



North Bay & District
Multicultural Centre
Immigrant Settlement Services

NEWSLETTER

From Don Curry, Executive Director

Canadore President Joins Board

New (not sure how long we can call him “new,” since he has been on the job since last summer) Canadore College President George Burton has joined the board of directors of the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre. He attended his first board meeting in December. Board members are Ainul Ahmed, Joanne Bénard, George Burton, Cathy Ellis, Gary Gould and Susan Church. Susan Church is the chair.

George has made his presence felt at Canadore but what excites me most is his plan to bring varsity basketball back to the college. Watch for it next season. The college is already recruiting very tall players. It will be fun to see a seven-footer walking the streets of North Bay. Basketball fans will remember the heady days at Canadore when Kerry Vinson was the coach. His teams packed the gym and attracted very talented players from southern Ontario and their friends. It was a great student recruiting initiative and it brought student diversity to the college.

Chamber of Commerce Board

I was elected to the Board of Directors of the North Bay & District Chamber of Commerce and attended my first board meeting in December. After leaving the hospital board in April it was time to end my hiatus. The Chamber’s Executive Director, Patti Carr, has been active with the multicultural centre and the North Bay Newcomer Network from the early days and we have appreciated the Chamber’s support. The Chamber is a strong force in the community, with almost 900 members and a board of 25 directors.

Christmas Party Packs Them In

Our annual Christmas party for clients was held December 20 in our board room with 46 people attending. Santa made an appearance and had small gifts for all. Our staff and volunteers once again were outstanding in pulling the event together.

Cookbooks a Big Hit

One result of our International Cooking Club for 2011 was an international cookbook, with recipes prepared and tested by seniors and clients during the year. It’s a great project, bringing seniors together



with newcomers to don their aprons and cook up a storm together. The project was funded by the federal government's New Horizons for Seniors program.

Client Numbers for First Nine Months

To the end of December we served 68 new clients numerous times, in addition to many clients registered prior to April 1. In total there were 627 client appointments in the first nine months of the year. Of the 68 new clients, 25 are from Timmins and Kirkland Lake and are served from our Timmins office.

In addition we have 27 ongoing matches in the Community Connections program, all in North Bay. They will begin soon in Timmins. These numbers reflect Citizenship and Immigration Canada eligible clients only—permanent residents of Canada, live-in caregivers and government-assisted refugees.

Another 30 new clients, including temporary foreign workers, international students who want to stay in Canada and newcomers who have become Canadian citizens were served through other funding.

New School Board Director Receives Briefing

Program Coordinator Deborah Robertson and I enjoyed meeting the new Director of Education at the Near North District School Board, Geof Botting, in December. New Superintendent of Schools Roz Bowness, Chippewa Secondary School Principal Tim Collins, M.T. Davidson School Principal Jim Burrows and English as a Second Language teacher Melanie McVeety were all present. Geof was quite familiar with newcomers in schools and ESL programs from his time in Ottawa. We look forward to continued improvements in the ESL program through our partnership with the school board.

Timmins School Board Director Visits

Glenn Sheculski, Director of Education for the Northeastern Catholic School Board in Timmins, visited the multicultural centre and the ESL class at Chippewa Secondary School while he was in North Bay. We hope to work with Glenn to launch an ESL class in Timmins through his school board. We have offered to create a similar arrangement to what we have in North Bay, whereby our Timmins & District Multicultural Centre office would take the bulk of registrations for ESL classes and pass them on to the school board.

HR North is in First Stage

HR North, a project we launched with the City of North Bay and many other partners, including Timmins Economic Development Corporation, Timmins Local Immigration Partnership, District of Nipissing Social Services Administrative Board, Labour Market Group and Yes! Employment Services, is taking its first steps this month.

We held interviews in December for a short-term research contract and Karen Chamberlain was the successful applicant. She will be talking to employers in small and medium-sized enterprises from Parry Sound to Hearst to determine how they recruit and retain people for hard-to-fill positions and what HR





services would be of benefit to them. The research will identify gaps in the recruitment and retention of foreign-trained individuals.

The research component is funded through a grant from ALLIES, a project of the Maytree Foundation plus Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Development of a database for use by employers and job seekers is funded through FedNor, City of North Bay, Timmins Economic Development Corporation and the Labour Market Group.

Billboards Are Up

We hope drivers on Highway 17 between Sturgeon Falls and North Bay and Mattawa and North Bay are noticing our billboards. Funded through Citizenship and Immigration Canada, they provide newcomers to Canada with our website address so they can come in and access our broad range of settlement services. The billboards also have the website address of the North Bay's immigration portal. We hope to acquire a location for a third billboard on Highway 11, south of North Bay.

The billboards complement a national television advertising campaign by Citizenship and Immigration Canada that works on the phrase "New to Canada?" If you go to the website featured on the TV ads, www.cic.gc.ca/new and ask about North Bay or Timmins you are directed to our websites.

Timmins and Kirkland Lake Hopping

Andrée Fortin, our settlement counsellor in the Timmins office, was trying to keep up with client demand working only four days a week. With some CIC budget adjustments she is now working a full five days, four in Timmins and one in Kirkland Lake. If you haven't heard they have gold up there and its price is at an all-time high. Book early if you want a hotel room.

Andrée has started English Conversation Circles and Conseil scolaire public du Nord-Est de l'Ontario is conducting French as a Second Language classes for our clients in both Timmins and North Bay.


Cricket Anyone?

A fall cricket demonstration session sponsored by the Ontario Cricket Association and North Bay's Parks and Recreation Department sparked a lot of interest in the sport. Now we are coordinating weekly indoor sessions at École secondaire publique l'Odysée through the winter, before we take the sport back outside in the spring. We're getting a mix of newcomers who know the sport well with Canadians who are being introduced to it.

Northern Ontario Business Award

Deborah Robertson and I attended the Northern Ontario Business Awards gala in Sudbury September 27 and the winners' dinner September 26. We didn't anticipate the pomp and ceremony that went with being one of 10 winners from across Northern Ontario and were very pleasantly surprised. The North Bay & District Multicultural Centre was featured in a glossy program handed out to the 500 people present, plus the 25,000 readers of Northern Ontario Business. A video shot at our offices was shown





prior to me going on stage to accept the award and it's now on our website and the Northern Ontario Business Awards website, which also has my acceptance speech. It was a fabulous event and we thank Michael Atkins, Patricia Mills and Kimberley Wahamaa at Northern Ontario Business, the judges and award sponsor Cisco Canada for recognizing our work in such an outstanding fashion. We have a very professional staff that is doing great work in both the North Bay and Timmins' offices.

OCASI, WCI and Professions North

We are members of three organizations striving to make it easier for newcomers to Canada to find employment, get settled and feel welcome in Ontario. I attended meetings of all three in November in Toronto, Ottawa and Sudbury. For more information on OCASI (Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants) check out their website at www.ocasi.org. For more on WCI (Welcoming Communities Initiative) go to <http://welcomingcommunities.ca> and for more on Professions North/Nord go to www.professionsnorth.ca.

North Bay Newcomer Network Valentine's Day Meeting

February 14 is an easy date to remember for our full membership meeting of the North Bay Newcomer Network, our Local Immigration Partnership project. NNN keeps growing and has more than 50 organizations represented and we hope to have a good turnout at the Clarion Pinewood resort from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. It will be a great opportunity to look at where we've been, and of course, where we're going. If you would like to have your organization become part of NNN send me an email.

Golf Tournament

It's never too early in the year to be thinking about golf. I think about it all the time. As soon as we have a date firmed up for our third annual charity tournament I'll let you know. We will be looking for golfers, of course, plus sponsors and silent auction donors. We've had two great events and we're looking forward to number three. We hooked up with Partners Bowling and Billiards, our golf tournament partner, for our staff Christmas dinner and bowling party and once again had a great time. Board member George Burton, an athlete in his younger days, demonstrated that he still has some moves.

Check Our Websites

If you have any questions about our services check us out at www.nbdmc.ca and www.northbayimmigration.ca. For Timmins check www.timminsmulticultural.ca and www.immigrationtimmins.ca.

