

Stories driven by Time, Education & Socialising in K’jipuktuk-Halifax, NS, Canada

Photos by
Evanz, Kingsley & Vanessa

July 2026

HRC & GRABS
Collaboration

GRABS
Growing Up Across Borders

Halifax Refugee Clinic

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Special thanks go to
Julie Chamagne and Gillian Smith at the Halifax Refugee Clinic
and to
Professor Evangelia Tastsoglou at Saint Mary’s University.

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The photographs included in this photo book were produced by and belong to young participant artists:

Evanz, Kingsley & Vanessa.

The design and layout of this photo book were produced by the young participant artists. The final photo book was produced by GRABS researcher and PhD candidate Juan Manuel Moreno and printed at the *Centre des recherches sociologiques et politiques de Paris* (CRESPPA), Université Paris 8, France.

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Back and inner covers illustration, *Growing Up Across Borders*, by Juanchila, 16.10.2024
Font used: Baskerville Old Face; Liberation Sans, by Pravin Satpute & Steve Matteson

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The GRABS project

Growing Up Across Borders (GRABS) is a five-year research project examining the lived experiences of young people aged 15-25 years old who are growing up in situations of forced migration and (im)mobility across borders. The project aims to better understand how lived experiences of violence, displacement, migration and borders impact young people's lives and transition into adulthood, crossing geographical mobility with mobility across their life course.

The GRABS team is based at the Centre de recherches sociologiques et politiques de Paris (CRESPPA), Université Paris 8, France, and is composed of five researchers: Professor Jane Freedman, who is the project leader, post-doc researchers Dr Glenda Santana de Andrade and Dr Isabel Morrell, and doctoral candidates Jessi Kume and Juan Manuel Moreno. Developing and exploring creative participatory methodologies, we work together with young people to gain a better understanding about their challenges, needs and priorities, as well as their copying strategies, agency and resilience when faced with such difficulties. We believe this will put us in a better position to understand how they can be better supported in their mobility and in their transition into adulthood. In this way, we hope to provide feedback to those who deal with policies and provide services for young people in situations of forced migration.

At GRABS we work in collaboration with local researchers, service providers, and community organisations in various locations across five countries – France, Greece, and the UK in Europe, and Canada and South Africa – each place experiencing varying migration, asylum and refugee situations and regimes; housing, employment, education, health and social security systems; and historical, socio-cultural, economic and political contexts. In K'jipuktuk-Halifax, part of unceded Mi'kma'ki territory and today Nova Scotia, Canada, we have worked in collaboration with the Halifax Refugee Clinic and the YMCA Youth Outreach Team at the YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programmes. We are being hosted by Saint Mary's University to be able to conduct this research.

The GRABS project is funded by the European Research Council (ERC Advanced Grand 101141171).

You can find out more about the GRABS project and research team in our website:
https://erc-grabs.univ-paris8.fr/

Halifax Refugee Clinic

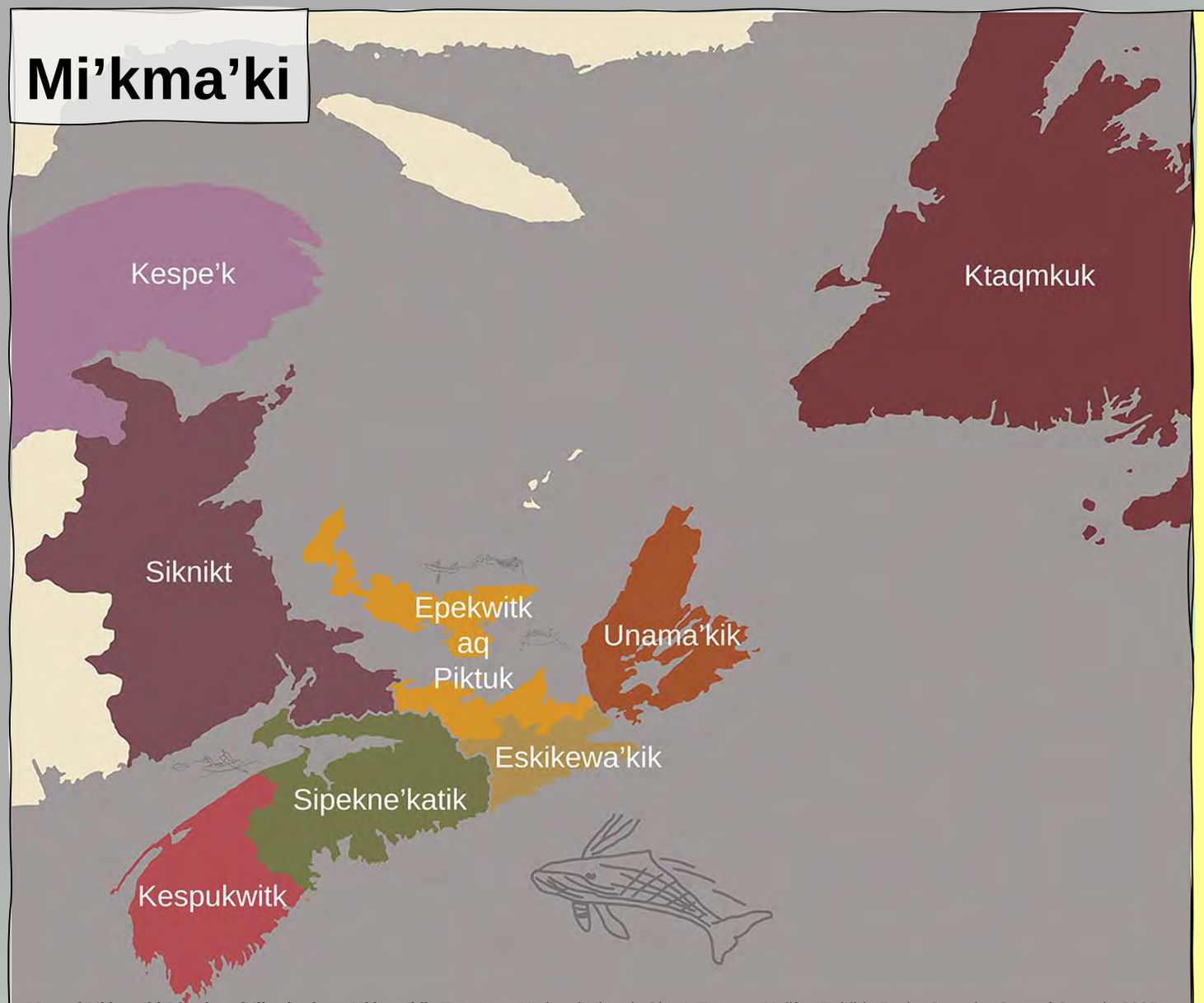
The Halifax Refugee Clinic (HRC) was founded in 2000, by immigration, refugee and human rights lawyer Lee Cohen, K.C., to ensure that some of the world's most vulnerable and persecuted people receive urgently needed support and representation while they navigate the complex refugee determination process. The HRC's mandate is to provide legal representation for those claiming refugee status and seeking protection in K'jipuktuk-Halifax and in Nova Scotia, to ensure that they are given a fair opportunity to present their cases before the Immigration and Refugee Board, and that throughout the process, their rights and their integrity are fully respected. In addition to immigration and refugee legal services delivery, the HRC provides robust and comprehensive settlement services, engages in local and national advocacy efforts and serves as a hub for community engagement and partnerships.

The HRC's approach is anti-oppressive, trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and client-centred. Through direct, intersectional legal and settlement services provision, the HRC works to ensure that people seeking safety in our community have meaningful access to justice, and the support and opportunity to rebuild their lives with dignity and self-determination.

HRC's life changing work is guided by a volunteer board of directors and is implemented by an expert multidisciplinary and multilingual staff team and a network of volunteers, placement students and community partners. The work is made possible through various grants and funding sources and by the generosity of private donors.

You can find out more about HRC services and work with the community on their website: https://halifaxrefugeeclinic.org/about/

K’jipuktuk, *Great Harbour*, it’s part of Mi’kma’ki



Map of Mi’kma’ki Districts (Kjipuktuk aq Mi’kma’ki). *Fort Anne National Historic Site & Fortress Halifax Exhibit, Parks Canada, Gov. of Canada 2025*

The research and workshop sessions leading to this photo book were carried out in K’jipuktuk, today also known as Halifax. K’jipuktuk means ‘great harbour’ in Mi’kmaw.

K’jipuktuk (Halifax), and what is today known as the province of Nova Scotia, form part of Mi’kma’ki, the ancestral and unceded territory where the Mi’kmaq Peoples have lived for more than 11,000 years.

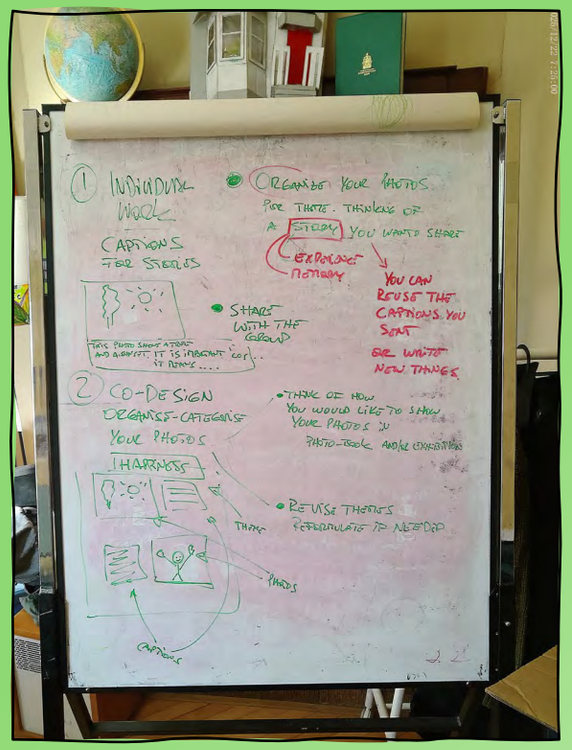
Located within the Northeastern Woodlands, Mi’kma’ki territory extends across all 4 provinces of today’s Atlantic Canada (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland), the Gaspé Peninsula, and parts of the state of Maine, in today’s United States.

We acknowledge and are grateful, as foreigners visiting, studying, working, living, or just passing through, to be in these lands to carry out this research project. Wela’lin.

Mi’kmaw district place names for Mi’kmaki and their meanings: The districts of Mi’kma’ki shown in this map and described below were based on rivers, streams and natural drainage systems. They were flexible, permeable boundaries that reflected the “changing conditions and the needs of people in each area, rather than acting as geopolitical boundaries.”

Kespe’k (”end of land”) is comprised of the Saint John River Valley and the Appalachian Mountain Range of northern New Brunswick and the Gaspé area of Quebec. **Ktaqmkuk** (”across the waves/water”) Newfoundland. **Siknikt** (”drainage area”) includes the Miramichi River and the Acadian Coast and Bay of Fundy Region. **Epekwitk aq Piktuk** (Prince Edward Island, “cradled above water” and Pictou “explosion place”) is comprised of PEI the lowland area along the Northumberland Strait, sperated from neighbouring districts by the Cobequid Highlands and the Pictou and Antigonish Highlands. **Kespukwitk** (”end of flow”) includes the area west of the La Have River to Yarmouth/Cape Sable in South/southwestern Nova Scotia. **Sipekne’katik/Sikipne’katik** (Shubenacadie, “area of wild potato/turnip”) is comprised of the Shubenacadie District and the Minas Basin Coast. **Eskikewa’kik** (translation uncertain at this time, some suggest “skin dressers”) comprised of the portion of Atlantic Coastal Region from the western portion of Nova Scotia west of Sheet Harbour to Canso. **Unama’kik** (a variation of the word Mi’kma’kik, meaning “Mi’kmaw territory”) Cape Breton Island.

Sources: **Sable & Francis (2018)** The Language of this Land, Mi’kma’ki, pp.21-22; **Mi’kmaw Place Names Digital Atlas (n.d.)** (https://placenames.mapdev.ca/); **Mi’kmawey Debert Cultural Centre (n.d.)** (https://www.mikmaweydebert.ca/)





Photovoice workshop sessions, June 2026.





About this Photo book and the themes explored by participants

This photo book is the product of a collaboration between the Halifax Refugee Clinic, and the ERC Growing Up Across Borders research project. This collaboration led to a series of creative participatory workshops in photography and photovoice ran by GRABS researcher and PhD candidate Juan Manuel Moreno, consisting of 6 three-hour sessions held between April-June 2026, in K'jipuktuk-Halifax, NS, Canada.

During the first couple of workshop sessions, participant youth discussed and decided on which themes they wanted to work on, they were given a digital camera and introduced to some basic skills in photography. Between each weekly session, participants were invited to take photos related to their chosen themes and bring them for discussion with the group. During these discussions, copies of the photographs were printed for participants to organise them according to the themes, while reflecting on their meaning, and the stories and feelings behind them.

The two main themes explored during the workshops and featuring in this photo book – **Time, Education** and **Socialising** – had originally emerged from focus group discussions held during a prior visit in February 2026 and were later further discussed during the first session of the photography-photovoice workshops. While broad in scope, the themes carry different meanings and represent some of the lived experiences and stories the young people wanted to share through their photographs.

Participants chose how to display their photographs in the pages and organised them by themes.

Time

Kingsley



Football pitch

It shows a place I spend a lot of time while waiting for next steps.

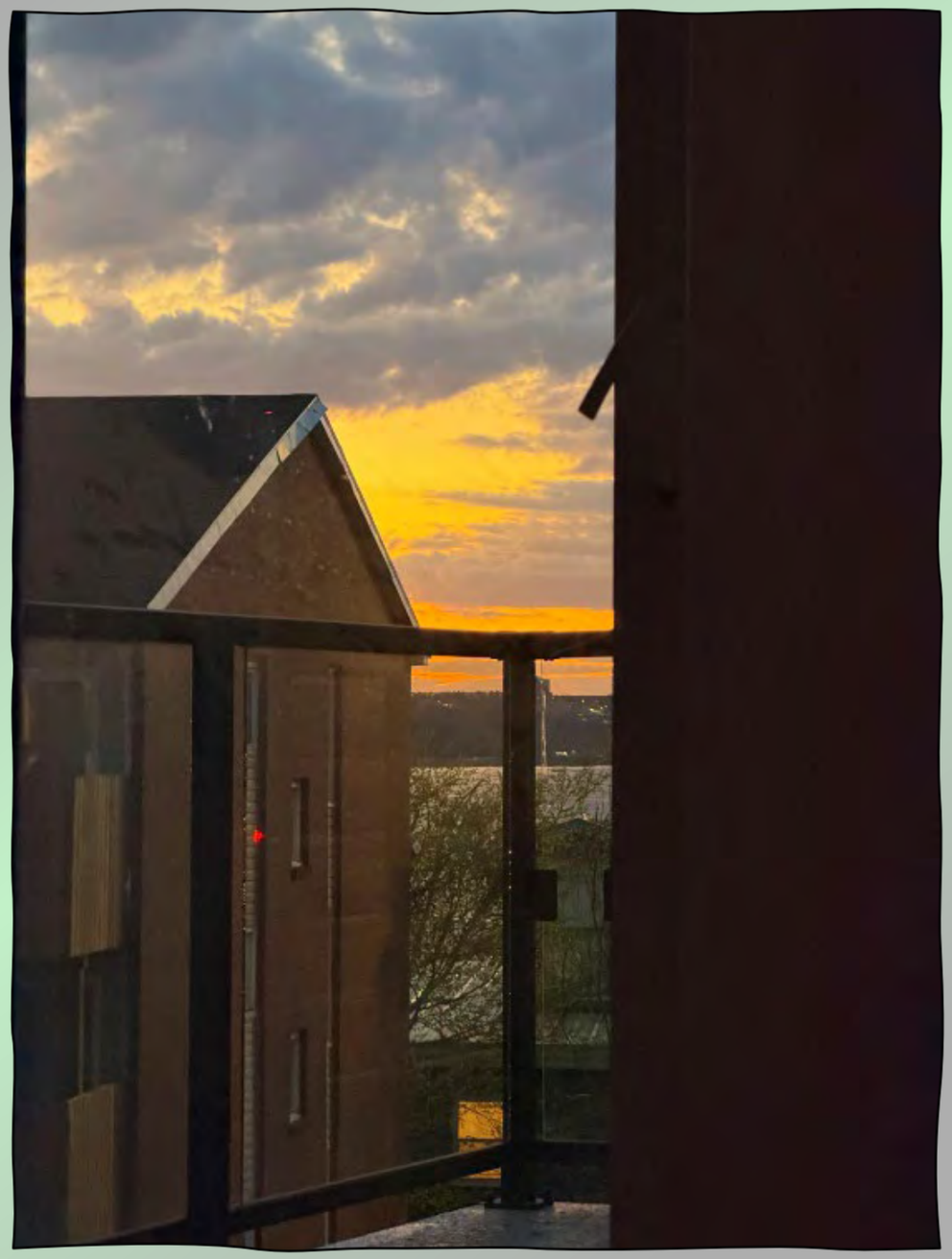


View of of the city, downtown

It shows the nice view of the city a place to visit and clear my mind. While waiting for answers from immigration views like this are something I like to see and document because I might not have the chance to do so again.

Vanessa





Daytime in park and Sunset from bedroom window

The first picture is of a landscape, we can see the greens, yellow flowers, tall standing trees and a bright blue sky taken at sunrise on my way to work. While the second picture was taken in the evening from my apartment through the glass door. Time can be explained through day and night. During the day the sun shines brightly and people are usually awake, working, studying or playing. While at night the moon and stars appear, the sky appears, the sky becomes dark, and people rest or sleep. As an immigrant the daytime reminds me of a new start, it represents hope, new opportunities, hard work and building a better future in a new country. While nighttime represents rest, reflection, memories of home and sometimes loneliness while adjusting to the new environment. Together day and night shows the journey of adaption, balancing challenges and growth while creating the new life far away from home but with hopes for a better future ahead with time.

Evanz



This picture taken at night from the middle of University Avenue, with red traffic lights it kind of symbolizes where I am. There is still a long distance to the red lights, but you can't really tell how far you are from where the traffic lights are, but you know for sure that the traffic light is red. This symbolizes where I am now with my immigration process, from here I don't know what's going on, but I know I can't move forward.

Socialising

Vanessa



Community Event in Poster

During my morning run, I came across this poster and it made me happy at my first glimpse of it so I hurriedly took a picture. Looking at the park most especially the playing ground brought back a lot of memories from home.



Playground in Park

These pictures are socially impactful to me as an immigrant because they represent community, safety, and belonging in a new environment. The park shows peace and shared public spaces, while the community event poster makes me feel included and welcomed into local life. Meeting new people and getting to interact with them erased the thought of abandonment which most times crowded my mind. But I am happy today because I feel less anxious and more ambitious to participate in events, meet people and feel belong.



Boxes

It represents social life at work you get to meet and socialise with people on a daily basis.

Kingsley

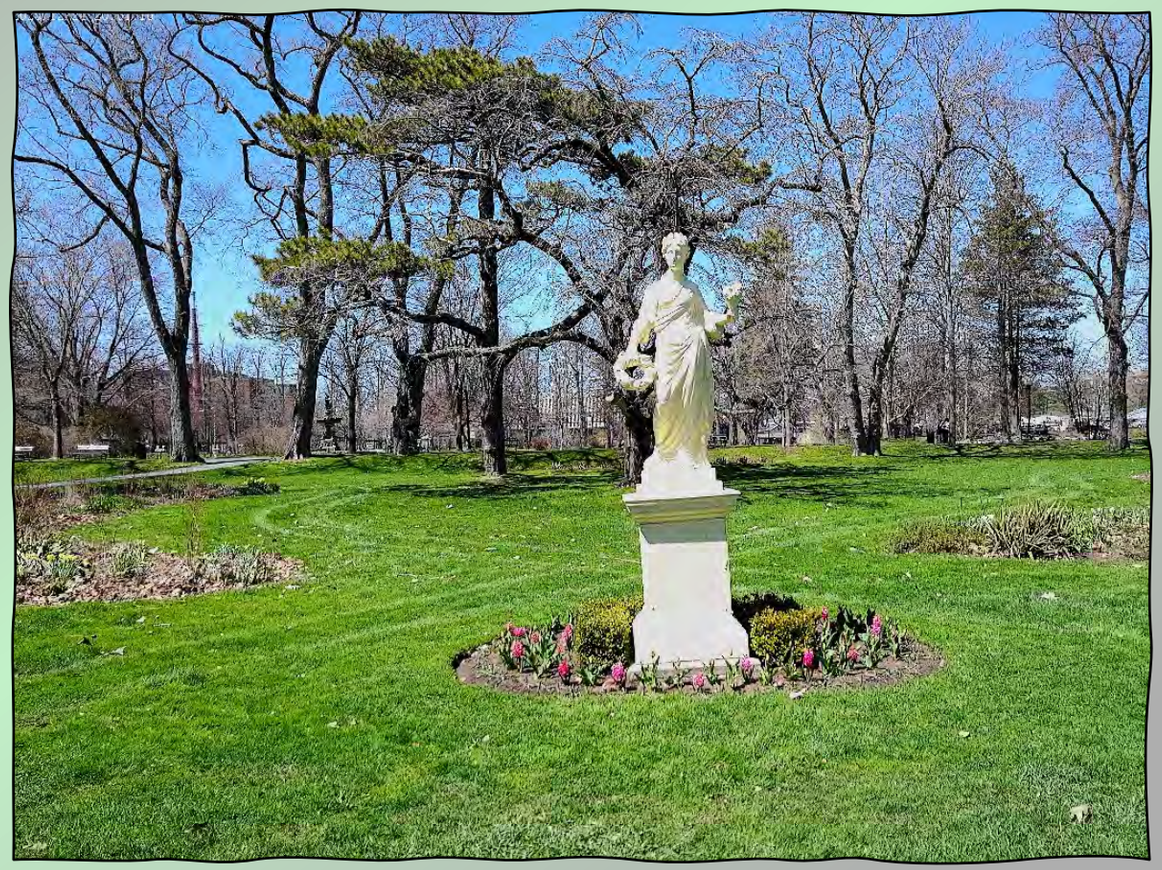


Birds

A bird on flight focused on its destination. It represents my social life. Due to situations in the meantime socializing is not my priority at the moment I spend most of my time planning and creating.

Evanz





These images of the lush grass in the park and that with an angel in it represents a new dawn and also works as an anchor to remind me how the grass back home would smell like and this helps me relax and brings me peace.

Education

Vanessa



Bookshelf

I love reading so I choose a picture of my bookshelf as a right fit to talk on this topic. Reading has helped me acquire more knowledge, develop skills and values and most importantly information on how to navigate the system as an immigrant.



Community Library Center

The second picture is of an education center I came across. Seeing this made me realize that everyone is being considered. I thought of the people who have difficulty navigating the system due to other factors including language barriers. Having help with the basics such as reading will go a long way and make them feel among. To me these images symbolize growth, learning, and adaptation, showing how education helps immigrants find confidence and opportunities in a new environment.

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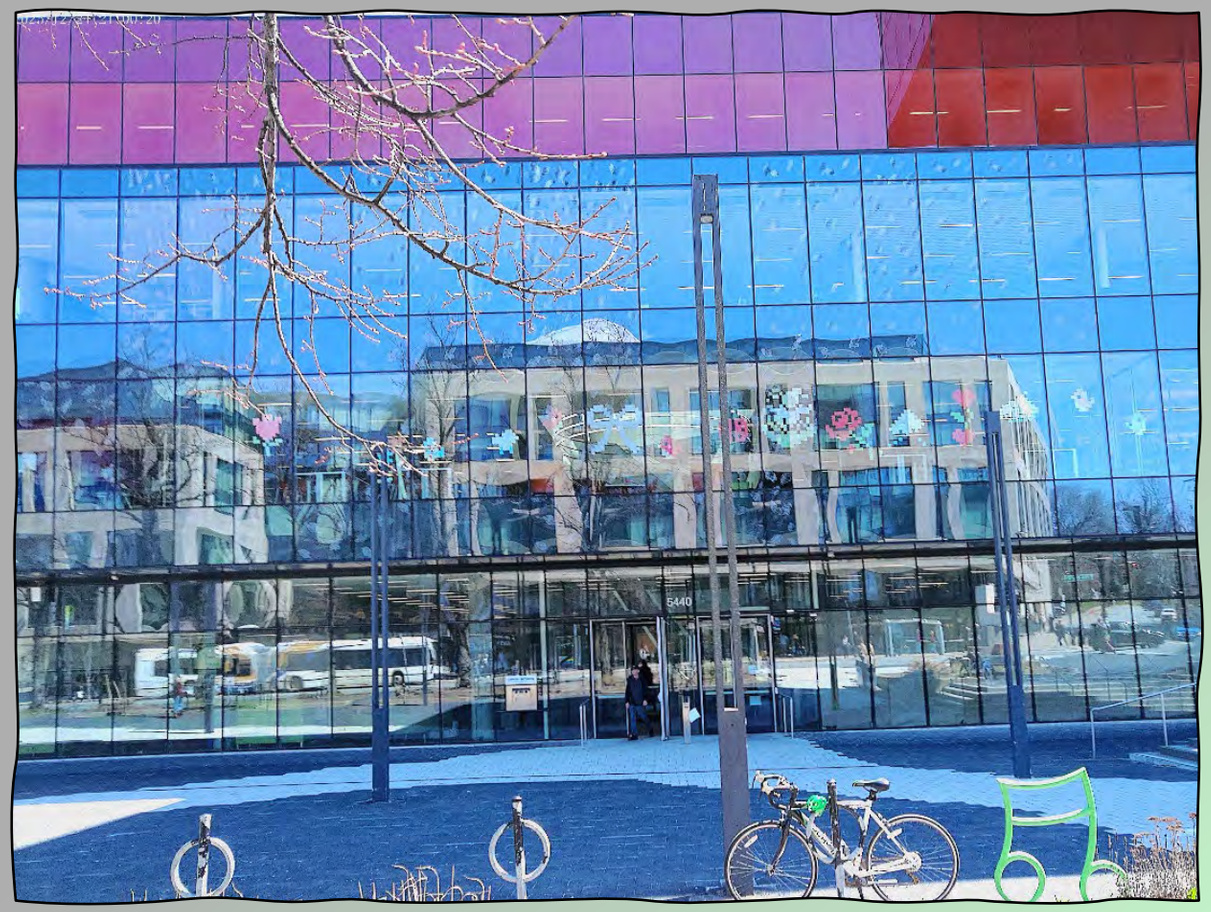
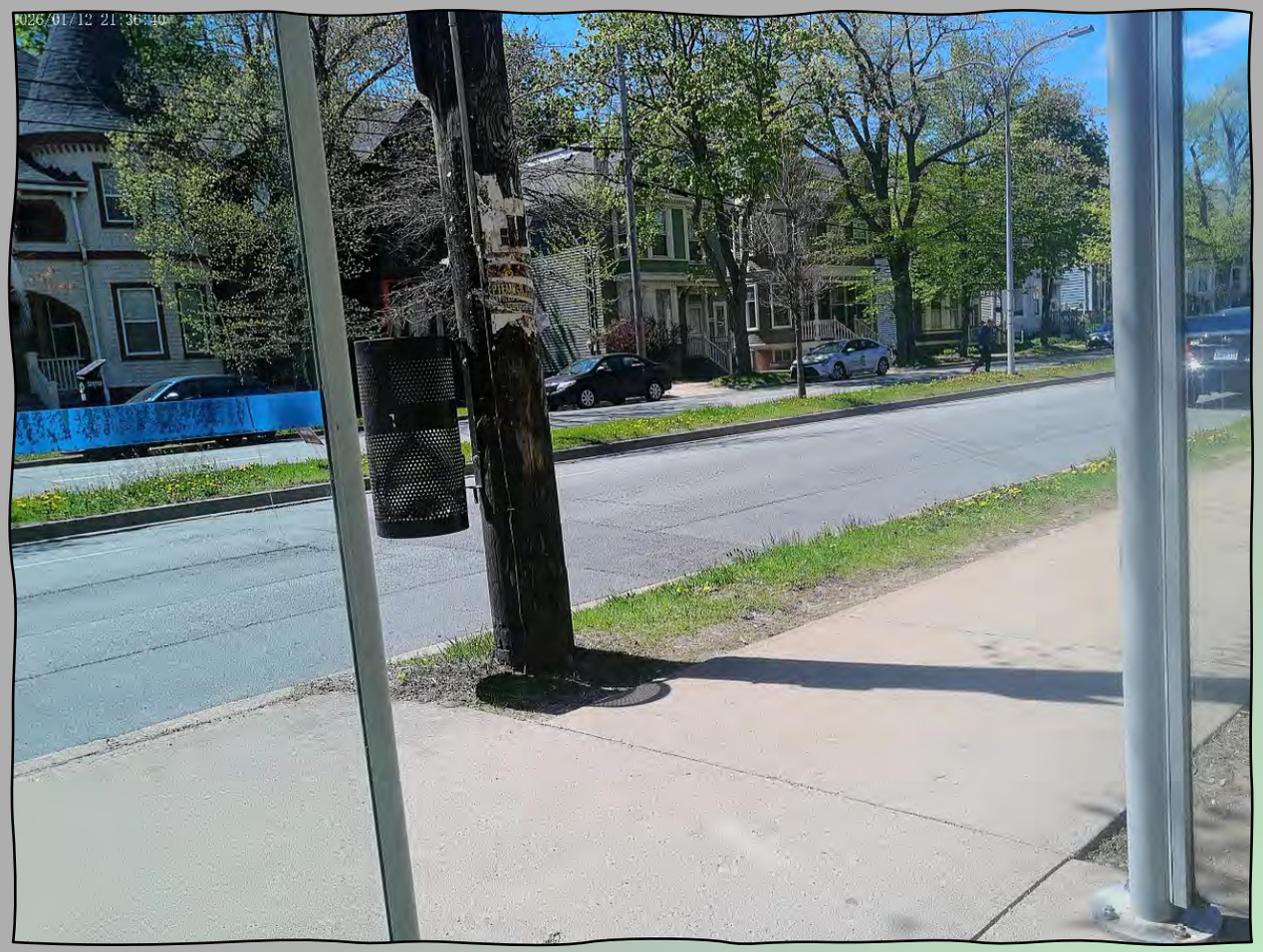
Evanz





Even though the image depicts a dark night, it is juxtaposed by the imposing library where I go to better myself on my terms, to learn based on my interests and likes, not a curriculum written by someone else. And there is free wifi!!

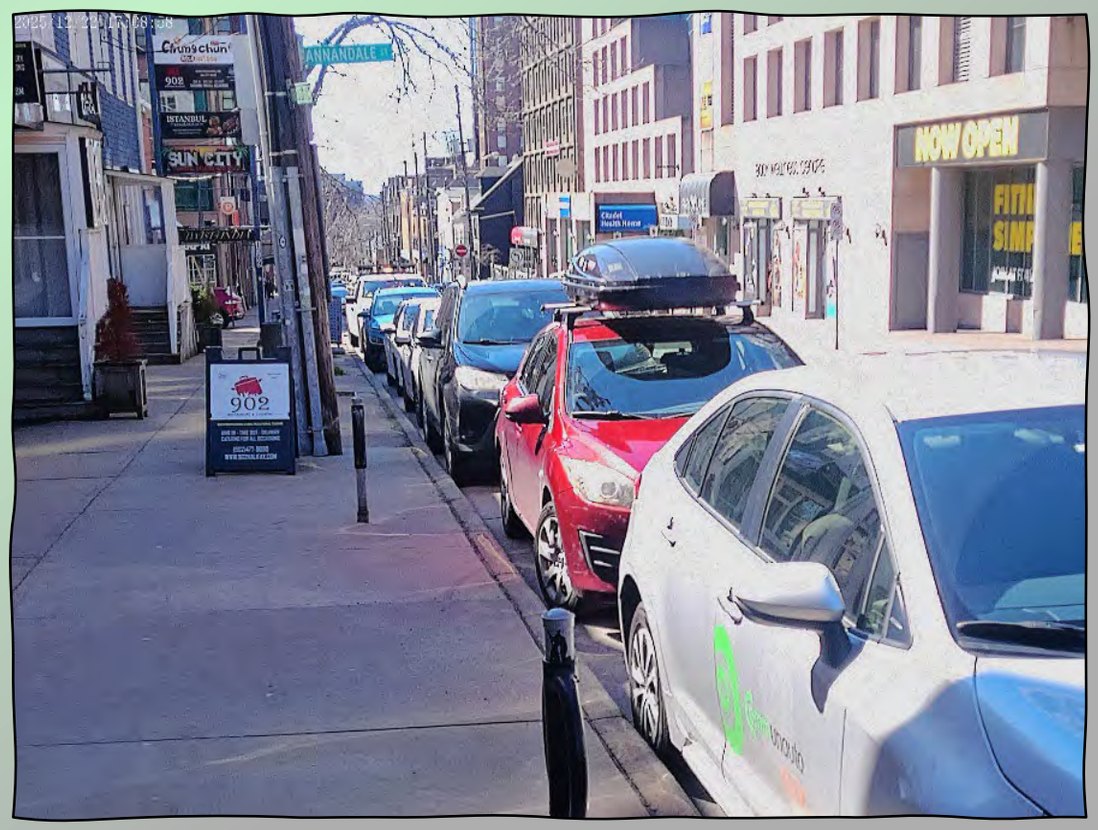
Kingsley



Blooming trees

It represents education, learning from the environment and adapting.

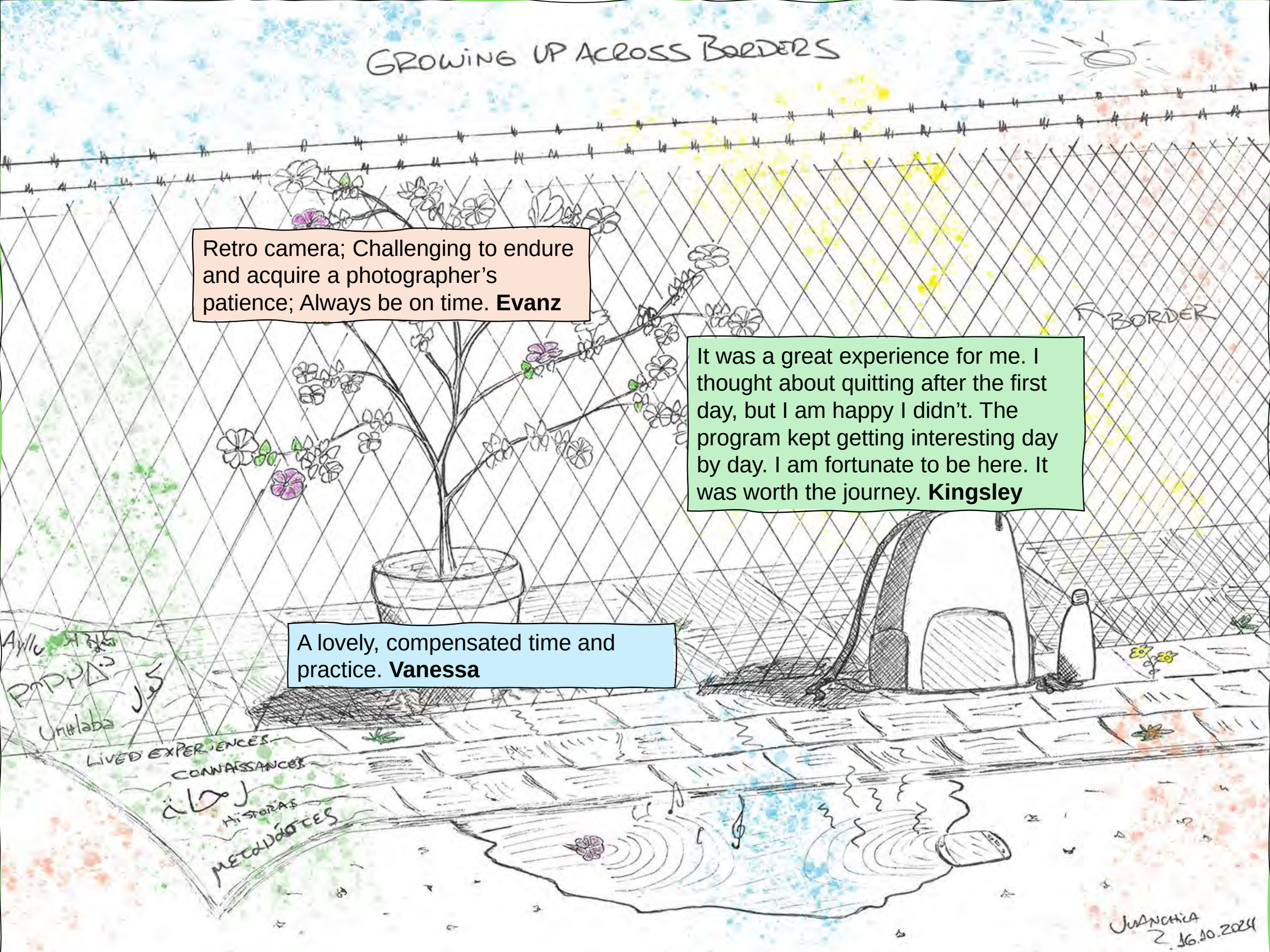
The photo simply shows cars in line waiting for their turn to move forward. It means the amount of time I wait during my immigration process and how it slows me down in moving forward.





Flowers

The ones with yellow toppings represent people that are familiar with the environment and know how to navigate. The purple topping represents a person who's not familiar and not navigating. In respect to education for me as an immigrant there are challenges, I will have to go through like language test, etc. which makes me the purple flower. While the yellow ones represent people that don't have to go through that so navigating is different for them.


GROWING UP ACROSS BORDERS
Retro camera; Challenging to endure and acquire a photographer's patience; Always be on time. **Evanz**
BORDER
It was a great experience for me. I thought about quitting after the first day, but I am happy I didn't. The program kept getting interesting day by day. I am fortunate to be here. It was worth the journey. **Kingsley**
A lovely, compensated time and practice. **Vanessa**
LIVED EXPERIENCES
CONNAISSANCES
HISTORIAS
JUANCHICA 16.10.2024

GROWING UP ACROSS BORDERS

BORDER

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