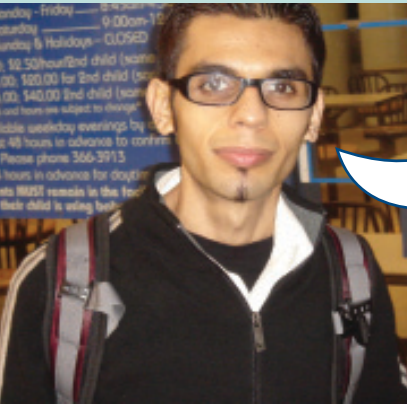




## Volunteering a Welcome

Fahd Mirza volunteers with the Calgary Bridge Foundation, an organization that offers services to help immigrants and refugees adjust to life in Canada. He is 19 years old and an immigrant himself.



Fahd Mirza came to Canada fourteen months ago with his parents. He feels a responsibility to give back to Canada, because of the opportunities Canada has given him. **Think critically:** How do his actions reflect active citizenship?

We came to Canada because my parents wanted a better quality of life than in Pakistan. There's so much stress in terms of survival in Karachi — the city I'm from. Crime is one of the major problems. You don't know if you're going to get home safe or not.

Canadian society has helped me in every single way. The most important part is welcoming me and integrating me without any concerns. It has provided me with opportunities for education and work. The government of Canada makes sure that our rights and freedoms are protected.

I found out about the Calgary Bridge Foundation last year at school. Our teacher invited the Foundation to talk about the Homework Club, where immigrant kids from Grades 1 through 12 get mentors, like me, to assist them with schoolwork. I help kids in Grades 5, 6 and 9 — especially with math and science because I'm really good at math and science.

Being a volunteer gives me so much personal satisfaction. It helps me so much, just a few hours in the whole week. I've learned a lot about different cultures and traditions. The kids I work with come from Saudi Arabia, India, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka. We learn from each other. The most important lesson is how to live together.

The big reason I volunteer is that I want to pay back Canadian society for all the things that it has done for me. For welcoming me. Not every country does that.

## connect to the big ideas

The Calgary Bridge Foundation is one of several organizations in Alberta that offers assistance to immigrants and refugees. Check the yellow pages of your phone book under "associations." Or check online. What organizations are in your community? How could you or your class volunteer?