



**NORTH BAY & DISTRICT MULTICULTURAL CENTRE
TIMMINS & DISTRICT MULTICULTURAL CENTRE
ANNUAL REPORT 2016**



THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

The North Bay & District Multicultural Centre and its satellite office, the Timmins & District Multicultural Centre, provide newcomer settlement services for the region from Parry Sound in the south to the James Bay Coast in the north—20 per cent of Ontario’s land mass.

In addition, we operate the North Bay Local Immigration Partnership initiative, the North Bay Newcomer Network, and the Timmins Local Immigration Partnership.

We are grateful for operational funding from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and International Trade.

Additional funding from FedNor, the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the City of North Bay, Timmins Economic Development Corporation, the City of Temiskaming Shores, The Town of Cochrane, the Central Almaguin Economic Development Association, Canadore College, Nipissing University and the RBC Foundation is very much appreciated. We also thank those who chose to make charitable donations to us in the past year.



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

The past year saw the most change in the composition of the board of directors since the organization opened its doors January 1, 2008.

Susan Church, chair since our inception, stepped down, along with board member Ainul Ahmed, a member since shortly after inception. The skills of both Susan and Ainul, president of the North Bay Muslim Society, were considerable and contributed immensely to the strong governance the agency has enjoyed. On behalf of the board and staff I thank them for their many years of volunteer service.

Susan, Executive Director of Blue Sky Economic Growth Corporation, was one of the original three board members, and the other two, Joanne B nard and Gary Gould, remain on the board.

We advertised for new board members and found there is no shortage of talented people willing to serve and help move the organization forward. With a catchment area from Parry Sound in the south to James Bay in the north, and offices in North Bay and Timmins, it is not simply a local agency and board members need to be in tune with the entire region.

Along with Joanne and Gary, George Burton remained as a board member. New board members are Dr. Natalya Brown, Dave Wolfe, Brian Marks, Simon Blakeley and Marcus Etienne and they provide a broad range of cultural and work experience.

Dr. Brown was born and raised in Kingston, Jamaica and is an associate professor in the School of Business and the Department of Political Science at Nipissing University.

Dave Wolfe is originally from Sault Ste. Marie and is a long-time writer for the North Bay and Toronto marketing and design firm, TWG Communications.

Brian Marks lives in Timmins and is the CAO of the Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board. Simon Blakely adds a second English accent at the board table and is an employment officer with Professions North in North Bay. The other English accent belongs to our Executive Director, Deborah Robertson.

Marcus Etienne is from Colihaut, Dominica, and is a Social Service Worker student at Canadore College. He also has a B.A. in sociology from Nipissing University

“... AND OFFICES
IN NORTH BAY AND
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AGENCY AND
BOARD MEMBERS



To round out the day jobs of our board, George Burton is president of Canadore College. Joanne B nard is Director of Education for the Sudbury Catholic District School Board, while maintaining her residence in Callander, which neighbours North Bay. Gary Gould, a long-time former North Bay resident, is CEO of the Tampa, Florida JCC and Federation. My part-time day job is president of Curry Consulting, which I started after retiring from eight years as the executive director of the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre.

Collectively we have decades of experience in the not-for-profit and private sectors and personally, I am thrilled that people of such calibre volunteer their services to help move the organization forward. Coupled with the senior staff leadership and the excellent and committed staff members, the organization is ready to take on any challenge.

DON CURRY



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Don Curry, Chair
Joanne Bénard
Simon Blakeley
Natalya Brown
George Burton
Gary Gould
Marcus Lester Etienne
Brian Marks
David Wolfe

STAFF

North Bay

Deborah Robertson, Executive Director
Vindra Sahadeo, Program Coordinator
Meg Ramore, LIP Coordinator
Tara Gillies, Office Manager
Maryline Pillet, Settlement Worker & Volunteer Coordinator
Taslina Ahmed, Newcomer Settlement Worker
Kait Morris Business Incubator Manager

Timmins

Tom Baby, LIP Coordinator
Melanie Lafreniere, Settlement Worker
Brittany Pentland, Outreach & Events Intern

North Bay & District Multicultural Centre

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www.nbdmc.ca

Timmins & District Multicultural Centre

119 Pine Street, Suite 10
Timmins, ON P4N 2K3
www.timminsmulticultural.ca



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It has been an exciting and challenging 12 months. As I look back on my first year as Executive Director, I am grateful to the support of my Board, staff and community partners in both North Bay and Timmins, who have all contributed to easing my transition into the role.

A major event this past year has been to negotiate our ongoing core funding from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). We are fortunate to have signed another 3 year contract and look forward to continuing to meet their mandate and deliverables, which have such a positive impact on the communities we serve.

With two major projects coming to an end in 2016, the downtown incubator Genesis@204 and the Northeastern Ontario Immigration Project, we sadly said goodbye to staff members Sarah Morin and Garvin Cole, who ably led the successful pilots to their conclusions. Our Settlement Worker in Timmins moved on and was replaced by Chantal Boudreau, a bilingual Social Service Worker graduate. We welcomed another NOHFC funded intern in Timmins, Brittany Pentland, who continues to support LIP and settlement work in the community and surrounding areas.

“I KNOW THERE IS
STRENGTH IN THE
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WE OVERLAP”.

ANI DiFRANCO

In partnership with the Timmins Economic Development Corporation, we also welcomed Sylvie Lamothe to our Timmins team, who has the task of developing, launching and promoting a Ministry of Citizenship (MCI funded) immigration portal for the smaller municipalities in Northeastern Ontario. Check out the portal at www.neoimmigration.ca. The portal is a valuable item in the region’s toolkit for attracting and retaining newcomers.

Due to a small increase in funding from IRCC, to support Syrian refugee initiatives, from January to March this year we were able to bring on board two staff with very specialised skills; Sara Falah, an Arabic-speaking Settlement Worker and Nancy Kornafel, an experienced ESL teacher. Both staff were able to support the many refugee families that have settled in our region by providing targeted services and have greatly contributed to the likelihood of their successful settlement.

I attended my first Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) Executive Director’s Forum in the autumn. It was a wonderful experience, allowing me to connect with other Executive Directors across the region and to access specific training and resources. The sector’s response to the Syrian refugee crisis was a constant focus of conversation. I remain humbled by the numerous ways in which communities across the country rose to the meet this challenge with open arms.

As I look forward to 2017, I am excited by the ways in which both the sector and our agencies will continue to meet challenges with enthusiasm and strength.

DEBORAH ROBERTSON



A MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM COORDINATOR

A year chocked full of challenges and successes as we navigated new territory in many ways, new leadership, new portfolios and new families needing our support in unique ways.

The Settlement department rose to the challenge to welcome and support our new Syrian families, three in North Bay, one in Sundridge, two in Temiskaming Shores and two in Parry Sound. It was very exciting building relationships with the various sponsorship groups and heartwarming to see the level of concern they have for their sponsored families.

For the first time in many years we were able to host a Canadian citizenship test and ceremony in North Bay during the summer, this was an amazing experience for many of us and we do hope we can repeat it soon.

This year we also successfully ran a survival ESL program in our boardroom for six weeks during the summer, this program was geared to the influx of newcomers with no English. Our clients benefited tremendously and our volunteers were amazing.

This was also the year our cricketers gained their independence from the NBDMC, we have over the last five years worked closely with them to give them the skills they need to operate as an independent entity, we are very proud of what they have achieved and we will continue to support them in any way we can.

All in all it was a very successful year for the settlement department. This was due primarily to the hard work and professionalism that is continuously displayed by our settlement workers. I take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to them and I look forward to even greater successes in the coming years.

“CONTINUOUS EFFORT
NOT STRENGTH OR
INTELLIGENCE IS THE KEY
TO UNLOCKING OUR
POTENTIAL” .

WINSTON CHURCHILL

VINDRA SAHADEO



A MESSAGE FROM THE NEWCOMER SETTLEMENT WORKER

Moving from familiar surroundings to a new and often foreign environment can create a multitude of both emotional and psychological responses - excitement, exhilaration, uncertainty, anxiety - all stemming from the loss of one's previous sociological backdrop. Such experiences become magnified or diminished as the days in the settlement journey of newcomers to Canada progress and individual responses differ from person to person. Settlement Services ensure newcomers can access the supports necessary to settle into life in Canada. Key to this service is working with clients to assess their unique capacity and settlement needs resulting in a personalized and comprehensive settlement plan outlining a clear path to successful settlement.

"IT IS DURING OUR DARKEST MOMENTS THAT WE MUST FOCUS TO SEE THE LIGHT".

ARISTOTLE ONASSIS

Settlement Services were delivered through drop-ins, emails, phone calls and appointments in the year 2016. The individual services ranged from one-off support in providing information on Canadian life and providing referrals to other services in the community, and on-going case management support. With an increase of Syrian refugees coming to North Bay and the area, we provided more extensive individually tailored one-on-one support to more isolated and vulnerable clients.

We continued to offer information sessions and workshops in administering settlement services. Our events and activities included Ice Skating, trip to Long's Sugar Bush and Board's Honey Farm, Canada Day Multicultural Showcase, Waterfront Pizza Party, Halloween Party and Holiday Party. Summer ESL and English for the Workplace were new initiatives we inaugurated and were well-attended and successful. Attendance and outcome of these workshops were enormous and proved to be indispensable in the community.

Throughout the year, we provided a number of community outreach activities to promote community connections among newcomers, in relation to other service providers, and within the community in general. These outreach activities included but not limited to visiting outlying area, presenting to community organization, building and maintaining partnership with other organization and hosting information booths in community events. These partnerships resulted in reducing barriers to access for newcomers and ensured the accurate information to be delivered.

Our dedicated volunteers provided support, skills, talents and abilities to give hope and strength and the courage to newcomers to settle in their new community. They generously give their gift of time to make contact, being ESL tutor, provide support and encouragement and perhaps provide humor to make newcomers' day a bit more bearable. We would like to thank the many volunteers that assisted us this year in making North Bay feel like home for many newcomers.

This past year was a substantial and thriving year for the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre. We are eagerly awaiting for 2017 to be another rich and productive year

TASLIMA AHMED



A MESSAGE FROM THE SETTLEMENT WORKER & VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

During the year 2016, the Multicultural Centre welcomed many clients with a wide range of needs. While most need help with their immigrant status or have questions about immigration, many have questions about community services.

Our customers come from all parts of the world and all backgrounds, we also counted many Canadian citizens who had questions about immigration.

We were pleased to offer various activities that allowed newcomers to understand some culture of their host country. The Christmas party was a good opportunity for parents and children to enjoy eggnog, chocolate and some small presents under the decorated tree.

This year, we were pleased to welcome several families of refugee immigrants, including families from Syria. We were able to offer them interpretation services and English courses to facilitate their integration. Since some of these families reside outside of North Bay, this has allowed us to strengthen our ties with the surrounding communities.

We also continue to work with our community partners by participating in workshops and taking part in activities.

We strive to serve our clients in both official languages, so it is with pleasure that we serve Francophones and all those who want to, in French.

Finally, we would like to thank all the volunteers who have been involved with the Multicultural Centre without which many events could not have taken place. We thank them for their commitment and dedication to newcomers. Thanks to them for their support for the diversity of our communities.

Durant cette année 2016, le Centre multiculturel a accueilli de nombreux clients avec des besoins très variés. Tandis que la plupart ont besoin d'aide concernant leur statut d'immigrant ou ont des questions à propos d'immigration, nombreux sont ceux qui ont des questions regardant les services communautaires.

Nos clients viennent de toutes les parties du monde et de tous les horizons, nous avons également compté bon nombre de citoyens canadiens qui avaient des questions concernant l'immigration.

Nous avons eu le plaisir d'offrir diverses activités qui ont permis aux nouveaux arrivants de comprendre quelques bribes culturelles de leur pays d'accueil. La fête de Noël a été une bonne opportunité pour parents et enfants d'apprécier le lait de poule, le chocolat et quelques petits présents sous le sapin décoré.

"...WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL THE VOLUNTEERS WHO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH THE MULTICULTURAL CENTRE WITHOUT WHICH MANY EVENTS." COULD NOT HAVE TAKEN PLACE".



Cette année, nous avons eu le plaisir d'accueillir plusieurs familles d'immigrants réfugiés et notamment des familles originaires de Syrie. Nous avons pu leur offrir des services d'interprétation et de cours d'anglais afin de faciliter leur intégration. Vu que quelques une de ces familles résident en-dehors de North Bay, cela nous a permis de renforcer nos liens avec les communautés environnantes.

Nous continuons également le travail entrepris avec nos partenaires communautaires en participant aux réunions de travail et en prenant part aux activités.

Nous nous efforçons de servir nos clients dans les deux langues officielles, c'est donc avec plaisir que nous servons les francophones et tous ceux qui le désirent, en français.

Enfin nous tenons à remercier tous les bénévoles engagés auprès du Centre multiculturel sans lesquels de nombreux évènements n'auraient pu avoir lieu. Nous les remercions pour leur engagement et leur dévouement envers les nouveaux arrivants. Merci à eux pour leur soutien à la diversité de nos communautés.

MARYLINE PILLET



A MESSAGE FROM THE TIMMINS SETTLEMENT WORKER AND VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

2016 has been quite an eventful year. There have been many successes through events, partnerships and settlement assistance for newcomers here in Timmins and surrounding areas. It has been a very busy year learning about immigration updates and new immigration programs. I have also taken the opportunity to work on my professional development through online courses, webinars, workshops and conferences.

As the settlement worker, I have had the opportunity to travel to Cochrane, Kirkland Lake, Hearst, and Kapuskasing this year to provide settlement services to newcomers in these areas. In doing so, I was also able to meet with community partners and had the opportunity to develop partnerships with some of the organizations.

This year, the Timmins Multicultural Centre took part in many events such as, Welcome to Timmins Night, Welcome to Cochrane Night, the Multicultural Festival and the International Day for Elimination against Racial Discrimination. These events are an essential part of creating a welcoming community for newcomers as they promote inclusion and awareness.

One of the biggest barriers that newcomers face in Timmins is language. There are no English Classes offered in the Timmins area, and this can be very challenging for newcomers whose first language is not English. Our intern Brittany and I took initiative and decided to start our own English Classes. We were able to recruit two wonderful volunteers who have now taken over the program and are doing a great job! This will ensure that newcomers have a support in place to help them improve their language skills.

This year, we have made 3 volunteer matches and have recruited, screened and trained two new volunteers to run our English Classes, as mentioned above. The biggest trend for volunteers here in Timmins is English tutors. As there is a gap in language services, there is a large need for English as a second language tutors. Our volunteers are an essential part of settlement service delivery as their contributions help our newcomer clients integrate smoothly in the community.

In spring of 2016, the TDMC was approached by a group of newcomers who were interested in playing Cricket. Cricket is an internationally recognized sport, however it is not well known in Canada. We were able to help the cricket team secure practice space for the summer and helped them recruit new players. They also travelled to North Bay, Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie where they played in tournaments against other teams. We proudly have their trophy displayed in our office for all to see.

“CULTURAL DIFFERENCES SHOULD NOT SEPARATE US FROM EACH OTHER, BUT RATHER, CULTURAL DIVERSITY BRINGS A COLLECTIVE STRENGTH THAT CAN BENEFIT ALL OF HUMANITY”.

ROBERT ALLAN AURTHUR



My time with the Timmins & District Multicultural Centre has been extremely informative and enriching. Thank you to everyone who has helped in making our community a welcoming and safe space for newcomers.

MELANIE-LYNN LAFRENIERE



A MESSAGE FROM THE BUSINESS INCUBATOR MANAGER

I have been involved with the project for the last year and half and it has been amazing to watch the project grow. As it comes to an end December 31st I am grateful to have seen its highs and lows and for the learning opportunity it provided me, as well as its members.

I have managed to learn a great deal about the economic landscape of North Bay and what it is that entrepreneurs are looking for, as well as the strong entrepreneurial spirit found in the people in our community.

Over the summer we had an unexpected surge in interest from the local art community. Steven Kudla, a local artist came in with a business plan and set up a gallery/studio space where he consulted for graphic design work and artwork as well as custom t-shirts. His membership drew others in the community and we ended up with a total of 3 very different artists in the Boutiques.

In the last six months we saw a great deal of interest from a variety of businesses and retailers in our space. However, at this point, most were looking for a place where they might set up long term, and with the end of the program in December that was not something that we could accommodate. At one point over the last year, we even had a waiting list for our private offices proving desire and need for this type of project in North Bay.

Over the last two years Sarah and her successor Kait with 109 entrepreneurs seriously interested in starting businesses and had 21 people participate in programs to increase economic opportunity. The project saw 16 businesses come through its doors and many of them moved on to great success after their time here.

This year's key events included the Old Fashioned Christmas Walk and the final Gallery Hop of the year. Both events saw a great deal of foot traffic and generated a great deal of interest in the project and its mandate. The retail members used these opportunities to make key connections in the downtown art community and gain exposure for their products and work.

KAIT MORRIS

"I HAVE MANAGED TO LEARN A GREAT DEAL ABOUT THE ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE OF NORTH BAY AND WHAT IT IS THAT ENTREPRENEURS ARE LOOKING FOR, AS WELL AS THE STRONG ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT FOUND IN THE PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY".



A MESSAGE FROM THE OUTREACH & EVENTS INTERN

Working at the Timmins & District Multicultural Centre has been rewarding, educational and eye-opening. Upon starting my internship, I had no idea what to expect. Being a newcomer to Timmins and recently graduating from post-secondary, I was nervous about taking on a completely new role, however, I was ready to accept the challenge.

While working here, I have had the opportunity to sit in on many committee meetings, such as the Syrian Refugee Sponsorship Committee, Welcome to Timmins Night Committee and the Timmins International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Committee. Attending meetings has been one of my favourite aspects of the position and has provided me with the opportunity to meet and network with various professionals in the community.

After facing challenges with the lack of English as a Second Language (ESL) opportunities in the community, the TDMC decided to create ESL classes towards the end of the year. Soon after, we were blessed with two amazing, experienced volunteers to run one beginner and one intermediate class. Being involved in the whole process from recruiting students to finding a space, attending and overseeing the classes has been challenging at times, but overall very rewarding. From week-to-week interacting and witnessing the students improve their English skills has been a better experience than I ever imagined. During conversational components of the classes, I enjoy connecting with newcomers and learning more about their life and personal experiences. I can proudly say I thoroughly enjoy attending the English classes every second week.

I could not have asked for a better group of people to learn from and work with. Between the North Bay and Timmins office, whenever I have a question it is answered. This has allowed for a very positive and supportive work environment allowing me to grow personally and professionally. I'm looking forward to what is to come at the Multicultural Centre!

BRITTANY PENTLAND

"DURING CONVERSATIONAL COMPONENTS OF THE CLASSES, I ENJOY CONNECTING WITH NEWCOMERS AND LEARNING MORE ABOUT THEIR LIFE AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCES. I CAN PROUDLY SAY I THOROUGHLY ENJOY ATTENDING THE ENGLISH CLASSES EVERY SECOND WEEK".



A MESSAGE FROM THE NORTHEASTERN ONTARIO IMMIGRATION PORTAL PROJECT COORDINATOR

Over the past year, I've had the pleasure of working with a team of dedicated professionals to develop and launch a new tool that will enable our region to address issues of static and declining populations.

The Timmins and District Multicultural Centre (TDMC) in partnership with the Timmins Economic Development Corporation (TEDC) embarked on this new project that is indented to attract growth, change and innovation within the region. With support from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, a new regional immigration portal is now available to help attract and retain newcomers and immigrants to the northeastern Ontario. The new portal is bilingual, mobile friendly, and organizes community information necessary to make important settlement decisions in a simple and accessible way. The site can be accessed here: <http://neoimmigration.ca/>

Over the past year, I had the opportunity to visit most of the communities that are featured within the portal. I was welcomed with open arms in each municipality and I've learned that each of the communities has something unique to offer. What I found across the region are welcoming faces, vast forests, wide open spaces, wild life and a lot of fresh air. I have had the opportunity to meet many newcomers who have settled in the area and have found great success. It was a pleasure to be part of such an important project that will help ensure cultural and economic vibrancy for the communities in northeastern Ontario.

SYLVIE LAMOTHE

COMMUNITY
CANNOT FOR
LONG FEED ON
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ONLY FLOURISH
WITH THE COMING
OF OTHERS FROM
BEYOND, THEIR
UNKNOWN AND
UNDISCOVERED
BROTHERS.

HOWARD
THURMAN



A MESSAGE FROM THE TIMMINS LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP (TLIP)

“Unless you know the road you’ve come from, you cannot know where you are going” - African proverb
 This year, the LIP officer's priority was to capture membership feedback – from individuals, organizations, community partners and sectors (particularly employers) – in order to better secure participation from project partners. This feedback was then used to enhance the participation and engagement through restructuring and/or adjusting the approach to committee work.

Members wanted more direction, reporting, feedback and follow-ups, and also felt that more newcomers needed a seat at the table to empower them to become agents of change within their own community. As such, the LIP officer conducted research into how LIPs operate across the country. Taking into consideration the context of a small, rural, northern community, the LIP officer looked into other similar LIPs to find what could be replicated in Timmins. Specifically, the focus was on governance and organizational structure, committee type and mandate, and the mechanisms that create desired outcomes.

“UNLESS YOU KNOW THE
 ROAD YOU’VE COME FROM,
 YOU CANNOT KNOW WHERE
 YOU ARE GOING” –

AFRICAN PROVERB

As a result of this feedback and research an Executive Committee was created, an Advisory Committee replaced the Settlement and Welcoming Committee’s and ad hoc working groups established reflecting the priorities outlined in work plans. Furthermore, the mandate of the Advisory Committee was adapted to reflect previous committee objectives while expanding the scope to include offering a forum for stakeholders - newcomers, community partners, employers, service providers – to communicate their opinions, share their expertise and coordinate services.

During this project review, the LIP also conducted the 3rd annual International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (IDERD) Project with 3rd Annual Evening of Applause held at College Boreal. The event awarded City of Timmins Human Rights Hall of Fame, Students Who Make a Difference, and the Anti-racism Artwork contest winners. This year we were able to unveil our Human Rights Wall of Fame, in partnership with the City of Timmins, to the public and media with inducted members on hand. The Partnership also successful hosted the 2016 Welcome to Timmins Night in collaboration with the TDMC. More than 600 people, including roughly 60 newcomers, attended the showcase with over 120 service provider exhibitors.

Since September 2015, the LIP has been highly involved with the Syrian refugee resettlement initiative on a local level. After the City of Timmins announced it would be matching donations up to \$15,000.00 to bring a Syrian refugee family to Timmins, the LIP was called upon to assist in facilitating the process by which the refugee family would come to Timmins. As there were no established sponsorship groups or civil society groups engaged in refugee resettlement, the LIP was seen as the entity to expedite the process. The LIP would then assemble community volunteers and stakeholders to create a refugee sponsorship group



(Timmins Refugee Sponsorship Group) in order to get the process started. Soon after, the sponsorship group raised more than \$90,000.00 and enabled the committee to commit to bring two refugee families. Almost two years later, on March 10, 2017 the community of Timmins received its first Syrian refugee family.

TOM BABY



A MESSAGE FROM THE NORTH BAY NEWCOMER NETWORK (NNN) / LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP (LIP) COORDINATOR

The North Bay Newcomer Network had a busy year of new opportunities. Two pilot projects came to a close, which enabled NNN to engage new partners as well as apply for new funding opportunities.

The Employers' Council's Skilled Newcomer Career Loan Program continues to run. This program was developed in partnership with the City of North Bay. With the pilot funding period coming to an end, this year NNN handed over management of this community loan program to the settlement program at NBDMC. This community loan program helps skilled newcomers upgrade their credentials so they can get back to work in their field. This character-based loan enables our district to fully benefit from internationally trained talent while offering an avenue for skilled newcomers that lack established Canadian credit.

The online platform can be found on the North Bay Immigration Portal at northbayimmigration.ca.

The Welcoming Committee's incubator pilot project came to a close in December. This two-year pilot project brought new partnerships and opportunities to connect with the North Bay community. During the two-year pilot many entrepreneurs thrived. We saw several Genesis@204 members graduate into their own locations. Make sure to check out Project Manager Kait Morris's report on Genesis@204.

We worked with the City of North Bay to begin the process of updating the municipal immigration plan. Created in 2007, the original plan recommended a settlement agency be established, which soon became the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre. The new plan engages local employers, immigration experts, newcomers, and service providers in the foundations of the eventual recommendations. NNN is excited to move forward together with the City of North Bay in creating a North Bay that welcomes, values and fully benefits from the contributions of newcomers to Canada. Stay tuned these coming months for the launch of the new North Bay municipal immigration plan.

NNN has spoken to a community members and stakeholders over the years about organizing a local multicultural festival. With the upcoming Ontario150 celebrations NNN partnered with a local theater organization to apply for Ontario150 funding for a Drum & Dance Festival to be held in summer 2017. In January 2017 we received confirmation that the proposal would be successfully funded. The planning committee partnered with the annual Summer in the Park Festival to host the North Bay Drum & Dance Festival in partnership during the August Civic holiday weekend 2017.

We continue to plan opportunities as we look into next year.

The North Bay Newcomer Network continues because of its dedicated partners and our engaged community. Many thanks and appreciation goes out to all who support and encourage the work we do.

MEG RAMORE

