

Feels like home



Feel like Home The first few weeks I arrived in Leeds, I felt quite lonely since I arrived late and I missed out the chance to meet new friends during the fresher programs. One day I received an email from the university telling that there will be a party to welcome new and returning Muslims faith students in Leeds Grand Mosque. I knew this will be my opportunity to meet and socialize with other students that have same faith as me. Without hesitation, I highlighted the date in my diary.

On the day itself, when I reached the venue, I was surprised to see the crowd that gathered in the place. It was really beyond my expectation. For one second, I hesitated to join the party because I came alone and afraid that I will be isolated from the crowd. Suddenly a friendly young lady, whom I assumed to be one of the society members, greeted me warmly at the door and invited me to come in. I saw groups of young students around my age, busy chatting and mingling around in the hall.

I walked to the girls to greet them and introduce myself. They were so friendly and welcomed me to join their group. We started to talk about ourselves, random topics and made jokes. Within that short acquaintance, I slowly felt so comfortable with them and no longer felt awkward at all. All of us came from different countries, ethnicities and some of them are locals too. It was good to know that you are not the only one who is thousand miles from your home. The event started with welcome speech from the society's representative.

Then, we were being informed briefly about the upcoming events that will be held by the society throughout the year. After the short opening, we were divided into two groups to have ice breaking session. We had so much fun

during the session. All of us were then later being invited to have some refreshments that had been prepared by the society. Before the event ended, we promised to meet up again for the Eid celebration a week from now. As promised, on the 26th October 2012, we gathered again in the same place for the Eid Adha celebration.

This time was not only for 'us' but the whole Muslims faith community in Leeds. It was great to meet even more new people on that day; some of them came with their families and small children too. We had prayer together in the morning. Then, all of us had photosession before heading to the feast in our friend's house. It was such a great experience and glad to know that we are like a 'bigfamily' here in Leeds. Most of all, this kind of gathering makes you will feel like home. I am absolutely looking forward to joining more social events like this in the future.