



The Citizen

Durham Region's Diversity Focused Newsletter
Issue 28, Fall 2016

In This Issue:

The Citizen	1
Durham Region's Diversity Focused Newsletter.....	1
Issue 28, Fall 2016	1
In This Issue:.....	1
Lifelong Learning:.....	4
Challenges and opportunities abound	4
Building Community:	5
Local heroes give back	5
Creating Welcoming Communities:	7
Volunteering internationally	7
Volunteering in Durham:.....	8
Opportunities	8
Supporting Creative communities:.....	9
Art in Durham	9
Supporting Safe Communities:.....	10
Seniors in Durham	10
Supporting Families:.....	11
Community Care Access Centre is for everyone!	11
Building Healthy Communities:	12

Region of Durham offers counselling services.....	12
Supporting Newcomer Integration:	13
Pre-arrival services	13
Supporting Newcomer Integration:.....	14
Credential assessment	14
Supporting Newcomer Integration:.....	15
Canadian experience.....	15
Supporting Newcomer Integration:.....	16
Bridging programs	16
Embracing Diversity, Engaging our Community:	17
Durham’s first municipal diversity conference.....	17
Creating Opportunities:	18
Work Skills Training Program for newcomer youth.....	18
Building Inclusive Communities:.....	19
Durham Welcome Centres	19
Celebrating Learning:	20
Durham libraries	20
Supporting Inclusive Communities:	21
Nourish Community Hub in North Durham	21
Supporting Healthy Communities.....	23
Car seat safety	23
Glossary	24
Bartering:	24
Comfort Zone:.....	24
Daunting:	24
Enriched:	24
Entrepreneurship:	24
Exemplify:	24
Grassroots:	24
Ground Zero:	24
Hot Desks:	24
Maze:.....	24
Sliding Scale:.....	25
Vision Board:	25
Winsome:.....	25
Success Story:	26

Resilience and strength 26

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



Lifelong Learning:

Challenges and opportunities abound

Life is [enriched](#) by those “ha, I didn’t know that” moments. Moving outside our [comfort zones](#), to purposefully go into the unknown, to learn new things, try new things, and experience something new is difficult for most of us. But we learn from these things and we’re never too old to gain new insights and knowledge. The benefits of lifelong learning are tremendous, for mind, body and soul.

Work takes up so much of our time and a rewarding work life is usually one in which we are challenged and allowed to bring our full range of talents to the job. But not all jobs are rewarding and we can all get bored even in jobs we love. If that’s the case, it may be time to look for learning opportunities in the workplace, to look at upgrading qualifications or even to look for a new job opportunity. Take advantage of the employment services available throughout Durham, look at courses at the colleges and universities in the region or explore options through Continuing Education at the school boards.

Volunteering also provides opportunities to learn so much, about ourselves, our community and the broader world we live in. Volunteering can provide an opportunity to give back and to build communities that are engaged, caring, vibrant and welcoming. Importantly, too, it can be a lot of fun!

Being open to learning can be [daunting](#), but I would argue, ultimately rewarding. You never know what’s around the corner. What will you learn today?

“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.” – Dr. Seuss

“Wisdom is not a product of schooling but of the lifelong attempt to acquire it.” – Albert Einstein



Building Community:

Local heroes give back

Many people in Durham will recognize the woman in the centre of this photo. Adolphine Mukamanzi is the Community Liaison contact for Conseil Scolaire de district catholique centre-sud (the French Catholic School Board) in Durham. In October, she will be taking a leave from her job to dedicate some time to a project she and two friends started a few years ago. This is their story.

The Project

In December 2011, Noreen Barbe, Adolphine Mukamanzi and Marie Ntaganda travelled to Rwanda. During their stay, they visited the village of Kavumu, where children and parents came to welcome them. During their conversation, the parents mentioned that their children travelled two hours to get to the closest school every day, which was particularly hard for the younger children. The parents were asking for help to build a school in their village.

When they returned to Canada, the three women could not stop thinking about the children of Kavumu and they decided to put together a team to start raising money to build a school in the village. It was at this time that the Le chemin de la lumière/Inzira y'Urumuri project was born.

Inzira y'Urumuri approached L'AMIE, an organization which has been helping young children in developing countries for over 40 years, specifically in Rwanda for the last 10. They agreed to sponsor the project and manage the funds collected for the school. This partnership will allow a vast improvement to the quality of life of the Kavumu children.

The project goals in Rwanda are to build a primary school (kindergarten to grade 9) for Kavumu children, to foster growth and education for the children of the village, to give the children a chance to have a better future and hopefully, in turn, also become agents of change in their communities. The project goals in Canada are to involve youth and other members of the community in raising funds for a worthy cause, while also offering them an opportunity to practice sharing, solidarity and leadership skills.

For more information about the project and to track the progress of the building (and to see what Adolphine is up to!), visit [the project Facebook page](#) (www.facebook.com/lechemindelalumiere) and follow them on Twitter @cheminlumiere.





Creating Welcoming Communities:

Volunteering internationally

In his own words, Grant Sigsworth tells us his story. A Whitby resident who retired from a career in international development, Grant writes about his nearly two weeks last May as a volunteer in the Moria detention centre. The centre houses 3500 refugees and migrants on Lesbos, a Greek island where over a half million persons of 20+ nationalities arrived by dinghies across the 6 km strait from Turkey during 2015 and early 2016. On March 20, the EU and Turkey agreed to halt the traffic.

Volunteering in Lesbos appealed to my interest, experience, and heritage. I've enjoyed travelling worldwide, for business and adventure, and lived overseas. I volunteer in Durham in church and community, and have joined or organized personally rewarding volunteer teams, Quebec flood relief, Mississippi post-Katrina relief, and overseas work teams including after Haiti's earthquake. Media reports of Lesbos as [ground zero](#) for thousands of refugee boats repeatedly caught my attention. My interest was heightened upon learning that an Oshawa-based missions agency (where friends work) could channel me to a camp on Lesbos. The tasks would be straightforward and within my senior-age capabilities. When I remembered my ancestors who left Germany (17th century) to be accepted by Britain as penniless migrants and Loyalist ancestors routed off their Pennsylvania farm (1776), a strong sense arose that Lesbos was **my** time, **my** place to "give back", even modestly, to today's refugees.

Lessons from Lesbos? [Winsome](#) friendliness, caring attitudes, the smallest offer of respectful assistance are invariably welcomed by those (at home or abroad) in distress, at risk, hearing little but rumours and unmet promises, caught up in circumstances beyond their control. Advice? Be open to volunteering opportunities, go looking for them. For volunteering opportunities for Greece refugee camps try [Samos Volunteers](#) (www.samosvolunteers.wordpress.com) or Eurorelief.net (www.eurorelief.net/volunteer). Don't be immobilized by age or inexperience or cross-cultural differences: either not going at all or holding back after arrival. Engage!





Volunteering in Durham: Opportunities

You can make a difference in Durham Region by volunteering some of your time and talent. There are many opportunities for service and there is sure to be one or more that will interest you. Everyone has something to contribute to volunteer service that not only makes your community a better place but also improves your connection to Durham Region.

Volunteering is a two-way street. It benefits the organization or cause and the volunteer who makes the effort. This can be especially true for volunteers who are relatively new to a community. For in the act of volunteering the volunteer is drawn together with others, who in a shared effort, are helping to improve the community. By doing so, they create opportunities for themselves to learn about their new surroundings and importantly, to expand their network of contacts.

For more information about local volunteer opportunities, visit [Information Durham](http://www.durham.cioc.ca/volunteer) at www.durham.cioc.ca/volunteer.





Supporting Creative communities:

Art in Durham

A stunning new art project was recently unveiled at the new Fairview Lodge in Whitby. During the course of approximately nine months, Art With a Heart worked with local seniors and the community to create The Legacy Project, a series of mosaics in the gardens off the café at Fairview. The mosaics combine the voices, memories and stories of residents and their families into beautiful visual representations made of thousands of tiny tiles. The mosaics were designed around unique themes which were identified in inter-generational workshops that brought residents, family members and local artists together. The themes of gardens, recreation, traditions, immigration/Canada/ travel, passing of time/changing of the seasons/handing down stories are all beautifully expressed in these gorgeous works.

It is important to connect and to create meaningful discussion around history and memories from people's lives and Art With a Heart executive director/artist at large Sheri Gundry noted how important it is to have the voices and stories of people's lives listened to and appreciated. This project allowed for residents to share and document the thoughts and memories that are meaningful and important to them with their families and with the community. For more, visit [the YouTube video documenting the project](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFI8qJKFajI) at www.youtu.be/pFI8qJKFajI.





Supporting Safe Communities:

Seniors in Durham

Seniors are the foundation of our communities. They deserve dignity and respect and nothing less. Since the early 1990s, Durham Elder Abuse Network (DEAN) has worked with community partners and agencies to ensure the issues surrounding seniors safety and elder abuse are brought to light. DEAN is comprised of more than 60 individuals, both for-profit and not-for-profit agencies, organizations, health care sector workers and justice partners. The group is a strong advocate for seniors' issues and rights.

In the past, the network has hosted education events for seniors as well as health care professionals, obtained grants to raise awareness in Durham about elder abuse, offered a place to share difficult cases and consult amongst professionals to problem solve. Most importantly, DEAN is able to help seniors who are victims of abuse, through generous donations and financial support.

This year we are very excited to work with Durham Regional Police to offer our very first Senior Safety Calendar. Officers were matched up with seniors within our communities in an attempt to highlight important and relevant safety information. The calendars are free for any senior in Durham. They are available through most of our member organizations.

It is estimated that 10 per cent of older adults will experience one or more forms of abuse at some point during their senior years. Those who work in the field think that is much higher. It is important for our seniors as well as our health care professionals to be aware that they are not alone. There are resources out there for you if you need them, there is a response available to you in Durham if you require it and there are dedicated professionals there to address your questions and concerns. For more information, please visit the [DEAN website](http://www.durhamelderabusenetwork.ca) at www.durhamelderabusenetwork.ca.





Supporting Families:

Community Care Access Centre is for everyone!

A recent study found that newcomers are less likely to use agencies for family support than other community members. It's unclear why this is the case, but community supports are available to all members of the community, and often provide multi-lingual and culturally appropriate services. CCAC is one of those crucial services all newcomers should know about.

The Central East Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) is one of 14 CCACs that work in communities across Ontario to connect people with quality in-home and community-based health care. They work to ensure patients receive the care they need when they need it. They provide information, direct access to qualified care providers, and many comprehensive services to help people come home from the hospital sooner or live independently at home longer.

Finding and accessing care can sometimes be confusing and complicated. The CCAC helps people find their way through Ontario's health care system, understand their options and get the highest quality care possible. They help people from school children with special health needs to seniors needing health services at home or admission to a long-term care home.

Every day in communities across the province, nurses, doctors, therapists, personal support workers, CCAC Care Coordinators, CCAC Direct Clinical Nurses and others work together to provide better quality of care for patients. The CCACs work as a team along with health care partners to transform our health care system in order to deliver the health care that people need.

To reach CCAC, please call 1-800-263-3877 or visit the [CCAC website](http://www.healthcareathome.ca/centraleast) at www.healthcareathome.ca/centraleast.





Building Healthy Communities:

Region of Durham offers counselling services

Newcomers to Durham Region are faced with many changes and challenges as they adjust to their new community. Certified counsellors at the Region of Durham are here to help! The Region provides individual, couple, family and group counselling to Durham Region residents through its Social Services Department, Family Services Division.

Counselling can help clients see things more clearly while they focus on feelings, experiences or behaviour, with the goal of positive change. During a counselling session, people are able to discuss their problems and any difficult feelings they encounter in a safe, confidential environment. Counselling services can address a number of issues, such as: stress, trauma, workplace violence or conflict, substance abuse, anger, anxiety, depression, budgeting, self-esteem, bereavement, family conflict, separation or divorce, abuse or violence, parenting, addiction, or caring for elderly parents. Family Services uses a short-term counselling model of 12 sessions.

Counselling services are available to adults and children age six or older. For more information, or to register for counselling, please call the Family Services' Centralized Intake Line at 905-666-6240 (or toll-free at 1-866-840-6697). For more information about the Region of Durham's programs and services, please visit the [Region of Durham's website](http://www.durham.ca) at www.durham.ca.





Supporting Newcomer Integration:

Pre-arrival services

Newcomers often say that they wished they had had more information prior to arriving in Canada. The federal government has increased pre-arrival services for those selected to immigrate to Canada. Services are free and can be accessed online and in-person. To be eligible to use the service you must have received a Confirmation of Permanent Residence (COPR) letter, **or** a notification about a positive eligibility decision on your application from the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), and be outside Canada.

The IRCC website includes an online directory of services that you can access according to where you plan to settle (city or province) or by your profession. Services include understanding life in Canada, finding a job, and accessing other settlement services once you have arrived. Again, there is no cost to access these services. Visit the [IRCC website](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/before-services.asp) at www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/before-services.asp.

Living in Canada is an excellent resource for those immigrating to Canada. The site asks you to answer some preliminary questions so the database can develop a customised settlement plan specifically tailored to your needs. For more information, visit the [IRCC website](http://www.cic.gc.ca/lctvac/english/index) at www.cic.gc.ca/lctvac/english/index.





Supporting Newcomer Integration:

Credential assessment

Educational requirements are different for every profession and trade in Ontario. Some professions stipulate where and how international credentials are to be evaluated, so it is best to find out what is required in your field before having your credentials assessed. There are a variety of organizations that can assist with the process of getting your foreign credentials assessed and translated into their Ontario equivalents.

In Ontario, there are two types of occupations: regulated and non-regulated. The regulated professions (for example, physicians, nurses, lawyers, and skilled trades such as plumbers and electricians) set their own standards of practice in order to protect the public.

To determine if your occupation is regulated or non-regulated, visit the [Working in Canada website](http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/home-eng.do?lang=eng) (www.jobbank.gc.ca/home-eng.do?lang=eng). This site will help you identify the name of your occupation in Canada and give you important information about your profession in many regions of Canada, including job duties, skill requirements and wage rates.

For more information about having credentials assessed, visit the [World Education Service \(WES\) website](http://www.wes.org/ca) at www.wes.org/ca.





Supporting Newcomer Integration:

Canadian experience

Often, one of the biggest stumbling blocks for newcomers is finding work in their field. For many foreign trained professionals, this will mean re-qualifying in some way, or having to have their credentials assessed and formally recognized. It can be difficult to know where to start! Global Experience Ontario (GEO) offers information and services to help immigrants become licenced or certified to work in Ontario's regulated professions and skilled trades. GEO offers webinars and workshops on licensing in specific professions, as well as career maps, fact sheets and other resources, including academic credential assessment and bridging programs. For more information, visit the [GEO website](http://www.ontarioimmigration.ca/en/geo/index.htm) at www.ontarioimmigration.ca/en/geo/index.htm.

HealthForce Ontario's Access Centre for Internationally Educated Health Professionals (IEHPs) offers similar services to health care professionals. It provides profession-specific information sessions, referrals to upgrading courses and regulatory bodies and information about pursuing alternative careers in health care. Knowledgeable advisors work one-on-one with clients to review prior experience and explain the steps to qualification.

The Access Centre is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and all services are free of charge. To become a client, register online at the HealthForce Ontario website and follow the links to the Access Centre. For more information, visit the [HealthForce Ontario website](http://www.healthforceontario.ca/en/Home) at www.healthforceontario.ca/en/Home.





Supporting Newcomer Integration:

Bridging programs

Bridge training programs help qualified internationally trained individuals move quickly into the labour market in Ontario. They assess your existing skills and competencies, compared to Ontario employer expectations. They provide training and Canadian workplace experience without duplicating what you have already learned.

Some bridge training programs offer mentoring opportunities with established professionals to help you become certified or registered in your field.

Each bridge training program is different and may provide you with:

- An assessment of your education and skills.
- Clinical or workplace experience.
- Skills training or targeted academic training programs.
- Preparation for a licence or certification examination.
- Language training for your profession or trade.
- Individual learning plans to identify any added training you may need.

For details on all of the information above, as well as information on funding for bridging programs, please visit the [Ontario Immigration website](http://www.ontarioimmigration.ca/en/working/OI_BRIDGE.html) at www.ontarioimmigration.ca/en/working/OI_BRIDGE.html.





Embracing Diversity, Engaging our Community:

Durham's first municipal diversity conference

The Town of Ajax is excited about its Municipal Diversity Conference, which will be held on Oct. 22 at the Ajax Community Centre in the HMS Banquet Hall, beginning at 9 a.m. The goal of this conference is to provide an environment of shared learning on diversity and inclusion in Ajax. The conference is open to everyone, not just Ajax residents.

The featured speaker will be Michael Bach, Executive Director of the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI). Recognizing and appreciating that the community is ever-changing as it grows and evolves into one of the most diverse communities in the region, the theme of the conference is Embracing Diversity, Engaging our Community.

Through consultation and dialogue with Ajax residents and community organizations, a number of topics have been developed for the conference breakout sessions. These include diversity leadership, exploring race and culture, and understanding Aboriginal and/or Indigenous issues.

The conference will be a great experience for all attendees with dynamic speakers and takeaway learning. The Town of Ajax will also be presenting the draft phase two portion of its Diversity and Community Engagement Plan. You don't want to miss this one. Admission is FREE, lunch and refreshments provided. For more details, please visit the [Town of Ajax Diversity website](http://www.ajax.ca/diversity) at www.ajax.ca/diversity.





Creating Opportunities:

Work Skills Training Program for newcomer youth

During the summer, an innovative program was run for newcomer youth at the Ajax Welcome Centre. Run by Agilec (and funded through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada), the Work Skills Training (WST) Program was designed to help newcomer youth gain hands-on skills and knowledge to become more competitive applicants for the Canadian workforce. The program attracted a total of 28 participants for the two-day workshop. Participants learned how to use a cash register, and serve customers effectively, in addition to learning about cultural competence, and Canadian health and safety practice and guidelines.

Participants also had the opportunity to self-reflect and create a personal [vision board](#) displaying their future career goals and aspirations. Youth also had the opportunity to ask employers questions at an employer panel discussion that was held during a networking lunch on the second day of the program. The WST program created an inviting environment for newcomer youth to openly share their workplace culture from back home, as well as learn about integrating into the workplace in their new home here in Canada.

We asked newcomer youth what they enjoyed the most. Here is what they had to say: “Learning how to use a cash register and how to deal with customers in different situations;” “Communicating with each other;” “I enjoyed the employers’ panel and how they gave advice.” For more information on other newcomer youth programs offered by Agilec, please visit the [Agilec website](#) at www.agilec.ca/our-services/employment-services/newcomer-youth-services.





Building Inclusive Communities:

Durham Welcome Centres

The vision of a one-stop shop to meet newcomer settlement needs came to life in Ajax and Pickering in November 2011. Since the doors of the Welcome Centre Immigrant Services were first opened, the Welcome Centres have met the unique and diverse needs of newcomers who have chosen to make Durham Region their new home. The activities of the Welcome Centres align with and inform the community's commitment to diversity and inclusion in our community.

The Welcome Centres provide the essential tools needed to navigate a complex [maze](#) of available services; from gathering information, to developing English language skills, to integrating economically and socially in a new community. The Welcome Centres are dynamic and flexible in order to maintain our commitment to provide a safe, positive and inclusive space.

Newcomer clients access services at many points along their settlement journey. The Welcome Centres are their "home away from home". Partners agree that as a collective of 40 service organizations, we have built our understanding of, and sensitivity to the newcomer experience. At the Welcome Centres and among our partners we have expanded programs and services to address the expressed and emerging needs of immigrants and their families.

As we continue to welcome newcomers to Durham Region, we invite you to join our fifth anniversary celebrations in November. Please visit the [Welcome Centre website](#) at www.welcomecentre.ca or call 1-877-761-1155 to begin your Welcome Centre experience.





Celebrating Learning:

Durham libraries

Durham libraries offer a wealth of opportunities for learning. Read books, watch films, listen to music, attend discussion groups and lectures, learn a new language, practice an old language, create your own movie, tell your story, meet your neighbours and more, all available at your local library.

Public libraries are free in Ontario. To join the library, you need one piece of official identification and proof of address (for example, a telephone, electricity, gas, or cable bill). Children can get their own library card.

At your local public library, you can help your child succeed in school, learn about services for newcomers, get information about finding a job, borrow books, CD's and videos in many languages, use computers and access the internet, and have fun with your family.

Visit the [library page of the Durham Immigration Portal](https://www.durhamimmigration.ca/learning/Pages/LibraryPrograms.aspx) (<https://www.durhamimmigration.ca/learning/Pages/LibraryPrograms.aspx>) for a list of Durham public library websites, as well as links to information about public libraries in Ontario in 18 languages.





Supporting Inclusive Communities:

Nourish Community Hub in North Durham

As part of rural Brock Township, access to food, nutrition, budgeting information, and education can be a challenge. It was in recognizing this that the Nourish Community Hub was born, as an innovative [grassroots](#) centre that brings the community together to celebrate food and exchange knowledge and resources. Everyone is welcome!

This collaborative work space in Cannington is home to organizations catering to food and housing security, skills enhancement and [entrepreneurship](#). They also offer business support services in an attempt to entice new partnerships to the area to supplement existing services offered here.

As the recipients of the 2016 Accessibility Award, the facility is fully accessible, consisting of a commercial kitchen, rental hall, meeting rooms, private offices and [hot desks](#). Recently, Ontario By Bike designated the Hub as their official Visitor Information Centre because of their wide access to resources and information.

Volunteers are vital to activities and social gatherings are common, giving opportunities to meet people, gain a skill, explore a hobby, or get a bite to eat. People connect, become empowered, and develop valuable ideas.

The Nourish Community Hub strives to become more inclusive for all, offering programs that evolve to reflect new requests. Working with local community and migrant workers, it offers multiple services, including the development of financially accessible programs. Topics include cooking and language classes, skills programs, financial literacy, art socials, sustainable systems, food processing, luncheons and webinars, children's workshops, a food pantry, community gardens, and affordable housing, among other things. Custom programs are also developed with community groups to suit their needs.

Donations are accepted and [bartering](#) is encouraged as payments outside of money are entertained. [Sliding scale](#) rates exist for activities that benefit the community and are not intended to make money.

For more information about the Nourish Community Hub, their partners, and the local community please contact Sherry at 705-432-2444 or [by email](#) at nourish.hub@tndf.ca.





Supporting Healthy Communities

Car seat safety

Safety standards are different in different parts of the world. Car seat safety is taken seriously in Ontario. Every child travelling on Ontario roads is required to be properly secured in a vehicle. Car seats provide safety for children who are too small for an adult seat belt. Children require different car seats depending on their size.

Stage 1: Rear-facing seats. The child's height should be less than 30 to 32 inches and they should weigh 4 to 45 lbs.

Stage 2: Forward-facing seats. The child's height should be 27 to 52 inches and they should weigh 22 to 70 lbs.

Stage 3: Booster seats. The child's height should be 40 to 63 inches and they should weigh 40 to 120 lbs.

Stage 4: Seat belts. The child's height should be 4'9" (145 cm).

Tips to remember:

- Check the expiry date on your car seat.
- Never place a car seat in front of an active air bag.
- Rear-facing car seats should be reclined to a 45 degree angle.
- Always use the tether strap when in the forward-facing position.
- Your car seat should not move more than one inch side to side when installed.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for installation.
- It's the driver's responsibility to make sure each child under 16 years old is secured.
- It's illegal to smoke tobacco in a vehicle with children under 16 years old.

For more information about car seat safety, visit the [Durham Region website](http://www.durham.ca/carseatsafety) at www.durham.ca/carseatsafety.





Glossary

Bartering:

Exchanging one thing or a service for another thing or service rather than buying the original service

Comfort Zone:

Feeling emotionally and physically safe and content

Daunting:

Intimidating or scary

Enriched:

When something is improved or made better

Entrepreneurship:

When a person creates and starts their own business or enterprise

Exemplify:

Represent something in an ideal way

Grassroots:

The public or the people being served by an organization or agency

Ground Zero:

The exact physical spot that something is happening

Hot Desks:

Shared communal desk space in an organization

Maze:

A confusing multi-directional way to get from one spot to another



Sliding Scale:

A form of payment that takes into account how much a person is able to pay for something based on their income

Vision Board:

A poster with images and notes that represent a theme or a goal

Winsome:

Gentle, kind or friendly



Success Story:

Resilience and strength

Immigrants tend to be very resilient people. By the very fact that they have left an established life in one country to embark on a journey to a new country, often with a new language, sets them apart from others. They are risk-takers and truly [exemplify](#) lifelong learning as they settle, adapt and learn about living and working in a new community. Hina is one of those immigrants. She arrived in Canada knowing very little about her adopted country with little English and few resources to support her when she arrived. The first few years were difficult (culture shock, isolation and loneliness) but a move to Durham proved to be a turning point for her and her children. A single mother of three, Hina had to draw on her own resilience and strength to build a new life.

Five years ago, Hina started English-language classes and in less than five years, she went from no English to taking credit courses through Continuing Education to get her diploma. It wasn't easy and at one point she considered going back to her home country but she was impressed with the continual kindness and patience of everyday people across Durham. People on buses, in banks, in her community were always willing to help with directions or just say "hello". A local volunteer with the Interchurch Immigrant Support Group (IISG) sat with her for seven hours when her daughter was ill. Asked why she decided to stay, Hina says, "The generosity and the kindness of the people in Durham made me stay."

Hina drew on the resources and help offered by the staff at Continuing Education, the Settlement Workers in Schools worker in her children's school, as well as IISG and the Welcome Centre. Her advice to newcomers, and newcomer women especially, is to learn English. In her experience, it is so important to be independent of interpreters and to engage with the broader community, for yourself and for your children. "You won't learn about your new home without learning English. It's very important," she says.

A major milestone for the family was recently reached, they became Canadian Citizens. "I didn't want to just be an immigrant; I wanted to be a Canadian. You have a responsibility to be part of this country. This is our home."





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

[Email](mailto:diversitynewsletter@durham.ca): diversitynewsletter@durham.ca

And check out the [Durham Immigration Portal](http://www.durhamimmigration.ca) (www.durhamimmigration.ca)

Follow us on the Region of Durham Facebook page and on Twitter at #DurhamImmigration

Back Issues: Visit the [Durham Immigration Portal](http://www.durhamimmigration.ca) (www.durhamimmigration.ca) for back issues of The Citizen by clicking on the Creating Community tab and then clicking on the Diversity Newsletter heading. You can also sign up for the newsletter online (please specify if you require the accessible version). Please feel free to forward The Citizen to others.



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

