



## Newcomer calculates mentoring advantages

**Accounting employees help others get a head start**

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SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Next month, Daping Yang will volunteer at a clinic to help low-income residents with their tax returns. And while her clients get free advice, Yang will gain important Canadian work experience.



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Daping Yang, left, checks files with KPMG Canada CFO Mary Lou Maher, who helped Yang improve her English skills and advised her about becoming accredited in Canada.

Yang heard about the program through her mentor, Mary Lou Maher, KPMG Canada's chief financial officer. "She was looking for something to do for the community and I thought it was a good idea to give her exposure to how some people struggle in life and help her develop her tax knowledge," Maher says.

At KPMG, support for new Canadians comes from many levels.

Employees have formed clubs that offer seminars to new Canadians hired by the company on topics such as business etiquette, and run social events, such as trips to hockey games.

Newcomers to Canada often feel isolated, says Michael Bach, KPMG's

director of diversity. The clubs provide "an instant social and support network that they can plug into."

GTA managing partner Rob Brouwer encourages colleagues to get involved in a mentorship program run by the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council.

More than 50 KPMG executives are mentors, including Maher.

When Yang arrived from China, she faced barriers. Her training as an accountant wasn't recognized, plus she couldn't form complete sentences in English. Over the past three years, Maher advised Yang on improving her English and on becoming accredited here. Now, Yang is an accounting student at York University. Though she speaks with a slight accent, she's almost fluent in English. She hopes to eventually obtain her Ph.D.

"The reason I can have the aspirations to pursue these dreams is because of Ms. Maher's encouragement."