

SCYP Profiles

An Interview with Michelle Korven-Culbert

SCYP's former Program Officer, now facing crazy roads and new adventures in Taiwan!

Where do you live?

Changhua, Taiwan

What do you do for work?

English Teacher, Inter English School
Entrepreneur, Sunrider International

What kinds of skills and knowledge do you use in the work that you do?

People skills. I work with people from all different kinds of backgrounds, and different cultures. I've realized that it doesn't matter if I'm meeting a business prospect, teaching a six year old how to say "My name is....." or negotiating my contract – it all comes down to having good people skills. Understanding people and having a knowledge of basic human tendencies and needs will get you further in life than any other skill. We're all the same no matter where we are, what we're doing, or what our life is like. We fundamentally have the same needs and desires. For me developing my people skills is learning what those needs and desires are, and learning how to better relate to, understand and deal with other people. There are tons of skills one can learn that will improve your friendships and relationships, job prospects and future opportunities. Unfortunately these aren't taught in school curriculum – but they aren't difficult skills to learn or put into practice!

How were you involved in SCYP?

I was the Program Officer from January 2003 until December 2005.

How did your involvement in SCYP influence you?

SCYP influenced me in many different ways. Here are only a few;

1. Working with such a diverse group of people from different ages was a great learning experience for me. I realized that a person's age has no relation to what you can learn from them. Everyone I met taught me something!
2. Being responsible for a program with such a rich history gave me a sense of duty and responsibility that went beyond myself. It was wonderful to care about and focus on something that was making a difference in the lives of other people. I felt that my position gave me the opportunity to be 'of service' to others.
3. The office at Saskatchewan Co-operative Association was one of friendship and support, at the same time that it was professional, and progressive. I learned the value of a positive working environment.
4. I learned about values, democracy, self-confidence, group dynamics, community, and leadership.

What influenced/led you to do the work that you are doing now?

I had always had a desire to travel and see other parts of the world. My husband also shared that dream. Deciding to work abroad for our first year of marriage was making a dream come true for both of us. I've also always considered becoming a professional educator. Working as an English teacher would give me 'classroom' experience and help me to decide if that was a profession I wanted to pursue.

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What do you find inspiring in your work?

I find it inspiring when I can see my students enjoying a lesson, when I can see their development and know that I am helping them, and when I can open their eyes to something new and different. I love sharing what life is like in Canada, what my beliefs are and what I think is possible.

What else inspires you?

Quotes. I love when in a few words someone can capture an entire feeling or idea, or philosophy. I often write down quotes that mean something to me and revisit them. I find them very powerful and often life changing.

If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?

I think my "Where wouldn't I go" list is a lot smaller! One of my dream holiday spots is Thailand....I'm leaving for a 10 day vacation on an little Thai Island in 2 weeks. Another dream coming true.

I would really like to visit Africa, South America, and Europe.....as well as many others.

Favourite summer activity?

Spending time at my parents cabin at Clearwater Lake. It is the most beautiful little lake, I feel very at peace when I am there, and my family is always close by. That is one experience I missed terribly being abroad this past summer.

Last book you read?

I've got a couple.

"Excuse me Your Life is Waiting" by Lynn Grabhorn (Excellent! – I read it twice)

I'm currently reading, "How to Win Friends and Influence People" by Dale Carnegie. Although it is a cheesy title it is one of the best books I have ever read. I'm only half way through and I am learning sooooo much! I highly highly highly recommend this book!

Novels:

"Angels and Demons" and "The Da Vinci Code" by Dan Brown. He's an extraordinary writer.

Anything else you would like to tell us about yourself?

I'd like to leave you with a few of my favorite quotes:



Definition of Leadership:
the positive, progressive, ethical influence on others.
Bob Goshen

There is nothing either good or bad, but
thinking makes is so.
Shakespeare

Only as high as I reach
Can I grow,
Only as far as I seek
Can I go,
Only as deep as I look
Can I see,
Only as much as I dream
Can I be.
Karen Ravn