



Abdullah Salehuddin: Education and Achievement are Limitless

L.A. Valley College resources support young man's educational goals

By Caroline Sun

Growing up, Abdullah Salehuddin often wondered if his first meal of the day would also be his last. At age 3, his family arrived in the United States from Bangladesh in pursuit of a new life, only to be met with a harsh reality.

"When my family and I moved to the United States from Bangladesh, we thought we had escaped the devastating circumstances of living in a developing country," Salehuddin said. "Unfortunately, poverty snuck into the plane without a ticket and managed to follow us to our new home."

Despite these dire circumstances, Salehuddin, now 27 years of age, is the first in his family to receive a college degree.

Salehuddin, a resident of Encino, recently earned his associate degrees in communications, with an emphasis in rhetoric, and sociology at Los Angeles Valley College. In the fall, he will attend University of California, Berkeley to pursue a career in law or education.

"I want to give a voice to those who lack a voice and to people who are underrepresented," Salehuddin said. "I hope to make some change in this world."

At Valley, Salehuddin found his place as a member of the award-winning speech and debate team for two years. After taking a public speaking course, Salehuddin was recruited by his professor to join the team.

This year, Salehuddin won gold medals in informative speaking at the national competition and persuasive speaking at the state championship. He also won silver and bronze awards in other categories.

"Most people think speech and debate is for people who are great speakers, but this activity actually enhances writing ability, thought process, and listening ability," Salehuddin said. "In addition, you develop speaking skills and it really transforms you as a student."

Salehuddin works as a security guard at a local company 48 hours a week. He specifically chose this job in order to complete homework during breaks.

Although he possesses a rigorous academic ability now, it took time for him to develop to his current potential. Upon entering college, Salehuddin says he had issues with being a good student.

"It was tough and I couldn't read well. There was at least one word in every one to two sentences that I didn't know. My reading level was really low when I started, but

Valley College had so many resources, so I was able to overcome that. Valley really provides an opportunity for students to improve academically.”

His advice to students thinking about attending community college is to utilize the resources provided, take more challenging courses, and join one of the many school clubs.

“Don’t settle for average,” Salehuddin said. “Don’t limit yourself.” ■

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