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Equilibrium School

Equilibrium message from Anna & Kasia

Dearest Students,

Equilibrium School was founded in 1993 and since its inception we have never delivered all of our classes online. Though we have some past experience with online classes, we've never had to offer all of our programs online, so you are part of history in the making. This is a new experience for everyone involved and we hope you enjoy meeting your teachers and classmates in your virtual Zoom classes and via Skype.

Our teachers had the opportunity to learn the new online Zoom platform during spring break.

One of Tina's close friends, Dale, who lives in the United States happens to be an expert in zoom teaching and he volunteered to train our teachers on his own time, in the true spirit of *Paying it Forward*.

We are extremely proud to have you as our students. Every one of you has stepped up to the challenge and worked very hard on adjusting to the new reality of our online learning. We couldn't ask for better students. You've proven to be resilient, innovative and very understanding. Thank you for being you!!!

Although we are happy to see you everyday in our online classes, we miss very much seeing you in person. It is very quiet here at the school without all of you. All the corridors, classrooms and our lunchroom are very empty and sad. We miss your morning "hellos", your chatter and your laughter. Please remember that we are here to help and assist you. You are welcome to call us with any questions, you can also send us an email and book a meeting with Richard if you need help from the school counselor.

We are happy to report that a Little Mole and his friend Moominmamma are keeping us company. They are a handful as often they steal our food and force us to exercise in the mornings, which we are not big fans off. Please remember to check out our Facebook and our Instagram account ([equilibriummyc](#)) to follow their mischief.

We hope you continue to stay safe and healthy. We wish you and your families all the best in the coming weeks. **Please remember that WE CAN DO IT!!!**

Music in a time of social distancing



There are so many things that have been cancelled since we have entered this lockdown. However, the one that has hurt me the most is the cancelling of live music events. I had bought tickets to two important concerts for me, Rage Against the Machine (and Run the Jewels), which I was going to go to with one of my oldest friends. Richard and I also had tickets to Buddy Guy, an 83-year-old blues player whom I've never got to see before. Despite this, I have been able to experience some amazing live music on my computer, almost every day.

My favourite country singer, Jason Isbell, has a wonderful wife, Amanda Shires, who had a 30-day marathon of some wonderful live music on her YouTube channel. They covered music that ranged from old-time country music to gospel to Radiohead to their own beautiful tunes. They would ask for money every day, not for themselves, but for their usual touring musicians. Another, unexpectedly enjoyable, online concert came from hip hop star, Post Malone, paying tribute to the great 90s rock band, Nirvana. He's already raised over four million dollars for COVID-19 charities.

One of my old friends from Saskatoon, Suzie Vinnick, has decided to have a concert out of her home on every Wednesday night so that she can still perform for people because touring was so important to her.

One thing we can all do for our favourite musicians at this time is to actually buy their music, whether it is a download of an album, ordering it directly from them, or watching one of their online concerts and putting something into their online "tip jars".

Another, new, way to help in this time is by buying the very new version of Bill Withers' *Lean on Me* that was just released by a supergroup of Canadian artists of all genres. If you go to YouTube, you can listen to the song. If you follow the links, you can see how you can contribute a little something. If you can't contribute, just listen to the song as many times as you can so that YouTube will pay something to the fund for medical assistance in this difficult time.

Music has a way to unify people, and it keeps doing so in these hard times. It's great to see so many wonderful artists *Paying it Forward* and giving us a chance to do the same.

-by Darren

Online Classes

Class Thoughts about Online School

Husam- I start at 9:00 a.m. full time online English class. I like to study online because I can learn more about how to use a computer. Before I was scared to study online but now, I know more.



Cam

I study English online but I don't like it because it makes my eyes hurt. I didn't even know English, but now I am a little bit better. Thank you for the teacher.

Waldek

We study online. Also, we see each other on the computer. Online school is what we are doing right now. It is a new experience for me and interesting.

Grace

I have a chance to talk with my online school group. I can see many friends in there. The class is very interesting. It is a new experience. There are many funny accents. There are funny students in my class.

Gilbert

I like to see my teacher online everyday. My teacher sends me an invitation to the group everyday. I like to study online.

Kevin

Now I am studying online. I prefer having classes at the school. Online classes are more difficult. The only good thing about online classes is that you are at home.



Our teachers Zooming.

John - I am learning English. Today we are studying online. It is the best way to take care of ourselves. All people are changing their way of life.

Esperanza - I like to study English because it is very important for me when looking for a good job. The problem is that I don't understand. Listening online is very difficult. More difficult than in the class. I like to study because it is very important to help the people.

Mohini- I don't like to study online. I am learning English. It is very hard for me online. There are 16 students online studying. I have never studied on a laptop before. It is very hard on my eyes. But thank you everyone, my case manager and my teacher.

Manjit – Now I am studying online, but I like studying in school more. I'm also thankful to my teacher and WCB that I can still do something from home. I am busy Monday to Thursday, from 12:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Roberto – I am at the school English as a Second Language online because of the virus COVID-19. The online class is hard because my eyes are looking at the screen on a small iPad. It is hard to read. The most important is to learn English and safety. It is a new experience. Online school is good for me because I am in Mexico. That way, I don't lose my class.

Williams - I start at 9:00, my online English class. My school sent me one computer for my class online. I am happy for my new computer and my online class. My English class is online 4 days a week, Monday to Thursday. This is my first time in an online class.

Xinh – I go to school. It is very hard. I don't understand. Sometimes I understand, sometimes I don't.



Memories from my childhood in Turkey

by Senol Akyaz

My name is Senol Akyaz, and I was born in 1969 in Yellow River, Turkey. I have both good and bad memories of my childhood. However, I want to write about my good memories.



My name is Senol Akyaz, and I was born in 1969 in Yellow River, Turkey. I have both good and bad memories of my childhood. However, I want to write about my good memories. One of my good memories is about my friends. One of my best friends from my boyhood grew up with me in my Turkish village. His family was very nice to me because my Mother died when I was very young and my Father had to be away a lot to work.

My best friend, whose name is Heyrettin Coh, and I did many things together, such as fishing in the river, helping our neighbours and exploring the country-side. We often worked to make some money. For example, we caught fish in the river to sell to the villagers. Also, we dug up sand from the river and helped load trucks for local house-builders. Besides making some money, my best friend and I also had many other adventures together. We always tried to help and support our families because they were poor.

My best friend back then is still my best friend today. He is the mayor of a town just across the river from where we grew up. Even though I'm living in Canada and he is still in Turkey, Mayor Hayrettin Coh and I talk often on WhatsApp, so we stay in touch with each other. Our life-long friendship keeps getting stronger all the time.



-Washington Irving-

"Sweet is the memory of distant friends! Like the mellow rays of the departing sun, it falls tenderly, yet sadly, on the heart"

How pets help during this time of isolation

by Albert Desjarlais

Pets are a great help during this time of isolation. I have two cats and one gecko(lizard). My pets make me laugh all the time which helps me feel better. Some of the ways they communicate are just like humans. My cats both say "Al" very well. They say they're hungry or they want to go somewhere. This makes me laugh a lot. All the pets like playing Fetch. They like bringing many different objects to me. All this activity keeps me from being bored. When it's warm, I take the pets for a walk on their leashes. I don't feel lonely because I have my pets and they sleep with me in my bed.

ask your teacher

Q: What is the hardest thing about being a teacher?

A: Is there anything you wish you taught but you can't?

B: So you have a favorite "success story"?



My children appreciate that we can celebrate all meals together every day. We can spend more time together and have long conversations while having fun. This real situation shows what is valuable in life. It is especially important for kids because now they can understand it in a simple and realistic way. Now kids can easily understand what freedom means. This situation shows that we can enjoy every simple thing in life.

Reinette's class pondered about the pandemic

Korea had the second largest number of infected people next to China. Now Korea has flattened the curve because the government have been trying their best to test suspicious people and the people who want to get the test. I think if all the countries follow Korea's example, we can overcome the plight.



The Covid-19 shutdowns have unintended climate benefits such as cleaner air and clearer water.

I think this is a very good time to spend and give quality time to our family.

I am comfortable keeping two meters social distance. I am happy to see everyone respect social distance.

Children almost don't get sick on COVID-19. Many people who get sick have light symptoms.

Coronavirus is warning humans that we are in danger all the time. We can't do anything we want. We need to respect nature.

“While we are panicking about Covid-19, mother nature is healing”.

During these difficult times we realize how valuable and necessary friends and family are.

Travel plans for the weekend by Reinette's students

I hope the weather is good for my trip to one of the following destinations:

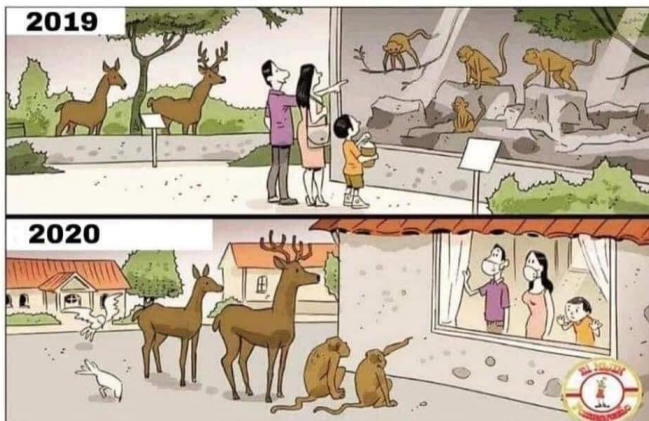
- Los Patio
- Banff Yard
- Lake Deck
- Cineplex Basement
- Garage Warehouse
- The Saddlehome
- Cross Iron Mills Livingroom
- Tim's Kitchen
- Puerto Backyardia



COVID -19 Humour to get us through

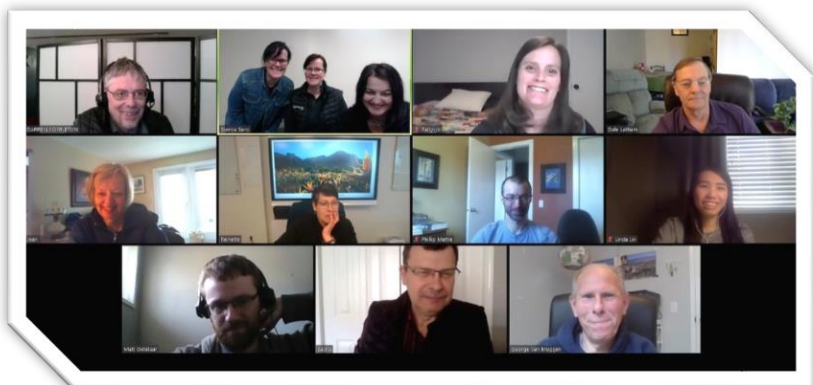


The way Karma works



5 minutes later:



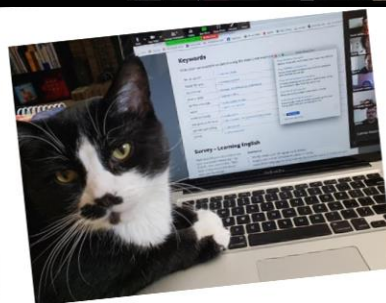


Our new friend "Krecik - the Little Mole"

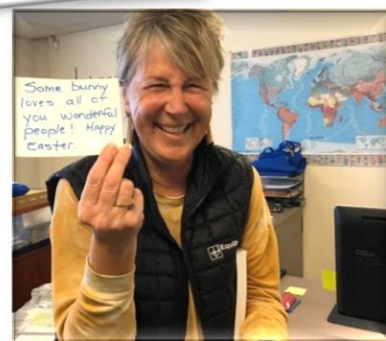


Thank you Dr.Dale for all your help with ZOOM.

Life in the time of Corona in our school



Tina's class helper.



Gina Landry - ESL Student

My name is Gina Landry, and I am 52 years old. I was born and raised in the French Acadian town of Maltempec, New Brunswick. My native language is French. I moved to Alberta in 2010 and first lived in Edmonton. Now, I am living in Grande Prairie, Alberta, with my twin nineteen year-old daughters and like it very much there. I am now in an ESL program at Equilibrium School and Skype with my instructor, whose name is George. My goals are to



improve my reading and writing skills so I can go to college to become an educational assistant.

I like to listen to music. My favourite kinds of music are country and rock from the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's. I also like to read books, stories and magazines in French. I like to watch sports, and my favourite sport to watch is hockey; I love to watch the Montreal Canadiens. I played volleyball when I was younger.

By: Gina Landry, ESL student

Job Considerations

by
Belal Herzawy

There are several things to consider when looking for a job. What I think is important are things like benefits, compensation, and safety.

Having benefits is important for a few reasons. Just like having vehicle insurance, benefits provide peace of mind knowing that my health is taken care of without too much expense. For example, if I had benefits right now, I wouldn't need to pay the full price of my monthly medication. Also, in

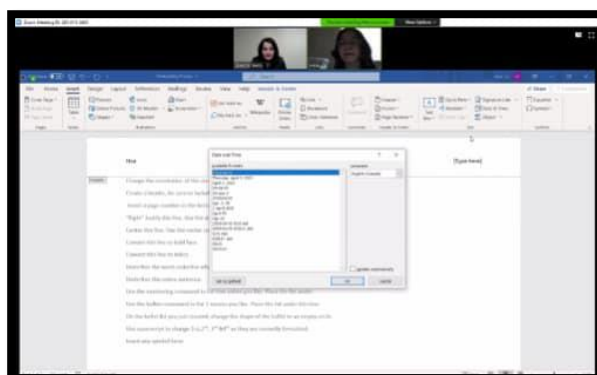
emergency medical situations, having benefits can reduce the financial stress.

Compensation is another important consideration when searching for a job. The pay needs to be enough to cover my lifestyle and necessities. However, if a job offers a lower salary with a better benefit package, I would consider it. As well, Proper compensation is motivation to stay at a job.

Finally, the most important consideration is safety. An injury can be physically debilitating, not to mention the damage it causes

mentally. Being personally injured on the job, has Impacted my life in and out of the workplace. In my case, my injury is permanent; therefore, any future job MUST enforce strict safety procedures.

In conclusion, looking for a job requires a great deal of planning. For me benefits, compensation, and safety are the most important considerations. Having the safety net of a well- optioned benefits package, proper compensation, and strict safety guidelines can make or break a job decision.

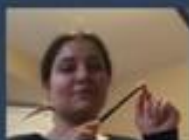


Hoa working hard !

How has the pandemic positively changed or affected your life?



UNDERSTAND
FAMILY STAY LOT MONEY GASOLINE HOME SUPPORT
REST POSITIVITY 19 SPEND LESS POLLUTION NEW OPPORTUNITY
ABILITY SLEEP CAN DON'T TAKE FRESH AIR LEARN ONLINE
CHILDREN DRIVING TAKE TIME PEACE & QUIET



EARTH DAY TIPS — from Tina's PM class

Sewak Sandal

- Don't use plastic shopping bags
- Reduce packaging materials
- Take the responsibility to grow one tree
- Reduce your needs
- Don't throw garbage on the streets
- Always keep the environment clean

Quan

- Cut down air pollution
- Reduce global warming
- Reduce car driving
- Increase car-pooling
- Use public transportation

Gazzy

- Recycle your empties
- Reduce your dependency on your car
- Think of alternative ways to repurpose things
- Reduce using plastic and dispose of it properly

Pushpinder

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Volunteer for an environmental program
- Turn off lights when you leave the room
- Turn off electronics when you aren't using them
- Use your kitchen compost as fertilizer
- Fix your leaking taps
- Try to use cloth towels instead of paper towels
- Take shorter showers
- Grow plants
- Don't use plastic bags and straws



- Don't throw garbage in the river
- Donate your old clothes and other things – don't throw them away

Rommel

- Send your kids to school by walking, not driving
- Get exercise by walking, not driving

Jagjeet

- Recycle your waste
- Clean up garbage around your house

Sukhbir

- Plant trees in your yard
- Encourage everyone to help the environment
- Turn off taps when brushing your teeth
- Reduce the water you use for your garden and grass
- Recycle bottles, cans, plastic and paper

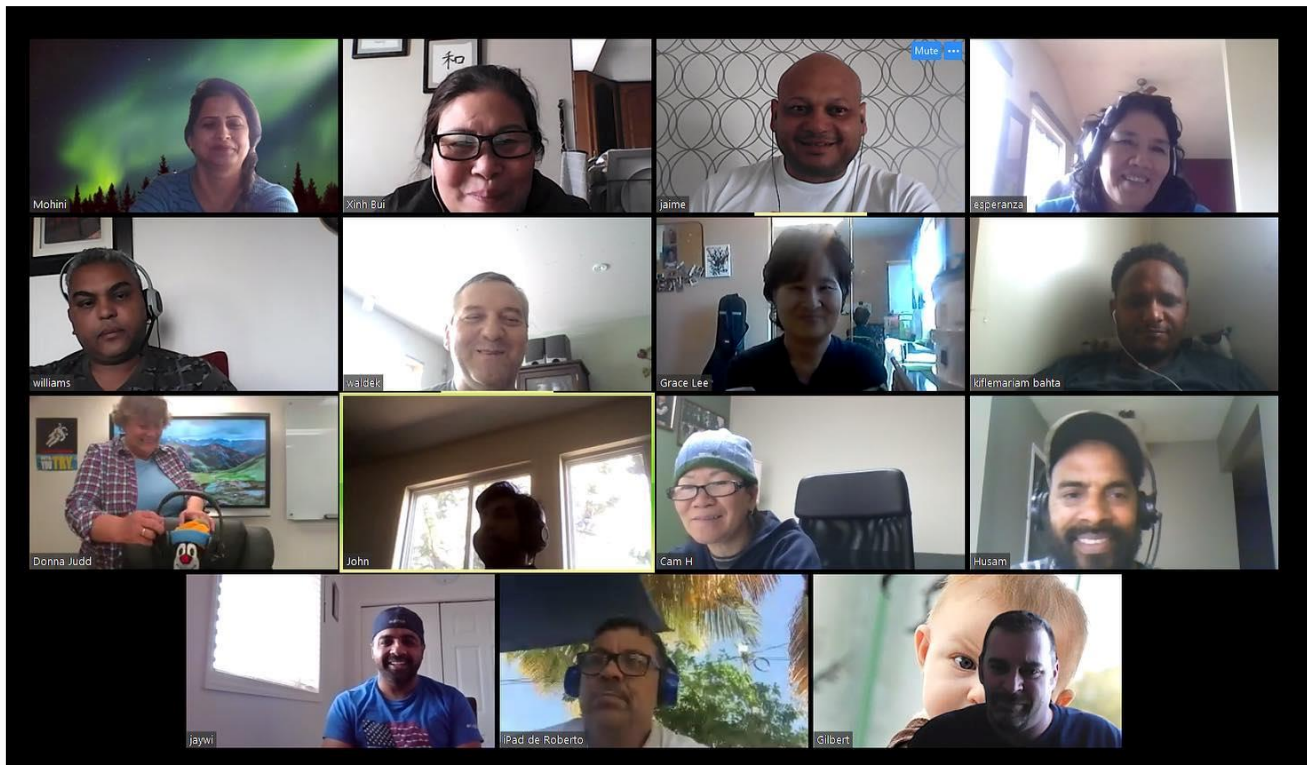
Antonio

- Use less energy
- Try not to use plastic
- Don't buy extra food
- Respect the environment as your home

Worke

- Countries think of what they can do nationwide
- Do not increase the earth's temperature
- Tell people about Earth Day

Donna has a new teacher assistant 😊👍 Our Little Mole is very busy everyday.



Lilia's class during the test



Lilia's class after the test



Guess who is it on this picture?



Little Mole and his friend Moominmamma

An Unforgettable Week

by Williams Margarejo with help from George

I remember August 16, 2007 very clearly. This was the day I tried to escape from my home country, Cuba. Due to bad social and economic conditions imposed by the dictator, Fidel Castro, many Cubans were trying to leave Cuba in those years to reach the state of Florida in the United States. I and 17 other people who were going to escape agreed to help build a boat. We built it in the forest near a small river and bay and had to endure little or no food and primitive sleeping and working conditions. We hoped to escape on August 13, Castro's birthday, when national celebrations would have distracted the Cuban coast guard, but building the boat took several days longer than we anticipated.

Finally, on August 16, we were ready to escape. After midnight, we walked to the river which fed into a bay near the coastline by Mariel Port, about 40 kilometers east of the capital city, Havana. A tractor took the boat to the water. As we were carrying the boat to be unloaded into the river, I injured my side and back. We finally got everything ready at 4:00am. We 18 people all paid \$1,000USD each to be smuggled out of the country to the United States.

The boat we used was not large, and with 19 people, including the operator, it sat very low in the water. As we left the bay, the operator did not use the boat's motor, as we had to sneak past a military base; we rowed the boat using oars instead. However, we were spotted by the Cuban military police, which sent a big boat to ram and swamp our little boat. Our boat filled with water and we were all very afraid that it would sink. The operator, known to us as Papa, managed to turn on the engine and we escaped. However, my friend, Tony, was thrown

into the water and was picked up by the Cuban authorities. I later learned that Tony was sent to jail for several days.

Once we were out in the ocean, the operator set our course towards Key West, Florida, I was worried about sharks attacking us, since our boat was so low in the water. Many of us were seasick due to the waves and tossing of our little boat. It took us almost 12 hours to make the crossing into Florida's territorial waters.

We were within 20 kilometers of Key West, Florida when we were spotted by a U.S.A. coast guard helicopter, which sounded the alarm to a coast guard vessel. About 5 minutes later, the big boat came and rammed our little boat. All of us in the small boat were ordered to board the big coast



guard vessel. Then the coast guard boat used its guns to shoot holes in our little boat and it sunk quickly into the ocean.

We were on the American boat for 7 days, and were only each given a bit of rice, beans and water two times a day. I lost a lot of weight! During that week, other Cubans in small boats trying to escape Cuba were spotted and picked up by the American authorities. By that time there were more than 100 refugees on the boat, and we were sent to the Cuba Port

Emigration authorities and forced to return to Cuba.

All of us who hoped to escape Cuba were very unhappy when we had to go back. We also lost all the money we paid trying to escape. However, the following year I used another way to leave Cuba: it took a lot more time and money, but at least I was successful. However, that is another story!



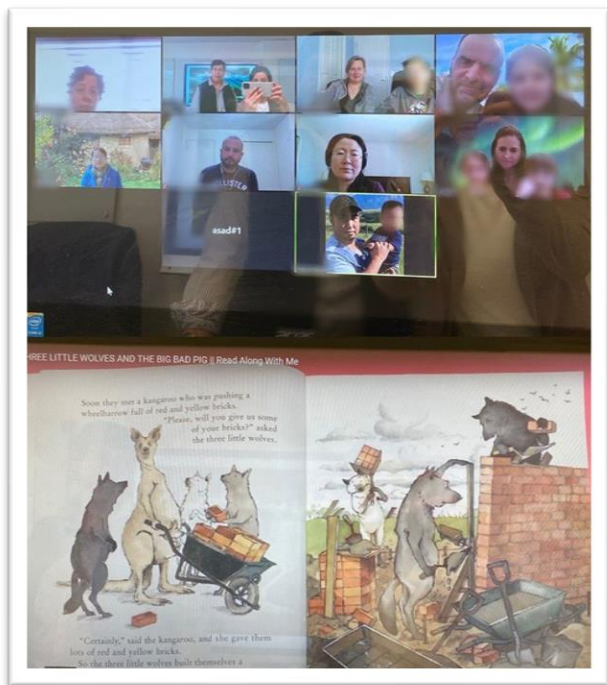
Pay it forward

like Dina would

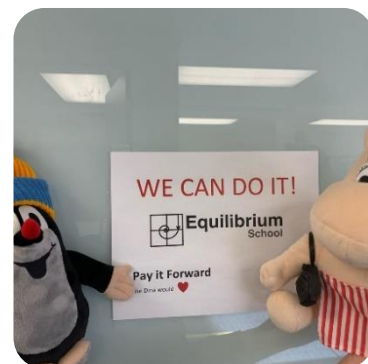


Our students idea how to pay it forward. (Reinette's class)

- ◇ If you don't normally prepare meals for the family, then now is the time to prepare a delicious Mexican dinner for the whole family.
- ◇ I helped somebody who was not comfortable using an application on her phone. It was challenging because it was a telephone conversation.
- ◇ Call someone who is lonely.
- ◇ Do grocery shopping for someone who is not able to it.
- ◇ Deliver medicine to a retirement facility.
- ◇ Help someone finding his or her lost pet.
- ◇ I helped my older neighbours getting their groceries for them. They gave me a list and refunded me via an e-transfer.
- ◇ My neighbour used his snow blower to remove the snow on my sidewalk. I was very thankful because of my injury I am not able to do it myself.
- ◇ I would like to give people who don't have a vehicle a free ride to the airport. If possible, I want to volunteer at a safe place to feed the homeless.



Thank you Susan for helping out with the textbook distribution ! We really appreciate your help. These textbooks are necessary for our students to be able to continue their on-line training! Another example of Pay it Forward like Dina Would ❤️



SWAG for our students.

Contact us at **403-283-1111**

www.equilibrium.ab.ca