



North Bay & District Multicultural Centre &  
Timmins & District Multicultural Centre

Annual Report 2019

## Thank you to our Funders

The North Bay & District Multicultural Centre and the Timmins & District Multicultural Centre wish to gratefully acknowledge operational funding from Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

Additional funding from the City of North Bay, Timmins Economic Development Corporation, District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board and FedNor is much appreciated. We also thank those who chose to make charitable donations to us in the past year.

*Thank*  
**YOU**



## Board of Director's

Don Curry, Chair  
Simon Blakeley  
Natalya Brown  
George Burton  
Marcus Étienne  
Brian Marks  
Susan Pratt  
Gina Sherry  
Dave Wolfe

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## Staff

### North Bay

Deborah Robertson, Executive Director  
Vindra Sahadeo, Program Coordinator  
Meg Ramore, LIP Coordinator  
Cindy Tibbles, Settlement Worker & Volunteer Coordinator (Maternity Leave Oct 2018)  
Taslina Ahmed, Settlement Worker  
Tara Gillies, Office Manager  
Ziyaad Rajabalee, English Language Practice Lead

### Timmins

Mike Scott, LIP Coordinator  
Kayla Parent, Settlement Worker & Volunteer Coordinator  
Nourin Ali, Multiculturalsim Project Officer Intern

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### North Bay & District Multicultural Centre

100 Main Street, East  
North Bay, ON P1B 1A8  
[www.nbdmc.ca](http://www.nbdmc.ca)

### Timmins & District Multicultural Centre

130 Pine Street South, Suite 1  
Timmins, ON P4N 2M5  
[www.timminsmulticultural.ca](http://www.timminsmulticultural.ca)

## Board Chair's Report 2019

We become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic. Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams.  
- Jimmy Carter

Twelve years go by fast!

That's how long it has been since Tara Gillies, Ann Welsh and I opened the Fraser Street door of the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre January 1, 2008. There were actually two years of preparation before that, working with the City of North Bay and the then Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and a couple of years before that working with the North Bay Newcomer Network.

Since then we expanded twice at our original location and then moved to the present location at 100 Main St. E. in downtown North Bay.

I resigned my position as board chair at the December meeting with profound regret. I launched a new business in immigration consulting at the start of December, and as North Bay's first Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant I felt there could be a conflict of interest if I ever had a client referred from the multicultural centre.

That is not to say I won't be there if the centre needs some assistance or advice. I have too much invested in its future success.

We have had a bit of staff turnover over the years, especially in our Timmins office. However the North Bay office, with Deborah Robertson, Vindra Sahadeo, Cindy Tibbles, Meg Ramore and of course Day 1 staff member Tara Gillies, has been fairly constant. Together, they have years of experience to guide the hundreds of clients who come through the doors.

We have lost board members due to our nine-year limit and for other reasons but there has not been rapid turnover and the present complement of directors has the experience to guide the agency forward.

The federal government has listened to our constant refrain that more has to be done with federal immigration policy to encourage newcomers to land in Northern Ontario. The result is the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot getting under way in January 2020 and it will be very interesting to monitor its success over the years. Success will be measured not by how many come, but by how many stay. Have we contributed to North Bay and Timmins and

surrounding communities becoming welcoming communities for newcomers? I certainly think so.

I am confident the multicultural centre staff in both North Bay and Timmins will be doing their best to ensure newcomers arriving under the pilot program get the assistance they need to settle and integrate into the community.

The North Bay & District Multicultural Centre, the Timmins & District Multicultural Centre and the Local Immigration Partnerships in both cities have been a big part of my life for some time. While I am saying goodbye to a formal role I will be cheering them on from the sidelines and helping out whenever I can.

**Don Curry**  
**Board Chair**

## Executive Director's Report 2019

“We’re all in this together.” – Sam Roberts

2019 began with a call for proposals from our major funder: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). I am happy to report that we were successful in receiving ongoing funding for our core services - Settlement and Orientation and the Local Immigration Partnerships, both in North Bay and Timmins. In a welcome move, IRCC have increased the length of their contracts to 5 years, which provides increased stability for our programming and partnerships.

Earlier this year, it was announced by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada that North Bay and Timmins had been selected to take part in the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot. The pilot provides a pathway to permanent residency for those who meet certain eligibility requirements from the federal government in addition to community specific requirements. The pilot will launch early in 2020 and we are working with numerous community partners to support this exciting initiative.

A brand new project for us this year was the Digital Messaging for Settlement and Integration Project (DMSI). We are one of only 4 pilot sites across Canada selected to receive funding for this project – others are in Calgary, Hamilton and Ottawa. The focus of the project is to use a Facebook group and Messenger to decrease social isolation for clients who live in outlying areas. The digital platform provides opportunities to share experiences and offer peer support, client to client. We are looking forward to continuing the project into 2020.

Our Timmins office has seen a lot of movement this year – both in staff changeover and a literal move across the street. The Timmins & District Multicultural Centre, including the Timmins Local Immigration Partnership, packed up and moved less than a block away to their new home in the Timmins Economic Development Corporation offices in June. The new location is far more visible, offers more scope for signage and provides great opportunities for partnerships and support.

Board Chair, Don Curry, resigned from the Board in December of this year. Don’s resignation from the Board marks an end to a 12 year involvement with the Centre. Don is now a Regulated Immigration Consultant and is focussing on his business full time. Don was the founding Executive Director of the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre and a constant support and advocate for newcomers to our region. I thank him for his dedication, enthusiasm and leadership. I would be remiss to not also thank our dedicated and committed Board members for their support and guidance over the past 12 months.

In addition to IRCC, I remain grateful to our many funders including the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, FedNor, the District of Nipissing Social Services and Administration Board, Timmins Economic Development Corporation and the City of North Bay who have provided financial support for several projects and programs over the year.

Deborah Robertson  
Executive Director

## Program Coordinator Report 2019

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did but people will never forget how you made them feel.”- D. Maya Angelou

This year was a very interesting year in many respects. It was a year of enlightenment for me on some very crucial aspects of our core values and beliefs and how different people make meaning of them. It was a year of education, learnings and revelations, as I came to terms with major aspects of my reality as a racialized person in a small white town.

We welcomed Maryline Pillet as our Settlement worker as Cindy Tibbles proceeded on Maternity leave. Taslima, Maryline and Chantal Boudreau in our Timmins office worked exceedingly well as team and continued to serve our clients with compassion, empathy and professionalism.

We said goodbye to Chantal Boudreau at the end of the summer as she moved out of town and onto new adventures. We welcomed Kayla Parent as our new settlement worker in Timmins and she came in with passion and commitment and was very quick to master the role as the Timmins settlement worker.

As a team we continued to steadfastly serve our clients and went above and beyond to ensure that their settlement process was smooth.

We thank our funders, volunteers and community partners for their continued support.

Vindra Sahadeo  
Program Coordinator



## Settlement Worker Report North Bay 2019

“The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.”  
– Albert Einstein

I am so thrilled to be back from my second maternity leave and looking ahead to a fruitful year with my colleagues, our clients, volunteers and community partners. I would like to extend a big thank you to Marilyn Pillet for delivering such outstanding support and dedication to clients in my absence. I know you will be greatly missed by all.

While I cherished the time I was so fortunate to have with my daughter, I'm eager now more than ever to provide meaningful settlement assistance. Upon my return, it has been a pleasure and honor meeting the many new families and individuals that have chosen to settle into our community over the last year.

Becoming a mother has certainly changed my thinking outward to our community and to how critical it is that we support one another. We must continue to shift our thinking from accepting or tolerating our differences to embracing and valuing them. We have an opportunity to learn from every person's unique experience walking through this world.

What a privilege to be the chosen community folks have immigrated to. Even while some were forced to flee here as refugees, they still make a choice every day to stay or leave our city. We all must do our part in making our community more welcoming for everyone. We all play a role in influencing a positive change in the daily lives of newcomers to Canada. While providing settlement assistance is a critical component to this, it is not enough. We must continue to strive for positive change in our community.

I am looking forward to building new and strengthening existing relationships with community service providers, volunteers, and clients in the year ahead. Let's all give a big, warm, and meaningful welcome to all!

Cindy Tibbles  
Settlement Worker and Volunteer Coordinator

## Settlement Worker Report North Bay 2019

Reach high, for the stars lie hidden in you. Dream deep, for every dream precedes the goal.”  
-Rabindranath Tagore

We are happy to report another successful year. It has been an extraordinarily dynamic, demanding and transformative year for NBDMC. We are very grateful to IRCC and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services for their continued support of our programs. One local funding opportunity emerged during the year resulting in the Empowering Women Catering Project.

We have seen an influx of international students and their families in recent years. The settlement program welcomed the largest number of international students from different countries last year. In spite of many limitations, our collective expertise and experience allowed us to guide the international students to prepare and settle in the community.

We provide comprehensive needs assessment services and referrals for newcomers by addressing the complex and multiple issues of adjusting to their new country. The Settlement program relies on partnerships and good collaboration with many other organizations. We continue to work closely with the community organizations that enable us to empower our clients with vital skills for employment, settlement and integration, and well-being.

The year ahead promises new opportunities and growth. With the Rural & Northern Immigration Pilot launching soon, the coming year sure will be busy and exciting. We are committed to carrying on our role in offering a culturally informed bridge between recent newcomers to this community and those who arrived earlier, keeping in mind that with the exception of our First Nations peoples, we are all immigrants to Canada.

Talsima Ahmed  
Settlement Worker

## Settlement Worker Report Timmins 2019

Our attitude towards immigration reflects our faith in the Canadian ideal. We have always believed it possible for men and women who start at the bottom to rise as far as the talent and energy allow. Neither race nor place of birth should affect their chances.

Although I have only been part of the Timmins & District Multicultural Center as a Settlement Worker for a short amount of time, I have learned many things regarding immigration. I have been part of the Timmins community for 15 years and have much knowledge of the services offered in Timmins and the surrounding areas.

I have a great sense of appreciation for the diverse group of clients we work with and the difference within all cultures.

I have had the opportunity to help clients in person, via telephone as well as via email. This has facilitated much needed services for clients with limited access to transportation in our surrounding areas.

I have also had the opportunity to facilitate a few social events for our clients which have proven to be quite successful and enjoyable. This has given me the opportunity to get to know the clients we serve on a more personal level.

The relationships I have built with clients have proven to be positive for the clients we serve as well as, myself.

I am fortunate enough to work with a fantastic group of colleagues within the North Bay and Timmins office who have helped me learn what I know today regarding immigration and settlement. I look forward to continuing to enhance my knowledge within this field as there is always room for growth and increased knowledge.

**Kayla Parent**  
Settlement Worker, Timmins and Surrounding Area

## Digital Messaging for Settlement and Integration (DMSI) Project Report 2019

"Surround yourself with only people who are going to lift you higher."  
-Oprah Winfrey

The North Bay & District Multicultural Centre has reached out to newcomer clients with our Facebook Group and Facebook Messenger centered project: NewcomerNEO.

Funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), this digital community project started in March 2019 and ended December 2020 but continues with the help of NBDMC staff who post on Facebook and message clients online. The online group was created to build stronger ties between newcomers throughout our region, provide opportunities for peer support and reduce social isolation. Clients have joined the group online from locations throughout the region we serve. We have made connections to new groups, such as the Empowering Women's Catering project, new and increasing numbers of international students at post-secondary institutions and we continue to add Adult ESL students to the group. Literacy Nipissing, as a result of increased demand by advanced English Language Learners, has developed a classroom of students who learned about their service through our digital messages and posts. Events promoted through our personal messages in the Facebook Messenger App and through the WhatsApp International Friends and Professional Women Newcomer Network online communities have led to participation in job fairs, student orientation, and most recently, Christmas events.

Each day there are newcomers who use our digital community to support their integration locally and we receive personal messages that answer specific questions. As a result, we have had interest in English, and job hunting, the Santa Claus parade and networking for employment.

As of January, 2020 there are 90 member of the group online. The lead agency for this project Refugee613 is evaluating the results of this pilot and 3 others funded for one year. We will be hosting events and asking participants to respond to surveys about their experience.

Chantal Phillips  
DMSI Project Coordinator

## Coordinator of the North Bay and Area Local Immigration Partnership (NBLIP) Report 2019

“When a flower doesn’t bloom, you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower.”  
-Alexander Den Heijer

2019 brought clear focus and new opportunities for the North Bay and Area Local Immigration Partnership. It was a busy year; we submitted our five-year application to IRCC's 2020-2025 CFP, strategized with stakeholders on the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot, updated our terms of reference, rebranded, collaborated with northern partners, and shared best practices nationally.

### Vision for prosperity

The NBLIP Executive worked together to update our terms of reference. Previously we had four separate documents (one for each sub-committee, one for the executive committee). I am proud to share that NBLIP now has one terms of reference that clearly defines not only our priorities but our approach.

UPDATED: North Bay and Area LIP Operating Values:

- We commit to being *inclusive* in process and action, and in engaging local stakeholders with an intentional emphasis on the participation of newcomers
- We will be *responsive* to newcomers’ experiences of belonging, as well as the community's changing needs
- We *encourage* and *support* new ideas and innovation to enhance the newcomer experience
- We *recognize* the inherent value of newcomers
- We will be *intentional* in recognizing and addressing systemic barriers impacting newcomers



NORTH BAY & AREA LOCAL  
IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

*A New Prosperity*

## Connecting on northern needs

Over the last few years the Northern Ontario LIPs and RIF (Réseaux en immigration francophone) have been gathering to share priorities, identify trends, regionally strategize, and leverage efforts. This includes the North Bay LIP, Timmins LIP, Sault Ste. Marie LIP, Greater Sudbury LIP, Thunder Bay LIP, and Réseau du Nord (RIF covering all Northern Ontario). The greatest barrier to coordination is logistics. As a result, the five northern LIPs and RIF coordinated our CFP applications to IRCC for a Regional LIP & RIF Strategy Project. This project would bring us together twice a year, addressing our geographical and operational silos that make it a struggle to grow capacity. Being able to connect this way will contribute to better coordination of services, enhance leveraging of shared resources and knowledge-sharing, and enable the development of a Northern strategy that reflects and responds to the unique and evolving needs of the settlement sector in Northern Ontario.

## Sharing our work

In 2015 the Skilled Newcomer Career Loan was established through a working group of NBLIP. The innovative approach to this character-based community-loan program caught the eye of Cities of Migration, an international project of Ryerson University showcasing innovative ideas on immigrant integration from cities across the world. I was invited to present during the Cities of Migration webinar "Immigrant Futures: Regional Strategies for Northern Attraction and Retention" as part of a special series in the Immigrant Futures project exploring new approaches and strategies that can address challenges of attraction and retention of immigrants in small cities, towns and regions. I presented practical strategies, measurable successes and transferable lessons from the work led by the North and Area Bay LIP. A recording of the webinar can be found here: <http://citiesofmigration.ca/webinar/webinar-immigrant-futures-regional-strategies-for-northern-attraction-and-retention/>. An article spotlighting the program can be found here: [https://citiesofmigration.ca/good\\_idea/career-loans-a-community-investment/](https://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/career-loans-a-community-investment/).

I look forward to new partners and new opportunities in 2020.

Meg Ramore (pronouns: she/her)  
North Bay and Area LIP Coordinator

## 2019 Highlights:



### HUMAN RIGHTS HALL OF FAME

District of Nipissing  
20 19

**Dr. Michael DeGagné inducted into the 2019 Nipissing District Human Rights Hall of Fame**

Dr. Michael DeGagné has spent his entire career helping people and working to establish a vision and the conditions for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. Starting with his work with provincial and federal agencies and governments, including Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and Health Canada, and continuing as the founding executive director of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, his leadership had inspired hope and action for healing and reconciliation.

Dr. DeGagné imparts his belief that education is the key to a better world and an investment in one's personal future. Education, he insists, has the power to transform individuals and communities.

**Congratulations Michael!**



## NORTH BAY DRUM AND DANCE FESTIVAL / FESTIVAL DE TAMBOUR ET DE DANSE DE NORTH BAY

Feel The Beat @ Culture Days!

**FREE PERFORMANCES:**  
Saturday, September 28th  
12:00 NOON - 3:00 PM  
@ Kiwanis Bandshell

**FREE FAMILY WORKSHOP:**  
Sunday, September 29th  
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM  
@ North Bay Museum Amphitheatre

Join us as we open Nipissing Culture Days with the beat of the drum!  
African Drummers & Dancers, featuring International Master Drummer Amadou Klenou • Filipino Dancers • Indigenous Drummers • Tibetan Singing Bowl Musicians • & more Local Artists Playing the flute and Guitar!

NorthBayDrumAndDanceFestival.ca • NipissingCultureDays.com

## TRANSCENDER Day of Remembrance

Wednesday, November 20th

Candlelight Vigil  
7-7:30 P.M.

Reception  
7:45-8:30 P.M.

## Coordinator of the Timmins and Area Local Immigration Partnership (TLIP) Report 2019

Every successful individual knows that his or her achievements depends on a community of persons working together.”  
-unknown

This year has been one of new beginnings, renewed engagement and continued growth for the Timmins Local Immigration Partnership. In May of 2019 we, along with Timmins & District Multicultural Centre, relocated to a shared office space with the Timmins Economic Development Corporation. This move could not have come at a better time for TLIP as it was immediately followed by the announcement that Timmins would be one of the 11 communities selected for the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot Project. Since then, TLIP, TDMC and TEDC have worked very closely on all matters pertaining to the pilot as well as several other TLIP initiatives.

Over the summer of 2019, the TLIP Advisory Committee expanded from a group of 18 dedicated member organizations to its current 34 members. We look forward to expanding to include more representatives from the health care sector and beyond in 2020.

Apart from TLIP’s annual events which are highlighted below, the Fall of 2019 saw the launch of an ESL/FSL Task Force in Timmins, which plans to launch pilot programs in both official languages in the Fall of 2020. Community-based language learning programs that are accessible and affordable were recognized as a significant gap, and so a strong group of educators, community builders and would-be students are working collaboratively to address it.

Our 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Welcome to Timmins Night took place in September 2019 and featured 123 non-profit organizations, clubs and recreational activities. The organizing committee also created new attractions including a world map so that newcomers could identify their country of origin. By the end of the evening, we had a great sense of just how diverse our community is. We also had a City of Timmins photo backdrop created which gave people the opportunity to take photos with family, friends and some of the many characters that were in attendance.





Our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Francophone Immigration Week celebration took a great leap forward in terms of programming. With the help of the organizing committee and its various partners, we were able to host a total of five events throughout the week. The week began with a Mayoral proclamation delivered by City Councillor and dedicated TLIP member, Michelle Boileau at College Boreal. That same evening, College Boreal hosted a “Collective Kitchen” event where francophone international students from four different countries were able to create a dish unique to their culture. Cooking alongside them were representatives from the local francophone cultural group Les Perles du Nord. The remainder of the week featured a comedy show hosted by Centre Culturel La Ronde, a sports night sponsored by Université de Hearst, and capped off with social evening at Compass Brewing sponsored by Réseau du Nord.



TLIP and TDMC also increased its level of engagement with the international student population in 2019. Orientation days, International Education Week and the student-led Navratri Festival are just some of the events we attended in order to share information and increase awareness about our services. We continue to find ways to foster connections with our partners to help integrate students in all facets of community life.



In 2020, we look forward to continuing to support the roll-out of the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot in Timmins. We also have plans for some exciting new programs so stay tuned!

Mike Scott

Timmins and Area LIP Coordinator

## Multicultural Project Officer Report 2019

“Canada’s multiculturalism is our identity.” - Erna Paris

This internship is my first work experience as a fresh graduate. I am very fortunate to get to work on issues that matter the most to me and use Arabic my first language in certain aspects of my work.

Being part of immigration and settlement dialogues is very meaningful to me. I enjoyed working towards creating initiatives and projects to support the attraction, retention and integration of newcomers – including international students, temporary foreign workers and the diverse population.

Moreover, I learned how to work hand in hand with the community and learned from best practices. Our initiatives and projects rely on successfully bringing stakeholders together, creating new community partnerships, and strengthening existing ones. Welcome to Timmins Night – our biggest event of the year is the best example of community partnership.

What I found to be challenging yet very interesting is constantly evaluating our initiatives, assessing their alternatives, then adding little tweaks to enhance them accordingly every year. This was evident in our active presence in Downtown Timmins Urban Park, international students welcome and orientation weeks, international education week, and Francophone immigration week.

Overall, it is a very rich experience to me as I have been given the room to bring my ideas to reality and learn by doing along with a fantastic supportive team!

Nourin Ali  
Multiculturalism Project Officer

## ESL Instructor Report 2019

“Language is the road map of a culture. It tells you where its people come from and where they are going.” Rita Mae Brown

Our “English Language Practice” sessions online had yet another successful year in 2019. We were able to reach clients who needed access to language learning from far and wide. There is no doubt that the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre provided a perfect environment for teaching as well as an excellent platform that prepared the English language learners for their future endeavors.

In 2019, online participants were mostly families from Syria and Iran, and some from Latin America and Palestine. They joined the English Language Practice via Skype from as far as Deep River, Thunder Bay, Timmins and Parry Sound. They had various goals: most of them wanted to study English for the purpose of employment while others wanted enough English to join an ESL program at a college or to pass the citizenship test. My goal is to make them reach a CLB 3 level. In all cases, I was pleasantly surprised at how fast they gained the necessary language and intercultural skills despite the limited hours online.

When I started working at Multicultural Centre as an English Language Instructor, I had limited knowledge of online teaching, but I am grateful for the tremendous help and encouragement I received from everyone at North Bay & District Multicultural Centre. Valuable language learning tools such as books geared towards new immigrants, exclusive access to an online practice website and online Language Management System that Vindra made available were great assets that I am certain enhanced our clients’ learning experience and perhaps made this program memorable for them. I was able to be regularly in touch with our clients by phone, email and Skype.

In conclusion, I would like to thank everyone at the NBDMC: Deborah, Vindra, Taslima, Meg, Tara, and Cindy. I’m looking forward to continuing working with such a wonderful team, meeting our amazing clients and further enhancing our online sessions.

Ziyaad Rajabalee

<http://ziyaadspage.weebly.com/>