

The Citizen

Durham Region's Diversity Focused Newsletter

ISSUE 6
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Building a culture of inclusion: Benefit for flood victims in Pakistan



**"IF DANCING
IS THE
POETRY OF
THE BODY
THEN
GENEROSITY
IS THE
POETRY OF
THE SOUL."
- PICKERING
MAYOR DAVE
RYAN**

Back (left to right): Chief Mike Ewles, Pickering Mayor Dave Ryan, Audrey Andrews, Ajax-Pickering MP Mark Holland, Don Terry (OPG Public Affairs Manager), Pickering-Scarborough East MP Dan McTeague, Mohammed Rahim (President, Pickering Islamic Centre)

Front (left to right): Vaqar Raees (OPG), Saeed Sidique, Andaleeb Tabassum, Tracey Vaughan, Shashi Bhatia (Chair, Indo-Canadian Cultural Association of Durham), and Ashok Bhatia

On Oct. 23 in the OPG auditorium something special happened in Durham Region. Under the banner "Aman Ki Bhasha"— Language of Peace, Durham's Pak-Canadian Friendship Society and the Indo-Canadian Cultural Association joined forces to raise money for Pakistani flood victims. This was a unique and important event demonstrating how communities that have historically seen conflict between them can use the common ground of Canada and the common threads of humanity to indeed be "our brother's keeper".

The auditorium was filled with participants from a wide variety of backgrounds who enjoyed an evening of food, music and dance from around the world. The evening was punctuated with sombre moments as video from Pakistan showed the devastating degree of destruction and true human suffering as a result of the floods. Shashi Bhatia, Co-chair of the Indo-Canadian Cultural Association emotionally emceed this historic evening and reminded us that her adopted home of Canada gives her the space and freedom to care

about all of humanity and for that she is grateful. The event raised \$8,500 and generated untold goodwill.

*Audrey Andrews
Manager, Diversity & Immigration Program
Region of Durham*

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Translation links: www.translate.google.com

Inclusion starts with youth



Austin Lennard receives his iPod Nano from Caroline Nevin, Branch Manager at Scotiabank.

Racism Stop It! and the Mathieu DaCosta Challenge, two national competitions for youth, were the focus of a fun and successful workshop held at Durham Regional Headquarters on Saturday, Nov. 16. The successful and fun event was hosted by the Local Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council (LDIPC) with corporate sponsorship from Scotiabank.

There was no shortage of talent or good ideas as local students interested in participating in one or both of these prestigious national contests took part in the half-day session. Professional videographer Raheel Raza shared tips on how to create videos and how individuals and schools can enter one or both of these annual contests. Students took application packages, their unbridled enthusiasm and plenty of helpful information back to their schools in the hopes Durham will make its mark in the contests. Many thanks to Sante Tesolin and Caroline Nevin of Scotiabank for providing the great pizza lunch and the generous prizes and to Betty Chartrand, Nadia Polani and Keith Richards for all their help and support without which the workshop would not have been such a great success.

*Hilary Schuldt
Policy Advisor, Diversity & Immigration Program
Region of Durham*

Youth HOST Program at WMRCC of Durham

WMRCC of Durham's Youth HOST program supports newcomer and immigrant youth within the Durham school system and community to adapt, integrate and overcome stress with their transition into a new life in Canada. Student volunteers are matched with newcomer youth for friendship in a fun and safe environment. Newcomer and immigrant youth gain emotional and social support through participating in social activities. The program is implemented according to each specific school's needs.

Some of the special activities we do in the schools include conversation circles, mentoring, providing and bringing awareness of services and resources in the community, building networks, and assisting with school functions such as multicultural celebrations and talent shows.

We have a weekly youth night at local libraries and community centres. This program provides workshops, information sharing, recreational activities and cultural presentations. The Youth Host Program works in collaboration with the SWIS Program at CDCD. For more information, please contact our centre at genevieve.solomon@wmrccdurham.com.

*Esther Enyolu
Executive Director
WMRCC of Durham*



Members of the Youth HOST program.



Youth HOST program members visit Niagara Falls.

An evening of hope: Shaquille Wisdom memorial



"There are times in life where we are so impacted by events that we stop whatever we are doing to pay attention and to focus. This is one of those times. Our LGBT youth are facing a crisis that is not of their choosing. Homophobia and bullying is taking its toll on the LGBT community, especially our youth. We must send a message that homophobia and bullying is not acceptable in our schools and in our communities, both on the ground and on the internet.

Many of us who volunteer at PFLAG Canada Durham do so because of a young boy named Shaquille Wisdom. Sadly, 13 year old Shaquille took his life in Ajax 3 years ago because of bullying and homophobia. It touches all of us personally. In September we decided that the time had come to properly remember Shaquille at a memorial and also to show our young LGBT people that there is hope, help and acceptance in their community. We could not have foreseen that the timing of this message would be so imperative. Our newspapers and television screens have been inundated with heartbreaking stories of young lives lost due to bullying and homophobia. The 13 lights before you signify that it is vital that the time for change is here.

We have come so far and yet every day we still hear of gay bashings and young people being banished from their families and another suicide in our community. This is why PFLAG Canada Durham is here. We are here at the front line supporting those facing issues of sexual orientation and gender identity. We deliver awareness programs and crisis support in our local schools and with health care providers.

In Durham we have sharing meetings in Oshawa, Uxbridge and Pickering. We welcome everyone: the LGBT community, educators, family, friends, parents, allies, co-workers. With your support we are determined to expand these sharing meetings to every municipality of Durham.

To our LGBT youth, we say this: you are loved, you are accepted, you are perfect just the way you are. You do not have to walk alone on your journey. We are here!"

*Excerpts of a speech by Donna McAllister
PFLAG Durham at the Evening of Hope event
www.pflagcanada.ca*

Voices: Durham newcomer students tell their stories

The release of *Voices: Durham newcomer students tell their stories* was celebrated at the launch event on Oct. 6, at the Education Centre, Durham District School Board (DDSB). Families, staff members and many of our community partners came out to see the video and meet the project participants.

Voices includes profiles of 29 Durham newcomer students from Grade 2 to Grade 12, as well as an elementary school parent. Sam, a 17 year-old student in Ajax, tells of his struggles and successes, the day he was granted asylum in Canada, and his experiences at school. Alexandra, an Oshawa secondary school student, speaks of the sacrifices made by her parents in order for her to have a better life in Canada. Nardin, an elementary school parent, shares her advice for other newcomer parents:

It takes time. It's hard at the beginning but everybody has to be patient because it's like steps and you can't go from the beginning to the end but you have to go step by step and it's not that difficult. If you get the key in Canada you can open any door you want, but you have to search, ask and take other experience, and be patient and everything will come.

— Nardin, Parent

Voices follows the 2009 release of the book *Journeys: Durham newcomer students tell their stories*, a collection of the coming-to-Canada stories of 81 Durham newcomer students. *Voices* will be shared with our community partners, and will be distributed to all DDSB schools. For more information about *Voices: Durham newcomer students tell their stories*, please contact Anne Sidnell at the DDSB (sidnell_anne@durham.edu.on.ca).

Anne Sidnell
Education Officer ESL/ELD
Durham District School Board



Tammy Kittanathawongs who designed the *Voices* cover art with her ESL/ELD teacher Niki Pappas.



Building job search skills with newcomers

On Sept. 29, the Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre (DRUHC) hosted an interactive session for new immigrants interested in learning about the recruitment and selection process in the public sector as well as hiring trends within Durham Region (as an employer). A wide array of topics were covered, including: the recruitment and selection process in a unionized workplace; how to determine the skills, abilities and qualifications in a job advertisement; how to identify transferable skills in a cover letter and resume; how to research employers and identify mutual core values; what to expect during a Canadian employer's selection process; how to answer behavioural-event interview questions; how to practice answering interview questions to overcome shyness/anxiety; how to present work references from employers outside of Canada; and how to use the Internet to seek out and apply to job opportunities online.

More than 30 participants attended, all of whom received resources to assist them in their job search as well as civic information about the community. Questions raised during the interactive workshop included: how to get foreign credentials evaluated; how to gain Canadian work experience; and, for six participants, how to begin the process of having their medical professional credentials evaluated.

The DRUHC (www.unemployedhelp.on.ca) is a non-profit organization whose professional staff provide valuable assistance to many newcomers. They have a keen understanding of the issues/challenges facing newcomers when seeking employment in the community. Durham Region is pleased to partner with the DRUHC.

Nancy Sandercock
Human Resources Manager
Region of Durham

Seasons greetings from around the world!

At this time of year, the celebration of religious holidays and festivals from around the world is an important part of many peoples' lives. Appreciation and acknowledgement of all holidays builds a culture of understanding for diversity and inclusion in its broadest sense. It illustrates, particularly to newcomers to Canada, that acceptance of human diversity is in the DNA of all Canadians.



- EID al-ADHA** At the end of the Haj (annual pilgrimage to Mecca), Muslims throughout the world celebrate the holiday Eid al-Adha or the Festival of Sacrifice. In 2010, Eid-al Adha was celebrated on Nov. 17.
- HANUKAH** Also known as the Festival of Lights. For Jewish people Hanukah starts at sundown on Dec. 2 and lasts for eight days.
- BODHI DAY** Buddhists around the world celebrate Bodhi Day on Dec. 8. It was the day in 596 BC that the Buddha first attained enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree.
- ST. LUCIA DAY** Also known as Santa Lucia Day, it is a Lutheran Catholic Christian holy day that is celebrated around the world on Dec. 13.
- LAS POSADAS** Christmas festivals in Mexico begin with Las Posadas, nine consecutive days of candlelight processions and lively parties starting Dec. 16.
- DONG ZHI** Also known as Winter Solstice, it is celebrated in on Dec. 21. Winter Solstice simply means the shortest day of the year. Dong Zhi is the thanksgiving of the Chinese calendar.
- CHRISTMAS** Celebrated by Christians on Dec. 25 Christmas marks and honours the birth of Jesus Christ. Orthodox Christians will celebrate Christmas on Jan. 7, 2011.
- THAI PONGAL** Also known as the "Rice Festival", it is a harvest festival celebrated by Tamils around the world. It is equivalent to a Thanksgiving event and is celebrated on Jan. 14.

For more information on these and other holidays, please visit the Town of Ajax website (www.townofajax.com) and click on the Religious holidays and festivals heading.

*Roland Rutland
Coordinator, External Affairs
Baha'i communities of Durham Region*

World Religion Day: Building understanding

The Durham Multi-faith World Religion Day Committee, in collaboration with Faith United Church Courtice, will host the 5th annual World Religion Day celebration on Jan. 16, 2011 from 2 to 4 p.m.—in which at least 12 faith denomination/groups are expected to participate. The 2011 celebration will be held at Garnet B. Rickard Recreation Complex Hall, 2440 King St. W., Bowmanville with exhibits and demonstrations of music, spirituality, cultural foods and arts to be shared in a manner fully respectful of everyone's beliefs. Admission is free and all are invited.

The goal of the Multifaith Community of Durham Region and its partners is to bring all faiths together, not only to raise awareness of the world's religions and to find the similarity between our faith, but also to work together to increase cross-cultural understanding, strengthen our commitment to mutual respect for each other, and contribute to the maintenance of harmony and order in Durham.

*Donald Igbokwe
Co-Chair
Durham Region Multifaith WRD Committee*

Hispanic Seniors Group gathers weekly in Oshawa

The open house event for the Hispanic Seniors Group at the Oshawa Senior Citizens Centre on Oct. 20 went very well. We welcomed almost 85 seniors from the centre that came to experience the culture and traditions of 12 Latin American countries that were showcased. Seniors tasted traditional food and beverages.

*** Peru * Argentina * Venezuela * Mexico * Chile * El Salvador
* Guatemala * Cuba * Nicaragua * Colombia * Uruguay * Ecuador**

The Hispanic Seniors Group meets every Wednesday from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at the Oshawa Seniors Citizen Centre, John St. Branch. The group has been around for one year already and is growing. We have 37 members! The group was created to help isolated Hispanic seniors settle in the community. The group is lead by Teresita Perera, ISAP Counsellor at the Community Development Council Durham and volunteers. For more information, please email CDCD at tperera@cdcd.org.



The Hispanic Seniors Group meets:

Every Wednesday
1:30 to 3:30 p.m.
Oshawa Seniors Citizen Centre,
John St. Branch



The Deaf Interpreter Program

One of the most important services The Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) provides is sign language interpreting for the Deaf community. The Ontario Interpreting Services (OIS) is a department under CHS that screens qualified ASL/English interpreters to work in the community.

The Deaf Interpreter program also had been started to provide Deaf experts who are knowledgeable in ASL, gesture, mime and other communication strategies to work with regular ASL/English interpreters. They work with regular ASL/English interpreters to communicate with immigrants from other countries whose native sign language is not ASL or when the Deaf newcomer may not have a strong foundation in any language at all, due to lack of a formal education system for the Deaf in their native country. They can be available to interpret for the newcomer in a variety of situations such as immigration and citizenship hearings, meetings with social services, governmental agencies,

potential employers and mental health professionals to name a few.

For more information, or if there is anyone in need of ASL/English interpretation, please contact the Durham branch of the Ontario Interpreting Services at 1-888-363-0373 or 1-888-697-3623 (TTY).

*Veronica Bickle
Durham Deaf Accessibility Committee*



Places of Worship Tour: Building a culture of inclusion

Building a culture of inclusion in Durham region begins with learning more about each other. A key first happened this past week when Region of Durham staff joined officers from the Durham Regional Police Service on the first Places of Worship Tour. The tour provided the more than 30 participants with a unique insight into a number of diverse faith communities in the region. Durham's CAO, department heads, diversity committee members and several police officers, including a deputy police chief, joined members of the Local Diversity & Immigration Partnership Council. The tour began at Regional Headquarters with a Christian multi-denominational presentation. The group then boarded a Durham Region Transit bus to visit the Muslim Association of Whitby Jamia Masjid, the Pickering Devi Mandir and the Beth Zion Synagogue in Oshawa.

We were warmly welcomed at each place of worship and came away with increased knowledge and a deeper understanding of what distinguishes one faith from another and more importantly, what they all had in common. The tour was such a success that plans are already underway for a second Places of Worship tour in the spring.

*Pauline Reid
Office of the CAO
Region of Durham*



Participants of the Places of Worship tour outside the Pickering Devi Mandir.

"TODAY WAS ONE OF THE MOST MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES I'VE HAD SINCE I JOINED THE REGION THREE YEARS AGO. PLEASE EXTEND MY SINCERE THANKS TO YOUR TEAM FOR ORGANIZING SUCH AN ENLIGHTENING DAY!"
- KERRI KING, TOURISM MANAGER, REGION OF DURHAM

Public Health holds diversity workshop for Regional staff



Public health nurse Carly McKinnon gives Maya Ahmed her vaccination as her sister, Rana, looks on. The first mass H1N1 vaccination clinics, including this one at 3050 Garden St. in Whitby, opened in Durham Region Monday. (Oct. 26, 2009). ©STEVE RUSSELL/THE TORONTO STAR

"Honour Our Differences, Cherish our Similarities" was the theme of the diversity workshop held on Oct. 1 for Durham Region's Public Health Nursing and Nutrition Division (PHNN). More than 150 staff members, including public health nurses, public health nutritionists and family visitors attended the event.

The keynote speaker was Tracey Vaughan, ED of the Community Development Council of Durham. She inspired and challenged us to view all the work we do through a diversity and inclusion lens.

Speakers from the following agencies shared their perspectives on some of the challenges facing the people they support and offered valuable insights: Ajax, Pickering, Whitby Community Living; Durham Mental Health Services; Immigrant Settlement Services; March of Dimes: PFLAG; and Durham Youth Housing and Support Services.

Evaluations from workshop participants indicated that the workshop helped them reflect on their current values and attitudes related to diversity and their current public health practices.

*Janice Bogdan & Catherine Rooney
PHNN Division and Diversity Workshop Planning Committee Members
Region of Durham*

Durham Immigration Portal: A tool for you



The Durham Immigration portal continues to be a growing source of information for both newcomers and service providers. Since the launch in March the portal has been averaging 1500 hits each month with visitors coming from over 50 different countries.

If you are interested in finding out more, want to join a content development team or your group or association would like a portal demonstration to see how the portal can help you, your agency, and your clients, please contact Hilary Schuldt at hilary.schuldt@durham.ca for more information.

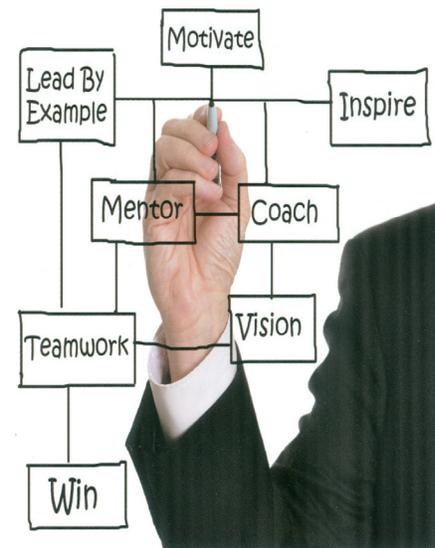
If access to computers or the internet is a problem ask about our new mobile lab with wireless connection coming January 2011 – and our after-hours and weekend availability.

Improving labour market outcomes

The Generations Mentoring Program has been designed to offer seniors opportunities to mentor individuals who have barriers to employment, in order to achieve their personal employment and/or volunteering goals.

This partnership aims to 'bridge the gap' between seniors and non-seniors in the community through the sharing of experiences and skills across generations. The goal is to match mentors and job seekers based upon previous experience and the availability to create lasting relationships that have positive benefits for both the mentee and the mentor. Mentoring benefits our community by providing inspiration, acceptance, challenges, a sympathetic ear, and exposure to new activities and experiences.

The Generations Mentoring Program is being run through META Vocational Services. META provides a comprehensive range of free personalized career counselling and employment planning services. For more information, please contact META at 905-725-0087 or toll-free at 1-866-794-4677.



*Pauline Bennett
Manager*

META Vocational Services Inc.

Those who went before: Ukrainian-Canadians

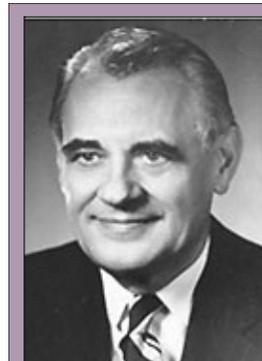
A mural in the Oshawa Public Libraries' McLaughlin Branch commemorates the 1932-1933 Holodomor famine. The word "holodomor" means "plague of hunger" and refers to the period when millions of Ukrainians died of starvation. Oshawa is home to a substantial number of Ukrainian-Canadians, many of whom came to Canada as newcomers to escape the famine in the '30s. Ukrainian newcomers have made a significant contribution to the Oshawa community.

From the library's windows, you can see the Ontario Ministry of Revenue building which was named for Michael Starr (Starchewski) (1910-2000) who was elected Mayor of Oshawa in 1949. Starr was the first Ukrainian Canadian to be elected mayor of a large Canadian city and the first Ukrainian Canadian cabinet minister. In 1973, Mr. Starr became Chairman of the Workers' Compensation Board of Ontario. He continued to live in Oshawa until his death in his 90th year. Starr was a political pioneer in Canadian history and a regular fixture at the library.

During the 1960s and 70s, the manager of the Oshawa Public Library's cataloguing department (also Ukrainian) singlehandedly founded a

central resource for Ukrainian material in Durham. Oshawa's McLaughlin Branch continues to build its Ukrainian collections. Ukrainian is one of 31 languages represented in films, magazines, newspapers and books at Oshawa's main library branch. Today, anyone can access the Ukrainian-language materials available in Oshawa from anywhere in the world. For more information, visit the library's website at www.oshawalibrary.on.ca.

*Sally Grande
Serials and Multicultural Librarian
Oshawa Public Libraries*



*Michael Starr
[Starchewski]
Mayor of
Oshawa 1949*

*Source:
Oshawa
Public
Libraries,
Local History
Photo Archive*

Local Diversity & Immigration Partnership Council

The members of the Local Diversity & Immigration Partnership Council (LDIPC) met on Nov. 18. Members of the Council are drawn from diverse sectors of the community representing agencies, school boards, faith groups, local business groups and the Region.

The LDIPC has four main objectives:

- To create a culture of inclusion
- To improve labour market outcomes for newcomers
- To attract and retain newcomers
- To enhance Durham's settlement capacity

The LDIPC acts as an incubator for ideas, measuring trends, identifying needs and mobilizing the appropriate community resources to meet those needs. Local Immigration Partnership Councils are a mechanism to develop local partnerships and work to embed the needs of newcomers into planning processes. The LDIPC will be meeting regularly and updates on the work of the Council will be reported here in *The Citizen* and on the [Durham Immigration Portal](#).



Dr. Shahid Alvi



Allan Angus



Martyn Beckett



Photo not available



Pam DeWilde



Dr. Hugh Drouin



Keith Hernandez



Cllr Colleen Jordan



Ali Juma



Kerri King



John Koopmans



Rick Lea



Wanda Leach



Caroline Nevin



Mayor Larry O'Connor



Keith Richards



Tracey TynerCavanaugh



Tracey Vaughan

Members of the Local Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council

Sector	Name	Organization
Academic	Dr. Shahid Alvi	University of Ontario Institute of Technology
Academic	Mary Blanchard	Durham College
Accessibility	Tracey Tyner Cavanagh	Region of Durham
Accessibility	Allan Angus (alternate)	Durham College Accessibility Working Group
Business / Chamber of Commerce	Caroline Nevin	Scotiabank
Community Member at Large	Ali Juma	Durham Children's Aid Society
Economic Development	Kerri King	Region of Durham
Employer / Service Provider	Wanda Leach	Lakeridge Health
Employment Skills and Training	Rick Lea	Durham Region Local Training Board
Ethno-cultural / Francophone	Keith Hernandez	KAH Consultants
Faith	Pam DeWilde	Inter-Church Immigrant Support Group
Local Municipal Government	Councillor Colleen Jordan	Town of Ajax
Local School Board	Martyn Beckett	Durham District School Board
Police Services	Keith Richards	Durham Regional Police Service
Region of Durham	Dr. Hugh Drouin (Co-Chair)	Social Services
Region of Durham	John Koopmans	Planning
Regional Council	Mayor Larry O'Connor (Co-Chair)	Township of Brock
Settlement Services	Tracey Vaughan	Community Development Council Durham

Working in your field: A journey



Sanda Silaghi came to Canada in 2004 from Romania. Her first year in Canada was challenging as she looked for work, improved her English and learned how to get around her new city.

Sanda worked as an academic librarian in Bucharest, and through Career Bridge, an internationally trained professional bridging program, Sanda got her first library-related position in an insurance firm a year after coming to Canada. To work as a professional librarian, however, requires a Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) degree and going back to university was very intimidating.

Many of her acquaintances were pursuing part-time degrees in addition to working, however, and so after a couple of years Sanda decided "if they can do it, I can do it" and she enrolled in an online MLIS program.

While studying for her degree, Sanda became interested in public library work, "many of my fellow students were working in public libraries. They were sharing great stories with us about how grateful and appreciative their customers were, so I got interested in working in a public library". She completed her Master's degree this past summer, got a part time job working in a GTA public library and then saw an advertisement for an interesting research project at the Ajax Public Library.

Sanda did a lot of research while working at the insurance company and enjoyed it. So, when she saw the posting she thought, "hmmm, a research project, that sounds really interesting, what's the topic? Newcomers, hmmm, immigrant women, even better, I'm one of them, so let's see what it's all about". Sanda applied for the position and is now leading the

"Tell your stories: Immigrant women and their families" project at the Ajax Public Library. The project aims to gain a better understanding of the settlement experience of newcomers, especially immigrant women and hopes to identify any service gaps and learn what role the public library can play in filling those gaps. The data gathering stage of the project has just wrapped up and early findings will be shared with the community and/or participants in the early spring.

Sanda came to Canada hoping to find a job in her field. With some hard work, perseverance and faith in her own abilities, she found a position that is challenging, rewarding and – with the project results due in a few months - gives back to the community in very concrete ways. For more information about the "Tell your stories: Immigrant women and their families" project, please email Sanda sanda.silaghi@townofajax.com.

Samantha Burdett
Policy Advisor
Diversity & Immigration Program
Region of Durham

BACK ISSUES: Visit www.durhamimmigration.ca for back issues of *The Citizen* by clicking on the Creating Community tab, and then clicking on the Diversity Newsletter heading. You can also sign up for the newsletter online. Please feel free to forward *The Citizen* to others.

Local Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council

We look forward to hearing your stories and feedback. If you would like to *subscribe* or *contribute* to *The Citizen*, please contact us:

Email: diversitynewsletter@durham.ca | **Portal:** www.durhamimmigration.ca



Citizenship and
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