

I thrive when...

You are cordially invited to the online version of the **PhotoVoice Exhibit** entitled: "*I thrive when...*"

This is a Community Engaged Learning and Teaching (CELT) initiative with Dr. David Day's undergraduate Advanced Seminar in Social Psychology (PSY 918) and students in the course, Learning and Development Strategies: Thriving in Action (SSH102), taught by Dr. Diana Brecher and Dr. Deena Shaffer.

Dates available: **Friday, April 1, 2022 to Monday, April 4, 2022**

Location: **Online** – The posters will be available for your enjoyment on the Faculty of Arts CELT website (<https://www.ryerson.ca/arts/faculty-and-staff/celt/>). If you would like to share your thoughts or comments with the students, please send them to Dr. David Day at dday@ryerson.ca, Dr. Reena Tandon at reena.tandon@ryerson.ca and Dr. Diana Brecher at dbrecher@ryerson.ca and we will forward them to the students.

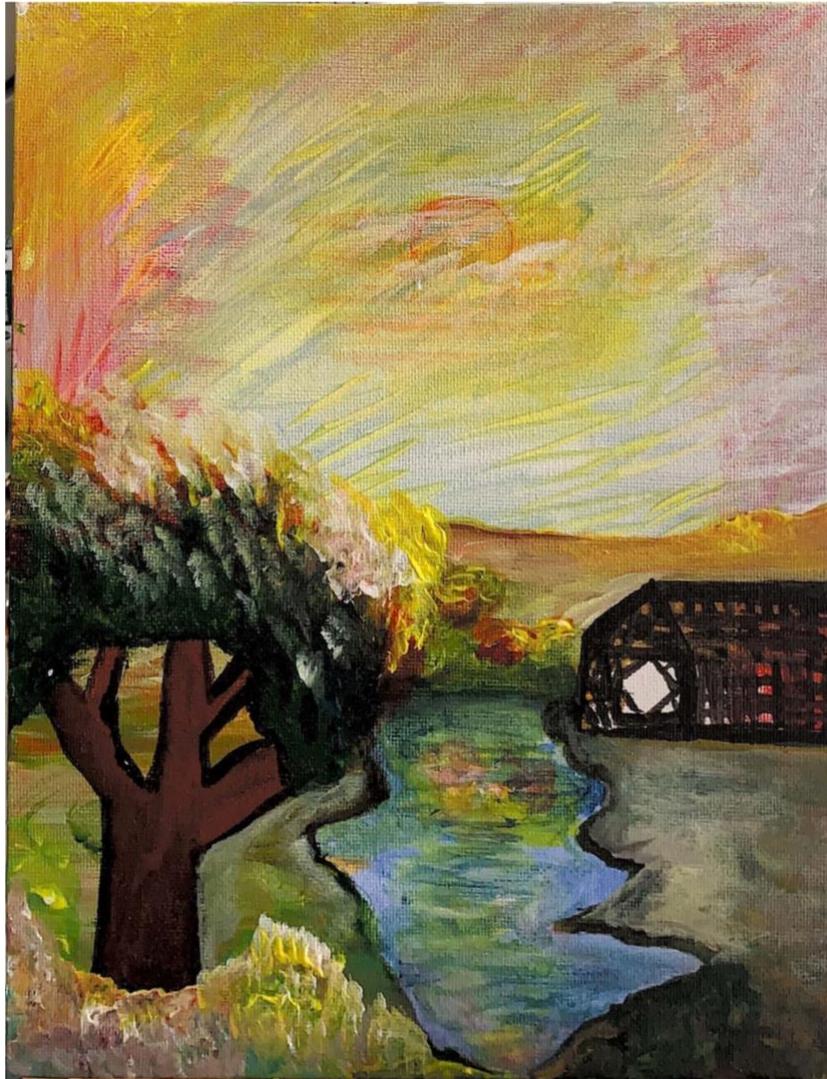




“Embracing the Journey”

Morayo Aladejana

I thrive when I am able to explore and reflect on myself, my goals, and my journey. This photo demonstrates a girl on a trip who is trying to explore not only herself but is trying to thrive in her journey through the world, despite the noise that she may be constantly surrounded by. Embracing the journey, pursuing ambitious dreams, and reflecting and embarking on the simple things I enjoy such as travelling or viewing the nature that surrounds me, reminds me to hold onto the bright light in times of trial. This photo reminds me to be hopeful in anticipation through my life journey because being hopeful and embracing my journey is when I thrive best and am able to attain and strive for my goals. In this way, reflection through partaking in activities that I enjoy ultimately gives me peace of mind.



“Painting”

Taqwi Ashteewi

I thrive when I paint. I mostly like painting nature; I find it very therapeutic. This particular picture I painted reminds me of my grandparents’ farm. Before I came to Canada, I used to visit my grandparents’ farm all the time and I loved the blooming flowers during the spring season and the tall green grass, and mostly the sun shining. I can call this farm my happy place because I grew up on a farm and I find farms, in general, a very peaceful place. Painting makes me calm, especially when I paint memory places I loved or random objects depending on my moods or feelings. It helps me remember the beautiful memories I had, and to be able to express my emotions through painting has helped me throughout my journey of getting to know myself better. For that reason, I thrive when I paint.



“My Purpose to Bhangra” Muskaan Kaur Aujla

I thrive when I express my positive energy to the world. Bhangra is a Punjabi folk dance traditionally performed during the harvest season. When I dance, I see that all of my worries, stress and destructive energies vanish. Bhangra has allowed me to build confidence so that I can get the chance to express myself to the world. Bhangra is the reason I've become more connected to my culture, family, and friends. Every day, I look at this picture because it brings me happiness. As I dance with a team of powerful girls on a stage, I strive to dance with pleasure, enthusiasm, and strength. This supports the thousands of people watching, as my dancing provides good vibes. This will allow me to make a difference in all the horrible happenings in their lives. I believe that as I share my positivity, they will too! Let's make the world a happier place!



“Overcoming the Tower of Adversity”

Nathan Dickenson

To thrive, is a feeling that many feel under optimal circumstances. Whether it be based upon love, happiness, or even good weather, most people thrive under favourable conditions. However, I find that I thrive under pressure. I have found ways to climb up to the top of the steep, tall, harsh tower of life’s adversities, where once at the top, all that I can do is laugh - laugh at all of the obstacles that tried to knock them down to the bottom. This picture encapsulates and emulates that very feeling, which the hungriest know all too well. Stay hungry, never give up. Thrive under pressure.



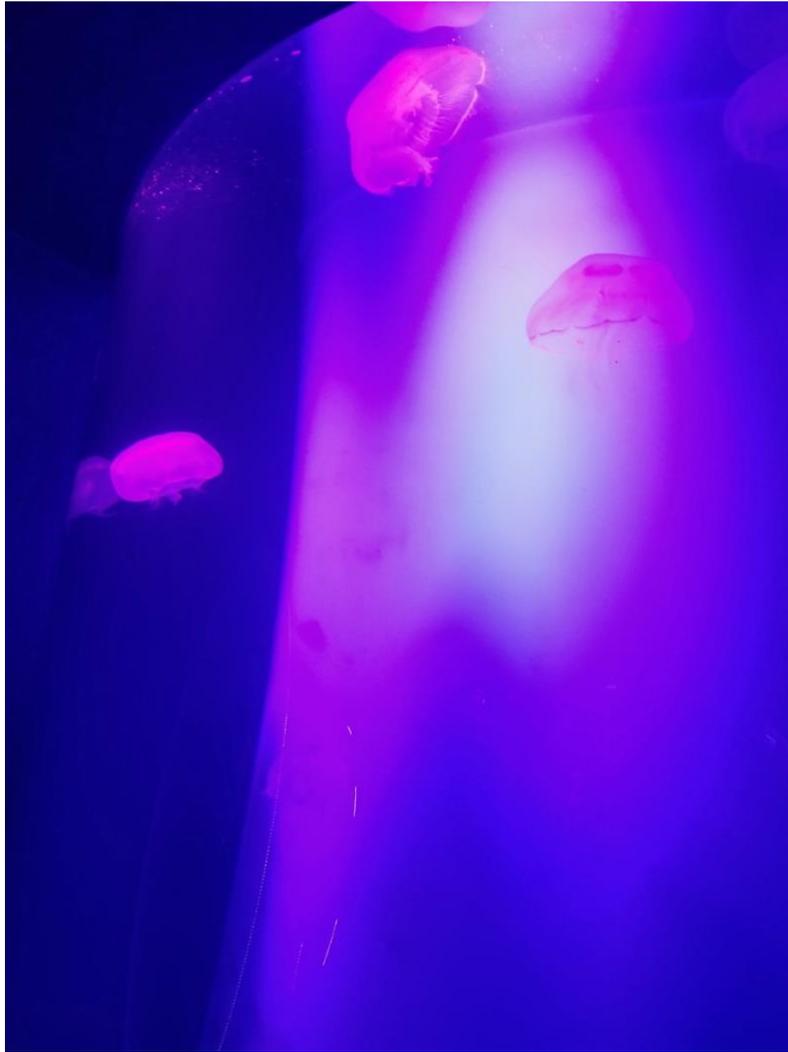
“Branching Out” Hannah Grewal

As a busy university student, I realized that it is difficult for me to find the time to go outside and enjoy nature. I started to take time out of my day to go outside and go on long walks with my dog as she really enjoys the outdoors. We usually go on the same route in my neighbourhood and I put my headphones in which helps me feel so relaxed. Later on, I noticed that going on walks outside actually improved my mental health and it is actually a destresser for me. I feel more energetic, calm and I notice my grades have been improving so much once I started going outside more. Overall, I can positively say that going outside and just being alone has made my life a lot better. Therefore, I can say I thrive when I am outside and in the fresh air.



“Unbridled Joy” Aashna Halani

I thrive when I am in an environment that makes me feel safe and loved, where I am surrounded by my “people”. I consider my group of best friends my “people” because they are individuals who are not just my family by chance, but by choice. It is a family that actively chooses each other every day. This priceless relationship is a process that does not just stop there – they make the conscious decision to spend their time and love on me across great emotional and physical distances time and time again. I thrive when I am with this chosen family of mine because when the three of us are together, I can be my true authentic self, and release my inner child without the fear of judgment, only pure and unbridled joy. In this way they ground me, ultimately allowing me to thrive. I chose this photo because it sparks joy and serves as a reminder of my support system when we are not physically together.



“Relaxed State”

Donya Hemmati

I thrive when I do not overthink. This is a photo of jellyfish that I took when I went to Ripley’s Aquarium in Toronto. This photo signifies a memory to me of a moment when I was not overthinking; I was simply in a relaxed state when I was viewing all the jellyfish swimming in the water. Jellyfish have always fascinated me because they do not have a brain to control their thoughts. Instead, they overcome challenges that they face by using their pure instincts. Seeing all the jellyfish in the aquarium helped me realize that I do not need to make my life more difficult by overthinking when it comes to my academics and life in general. Jellyfish, like nature, make me feel calm, less tense, and in a state of peace. When I let go of the things that cause me stress and avoid worrying about future outcomes, I thrive and learn to live in the present moment.



“Pause”

Gabriela Kandyba

I thrive when I take a step back in the midst of chaos to appreciate the little things, which helps me to feel more grounded. I would always find myself in a “go-go-go” mindset, which prevented me from pausing and taking in my surroundings. I came across these flowers and instead of quickly taking a photo, I deliberately stopped to admire them. I noticed a bee collecting pollen, which I would have otherwise missed. Then, I began habitually taking moments to slow down. I discovered that by stopping to take in the beauty around me, I was bringing myself back to the present moment, and while in this clearer headspace, I wasn’t worrying about what was next on the to-do list. It’s easy to get caught up in life’s hectic schedules, but taking a moment to slow down and focus on the easily overlooked little things in life has been gratifying!



“I Thrive When the Sun Rises”

Haadia Khan

The sun rises from behind the Earth in the east; it is beautiful, calm, and taking morning walks and seeing the sun sparkle creates the right tone for the day. Seeing the beauty right in front of us, given to us by nature, is an easy way to thrive. The sun rising makes me thrive because of the energy I receive from moving my body and taking care of my mental and physical health. Seeing the sunrise is a good way to remember how beautiful the world around me is and how easy it is to get caught up in it. I thrive early in the morning to ensure I step in the right direction and have a positive and energized day.



“High Tides and Good Vibes”

Ivy Kim

Last year around this time, I was going through some personal problems, and I felt I needed a way to escape reality. I booked a trip to Greece and travelled with my girlfriends for a few months. This is a picture of the sea/pool we visited in Mykonos. I chose this picture because I felt such deep contentedness being near the water. It brought us feelings of security and relaxation, which were something I needed at the time. I immediately felt my stress levels drop, and I fell in love with nature. I felt the experience was pleasant and relaxing. Something about the wave/ocean’s rhythm was pleasurable as it brought out the feelings of calmness and safety. I learned I thrive when I’m at a place of peace — taking more trips spending time with my girlfriends to share the experience with.



“Unity”

Zara Knipfel

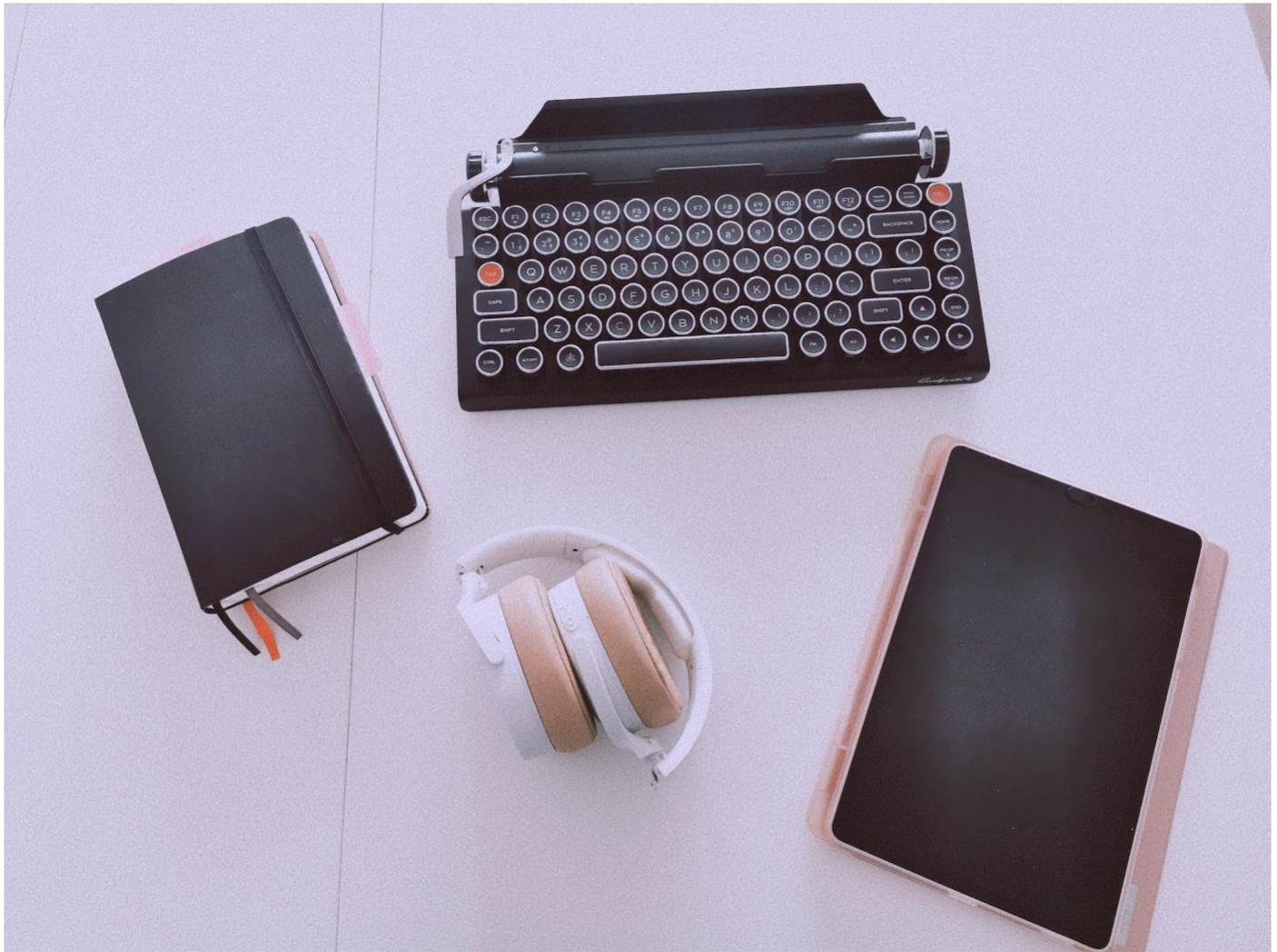
The loud roar of the audience before the complete and utter silence, just the faint unified sound of dancers breathing in and breathing out. The calm before the storm. The adrenaline rushing through my body, making my heart pound so loud I can hear each heartbeat in my ears. The bright lights warming my skin and causing me to squint as my eyes adjust to the harsh gleaming light. Being completely consumed by worry and excitement as I wait to hear the first notes of a song I have listened to countless times. However, my stomach settles as I look around and see I am not alone, but rather a part of a unified group.



“Music is Self-Care”

Roseleen Ladi

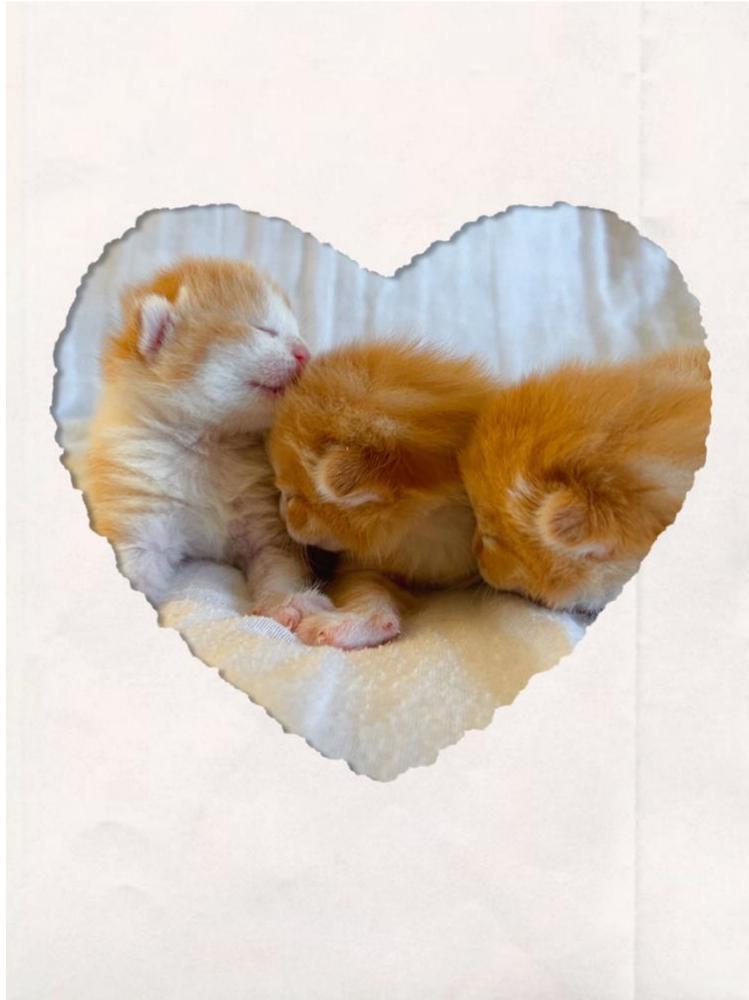
Immersing myself in uplifting and empowering tunes from the moment I wake up to when I prepare for bed is what allows me to thrive and unleash my best potential. This image which features collages of famous records that were playing and singer Biggie Smalls represents how music allows me to feel energized as the fast and upbeat tempos transport me into a stress-free and relaxed space. Music allows me to thrive and feel peace as I shut out all distractions, worries, and stresses and allow myself to just interact with the rhythms and beats. Listening to music is a form of self-care for me that has the capacity to elevate my mood, cope with my anxiety and improve my focus. Music is a daily component of my self-care routine and it is something that I look forward to listening to each and every day.



“Reach for the Stars”

Samantha Lau

I thrive when I am being creative within my own element. This is intrinsically meaningful because I have grown up writing my entire life, as it is my passion. During this pandemic, writing had been difficult to see as a joyful task as opposed to how it used to be. As a result, I attempted to romanticize the act of writing. This way, I was able to set up my headspace in order to focus back on my long-lived passion. Perfection is not something to strive for, as picture-perfect as something may seem, but to make the best of the present moment. I thrive when I can immerse myself into worlds within the depths of my imagination.



“New Life”

Meilin Ma

The world has changed a lot in the last couple of years because of COVID-19, and so has every one's understanding of life. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all of us including our pets, and has taken so many lives. Despite this, the pandemic has also made people appreciate life more than before, just like this batch of little kittens means so much to me. These newborn kittens are tiny and weak. They need a stable and healthy environment to grow up in. To me, my kittens represent hope in life despite difficult times. I hope the pandemic will be gone soon and everyone's life can get back on track, and we can all remember to see the good.



“Aiming High, Claiming Life”

Bintou Maiga

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“I Thrive When I Am in the City”

Dominique Miller

This photo resonated with me emotionally because it was my first day of in-person classes at university; catching that glimpse of the square, a very central yet mesmerizing view, took my breath away and made me think how happy I was at that very moment. After a beneficial three years of focusing on my mental health, I took some time off and transferred to Ryerson University in hopes of bettering myself. Fortunately, my experience here has been nothing less than sensational, reflecting on the statement, “I thrive best when I’m in the city.” The city is so immense, yet every individual you pass has a story to share, which has helped me get out of my comfort zone and explore something new. Additionally, a busy, complex environment has helped shape me into a stronger individual, and I am proud of myself every day for overcoming the challenges I have faced.



“Double Vision”

Reya Ramdat

I thrive when unrestricted and organized. While this state may seem at odds, they actually work seamlessly to provide prospective and realistic views of life. On one side, I dare to dream, fill in my own opinions, and enjoy the present. The other side signifies how I plan goals, anticipate obstacles and utilize my support. Pictured in both is the figure of my brother, who is a constant support in my life, by simply being there. The ability to maintain both sides allow me to thrive. I believe pointillism is a prime representation of organized chaos as it highlights all of the details that work harmoniously when combined. The original picture blurs it all together to emphasize mortality, but that's not a bad thing; contrarily, it minimizes the anxiety that arises in specifics.



“I’d Rather Be too Much than Not Enough”

Allegra Romaniello

In the early stages of this project, having to think about what made me “thrive” was difficult as the word thriving has been thrown around so often with the rise of self-care movements. With further reflection I realized that thriving for me is when I feel whole; nothing about me has to be hidden.

I grew up understanding that I was a powerful personality—lots for people to take on. Making friends was difficult and being told by your peers that you were “too much” takes a toll on a young mind. Somewhere along the way, I learned that making myself small and hiding those “difficult” parts of myself made people like me more and that's all I wanted. For years I feared those parts of myself; was I being too loud? Too opinionated? Too fiery? I lost myself and I wasn't happy. In this photo, things had started to change. I was in my last year of high school and I started to bring those large parts of my personality back because I had learned that people needed to like all of me, not just what I pretended to be.

In the photo, I was surrounded by my friends and we were taking photos together for a small business. Something in me decided to jump up on this pillar and start singing songs from a musical we had watched in drama class. I didn't care if I was too loud or annoying, I just wanted to have fun. They saw me and laughed, and some followed along and sang too; it was from this experience I realized I didn't need to hide anymore.

When I was sent this photo from that moment I cried. I was this powerful and happy girl that I had lost so long ago. I wasn't trying to look pretty or make others happy at that moment, I was just being me, I was THRIVING! Every powerful, fiery, opinionated, and loud part of me was there and I realized that I loved her and never wanted to lose her again.



“Desire for Simplicity”

Arabi Sarveswaran

Thriving in peace and quiet is the life that is the easiest for me. It’s the life that I wish to live in. Everything is simple, everything is peaceful. Named “A Famille rose ‘doctor’s patient””, this delicate sculpture captivated my eyes as they just looked upon the sky without a care in the world. A life in which you and your thoughts are present without the unnecessary commotion around you. I’ve always wanted to live in a place where I’m in the middle of nowhere: dead center with trees surrounding me or in an open land without telling a single soul where I’m living. It sounds unsafe but it’s a desire that was created in me. I want to be alone, or I want to be alone with people who will give me a simple life. It’ll be a life where I’m free. Free.



“Sunny Day Café”

Emma Sinclair

When brainstorming a photo to use for this project, I tried to think of when I feel the happiest and most productive. The first idea that came to mind was a photo of a cup of coffee. However, a cup of coffee alone does not represent me at my happiest. Diving deeper into this thought, the idea of sitting in a café on a sunny day more accurately describes when I thrive. If I am ever feeling down or lacking the motivation to complete schoolwork, the idea of finding a unique café to sit in for the day instantly boosts my mood, which usually pairs with feeling more productive. Therefore, I can confidently say “I thrive when I am enjoying a coffee in a café, preferably on a sunny day”.



“Too Many Paths”

Laenan Sivathas

I thrive when I know there are several pathways to my goal. In this image, a young man is seeking a way to get to campus. As it is his first year, he is experiencing difficulties determining the “right path”. He asked many people and each of them had a different answer. He also made his suggestions on what path he wants to take, but everyone around him said "that's not the right way to go", "that's too long", "trust me, my path is the only path." With all of these replies, he is at a loss on where to proceed. So, he glances at the campus map, trying to figure out which way is best for him. As he looks at the numerous paths, he comprehends that all paths go to the same destination and he has many alternatives, sooner or later he will eventually find his “right path”.



“Reflection”

Philipp Smirnov

I am holding a past photo of a family trip to a Toronto Park using the subway, which was taken several months before the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020. My little brother and I are in the photo. I am sitting upright and looking towards the camera, while my little brother is both leaning on and looking towards me. I am holding the aforementioned photo against a white wall at home. The picture of me holding the print photo at home was taken in March 2022, as a way to commemorate two years since the COVID-19 outbreak in Toronto. My little brother personifies a reflection of my younger, playful self, while holding this photo helps me reflect on times before COVID - hence why I have titled it “Reflection”.



“What if Everything Works Out?”

Sarah Stewart

The endless journey of self-discovery is a challenge, yet worth the while. Over the past year, I have discovered that I thrive best when the mind and body are at ease—no stress or negative thoughts, just me, myself, and I. The imitation of a negative circumstance appears to last forever, yet new opportunities emerge at just the right moment. I breathe out the worry until it eventually fades away. You simply must remind yourself that you are doing the best in your current situation as you survive to see another day. Each day becomes a week, a week becomes a month, and in a few months, it will be a year. See. Wasn't that hard, was it? You must be kind to yourself through the good, and especially the bad. Remember, what you say to yourself matters. Consider, what if it all works out in the end?



“Body, Mind and Soul”

Shaimaa Swaleh

As a busy university student, I often find myself forgetting to take care of my health. I used to have terrible eating habits, and as a result, I would always feel lethargic and wouldn't get any work done. One day, I decided “enough is enough” and started eating more consistently and most importantly, eating foods that fuel my body. Now, after about two months of healthy eating, I feel more energetic and I feel my mental health improving. I am noticing a difference academically since I have the energy to complete my schoolwork. Overall, my life is much better and thus I can say with confidence that I thrive when I nourish my body.



“Happiness” Kiyaan Visram

This is an image of me playing my favourite sport which is soccer. I have played for many years and have a lot of experience. In this image, I am kicking a soccer ball and if you look closely, you can see it in motion. I took it downstairs to my basement. I decided to take this particular picture because soccer brings me an overwhelming amount of joy. Whenever I can, I play it and it is my #1 stress reliever. Due to this, it not only makes me happy, but also helps me thrive since a key ingredient in thriving is having something to turn to that will relieve some of your stress. This is what I turn to.



“Reflection”

Ekaterini Vlashi

I thrive when I see opportunities, and I do not feel hopeless. Even when in moments of darkness, I want to be able to see the light. This photo is a perfect example of how I feel living in the city. The routine and noise, chaos and responsibilities, and anxiety and work, make me very tired, and I do not feel like I thrive most of the time. But, I am learning to remember how far I have come and that I am slowly accomplishing all the things I always wanted; I remember to look at the bright side and focus on what is positive in my life.