

# The Citizen

DURHAM REGION'S  
DIVERSITY FOCUSED NEWSLETTER  
Issue 15 2013



## Improving labour market outcomes for newcomers: Job Search Workshops

Finding employment can be very challenging, especially for newcomers. If you are a new immigrant, convention refugee or live-in caregiver and looking for a job, then this article is for you!

Did you know that 80 to 85 percent of jobs are not advertised? It is very expensive to place an ad in a paper and can be overwhelming for employers to review hundreds of resumes for only one position. How do you find jobs if they are not advertised? By **networking** with people connected to your desired occupation/industry and telling them about your work experience. As a newcomer, your first professional contact may come from someone in your family, through friends and neighbours, places of worship, schools, libraries, or through volunteer opportunities.



If you are feeling overwhelmed on how to make the right connections or not sure how to "market" yourself, join us at the Pickering or Ajax Welcome Centre to participate in the Job Search Workshop (JSW) Program!

JSW is funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). It is especially designed to give you the support and help you need to create an effective résumé, to effectively plan your job search and to learn about government programs to assist you in securing gainful employment. Make an appointment to have your employment needs assessed. Then, attend workshops where you will learn to understand your occupation within the Canadian job market; how Canadian companies hire within your field; how your résumés are read and selected; how to target your résumé to catch employers' attention; effective interview techniques; and most importantly, learn about networking strategies such as "cold calling" and "information interviews".

Call 905-420-3008 today to book an appointment in Pickering or Ajax!

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## Creating a culture of inclusion: Black History Month in Durham

February is Black History Month across Canada. It is an opportunity to celebrate and honour the many achievements of black Canadians, past and present. There were a number of amazing events held throughout Durham last month. We've included some photos from the Celebrate Black History Month event organized by Cultural Expressions Art Gallery and the Town of Ajax (and community partners); and the "Still I Rise! A Celebration of Humanity" event at Trent University in Oshawa. More on the "Still I Rise" event below.



Cadence Dance Academy perform at Celebrate Black History Month in Ajax. (Photo credit Denise Wilkins, LifeartDesigns.ca).

"Still I Rise! A Celebration of Humanity" is a community event created by Trent University Oshawa students to celebrate Black History Month. This was the third year for the event and students welcomed hundreds through the doors at the Thornton Road Campus. This celebration was born from a grassroots student movement to bring groups together to foster dialogue within the community. Twenty-five student groups showcased their leading-edge research and coursework in black psychology, sociology, history, and literature. More than 30 public and private

sector organizations collaborated to provide current information on events and developments around the GTA, including the Durham Local Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council, the Multicultural Council of Durham, and Cultural Expressions Art Gallery.



The Celebrate Black History Month committee with young attendees. (Photo credit Paul Brown).



Local hero Constable Keith Richards at "Still I Rise"

While hundreds of attendees flocked to the booths, students recognised four local heroes. Honoured local heroes are Durham Police Officer Keith Richards, for championing diversity and being a role model within the community and police services for the past 23 years; **Septuagenarian** author and motivational speaker Errol Gibbs; Rosemary Sadlier; and Kid 'Trudoe' Clarke, a successful artist and founder of Urbanology magazine. The student committee made a surprise presentation to Professor Laurie Jacklin for empowering students to reach out to the community. "Doctor Laurie put tremendous time to make sure that we students can shine," said Pita-Garth Case, student Vice-President of the Still I Rise committee. "Our involvement has been career-changing for many of us."

Student event President Roderic Southwell explained the importance of the event to Trent students in this community. "As future leaders in our community, we invite everyone – regardless of colour, 'race', ethnicity, birthplace, and so on – to join us on our on-going journey as we harness our past, rooted in pain, to create a better and more inclusive future for everyone."



Trent Provost Dr. Gary Boire (L) believes in the importance of this event so strongly that he volunteers as the Executive sponsor. Pictured here with student Pita-Garth Case.

## Creating soup connections: Hot Roots Soups

Who would have thought that soup could connect farmers to Caribbean history and global sustainability and urban restaurants? Oshawa's "Hot Roots Soups" festival from Feb 12 to 16 did just that! The five-day spicy celebration of 'local roots' was an **epicurean** adventure shared by 13 downtown Oshawa restaurants in an attempt to attract **foodies** downtown for soups inspired by Afro-Caribbean cuisines.



The idea was a concoction stirred up by Oshawa's Innovation Lab (iLAB), DurhamVeg, Creative Carrot, Oshawa City and the Foundation for Building Sustainable Communities (FBSC). A few days after the initial discussion, Oshawa's Downtown Business Association (BIA) and Oshawa Public Libraries joined this team. With only six weeks to organize the event, local organic farmers were engaged to deliver root vegetables downtown. The graphics, webpage, most of the printing

and prizes were donated. DurhamVeg compiled a recipe booklet for each restaurant and Richters Herbs of Uxbridge donated a large quantity of thyme. Community organizations generously supplied items for gift prizes. For every soup sold, a \$1 donation went to Hearth Place Cancer Support Centre. At the end of the festival, Hot Roots had amassed over \$400 for Hearth Place.



Ironically, the hot soups made from winter root vegetables, combined with spices from warmer climates, enticed people to venture out to try new restaurants on the coldest days of 2013. The project was a learning experience for all involved. The Hot Roots Team is keen to try again next year.

<p><b>Welcome Centre Immigrant Services</b> Durham Region</p> <p>Services provided free of charge to clients Des services sont aussi disponibles en français.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Settlement Services</li> <li>■ English Language Classes</li> <li>■ Employment Supports</li> <li>■ Accreditation Information</li> <li>■ Interpretation Services</li> </ul>	<p><b>AJAX</b> 458 Fairall Street, Unit 5</p>	
		<p><b>PICKERING</b> 1400 Bayly Street, Unit 5</p> <p><b>1-877-761-1155</b> info@welcomecentre.ca</p>	
<p><b>welcomecentre.ca</b></p>		<p>Funded by:  Citizenship and Immigration Canada</p>	<p>Financé par: Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada</p>



## Building safe communities: Prevent credit and debit card fraud

Credit and debit card fraud has affected many residents in Durham. Although it is impossible to stop this growing crime completely, we can protect ourselves from becoming victims. When using the POS (Point-of-Sale) terminals in stores, always try to insert your CHIP card first and only swipe your magnetic stripe if the credit card terminal does not accept CHIP transactions. The safest method is RFID, which is also known as 'tap' or MasterCard Pay pass/Visa Pay Wave/Interac Flash. This method keeps the magnetic stripe of your debit or credit card secure. The magnetic stripe is the easiest way for criminals to compromise your debit and credit card.



One thing to look for with CHIP transactions is your credit or debit card going too far into the terminal CHIP reader. A **tampered** CHIP credit card terminal will be evident by how far into the terminal you are forced to insert your card.

If your card has been compromised, notify your bank immediately to stop any **fraudulent** use of your data. You are also encouraged to notify police and file a fraud report. Durham Regional Police has a very aggressive and internationally recognized fraud unit that actively investigates these types of crimes.

Protecting yourself from Identity Theft cannot entirely be controlled but you can minimize the risk by guarding your personal information. For additional helpful hints on how to reduce the likelihood of fraud happening to you, please review our tips at [www.drps.ca](http://www.drps.ca) and click on Public Safety.

Inspector Bruce Townley  
Durham Regional Police Service  
Co-Chair Diversity Advisory Committee

## Improving settlement outcomes for newcomers: Income Tax Clinics



Back by popular demand the Durham Welcome Centre Immigrant Services is pleased to offer a **FREE Tax Clinic** from Feb. 11 to April 12, 2013 at both Welcome Centre locations in Ajax and Pickering.

To be eligible for this **FREE Tax Clinic**, clients must:

- Be immigrants/newcomers who have been in Canada for less than five years
- Have a household income of \$40,000 or less

The Tax Clinic is available during regular working hours from Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. By appointment **ONLY**. Some evenings may be available.

For more information or to book an appointment, ask at reception or call 1-877-761-1155.

## Creating a culture of inclusion: Whitby Seniors Newcomer Program

The Newcomers Welcome Program for Seniors (NWPS) at the Whitby Seniors' Activity Centre (WSAC) promotes the sharing of cultures from around the world by recognizing differences and acknowledging them as a chance to build relationships and to learn from one another.

Made possible through a grant from Service Canada, and supported whole-heartedly by Whitby's Mayor and Council, this project recognizes the increasing diversity of the municipality and the needs of newcomer seniors who want to participate in healthy aging activities. Whether you are new to Canada, new to Durham, or new to Whitby our goal is to create a socially inclusive and active community where newcomers can begin making connections outside of their home and into their broader communities.



Our members have enjoyed: laughter and building new relationships; a variety of activities and holiday celebrations; a warm, friendly, and comfortable environment; a sense of belonging. Currently over 22 members from approximately fourteen countries around the world including the United States, India, England, China, Colombia, Jamaica, Greece, etc. are involved in the program. Our membership continues to grow with a willingness to share and have fun on our way to active aging.

We invite you to share your culture with us Thursdays from 1 to 3:30 p.m. For more information, please contact the Whitby Seniors' Activity Centre at 905-668-1424.

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## Aging is something we all have in common: Aging Gratefully

Aging Gratefully is a program supported by North House Transitional Housing. This series of social events creates an atmosphere for seniors to connect. As the population ages many people are aging well but others are not. Our strategy is to encourage those who are aging well to engage with those less visible. We know that positive social interaction is a major predictor to healthy aging, along with food security and safe shelter.

In our Seniors Greetings program volunteer groups created handmade Christmas cards and delivered over 600 personalized greetings to retirement, nursing homes and isolated seniors in the Townships of Uxbridge, Scugog and Brock.

In partnership with the Cannington Legion the Seniors Dance entertains with ballroom dancing, line dancing, and a night out to get moving or just socialize. Durham Region Transit provides services for anyone who needs transportation for \$1.65 each way. This picture is of 95 year old Doris who vowed she wasn't leaving until she danced, and she did!



In a series of motivational workshops, Dr. Vi Tu Banh from Uxbridge reminds everyone of the value of staying positive in longevity. He also teaches the group how to Chi Walk. Spanish for Seniors and Senioritas is another fun way to keep our brains in gear.

To learn more about Aging Gratefully, call Kim Bouwmeester at 705-432-2444 or email at [kim@tndf.ca](mailto:kim@tndf.ca).



## Improving labour market outcomes for newcomers:

### Enhanced Language Training program

One of the most challenging obstacles facing internationally trained professionals (ITPs) is securing employment **commensurate** with their education and experience. Experts from across North America have cited that one of the most important tools in securing employment is networking. Building a professional network in a foreign country can be extremely daunting. Language barriers and unfamiliarity with the new culture can create many barriers for ITPs. The Enhanced Language Training program (ELT) strives to assist ITPs in overcoming these barriers through a 16 week program. Funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the ELT program is delivered by Durham Continuing Education, a division of The Durham District School Board. The program is offered three times a year at E.A. Lovell in Oshawa, the Pickering Welcome Centre and the Ajax Welcome Centre.

The ELT program is divided into two eight week sessions. The first eight weeks are spent in-class focusing on Canadian culture, workplace integration and English language upgrading, while the second eight weeks are spent **on placement** (where possible). Working closely with local businesses and community partners, the ELT Client Counselor/ Placement Coordinator connects students with placements. While employment is not

guaranteed, valuable networking opportunities are.

Leticia Simon, a former ELT student and permanent employee at UOIT explains how networking assisted her in securing employment.



"Networking was crucial for me in order to find the job I wanted in Canada. Through the ELT program I was given the opportunity for a placement in a job position where I was able to apply all the experience I gained while working in a similar area in my home country.

I believe this experience was beneficial for both myself and the company because I had the chance to meet people and to learn their processes. The company had just not an **extra hand on deck**, but also a trained candidate ready to start the job anytime."

To join the Program and or to become a placement partner, please contact Alana Magsombol at 905-440-448 or email at [alana\\_magsombol@durham.edu.on.ca](mailto:alana_magsombol@durham.edu.on.ca).



Do you live or work in North Durham? Consider becoming a member of the North Durham Social Development Council (NDSDC). The NDSDC aims to increase the awareness of available services to residents in North Durham by networking and collaborating with service providers and establishing partnerships and sharing resources. Interagency meetings provide an opportunity for networking and professional development. For more information about the NDSDC, visit <http://northdurhamsdc.com>.

## Enhancing settlement outcomes: Making connections at your library

If you want to make connections in the community why not head to your local public library? There you'll find plenty of opportunities to meet other people by attending programs. You'll also have access to community information and a chance to learn more about the area in which you live, work or go to school.

Most library programs are available at no cost or minimal cost to participants. They range from instructional or educational to those held strictly for the purpose of entertainment. For example, many libraries offer information sessions on starting a business or resume and interview help. There's even a program to help new immigrants in need of networking, building contacts and a peer support while searching for a job. Sometimes these programs are in partnership with other community organizations that have expertise in the area, such as school boards and not-for-profit agencies.

Many libraries screen movies, including films in other languages or travelogues for seniors, along with refreshments that represent the country explored in the film! Libraries regularly have authors visit to speak about their books or the subject on which they have written. Presentations may also consist of local history, health and nutrition themes, gardening and other special interest topics.

Some of the educational programs are computer training (occasionally these include English as a Second Language computer training), as well as citizenship test preparation courses. Opportunities to network are presented through cultural events, conversation circles, current event discussion groups, coffee clubs, etc., which provide the occasion to practice English communication skills.

Libraries are all about children's programs. Story Time and Baby Time (stories and sing-a-longs) are a great way to get out and meet other new parents. Kids can also get

support through homework help and reading buddy programs, as well as make new friends through craft and activity programs held during school breaks and throughout the year.

Most libraries have online event calendars. Search for the name of the municipality and the words "public library" to find your local library website. Keep in mind that libraries may require you to register for a program before the date of the event. Attending library programs can be a great way to practice your new language skills and meet people in the community. So, whatever your interest or need, check out your local library to experience some Canadian culture.



## Helping newcomers find employment: Employment Ontario provider, vpi Inc.

As a newcomer to Canada, looking for a job can be overwhelming; however, with the benefit of Employment Ontario funding, vpi Inc. is able to assist newcomers with the job search process. In addition, there is absolutely no cost to access vpi's services.

Our highly experienced career specialists work with clients to create a unique job search action plan tailored to the Canadian marketplace. Newcomer job seekers can access resume, cover letter and interview assistance; attend employment or career exploration workshops; and access local job boards and job fairs.



In addition to receiving assistance from our full-time resource specialists, our facilities are equipped with computers, the internet, job search books and resources, telephones, fax machines and photocopiers.

Our employment specialists work with local employers, seeking out new positions for clients. We also support newcomer clients through job matching placement and incentives, and we can facilitate apprenticeship opportunities. Employment counselling and **mentoring** is provided, assisting newcomers with common workplace challenges.

For more information on vpi services, visit [www.vip-inc.com](http://www.vip-inc.com).



## The Regional Municipality of Durham: Join the media distribution list

The Regional Municipality of Durham would like to extend an invitation to media outlets, to be included on its media distribution list. Media outlets that are currently on the list directly receive media materials via email—including public service announcements, media advisories and news releases—about the Region of Durham's programs, services, special events and other announcements.

To be included on the list, please contact Corporate Communications at [corporatecommunications@durham.ca](mailto:corporatecommunications@durham.ca). Please include your contact information and details about the media outlet, such as publication dates (where applicable), circulation information and target audience. If possible, please attach a PDF copy of the publication or, if electronic, a link to the website.

Please note: the media distribution list is for media outlets only. Durham residents can access the Region's media materials at [www.durham.ca](http://www.durham.ca), under the Media Room heading. Up-to-date news is also available through Twitter at [www.twitter.com/regionofdurham](http://www.twitter.com/regionofdurham), or by visiting the Region's Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/regionofdurham](http://www.facebook.com/regionofdurham).

## Celebrating cultural diversity: Learning and sharing during Tamil Heritage Month

Tamil Heritage Month serves as a month for Tamils to celebrate their culture, traditions, history, literature and festivities, providing the Tamil mainstream community with an opportunity to obtain and preserve the rich heritage of Tamils. January was chosen as the Tamil Heritage Month for a number of reasons. The Pongal festival is a Thanksgiving ceremony in which the farmers celebrate the event to thank the spirits of nature, the sun and the farm animals for their assistance in providing a successful harvest. Thai Pongal is the most important and widely-celebrated festival among Tamils around the world and falls in the middle of January.



Tamil Heritage Month was proclaimed by the municipalities of Ajax, Oshawa, Pickering, and Whitby, as well as the Durham District School Board. During this month, a number of celebrations, displays and competitions took place in the Durham. The Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham (TCASD) celebrated its 5th Annual Thai Pongal Day on Jan. 26, 2013, as the major Tamil Heritage month celebration. It consisted of a rice pouring ceremony, singing, dances and commemorative speeches from dignitaries. TCASD presented tokens of appreciation to the City of Pickering, Town of Ajax, Town of Whitby, City of Oshawa and the Durham District School Board for proclaiming January as Tamil Heritage Month. In addition, TCASD organized many activities that promoted Tamil Heritage Month in Durham region such as delegate presentations, Tamil displays at Mcleans Community Centre in Ajax and Pickering Library, and held drawing, word search and writing competitions.

Raveena Rajasingham

## Creating a culture of inclusion: Pride Durham 2013

Durham will be celebrating Pride 2013 from June 4 to June 9. The theme of this year's festivities is **50 Shades of Pride - From Mild to Wild - Celebrating the diversity in all of us!** There is an ambitious schedule being planned with dozens of Pride-related events happening all over the region. Pride is an opportunity for everyone to come together whether lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, queer, questioning, or an ally of the LGBTQ community to celebrate, educate and learn. Plan to participate, there's something for everyone, from youth-specific events, sports events, performances, picnics, breakfasts, to the family day expo on Saturday, June 8. The celebrations culminate in the Pride Parade through the streets of Oshawa on Sunday, June 9, followed by the QueerStock music festival in Memorial Park. For more information and a detailed schedule of all that's happening Pride Week 2013, visit the Pride Durham website at [www.pridedurham.ca](http://www.pridedurham.ca) or [www.50shadesofpride.ca](http://www.50shadesofpride.ca).



## Celebrating a culture of inclusion: Immigration portal video launch

On Jan. 25, a touch of Hollywood hit Durham along with a heavier than expected snowfall. Despite the bad weather it was lights, camera, action at the Ajax Convention Centre as more than 80 community partners gathered for the premiere of the immigration portal's four new videos.

### **The Power of Partnerships**

Includes an overview of what an immigration portal is and the role of community partners in the making of [www.durhamimmigration.ca](http://www.durhamimmigration.ca) as a best practice. This video is a compilation of video clips in which community members discuss the success of the immigration portal and the relevance of the portal partnership to their work.

### **Celebration Reel**

Highlights of the diversity work of community partners. A visual demonstration of local achievements as the community continues its work towards the creation of a more welcoming and inclusive Durham.

### **Cross-cultural Communication**

A stand-alone learning tool designed to assist local businesses. This video provides an accessible introduction to the complexities of workplace communication in a globalizing world with clips of popular trainer Lionel LaRoche.

### **An Evaluation Primer: Using Outcomes-based Evaluation to Measure Community Goals**

Provides an introduction to the theory and practice behind outcomes-based evaluation with an emphasis on Results-based Accountability (RBA). It includes interviews with community partners as well as a clip from RBA founder Mark Friedman.

For more information, email [immigrationportal@durham.ca](mailto:immigrationportal@durham.ca).





## Local Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council: Recruiting for new members

The Local Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council's primary purpose is to act as a community advisory body lending direction to the development and execution of a Diversity and Immigration Community Plan for Durham region that will improve the settlement and integration experience of Durham residents.

Members of the Local Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council (LDIPC) are drawn from diverse sectors of the community representing agencies, school boards, faith groups, local business groups and the Region. It is recognized that any one member of the LDIPC can and should, when possible, represent more than one sector or organization. Members who can speak on behalf of a number of stakeholders and represent the broadest range of interests and voices are deemed key for the LDIPC to have as comprehensive a representation of the community as possible.

### The LDIPC is currently recruiting for two members:

- Community Member-at-Large
- Member of the Faith/Cultural Community

For the application process, full LDIPC Terms of Reference and information about the work of the Diversity and Immigration Program at the Region of Durham, please visit [www.durhamimmigration.ca/about/ldipc](http://www.durhamimmigration.ca/about/ldipc). **Applications are due on Friday, April 5, 2013 by noon.**

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## GLOSSARY

**Cold calling** – when you contact a prospective employer (or client) without having a prior relationship with them

**Commensurate** – equal to

**Epicurean** – someone or something who loves good food

**Extra hand on deck** – having an extra person to do general everyday tasks

**Foodie** – someone who loves good food

**Fraudulent** – something that is done intentionally to criminally deceive

**Grassroots movement** – a political act or series of actions whose idea comes from the core group of people being affected – from the bottom up

**Information interview** – having an interview with a person working in a field that you're interested in working in, not necessarily for a particular job but instead to learn more about the position and the sector (a form of networking)

**Mentoring** – this is a situation in which a person with more experience in a certain field works with another person with less experience to teach them, offer critical advice and share opportunities with them

**Networking** – meeting and talking to other people with professional goals in mind

**On placement** – an opportunity to gain work experience (usually unpaid) in an organization for a specific period of time

**Septuagenarian** – someone who is between 70 and 80 years of age

**Tampered** – something that has been changed from its original purpose

**Tax clinic** – a workshop to help individuals complete their annual income tax return – it is mandatory to complete an income tax return in Canada



## "Network and connect with people"

Esther Amoako first came to Canada as an international student, receiving a Master of Laws degree (LLM) from Queen's University in 1994. Back in Ghana she worked with the Ghana Law Reform Commission, taught criminal law on a part time basis at the University of Ghana and founded AIDS Alert Ghana, an NGO that taught HIV/AIDS legal literacy to people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. Esther knew, however, that she would return to Canada; "I had fallen in love with Canada, so in my mind I knew that I would migrate one day." She and her family migrated to Canada in 2005.

The family settled in Durham, a place that Esther had visited as a student. To them, the special feature about the region is the combination of rural and urban, "you can drive down Rossland Road and see green fields but are only minutes away from downtown Whitby or shopping in Oshawa. This is a good place to raise children, people are friendly, neighbours are friendly".

Esther found work relatively quickly when she arrived. What really helped were her social networks. "People have been helpful to me. In my church I connect with people and they support me. I've used the employment services to learn about finding jobs and resources available in the region, I found that really useful. In general, I have benefited a lot from the services in this region and of course, services are linked to people." Her advice to newcomers, "people should network and connect with people. Sometimes the job you're looking for is right there and in Canada a high percentage of jobs are in the hidden market, it's not a secret, but you need to connect with people to find out about them."

Settling in a new country is difficult. There can be challenges but her advice is, "contribute, it's two-way, as newcomers, we have a lot of skills.

Volunteer, take part in activities in the community.

It's also very important to talk to your children about what they're hearing and learning in this new place, it's essential to stay connected to your children".

She also tells her children that they have a role to play in raising awareness about their home-country, being an ambassador for their home-culture and a role to play in changing and challenging misconceptions about Africa.

Esther has seen Durham become more diverse. When she first arrived she would travel to Toronto or Scarborough to visit African stores to get food from home but now there are three or four different African/Caribbean grocery stores in Ajax and Pickering. Even on her own street, she's noticed that there is more of a mix of different nationalities/different people. To people who are feeling lonely or disconnected, she says, "you need to reach out to other people and ask for help when you need it, use the services that are available, you'll find the help you need."

Esther worked as the first Coordinator for the African Caribbean Council on HIV/AIDS in Ontario (ACCHO) and briefly with the Ontario HIV/AIDS Treatment Network (OHTN). In 2009, she graduated from York University with an Master's in Development Studies and is currently working towards becoming a lawyer in Canada.



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](mailto:diversitynewsletter@durham.ca) | **Portal:** [www.durhamimmigration.ca](http://www.durhamimmigration.ca)

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