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The Citizen

Durham Region's Diversity Focused Newsletter
Issue 20, Fall 2014

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Words that are bolded and underlined throughout the newsletter are defined in the [Glossary section](#)



Welcoming fall:

New opportunities for learning, growth and contributing to welcoming communities

The end of summer is always a bit bittersweet - the end of [flip-flops](#), living outdoors, glorious gardens and summer holidays. September, though, brings a multitude of blessings – a return to routine (ask any parent!), [duvets](#) on the bed, fall harvests and fairs, spectacular Autumn colours, and it also brings opportunities to learn and get engaged in new activities and pursuits. Fall marks the beginning of the school year for many of us, municipal recreation programs start new schedules, and councils and committees restart after the summer break. This really is a fantastic time to get re-acquainted with friends, colleagues and neighbours by trying a new activity, pursuing studies or a new hobby, and getting involved in your community.

And, speaking of getting involved, Oct. 27 is municipal election day in Ontario! Know the issues and get engaged in the process by attending [town hall meetings](#), [all-candidate debates](#), and by reading websites and news related to the election. Decisions made by our Regional Council and Local Councils have a very real impact on our day-to-day lives so make sure you're part of that decision-making process on Oct. 27 by voting. There's more on the election and local governance in the article on page 6.

For more information on what to do this fall, the Durham Immigration Portal has a wealth of information on where to find out about municipal and library programs, fairs, festivals and events happening all over Durham region. A couple of pages to bookmark:

Things to do - www.durhamimmigration.ca > Living > Things to Do
Community Events - www.durhamimmigration.ca > Events
Learning in Durham - www.durhamimmigration.ca > Learning

Whatever you decide to do this fall, enjoy the start of a new season!





COFRD:

30e anniversaire

Le COFRD fondé et incorporé en 1984 célébrera son 30e anniversaire cette année. Il regroupe 26 organismes membres sans buts lucratifs et a pour mandat de promouvoir la langue, la culture et le patrimoine. Notre organisme offre plusieurs services: Centre d'Emploi francophone de Durham; Services d'établissement pour les immigrants francophones de Durham; 7-10 spectacles francophones par année; Vente de fromage St- Albert; Services informatiques; Librairie du Centre à Oshawa: vidéo, livres, jeux, musique et cartes de souhaits en français.

Le Centre d'Emploi Francophone de Durham financé par Emploi Ontario est géré par le COFRD. Le CEFD aide la communauté francophone à trouver du travail et aussi les employeurs à embaucher des personnes possédant les compétences recherchées. Nous sommes le seul centre d'emploi francophone de la région de Durham. Venez donc nous rencontrer au 57 rue Simcoe Sud, suite 2H.

Les services d'établissement financés par CIC offrent les services suivant: l'accueil, l'aiguillage, l'accompagnement ainsi que la formation. Nous pouvons répondre à vos questions sur la santé, les services sociaux, le transport, le logement, vos droits et devoirs et autres encore. De plus nous offrons des services de travailleurs en établissement dans les écoles.

Pour plus de renseignements sur tous les services visitez [le site de COFRD](http://www.cofrd.org) (www.cofrd.org).

Founded and incorporated in 1984, the COFRD includes 26 non-profit member organizations with a mandate to promote language, culture, and heritage. This year the COFRD celebrates its 30th anniversary. Our organisation offers services in several areas: Durham francophone employment centre; settlement services for francophone immigrants in Durham; 7-10 francophone shows per year; sale of St-Albert cheese; information services; and the Librairie du Centre library in Oshawa that provides videos, books, games, music, and greeting cards in French.





Everyone welcomed!:

Scugog Council for the Arts

After the move, a new home, new community, new school and new job, the next phase of settling starts; reuniting with your passions and hobbies. The Scugog Council for the Arts (SCA) may be for you. They host a Gallery that is open to the public Tuesday to Saturday from noon to 3 p.m. with an opening reception the first Saturday of the month, showcasing the new exhibit. Refreshments are served.

Scugog boasts a wide variety of excellent talent and the SCA encourages you to include the Gallery on your next visit to Port Perry when you shop or dine at any of the fine establishments in the historic downtown core. The SCA Gallery is free of charge, wheelchair accessible and has public washrooms on site. You can check the [SCA Gallery website](http://scugogarts.ca/exhibits-2013/exhibits-2014) (<http://scugogarts.ca/exhibits-2013/exhibits-2014>) for information about the monthly exhibits.

Established in 2005, the SCA is a not-for-profit organization, with a part-time Administrator and a volunteer Board of Directors. The SCA is dedicated to providing a strong voice for arts and culture in Scugog Township, and to promoting and growing the arts in all areas of the community. SCA members include individuals, businesses and organizations that participate in or support a vibrant local cultural scene, which includes theatre, music, dance, visual and graphic art, craft, literary arts, and arts education.





Building healthy communities:

Through food

Durham Region is home to some of Ontario's finest farm land. As urban dwellers, it is easy to forget that we can participate in growing some of our own food. The Nourish and Develop Foundation (TNDF) helps everyone enjoy the [bounty](#) from Durham's thriving, [ethical](#) farms.

Community gardens are a great way to get people involved in growing their own food. Many community gardens contribute a portion of their harvest to their local food bands, food pantries or soup kitchens. Another wonderful initiative is the Plant a Row, Grow a Row, where people plant for themselves and for others by taking what they need and donating the rest. With more than 35 per cent of our food going to waste, there is no reason that anyone in Canada should ever be short of food. TDNF recognizes that food education (growing, harvesting, preparing and preserving) helps people [thrive](#). You don't have to be an expert gardener to get involved, anyone who wants to grow their own food can join a community garden and receive [peer support](#) from their fellow gardeners.

The benefits of gardening and [reaping](#) the harvest go beyond saving money. Gardening and growing food is a relaxing activity. It helps to restore our minds and bodies after our busy work and families lives. It helps to remind us to take the time to prepare a healthy meal. The benefits of getting back to our roots, growing our own whole, seasonal, fresh produce, and learning how to prepare and preserve it, are part of good health physically, emotionally and financially. Maybe it is time to meet new friends, learn how to grow your own and reconnect with the food chain. Bon appetit!

For more information, visit the [Nourish and Develop Foundation website](http://www.tndf.ca) (www.tndf.ca) or [reach the Nourish and Develop Foundation by email](mailto:info@tndf.ca) (info@tndf.ca).

For information on where to find farmers' markets, farm shops and information on community gardens, visit the food section of the Durham Immigration Portal: www.durham.immigration.ca > Settling > Food.





Learning about healthcare:

Some services are available at home!

The Central East Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) is one of 14 Community Care Access Centres (CCACs) in Ontario that work in communities to connect you with quality in-home and community-based health care. The Central East CCAC can help you come home from the hospital sooner or we can provide you with information about long-term care options if it becomes too difficult for you to live independently at home.

We strive to ensure you receive the care you need when you need it and help you to enjoy the best possible quality of life. Our knowledgeable staff works with you and your family to develop a customized care plan that meets your individual needs. In addition, we can also provide you with information and link you to a wide range of services available in your community.

Services provided by the Central East CCAC can include: nursing; physiotherapy; occupational therapy; speech-language therapy; social work; dietetics; medical supplies and equipment; and personal support (bathing, dressing, etc.) in your own home.

Central East CCAC can also provide access to specialized programs including:

- Centralized Diabetes Intake and Centre for Complex Diabetes Care
- Healthcare Connect
- Mental Health and Addiction Services for Children and Youth
- Palliative Care (care at the end of life)

For more information, call (905) 310-2222 (CCAC), or visit the [CCAC website](http://healthcareathome.ca/centraleast/en) (<http://healthcareathome.ca/centraleast/en>).



Central East

CCAC

Community
Care Access
Centre

CASC

Centre d'accès
aux soins
communautaires
du Centre-Est



New baby, new home, new community?:

Learn about the Enhanced 18-Month Well-Baby Visit

Durham Region Health Department encourages parents to take an active role in monitoring and supporting their child's development. How your child plays, speaks, and acts offers important clues about how they are growing. Eighteen months is an important time to check your child's progress. This can be done by scheduling and attending your child's Enhanced 18-Month Well-Baby Visit. The Enhanced 18-Month Well-Baby Visit marks the last scheduled visit to a [primary health care provider](#) before your child starts school. It is a longer, more in-depth visit which allows extra time for you to ask questions about your child's growth and development.

It is important to not accept a "wait and see" approach with your child's development. The Enhanced 18-Month Well-Baby Visit helps you learn more about common developmental milestones and supports you to actively participate in your child's development. It is also a great opportunity to hear more about programs available in your community that promote child development.

To track your child's developmental progress, go to the [Region of Durham website](https://www.durham.ca/en/health-and-wellness/child-development.aspx) (<https://www.durham.ca/en/health-and-wellness/child-development.aspx>) to register your child and receive free checklists as your child grows.

To learn more about the Enhanced 18-Month Well-Baby Visit, call Durham Health Connection Line at 905-666-6241 or 1-800-841-2729, or visit the [Region of Durham website](https://www.durham.ca/en/health-and-wellness/child-development.aspx) (<https://www.durham.ca/en/health-and-wellness/child-development.aspx>).





Creating community connections:

Ajax Public Library's new program for seniors

Keep your mind and spirits active. Build connections with youth. Use your native language to Skype your friends and relatives back home or abroad. Continue with activities you enjoyed in your youth and meet new people. These are some of the daunting challenges for a senior, particularly for the seniors who are newcomers.

Learning to use computer technology is often considered 'difficult' or 'not-my-thing'! Having a youth or a tech-savvy senior in your community to teach and share knowledge helps everyone to overcome that fear or difficulty. The opportunity to meet new people, enjoy a great conversation, and learn how to Skype or use Facebook, benefits all and everyone is able to feel positive, contribute in a meaningful way to their community and stay connected!

In the coming months, the Ajax Public Library will offer the following Stay Connected workshops and seminars: computer technology, internet and email; critical online content research and evaluation; social media: Skype, Facebook, webcams, chat lines and texting, etc.; active online games, e.g. brain and memory games for seniors; introduction to genealogy research; basic elder abuse online (spam, online fraud, identity theft, etc.); "How to age happily and feel young" seminars; and other light-hearted entertaining seminars.

If you are a youth, tech-savvy older adult, speak and read other languages plus are interested in engaging with seniors and newcomers, the Library would be happy to hear from you. For more information, please contact Elaine Lievaart at 905.683.4000 x 8806.





Building healthy communities:

Sodium – how much is too much?

Information about the food you buy is presented differently in different countries. Some countries try to bring you information to help you make good decisions that promote health. Canada is one of those countries.

Too much sodium can cause high blood pressure, which can lead to heart disease, stroke, and kidney disease. Adults only need 1500 mg of sodium per day and children need even less. Sometimes it can be difficult to know what foods are high in sodium. Most of the sodium we eat is added to food, especially processed, packaged, ready-to-eat, fast food and restaurant food.

How can you reduce your sodium intake?

- Choose fresh foods more often
- Prepare meals at home and add flavour with spices instead of salt.
- This is an excellent way to reduce your sodium intake
- Rinse and drain canned vegetables, peas, lentils, olives and beans
- Look at the Nutrition Facts Table on products for sodium content and choose low or no sodium versions

For more information about reducing your sodium intake, please visit the [Durham Region website](http://www.durham.ca/healthyeating) (www.durham.ca/healthyeating).

Small steps to reduce your sodium



Get fresh when you can.



Durham Health Connection Line
905-686-6241 or 1-800-841-2729
durham.ca/healthyeating
Information available in accessible formats.





Community engagement:

It's time to vote!

Vote: (Noun) A formal indication of a choice between two or more candidates or courses of action, expressed typically through a ballot. (The vote) - the choice expressed collectively by a body of electors or by a specified group.

Taken from the Oxford Dictionary

It sounds simple enough, a vote is “the choice expressed collectively” by a group of people. Yet, it is a powerful statement and it starts and ends with each of us as individuals. Voting is a responsibility and a right that we as Canadians should all participate in. On Oct. 27 let's exercise our democratic right and vote in the municipal election!

In Durham Region, mayors, regional councillors, local councillors and school board trustees will be elected in Ajax, Brock, Clarington, Oshawa, Pickering, Scugog, Uxbridge and Whitby. For the first time all eligible voters will also have the opportunity to cast a vote to choose a Regional Chair, representing the entire Region. Traditionally the Regional Chair was chosen by the 28 Regional Councillors elected from the respective municipalities. The newly elected Regional and Local Councils take office Dec. 1.

To be eligible to vote you must be a qualified elector in the municipality in which you live or own or rent property. You must be a Canadian citizen, at least 18 years of age, and not prohibited from voting under any law. If you have questions about whether you would be qualified to vote in your municipality, or to find out if your name is on the Voters' List, please contact your municipal Clerk's office.

Municipal elections have the lowest voter turnout in Canada and yet the decisions made by Regional and Local Councils affect our day to day lives most directly. Issues like property taxes, housing and business development, road maintenance, public health, social service delivery – all of these issues and more are decided by municipal councils. Ensure you have a say in how your community is run.

If you think you might be interested in getting more involved politically, it's not just elected politicians who shape public policy at the local level. All municipal councils have Committees of Council, and many of these have members of the public as sitting appointed members. Local municipalities also have appointed Library Board Trustees. Being appointed to these committees and boards is a competitive process with calls for these positions



typically sent out in early November or December. Some municipalities have information sessions to share what committee positions are available. For more information, visit your municipal website (links can be found at the [Durham Immigration Portal](http://www.durhamimmigration.ca/living/government/Pages/MunicipalGovernment.aspx) (<https://www.durhamimmigration.ca/living/government/Pages/MunicipalGovernment.aspx>)).

In Canada we are indebted to those who fought for the rights of women to vote (1917 in Ontario - 1940 in Quebec), for the right to vote for Aboriginal people (1960 for all Aboriginal Peoples) and for many immigrant groups to have the right to vote (1947 for Chinese-Canadians). It is up to each of us to honour their dedication and hard work by voting on election day - so get out and vote and encourage your friends, family and neighbours to vote too!





Creating welcoming communities:

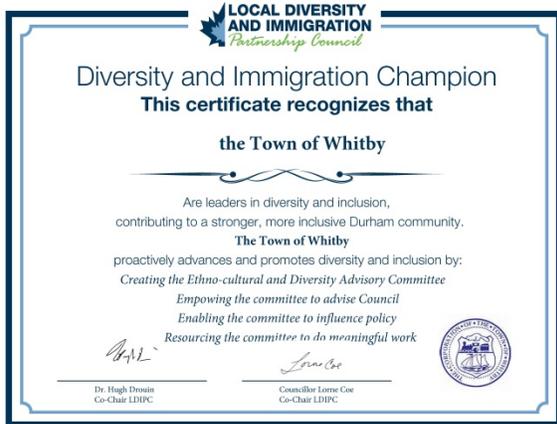
Diversity and Immigration Champions

In 2010, the Local Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council (LDIPC), after broad community consultations launched the Community Diversity and Immigration Community Plan. The Plan acknowledged the work that was underway, identified what work still needed to be done and looked for ways to utilize existing resources better.

The Durham community understood that when we attract the best and brightest from around the globe, communities thrive and economies grow. The Plan supports the notion that true settlement occurs when organizations, communities, agencies and individuals incorporate the needs of all populations into planning processes.

Four years later, we are celebrating organizations that have emerged as Champions of Diversity. In December 2013, the Diversity and Immigration Champion Awards were launched, recognizing organizations that have shown leadership in Diversity and Immigration matters. Pictured here are Durham's first five Diversity and Immigration Champions. Congratulations!

You are invited to apply to be a Diversity & Immigration Champion and demonstrate publicly that you have embraced the principles of inclusion and commit to sharing in the responsibility of making Durham region a more welcoming community. Visit the [Durham Immigration Portal](http://www.durhamimmigration.ca/about/ldipc/Pages/champion.aspx) (<https://www.durhamimmigration.ca/about/ldipc/Pages/champion.aspx>) for an application package.





Creating community:

LINC volunteers

September - summer is over, the weather grows cooler, and it is time for school. Not only students and teachers but also volunteers begin to contemplate the return to class. For some it is a return to the familiar; for others, it is a new beginning.

The LINC/ESL schools at Bayly Street in Pickering and EA Lovell in Oshawa are fortunate to have many wonderful community volunteers who offer their time to help newcomers learn English and adjust to Canadian culture. Some volunteers stay for a few months; while others have been volunteering for more than ten years. Each volunteer gives the schools from three to twelve hours a week. Last year, the programs drew on support from more than 24 volunteers who provided a combined total of approximately 90 hours of service per week.

Assisting in the classrooms, guided by the instructors; reading with students; helping in the computer labs; and participating in small conversation groups are some of the ways these volunteers enhance the lives of adult students in the LINC/ESL classes.

Although some volunteers come from teaching related backgrounds, the major requisite qualities are kindness, warmth, patience and the ability to speak English fluently.

For more information about volunteering, please [email Janet Macdonald](mailto:macdonald.janet@durham.edu.on.ca) (macdonald.janet@durham.edu.on.ca).





Back by popular demand:

Durham Funders Forums

The LDIPC and a [collaborative](#) of funding partners are hosting the second annual Durham Funders Forum this October. The first event was held in April 2013 and was hugely successful with both our local community partners and for the funders who participated.

The purpose of the event is to give not-for-profits in Durham Region an opportunity to learn more about the agencies and ministries who provide community-level funding, to develop relationships and to explore opportunities for future projects. Each session will include brief presentations from participating funders followed by a series of one-on-one discussions between individual participants and funders – basically, funder speed-dating!

Last year's event filled up quickly so again, **registration is mandatory**. Funders Forum sessions will be held at the following dates and times:

- Tuesday, Oct. 7 (5:30 to 7:30 p.m.) at the Scugog Public Library in Port Perry
- Tuesday, Oct. 14 (1-4:30 p.m.) at the Region of Durham headquarters in Whitby
- Tuesday, Oct. 14 (5:30 to 8 p.m.) at the Region of Durham headquarters in Whitby

For additional detailed information and to register for any of the sessions, [register online](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RF6XSTB) (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RF6XSTB>). If you have any questions about the event, please [email LDIPC staff](mailto:ldipc@durham.ca) (ldipc@durham.ca).





Healthy communities:

DDSB Make a Difference Program

The first 5 years of a child's development are critical because they have an impact on all aspects of a child's life right into adulthood.

Living in poverty during this period can have short-term and long-term effects on young children. It can alter their development and diminish their ability to be successful in school, to lead productive lives and to become responsible citizens. With that in mind, the Durham District School Board is launching a pilot project in Oshawa schools entitled, 'Make a Difference - an Oshawa Early Years Initiative.' Supporting our young children, especially those in need, by ensuring they have the best possible early years opportunities, will change both their ability to succeed in school and their future.

Developing a comprehensive, multi-faceted strategy to address poverty is essential if we want to truly make a difference. Approximately 11% of Durham's children ages 0-12 are living below the poverty line. The prevalence is higher in Oshawa (19.8%) as compared to the Region of Durham as a whole. The issues of poverty affecting families in Oshawa need to be addressed.

Children who experience poverty tend not to reach higher levels of education and are more likely to live in poverty as adults. This cycle will continue as each generation hits adulthood and another cycle of poverty begins with their children. Inter-generational poverty is a complex cycle that requires a multi-faceted approach to supporting, educating and assisting both the adults and children.

We can make a difference... one child, one family, one school, one community. When children are not ready for school, they struggle or have difficulty meeting developmental milestones. Early experiences help prepare children for school and life.

There is no single measure to address poverty. The impact of poverty on young children is complex and requires a coordinated, integrated multi-faceted approach at all levels of government and education.

Schools play an integral role in supporting our vulnerable students. A multi-faceted approach needs to be taken by our schools and community partners to provide a service-centered approach with a range of programs to support our youngest learners and their families. The following recommendations support an integrated approach: Nutrition/ Breakfast programs; Vision, dental and hearing screening; Ongoing use of Focus Groups; Full service-centred schools; Parent and Family Literacy Centres; Parent activities/workshops to support community needs; Create an Opportunity Gap Action Plan; Intervention programs; Use of EDI for planning purposes and establishing programs; Kindergarten Support Programs; Affordable high quality Early Years and



Child Care programs; Targeted oral language programs; and Supporting our young children, especially those in need, and ensuring they have the best.

For more information visit the [DDSB website](http://www.ddsb.ca/Programs/EarlyYears/Make_a_Difference/Pages/default.aspx)
(http://www.ddsb.ca/Programs/EarlyYears/Make_a_Difference/Pages/default.aspx)





Supporting communities:

Durham Region's Intimate-relationship Violence Empowerment Network (DRIVEN)

Abuse is wrong and against the law. DRIVEN provides women experiencing intimate-relationship abuse with help. The services are provided by on-site and off-site partner agencies. The off-site agencies are connected to the DRIVEN clinic by telephone and video chat.

On-site services: counseling; parenting support; danger assessment; safety planning; admission to a shelter; help identifying housing options; help identifying financial options; advice and support from Durham Children's Aid Society; and documentation of injuries.

Access to off-site services: legal support and advice (family and criminal); Legal Aid Ontario support (if eligible); Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre; settlement services for newcomers; police support; victim services; outreach services (Durham College/ UOIT); specialized addictions counseling; and referrals to additional services.

DRIVEN provides access to culturally sensitive services for multicultural, immigrant, and refugee women as well as settlement services for women who are newcomers.

DRIVEN has partnered with the Welcome Centre Immigrant Services (Ajax & Pickering) and the Brock Community Health Centre to provide women with additional locations to access the supports of DRIVEN. Women can visit one of these locations to be connected with DRIVEN over video chat.

DRIVEN is open on Mondays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding statutory holidays. Women can walk-in or book an appointment. Childcare is available. DRIVEN is located in the Durham Children's Aid Society building. Women can call DRIVEN for more information or to arrange an appointment at any of the locations, 905-432-7233 or 877-723-3905, or visit the [DRIVEN website](http://durhamdriven.com) (<http://durhamdriven.com>).





Glossary

All-candidate debates:

Events often organized by a local community organization that bring together all of the candidates running for the same position in the community to discuss key issues

Bounty:

Harvested fruit and vegetables

Collaborative:

A group of organizations working together on one project

Duvets:

Large comfortable blankets for a bed, traditionally made with feathers

Ethical:

Actions or processes that aim to ensure the highest level of well-being for the people, animals and the environment

Flip-flops:

Summer sandals, typically plastic with between-the-toe posts (named for the sound they make when you walk in them!)

Homophobia:

An irrational fear and/or discrimination against homosexuals/members of the LGBTQ community

LGBTQ:

The term used to describe the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning community and its allies

Peer support:

Help from others doing the same thing that you're doing



Primary health care provider:

Typically family doctors, nurse practitioners and nurses

Reaping:

Harvesting or gathering the produce from the fields/orchards

Sodium:

Salt

Thrive:

To do really well at something

Town hall meetings:

Events organized around a political or community issue to gather and share information

Transphobia:

An irrational fear and/or discrimination against transgender individuals



Durham diversity:

Marking International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia

During the summer, Pride events were held all over the world, some small gatherings and some very large festivals. In 2014, Toronto hosted World Pride, bringing millions of visitors out on the streets of the city to celebrate the [LGBTQ](#) community and its allies. In Durham, Pride was celebrated with a parade, dances, barbeques and a music festival. And, while we celebrate the gains made for LGBTQ individuals and families, we also need to remember why Pride and the rainbow flag are still so important, visibility and education bring acceptance and equality. The following speech from Stacey Vetzal, Vice-President of PFLAG Canada Durham Region at the flag raisings to mark the International Day Against [Homophobia](#) and [Transphobia](#) remind us why Pride and the rainbow flag go beyond just a celebration.

“This flag represents so many things to so many people. I am honoured to be standing here in front of all of you on this International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia to raise this flag, and make our communities visible.

While the laws in Ontario say that we must not discriminate against our LGBTQ communities, I am sad to say that this sentiment is still not universal in our day to day lives, and won't be until we have wiped out homophobia and transphobia. As a step towards world-wide change, this day is known as International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia, to bring to mind the struggle we face in bringing equality to all people, no matter their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

We still live in a world where many people are unable to live their authentic lives, hiding their sexual orientation and gender identities, wearing a mask and role-playing to protect themselves from family, friends, and discrimination in the workplace.

We are here, and we raise this flag, because we believe it is time for this struggle to end. This day is not just another day to highlight the struggle this community faces, but it is also a celebration for how far we have come, especially as a community. Today is all about hoping for an inclusive world.

Staying silent in the presence of homophobia and transphobia means being an accomplice, complicit. It should be denounced each and every time we witness it. It is our personal, social, and civic responsibility to do so.

Today we make this flag visible, and give hope for all those in our community who are unable to be visible themselves. I want to sincerely thank each and every one of you for coming today and showing your support for inspiring change. We have come a long way and this wouldn't be possible without all of you. And on behalf of our community, I ask you all to make an active choice and make every day a day against homophobia and transphobia.”



For more information, visit the [PFLAG Canada Durham Region website](http://pflagdurhamregion.com) (<http://pflagdurhamregion.com>). For additional resources on LGBTQ issues, visit the [Durham Immigration Portal](https://www.durhamimmigration.ca/living/lgbtq/Pages/default.aspx) (<https://www.durhamimmigration.ca/living/lgbtq/Pages/default.aspx>).





Success Story:

Community volunteers support newcomer families

The Inter-Church Immigrant Support Group (IISG) is made up of volunteers from Christian churches in Durham region. They aim to assist immigrants and refugees who are new to Durham integrate into the local community. One of the families that they work with shared their story.

We arrived in Canada on January 21, 2013 as permanent residents from Botswana in Southern Africa. We came to Canada expecting that things would work out as we had planned, both having a background as health care professionals (Doctor and Nurse). Little did we realize that it would be so difficult to find work in the health sector despite our credentials being evaluated and verified.

Through the Welcome Centre, we were introduced to the Inter-Church Immigrant Support Group (IISG). We found the IISG to be a compassionate and friendly group with outstanding volunteers. They have good intentions and love to help others, which is why they spend their time trying to make a difference for newcomers to the region.

IISG volunteers undertake a challenging role, of meeting with new immigrants and refugees to help ease their integration into the local community.

We first met the IISG volunteers in April and they took the time to listen to our life experiences. We really felt cared for. Then to our surprise, we were asked to list any household needs including clothing. By the end of April the house had 100 per cent of those needs met.

The IISG volunteers also provided us with information and support that included financial assistance for our exams, transportation to our appointments and they helped us to know the region better. We were also assisted and supported with appraisals and resume preparation and presentation.

We were warmly taken in by the IISG. We now feel that we are home, we have friends and despite all of the challenges, we remain strong and positive because we are safely guarded by IISG.

The Ayodele Family

If you are interested in volunteering with the Inter-Church Immigrant Support Group, they have particular need for volunteers to do the following: visit families and assess needs; help occasionally with deliveries; drive newcomers to appointments; help and encourage with English conversation skills; and help with moving furniture.



They also need donations of furniture and household items; drivers with trucks to occasionally pick up and deliver; and churches to provide and deliver Christmas baskets.

For more information about the Inter-Church Immigrant Support Group, please [email the IISG Coordinator](mailto:iisupportgroup@gmail.com) (iisupportgroup@gmail.com), or call 905-626-1823.





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

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