

## Commonwealth Women's Blog

July – August 2017

I am really enlightened to be a part of the Commonwealth Women's Mentorship Scheme. My name is Elon Alonzo. I am 25 years old and am from Guyana. One of the 2017 goals I wrote on my white board was to seek mentorship and it was finally happening.

I was attached to Valarie Wafer who has a wealth of experience in business and Rotary. Both areas I have immense interest since I grew up in my Grandfather's small-scale Manufacturing business and am a rotaractor. I also was presently employed at Massy Distribution (Guyana) Inc as a Product Specialist responsible for brands development and marketing.

The goals we created were as follows:

1. To become a successful and impactful business professional
2. To balance work and personal life
3. To have an effective leadership system for sustained success.

I learnt so much from Valarie and about her Disability programs at work, her business and life and was given so much advice that my life started to turn around. As a result, I started to create business plans, learnt about strategy and even created a 5-year strategic plan for my life. In our introduction, we swiftly moved from being introduced to acquaintances because of our commonalities and her maturity in guiding me.

I started to frame the life I wanted and in a bitter- sweet state I was awarded and accepted a scholarship to study for a MSc in Public Sector Management in August 2017. A past dream had turned into a reality.

The coordination of resigning from my occupation and moving to Trinidad and Tobago made our conversations infrequent but we remained in contact.

We were committed to still continue with this program.

Thanks Commonwealth Women's Mentorship Scheme!!

Love,

Elon Alonzo

September- December 2017

I arrived in Trinidad and Tobago in September 2017. During this time, I had to deal with exposure to a new culture, settling in and adapting to student life which I had left behind 5 years ago. It was a blessing to have attained some of the guidance that I was given by Valarie before. For instance, I had a great deal of issues with coping with personality and performance issues in my group work. As now my WhatsApp friend, a quick call or message would guide me in how to illustrate leadership in these situations. Our meetings still occurred but were not as frequent as we wanted.

Since, I had a shift in life, we decided to make new goals which will kind of be schemed to my new life. These entail:

1. Better understanding and dealing with diversity in groups
2. Fusing my past work experience into the student life and my new career path
3. Learning how to prepare a personal portfolio and to manage in the world of work
4. Creating a new strategic plan

My class schedule allowed us to have 3 meetings and some WhatsApp discussions and we have begun looking at these areas but more so on a practical basis as all touched my present state in life.

Even though there were hiccups in our journey, I must say that this program was 100% impactful. I have learnt so much and have gained so much.

I am grateful to Valarie's guidance and her intense interest in my development and wellbeing. Moreover, despite difficulties, the rules around the program helped us to maintain a structured approach that has made it an excellent initiative.

Thanks Commonwealth Women's Mentorship Scheme!!

Love,

Elon Alonzo