



North Bay & District
Multicultural Centre
Immigrant Settlement Services

NEWSLETTER

From Don Curry, Executive Director

Community Builders grant

We received \$20,000 from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's Community Builders program and those funds are now being spent. We are working with an advisory committee from the four school boards to create an anti-racism lending library, creating new brochures in English and French, creating a new poster and launching a transit ad campaign on North Bay city buses. There are still many out there who don't know we exist. We expect resources in the anti-racism lending library to be available for community use by April. Give me a call at 495-8931 for further information or check our website at www.nbdmc.ca. I thank representatives from the four school boards: Blanche Hélène Tremblay, Jodie Nychuk, Ashli Lewis and Marylou Cappadocia for their insight and assistance in selecting resources for the lending library, and our Canadore College Social Service Worker program student intern Emily Jusic for her passion for the project.

Seeking more projects

We have four outstanding grant proposals: to seek additional funds for marketing in Nipissing and Parry Sound Districts; for an anti-racism project; and two for additional settlement services support. Three of these proposals involve hiring additional staff, which would cause us to expand our present main floor location to include an additional 1,250 square feet on the second-floor. We have yet to negotiate our approved Local Immigration Partnership project with Citizenship and Immigration Canada, which will result in a new staff person. We are anticipating that person will be in place in April.

Mosque opens in North Bay

Most of our staff attended the official opening of North Bay's first mosque. It was a wonderful event, also attended by our City Hall partners Mayor Vic Fedeli, Councillors Chris Mayne and Judy Koziol, and Economic Development Officer Marla Tremblay, who is the co-chair of the North Bay Newcomer Network. MP Anthony Rota and dozens of other guests were on hand for the opening, which provided tangible evidence of the city's increasing diversity.



The official opening of a mosque in North Bay was held October 26, 2008, with a large crowd of people attending, including the staff of the multicultural centre. From left North Bay Mayor Vic Fedeli, Shane Merali, MP Anthony Rota and Dr. Lukmann Waja cut the first piece of cake to commemorate the opening.



Immigration portal

The City of North Bay received funding from the Ontario government to launch an immigration portal and we are pleased to be of assistance in this project. We did a number of interviews and our staff organized and participated in photo shoots. Now the challenge is to create content for this vehicle that will be a major component of the city's immigration attraction strategy. Watch for it to go online by early 2010.

1,000 days ahead

Our board of directors launched a strategic planning process to mark the first anniversary of the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre. With a year of service under our belts, it was time to take a look at where we've been and where we're going. Facilitator Wayne LeBelle of West Nipissing led board members, staff, volunteers, clients and North Bay Newcomer Network executive members through a full day retreat at Mexicali Rosa's February 10 to begin the process. We identified 15 priorities for the coming months and they are now being incorporated into a strategic plan.

Incorporation

While we are known in the community (we hope) as the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre, we remain incorporated as Young People's Press, the organization that started the centre. That will change soon, as we re-incorporate, with new objects of incorporation, as the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre. We will remain a nonprofit corporation without share capital, with the same board of directors.

Client statistics

Our records to the end of January show we had 482 client visits by 55 eligible clients over the preceding 11 months. Eligible clients are permanent residents of Canada who have yet to become Canadian citizens, although that distinction may soon change. In addition we had more than 100 people seeking our services who did not qualify under these guidelines. Our Host program has 17 matches between newcomers and mentors who have been in the area for some time.

Social events

Some of the social events organized by our staff and volunteers since the last newsletter include a volunteer appreciation evening, a pumpkin carving night for Halloween, a children's Christmas party in partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Bay & District, a sliding afternoon on the West Ferris overpass and a film night. Super volunteer Julie Grant and our friends at Bell Aliant organized a Thanksgiving dinner for newcomers at the Bell building, enjoyed by all.



North Bay Newcomer Network

NNN continues its work, eagerly awaiting staff assistance when we hire our LIP grant staff person. Marla Tremblay and I co-chair NNN and we are joined on the executive committee by LeeAnne Maillé of Yes! Employment, Darlene Jamieson and Amelia Roscoe of Big Brothers Big Sisters, Ann Welsh of the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre and Karen Strang of Nipissing University.

Settlement North

Settlement North is a new entity, comprising settlement agencies in North Bay, Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay and Kenora. We met in Thunder Bay last summer and at Geneva Park near Orillia in October. We met again this month in Thunder Bay and decided if we're going to continue meeting like this we should give ourselves a name. The Thunder Bay Multicultural Association, which has been a settlement agency for 30 years, is leading the way and we are learning all we can from those who have been at it longer.

Conferences

Our staff attended the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) conference at Geneva Park, near Orillia in October. In November Ann Welsh and I attended the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program conference in Niagara Falls. It was held over two separate three-day periods, with 600 people attending each conference. Citizenship and Immigration Canada paid the bills for these

professional development opportunities. Ann and Oweeny De Silva are attending a Host conference in Waterloo this month.

International Food Festival

You can tell you're getting established when events start repeating themselves. We attended our second International Food Festival event at Nipissing University February 7 and were pleased to be co-sponsors with the university this year. It's a wonderful event that exposes the community to the multicultural reality of the city. The food is great too! The university uses the event as a fundraiser to support its student refugees. Approximately 400 people attended this year and the university raised \$2,800 after expenses.



Taslima Ahmed of the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre sold out on her recipe very quickly at the International Food Festival at Nipissing University February 7. The event was co-sponsored by the multicultural centre.

International Day

Another event soon to repeat is the 21st annual International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. We organize it with our partners, the four school boards, Canadore College, Nipissing University, and Nipissing Secondary School. Come out and enjoy the Evening of Applause Wednesday, March 25 at 6 p.m. at the Algonquin Secondary auditorium. It is great to hear the achievements of the Students Who Make a Difference and inductee to the Nipissing District Human Rights Hall of Fame. The Interlink Choir will perform from 6 to 6:30 as people are arriving for the official 6:30 start.

Student interns

We have developed a relationship with the Social Service Worker program at Canadore College to take both first and second-year interns for job placements. Emily Jusic, a graduating student, is with us throughout this semester while Jessica Milne, a first-year student, spent two weeks with us. Our settlement officer, Taslima Ahmed, is a graduate of the program. She also has an MA degree in sociology from the University of Dhaka in Bangladesh and speaks four languages.



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