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Congratulations!

Congratulations to the Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre for being the recipient of the **Integration Award** at the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce Business Awards Gala on February 23rd.

An honour well-deserved!



Sandi Nicholls, Account Manager of Libro Credit Union (L), presents Lucia Harrison, Executive Director of the Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre with the Integration Award.

Hello Partners,

Welcome to our third newsletter. Over the fall 2013 many of you were engaged in the Community Action Planning (CAP) process, and we are extremely happy to be launching the Plan this year. Steering groups are currently in the midst of deciding which activities to tackle over the next 12 months in order to make progress in the identified priority action areas that they determined. You will find more information about the CAP inside this issue.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate newly elected chairs Pari Karem (Settle Steering Group) and Fauzia Mazhar (Belong Steering Group). Pari and Fauzia will also be members of Council representing these groups. We very much look forward to working with both of you.

In order to enhance communication, all Council and steering group minutes as well as quarterly updates will be placed on the Immigration Partnership website. Please be sure to go to www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/immigration-partnership/immigration-partnership.html for the meeting minutes and reports.

On another note, April is Volunteer Recognition month. The Immigration Partnership would not be the success it is today without everyone that makes up the Immigration Partnership – you, the volunteers. Thank you for your continuing support of the collective. We are so pleased to present a Feature Story in this issue written by staff and volunteers at the Volunteer Action Centre of Kitchener-Waterloo and Area.

I hope that you enjoy reading this latest newsletter. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Best wishes,

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This document is available in alternate formats upon request.

Feature Story – Celebrating Volunteers

Written by Dianne Boston-Nyp, staff member at the Volunteer Action Centre of Kitchener-Waterloo and Area

National Volunteer Week is held for one week in April each year to raise awareness of all the many wonderful people who contribute to making this country a great place to live. Watch the newspaper and television for stories of volunteers who are making a difference and how.

The Volunteer Action Centre of Kitchener-Waterloo and Area has been a participant in the Immigration Partnership's Belong Steering Group since it first began and we are glad to share our perspective with the readers of this newsletter.

Let it be known that the newcomer population is one of the primary target audiences we support in finding their way to volunteering experiences. With over 160 local organizations in our network – it is a good place to start.

Benefits of volunteering are not the same for all people but can have extra importance to someone just learning about their new home, culture and community. Here are some benefits that are most commonly recognized:

- Gain work experience
- Gain self-confidence and skills
- Improve English language
- Contribute to your community
- Network for success
- Meet new people and make new friends
- Find out about community services
- Increase your understanding of Canadian culture

The benefits to having newcomers as volunteers in our community are reciprocal. At the Volunteer Action Centre, we have had the

pleasure of working with many young bright volunteers experiencing their first volunteer placement in Canada right here at our Centre. Their time and talent to help support others with finding their way to a suitable volunteer position has been a great help to our small staff. The journey to being a connected community member in a new culture takes time and many hands reaching out along the way.



How to volunteer:

1. Visit the Volunteer Action Centre website to learn more about the volunteer opportunities at www.volunteerkw.ca. You can search by area of interest or special events.
2. Call the Volunteer Action Centre at **(519) 742-8610** to make an appointment and we can spend more time with you to find the opportunity that matches your skills.
3. Contact the volunteer manager of the organization that you are interested in and fill the application.

Feature Story (continued) – I am a New Canadian and I Volunteer

Written by Asma Alwahsh and Maria Jose Lambour

The challenge of getting involved in organized volunteering is a personal journey for each of us to explore and enjoy and here are a couple examples of two brave new volunteers.

Asma Alwahsh

I remember when I first moved to Canada; how I was so lost, confused and struggled from a lack of confidence. I contemplated traveling back to my country, Jordan, many times because of how lost I felt. After much internal conflict and debate, I decided to stay and discover the community that surrounds me. I went to the Volunteer Action Centre in person for an appointment at first and then learned to use their wonderful website that has so many great organizations listed on it.

I found many positions that suited my personal skills and interests. I soon started to volunteer at the YMCA of Kitchener-Waterloo to help other newcomers and I am now also a part-time staff at the Volunteer Action Centre with thanks to a program I learned about at Focus for Ethnic Women. In short, the opportunities were many because of my desire to persevere my challenges and fears.

Being a volunteer opens many opportunities for me to connect with new people, gain self confidence, skills and work experience and the most important thing it gives me the feeling of belonging to the community.

Maria Jose Lambour

Volunteering for me was a great opportunity, not just to learn about myself, what I enjoy and what my skills are but also to be able to give back to my community, help others and feel that my time was worth it. Volunteering opens the door to opportunities. It helped me to meet people, professionals and friends in my field that were understanding and supportive.

I volunteered at Volunteer Action Centre, Immigration Partnership and The Community Information Centre as well as other volunteer experiences from my country of origin where I learned the importance of volunteering and how volunteers make a difference. All these experiences provided me with a network that I was able to use later on to find employment. I am now working as an Employment Advisor for Lutherwood Employment Services and I can say I have more connections, resources and partners that help me serve my clients and provide them with the support they need according to their needs, values and goals.



(Left to right) Asma Alwahsh, Maria Jose Lambour and staff member Dianne Boston-Nyp from the Volunteer Action Centre

Upcoming Volunteer Week-Related Events

Annual Gala Awards Dinner to Recognize Volunteers

WHAT? The local Volunteer Action Centre (VAC) celebrates National Volunteer Week by holding an annual Gala Awards Dinner to recognize individuals, organizations and businesses that make impressive contributions to community organizations in Kitchener, Waterloo and surrounding areas. Nominations have already been collected for this year.

WHEN? Thursday April 3, 2014:
6 -10 p.m.

WHERE? Victoria Park Pavilion

HOW? All are welcome!

Volunteer Speed Matching

WHAT? Volunteer Speed Matching is set up just like speed dating, except that the daters are community organizations who will meet up with an interested group of professionals looking to explore volunteer opportunities in Kitchener, Waterloo and area.

WHEN? Tuesday, April 8, 2014: 5 - 8 p.m.

WHERE? The Flying Dog, 341 Marsland Drive, Waterloo

HOW? Please register before Tuesday, March 25 at www.volunteerkw.ca

Upcoming Immigration Partnership Events

Global Skills Networking and Recruitment Event

WHAT? This is the 6th year of the Global Skills Conference which targets professional immigrants who want to learn more about ways they can prepare and find work in various sectors. As part of this Conference, a Networking and Recruitment event is hosted by the Immigration Partnership. We invite employers who are hiring or planning to hire to have a complimentary table to promote their company and job opportunities.

WHEN? Wednesday, April 2, 2014: Networking and Recruitment event time 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

WHERE? Bingemans Ballroom

HOW? If you are interested in exhibiting at this event, contact Nora Whittington at 519-575-4757 ext. 3173 nwhittington@regionofwaterloo.ca. Space is limited, so book early!

Diversity Intelligence Seminars

WHAT? The Immigration Partnership offers Diversity Intelligence (DI) seminars which are delivered to employers and employment service providers. These complimentary lunch and learn events are popular.

WHEN? June 2014

HOW? Watch for details as they are available or contact Nora Whittington for more information.

Hot off
the press!



Employer Resource Guide

The Immigration Partnership has launched an Employer Resource Guide to simplify the process of finding International Talent for employers. If you are interested in more information about the Employer Resource Guide, contact Nora Whittington.

Highlighting Past Immigration Partnership Activities

Keys to Success for New Canadian Entrepreneurs – November 2013

*Submitted by Nora Whittington, Community Engagement Coordinator
for the Immigration Partnership*

The Immigration Partnership joined The Waterloo Region Small Business Centre in presenting an event to inspire new Canadians to find and understand their potential for success. Nick Noorani was the keynote speaker for the evening. Nick is a well-known thought leader in Canada and globally for the successful integration of immigrants and bridging cultural gaps in the workplace and beyond. He is a best-selling author and the founder of the Canadian Immigrant magazine.

Over 50 people attended the presentation at the Kitchener City Hall Rotunda. Some of the keys of entrepreneurship that Nick shared with the audience were: have a solid vision, be determined and focused, be ready to market and promote, have a community focus, set up a good team, surround yourself with mentors, be positive, believe in yourself, learn to network, take time to hear the silence and think. He also added that his '7 Success Secrets for Canadian Immigrants are: learn English, stay positive, embrace Canada, have a plan B, stay clear of ethnic silos, take risks, volunteer, mentor and network.

New Story Group of Waterloo Region – October and November 2013

Submitted by Janet Howitt, Community Engagement Coordinator for the Immigration Partnership

The Immigration Partnership Belong Steering Group has been invited to collaborate with the New Story Group of Waterloo Region to bring together our common vision of belonging. The New Story Group was started in 2010 by people with disabilities, families and agencies to start a 'new story' of inclusion. The goal of this group is to create positive change in human services and communities, so that vulnerable citizens can achieve full citizenship, participation and equality.

Current members represent a range of organizations and areas of interest including developmental disabilities, aging, health, mental health, immigrants and refugees and neighbourhood development. Dina Etmanskie has joined the New Story Group on behalf of the Belong Steering Group.

Funded by the Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation, the New Story Group planned two community forums to explore what belonging means to members of our community and identify ways to nudge people toward belonging. The group hopes to advocate and influence a vision for Waterloo Region as a welcoming community, valuing all people so they can participate in, and contribute fully to community life.

Stay tuned for more information in future newsletters!

Webcast viewing of the Vision 2020 National Settlement Conference – November 2013

*Submitted by Daniella McIntosh, Community Engagement Coordinator
for the Immigration Partnership*

The Immigration Partnership was selected to be a host for the webcast viewing of the Vision 2020 National Settlement Conference that took place in Ottawa from Nov. 13th-15th, 2013. Together, in partnership with the Mennonite Central Committee, we hosted 12 participants who were able to view segments of the conference that were being live streamed. This event brought together members from the Settle and Belong Pillars of the Immigration Partnership including community members and representatives from YMCA Immigrant Services, Reception House, Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support and the K-W Multicultural Centre.

The webcast featured an opening plenary by Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Chris Alexander and other breakout session topics included Measuring the Success of the Settlement Program, Responsive Programming and Delivery and Establishing an Evidence Based Model for Future Directions in Settlement.

Four key messages that were delivered throughout the conference were:

1. New immigration system means a need to prepare for change and adapt services
2. Data is key
3. Immigration will be employer focused
4. Explore innovative funding arrangements

During the conference, many references were made to the role of Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) in the future of the settlement program. It was shared that the overall purpose of LIPs are to bring community together; formalize already existing networks; and to have a coordinated, integrated approach to meet communities specific needs.

After the conference, webcast participants were invited to provide feedback and access to PowerPoint slides and archived webcast videos were made available.

Access to archived webcast videos is available at:

<http://www.meetview.com/vision2020/index.php?enter> (password: vision)

PowerPoint slides can be viewed at <http://www.vision2020conference.ca/ppt.asp>.

Community Action Plan (CAP) Update

Submitted by Nicole Francoeur, Social Planning Associate for the Immigration Partnership

Thank you to everyone who participated in updating the CAP! Consultations took place from August to December 2013 and involved the participation of over 150 people.

The CAP has been finalized and consists of a **full report** and **summary document**. It includes:

- 10 strategic directions
- 24 priority action areas
- Many possible activities. This provides a strong foundation for planning, while also enabling the Immigration Partnership to be flexible and adapt to the changing needs and circumstances of the community.

Since the finalization of the CAP, the Settle, Work and Belong Steering Groups have met to begin prioritizing activities and to develop their implementation plans, with the goal to make progress in all of the identified priority action areas by the end of 2016. The Immigration Partnership is up for the challenge! Implementation plans will be presented to Council in April 2014.

Please visit the Immigration Partnership website to view the CAP.

