



North Bay & District Multicultural Centre

Immigrant Settlement Services

NEWSLETTER

From Don Curry, Executive Director

Local Immigration Partnership Project



Laura-Jane Coté is our new project officer for the Local Immigration Partnership (North Bay Newcomer Network.) She started work September 1. Laura-Jane took early retirement from the Ontario government after a 20-year career as a senior manager in a variety of capacities. She wanted to leave Toronto and return to North Bay. She has a strong HR background, which will be useful in liaising with HR department heads in the region to educate them on hiring newcomers, and she has significant project management experience.

The LIP position is funded under a separate contribution agreement between the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre and Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Goodbye Ann, Hello Deborah



Program Coordinator Ann Welsh left on an eight-month academic leave August 28 and was replaced by Deborah Robertson. Ann is pursuing an M.A. degree at the University of Toronto on a full scholarship. Her thesis is about immigrant women's experiences in Northern Ontario. Ann and Ryan Barnhart of North Bay were married August 1.

Deborah was a star volunteer with us, after emigrating from England a year ago. She has a B.A. degree in English literature from England, experience in the publishing industry, and has first-hand knowledge of the immigration experience. She knows our Host program well, having been active in it, and job shadowed Ann to learn about the ISAP program and other duties.

Anti-Racism Lending Library

Our lending library resources are now catalogued and displayed on our website at www.nbdmc.ca. We encourage teachers at all levels and community groups to access these free resources, available in both official languages. The lending library of cultural awareness, diversity and anti-racism resources was developed through a grant from the Community Builders program, Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.

Resources were selected by a panel including representatives of the four district school boards: Jodie Nychuk, Near North District School Board; Blanche-Hélène Tremblay, Conseil scolaire catholique Franco-Nord; Mary-Lou Cappadocia, Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board; Ashli Lewis, Conseil scolaire public du Nord-Est de l'Ontario; plus Emily Jusic, an intern student from the Canadore College Social Service Worker program and me.

Resource descriptions, organization and web design are by Emily Jusic, volunteer Kaushal Kumar Singh and Tara Gillies of our staff. Resources are available free of charge to teachers and community groups. Please email me at doncurry@nbdmc.ca for information on how to access them.

MP and MPP Meetings

Ann, Deborah and I met with MP Anthony Rota and MPP Monique Smith in July to better acquaint them with what we do. Both were extremely supportive and Monique followed up very quickly with a letter to provincial Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Michael Chan, outlining some of our issues. Minister Chan soon responded.

Nugget Articles

I continue to submit articles to The Nugget on local immigrants and they receive favourable comment from people I meet. They are designed to educate the public about the contributions of immigrants to our society and quell some of the fears that are out there. One article quoted Mayor Vic Fedeli extensively and resulted in a letter to the editor that was quite negative about immigration. That letter sparked 50 posts to The Nugget's website and a few more printed letters. About two-thirds were negative, indicating we have education work to do.

Both the mayor and I posted comments on The Nugget site. The North Bay Newcomer Network is considering a public education campaign in 2010. After the articles appear in The Nugget they are scanned and posted on our website at www.nbdmc.ca

Immigration Portal

I am sure everyone will be impressed with the city's immigration web portal when it is launched in January. Our staff and clients have been very involved with its development, including design and content.

There will be a soft launch in November to get the bugs out of it and then the website address will go public. An IT firm in Toronto is developing it and Chelsa Mayhew of the Mayor's Office of Economic Development is writing the content with the aid of a content management system.

OCASI

I served on a province-wide committee established by the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants to develop and pilot test a web-based tool to encourage higher organizational standards at settlement agencies across the province. Resources on a wide variety of topics will be a very useful feature of the tool. By responding to 186 questions you determine if you are below standard, meet standard or excel in a variety of areas, under the broad headings of: Community Based Approach; Governance and Strategic Leadership; Operations; and Human Resources.

Ann is continuing her involvement with OCASI's www.settlement.org advisory committee while she is in Toronto.

The annual OCASI Professional Development conference for staff will be held November 4-6, preceded by the Executive Directors conference November 2-4.

ESL Numbers Way Up

The English as a Second Language class offered by the Near North District School Board at Chippewa Secondary School is bursting at the seams. Daytime classes have more than 30 students registered and a new night class has 21 students.

Taslina Ahmed in our office makes referrals and takes registrations. In the summer of 2008 she had six registrations and this past summer she registered more than 20.

English Conversation Circles Popular

Vindra Sahadeo of our Host program has had up to 30 participants attending recent English Conversation Circles. Held in the evenings at either the North Bay Public Library or in our upstairs board room at 374 Fraser Street, they are a great opportunity for newcomers to socialize and practise their English. A schedule is always on our website at www.nbdmc.ca.

With ESL classes discontinuing over the summer Vindra arranged for volunteers to lead classes in our offices. Keen students who did not want to lose time over the summer enjoyed our summertime sessions.

Client Statistics

The end of September marked the half-way mark of our fiscal year and we are pleased to report numbers are up over last year. We served 36 eligible clients (Permanent Residents of Canada) and they made 250 visits to our offices.

The Host program has 24 current active volunteers who are either matched with a newcomer to Canada or are participating in Host group activities. In August those activities included two English Conversation Circles, a women's brunch and a potluck beach party at Birchaven Cove.

Nonprofit Award

We were thrilled to be nominated as Nonprofit of the Year by the North Bay & District Chamber Commerce. We enjoyed the Evening of Excellence October 20 at the Best Western and the 180 people present at the dinner got to see a video on what we do. We congratulate the other two nominees, Community Living and the Business Centre Nipissing Parry Sound and applaud the good folks at the Business Centre, who won the award.



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