

“I thrive when...”

CELT PhotoVoice exhibit, Fall 2020
SSH 102

As part of the CELT (Community Engaged Learning and Teaching) PhotoVoice initiative, this was the focal topic posed to psychology students in PSY 918 and members of the partner group, students in SSH 102.

As part of their class project, students were asked to take photos in response to this statement, and write a narrative about what the photo conveys to the audience in response to the topic.

This is the collection of their photos and narratives. This is their PhotoVoice exhibit. Let's start the conversation.

“When do you thrive?”

Acknowledgements:

PSY 918 **Dr. David Day**; course-TA, **Kathleen Stewart** and students in the course

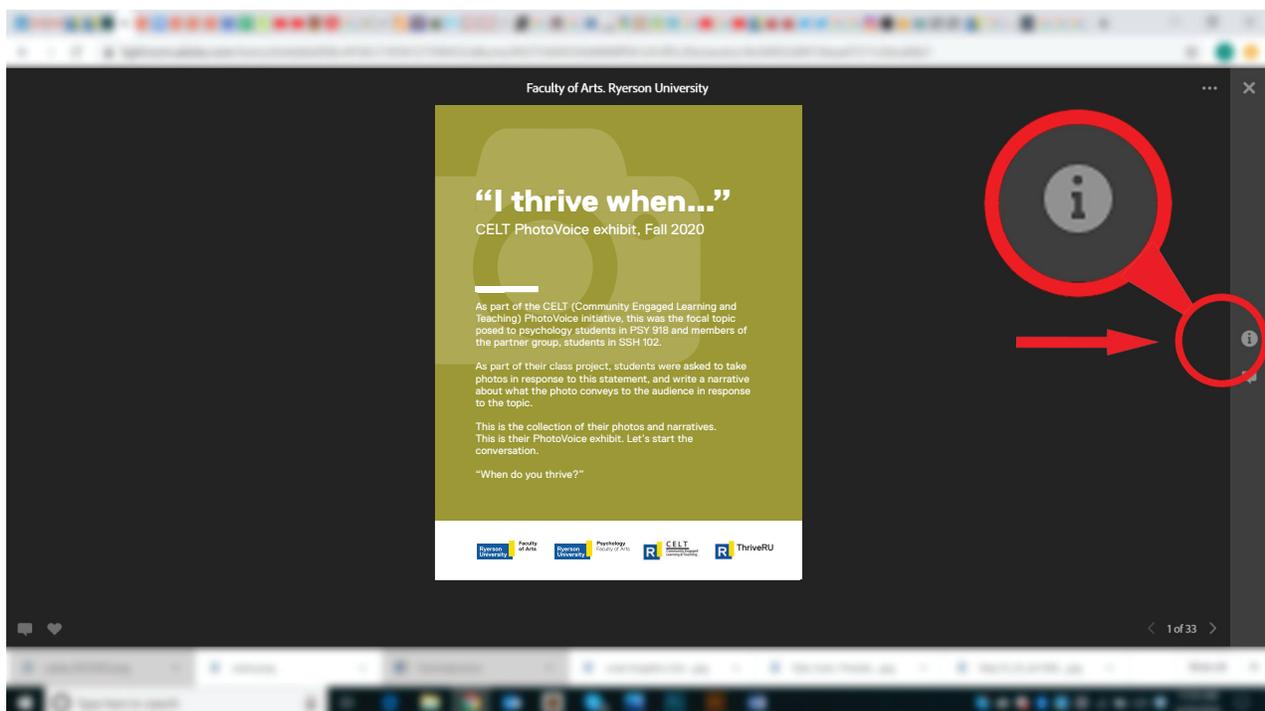
SSH 102 **Dr. Diana Brecher, Dr. Deena Schaffer** and students who participated in the project.

CELT **Dr. Reena Tandon** and student-staff, **Susan Chow**

How to read the stories in the online Lightroom gallery:

When you visit our online Lightroom gallery please click on the round 'Info' icon right to the image to expand the view and access the story accompanying the photo. You can also click on the image to expand it.

Enjoy!





“@BlasianKid101”

by Vanessa Erhirhie



Pencil in my right hand, oreos in my left hand. Camera around my neck, money on my mind. Sun glistening down on my caramel skin while my headphones are blasting Good Grief by Bastille. My life you may ask, chaos. Far from disaster, yet never as calm as the soft lighting in my local pharmacy. My undying thirst for knowledge and adventure chase me in circles making the silly assumption that my determination and imagination will simply disappear. A world without chaos would be a world where I'm not alive. I'm addicted. The hustle bustle setting is a drug which I'm addicted to. The melodramatic events which I have the honour to live through are what make me, me. The people I love, the places I go, the social injustices I hear, the cultures I experience, the art I make, the dreams I will achieve, the exhilarating feeling that rushes through my blood; it's chaotic, and that is what makes me thrive.



In the air, I am challenged physically, so much that I must be truly committed or never see progress, building strength and flexibility to reach each new pose. I am challenged intellectually, trying to recall the specific order of operations to keep me safe and making connections between different moves. The allow me to inject creativity, keeping me engaged and figuring out what each move means to me. I am challenged emotionally, finding the courage to climb to the top and to try something I was unable to do the previous week, trusting that I will only fall as far as I am meant to.

“Intertwined”

by Michelle Williams



“My Meaning Of ‘Home’”

by Habeebah Desai

This photo is a picture of the outside of my family's apartment building in India. The building in the picture was built by my great grandfather for his wife, and he named it accordingly after her, Hawa-Hira Mahal (like my family's version of the Taj Mahal). I chose this picture for the topic of “I thrive when” as this building symbolizes family and love to me. My family is my support system and the love they provide is what allows me to thrive in all aspects of my life. This building also reminds me of the sacrifices that were made by others so I could have the best life possible. Remembering these sacrifices also allows me to thrive through pushing me to make their



“Under Pressure”

by Reissa Lee Chan

I thrive when I am under pressure. I feel that being under pressure is when I create my best work, that I need to do this certain task in order to achieve something bigger. The feeling of having to get something done when it relies on something important fuels my best performance. In terms of my athletics, having the pressure to perform stellarly is beneficial because it channels my sports mentality. I believe that a sports mentality is when one can turn on a mode of competition, smart and agile thinking. Knowing that something depends on my performance creates expectations that are so rewarding in the end. I thrive when I have these constant reminders adding to my mental state reminding me to try and do my best.



I thrive when... I'm in awe. This picture was taken two years ago at a music festival in Toronto. I was standing with my sister appreciating the view. When I'm in awe, I can notice everything in its beauty and excellence in various domains of life. The disbelief of this view leaves me in amazement and that's when I can fully thrive in every aspect of my life. Thriving for me is this picture, it leads me to greater things that brings out the curiosity and creativity in me. This impowers me to thrive every day of my life.

“Awe”

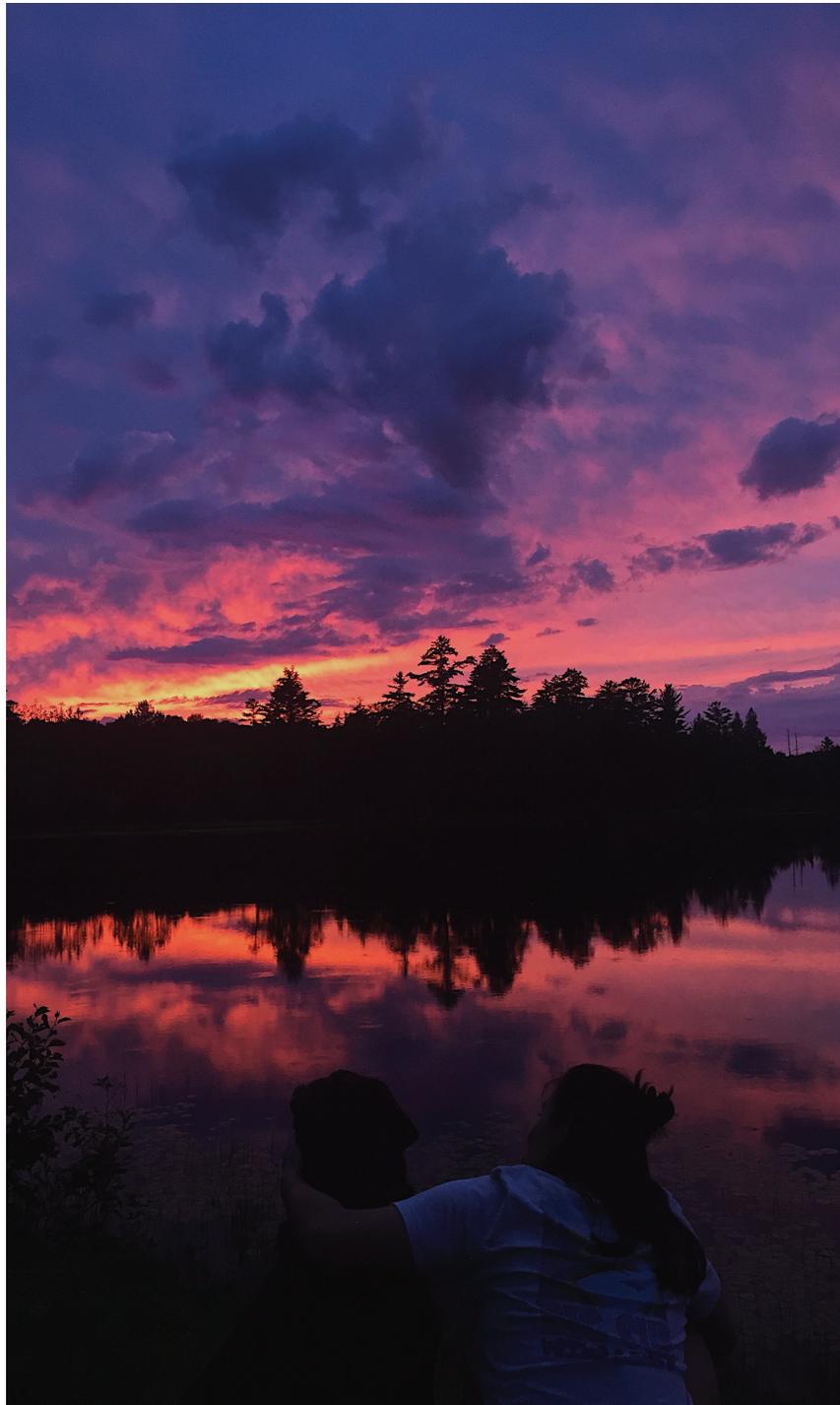
by Kayla Froese



“Refreshed”

by Sawda Bhaimiya

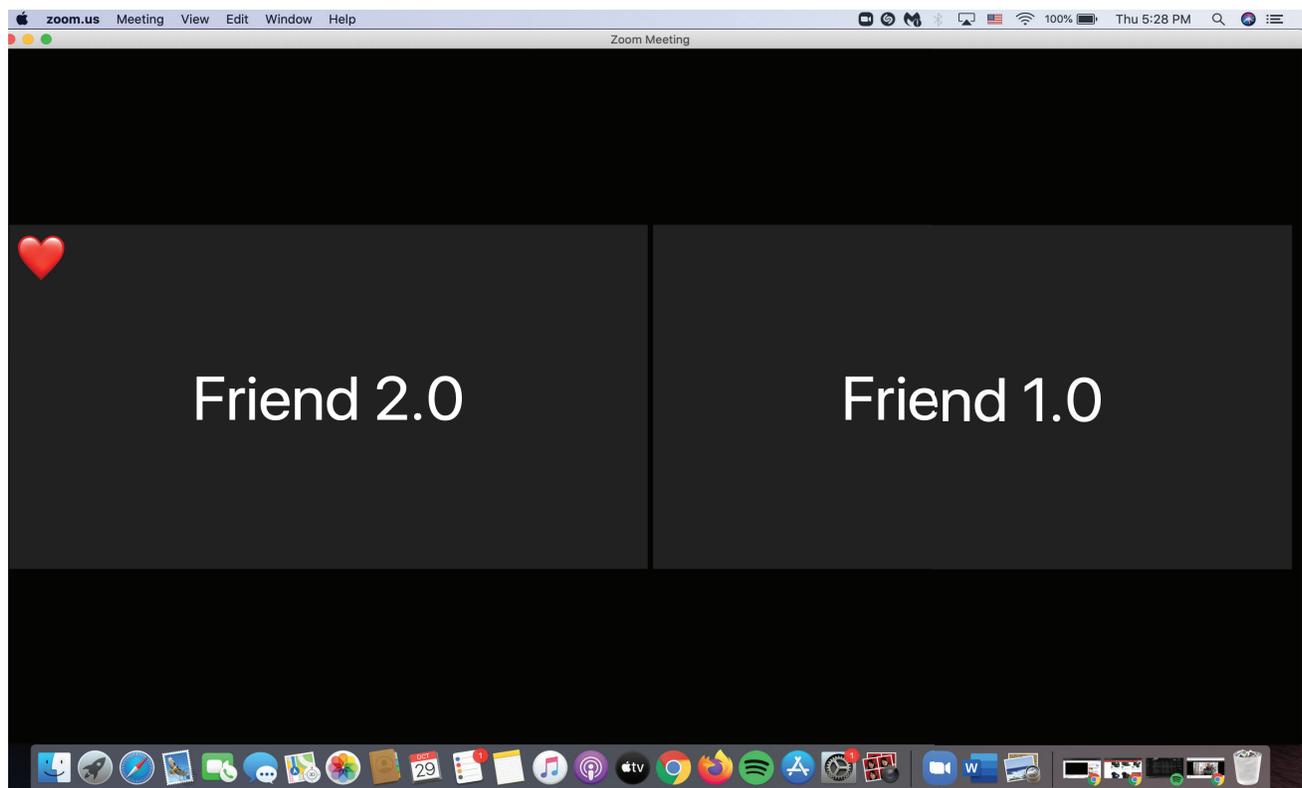
I thrive when I am outdoors and surrounded by nature. This image was taken earlier this year during the summer when I visited Niagara Falls. During the summer I always went outside for at least an hour a day to get a breath of air. Before the summer, I stayed locked up in my room all day and I found myself feeling more frustrated and suffocated as the days went on. I decided that I would force myself to go outside and take walks around the neighborhood or the park. I have noticed that this made me happier and more productive.



I thrive when I am fully immersed in nature surrounded by loved ones and animals. This photo was taken at a cottage near Minden, Ontario on a peaceful evening with my sister and friends dog as they sat by the lake enjoying the sunset. This photo represents a moment of true happiness that I experienced and have never forgotten since. I felt extremely blessed and cared for in this moment as we looked across the lake and reflected on life. The sunset represents a chapter in my life coming to an end where mistakes and failures are left in the past. The reflection on the lake signifies new beginnings as I continue to learn and grow every day.

“Settling In”

by Alicia Lam



“Friend 2.0”

by Pranav Adnani

I thrive when I talk to people. Think about it for a second before you read further. We all are in a global pandemic and the way we can feel normal would be when we communicate with others. Granted that we can't in person but on apps like zoom, hangouts, Skype etc, can help us still understand and evaluate conditions of others in places all around the world. Talking on zoom is a lot of fun as we get to meet new people who have different personalities, ideas, opinions and others. Being an extrovert this helps me a lot as I'm able to understand what others are going through even by just having a small conversation and without that we aren't able to develop as individuals. During this time, it's best for us to keep in some sort of contact with people as staying alone couped up in a single place for a while without communicating with people can be unhealthy for almost everyone. Meeting people would be a task during this pandemic but at least having a small conversation with old friends or even new ones could help us to thrive. We might be facing challenges or issues in our lives and a way to resolve them would be to seek help from friends or loved ones. We can consider ourselves being in the mercy of technology which has inspired me to call the new person I'm talking to as FRIEND 2.0. In conclusion, I thrive when I talk to people, whether it be over a zoom session or any sort of platform.



I thrive when I am able to leave my own world and enter a different one. Life can get so overwhelming if you let it. The stress will slowly creep up on you, and before you know it you'll be drowning in your worries. In order to alleviate some of the anxieties of my life, I have to force myself to take a step back and re-evaluate everything that is going on.

This allows me to take a breath, gain a new perspective on my troubles and figure out how I will deal with them. Stepping back could mean a variety of things to everyone but to me, stepping back means physically walking away from the place that I feel most stressed and mentally entering a whole new world. I do this by grabbing a book and transporting into the world that is created by the words I read. I let myself become a character in the stories I read and submerge myself into their plots. This way when I come back to the realities of my life I am able to really and truly thrive.

“A Whole New World”

by Agalyaa Sivaram



I thrive when I am in nature. I feel grounded and relaxed when I am enjoying nature walks. It helps with clearing my mind and helps me to mindfully focus on the beauty of nature. I enjoy taking pictures of beautiful trees, beaches, and lakes. I really enjoy the beautiful vibrant colours of the trees in autumn. The vibrant colours of the leaves are inspirational and provocatively stimulates my motivation. The coloured leaves signify a transformational period that represents the change in seasons and helps to motivate me. The vibrancy of the coloured trees represents beauty and peacefulness that can be found in the simplicity of nature. I thrive when I am surrounded by trees in nature as it helps me to find a peaceful and beautiful place that I can enjoy and feel deeply rooted and grounded with Mother Earth. The picture represents a beautiful cluster of vibrant trees in autumn and represents a peaceful state of mind that helps me to thrive during transformational times.

“Peacefulness”

by Lynette Mehmet



“Patience & Progress”

by Zahra Gabajiwala

This picture is a view of the CN Tower from my apartment. Every morning I wake up to this wonderful view and I am thankful for it every single day. This picture portrays when I thrive, by looking at how far I have come along and the journey I have ahead of me. It also makes me look back to how hard I have worked and my family and friends who helped me reach to this point of life. I thrive when I know I have a goal to achieve. When the sunlight that symbolizes how I can make my day better by learning from my previous mistakes, wakes me up every morning and when I see the CN Tower, the sky, the fluffy white clouds, the tall bushy trees, and the tall buildings just makes me feel so motivated. I look at the CN Tower as my end goal, trying to get closer and closer and working towards it every day. The Sky is my field and my path towards my end goal. The Clouds are the beautiful obstacles I get in my way that I overcome and learn something new from every time, they also represent the different opportunities I keep getting that teach me to make the most out of. The trees and the buildings are my ladders, that is my family and friends that keep pushing me to reach to the top. Waking up to this view is what starts my day with positive energy and a smile on my face which makes me realize how blessed I am. This is what motivates me to thrive, to go the extra mile, to believe I can achieve more and more every day. Knowing what I can be and things I can get just by working hard towards perusing my dreams, I will never stop.



“The Road Less Travelled”

by Aleksander Strazisar

The idea of discovering something new is what motivates me to get up in the morning and face the challenges that await. I thrive when I travel on the road less travelled. When I explore the unknown and see what awaits me. Having the ability to wander and explore when I am feeling burdened and when I am feeling limitless is invaluable, it gives me the energy to accomplish anything and everything. Knowing that there is a whole world out there to be explored and lived is what life is all about. This picture symbolizes me out exploring the world, and seeking the paths not yet seen.



“Beauty Over Boom”

by Ara Fitzpatrick

This lovely moment caught on film depicts how I thrive, primarily with its beauty. Over time I have noticed that I am most content, motivated and successful when surrounded by beauty. Whether it be the colourful pens and books I've acquired to make notes or the lake by my side while I walk, beauty makes mundane moments in my life most enjoyable. This building in progress with beautiful rainbows above metaphorically embodies this. The building is not something that would usually be considered beautiful, but under the full rainbow, it is the focal point of beauty in this picture and shows that sometimes the journey of being built can be just as, if not more, beautiful than the end goal. In some ways, the building is me and reminds me to recognize and cherish my journey's beauty when I thrive.



I thrive when I am able to go after what I desire with no regrets, and to be present through my mind, body and soul when I do so. This photo was taken when I in a place in life where I just wanted to be happy and go for things that seemed impossible as a coloured girl from Scarborough. I aspired to be a dancer and I wanted to share space with great dancers and their energy. I wanted to know what it felt like to be in a place where dance was the reason why people were still alive. I was thriving when I entered this mindset, even more when I allowed my body to embrace the feeling and then I ended up here, in this moment depicted in this photo The woman on the right is Kaea Pearce, an extremely talented dancer from the Royal Family Dance Crew. I was able to get into her class and share space with her and multiple other amazing dancers. This was one the days where I thrived, and I soared while doing so.

“A Dream I Went For”

by Christa Francis Xaviyaer



“State of Mind ”

by Ayyat Sattar

I thrive when I am in a calm state of mind. Being calm requires me to be in a state of mental peace and tranquility. Being able to be outside in a space where I can see that I am so small reminds me that difficult moments are a small part small of the bigger picture. Being in a calm state of mind allows me to focus on what's really meaningful. It makes me feel fulfilled and I am able to go to bed every night knowing I am doing what makes me happy. Having a calm state of mind allows you to thrive within yourself. Being able to go to calm places like this always brings me back to the positive state and grounds me.



“Alone, Together”

by Christophe Couttolenc



Tires squeal and sirens wail, the sound of yet another email. A radio DJ with more to say about a deadly virus that is on the way. When the city noise became too loud, we packed our bags and escaped the crowd.

As we hoisted the sail, my brother and I. We let all our worries wither and die. Our thoughts were boundless, and our souls were free. Alone, together, you and me.



“We The Change”

by Christine Paterson

I thrive when... I see people working together for the betterment of our global society. I took this photo on Friday September 27, 2019 when I attended the Global Climate Strike in Toronto. 15,000 people came out to march this day. We spoke in one voice demanding that our leaders do more to save our planet! Worldwide over 7.6 million people came out that week to speak up in a united voice! We all wanted the same thing! I thrive when I see potential possibilities materializing. When people open themselves up to showing empathy, and compassion for each other. My heart soars knowing that there are caring children & adults in the world, working tirelessly to protect the Earth. I see the struggle, but I also feel the power when optimism explodes and permeates our beings as we all work for a common goal.



I'm learning that life is not about surviving or going through the motions, but living with faith, intentionality, and purpose. I thrive when I am kind to myself, honor my boundaries, and give myself the space to grow. For me, thriving can look like: praying, growing plants, taking time to rest, curling up with tea and a good book, spending time with family and friends, painting with abandon, dancing wildly with the music blasting, and abandoning the hustle mindset by taking a walk in nature. To live is to thrive, and I thrive when I am in touch with myself.

“In Touch”

by Cristela Alvaran



“Connected”

by Dimitrije Vujčić

I thrive when I feel that I am connected with my surroundings. During this late summer evening of fishing with my good friend on the Rouge River, I looked up at the same train bridge which I've often traversed to reconnect with family and friends, and it struck me that the river below it connects people in much the same way. As our world seems to be moving towards greater disconnect, may we all find ways to feel connected .



Progress entails continuously challenging myself to overcome physical and mental limits and reflecting on the growth accomplished through this process. Through physical exercise, progress takes a material form in the gradual addition of weights and the increased muscle definition that results from challenging perceived limits. However, progress as a condition for thriving is present wherever growth is possible. The recognition that I am capable of progress, compels me to acknowledge that my agency as an individual is limitless. This instills a sense of purpose in all my actions and empowers me to overcome any barriers in my path, regardless of whether they are self-imposed or systemic. For these reasons, I thrive when I experience progress.

“Progress”

by Davon Phillip



“The Journey”

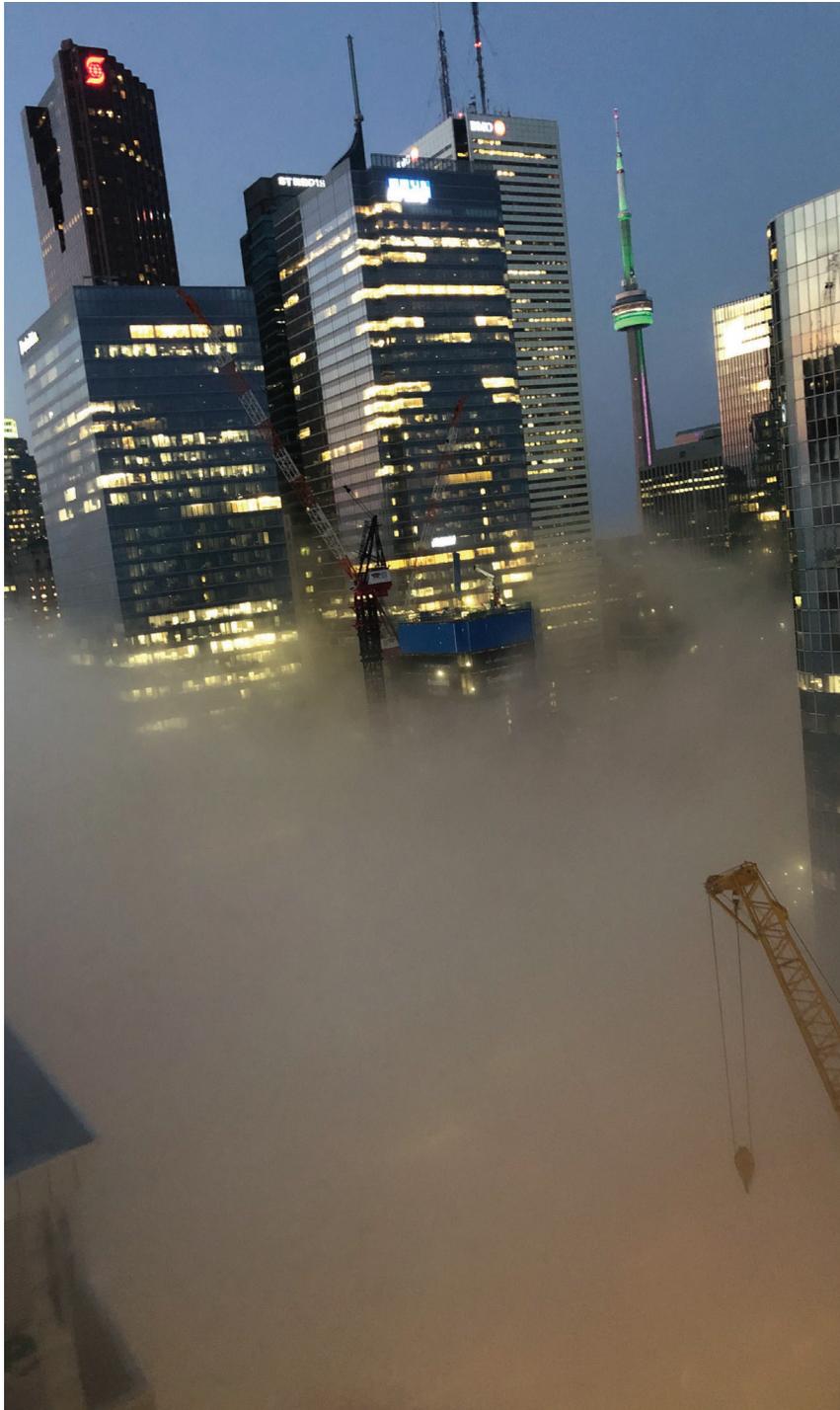
by Dylan Mills-Capote

I thrive when I set goals for myself. When you set a goal, you're creating a path for yourself to follow. For me, this has always helped me succeed because I also incorporate smaller goals that I can achieve on the way to my end goal. The path in this picture represents having an exact route to whatever I'm trying to accomplish. Sometimes we set unrealistic expectations on ourselves, which can negatively impact your mental health when you find it challenging to achieve it right away. Setting goals offers positive reinforcement that serves as encouragement that you're on the right track. This is so important to me because most of the time, for me at least, negative things always outweigh the positive, which is why we must give ourselves credit for the work progress we've made.



“I Thrive When I Find Moments of Solitude” by Maria Kendal-Kong

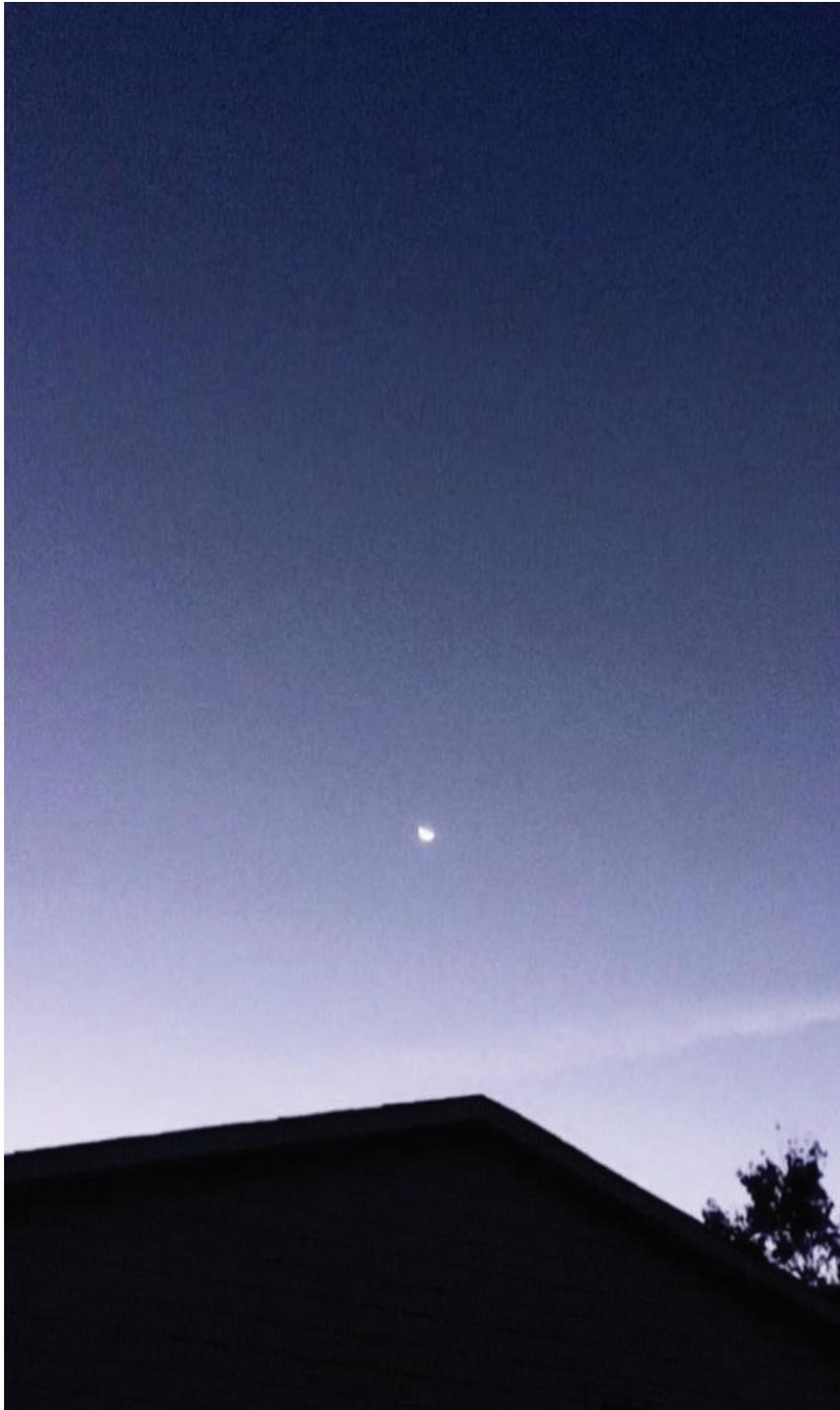
My photo represents groundedness and self-care. As someone who tends to focus on grades and productivity to the exclusion and detriment of all else, I need to be very mindful of taking breaks to re-charge. When I am exploring the forest nearby my house, it gives me moments of solitude and space to recharge. Nature's imperfections prompt me to own my own imperfections, as I step back from comparisons and just let myself be where I am, as I am. Once I have the space to recharge, I can be more present and intentional when I re-engage with my life and my studies.



This photo symbolizes how I thrive because it shows the same city but with two very different viewpoints. Within one half of the photograph, the city is covered with thick morning fog. However, within the other half, the city is crystal clear and allows the viewer to see even the CN tower. I thrive when I can view an issue with two different perspectives because it allows me to carefully assess my opinions rather than jump to a conclusion. Seeing the sheer dynamism of weather within Toronto, this reflects on how there are many angles to view an issue. Being able to acknowledge different perspectives allows me to thrive as a student and beyond.

“Double Sided-Story”

by Saurav Jain



I thrive when...my mind is clear, when I wake up early and just take a moment to breath with no distractions in sight. When there's nothing but silence and stillness, the only thing to break the silence is nature itself. Whether it be the birds chirping or the cars in the distance, it becomes easy to focus and think when there's nothing in sight but the sun slowly rising turning the darkness into light. This photo shows just that, the sun slowly rising but you can still see the moon ever so slightly as the shadows disappear. And in this moment my mind is clear and this is where and when I thrive.

“Clear Sky Clear Mind”

by Serika Ram