

# The Citizen

Durham Region's Diversity Focused Newsletter

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SPRING 2012

## Celebrating Black History Month in Durham

Black History Month meets a need to educate our community on the achievements made by black people in Canada and the rest of the world. Our roots in Canada date back to the 1600s but little is known of our involvement in the army, building, farming and inventions made in Canada. Our young people need to be made more aware of this history and to feel proud of their ancestry.

Once again Cultural Expressions Art Gallery Inc., the Town of Ajax, the Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre of Durham (WMRCC) and the RBC Royal Bank presented a celebration for Black History Month in Ajax. This community event was held on Feb. 11 at J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate.

Approximately 400 people enjoyed the festivities. Mark Beckles, Regional

Vice President of RBC Royal Bank presented awards to the winners of the 2012 RBC Black History Month essay competition. The competition asked students to share their stories of how Black Canadians have helped to define Canada's diverse heritage and was open to students applying to college or university.

Featured performers included African gospel singers Soul Influence, a local **calypsonian**, Jimmy Lalla, the dynamic WSK drummers and comedy skits from Marcia Brown Productions.

Talented youth entertained us with piano, poetry, and dance recitals. Finally, our keynote inspirational speaker Dennis Brown spoke about change as it affects us all and he challenged the audience to be better change agents in their communities.

The program fulfilled the



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Black History Month was celebrated at J. Clarke Richardson by more than 400 people on Feb. 11. Katura Gibb, Shardee Keane and David Grant received awards for their Black History Month essays.

mandate of why we celebrate Black History Month because it gave us all an opportunity to uplift ourselves and it gave us a sense of pride in our deep rich culture and heritage. It reminded us that we are an intelligent, talented and creative people.



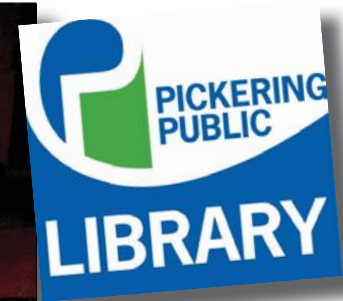
Esther Forde  
Cultural Expressions Art Gallery

Translation links: <http://translate.google.com>

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## Settling in Pickering: Resources at the Pickering Public Library



Did you know that you can use your local public library at no cost?

If you would like to borrow books, movies, CDs or video games all you have to do is show identification with your address and you can get a free library card.

The Pickering Public Library has books for adults and children in many languages including Urdu, Chinese, Spanish, French and Arabic. If you need ESL materials, the Library has these too! You can also learn a new language or take an ESL lesson by using the online language learning tool called Mango languages. It is available on the Library's website—you don't even need to leave home.

The Library also has computers with free internet access and free wifi for your laptop or device. The Library has study spaces, room rentals and has a variety of free programs for adults, teens and children. Drop by the Pickering Central Library – right beside City Hall and check out what's available or go online at [www.picnet.org](http://www.picnet.org).

Colleen Bolin  
 Manager of Client Relations  
 905-831-6265 ext. 6234  
[colleenb@picnet.org](mailto:colleenb@picnet.org)

Anna-Marie McDonald  
 Marketing Assistant  
 905-831-6265 ext. 6526  
[anna-mariem@picnet.org](mailto:anna-mariem@picnet.org)

**Library**

In every language it opens doors

مكتبة (Arabic)

biblioteca (Spanish)

لائبریری (Urdu)

bibliothèque (French)

Words in orange are defined in the glossary

## Celebrating Chinese New Year



Chinese New Year begins on the new moon. This generally happens in late January or early February according to the lunar calendar. As in other cultures, it is a Chinese tradition to visit relatives and friends during the holidays. Growing up, on New Year's Day we prepared our house, wore new clothes and waited for the guests to arrive so we could eat. The first meal of the year was always full of delicious vegetarian dishes consisting of 18 different ingredients. My mother explained that 18 was a lucky number signifying wealth and prosperity. We also had all types of vegetables as well as long continuous noodles, which symbolized long life. We would then complete the meal with mouth-watering and decadent desserts, sugared coconut and nian gao, a sticky rice dessert that is considered good luck when eaten during the holidays. Nian gao, is a **homonym** for 'higher year' which is symbolic for

raising oneself higher in each coming year. After the first meal at our house, our family would visit older relatives as it is a tradition for the youngest family members to visit the eldest and more senior members of extended families. Over the next few days, cousins and friends would visit us. We would take turns greeting guests at the door and helping to bring in the oranges and tangerines. These are the '**must have**' fruits that bring both luck and wealth. It's important to bring even numbers of fruit and to ensure that the number is not divisible by four as the number four when pronounced in Chinese also means death. After the guests settled down, the children would sit down with the adults drinking tea and greet them by saying "Gung Hei Fat Choy" (wishing you a prosperous year) and we would then run away happily with our **red-packet money**.

### New Years Dumpling Recipe

Chinese dumplings (Jiaozi) are very popular during the Chinese New Year season. They are made to celebrate the New Year and to bring peace and prosperity!

#### Ingredients

##### Dumpling Dough:

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- up to 1 1/4 cups cold water
- 1/4 tsp salt

##### Filling:

- 1 lbs ground pork or beef
  - 2 tbsp soy sauce
  - 1 tbsp oyster sauce
  - 1 tbsp salt
- 1 tbsp Chinese rice wine or dry sherry
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground white pepper, or to taste
  - 1 tbsp sesame oil
  - 1/2 green onion, finely minced
  - 1/2 cup of finely chopped chives
- 1 1/2 cups finely shredded Napa cabbage
- 2 slices fresh ginger, finely minced

##### Preparation:

1. Stir the salt into the flour. Slowly stir in the cold water, adding as much as necessary to form a smooth dough. Don't add more water than necessary. **Knead** the dough into a smooth ball. Cover the dough and let it rest for at least 30 minutes.
2. While the dough is resting, prepare the filling ingredients. Add the soy sauce, salt, rice wine and white pepper to the meat, stirring in only one direction. Add the remaining ingredients, stirring in the same direction, and mix well.
3. To make the dumpling dough, **knead** the dough until it forms a smooth ball. Divide the dough into 60 pieces. Roll each piece out into a circle about 3 inches in diameter.
4. Place a small portion (about 1 level tablespoon) of the filling into the middle of each wrapper. Wet the edges of the dumpling with water. Fold the dough over the filling into a half moon shape and pinch the edges to seal. Continue with the remainder of the dumplings.
5. To cook, bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add half the dumplings, giving them a gentle stir so they don't stick together. Bring the water to a boil, and add 1/2 cup of cold water. Cover and repeat. When the dumplings come to a boil for a third time, they are ready. Drain and remove. If desired, they can be pan-fried at this point.

*Memories of Chinese New Year in Hong Kong submitted by Cindy Poon  
Dumpling recipe and photos submitted by Patricia Liang*

## Celebrating Naw Ruz



The Shrine of the Báb in Haifa, Israel. Reprinted with permission of the Bahá'í International Community.

The Baha'i New Year festival known as Naw Ruz ("new day") is held on the spring equinox, March 21, but the celebration will begin the evening before because the Baha'i day begins at sunset.

The festival comes at the end of a 19-day fast in which adult Baha'is abstain from food and drink between sunrise and sunset as a reminder of the need for individuals to be detached from their material desires. Naw Ruz is the first day of the first of 19 months in the Baha'i calendar, which was initiated by the Bab, the forerunner of the Baha'i faith's Prophet-Founder Bahauallah.

Naw Ruz is one of nine Baha'i holy days on which work is suspended. It is generally

observed with a meeting for prayers and celebrations—often combined with a dinner since the sunset on which Naw Ruz begins ends on the last day of the Baha'i fast.

The Baha'i calendar consists of 19 months of 19 days (361 days) with the addition of "Intercalary Days," known as Ayyam-i-ha. These fall between Feb. 26 and March 1, four days ordinarily, and five in leap years between the eighteenth and nineteenth months to adjust the calendar to the solar year. Also known as "Days of Ha," they are devoted to preparation for the fast, celebrating, hospitality, charity and gift giving.

*Roland Rutland  
Co-ordinator, External Affairs,  
Baha'i communities of Durham*

## Building settlement and service capacity in Durham

One of the key objectives of the Local Diversity & Immigration Partnership Council (LDIPC) is to increase Durham's settlement capacity. One way is to support the work of the not-for-profit sector in Durham Region.

We know that funding is of paramount importance to not-for-profit organizations and so the *Funding Opportunities Update for Not-for-Profits* newsletter was developed. As funding opportunities come to our attention we are committed to sharing that information with our community partners. By identifying opportunities that develop and grow the sector, together we can better meet the needs of Durham's diverse communities.

*The Funding Opportunities Update* is sent out electronically on a quarterly basis. It includes the name of

the funding program, a brief description with a link for more information and the deadline for applications. We know that this is not an exhaustive list but we hope that it will be a useful addition to your own grant seeking research. If you would like to be added to the subscription list, please contact us at [ldipc@durham.ca](mailto:ldipc@durham.ca). The LDIPC staff is continuously seeking out new funding opportunities to add to the list of funders.

.....  
 • NEW! Take the opportunity  
 • to register your organization  
 • in the new Grants Ontario  
 • database ([www.grants.gov.on.ca](http://www.grants.gov.on.ca)). Grants Ontario is your  
 • source for grants provided  
 • by the Ministry of Citizenship  
 • and Immigration and the  
 • Ministry of Tourism, Culture  
 • and Sport.  
 • .....



Over the last couple of months the LDIPC has hosted information sessions on grant writing with both the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport and the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Nearly 80 people attended the MCI grant-writing workshop on Feb. 3 and another 35 people attended the OTF session on March 5. Information on future grant-writing workshops will be sent to those receiving the *Funding Opportunities Update*.

*Samantha Burdett  
Policy Advisor, Diversity & Immigration Program  
Region of Durham*

## Invitation to the Newcomer Community Kitchen at the Ajax Welcome Centre

Many say that nothing brings people together better than food. This is one of the reasons for having the Newcomer Community Kitchen at the beautiful Welcome Centre in Ajax. Newcomers and community volunteers meet every second Thursday of the month to cook together. This activity is run by the Community Connections Program at the Community Development Council Durham (CDCD). The Program's main objective is to assist immigrants in the process of integration. Newcomers are provided with support to establish social and professional contacts so they feel engaged and welcomed into Durham Region. The volunteers involved in Community Connections

activities work closely with recently arrived newcomers. It gives volunteers an opportunity to increase their knowledge of the challenges immigration brings. They also gain a sense of accomplishment by contributing to building inclusive and welcoming communities.

The Program is available to:

- Permanent Residents
- Convention Refugees
- Live-in-Caregivers

For more information about the Program please visit the CDCD website at: [www.cdcd.org](http://www.cdcd.org) or email: [jplishewsky@cdcd.org](mailto:jplishewsky@cdcd.org) or [bstobinska@cdcd.org](mailto:bstobinska@cdcd.org).

*Bozena Stobinska  
Settlement Worker*

*Community Development Council Durham*



### APPLE CRANBERRY CRISP

Pre heat oven to 350 degrees F

Prepare fruit, combining it with sugar and flavouring:

4 cups peeled, sliced, cored apples

1/2 cup packed brown sugar

1/4 tsp cinnamon

3 tbsp flour

1/2 cup cranberries (fresh, frozen or dried)

1/2 cup apple juice reduced to 1/4 cup

Place in baking dish; add the 1/4 cup apple juice

Make topping using the following ingredients:

2/3 cup flour

1/2 cup brown sugar

1/3 cup firm butter

2/3 cup rolled oats

Combine flour and sugar in a bowl; cut in butter until texture is like coarse crumbs

Bake until topping is brown and crisp (40 minutes)

## Building inclusion: World Religion Day celebrated in Uxbridge

World Religion Day was celebrated in Uxbridge Township on Jan. 15. Put together by the Durham MultiFaith World Religion Day Committee in collaboration with the Township of Uxbridge, this year marked the sixth annual celebration of World Religion Day in Durham Region. Township of Uxbridge Mayor Gerri Lynn O'Connor delivered the welcome speech as the host of the event with over 180 people in attendance.

The theme for 2012 was "Social Justice: The Key to Harmony." The aim of World Religion Day is to establish interfaith understanding and harmony amidst all religions. Human unity and true equality are based on an ethical belief which is preached in all faiths as a single spiritual and moral code of conduct. Events such as World Religion Day promote understanding and dialogue between the followers of all religions, to call attention to the common foundation of



Members of the organizing committee with local dignitaries at the World Religion Day event.

their spiritual principles and to emphasize the positive interaction amidst humankind bringing peace and tranquility in the Durham community in particular and in the world at large in general.

Representatives from the province, the Region and all eight municipalities (including Regional Councillor and LDIPC Co-Chair Lorne Coe) were in the audience and participated in the interactive discussion following presentations by nine faith groups. "I have learned

something today about other religions which I did not know in my entire life," commented one of the 10 students from India attending UOIT.

"All faiths preach one thing in common- worship your Creator and be kind and caring for all living beings on earth," added another student.

*Donald Igbokwe  
Chair*

*Durham MultiFaith World Religion Day  
Committee*

## Durham LGBTQ Communities Involved Committee

Formed in 2009, the Durham LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) Communities Involved Committee is comprised of community members whose mission is to initiate and promote strong collaborations and partnerships with local community organizations to inspire positive change and healthy development within the Durham LGBTQ community. Acting as a community catalyst, this committee provides a united voice ensuring the interests of the LGBTQ community-at-large are met, as well as acting as a resource to organizations, groups, residents and local government, advocating and increasing awareness of LGBTQ issues within Durham Region. The committee meets bi-monthly with approximately 30 members.

Achievements of this committee include the recent successful collaboration to develop an LGBTQ helpline in Durham. Led by lead agency, Distress Centre Durham, this collaborative

project known as Prideline Durham was launched in 2011, thanks to a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Prideline Durham provides emotional support, crisis intervention, and community referral information specific to the concerns and issues of the LGBTQ community in Durham Region. Other successes include providing extensive consultation, input and feedback to the Town of Ajax's Diversity & Community Engagement Plan, ensuring that LGBTQ concerns were included as part of the Town's overall diversity demographic.



*Robert Gruber  
Chair*

*Communities Involved Committee*

## Improving the settlement and integration of newcomers using [durhamimmigration.ca](http://durhamimmigration.ca)

The Local Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council is pleased to announce the creation of a unique new tool to help support English language learners living in Durham – coming Spring 2012.

The new tool will make use of the hundreds of community resources and services highlighted in Durham's immigration portal [www.durhamimmigration.ca](http://www.durhamimmigration.ca). The tool incorporates those resources into meaningful English language lessons and activities that can be used by professional language instructors, volunteers and in self-directed learning.

The benefits of this 'Durhamcentric' **curricula** include introducing language activities

through a locally relevant source (the immigration portal) that newcomers can go on to use as a starting point for their own explorations whether it be for job search, entrepreneurship, or finding local schools, services or local shops and restaurants offering a taste of home.



The curricula is being designed to accelerate and deepen integration; improve English language skills; foster a more welcoming environment; promote self-directed learning/research; celebrate and learn more about each other (multi-directional integration); improve confidence and participation in civic life; and introduce local service providers, events, and locations.

The **curricula** will be available in both print and electronic formats. For more information please contact Hilary Schuldt at [hilary.schuldt@durham.ca](mailto:hilary.schuldt@durham.ca).

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

## Inclusive communities: Improving lives of those living with MS

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is the most common neurological disease affecting young adults in Canada, which has one of the highest rates in the world. MS is a poorly understood disease with the average age of onset occurring between the ages of 15 to 40. Because it is a disease that slowly destroys the neurons in the brain, its symptoms can vary widely depending on the person. Most common are fatigue, poor balance, partial paralysis, double vision, and difficulty speaking. Most adults experience increasing disability as they age. There is no cure or effective treatment.

We are pleased at the Durham Regional Chapter to provide a number of services to people with MS overseen by our client services coordinator.

With one of the largest client service programs in Ontario,



The Durham Regional Chapter Board of Directors: Clockwise from top left: Debbie Hunter, Mike Roche, Fanuel Ephraim, David Reid, Jennifer Heynen, Elaine McDade, Amanda Murray. Absent: Jim Marsh, Sherry O'Mara

we raise funds to assist our members with information, meetings, programs assisting with purchase or loan of walkers, wheelchairs, stair lifts, wheelchairs, scooters and assistive devices such as grab bars for showers or some attendant care such a hiring someone to help with laundry or house cleaning.

There is a volunteer board of directors which meets monthly to discuss issues and concerns of the running of the chapter and of the membership of the MS Society, and also new and on-going initiatives. Every Monday there is an MS Yoga class and there are monthly "living with MS" meetings that sometimes feature guest speakers.

For information on the MS Society Canada, the Durham Regional Chapter or to sign up for our newsletter, please visit [www.msduham.com](http://www.msduham.com), "like us" on Facebook or phone 905-668-0388.

*Mike Roche  
Director, Social Action  
MS Society, Durham Regional Chapter*

## Improving labour market outcomes for newcomers: The Mentoring Partnership Program



The Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre has been successfully delivering the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) Mentoring Partnership Program (TMP) since September 2011. The program is designed to match internationally trained experienced

newcomers (mentees) with a mentor working in Canada in the same or similar field. The Durham program has been successful in registering 64 mentees and has matched 24 of these mentees with appropriate mentors.

Although the objective of the Mentorship program is not employment, rather sharing of experience and knowledge, a current mentee in the program has secured employment in his profession of property development and planning within his first month of TMP. Raymond Habets shares, "my mentor is very open and

humble about supporting me. He has lots of experience, knows a lot of people and has been helping me network. It is nice to talk with somebody who has more experience from the side of the employer from my industry. He is giving me the reassurance that what I am doing is good."

Mentors also report they have found their experience truly enriching, while additionally enhancing their own leadership, coaching and management skills. Hal Niedzviecki, publisher of an arts and culture magazine, fiction writer, journalist and a mentor with the program shares: "My parents were immigrants to Canada. I want everyone that comes to this country to be able to succeed on their own terms and knowing that I'm contributing to that, and to the whole idea of Canada as a multicultural society, is very meaningful to me."

For further information on how you can join the program as a mentor or mentee, please call 905-420-3600 or email [mentorship@unemployedhelp.on.ca](mailto:mentorship@unemployedhelp.on.ca).

*Markie Warren  
Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre*

## John Howard Society of Durham Region Employment Services

We know finding a job isn't easy! The John Howard Society of Durham Region has been offering employment and adult upgrading services for many years. The collaboration between these two programs offers individuals the option of obtaining services in a seamless manner and feel confident that their needs will be met on a one to one basis.

The following is a list of free resources available to help individuals prepare for and secure meaningful employment opportunities:

- Job search support- Available through our free resource centres and workshops as well as one to one with an employment counsellor.
- Job training and retention services- Job coaching,

mentoring, training and volunteer based opportunities and follow-up.

- Job matching and placement services- Access to the hidden job market, job trials, placements and supports and additional benefits/incentives.
- Adult upgrading program- Upgrade essential skills in preparation for transition to employment, further education/training, or increased independence.

Both youth and adults are welcome.

For employment service information contact the following sites:

- Oshawa: 905-579-8482, or Whitby: 905-666-8847

For skills upgrading information contact the following sites:

- Oshawa: 905-579-8482, or Bowmanville: 905-623-6814

For additional information, please contact Cheryl Thompson, JHS Marketing Outreach Worker for both Employment and Literacy Services at [cheryl.thompson@jhsdurham.on.ca](mailto:cheryl.thompson@jhsdurham.on.ca), or call 905-666-8847 ext. 35, and visit our website: [www.jhsemploymentservices.ca](http://www.jhsemploymentservices.ca)



*Cheryl Thompson  
Marketing Outreach Worker  
JHS Employment and Literacy Services*



## The Local Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council: One year later

It has been a year since the Local Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council (LDIPC) launched the Diversity and Immigration Community Plan. The priorities and the goals within the Plan come directly from the Durham community and guide us as we move the work of diversity and immigration forward in Durham. The LDIPC guides the work of the Plan, ensuring as many voices as possible inform planning and implementation. New to the LDIPC this year are: Regional Councillor Lorne Coe, Chair of the Health & Social Services Committee and Co-Chair of LDIPC; Mayor Terry Clayton, Township of Brock; Heather McMillan, ED, Durham Region Local Training Board; Bruce Townley, Inspector, Durham Regional Police Service; and Donna Bright, CEO, Ajax Library. We are grateful for the continued support of the returning council members.

The Durham LDIPC acts as a co-ordinator, facilitator and incubator. Council members, representing their networks, places of work and fields of expertise, act as champions of the Plan. Making Durham a more welcoming community is about working smarter and working together; it's about starting conversations and asking people,

business, organizations and communities to think differently; it's about asking the questions – how can I make my organization, my workplace, my community accessible to newcomers? What is my responsibility in making Durham a more welcoming community?

The LDIPC and program staff continue to co-ordinate information, facilitate new partnerships, publish *The Citizen*, notify the community about funding opportunities, improve (with the community partners) [www.durhamimmigration.ca](http://www.durhamimmigration.ca), bring training to Durham, and build capacity within the service-provider community and beyond.

The LDIPC thanks the entire Durham community for participating in the journey of making Durham a more welcoming community. To learn more about the LDIPC members and the Community Diversity & Immigration Community Plan visit [www.durhamimmigration.ca](http://www.durhamimmigration.ca).

It has been an exciting year and a privilege to be a part of this work in Durham region.

The LDIPC receives funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

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



**Introducing  
Co-chair  
Councillor  
Lorne Coe**  
Councillor  
Coe is

one of three Regional Councillors for the Town of Whitby. Lorne was elected to represent the East Ward of Whitby in 2003 and was re-elected in 2006. In 2010, Lorne was elected to Durham Regional Council. As a Regional Councillor, he also sits on the local Whitby Council.

Councillor Coe is the Chair of the Health & Social Services Committee, Co-chair of the Local Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council (LDIPC) and is also President of the Durham Region Non-Profit Housing Corporation. Prior to being elected to Whitby Town Council, Councillor Coe worked in senior positions in the private sector and as a civil servant within the Ontario government.



Regional Councillor Lorne Coe, Mayor of Brock Township Terry Clayton, Durham Region Local Training Board Executive Director Heather McMillan, DRPS Inspector Bruce Townley, and Ajax Library CEO Donna Bright.

## DRPS community outreach

Durham Region is becoming an increasingly diverse and multicultural community. In stride with this, the Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS) is furthering their efforts to ensure their services are responsive to the needs of the many voices of the community. On Monday, March 5, DRPS held the first annual Community Forum event at the Ajax Community Centre. The forum offered an open space for meaningful, progressive dialogue between all members of Durham Region on topics concerning community safety and diversity. Following a formal information session, community

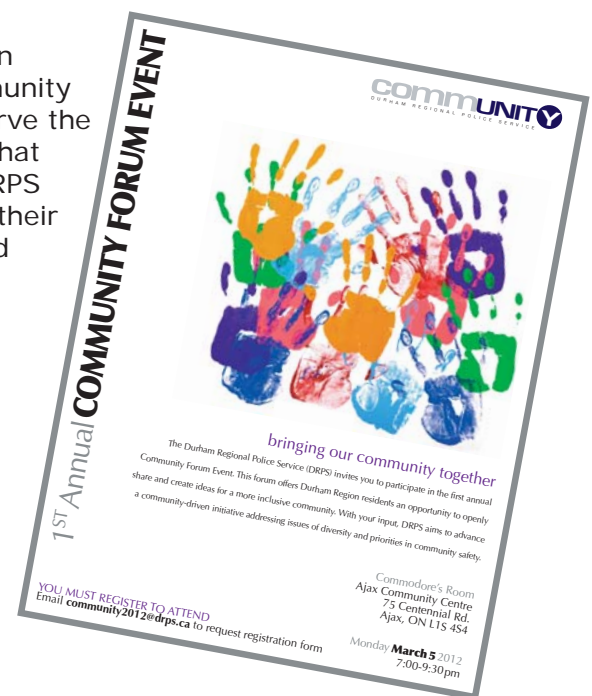
representatives and DRPS members participated in facilitated break out groups. The group's agenda generated discussion and ideas toward promoting sustainable, trusting, positive relationships with one another. With the input garnered from event participants, DRPS aims to advance a community-driven initiative addressing issues of diversity and priorities in community safety.

The overall goal is to gain feedback from the community on how the DRPS can serve the community better and what the community needs DRPS to do in order to ensure their continued confidence and trust.

Eighty participants took part in what will be an annual growing forum for community discussion. For more information on future events and how you can get involved please contact [community2012@drps.ca](mailto:community2012@drps.ca).

*Inspector Bruce Townley  
Durham Regional Police Service*

DRPS is now accepting student application packages for the 2012 Youth In Policing Initiative! The deadline for submissions is Friday, March 30 at 4 p.m. Applications can be downloaded from [www.drps.ca](http://www.drps.ca). Questions may be directed to [youthinpolicing@drps.ca](mailto:youthinpolicing@drps.ca).



Over 80 people participated in the first annual Community Forum at the Ajax Community Centre. Participants and representatives from DRPS engaged in small group discussions to generate ideas toward promoting sustainable, trusting, positive relationships with one another.

## What's more Canadian than hockey? Maple syrup!



The first official day of spring is fast approaching and with long winter days behind us, it's time to get out and celebrate the change in the seasons. One of the first signs of spring in Canada is the running of tree sap which can only mean one thing—maple syrup! There are at least two major maple syrup festivals to enjoy in Durham with many more open houses at **sugar bushes** across the region. The 37th Annual Maple Syrup Festival at Purple Woods Conservation Area in Oshawa will be open daily from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. during the March Break (March 10 to 18), as well as March 24 and 25 and March 31 and April 1. The Sunderland Maple Syrup Festival also runs March 31 and April 1 and includes all day pancakes, horse and wagon rides, lots of delicious food, arts and crafts at the school, a fine art show in the Town Hall, bus tours to the **sugar bush** and much more. Visiting a real **sugar bush** is definitely a rite of passage for all newcomers to Canada!

Now is also the time to start indoor planting for outdoor gardens as garden centres across the Region are re-opening for business. Many garden centres offer advice on what to plant and where; how to look after your lawn, trees, shrubs and plants; and some also offer seminars on a wide variety of gardening topics. Spend an afternoon at your local garden centre and explore native Canadian plants and vegetables. If you don't have your own outdoor space, you may be interested in joining a community garden. For more information, visit the Durham Digs website at [www.durhamdigs.ca](http://www.durhamdigs.ca).

For more information on what to do in Durham, visit the Durham Immigration Portal [www.durhamimmigration.ca](http://www.durhamimmigration.ca) or the Durham Tourism event calendar at [www.durhamtourism.ca](http://www.durhamtourism.ca).

*Samantha Burdett  
Policy Advisor, Diversity & Immigration Program  
Region of Durham*

## Glossary

**Calypsonian:** A Calypsonian is a musician who sings and plays calypso music, a type of music most commonly associated with the Caribbean.

**Curricula:** A curricula is a set of lessons with a purpose/theme.

**Equinox:** The equinox occurs twice a year when day and night are equal, usually late March and late September.

**ESL:** ESL is the acronym for English-as-a-second-language.

**Homonym:** A homonym is the term used for two (or more) words that sound the same when spoken but are spelled differently and have different meanings (e.g. there, their, they're OR too, two).

**Knead:** A cooking term, to knead something means mixing together ingredients with your hands, usually used in reference to making pastry.

**Red-packet money:** Red-packet money refers to the traditional red envelopes full of gifts of money given to children during Chinese New Year celebrations.

**Sugar bush:** A sugar bush is the area in a forest where the sap is collected from maple trees to make maple syrup.

## Be open-minded and make the most of what's in front of you



Aku Dunyo Richter arrived in Canada from Ghana in 1996. She came to Canada to join her Canadian husband, Conrad, who she originally met when he was travelling in Ghana a few years before. Arriving in Canada was a culture shock, arriving in Canada and moving to a small rural community where nobody looked like her was an even bigger shock. Aku was used to always having other people around. Where she came from a person was never alone and there was always someone to talk to. She felt very isolated on the farm with only the grass, the leaves and the birds as her friends. Not one to sit still for long, however, Aku tapped into her family networks in Toronto and joined an African drumming and dance group, which helped her to bridge those early years in Canada. In reflecting back on

those first few years, Aku notes that having her husband here helped with settling into life in Durham, but everything was SO different-the people, the food, the society-that it took time and an ability to be open-minded to see those differences eventually melt away.

Aku and her husband continued to work at the family business, Richters Herbs, but moved into Uxbridge when they started their family. Aku and the children were very active, taking walks and talking to neighbours, and getting involved in skating, soccer, baseball and skiing to meet people. By pushing herself to get out and be part of the community, Aku met amazing people and became part of a great community where people looked out for each other; reminding Aku of what her early life had been like in Ghana.

The family moved back to the Richters Herbs farm in 2003 when Aku and her husband bought the business from Conrad's parents but Aku has maintained close connections with the Uxbridge community and the larger Ghanaian community in Toronto. Aku's daughter has followed in her footsteps and now dances with an African drumming group. The family has made a number

of trips back to Ghana together, maintaining connections and relationships with family there.

Durham has grown and the ethno-cultural makeup of many communities has changed since Aku first arrived. Her advice to newcomers, no matter where they're settling in Durham is "...be open-minded, whoever you are, wherever you're from, it will be a shock when you leave your comfort zone and arrive in a new place. The best thing you can do for yourself is be open-minded and be accepting of the situation. Make the most of what is in front of you and that way you'll overcome any situation." For Aku, coming to Canada was an adventure that she was looking forward to; she was excited about coming and jumped in with both feet, which no doubt also made the transition to life in Canada that much easier.

Do you have a success story to share? If so, email us at [ldipc@durham.ca](mailto:ldipc@durham.ca).

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