

Roy's Story

Adding new people to his circle of friends is important to Roy Lim and he thinks carefully before jumping in. He likes to get to know people in familiar settings without having the pressure of developing a friendship – it will either come naturally or it won't and he doesn't want to push it. So when he and *Art of Asking* Facilitator, Jen Kleven, first started exploring possible connections, he made it clear that he wanted to start with people he already knew rather than show up at new places with the hopes of meeting people.

Dylan, was a perfect first choice for Roy. They met when Dylan worked with Family Support. Roy had enjoyed his company at the Family Support gatherings and other activities that he attended and missed him when he left. He'd also met Dylan at Wheelchair Basketball. When Jen suggested hooking up with Dylan, Roy jumped at the opportunity. He and Dylan had a comfortable connection that included low key activities such as hanging out together, going out for walks, listening to music, going for ice cream as well as connecting through their shared interest in wheelchair basketball. They spent time together at least once a week. Roy noted that, of all his connections, he enjoyed spending time with Dylan the most and is disappointed that Dylan is moving back to Ontario. As a parting gift, Dylan created a little cd of pictures of them together for Roy. Roy, in turn, made a cd of music they enjoyed for Dylan to take away with him. They plan to stay connected through e-mail or Skype.

Julie is another favourite of Roy's. She is a youth in the Family Support program like Roy so he already knew her. He liked the idea of spending more time with her so Jen explored ways to get them together. They share a common interest in art which meant choosing activities was easy. They have ventured out to do some art projects at the youth resource centre with their workers and have also engaged in their own art work together. Roy is currently working on colouring a t-shirt with butterflies for Julie reminiscent of their recent trip to Butterfly World this summer. Jen noted that Julie enjoys Roy's sense of humour and they have quite a few laughs together. They also both use wheelchairs and are able to enjoy shared sports activities such as badminton, a sport they have taken up together.

Joel, a friend of Jen's who Roy had met on several occasions is also developing a relationship with Roy. They've gone bowling, out to Tim Horton's and out for walks together. While still in the early stages, and dependent on Jen to set up, this relationship is a good one for Roy who likes to spend time with male friends. Joel finds the relationship rewarding too, commenting, *"I especially like going for coffee with Roy and laughing at the funny stories he makes up. He has a creative mind and can tell stories that go on forever"*. Roy has not been ready to connect with Joel on his own but this may come. Now that Dylan is leaving, perhaps Joel may start to assume a stronger role in Roy's life. Time will tell.

Aaron has also been a part of Roy's circle although he has been away most of the summer. Roy found this difficult. Roy likes regular connections with people so described his relationship with Aaron as somewhat disappointing. Now that school is starting he may find more opportunity to renew this relationship.

Shana is a family friend who Roy enjoys spending time with on his own. Previously, he would connect with her only occasionally when his family met up with her. But now, with Jen's support, this connection is happening more regularly so that Roy can look forward to regular contact with her each week. This is a great connection that the family can also move forward.

While Roy is wary about venturing to new places to connect with people he hasn't met before, Jen continues to explore possibilities that reflect Roy's interests. She looked into options at Skylight Art studios which Roy has flatly refused to explore with her. She is now checking out the Diversity Initiative where she is hoping Roy may join several other young people who are Korean like Roy to share a bit about their culture. Roy is reluctant but may possibly follow through with this one especially if some of his current network were to join him so he is not doing it on his own. Engaging as part of a group where the pressure is not on him will probably continue to be the best way to move forward. Roy is an outgoing and very social person with those he knows and trusts. Building that trust is the first step and is definitely the focus for Jen. She knows she needs to take his lead while gently helping him to step out there and explore new possibilities for himself. There is definitely an 'art' to this process that both Roy and Jen are learning as they go and it is paying off...one friend at a time!