

The Citizen

DURHAM REGION'S
DIVERSITY FOCUSED NEWSLETTER
Issue 12 2012



**LOCAL DIVERSITY
AND IMMIGRATION**
Partnership Council

Happy Birthday Canada!

July 1 is Canada Day, a national day of celebration with festivals, fireworks and fun in towns and cities all over Durham region.

Canada Day marks the day that Canada became an independent country (145 years ago) when the British North America Act was signed on July 1, 1867. The creation of Canada united Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and what is now Ontario and Quebec into one



Celebrating Canada Day at the Oshawa Lakefront

country, other provinces and territories joined at later dates. Originally called Dominion Day, July 1 became Canada Day in 1982 with the **patriation** of the Canadian constitution and the passing of the Constitution Act, 1982. If you haven't had a chance to visit Ottawa, the July 1 **long weekend** is the time to do it as Canada's largest birthday party is held on Parliament Hill. For those of you sticking close to home, don't miss this opportunity to wear red and white, don your maple leaf facepaint and meet your neighbours at local parks, beaches and fairgrounds where there will be food, music and lots of fireworks! One of the biggest events in Durham is held on the Oshawa waterfront, with fireworks set off in Lake Ontario. For more information on the Lakefront Festival, visit www.oshawa.ca.



The Canada Day long weekend is typically the start of the summer festival season. With so many things to see and do, some pre-planning of summer weekends could be necessary! Visit the events page on the Durham Immigration Portal www.durhamimmigration.ca, the

Durham Tourism website www.durhamtourism.ca or your local municipality's website for what's going on close to you. Have a great summer exploring Durham region!

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Celebrating South Asian Heritage Month in Durham

Durham Region celebrated a first on May 26 when the Indo-Canadian Cultural Association of Durham (ICCAD) partnered with the Town of Ajax, the Canadian Afghan Council, The Pak-Canadian Friendship Society, D-Matreek, the Nepalese Canadian Community Services, the Durham Tamil Association and the Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham to host a celebration of the sub-continent's rich cultural heritage.



Members of the South Asian Festival organizing committee

The festival included an art show, heritage displays and music and dance performances presented by the participating groups. As the compelling Afghan film 'An Act Of Dishonour' directed by Nelofer Pazira in which modernity and custom collide was shown, it was fitting that Member of Parliament Chris Alexander, Canada's former Ambassador to Afghanistan co-hosted the event with founding chair of ICCAD Shashi Bhatia.

The well attended festival was Durham's enthusiastic response to the Ontario Government proclamation designating May as South Asian Heritage month in commemoration of the many people of South Asian heritage who have made new lives in Canada.

With South Asians making up a significant proportion of Ontario's population the festival was able to draw upon the talents, heritage and traditions represented by participating groups. Said Shashi Bhatia "it is those traditions that contribute to making the Durham Region a place that we can be proud of and is what the Festival celebrates".

Shashi Bhatia
Executive Director
Indo-Canadian Cultural Association of Durham



Culture Days: Civic engagement through arts and culture

Culture Days is a collaborative coast-to-coast-to-coast volunteer movement to raise the awareness, accessibility, participation and engagement of Canadians in the arts and cultural life of their communities. The third annual Culture Days weekend will take place September 28, 29 and 30, 2012, and will feature thousands of free, **hands-on**, interactive

activities that invite the public to participate **behind-the-scenes**, to discover the world of artists, creators, historians, architects, curators, designers and other creative people in their communities.

Get involved! Talk to your organization about registering a Culture Days event and invite the Durham community to learn more about you and what you do. To learn more -including tips and tools for planning your event - and to register, visit www.culturedays.ca. Many organizations, libraries businesses throughout Durham are offering to be hubs for other community groups during Culture Days, so even if you don't have your own physical space, you can still participate. For more information on planning and staging your event, contact Durham Tourism at tourism@durham.ca or 1-800-413-0017.

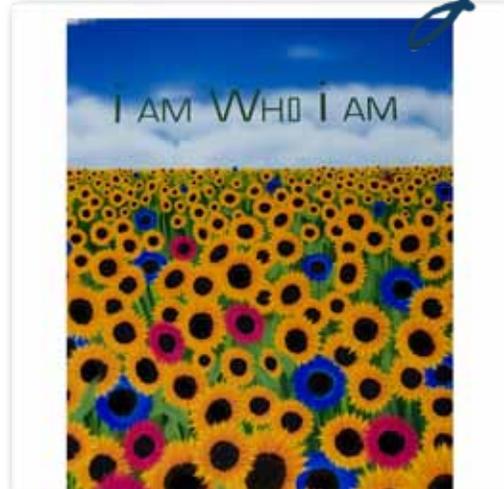
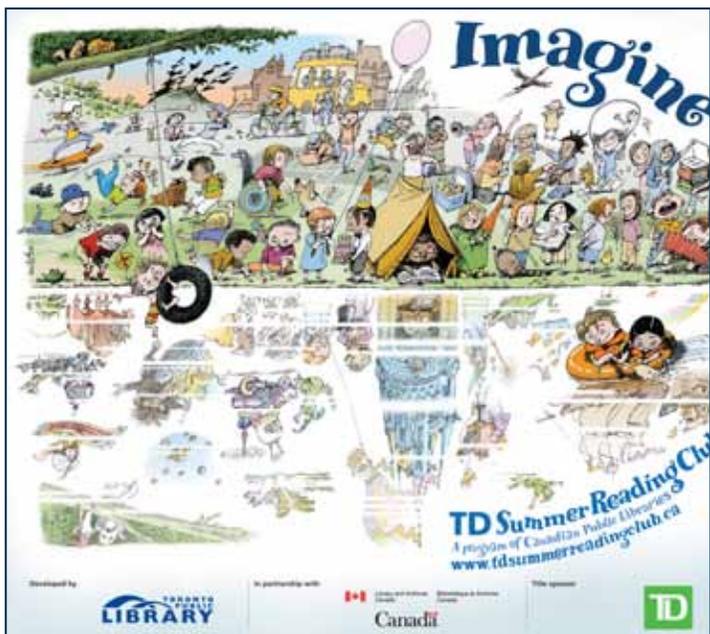
Inclusive communities:

Durham Region Transit and Durham Libraries team up this summer

It's that time of year again! Children across Durham region can visit any local library branch to register for the TD Summer Reading Club. This year's theme is "Imagine", and libraries have an enormous variety of books for all ages, in many different languages. Don't hesitate to ask one of the library staff if your local library branch doesn't have children's books in your **home language** as they may be able to get them for you through **inter-library loan**.

Kids who register for the Summer Reading Club will receive a free poster and activity book, and a sticker with a secret code for every book they read during the summer. There are nine stickers to collect, and the secret codes will unlock reading rewards on the website www.tdsummerreadingclub.ca.

To ensure that everyone has access to their local library and all the programs that they offer over the summer, Durham Region Transit (DRT) has teamed up with Durham libraries for the Ride to Read program. Children in Grade 8 and younger who sign up for "Ride to Read" summer reading programs get special stickers on their library cards giving them free travel on DRT buses in July and August. People travelling with children registered in the program pay the regular fare. A child with a special library pass may use the pass to travel to the library, recreation facilities and anywhere else they need to go in Durham. The DRT stickers are available through staff at your local public library.



The Art of Living Together: IDI Toronto and DDSB Art and Essay Contest

May 3 was a magical evening for six outstanding secondary students, and for their families and teachers. The IDI Toronto Awards Ceremony for the Art & Essay Contest themed, "The Art of Living Together" was co-organized by Durham District School Board and Intercultural Dialogue Institute Toronto. Durham District School Board was given the opportunity to have secondary students offer their vision of the theme through visual art or the written word. The **calibre** of entries was outstanding.

The awards were presented by prominent figures from the community. Speakers noted the richness of the diversity in Durham Region and the importance of celebrating this richness. During the ceremony, as a surprise to the award recipients, the winners were also awarded a helicopter ride on Air 1 with Durham Regional Police Service.

The winning entries in both the visual art and essay categories may be viewed at: <http://toronto.interculturaldialog.com/recent-upcoming-events/art-essay-contest-award-ceremony-may-3rd-2012/#>

Barry Bedford
Equity, Diversity and Race Relations Officer
Durham District School Board



Inclusive workplaces: DREN 2012 EmployABILITY Awards Gala

The Durham Region Employment Network (DREN) hosted the 2012 EmployABILITY Awards Gala at Tosca on June 7. The awards recognized the achievements of people who, despite a substantial barrier to employment, successfully obtained and maintained competitive employment. Also recognized are the businesses that provided the opportunity and the service providers who successfully matched their client's goals with the employer's needs.

This year, there were 11 nominees for the EmployABILITY Awards and all were recognized at the event. The three winners chosen demonstrate that there are no limits to success when ambition and opportunity connect:

- Winner 1- Dane Fallis, RGIS Industries
- Winner 2- Andrew (Drew) Reilly, Durham College School of Skilled Trades
- Winner 3- Mark Dahl, Hockey Hall of Fame

The Durham Region Employment Network also recognized achievements in innovation, volunteer citizenship and media. This year's winners were:

- Innovation-** Keith Brettell
- Volunteer Citizenship-** Scott Bremner
- Media-** Don Reist

In addition, The Regional Municipality of Durham awarded citizens, businesses and/or services nominated by local area municipality and regional advisory committees for efforts that have proven successful at the removal or prevention of barriers for people with disabilities.

- Town of Ajax** winner- Allan Angus
- Township of Brock** winner- Bill Lawrenson
- Municipality of Clarington** winner- Clarington Secondary School
- City of Oshawa** winner- Robert Gunn, Henry's Oshawa
- Region of Durham** winner- Windreach Farm



Allan Angus is awarded the Town of Ajax award by Regional Chair Roger Anderson

- Township of Scugog** winner- Neil and Susan Bradley and Cathy Cooper, Soup's on Us
- Town of Whitby** winner- Corrado's Restaurant

*Donna McAllister
Executive Director
Durham Region Employment Network*



Top: Warming up for the hike. Bottom: MPP Joe Dickson shares a joke with Vikki Gilmour of Durham Hospice

Durham Hike for Hospice: Respecting end-of-life traditions

Durham Hospice provides palliative care and support services for Durham residents. Many faiths, cultures and communities have different traditions and approaches to end-of-life care. What we all share is the end result. Death is something we all have in common. Durham hospice strives to ensure each end-of-life experience meets the needs of the families and individuals involved. Durham hospice has an extensive volunteer program and welcomes new volunteers from all communities.

On May 5, Durham Hike for Hospice took place in support of Durham Hospice. We are so fortunate that we have such a diverse and giving community. Friends, business associates and volunteers showed tremendous support and the outcome was three times more than last year, raising a staggering \$13,000. Visit www.durhamhospice.com to explore the Durham hospice website or call 905-240-4522 to discuss how Durham Hospice could serve you or how you could become involved.

*Vikki Gilmour
Fundraising and Event Coordinator
Durham Hospice*

Abilities Centre: Grand opening

Abilities Centre officially opened on June 2, with a public celebration. Abilities Centre was a dream long in the making towards creating an inclusive recreation space for all Durham residents.

Abilities Centre aims to enrich the quality of life for individuals of all ages and abilities through an inclusive environment. Whitby's newest inclusive state-of-the-art facility is more than just a fitness centre, with great sports and art programs for everyone.

Abilities Centre is ideally situated in Durham- approximately one kilometre off Highway 401, next to the Whitby GO Train Station- and is easy to reach by public transit- making it easily accessible for most of southern Ontario.

Amenities include a field house, fitness centre, basketball courts, running track, change rooms, theatre, music room, art room, sensory room, lounge (with full kitchen), library, meeting/board room, life skills apartment, games room, café and outdoor patio, as well as an indoor playground. All of the rooms are available for use by community organizations and businesses. Please contact us about availability and rental rates.

Abilities Centre is a charitable organization that believes in encouraging and embracing an inclusive environment for people of all ages and abilities. If you are interested in becoming a member of Abilities Centre visit us online at

www.abilitiescentre.org



Ajax is Walking

I CAN...get fit, have fun & be social

Join us for
a **FREE** one-hour supervised walk
all summer long!



Mondays at 9:30 a.m.
McLean Community Centre
95 Magill Dr.

Thursdays at 9:30 a.m.
Carruthers Marsh Pavilion
55 Ashbury Blvd. W.

A Step in the Right Direction!

For more information contact Kevin Smith at
kevin.smith@ajax.ca



Ajax Walking Group: Returns for the summer

The Ajax Newcomer Walking Group has changed its name but newcomers and other community members are back on the walking trails this summer. The recently renamed Ajax Walking Group meets twice a week at the following locations:

Mondays at 9:30 a.m.
McLean Community Centre
95 Magill Drive, Ajax

Thursdays at 9:30 a.m.
Carruthers Marsh Pavilion
55 Ashbury Blvd. W., Ajax

For more information contact Kevin Smith, Active Living Coordinator at kevin.smith@ajax.ca



Inclusive workplaces: Hire experience with TIOW

Older workers bring a wealth of experience to their job search and to their new employers but by the time people come to the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers (TIOW) program, most have already launched several unsuccessful attempts to deal with their unemployment. To face prolonged unemployment this late in their career is frustrating and often demoralizing.

Our program helps. In an intensive four weeks of workshops, we address the particular issues facing experienced workers. In the first week we focus on career and personality assessment; we use the results of this week in re-building self-esteem, but more practically in building a self-marketing strategy which clients can use in their job search. We also address the more traditional aspects of the job search and how they may be performed more effectively in the new economy.

Our resumés are designed to highlight strengths and accomplishments. In our interview techniques workshops we take resumé bullet points and turn them into effective presentations. Our program does not end after four weeks. Participants often go on to formalized training or to self-directed job searches. In either case, they have full access and support of TIOW staff assistance and the resources of the Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre. The program has proven highly successful.

*David McKay, B.Ed.
TIOW Career Coach/Facilitator
Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre*



"With Help, We've Successfully Re-Entered the Workforce."

Inclusive communities: Dignity, respect and nothing less

Elder abuse is any action or inaction which causes harm to an older person by a person in a position of trust. The abuser may be a family member, friend, neighbour, or someone providing personal care or professional services to an individual.

June is Seniors Month, and on June 15 we recognized World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. In Durham region, the Durham Elder Abuse Network (DEAN) encouraged community partners to take a stand against the mistreatment of seniors by organizing demonstrations to help raise awareness about elder abuse.

It is estimated that 10 per cent of seniors fall victim to some form of elder abuse. How are these seniors being abused? Physically, psychologically, emotionally, financially, sexually, and through neglect. Eighty percent of these victims are

financially abused by either theft by Power of Attorney, scams by cons and crooks, or credit card and debit card thefts.

In Durham region, community agencies came together in 1994 and formed the Durham Elder Abuse Network (DEAN). The DEAN vision is to be leaders in the development of an integrated and collaborative strategy to address the prevention of elder abuse in Durham Region through networking, information sharing, raising awareness, and **advocacy**. More information about DEAN and how to become involved and educated can be found online at

www.durhamelderabusenetwork.ca.

*Jennifer Jospheson
Chairperson, Durham Elder Abuse Network*

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Silent No More
Durham Region Speaks Out Against Elder Abuse

On Friday June 15 - World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, the Durham Elder Abuse Network, Full Life Integrated Health Care Centre and T & E Health Pros Inc. will take to the streets to tell our community to be 'Silent No More' about this serious problem affecting our valued seniors. We are asking you to do the same.

Bringing the problem of elder abuse into the light is not enough...this demonstration is a **Call to Action**. Our community recognizes it is happening, it's not acceptable and that we need to find ways to address it and stop abuse against older adults in Durham Region.

Join our region-wide rally on June 15 and take to the streets from 1:00 - 2:00 pm to unify our voices and **Call for an End to Elder Abuse**. We will not have a moment of silence for victims but rather an hour of raising our voices to stop elder abuse.

Location: _____

New Horizons for Seniors: Exciting new projects in Durham



Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) recently announced the recipients of the New Horizons for Seniors Program grants. Each grant is worth up to \$25,000 and is aimed at projects that are led or inspired by seniors who want to make a difference in the lives of others and in their communities. Some of the exciting new initiatives include:

The **Devi Mandir** program, “Growing Together,” is a joint project to promote volunteerism among seniors and other generations. This initiative will engage seniors in the community through mentoring of others, especially youth. The major objective of this initiative is to create programs for inter-generational connections and communication between the seniors and youth of the organization as well as the broader community. This perfectly aligns with the outreach initiatives at Devi Mandir.

The **North House** project will be focusing on seniors services available in Brock, Scugog and Uxbridge townships and will identify

gaps in services and barriers to access. Through a series of ‘Ageing Gratefully’ workshops, we will partner with local organizations and service providers to facilitate sessions on Coping with Caregiver Stress, Living a Happy, Healthy, Safe and Social Life in the Comfort of Your Own Home, and integrative workshops designed to ‘train’ seniors to help one another. Out of these workshops we will be able to build both volunteer opportunities for seniors in their communities and an easily accessible database of supports and services.

The **Town of Whitby Senior Services** will be developing a weekly drop in program this fall called Immigrants and Newcomers Support Services. The program will allow participants to get acquainted with a variety of activities that will enhance their social intercultural interaction and activities and emphasize a spirit of belonging, acceptance and relationship-building.

The New Horizons Project Partnership between **Bethesda House, Durham Elder Abuse**

Network (DEAN) and the Region of Durham’s Social Services Department will create a multilingual assisted communication tool kit, provide training on the use of the kit to a multigenerational group of professionals and community volunteers and will provide train-the-trainer sessions that include representatives from Durham’s main ethno-cultural/linguistic communities.

The **Brock Community Health Centre** ‘Drumming for Health’ program will be designed, implemented and delivered by seniors for seniors.

Additional seniors mentorship programs will be run through the **Beacon Presbyterian Church** in Beaverton, the **Durham Deaf Society** and the **Violence Prevention Coordination Council**.

Congratulations to the successful recipients of the grants, we look forward to hearing more about each of the projects as they are rolled out!

Photo permission: Samantha Burdett



Summer in Durham: Getting out and about

In Durham Region you don't have to travel far to experience unique summer getaways. Durham offers many summer experiences that can't be found anywhere else. Many visitors trek from neighbouring regions to enjoy the unique experiences offered here. This summer, why not spend some vacation time enjoying the great attractions close to home?

From studio tours and street festivals to outdoor concerts and spectator sports, there's always something unique happening in Durham. This summer, bring out the country in you at Boots & Hearts—a three-day music festival featuring big names such as Sheryl Crow, Carrie Underwood, Kid Rock and Tim McGraw (Aug. 10 to 12) in Bowmanville.

Durham region's newest summer experience takes place in the treetops on the beautiful Oak Ridges Moraine in Oshawa. It's heart-pumping, adrenaline-rushing, aerial adventure at the Treetop Eco-Adventure Park, set to open early this summer. The course features giant tyrolean zip lines, suspended bridges, swinging surprises, Tarzan swings, nets and more. Get climbin' at www.treetopeco-adventurepark.com.

Take pleasure in lunch, sightseeing, and dinner and dance cruises on Scugog Island Cruises in Port Perry. For more information, visit www.scugogcruises.com.

Hop aboard the York Durham Heritage Railway (YDHR) in Uxbridge, and ride through the picturesque Oak Ridges Moraine in a 1950s coach or the ever-popular 1919 Pullman coach. The YDHR is the GTA's only heritage railway for tourists. For more information, visit www.ydhr.ca.

Looking for more to do? Visit www.durhamtourism.ca.



Embracing dual cultures: Alma Latina Online

Alma Latina Online magazine (almalatina.ca) was born out of the need I saw, as a Latin American woman, to provide information, writing articles both in English and Spanish, about topics of interest to **Hispanics** and anyone interested in our culture and way of life. Alma Latina literally means “Latin Soul” and many people, not just Hispanics, love and admire our culture. The number of Hispanics has increased dramatically in Durham and so our intention is to write about places, events and stories mostly about the area east of the city, but also about any interesting topics pertaining to the City of Toronto.

I've worked as a **freelance** reporter for the Hispanic media for many years, and decided to finally start Alma Latina Online Magazine, a dream I've had for a long time, to make a reality my childhood dream of becoming a storyteller.

As an immigrant woman, I feel we are very much like the “**Tween**” **generation**— those of us who were not born here but have been here so long that we feel 100% Canadian, yet feel nostalgic for the land and life we left behind. We are just as comfortable speaking both languages, and switch back and forth from one to the other (or mix them up all the time, like most of us do). We live in and love both worlds, so it wouldn't be fair to talk about one without mentioning the other. Alma Latina is hoping to be the bridge and connection through both.



*Alma Sandoval Betancourth
Alma Latina Online*

Pride Durham: “Putting the Unity in Community”



Working together to build welcoming communities that embrace and celebrate all of the diverse communities within Durham region is an integral part of the work of the Local Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council.

June is LGBTQ Pride month in Canada and during the week of June

4 to 10, a number of Pride events were held across Durham. The week started with the raising of the rainbow flag (a symbol of the LGBTQ community) in many municipalities across the region.

During the week, Youth Pride events were held at D.A.A.S.C and a speaker series was held at UOIT. The weekend kicked off with the Saturday Family Festival that included entertainment, vendors, community partners, and a dinner and dance in the evening. The Second Annual Pride Parade was held on Sunday, June 10 with

hundreds of people participating as marchers and supporters. Pride Durham ended with the Queer Stock Music Festival at Memorial Park.

Truly inclusive communities are born and sustained when civic leadership institutionalises change. Participation by LDIPC partners including Community Development Council Durham, the Durham Regional Police Service, teachers from the Boards of Education and Durham Children’s Aid Society is a demonstration of a commitment to supporting inclusive communities.



Representatives from many of the Local Diversity & Immigration Partnership Council member organizations took part in the second annual Pride Durham Parade. Regional Councillor and LDIPC Co-chair Lorne Coe joined LDIPC staff Samantha Burdett, Hilary Schuldt and Audrey Andrews.

Photo permission: Susan Driggers



Partners at work: Durham Immigration Portal Curriculum launch

On Saturday, April 21, Regional Councillor and Co-chair of the Local Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council (LDIPC) Lorne Coe hosted the launch of a new tool designed to assist newcomers learning English while simultaneously orienting them to the region. The new tool entitled, "Durham Immigration Portal-based Curriculum: English Language Learning Resources" (a combined Federal and Provincial government-funded project) was designed for use by professional language instructors, volunteers and/or newcomers.

Councillor Coe unveiled the curriculum and welcomed the distinguished audience that included local language instructors, school board representatives, librarians and community volunteers.

Veronica Vulic, the primary writer, demonstrated the new tool to the full house at the beautiful St. Francis Centre in Ajax, while local organizations provided information on their services in the atrium during the break.

The curriculum includes learning activities for all language levels and covers topics from getting a job to finding global foods in your local neighbourhood and everything in between. To order a copy of the curriculum or for more information, contact hilary.schuldt@durham.ca.



Regional Councillor and LDIPC Co-chair Lorne Coe with members of the Tamil Cultural and Academic Society at the launch of the Durham Immigration Portal Curriculum

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

Diverse-City Whitby Art Event

The Town of Whitby is pleased to announce that the Ethno-cultural and Diversity Advisory Committee is now a Committee of Council and is excited about the work that lies ahead.

The committee is developing a work plan that will outline their future goals and activities; however, they have already undertaken a significant project this year: the Diverse-City Whitby Art Event which promoted art work from Henry Street High School and Sinclair Secondary School students. The art reflects and portrays the diversity in the Whitby community.

Twenty-six pieces were displayed at the Whitby Central Library during the month of May. Mayor Perkins and other members of Whitby Council joined members of the Ethno-cultural and Diversity Advisory Committee on May 4 to honour the students whose art work was on display.

The Ethno-cultural and Diversity Committee is very excited to be offering events and programs that will create a positive impact in our community and celebrate our diversity.



*Sarah Klein
Manager of Recreation
Town of Whitby*

Inclusive workplaces: World Education Services

World Education Services (WES) has recently partnered with the Welcome Centres in Ajax and Pickering to conduct information sessions and provide one-on-one advisement services for internationally educated individuals on the “hows” of getting recognition for their international education from employers, academic institutions and professional licensing bodies.

WES is a not-for-profit organization that evaluates international academic credentials by authenticating documents and providing their Canadian academic equivalents. WES’ mission is to advance the global mobility and integration of people into academic and professional settings by evaluating and advocating for recognition of international educational qualifications, and enabling individuals to fully utilize their education. WES is widely used by employers, academic institutions, and professional licensing bodies.

At the Welcome Centres, WES will provide one-on-one advisement to internationally educated individuals, assess their credentialing goals and needs and help them navigate through the recognition process. WES will also advise individuals on leveraging their evaluation reports with employers, academic institutions and professional licensing bodies.

The recognition of international academic credentials is key to access and integration of immigrants to Canada’s Labour market. Academic evaluation services play an important role in facilitating the recognition of international academic credentials.

Please contact the Welcome Centres at 1-877-761-1155 for information on the next WES session. We suggest that you visit the WES website at www.wes.org/ca to get some basic information before attending a WES session.

*Karolin Givergis
Client Services Assistant
World Education Services (WES)*



World Education Services

GLOSSARY

Advocacy – To speak or act on behalf of a cause or issue.

Assisted communication toolkit – A board that uses pictures and symbols instead of written text to help nonverbal people communicate.

Behind-the-scenes – The production side of a performance, theatre or event, how it’s made, produced or created.

Calibre – The quality of something.

Freelance – Most often used in connection with journalism or artists, producing a piece of work independently and then submitting it to a media outlet to be published.

Hands-on – Active participation in an activity, for example, building something, drawing something, acting in a play.

Hispanic – Someone who originally comes from Spanish-speaking Latin America.

Home language – The language that someone speaks at home (typically not English or French).

Inter-library loan – Borrowing library material (books, audio tapes, DVDs etc.) from another library system.

Long weekend – When a holiday falls on a Friday or a Monday and the weekend becomes three days long (or sometimes even four!).

Palliative care - An approach to care that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problems associated with life-threatening illness (WHO definition).

Patriation – Bringing something (or someone) back to the country of origin, in the case of the Constitution this meant bringing the document from the United Kingdom to Canada.

Tween generation – Associated with being in-between the life stage of a child and a teenager.



We are Canadian by heart It's a choice for us

The first time that Zoher Mazari visited Canada it was a shock, he couldn't believe that such a beautiful country existed and that he hadn't known about it. "It was so wonderful - the people were wonderful and the scenery was astonishing, a beautiful country. I went to a restaurant and heard five different languages spoken. I went home and shared everything I felt with my wife and said Canada is the place I see our daughter growing up."

An experienced commercial airline pilot based in Algiers, Zoher and his family emigrated from Algeria in 2000, landing in Toronto on July 1 - Canada Day! At the time, Algeria was in the midst of a great deal of unrest and Zoher felt that it was no longer a safe place to raise his family.

The family settled in downtown Toronto with Zoher continuing to work out of Algeria and France while his wife worked as a French teacher with the French-language school board. After years of flying very large commercial jets (including the Boeing 777), Zoher switched to the Canadian-made Dash-800 which not only brought him back to Ontario on a more regular basis for training, it also paved the way for his first Canadian job. He now works as an instructor pilot, close to home and to his family.

After ten years living in downtown Toronto, the family wanted a change and started looking for a smaller town to relocate to. They had heard about Oshawa and researched online but wanted to have their own experience and so before deciding for sure they came and visited after work, ate in local restaurants, drove around and spoke to local people about why they live



here. The family liked what they heard, what they saw and as Zoher explains, "we fell in love with it! Ten minutes from downtown and you're out in the country. You have a downtown and yet when you see people in the street, they say hello to you, which was not the case in Toronto and we really liked that."

If someone asks Zoher about immigrating to Canada, he tells them to come and visit, to learn about the country. He says, "Canada is a beautiful place for immigrant people. We all had a reason to quit our home countries and usually it's not easy," but Zoher argues that in a smaller centre like Oshawa, newcomers will find the transition easier. "You'll find people with values, you'll interact with people more and you'll be integrated more easily. There is absolutely nothing that you cannot find in Durham region, absolutely nothing. It's a wonderful region and after three years I'm still discovering new things to see and do."

Do you have a success story to share? If so, email us at ldipc@durham.ca.

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

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.

