



NEWSLETTER
ISSUE 8
FALL 2015

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DO YOU WANT TO CONTRIBUTE?

If you have suggestions or are interested in
writing an article for this newsletter, contact:

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 @ImmigrationWR
www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca

INNOVATING FOR CHANGE

One of the first things any newcomer to Waterloo Region will notice about this community is that it prides itself on being highly connected and innovative.

But what does being highly connected and innovative mean in a community that already appears to be that? It can mean being smart and creative in the ways and types of connections made; altering or transforming established programs, practices and partnerships; throwing out the old and starting afresh; and so much more.

Immigration Partnership strives to be reflective of those values, pathways and talents in bringing community partners together for positive change. Around our tables, partners are bringing forward ideas for or being asked to consider new ways of developing and delivering programs and services, new partnership models and opportunities for responding to needs. This newsletter is about programs that connect with and serve immigrants and a selection of “locally-grown” innovative initiatives that have the potential to change immigration and integration as we know it. You will also find information on the people behind Immigration Partnership and the work currently being done by our partners.

Once again a huge thank you goes to our partners for their ideas and contributions. We hope you enjoy this issue of our Newsletter and are inspired to get involved in improving immigration experiences in Waterloo Region in your own way.

Tara Bedard
Manager, Immigration Partnership

LOCALLY-GROWN APP TO TRANSFORM IMMIGRATION EXPERIENCES

Carlos Saavedra, Imminy CEO and Co-Founder

Imminy is a new, innovative web platform that attracts and guides international talent to communities that offer them the greatest opportunities for success in employment and life acclimation.

Imminy was first developed when I won a national hackathon in 2014 organized by the Government of Canada, just after I graduated from the University of Waterloo's Master of Digital Experience Innovation program. I and my friend Jason developed an app using open data to match newcomers to cities that aligned with their lifestyle preferences. Inspired by the stories and challenges my immigrant parents faced when coming to Canada, I knew I could create a platform to help improve today's Canadian immigration experience. I then worked with my brother Robert, who studied international politics and volunteered with international students at the University of Waterloo, to form Imminy.

In September 2014, we joined the Laurier Launchpad program at Communitech in Kitchener. Through over 100 interviews with immigrants and organizations, we learned about the frustration newcomers' face in bringing together all the essential information they need when coming to Canada. Knowledge gaps created by these frustrations have led to newcomers becoming employed in professions either below or outside their skill sets, and missing out on opportunities to access free settlement services in their community of choice. We also learned that communities and settlement organizations want to make themselves more visible to incoming immigrants, and employers wishing to hire immigrants are intimidated by the process.

On the Imminy platform, newcomers create a free profile based on personal information, desired career, job skills and community preferences and are matched to cities and towns in Canada that are the best fit for them. Newcomers then have access to vital information in seven languages about those communities including population, unemployment rate, diversity, average rent prices and more, all in one comprehensive package. Newcomers will also have access to career profiles that explain the requirements, skills, employment outlook, expected salary and regulation status of their desired career.

In addition to this matching tool, Imminy will also launch a job search service through which Imminy Job Hunters will look over a newcomer's online profile and begin the process of getting them an interview at a business located in the community they are matched to.

By building our knowledge through active engagement and discussion, we are preparing to disrupt the current immigration experience with Imminy this November. You can sign up to be invited to an early beta at: www.imminy.com.



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BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY

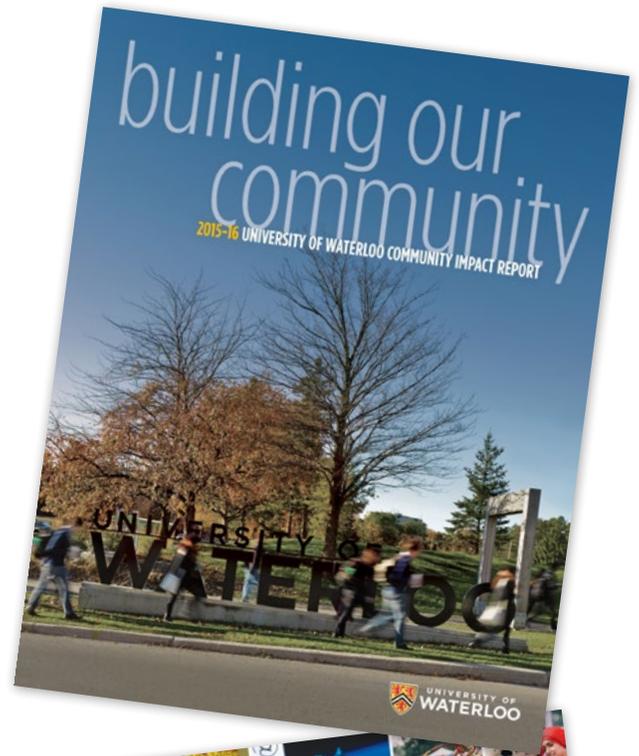
Access to the arts, exposure to new cultures and appreciation of diversity are the cornerstones of building a rich and vibrant community.

Welcoming individuals from across the world, the University of Waterloo is proud to have global connections institution-wide, including 35% of graduate students, 13% of undergraduate students and 322 faculty members with international roots.

As UWaterloo continues to expand its impact and reach both locally and globally, they recognize the need for a strong relationship with our community to reach their goals. By participating on the Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership Council, the University of Waterloo works alongside other local post-secondary institutions to leverage the benefits and celebrate the diversity that their international students, faculty and staff bring to our community.

On the morning of Friday, September 11, 2015, University of Waterloo President and Vice Chancellor, Feridun Hamdullahpur, hosted a number of elected officials and community leaders at the Waterloo Region Museum to launch the University's first ever Community Impact Report, Building Our Community.

Outlining UWaterloo's connections, partnerships and impact on the community, this report emphasizes the University's efforts in helping to make Waterloo region a great place to live, work and play. We invite you to learn more about the dynamic role they play in our community.



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NEW COLLABORATIONS FOR WELCOMING AND BELONGING

LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK

Janice Ouellette, City of Kitchener Volunteer Services

Local Government Week in Ontario takes place October 18-24, 2015 with the general goal of increasing youth and public awareness about the important role local government plays in our communities.

This year, the City of Kitchener (a lower-tier municipality) will showcase how municipal government services have the most direct impact on the daily lives of our residents and businesses by shining a light on the members of Council and City employees who deliver these vital services. The City of Kitchener will also focus their attention on newcomers and youth because they believe that when residents become active participants in local government, they become interested and invested in their community, further encouraging them to make it their home, take ownership and give back. The City wants to help newcomers and youth to see that becoming civically involved can help ensure that communities actually develop in a way that best meets their needs.

So, how will the City of Kitchener tackle this goal?

We are hosting a Citizenship Ceremony at Kitchener City Hall (on Tuesday, Oct. 20) in partnership with the Immigration Partnership and the City's Safe and Healthy Community Advisory Committee. Community partners, citizens and city staff are invited to witness the ceremony and then join the new citizens in a reception. Through displays and hand-outs and interactive games, staff will share information about the

local government services they provide to the community, the careers they have with the city and how our community members can become engaged. City of Kitchener Mayor Urbanovic will speak of his own immigrant story and the role local government plays in creating welcoming communities for newcomers.



The City of Kitchener also chose to focus their attention on newcomers and youth because they believe that when residents become active participants in local government, they become interested and invested in their community, further encouraging them to make it their home, take ownership and give back.

COMMUNITY GATHERING: WATERLOO REGION WELCOMES REFUGEES

Josh Hissa, Mennonite Central Committee Ontario Communications Coordinator

I'll admit it – I can be a pretty cynical person. It's tough not to be. We hear enough, see enough and have lived enough to sometimes forget the existence of general goodness in the world.

But over the past number of weeks, my cynical worldview has drastically changed. After witnessing firsthand the outpouring of support in Waterloo Region for refugees around the world, it's difficult to not be struck by the depth of people's compassion, dedication and desire to act.

Several weeks ago, Mennonite Central Committee Ontario was able to partner with local groups for "Waterloo Region Welcomes Refugees" – an inspirational gathering of regional representatives, community members and organizations working together to support refugees. The evening was a moving example of a community coming together and governments responding. In the shadow of a huge crisis, it is often so easy to feel insignificant, yet our community's response has shown that Waterloo Region cares.

We at MCC Ontario are truly blessed to be active in this vibrant and caring region and would like to thank our partners for their skillful dedication to these causes: Immigration Partnership, Reception House, Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support, Kitchener Waterloo Multicultural Centre, YMCA Immigrant Services, Welcome Home Refugee House, Najda Now, ShamRose for Syrian Culture, Canadian Lutheran World Relief, Community Coalition on Refugee and Immigrant Concerns and Muslim Association of Canada. MCC Ontario would also like to thank the Region of Waterloo and the cities of Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge for their generous giving towards the work of MCC overseas in Syria and here in Canada.

It's my hope that the public momentum sparked by the photograph of little Alan Kurdi will remain. The crisis in Syria has been building for more than 5 years, and working to support refugees in Waterloo Region takes much more than one event. But take it from a cynic – this community has the right people, organizations and leaders to make a difference for refugees. I hope you'll join us for the long haul. For more information on MCC's refugee response, please visit: www.mcccanada.ca/refugeeresponse.



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COMMUNITY GROUPS DISCUSS REFUGEE PREPAREDNESS IN WATERLOO REGION

With the spike in international attention to the refugee crisis has been a considerable increase in local efforts to facilitate the sponsorship and support of refugees in Waterloo Region.

With many new groups getting involved in refugee sponsorship, early October brought together a wide array of service providers, faith and community groups to share information, build connections and contribute to community coordination and preparedness for a growing number of refugees. The aims of coming together were: to develop a common understanding of which service organizations and community groups are involved in refugee sponsorship and support in Waterloo Region and what they are doing; to increase awareness of connections, commonalities, linkages and overlap in services and efforts; to develop understanding

of refugee coordination needs in Waterloo Region. Every group present provided an overview of their work, how they can support others and what types of support they would benefit from.

The session concluded with a discussion about coordination which touched on other areas groups felt need to be addressed as Waterloo Region prepares to receive more refugees. Recommendations included regular meetings to foster coordination and collaborations and build on programs already in place, outreaching to Syrian and other communities to ensure that they have information about services and developments in the community, updating service inventories and aligning private refugee sponsorship efforts with services, focusing specifically on identifying gaps and how to address them and addressing the need for increased financial support to services as the number of refugees in need of service grows.

NEW IMMIGRANT EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES

COMMUNITECH TECH JAM PARTNERSHIP FOR IMMIGRANT EMPLOYMENT

The Immigration Partnership was thrilled to be able to participate in the high profile and successful Communitech Tech Jam job fair on September 29 at Bingeman's.

Together with the Internship Program (Conestoga College) and the Mentorship Program (YMCA), we were able to promote different ways to access immigrant talent in the community. We set up a Coaches Corner for international talent who had specific questions regarding networking with employers or about settling in Waterloo Region. The team was available to employers who had questions as well. We were joined by a Andrew, an InMoov robot, at our exhibit which created a buzz of activity around our booth. Thank you to Richard Ryerson for allowing us to use this robot which he developed. A great big thank you to Communitech and their team for all their support. Thank you to Marilena Benak, Mentorship Program and Tina Allishaw and Sue Benoit, Internship Program for their involvement.



ORANGE SKY ENTERPRISES FOCUSED ON IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURISM

It was fall 2009 when my family arrived in Canada with no more than some baggage and a lot of hope, after having fled Columbia, my home country.

We started taking English classes but experienced language barriers and culture shock. The transition was easier for some of our family members than for others, but I didn't want to give up. I believe in creating community so I started organizing a support group for Hispanic families I met during our first months in Canada. We met every two weeks, shared meals, prayed for each other and offered emotional support to many people experiencing a lot of difficulties.

My husband and I began to organize seminars in Spanish about entrepreneurship to motivate the Hispanic community to look for ways to own small businesses. But where did this all come from? I was 15-years-old when I started my first business in my hometown, and since then I've owned different businesses, even while when I studied law. Through those years I delivered seminars about entrepreneurship and customer service in Columbia and sales training to sales representatives of the Colombian subsidiary of a multinational company where I was the national sales manager. Personal circumstances forced me out of my country, but I continued to pursue my dreams.

I love to see how something great can be born of a simple idea if you believe in it. I also love to see the social impact of creating jobs which help people put food on their tables. I have been delivering these seminars in Waterloo Region for almost five years, at the beginning just with our own resources and now with the support of Waterloo Region Small Business Centre. Today, I am proud to have motivated many attendees of my seminars to start their own small businesses: Autosshops, hair salons, clothing boutiques, etc. I know from my own experience the struggles these people go through to keep their business afloat, but I also know the satisfaction that comes from owning something you first created in your mind.



HealthForceOntario ADVISOR NOW IN WATERLOO REGION

The HealthForce Integration Department, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care and the University of Toronto, has embarked on a project to develop a range of supports that will facilitate the integration of Internationally Educated Healthcare Professionals (IEHPs) into the Ontario workplace in both licensed and alternative careers.

While support and advisory service has been based in Toronto, advisors are now available in Waterloo Region, Windsor and Ottawa. The project has 3 components:

- Practice Ready e-learning Program (PReP): modules designed to help IEHPs improve communication and soft skills.
- Workplace Integration Network (WIN): online education modules for employers to support and fully utilize the skills IEHPs bring to their workplaces.
- Alternative Career Program: a combination of online resources and individual counselling to help IEHPs explore career options or be supported in a path to licensure.

Project goals include the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programs and services across Ontario, as well as building local relationships with stakeholders to support their work, learn from their experience and determine areas for collaboration.

Our local advisor is conducting outreach and connecting with local immigrant settlement and service agencies, health care employers and the community at large to identify newcomers in the healthcare field. IEHP's will benefit from individual and web-based appointments, group workshops, information sessions and other ways yet to be determined.

The first workshop for IEHPs will be "Understanding the Canadian Health-Care System", a four-day course taking place over four weeks: November 12, 19, 26, Dec. 3. It will be held at the Health Sciences Building at Conestoga College in Doon from 10:30 am – 3:30 pm.

For more information, to refer an IEHP for an individual appointment or to register them for the course, contact Marlene Meechan: m.meechan@healthforceontario.ca.



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HealthForceOntario

IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP PEOPLE:

MIRA MALIDZANOVIC, FORMER SETTLE STEERING GROUP VICE CHAIR

Courtesy of Waterloo Region Record.

WATERLOO — All Mira Malidzanovic wanted to do as a new refugee to Canada was to help others like herself. It was a dream she brought to life.

The 57-year-old Waterloo resident is stepping down from her position as program director of Reception House Waterloo Region, a temporary home for recently arrived government-sponsored refugees that began in 1985.

Over the past 18 years, she has paid home visits to refugee families, translated for others fleeing war in former Yugoslavia, and kept a close eye over refugee children who slept under the roof of Reception House at 101 David St. in Kitchener.

“It was my dream to work with refugees,” she said. “It was my passion, helping people.”

In 1993, Malidzanovic fled war in Bosnia-Herzegovina with her husband and children. The philosophy professor found herself in Manitoba as a refugee.

She offered interpretation services for other refugees who were mostly from the former Yugoslavia.

“The experience helps,” Malidzanovic said. “You know how it feels to lose your dignity and lose your country.”

She joined Reception House when her family moved to the region so her son could pursue studies at University of Waterloo.

“It was much smaller,” Malidzanovic said of the early staff, recalling the five-person operation that was responsible for everything from client settlement and visits to cleaning the office.

“Everything that comes up, you had to do,” she added with a laugh. It was a hard job. Malidzanovic heard horrifying stories and helped new refugees cope with change.

The “happy endings” of refugee families kept her going.

Now the booming refugee support centre boasts 30 employees.

Malidzanovic decided it was time to hang up her hat. Her last day of work is Saturday.

“My position is administrative work and my passion is really hands-on work,” she said.

“It was a beautiful place to work.”

Lucia Harrison, executive director of the Kitchener Waterloo Multicultural Centre, said Malidzanovic was devoted to justice for refugees.

“She knew refugees were coming with strengths and she understood they came from sometimes horrific situations,” Harrison said.

Their professional relationship was one of collaboration, not competition, Harrison said. Refugees who began their stay in Canada at Reception House would “naturally” flow into using services at the Multicultural Centre.

“Sometimes, as an executive director, it’s good to have someone to bounce things off confidentially,” Harrison said.

Malidzanovic isn’t certain what she will do next, but she wants to continue helping others.

“The question of refugees is the single most important issue of our century,” Malidzanovic said.

<http://www.therecord.com/news-story/5738754-from-refugee-to-advocate-program-director-of-reception-house-steps-down/>



Mira Malidzanovic
Peter Lee,
Record Staff

CINDY LANE-TARASOW, CHRL, CEO POMEGRANATE CANADA INC., IMMIGRANT EMPLOYMENT ACTION GROUP CHAIR



Cindy is the personification of the bold collision between HR Leadership, Business and Skilled Immigrant talent solutions, and she is perfect to lead the next chapter of Immigration Partnership's Immigration Employment Action Group (IEAG).

A graduate in psychology from the University of Guelph, Cindy started as a recruiter in Hamilton, Ontario. Like a millennial today, she accelerated her learning in progressive roles across the GTA in Industrial/Labour Relations, Training and Development, the new field of Human Resource Information Systems, Talent Management, Leadership Development and HR/Business Process Consulting. All while strategically encompassing sectors from Tier One Automotive, Telecommunications, Pharmaceutical/Consumer Goods Manufacturing, Not-for-Profits and Employer Services.

But it was during her years in Waterloo Region as VP at Right Management that she saw the critical need in the market for the intersection of social responsibility and economic development.

Cindy explains, "In this region I embraced the start-up culture, collaborated with Angel Investors, worked with Communitel and volunteered with the Immigration Partnership of Waterloo Region to represent the employer perspective. During this

dramatic time of mass BlackBerry layoffs, I saw terminated immigrants (likely hired right out of university/college) and new skilled immigrants struggling equally to achieve optimum employment while respecting their skills and abilities. With my knowledge of business and the 2020 demographic outlook unresolved, this talent issue will cripple the progress of this nation. I became determined to craft a cost-effective and easy to implement solution."

In January 2015, Pomegranate Canada Inc. was created in partnership with Qwalify.com to solve this problem and to prosper our economy. New and innovative engagement technology is applied to sourcing, recruiting and succession planning in a unique way to make recruiting a profit venture. Going full circle from her early days in recruiting and comprehensive HR knowledge with business process, she gets at the "it factor" on a mass basis internally and externally. Her passion is to use technology in overcoming all systemic barriers for the skilled immigrant and help transfer their global skills into our collective Canadian economy.

The IEAG is an extension of her drive. Her leadership to help ensure the optimization of access to talent, through the network of employer program offerings, will drive positive outcomes.

When you meet her and have a chance to chat about her early and later years in HR, she will recall crystallized moments that defined her social responsibility and drive to help continue to educate and support employers to actively invest in the "gold" of our region's talented immigrants.

IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP UPDATES

SETTLE

The Settle Steering Group (SSG) has much to look forward to as they continue work to address activities in the Community Action Plan. While housing and health care continue to be a priority, SSG is looking at how the unique challenges faced by refugees are connected to each priority action area. Many SSG members helped organize the Waterloo Region Welcomes Refugees Community Gathering on September 15 at Kitchener City Hall

and the group is looking at ways to be involved and support local efforts to respond to the global refugee crisis. In addition, the SSG developed questions for local Federal Election Candidates and members are attending local All Candidates Sessions to ensure that candidates are speaking about the approaches their respective party will take to addressing immigration issues.

WORK

Since the last newsletter, the Work Steering Group (WSG) finalized the proof of concept stage of a program called the Immigrant Talent Engagement Program (ITEP). ITEP is an interactive/on-line engagement program that will assist in bridging the gap between immigrant talent and employers by supporting employers in accessing outstanding talent. Special thanks go to Scotiabank for their commitment to this project and to the volunteer planning team - Ian Mclean, Phil Noeling and Cindy Tarasow - for their many hours of leadership. We also acknowledge the K-W Multicultural Centre, YMCA and

Northern Lights for their involvement. You will hear more about this program as it moves forward. The WSG's Immigrant Employment Action Group (IEAG) has a new Chair! Cindy Tarasow, Pomegranate Canada Inc., is stepping into the role, bringing much experience and passion. WSG will participate in the Chamber Business Expo at Bingeman's in November. Our participation will include networking training for immigrants before the event to prepare them to meet many local business people/employers at this Expo. And stay tuned for a Diversity Intelligence Seminar for employers early in 2016!

BELONG

The Belong Steering Group (BSG)'s Municipal Services Action Group is solidifying their relationship with the Adult ESL staff at St Louis schools to continue to offer interactive presentations on local democracy and civic engagement – one goal will be to provide fall and winter term presentations to ESL students at the four St Louis campuses in Waterloo Region. In addition the BSG has connected on planning displays and tours during Ontario Local Government Week October 18-24, 2015 mostly at City Halls. As part of this week, the City of Kitchener, the Safe and Healthy Advisory Committee and Immigration Partnership have planned a Citizenship Ceremony to welcome new Citizens and share the importance of citizenship and local engagement. The Public Education Action Group continues to develop its plan for a public education campaign

to celebrate diversity. In tandem, partners at the Waterloo Region Museum and the Region of Waterloo, supported by Interfaith Grand River and other local groups, are creating a set of pull-up banners celebrating diversity in Waterloo Region focusing on faith and cultural observances using pictures, symbols and script. The planned launch is December 2015. The BSG also wants to recognize their partner the YMCA and the Cambridge Cultural Diversity Engagement Group who planned another successful International Festival at Riverside Park on September 26, 2015!



Immigration Partnership's collaborative actions are guided by its Community Action Plan 2014-2016.

[Click here to view it.](#)

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND UPDATES

Settlement Worker for those 'New to Canada'

Sunanda Sachdev is a settlement worker who helps newcomers learn about our culture, find places to learn English, get health care, find a job and housing, learn about our schools, apply for identification and much more. Sunanda speaks Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu and Dutch, and is happy to help anyone needing help settling in Canada. She is at Idea Exchange, Queen's Square, 1 North Square, Cambridge, most Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:30-5:30pm. Please contact Sunanda for an appointment, or drop by. Phone: 519.621.1621 ext. 271 or 226.339.2914 or email ssachdev@ckwymca.ca

Cambridge Conversation Circles

Drop in to free, friendly conversation circles to learn English, meet new friends, and talk about your community, culture and customs. Happening from September 7 through the end of May 2016.

Tuesdays, 6:15 – 8:15pm
Clemens Mill, 50 Saginaw Parkway, Cambridge

Wednesdays, 6:15 – 8:15pm
Queen's Square, 1 North Square, Cambridge

Thursdays, 6:15 – 8:15pm
Preston, 435 King Street East, Cambridge

Fridays, 1:00 – 3:00pm,
Hespeler, 5 Tannery Street, Cambridge

Learn How to Sponsor a Refugee

Learn about Group of Five sponsorship, including information about supporting documents, requirements, and the application process. Register for this free information session by calling Mandi at 519.505.2445 or email mandi@kwmc-on.com

When: Tuesday, November 24, 2015 at 7:00pm

Where: KPL Central location, 85 Queen St. N.

Tech training (registration required – www.kpl.org)

Introduction to Word Processing
November 18 @ 6:30pm, Country Hills Library

Introduction to Email
October 14 @ 6:30pm, Country Hills Library &
December 10 @ 2:00pm, Central Library

Introduction to Facebook Part 1
December 1 @ 6:30pm,
Central Library

Online Privacy and Security
October 15 @ 2:00pm,
Central Library

Introduction to LinkedIn
November 19 @ 6:30pm,
Central Library

Money Matters

November 5, 12, 19 and 26 from 6:30-8:30pm

Money Matters is a free financial literacy program for adult learners taught by TD Bank volunteers. In this four-night course you'll learn about budgeting, banking basics, borrowing money, RESPs and other ways to save. Contact Aimee Jeffrey to register (519-743-7502 or aimee.jeffrey@kpl.org).

