



## **Alumni Association Scholarship 2021 Recipient Essay**

*by Rabab Rafique '21*

We've made leadership about changing the world, and there is no world. There's only six billion understandings of it. And if you change one person's understanding of it...if we can redefine leadership like that, I think we can change everything." These were the words of Drew Dudley in his TEDx Toronto talk in 2010. Dudley's words bring to light that we are all capable of being leaders. No matter what one's title, leadership is about what one makes of it; how one interacts with the people around them and impacts their understandings. I have been fortunate to serve in leadership positions during my time at ICO that I believe have allowed me to impact this community and others in a meaningful way, and my spirit of service and leadership will continue to thrive as an alumnus.

My leadership experiences at ICO began when as a front desk assistant at the residential complex, I took every opportunity to uplift my colleagues in times of stress and self-doubt. This continued as a library assistant in my third year. I also held a number of positions that allowed me to represent my passions and interests, and present others with opportunities to be a part of them as well. I have served on the executive boards of VOSH, the AAO chapter, and the Low Vision Club, playing an active part in board meetings, presenting creative ideas and helping in any capacity needed to plan and execute events and initiatives. I was also a remote intern with VOSH/International, which allowed me to act as a liaison between the national organization and the school chapter. In second year, I organized the resources and volunteers required for the video contest entry that won first place at the VOSH meeting in Montreal, Quebec, where I had the honour of representing ICO, and became a student fellow of SVOSH/International. I have also attained Student Fellowship with AAO and served as the OptoPrep representative for my class during our preparation for board exams. As an RC ambassador for prospective students and a student alumni ambassador during homecoming events, I positively represented the school for incoming students and alumni alike. I also demonstrated leadership by volunteering at various vision screenings when additional help was needed.

All of the roles that I had during my time here demonstrate the versatility of a good leader. Each of the positions that I have held define me as a leader in the ICO community, and I hope that my involvement and service within this community has made an impact, big or small, on my colleagues and their "understandings" of the world. I also hope to continue making an impact within the ICO community by joining the Alumni Ambassador Program and attending events as an alumnus. My next venture will hopefully be a residency year during which I will continue to develop the skills needed to be a leader in the advocacy of medical optometry and vision rehabilitation, two areas in which I have special interest.