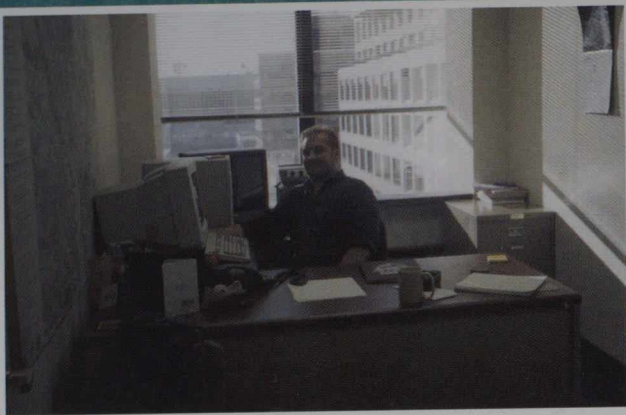


photo: courtesy Philip Strong



DFAIT Youth International Internship Program intern Philip Strong in the Washington, D.C., office of the American Council of the Blind

Each internship is designed to hone the skills and knowledge required to succeed in work with an international focus. It provides vital experience that can be turned into a career. Without this help, breaking into the international job market can be virtually impossible.

Internships are organized in each area of Canada's foreign policy: global issues; international trade; and culture and values. Projects listed under global issues promote priorities such as peace and human security, war-affected children, human rights, and democratic development. Trade interns learn about the promotion of international trade and sustainable development; they work with various trade councils, international organizations and the private sector. Many culture interns have been placed with film and television production companies, and have ended up finding full-time employment there. The internships carry out the government's commitment to helping young Canadians contribute to their country, gain employment, and apply their business and creative skills.

In 2001-02 Philip Strong, a 29-year-old from St. John's, Newfoundland, spent six months at the American Council of the Blind (ACB) in Washington, D.C. Visually impaired himself, Philip worked on developing accessible pedestrian signals. After his internship ended, he was asked to return and carry on the ACB project, which will be submitted to U.S. government officials. For blind and visually impaired pedestrians, the result could be better signals on street corners. For Philip, the result may be a full-time job at the ACB.

Philip encountered his own set of challenges, including repeated questions about his Newfoundland accent. "I was often asked what part of Ireland I was from," he says. Of course, nothing could have prepared him for what

happened during his first week on the job: Days after he arrived in Washington, the city was hit by the attacks of September 11, 2001. "We didn't know what to think. We were dumbstruck," he says, remembering that life ground to a halt. Philip contemplated returning home to safer territory, but eventually he decided to carry on with his work.

When asked to name the most enjoyable aspect of their internship, Philip and Annik both say it's the people. Philip met many warm and friendly Americans, including some co-workers who went out of their way to help him adjust to life in Washington and opened their homes to him. Annik has been fascinated by all the internationally minded people she has met in Cairo. For both, the experience broke stereotypes and opened doors to rewarding possibilities that they might never have discovered without the program.

D'Arcy Thorpe, Manager of the Youth International Internship Program, says, "This is a proven vehicle for engaging youth in international issues. International internships should be a key element of Canada's new Innovation Strategy. We are seeking input from the public, and it will be reviewed at the Innovation Summit to be held in Toronto in November, where DFAIT interns and partners will participate." The Summit will bring together representatives of business, universities and government with the aim of developing an action plan to make Canada a world leader in innovation by the year 2010.

The Youth Zone explores human security issues

Young Canadians have shown that they care about human security issues and want to be kept informed about them. Now they will be able to find the information they want on a Web page designed especially for them, within the Human Security site of DFAIT. The Youth Zone makes its debut this fall.

The Youth Zone is geared toward high school and university students. It will contain information on human security in general, and specifically on Canada's Human Security Program. It will also carry photos and stories from young people who have

practical experience in peacebuilding and human security. The Youth Zone is intended as a research tool for students, and will be a valuable resource for teachers who want to bring human security issues into

the classroom. Bookmark the Youth Zone Web address:

www.humansecurity.gc.ca/jeunesse-e.asp

