



North Bay & District Multicultural Centre

Immigrant Settlement Services

NEWSLETTER

From Don Curry, Executive Director

North Bay part of demonstration immigration project

North Bay, Brockville and Chatham-Kent have been selected as demonstration



Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Michael Chan was at North Bay City Hall May 22, 2009 to discuss a new immigration demonstration project involving North Bay, Brockville and Chatham, sponsored by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Meeting with the minister were from left: Don Curry and Taslima Ahmed of the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre; Mayor Vic Fedeli; Minister Chan; Tourism Minister and Nipissing MPP Monique Smith; Caroline Loiselle of the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration; Magdy ElDakiky of OMAFRA; and Chetna Sharma of the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines.

cities for a Community Immigration Retention in Rural Ontario (CIRRO) project. Sponsored by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and other provincial government ministries, the project kicked off May 22 with a visit from Citizenship and Immigration Minister Michael Chan and an almost full-day event May 26 at the Best Western, hosted by the Mayor's Office of Economic Development.

The North Bay Newcomer Network will help coordinate the project, which will develop tools and best practices for smaller Ontario cities interested in attracting and retaining newcomers to Canada. Local leads are Caroline Loiselle from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration; Chetna Sharma from the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines; and Marla Tremblay from the Mayor's Office of Economic Development. Results of the project will help influence provincial government policy on how to attract newcomers to Ontario's smaller centres rather than the Greater Toronto Area.

English Conversation Circles

We are now partnering with the North Bay Public Library to continue our successful English Conversation Circles. They are open to any newcomer to Canada who would like the opportunity to practise his or her English in an informal, friendly session. The summer schedule is June 11 and 25; July 9 and 23; and August 13 and 27. They are held in the auditorium at the library and begin at 6 p.m. each evening. Anyone seeking further information can call us at 495-8931 or 495-8887.

Lending library almost ready to go

Resources for our anti-racism and cross-cultural education lending library are in and we are almost ready to make them available to the public. More than \$3,000 of our \$20,000 Community Builders grant from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration was spent on books, DVDs and other materials.

The remainder of the grant was spent on new brochures, posters and transit advertising in North Bay. Once all our English and French resources are catalogued we will put them on our website and provide them to the four school boards for their websites. They will be available free of charge to teachers and community groups. We thank our student intern, Emily Jusic, from the Social Service Worker program at Canadore College, for all her work in leading this project. We also thank our advisory committee from the four school boards: Blanche-Hélène Tremblay from Conseil scolaire catholique Franco-Nord; Jodie Nychuk from the Near North District School Board; Marylou Cappadocia from the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board and Ashli Lewis of Conseil scolaire public du Nord-Est de l'Ontario.

Client statistics for first full year

The fiscal year ending March 31 marked our first full year of operation. During the 12-month period we served 67 eligible clients under the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP) and they made 532 visits to our offices. ISAP-eligible clients are permanent residents of Canada or refugees.

During the year we also provided assistance to approximately 100 ineligible clients, comprised of Canadian citizens, temporary foreign workers and international students. Because Canadian citizens may still require language classes, assistance in sponsoring relatives, or other services, we continue to voice our concern that they should be eligible clients. Temporary foreign workers and international students who want to become permanent residents also require service. In North Bay and area they have nowhere to turn but to us.

We recently completed a mass mailing of our brochures to 26 area municipalities in an effort to broaden our base of clients outside North Bay. We encouraged mayors and councils to inform municipal and library staff about our services and make our brochures available in libraries and municipal offices.

Staff news



Ann Welsh (left) and Oweeny De Silva of the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre at the International Food Festival at Nipissing University.

Oweeny De Silva, who led our Host program, is on the move. Her last day with us was June 9, as she moves on to new opportunities in Ottawa. Oweeny and Program Coordinator Ann Welsh took our Host program from no matches to 25 in the last fiscal year, and from no volunteers to 28. The Host program matches area residents with a newcomer to Canada to

provide friendship, support, local knowledge and an opportunity to practise English or French. Oweeny's outgoing personality, organizational skills, empathy and

friendship will be missed by clients and staff. We wish her well.

Staying with staff news for a minute, Program Coordinator Ann Welsh is getting married August 1. The lucky guy is Ryan Barnhart, a graduate student at York University, consultant and right-arm to Jimmy Colios at Churchill's Prime Rib House.

Taslina Ahmed, our settlement counsellor, is approaching her one-year anniversary with us, and Vindra Sahadeo has moved from the Local Immigration Partnership coordinator position to succeed Oweeny in the Host program. Funding for the LIP program was put on hold after only one month of operation. We thank the more than 200 applicants who expressed interest in Oweeny's position.

Citizenship and Immigration Minister Michael Chan enjoyed dinner at Mexicali Rosa's when he was in the city May 22, where our board chair, Susan Church, is the owner/operator. Susan ended up having a 40-minute chat with the minister about the multicultural centre and the city's immigration initiatives. The minister tracked her down in the kitchen to say goodbye.

Second floor expansion

We were running out of room in our approximately 1,600 square feet of space on the main floor at 374 Fraser Street so we have added another 1,250 square feet on the second floor. We thank our board chair, Susan Church, Executive Director of Blue Sky Economic Growth Corporation, and Pat Aspin, Executive Director of Nipissing East Community Opportunities (NECO), for supplying us with board tables and chairs for our upstairs meeting space. Pat also found us a desk and

steno chairs for the upstairs office and reception space. We can now accommodate larger meetings than we could previously and we have more room for staff.

Nugget articles

Nugget Editor Steve Hardy and his editorial staff have been very supportive in helping us get the immigration message out to Nugget readers. The Nugget has supplied space and great design work for my periodic articles featuring newcomers to North Bay and for a coming (Saturday June 27) in-depth feature on immigration initiatives in North Bay. Immigration is literally changing the face of the city, something The Nugget noted in a front-page headline back on April 3, 2008.

Canada Day multicultural showcase

We are working very closely with Chelsa Mayhew at the City of North Bay and J.P. Fournier of École secondaire publique Odyssee in organizing the multicultural showcase feature of Canada Day at the waterfront this year. This will be the third year the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre has played a leading role in organizing the event. Auditions were held at Odyssee May 23 and it should be a great show. Join us at the Kiwanis Bandshell immediately following the Canada Day cake cutting.

The international soccer game, which was a huge hit last year, will be held at the Lee Park soccer field at 4 p.m. Nipissing University is playing a lead role in organizing that event.

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

The 21st annual International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Evening of Applause was held March 25 at École secondaire catholique Algonquin and we were thrilled to honour West Ferris Secondary School teacher John Hetherington as this year's inductee to the Human Rights Hall of Fame. His photo will soon appear on the wall outside the library at Canadore College and Nipissing University. I thank Carol Larouche and Steven Newman at Canadore for keeping the hall photos up to date.

Nipissing Area Scouts Canada received the organization award for their many good works over many years. The evening also recognized Students Who Make a Difference from every grade and high school plus Canadore and Nipissing. Anti-racism poster contest winners were also recognized, and took home \$50 apiece. Blanche-Hélène Tremblay did a great job as MC for the event.

Immigration portal

Work continues on the North Bay Immigration Portal, which will become the prime immigrant marketing tool of the city. Marla Tremblay of the Mayor's Office of Economic Development heads the project and she says it is on schedule for a public launch before the end of the year.

Vancouver conference a learning opportunity

The Maytree Foundation, partially through funds from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, sponsored four of us from North Bay to attend the 2009 ALLIES Learning Exchange in Vancouver June 11-12. Going with me were Ann Welsh of our office, in her capacity as chair of the settlement committee of the North Bay Newcomer Network; Marla Tremblay, co-chair of NNN; and Andrea Stoppa, Acting Executive Director of the Labour Market Group, a member of NNN. A major goal of the conference was to provide the tools and encourage municipalities across Canada to establish employment councils to assist employers in hiring newcomers. More than 200 people attended from across Canada. We learned a lot from the big three (Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver) and from communities bigger and smaller than ours. We left convinced that NNN is on the right track, but we can do more.



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