

The Citizen



Durham Region's Diversity Focused Newsletter

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Durham Region celebrates launch of Diversity and Immigration Community Plan



Above clockwise from top left:

Speakers Rick Lea, Dr. Hugh Drouin, Martyn Beckett, Mayor Larry O'Connor, Marayln Tassone, Hilary Schuldt, Tracey Vaughn, Audrey Andrews and Mary Barr.



Above: Muhtadi Thomas and the World Drummers.

DIVERSITY AND IMMIGRATION COMMUNITY PLAN



IT'S YOUR PLAN

On March 4, the Local Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council celebrated the launch of the Diversity and Immigration Community Plan. The Council, convened by the Region of Durham, the Durham Region Local Training Board and the Community Development Council of Durham, lends direction to the implementation of the Plan.

The event was held at the Ajax Convention Centre and brought together community partners and agencies for a common purpose, to celebrate the plan and help establish Durham Region as an inclusive and welcoming place to live, work and play.

The Diversity and Immigration Community Plan is the outcome of 18 months of research and consultation with stakeholders in the region. It will serve as a framework lending direction to future work. The Plan has four objectives: to create a culture of inclusion; to enhance Durham's settlement capacity; to improve labour market outcomes for newcomers; and to attract and retain skilled immigrants. Visit www.durhamimmigration.ca/about/LDIPC for a copy of the Plan.

Many school boards, employers, agencies, boards of trades and municipalities began the journey of incorporating the needs of newcomers into their planning

processes long ago. The Plan serves to bring those services together, make best use of resources and leverage partnerships.

This initiative was made possible through funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

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Empowering youth today to be leaders of tomorrow

Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) have created powerful connections to fight against homophobia and exclusion. Student-led, many who initiate these groups find they lack guidance, training and resources. PFLAG Canada Durham Region has collaborated with community groups to ensure student leaders of GSAs are equipped with the knowledge and resources they need to be successful. We are currently fundraising in order to provide a four day GSA Leadership Camp this summer in Durham. It will be the first of its kind in Ontario and is designed to help youth develop the leadership skills and resiliency necessary for them to become change agents in their schools, families, and communities. Grant applications have been submitted to Community One and the City of Oshawa, with the latter approving \$500 towards the camp.

On April 2, PFLAG Canada Durham Region will be hosting "An Evening of Hollywood Glamour" at Club Carib. A spectacular evening is planned with a scrumptious dinner and a "Le Cage aux Folle" show. The event will benefit our chapter's work and the Durham Region GSA Leadership Camp. For more information on the leadership camp, our organization, or to obtain tickets call 905-231-0533 or email DurhamOn@pflagcanada.ca.

Donna McAllister
PFLAG Canada Durham Region



PFLAG
CANADA
DURHAM, ONTARIO



Presents
An Evening
Of Hollywood Glamour



Saturday April 2nd
Club Carib Oshawa
Cocktails 6:30 Dinner at 7:00
Show Begins at 8:00
Tickets 50.00 in advance
For Ticket Information
Call 905-231-0533
or e-mail DurhamOn@pflagcanada.ca
Inspire Change



Celebrating Diversity: Empowering the next generation of African-Canadian builders

Black History Month was celebrated in a slightly different way than usual in Durham Region. On Tuesday Feb 15, The Congress of Black Women – Oshawa/Whitby Chapter, in collaboration with the Durham College and UOIT Diversity Office hosted its first ever Black Professional Mentorship Day under the theme 'Empowering the Next Generation of African-Canadian Builders'. Students were given the opportunity to hear from, and interact with, professionals from the Black community. Over 20 professionals from all walks of life (police officers, lawyers, health care and real estate professionals, financial representatives and social workers) were kind enough to donate their time and resources to be a part of this initiative. They all presented about their respective professions, their personal journeys with education and careers, and the importance of volunteering and active participation in the community by our youth. Over 100 students from Durham in grades 7 and upwards attended this event. The recurring sentiment throughout the day was how important and impactful an event like this is for our youth as they see themselves in these professionals and visualize themselves in these professions.

The overall goal of the event was to celebrate the increasing areas of diversity in Durham while presenting positive models for our youth.



Presenters at the Black Professional Mentorship Day.

Allison Hector-Alexander
Diversity Officer
Durham College

Now accepting Youth in Policing applications



Youth in Policing training in action.

The Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS) is now accepting resumes from students for the 2011 Youth in Policing program.

The goal of the program is to inspire young people to look at policing as a career choice and to become ambassadors by improving police and community relations. Successful students will be working closely with

members of the police service to learn leadership, team building and communication skills.

Highlights of the program include:

- Demonstrations from K-9, Robbery, Fraud, Homicide, and Tactical units.
- Character development.
- Diversity training.
- Youth mentoring and leadership.
- CPR training and certification.
- Community service.
- Healthy eating and fitness challenge.
- Goal setting and skill development.

To qualify for the Youth in Policing program, students must

be between the ages of 14 and 17; reside in Durham Region; be returning to school in September 2011; and be responsible for transportation to and from the work location.

Visit the DRPS website for additional information:

www.drps.ca

Applications for this position will be accepted until 4 p.m. on Friday, April 8. Questions may be directed to youthinpolicing@drps.ca.

Constable Keith Richards
Diversity Coordinator
Durham Regional Police Service

Respite care for families living with autism: Addressing language barriers

If you are new to Canada or just to Durham Region, you may be struggling to locate local, affordable respite care for your child or a family member's child who is diagnosed with autism.

FOOTPRINTS is a respite day-program for families with children, aged 13 years and under, who have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Programs are offered in Pickering and Whitby.

A volunteer-staffed respite program, FOOTPRINTS provides respite care in a safe and happy environment. Volunteers have a range of linguistic abilities including Arabic, Tamil, Mandarin and French speakers. FOOTPRINTS uses the PECS (Picture Education Communication System) to communicate with those kids who have limited language skills and some volunteers also know sign language. Children participate in a variety of activities in a caring and socially engaging environment. Supported by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the United Way of Durham and the Rotary Club of Pickering, to name just a few of our supporters, FOOTPRINTS gives families a very precious gift – *the gift of time*.

FOOTPRINTS Pickering offers care on Friday evenings and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.; FOOTPRINTS Whitby offers care on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon. Pre-registration is required and families are required to provide information about the nature of their child's condition to allow for the customization of care. For more information, log onto www.footprints4autism.org or call 905-420-0388.

Heather Johnson
FOOTPRINTS



Nate, along with volunteer Christie, make elephants during craft time at FOOTPRINTS Whitby.

Student winners announced in the annual diversity writing and arts contest



Gwen Williams, Robert Hinves, Sharon Steinhaus, local artists representing the PineRidge Arts Council and contest judges, with the first place visual arts entries.

This fall, the Pickering Advisory Committee on Diversity partnered with the Durham District School Board and the Durham Catholic District School Board to present a contest entitled "In Your Words & Expressions". The contest invited students from Grades 2 to 12 throughout Durham Region to submit a written or arts piece to the statement

"Since the founding of our community, the diversity of its residents has changed. In another 200 years, I think..."

A distinguished panel of judges reviewed over 100 entries and selected the winning entries for each of the age categories. Special thanks to our distinguished panel of judges for the written submissions which were Mark Holland, MP Ajax-Pickering, Cathy Grant, CEO, Pickering Public Library and Mike Johnston, Managing Editor, Ajax-Pickering News Advertiser. Special thanks also to the judges of the visual arts submissions, local artists Sharon Steinhaus, Robert Hinves and Gwen Williams, all members of the PineRidge Arts Council.

The Pickering Advisory Committee on Diversity is proud to showcase the winning entries in the lobby of the Pickering Civic Complex on March 23, 2011 and on the City's website at www.cityofpickering.com during March 2011. The first place submissions will also appear in the Ajax-Pickering News Advertiser or online at www.newsdurhamregion.com.

For full list of contest winners and/or to view all winning entries, please visit www.cityofpickering.com.

Marisa Carpino
Supervisor, Culture & Recreation
City of Pickering

CREATIVE WRITING First Place Winners

Grades 6 to 8
Mary Halliday and Madison McBurney
Grade 7 at St. Theresa Catholic School

Grades 9 to 12
Vanessa Chambers
Grade 11 at J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate

VISUAL ARTS First Place Winners

Grades 2 to 5
Gayathri Karalasingam,
Grade 4 at Jack Miner Public School

Grades 6 to 8
Sheridan Brown
Grade 7 at St. Theresa Catholic School

Grades 9 to 12
Kareem Mitchell
Grade 12 at All Saints Catholic Secondary School

The community has a new mobile computer lab

Thanks to provincial funding, provided through the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, the Durham Immigration Portal project is now able to extend its outreach through the use of its new mobile computer lab.

The mobile lab is made up of 10 laptop computers, a projector and a wireless internet hub – making access to the internet possible from most locations throughout the region.

In real terms, what this means is that portal demonstrations and training sessions can be held where and when they are needed.

For the first time partnerships with groups from all parts of the region and/or with those who meet in the evening and on weekends are now possible. In addition, newcomers who work during the day can take part in valuable portal evaluations in places and times of their convenience.

If you wish to book a portal demonstration, training session or would like to participate in a portal evaluation, please contact Hilary Schuldt at ImmigrationPortal@durham.ca.



New mobile lab demo.

Communication tool kit: Overcoming language barriers

The Region of Durham, Durham Regional Police Service and the Durham Elder Abuse Network have partnered to develop an assisted communication tool kit to be used for elder abuse screening. The project was funded through the Public Health Agency of Canada, Division of Aging and Seniors.

Seniors who have challenges with verbal communication are at an increased risk of elder abuse. By pointing at pictures, seniors who are not able to speak can use the tool to 'tell' investigators about their specific situation. As the tool was being tested, community caregivers suggested the tool could also be used to overcome language barriers and not just for non-verbal seniors.

In the event of an allegation of abuse where the investigator and the potential victim speak



different languages the investigator would normally get a translator. In many smaller communities, however, the translator knows both the victim and the alleged abuser and so potential victims may not feel safe or comfortable. The new assisted communication tool kit is much less threatening, allowing seniors who may

not speak English to explain their situation using pictures and pointing.

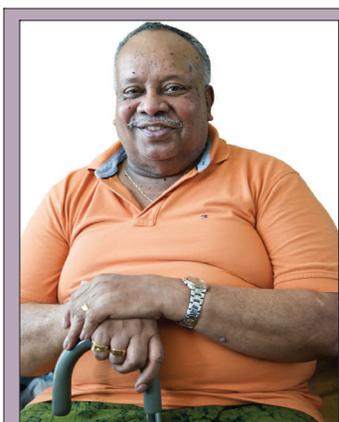
The assisted communication tool kit helps agencies give a voice to all abused seniors to help ensure that they live in our community with dignity and respect and nothing less.

*Tammy Rankin
Elder Abuse Advisor
Region of Durham*

Multilingual extended health-care services

Home First is a partnership between the Central East Local Health Integrated Network (LHIN), the Central East Community Care Access Centre (Central East CCAC), local community support agencies and local hospitals across the Central East Region. Home First is a philosophy that promotes safe and timely care, services and supports to allow patients to be returned to their community following a hospital stay.

In Durham Region, Home First has been implemented in Lakeridge Health and Rouge Valley Hospitals. In order to better meet the needs of our diverse population, the Central East CCAC has translated



One of CCAC's clients, Mr. Samy.



Home First Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) into Tamil and Chinese. These FAQs assist Tamil and Chinese-speaking clients in understanding the Home First philosophy and in answering any questions they may have about the services they may receive once they return home from the hospital. For more information about Home First or how to access the services from the Central East CCAC, please contact 1-800-263-3877. You can also visit the CCAC website at www.ce.ccac-ont.ca.

*Jennifer Old
Coordinator, Communications
Central East CCAC*

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.

Settling in Durham



For many years Andy Hiemstra (right) and other volunteers with the InterChurch Immigrant Support Group have moved furniture and built friendships with newcomers like Hoorvash Bakhshi (left) and his father Sami Desko (middle).

When I look around my house I'm reminded of how sharing resources can have a lasting impact in someone else's life. Around me I see my great-grandfather's armchair; an antique table my in-laws bought us as a wedding gift; and a bookcase that belonged to my husband's

grandmother. We've also bought a few pieces of furniture on our own but are grateful that we had people who helped us get through the "starting out" phase.

I witness the same generosity and willingness to share in my role as the Coordinator of the InterChurch Immigrant Support Group (IISG). This volunteer group has been active in Durham Region for almost twenty years and many newcomers have received donated furniture and household items that they needed for their first home upon arriving in Canada.

The mission of the IISG is to help refugees and immigrants in Durham integrate into the local community. Sharing furniture is only one of the activities of this group. Support also includes referrals to agencies and government services, assisting with transportation, advocating on their behalf, encouraging English conversation skills and building friendships. For more information about IISG, please contact iisupportgroup@gmail.com.

*Pam DeWilde
Coordinator*

InterChurch Immigrant Support Group

Organismes francophones de la région de Durham



Bienvenue dans la région de Durham! Plusieurs associations à but non-lucratives regroupent les gens selon des intérêts communs et garnissent

les calendriers d'activités et de festivités. Faisons le tour pour les rencontrer.

Commençons par le Conseil des Organismes francophones de la région de Durham; c'est votre arrêt pour connaître tout ce qui se passe en français dans la région. Au COFRD, vous trouverez également une librairie, des cartes de souhaits et un Centre d'emploi.

Un autre groupe qui s'occupe de la francophonie est l'Assemblée des communautés francophones de l'Ontario, ACFO Durham-Peterborough. Un de leur gros projet est de rendre Oshawa une ville bilingue.

Pour les dames, l'Association des femmes canadiennes-françaises organisent des soirées entre femmes ainsi que des activités familiales.

Les hommes se retrouvent parmi les Chevaliers de Colomb. Groupe actif dans la communauté à organiser des activités rejoignant toutes les catégories d'âge.

Le Club Optimiste s'occupe des enfants par le camp de vacances: le Camp Garnier. Les jeunes ont aussi du plaisir au sein du mouvement Scouts et Guides.

Chacune des écoles francophones a son Conseil d'école géré par les parents. Pour les plus petits, un service de garde: Les Lucioles est annexé à plusieurs écoles.

Il ne faut pas oublier les aînés. Le Club Jeunesse d'hier leur ouvre les portes en organisant des activités axées sur leurs intérêts.

Comme vous pouvez le constater, tout le monde trouve quelque chose à faire au sein de la communauté francophone de la région de Durham!

*Shelley Jean
Coordinatrice*

Centre d'emploi francophones de Durham

Making intercultural connections



Sharing a joke with work colleagues.

As an immigrant myself, I know that making intercultural connections can be intimidating and for some of us may seem like yet another skill we're told we need to acquire in our already busy schedules. We may shy away from gaining a better understanding of those around us because it can be easier to stick close to people with similar backgrounds. But in reality, it doesn't take that much effort to become interculturally competent – to learn how to engage and work well with people from a variety of different cultures and backgrounds.

Intercultural competence is about our willingness to learn about others while sharing our own experiences and cultural information. We are continuously interacting with people from various cultural backgrounds but we may downplay opportunities for our own deeper learning by concentrating on simply accommodating differences. Developing cultural competence is about learning to communicate across cultures more effectively. In order to do so, we must maintain a clear sense of our own identity, our attitudes, values, behaviours and communication style. We can then relate to others by comparing our similarities and differences. Not only will this help relationships with colleagues, it will also assist our successful integration into the Durham community.

*Keith Hernandez
Human Resource and Cultural Competency Trainer
KAH Consultants*

Thai Pongal: Tamil Thanksgiving



Rice field dancers

On Saturday Jan 15, the Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham (TCASD) held their annual Thai Pongal celebration, a rich tradition held in their homeland of Sri Lanka for hundreds of years. The celebration commenced with a lighting of the lamp by Mrs. Dickson (wife of Joe Dickson MPP for Ajax-Pickering). It was then followed by a dance performed by TCASD's very own youth, Iswarya Thayaparan.

The dance was followed by rice pouring ceremony, an annual tradition in the Thai Pongal celebration. All the dignitaries participated in the rice pouring event. This was an effort to educate everyone about the cultural significance and the rituals that go with Thai Pongal. More than 160 people attended the event including community leaders, community partners and members of TCASD.

There were many events throughout the night that summarized the true meaning of Thai Pongal. TCASD children held a skit about what Thai Pongal meant to them. There were many dances that incorporated the farmers and the harvest that we are thanking while doing our Thai Pongal ceremony. The TCASD youth put together many vocal pieces that are ritually practiced in the Tamil community.

This event was held to further educate youth and others from the community about Tamil traditions. The night was filled with many affairs that all interconnected to the foundation of why people celebrate Thai Pongal.

*Thusany Puvanendran
TCASD Youth Leader*

In my words: How I love Canada! I should have come earlier



My family settled in Canada on December 31, 2008 from the Philippines. I followed them five months later. My first few

weeks were a learning process and a period of adjustment. While job searching, I came across Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), Enhanced Language Training (ELT) and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. ELT offered help finding a job and immersing oneself in the job market. I wasted no time finding out how to get such free services in Canada. I was both thankful and hopeful that my needs would finally be met.

In the small ELT classroom I began to understand Canada

better. I learned about its rich culture, its people and its great history. I learned not only the proper use of English, but also how to be more conversant and polite. Canadians are basically very polite in their conversation. They give high regard to the person they are conversing with.

Finally, I had my first job in Canada working at a recycling plant. I sorted papers, plastics, bottles and tins from a file of garbage. My learning about Canada continued. My joy of being here and mingling with people of various origins overflowed. Even though I didn't have another job, I quit my first job after three weeks. I was bold. I had discovered Canada 'as a land of opportunity' and knew I would soon find a more suitable job. Good fortune and hard work provided one for me at the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities where I now work as a Finance Clerk.

Looking back, I can't thank the people enough who assisted me on my journey. I say a big thank you to Citizenship and Immigration Canada and to all the staff at Durham Continuing Education's Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada, Enhanced Language Training and English as a Second Language programs. They helped build my confidence. And, I believe that there are so many more people like the staff and teachers at Durham Continuing Education's LINC and ELT programs throughout Canada. They are such wonderful people. They are always willing and ready to assist new immigrants, like me, get into the job market and succeed. These people are the tools and partners of the government. They rally people to greater heights.

Leo Diarios

Adult English as a Second Language (AESL) Collection



Clarington Public Library
www.clarington-library.on.ca

The Bowmanville Branch of the Clarington Public Library has a brand new resource available for

English language learners, the Adult ESL Collection.

This extensive resource collection contains items you can check out for the regular loan period of three weeks, including learning dictionaries, thesauri, grammar usage guides, idiom guides, information on the TOEFL and other ESL tests, and

works of fiction written at an easier level so that adult language learners can enjoy them fully.

Browse the newest collection on the second floor of the Bowmanville Branch at 163 Church Street, Bowmanville, or look them up through the library catalogue at www.clarington-library.on.ca to request delivery to the Clarington Public Library branch of your choice.

Lisa Dyche
Community Development Librarian
Clarington Public Library

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