

Alberta Doctors' Digest

Med student takes a stand against domestic abuse

Tina Guo is currently a second-year medical student studying at the University of Calgary's Cumming School of Medicine. Inspired by the experiences of a close friend in high school, Tina founded the University of Calgary's Students Against Domestic Abuse Association in 2016, the first student-run initiative of its kind in Canada. Even after beginning medical school, Tina has continued to serve as the co-executive director of the association, managing a multi-disciplinary executive team to organize impactful events and meaningful projects.

In the first year of its existence, the association was inducted into the Calgary Domestic Violence Collective, consisting of 70 local member agencies that combat domestic violence. The association's End the Cycle initiative encompasses fundraisers and events that raise awareness about the misconceptions and realities surrounding domestic abuse and build the foundations for a campus-wide support network for individuals who have experienced domestic abuse or dating violence.



Tina Guo is driven by a persistent passion for advocacy and support of marginalized populations

Since its founding, the association has hosted three Road to Resilience conferences with keynote addresses, panel discussions and small-group interactive activities

featuring domestic abuse survivors and experts including lawyers, physicians, counsellors and researchers. The conferences provide participants with a comprehensive, multi-faceted understanding of domestic abuse, and they have empowered survivors to share their stories, fostered critical thinking and meaningful dialogue surrounding domestic abuse, and equipped students and staff with strategies to identify and respectfully but effectively intervene when others may be experiencing domestic abuse. In addition, the association collaborated with an on-campus club to organize a fundraiser that raised over \$2,000 for the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter.

To augment its fundraising efforts, the association hosted the inaugural YW Walk a Mile in Her Shoes on Campus event, the first of its nature and magnitude on any Canadian campus. The walk was accompanied by the Power to Empower Expo, an exhibition of local agencies that provide services for survivors and their allies. A highlight of the event was the keynote addresses, delivered by two students who shared their moving stories of dating violence and their journeys to recovery. Ultimately, the walk raised over \$500 for the YWCA Calgary. Furthermore, Tina has presented on behalf of the Students Against Domestic Abuse Association to the University of Calgary's president, chancellor, chancellors emeritus, Senate members, and top donors and sponsors, and she was recently featured in an article by *The Gauntlet* for her work on the Road to Resilience conference.

In the coming year, through the generous support of the U of C's Champions for a Healthy Campus grant, Tina will spearhead the launch of The Survivorship Series, a physical and digital story-sharing platform for local domestic abuse survivors. Tina is an outstanding and charismatic leader whose drive, self-accountability and vision have allowed her to effectively lead an executive team while managing her busy schedule and hefty academic workload. Through the years, Tina has innovated novel and unique approaches to advocacy for domestic abuse survivors and has spent substantial time mentoring her fellow executive members in their academic and professional pursuits, providing them with opportunities and ideas to harness their pre-existing talents while challenging them to cultivate new skills.

Driven by a persistent passion for advocacy and support of marginalized populations, Tina also became vice-president, finance of the University of Calgary's Student Run Clinic (SRC). The clinic allows student clinicians, under the guidance of physician preceptors, to deliver free health care services for residents at a refugee clinic and two homeless shelters: Inn from the Cold and the Calgary Dream Centre, the latter via the Alex Mobile Health Bus. The clinic has organized two clinic nights per week at its Inn from the Cold location to care for the shelter's residents, composed primarily of families, many of whom have young children and some of whom have fled domestic abuse.

Meanwhile, the Calgary Dream Centre provides residence and rehabilitation services for men battling the cycles of homelessness and addiction. Beyond the weekly clinic nights, the SRC also hosts myriad annual events, such as a Rich Man Poor Man fundraiser where the proceeds are donated to SRC operations, and two other global health initiatives each year. The SRC also organizes an annual Women's Empowerment Night, which provides workshops, services and pampering for local marginalized women. In her capacity as vice-president, finance, Tina ensures that clinic sites are adequately stocked with medical equipment, supplies and over-the-counter medications, and she oversees the student clinicians in their interactions with patients and preceptors.

Tina has deeply impacted her community through her extended dedication to advocacy for marginalized populations. She is an active listener and a brave advocate for the

marginalized and those who have encountered adversity in her community. She is bound to pave the way for future leaders and advocates.

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