

Summer Company 2017: Raquel Morales Carlson Lensful Photography

Raquel Morales Carlson gave up her “average Canadian gal” job to pursue her own photography business this summer in between her two-year digital photography program at Niagra College.



"I thought it was great," she says, referring to the summer company program. "I had a great summer. It went a lot better than I could've seen it happening. I'm really, really happy that I ended up doing this compared to working at Tim Horton's."

Raquel's love of photography came from a course she took in high school. She says she remembers when she was 15 years old and her and her friends would do photo shoots in the backyard. Back then it was just a hobby.

The idea behind applying for the summer company program was to learn what it would be like running her own photography business, while also having support to help her along the way before graduating and officially diving into the workplace.

"As far as seeing my business succeed or fail, it didn't really matter to me. It was just a tester year to see if I could actually do what I wanted to do."

And that she did.

"I am one trillion times more confident... And the fact that I could possibly do this for a long time and not be a starving artist - which is great. I think it's wild that I'm making money from something that I love to do."

On top of the grant given to Raquel as part of the program, her business, Lensful Photography, booked seven paid photo shoots throughout the summer and made about \$1000 in profit.

But money wasn't the only thing she gained. The program also offered training sessions, which taught a variety of business skills to participants.

"Everything I learned I applied to my business," she says, "but the most important things that I've taken away is marketing and the importance of getting out there, having face time with people and talking about your business. And being confident about what you do."

With summer gone, Raquel says she's heading back to school, but will try to continue her business.

"I've definitely been more busy as the months go by and I'm hoping to do a bit of it during the school year, but I am taking photography so it's going to be a lot of photography. So, we'll see."

Her plans for after graduating are also unclear, but she says entrepreneurship will always be part of her life.

"I know I'm always going to be doing something on the side now that I know how to do it."

