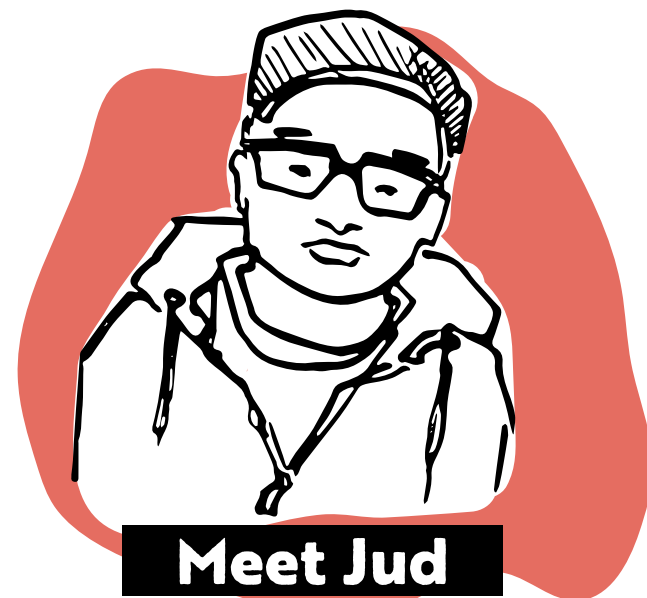# Tech Fellows

Community connections, at your fingertips

A network of tech savvy immigrant youth setting-up newcomers for success, with technology plus missions to get out & about without English.

options

IN WITH FORWARD

North York Community House

Meet Jud

Since arriving in Canada five years ago, Jud has taken on a lot of responsibility. He works in a factory and ontribute to the household bills. Reunited with his mum at age 18, Jud was reluctant to go to work, but driven by worry over what would happen if he didn't. He's never really taken time to develop a relationship with his new home country. He'd like to explore the wilderness, learn about Indigenous culture, and figure out what his purpose might be. He knows this means investing his time in different ways, but he doesn't want to let his family down.

Video games and internet forums got Jud through some difficult teenage years. Currently, he has a long distance relationship mediated by technology. But what he really wants is to connect with people and places around him, and feel invested in something without risking his family's security. It's hard for Jud to talk about purpose at home: it's just not a discussion topic in his family, who tend to be more focused on pragmatics.

As a Tech Fellow, Jud could explore career options outside manual labour, play a helper role which he finds meaningful, and start to orient his use of technology towards connecting with the world directly around him, rather than retreating from it.

What is Tech Fellows?

Mande is really lost and doesn't know how to ask for help.

While at the phone shop, Mande sees a sign in her language advertising TechFellows. She can get a coach to help her for free.

Techfellow Sue is in Mande's house. Sue helps Mande download and practice using google translate.

Sue creates a more adventurous mission for Mande: to go out and talk to a neighbour and practice a few greetings.

Mande is out of the house using google translate to have a basic conversation with her neighbour.

Mande feels a greater sense of engagement with her community and belonging to Canada. (longer term outcome)

Who to partner with?

Who might we partner with to deliver Tech Fellows?

- Phone providers, cable & internet providers to signpost tech coaching
- Grocery stores & transit to advertise tech coaching
- Universities & high school co-op programs to recruit and/or train tech fellows

Who might we partner with to develop Tech Fellows?

- Community culture crawl organizations to develop mission cards
- Cities to create incentives to visit parks, libraries, museums, cultural institutions
- Big businesses with tech support to learn best ways to teach tech

What might be the revenue model?

- **Sponsorship**: organizations that want to attract newcomers might sponsor missions
- **Corporate social responsibility:** telecommunications companies like Telus & Bell might contribute stipends & training for Tech Fellows
- **Fee for service:** cross-subsidizing with a tech coaching offer for older Canadians or foreign exchange students

Co-create this idea with us! Get in touch ...

In Surrey

Alysha Baratta
Impact Producer
with Options Community Services

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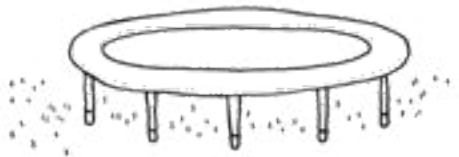*(604) 349 5221*

In Toronto

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For more info about the design process behind Tech Fellows:

Check our website or contact us!
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The Big Idea

a shift from

English language learning as a big barrier to community engagement; shame and embarrassment contributing to isolation.

to...

optimizing off-the-shelf tech

as a means to build confidence, meet neighbours and explore community.

What if more newcomers experienced tech as a tool that brought them closer to their new home & neighbours?

Belonging to Community

Now: People with limited English who are new to neighbourhoods don't know their neighbours or communities. They remain strangers.

With Tech Fellows: People are getting out more, becoming more familiar with their environment and their neighbours.

Sense of Independence

Now: Newcomers with limited English are often frightened to venture out of the house. They are dependent on family to run errands, go places, and explore.

With Tech Fellows: Newcomers are using tech tools to help them navigate their new contexts physically (google maps, transit apps) as well as practically (banking apps, communication apps).

Solves the problem of:

- **The transition doldrums.** The first months in Canada can feel unexpectedly hard as unfamiliarity with the language, geography and culture prevents meaningful social interaction.

- **Feelings of helplessness:** Newcomers feel reliant on the few family members and settlement staff who speak their language. This sense of dependency can lower self-worth and confidence.

- **Standing still:** Older newcomers describe classroom-based English language learning as "not for them." Sitting down feels the opposite of progress.
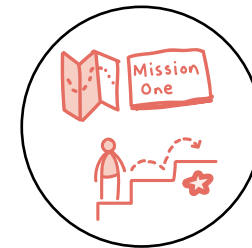

Three core features

Starts in context
Coaches come to newcomer homes to set-up tech for everyday use.

Tech as barrier buster
Uses translation, mapping, and home assistance apps as a means for getting out & about and meeting people.

Turns challenge into adventure
Supports newcomers to turn set-up tasks into an adventure versus daunting challenge.

Key user groups

Tech savvy youth
Newcomer youth looking for professional work experience and a job network. They know technology well and are keen to make a purposeful contribution.

The anxiously awaiting
Newcomers who want to feel part of their community, but feel held back by their lack of English and neighbourhood knowledge.

How does it make change?

Tech Fellows uses these mechanisms...

- Modelling and rehearsing tech use through missions
- Bridging relationships to informal resources in community
- Feedback from Tech Fellows, WhatsApp communities & earning incentives to get out & about

...to shape these factors...

- Builds capability to use technology
- Creates motivation and opportunity to interact in the neighbourhood
- Increases confident and competence to leave home and engage
- Enhances feelings of worth and capability to go outside comfort zone

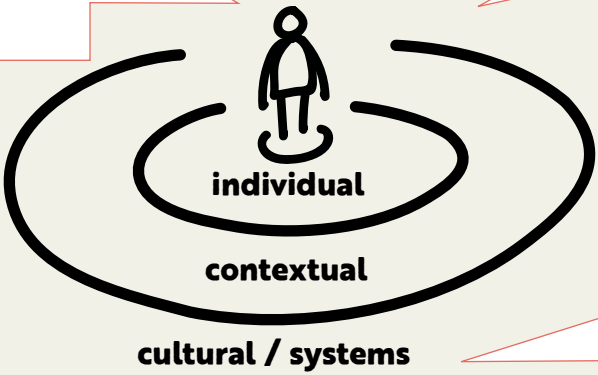**...to get to these outcomes**

Greater <u>independence</u>

Better <u>informal relationships</u>

Increased <u>sense of place</u> & belonging

Increased <u>self-actualization</u>

At an individual and systems level

Individual Level
- Provides meaningful work experience for immigrant youth
- Grows newcomer skills and sense of worth

Neighbourhood Level
- Breaks down barriers to social interaction

Cultural / Systemic Level
- Makes tech more inclusive and accessible
- Engages businesses & increases their talent pool

individual

contextual

cultural / systems

What else is out there like this?

SURREY LIBRARIES

Totally New to Computers class & 1-on-1 drop-in tech help at Surrey Libraries

<u>What's similar:</u> Gives slow-paced learning about basics of computers and answers any questions about tech

<u>How is this different from Tech Fellows?</u>
- Does not occur in homes; not mission-based

BC TECHNOLOGY FOR LEARNING SOCIETY

ReuseTech BC

<u>What's similar:</u> Provides paid fellowship for young people to learn about technology

<u>How is this different from Tech Fellows?</u>
- Focuses on tech hardware, rather than everyday use for community engagement

OntheSpot Language

<u>What's similar:</u> Provides mission-based learning opportunities

<u>How is this different from Tech Fellows?</u>
- Focus is on language learning, not use of tech to mediate language learning

Computer classes at settlement/senior services

<u>What's similar:</u> Teaches basics of computers such as creating an e-mail, browsing the internet

<u>How is this different from Tech Fellows?</u>
- Happens in a classroom, not in context.

bumble

Bumble (Dating App)

<u>What's similar:</u> Push notifications for suggested activities to do in community

<u>How is this different from Tech Fellows?</u>
- Purpose is romance rather than community

Carrot App

<u>What's similar:</u> Encourages users to walk to gain points, quizzes about government programs and info.

<u>How is this different from Tech Fellows?</u>
- Happens all online; no human component