

# The Citizen

DURHAM REGION'S  
DIVERSITY FOCUSED NEWSLETTER  
Issue 24, 2015



## Settling in Canada: Tips and resources for potential newcomers

Immigrating to a new country is a major **undertaking**. Whether you decide to move for work, an adventure or to pursue higher education, there are steps you can take before you leave your home country that will make the adjustment easier.

Take advantage of the pre-arrival resources offered through Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). Connect with the professional associations and organizations that regulate your profession. Get an international driver's license to ensure that you are mobile once you get to Canada. Check out [www.durhamimmigration.ca](http://www.durhamimmigration.ca) for advice, resources, links and more. The most important thing you can do before you embark on this incredible adventure is to research, read and ask questions so that when you do arrive, you're ready to **hit the ground running!**

This edition of *The Citizen* has a focus on "settling" in Canada. The settlement journey is unique and personal. Some newcomers would say they settled quickly, while others see it as a 10-year process. Whichever the case, the settlement journey will likely involve finding a job. This often happens only after a language assessment, having credentials assessed, and then working toward getting licenced to work in your profession (**if applicable**). There are a lot of steps.

One of the last steps toward securing employment in your field is getting work experience. We hear a lot about this in the news. Workplaces are unique, with subtle, **nuanced** cultures. Exposure to these cultures is critical to learning how to be a good fit. There are a variety of ways to gain exposure to Canadian workplaces and workplace cultures, including internships, mentorships and volunteering. A number of them are explored in this edition. Whether you or someone you know is just beginning their settlement journey or are nearing the end, this edition of *The Citizen* brings together a lot of moving parts that contribute to the process known as settling. Good luck!

Words in **red** throughout the newsletter are defined in the glossary on page 11.

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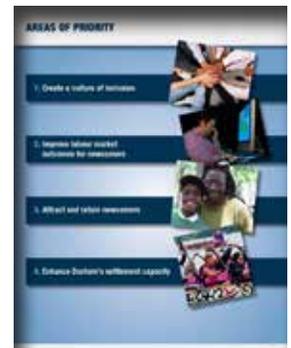
## Diversity and Inclusion: Have your say!



The Durham *Diversity and Immigration Community Plan* is now five years old. It's time to look back at the work that's been done across Durham, to celebrate the successes, to look forward at where we want to be in the next five years and to figure out how we want get there. The Local Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council (the LDIPC) is currently leading a process to do just that and we want your input. If you're interested in having a say in the next *Diversity and Immigration Community Plan*, we'd like you to complete an online survey. We'll be in touch soon with links and more information!

The LDIPC acts as a **backbone organization** to many of the initiatives happening throughout the region. The LDIPC works to facilitate access to resources, networks and best practices through a number of creative initiatives. Working in collaboration with close to 100 community partners, the LDIPC is working to embed the needs of all populations into policies and practices to build a creative, innovative, prosperous and engaged Durham Region.

For copies of the current Durham Diversity and Immigration Community Plan, visit [www.durhamimmigration.ca](http://www.durhamimmigration.ca) > About.



## Settling in Durham: Composting and recycling



A value shared by Canadians and Durham residents alike is a commitment to the environment. When you dispose of household food scraps and other organic items in the Green Bin program, it is composted locally to create compost for gardens and landscaping. It's a responsible way to manage household waste while benefitting the environment.

Some residents are using plastic bags in kitchen green bins. This impacts the composting process as plastic materials cannot be removed.

When using Durham Region's Green Bin program, please use only 100 per cent certified compostable liner bags (look for the logo), paper bags or newspaper to line your bin. Plastic bags are not accepted.

The following items do not break down at the processing facility, and therefore cannot be turned into valuable compost:

- Plastic milk bags and bread bags
- Plastic wrap, baggies and sandwich bags
- Any plastic bag except for 100 per cent certified compostable bags
- Plastic food containers (such as peanut butter jars)
- Plastic knives and forks

Durham Region's waste diversion programs are successful because of the commitment of our residents—thank you for your support! For a full list of acceptable green bin materials and a list of 100 per cent certified compostable liner bag brands, visit [www.durham.ca/greenbin](http://www.durham.ca/greenbin).



## Creating Fun Communities: Celebrate fall

For those new to Canada, some of the traditions celebrated in October can be confusing. There is more to fall than just back to school, it is full of wonderful holidays and things to do.

Why not check out one of the many fall fairs in Durham? Fall fairs usually include carnival rides and fall treats, as well as agricultural exhibits and competitions. A listing of fall fairs can be found at [Durham Farm Connections](#).



The Thanksgiving holiday originally developed from feasts held by settlers to Canada (the original newcomers!) to celebrate and give

thanks for the harvest. It's a wonderful time to enjoy a meal with family and friends. Turkey and ham are traditionally eaten, along with many side dishes and desserts, but Thanksgiving can

incorporate any family favourites.

Seeing ghosts and **ghouls**? Don't be alarmed!

Halloween is a holiday popular with children and adults alike. It evolved from an old Gaelic festival called Samhain, in which ancient **pagans** wore masks and costumes to appease evil spirits. These days, Halloween is all about parties, costumes and trick or treating for children. Homeowners carve a **jack-o-lantern** and set it out at dusk with a lit candle to show that treats are available! Enjoy a parade of adorable children in costumes and simply blow out the candle when the treats are gone.



For more information on what to do in Durham, visit the Durham Tourism calendar, <http://calendar.durhamtourism.ca>.

## Creating Engaged Communities: Get active and engaged with recreation programs in your community

There are numerous benefits to participating in recreation programs in your community. Many of these programs increase your overall health, fitness and physical activity levels, but they also help you to meet new people and learn more about your community. Participation in recreation programs can greatly enhance your family's quality of life while you have fun!

There are a wide variety of recreation and leisure programs offered by municipalities and community groups for all ages and abilities. These can include: fitness, swimming, skating, dance, language, arts and crafts, cooking, music and drama and so much more!

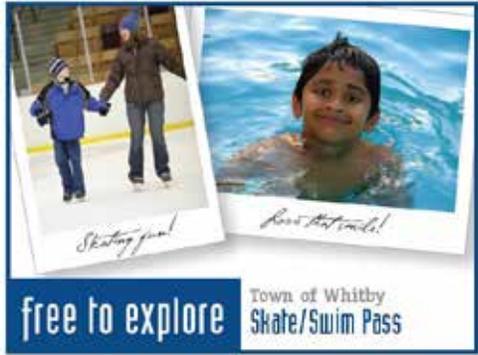
You can register for municipal recreation programs at your local recreation facility or by visiting your municipality's recreation web page. New program sessions start in January, April, July and September and registration takes place up to month before the programs start.

Depending on the type of program you are taking, the cost can vary. Most municipalities offer financial assistance programs to those in need. A full list of recreation providers who offer financial assistance can be found at [www.durham.ca/recsubsidy](http://www.durham.ca/recsubsidy).

Be sure to register for recreation and leisure programs and experience the many benefits of leading an active lifestyle and making new friends.



## Building active communities: Whitby's Skate and Swim Pass



Did you know that you can check out a Skate and Swim Pass at the Whitby Public Library and explore Whitby's recreation facilities for free? The pass entitles you to free admission to a public skate or swim at Town of Whitby recreation facilities.

How do I get a pass? There are 12 passes available for loan and you can call your local library to check availability. The pass is checked out on your library card for one week. Holds may be placed on the passes with your library card.

What does the pass do? The pass will entitle up to five people free admission to a public skate or swim at any Town of Whitby recreational facility.

Can I only use it once during the week? You can use it as many times as you like during the checkout period.

*I want to thank you for providing the free Town of Whitby swim/skate pass. My family is undergoing considerable financial constraints this year. With this pass, my almost 4 year old son has had many opportunities to swim and skate. Because I was able to take him swimming multiple times, he is now brave enough to jump right into the water. He is also learning to maneuver around on the ice with his skate aid. The pass has simply **been a life saver** for us.*  
Whitby Resident

## Building healthy communities: Families staying active together



There are many low or no-cost ways families can stay active in their community. As parents, we know that physical activity is needed for the healthy growth of children. It can support them in feeling happy, staying healthy, and help them learn at school.

Learning basic skills like how to kick or throw a ball, or swim at a young age will give kids confidence to try school sports and community activities and make new friends along the way. There are many ways for you to teach your kids these skills both at home and in your community.

- Play "Active Games" with your children at home. The Durham health website has a list of fun games for parents/caregivers

to stay involved in play with their kids and teach some of the basic skills like throwing, catching and jumping.

- Check out our "Walking Web page" for tips on walking as a way to be active. You can walk as a way to get to and from places, to relax, or have some fun!
- Find free and low-cost local community options/events to increase physical activity and get your family moving! Physical activity is a great way for everyone in the family to stay healthy and happy, and when it is low cost or free, it is all the better!

Visit [www.durham.ca](http://www.durham.ca) > Health > Health and Well-being > Physical activity for more information!

## Creating accessible communities: Durham public libraries offer alternative ways of reading

Ontario is proud of its commitment to residents with different abilities. If you or someone you know has a visual



or print disability, a partnership between the Durham Public Libraries and the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) offers alternative ways of reading.

Access is available to people who have a library card for the relevant municipality and have a learning disability related to reading, physical disability resulting in the inability to hold or manipulate a book, or a visual disability resulting in the inability to focus on a page.

Access to the collection is offered in a number of ways: you can receive DAISY audio CDs, Braille, or described movies through your local branch or by mail directly to your home; download books to your computer or mobile device, such as an iPhone; and/or download books to a DAISY player over a wireless connection without using a computer.

With CELA membership, you can also sign up for Bookshare, an online database that gives you instant access to more than 200,000 titles for free, including New York Times bestsellers, novels, children's books, mysteries, science fiction, nonfiction, foreign-language books, and more. With Bookshare, which requires proof of disability, you can read and listen to words read aloud, increase font size and read with large print, read on computers, tablets, smartphones, braille displays, etc. and get free reading software.

Find out more by visiting [www.celalibrary.ca](http://www.celalibrary.ca), or contact your local library [www.durhamimmigration.ca](http://www.durhamimmigration.ca) > Learning > Library Programs.

## Building healthy communities: Teen resiliency

The fall is often a perfect time of year to develop new skills such as resiliency to support change as your family settles into routines (new and old) at home, school, and work. During the teen years, some of these changes may involve families moving to a new country and teens starting a new school. Your teen may need extra support during this time. Getting involved in your community through school, faith or cultural centres can help with transitions.

Being a parent/guardian of a teen is full of rich opportunities for you and your teen to learn and grow together in positive ways.

Supporting your teen and yourself to become more resilient to adapt to some of these life changes is a vital role that parents can develop. **Resiliency is the ability to handle life's ups and downs in positive ways and helps support mental health.**

To become more resilient, your teen needs:

- Supportive relationships
- Healthy coping
- Optimistic thinking
- Emotional awareness
- Skills for living



It is important for parents/guardians to take care of themselves as well. Visit [durham.ca/TeensCan](http://durham.ca/TeensCan) for some great tips and a video on how to help build resilient teens (and parents).



## Working in Canada: Credential recognition



The most critical step in preparing to immigrate to Canada is to ensure that your educational credentials have been assessed and to ensure that you have investigated whether you also need to seek **accreditation** from a professional body to work in your profession in Canada.

World Education Services (WES) is a non-profit organization that provides research about international education and trends and offers expert credential evaluation services.

WES evaluates educational credentials from any country in the world and provides a Canadian equivalency. WES evaluations are widely accepted across Canada by government agencies, employers, universities and regulatory bodies.

WES is designated by the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Canada (CIC) to provide educational credential assessments (ECA) for degrees earned outside of Canada.

With a WES ECA you can:

- meet CIC educational credential assessment requirements;
- gain recognition for your education so you can pursue your goals in Canada; and
- store your report and educational documents for future use.

The WES ECA is valid for five years for CIC purposes. For information about CIC immigration programs, visit the [CIC website](#).

**\*WES does not evaluate occupational or trade qualifications.**



A WES credential evaluation gives you options. WES maintains a comprehensive database of institutions, academic programs and degrees. If you have educational credentials earned outside of Canada, a WES evaluation can help you meet university admissions or immigration requirements, qualify for professional licensing, or find a job in Canada. For more information, please visit [www.wes.org](http://www.wes.org).

 Settlement Services English Language Classes Employment Supports Accreditation Information Interpretation Services <small>Services provided free of charge to clients Des services sont aussi disponibles en français</small>	<b>AJAX</b> 458 Fairall Street, Unit 5	
	<b>PICKERING</b> 1400 Bayly Street, Unit 5 <b>1-877-761-1155</b> <a href="mailto:info@welcomecentre.ca">info@welcomecentre.ca</a>	
<b>welcomecentre.ca</b>	Funded by: Citizenship and Immigration Canada	Financé par: Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada

## Working in Canada: Certification and licenses



Having your education credentials assessed is only one part of ensuring that you can work in your profession in Canada. You also need to ensure that you are certified or licensed to work in the province you plan to live in.

Global Experience Ontario (GEO) is an information centre that guides internationally trained individuals and newcomers through the process of becoming certified or licensed to work in one of Ontario's non-health regulated professions or skilled trades.

GEO can provide information on internships specifically for internationally trained individuals new to Canada. These programs can be paid or unpaid. They also provide Career Maps and Skilled Trades Fact Sheets that describe the steps you need to take to get your licence and certification to work in your profession.

Particularly useful are the webinars that GEO offers, you can join one of GEO's free live webinars (from anywhere!) and find out how

to work as a licensed and registered engineer, accountant, teacher, early childhood educator, social worker or in the skilled trades in Ontario.

GEO can also provide information to you about alternate careers that utilize your existing educational credentials and professional experience. For more information, please email [GEO@ontario.ca](mailto:GEO@ontario.ca), visit [www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/english/keyinitiatives/geo.shtml](http://www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/english/keyinitiatives/geo.shtml) or call 1-866-670-4094.

### Internationally Educated Health Professionals (IEHPs)

If you work in the healthcare profession, the Access Centre can help find out how to qualify for professional practice in Ontario. The Centre supports IEHPs through a wide range of services including profession-specific information sessions, referrals to upgrading courses and regulatory bodies and pursuing alternative careers in health care. Knowledgeable advisors work one-on-one with clients to review prior experience and explain steps to qualification.

To become a client of the Access Centre, register online at [www.healthforceontario.ca](http://www.healthforceontario.ca) and follow the links to the Access Centre.

## Working in Canada: Language assessment

Communication skills may be the most important tool to settle successfully in Canada. Newcomers who want to advance their English **proficiency** have a number of options available to them upon arrival in Canada. Many programs for English advancement are funded by either the federal (LINC, ELT etc.) or provincial (ESL) government. Before starting a language training program, you must first get an assessment to find out your current language skills level.

Language assessment services provide free English language assessments and referrals to classes for eligible immigrants. The assessment demonstrates your level of English skill in listening, speaking, reading and writing. After the assessment, you will be given class options that are best suited to your English ability, location, time or personal preference. These classes will help you improve your English, meet other newcomers and learn about Canada.



In Durham Region, language assessments are provided on a scheduled and pre-booked basis at Welcome Centre Immigrant Services and other community locations. Please call the 1-855-330-8655 CLARS Language Assessment Centre to book an appointment for assessment. Some evening and Saturday appointments are also available.

To book an appointment for a language assessment, please call: 1-855-330-8655 or email [ysla@tcet.com](mailto:ysla@tcet.com).



## Settling in Canada: Registering children for school

As newcomers to Canada you may be wondering how and when you can register your child in elementary or secondary/high school in Ontario. All children aged 6-18 can attend school regardless of their immigration status or the immigration status of their parents. This is outlined in the *Education Act*, the law that governs public schools in Ontario.

Children are required to attend the school closest to their home. If you contact the school board offices they can help you find the elementary or secondary school in your area. For online information on how to register your child in school visit the [Settlement.org](http://Settlement.org) website and click on "education". There you will find a list of things you need to know and bring to the school. This information is translated in 11 languages.

If your child's first language is not English, the school will set up a team meeting for the parents, teacher and program support (ESL teacher) to plan for testing and develop a program of learning for your child.

You will need to bring a birth certificate to register your child. In Ontario, children are placed

in grades based on birth year. For example children who are turning 4 years old in 2015 (born in 2011) will start Junior Kindergarten in September 2015. Children who are turning 14 this year (born in 2001) will start secondary/high school in Grade 9.

Your child will also need to be immunized with all the current inoculations governed by the Ministry of Health. For more information visit [www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/immunization/ispa.aspx](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/immunization/ispa.aspx).



## Settling in Canada: What else do you need to know?



Most immigrants need support and assistance when settling in Canada. Settlement Services are offered daily from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. at the Ajax and Pickering Welcome Centres.

Settlement Services provide support and information on preparing immigration documents, applying for citizenship and renewing permanent resident cards. Information is also provided on GST/HST taxes, Canadian Child Tax Benefit, Social Insurance Number (SIN) and Canadian passport applications.

Welcome Centres also provide information and referrals to many community supports including recreational programs, parenting programs, employment supports, language classes, food banks, legal services, government offices, subsidized housing and other social service assistance. Some new immigrants have come from war zones and have faced abuse; Welcome Centres provide emotional support and trauma counselling through referrals as well as confidential programming offered onsite.

The Settlement team is multilingual, allowing them to communicate directly in many languages including Spanish, Hindi, Urdu, Dari, Farsi and Tamil. Guidance, information, and support are provided to help newcomers settle into Canada faster. All services offered at the Welcome Centres are free. For more information call 1-877-761-1155 or visit [welcomecentres.ca](http://welcomecentres.ca).

## Preparing to work in Canada: Job Search Workshops

A Job Search Workshop (JSW) participant was so happy with their experience, they said, "This program should be mandatory." More than 2,000 newcomers have received job search assistance since 2004.

JSW, offered at both Pickering and Ajax Welcome Centres, equips new and recent immigrants with the knowledge and skills required to launch an effective job search. Topics include how to target resumes, write cover letters and effectively respond to interview questions. Participants learn how to build professional networks, research companies, determine salary expectations and understand the Canadian workplace culture.

Employers frequently discard resumes that are not strong enough to be competitive. The JSW's targeted resume and cover letter workshops help to create professional and tailored job application packages based on prior education and work experience. Resumes that are tailored to the position have a higher success rate.

JSW's customized curriculum and one-on-one client support provides newcomers/ internationally trained individuals with the skills needed to improve opportunities for securing meaningful employment in Canada. More than 80 percent of JSW participants have obtained at least one job interview and more than 70 percent secure employment upon completion of the workshop!

For more information, visit [www.unemployedhelp.on.ca/clientjobworkshop.html](http://www.unemployedhelp.on.ca/clientjobworkshop.html).



## Preparing to work in Canada: Finding a mentor

The Mentoring Partnership (TMP) helps newcomers reconnect with their careers through mentorship. Through TMP, a mentee (newcomer) is matched with a mentor (industry expert).

Mentors provide mentees with occupation-specific advice and provide an insight into Canadian workplace culture. Through mentors, mentees gain connections with professionals in their field, allowing them to build on their networks. Through the TMP program, mentees benefit from activities such as mock interviews, networking and resume assistance.

More than 70 percent of newcomers involved in TMP find work in their field within 6 months of program completion.

For more information on TMP please call the Mentoring Coordinator at 905-420-3607 or email [mentorship@unemployedhelp.on.ca](mailto:mentorship@unemployedhelp.on.ca).

Testimonials from past mentees:

*"My mentor provided me the chance to job shadow her at Sheridan College which was an honor for me to be there with her and see how she manages her class and lessons. A week after that I attended a job interview and was offered an ESL teaching position."* - Fahim Bahrami.

*"I can feel my mentor's sincerity and willingness to help and support me all the way. His advice and words inspired me to boost my morale and self-confidence."* - Theresa Nullas.



## Settling in Canada: Support for newcomer women



Women's Multicultural Resource & Counselling Centre of Durham  
Empowerment, Sensitivity & Support

The Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre of Durham (WMRCC) is dedicated mainly to the **eradication** of violence against immigrant, newcomer women, children and youth. The organization works from integrated feminist, anti-racist and anti-oppression perspectives. The WMRCC has a number of new programs of interest to newcomers and others in the community.

**Building A Safe and Inclusive Community for Seniors** (Project BASICS) is a project designed to address and raise awareness on the issues of elder abuse in the community, including different forms of elder abuse and financial abuse. It encourages and promotes civic participation as well as inclusion of female seniors from diverse backgrounds, newcomers and immigrants in the community to minimize the social isolation they face. This project is funded by Service Canada.

For further information, please contact Cristina Gomez, Project Coordinator at 905-427-7849 or email

[cristina.gomez@wmrccdurham.org](mailto:cristina.gomez@wmrccdurham.org)

**Civic Engagement Program for Newcomer Women, Youth and Children:** The Children's Aid Foundation through the RBC National Diversity Fund for Children has provided a grant to WMRCC of Durham to implement enrichment programs for newcomer women, youth and children. This grant will enable WMRCC of Durham to provide basic necessities of life, including counselling and activities for their adjustment and integration in the community. Please contact WMRCC of Durham for further information.

**Youth Empowerment Program in Ajax:** The project enhances youth in Ajax to interact with each other through enrichment activities to keep them out of trouble. The youth meet on a weekly basis and participate in activities such as workshops, outings, homework support, building leadership skills and learning about each other's cultures and backgrounds. This project is funded by the Durham Community Foundation through the Town of Ajax Community Grant.

Information on other WMRCC programs can be found online at [www.wmrccdurham.org](http://www.wmrccdurham.org).

## Settling in Durham: Feeling nostalgic or homesick?



Homesick? It's only natural. The Oxford English dictionary defines HOMESICK as "experiencing a longing for one's home during a period of absence from it." HOME is defined as "a place where something flourishes, is typically found or from which it originates." Who wouldn't long to be in a place where you flourished?

Feeling homesick is natural and part of a set of emotions newcomers have to navigate, more intensely at first, but likely for the rest of their lives. Of course Canada is wonderful, but so was sitting around a table surrounded by familiar faces, a familiar language and the food of your childhood. There are a few things you can do to help. If you are looking for food from home, visit [www.durhamimmigration.ca](http://www.durhamimmigration.ca) > [Settling](#) > [Food](#). You will find the location of restaurants and grocery stores that specialize in food from around the world. Sometimes we just want to read or laugh in our first language. There are many cultural clubs in Durham offering a sense of home. Libraries have materials in all sorts of language as well as conversation circles. Visit [www.durhamimmigration.ca](http://www.durhamimmigration.ca) > [Settling](#) for information that can help you feel at home anywhere.



## Building inclusive communities: An Evening of Hope

An Evening of Hope is an annual event in memory for Shaquille Wisdom and those lost to bullying and **homophobia** in the region.

PFLAG Canada Durham Region and the Distress Centre Durham invite you to come out and show support by wearing purple (Spirit Day). Join us on Tuesday, Oct. 20 at 7 p.m. at Memorial Park Bandshell in Oshawa for this free event. Light a candle to illuminate your message of hope.

PFLAG Durham Region provides support, education and resources on issues of sexual orientation and gender identity/expressions for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, intersex, queer, and questioning persons and their families and friends. For more information, visit <http://pflagdurhamregion.ca>.

If you need immediate support, Prideline Durham is aimed at providing emotional support, crisis intervention, and community referral information specific to the concerns and issues of the LGBTQ community in Durham Region. Call 1-855-87-PRIDE (7747). If you are in crisis and calling outside of Prideline Durham's hours of operation, please contact the Distress Centre Durham 24 Hour Helpline at 905-430-2522 or 1-800-452-0688.



PFLAG Canada Durham Region and the Distress Centre Durham  
Presents

### An Evening of Hope

An evening of remembrance  
For Shaquille Wisdom & those we have lost to  
Suicide, Bullying and Homophobia in the Region

Tuesday, October 20<sup>th</sup> 2015  
7.00 PM – 8.30 PM  
Memorial Park Bandshell, Oshawa, ON

(Located in downtown Oshawa at the northwest corner of John and Simcoe Streets)

All welcome, come light a candle and illuminate your message of Hope  
Inspire Change, free event, wear purple (Spirit Day)



## Glossary

**Accreditation** – the process to have something officially recognized

**Backbone organization** – an organization that organizes or operates a project

**Been a life saver** – a common phrase to mean that something has been very helpful

**Eradication** – to get rid of or stop something

**Ghouls** - monsters

**Hit the ground running** – a common phrase to mean be ready or prepared

**Homophobia** – an irrational fear and/ or discrimination against homosexuals / members of the LGBTQ community

**If applicable** – a common phrase to mean the thing that is being discussed only affects the second thing if necessary or appropriate

**Jack-o-lantern** – a pumpkin that has been hollowed out and carved; a candle is usually placed inside the cavity of the pumpkin so that light shines out through the carved design

**Nuanced** – something that is subtle and hinted at

**Pagans** – usually refers to people in the pre-Christian era

**Proficiency** – something that someone is good at, a skill

**Undertaking** – a project or an activity



## Success story: Nadia Tazeen

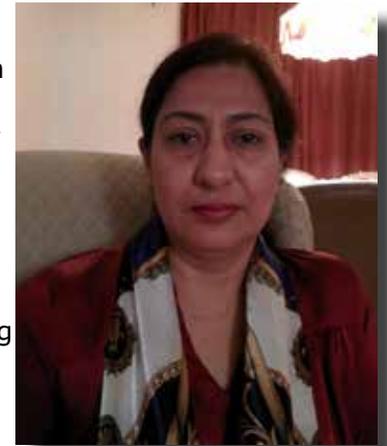
It's been one year since Nadia arrived in Canada with her family. Their arrival coincided with the start of her daughter's academic year at the University of Toronto. The family originally immigrated to Canada in 2012 but went back home to allow their youngest daughter to finish her last two years of high school and for both Nadia and her husband to wrap up their work and business. Permanently settled in Canada now, the family is looking forward to buying their first home here and finding permanent jobs in their fields.

The family knew before they came to Canada that they needed to get their credentials assessed and anticipated that it would take time to find jobs in their fields. They received additional information on equivalency at the airport when they arrived and found the process of having their credentials recognized straightforward. Both Nadia and her husband hold Master's degrees that have been recognized in Canada.

Nadia visited the Welcome Centre within the first week of arriving last year. She knew she needed to Canadianize her resume and knew the Welcome Centre staff would guide her step by step. In addition to resume help, she had a language assessment and signed up for both the Enhanced Language Training (ELT) and the Mentorship Partnership programs.

Nadia has an MD and spent many years teaching medical students anatomy at the university level. She is interested in similar work in Canada. After two months of enhanced language training she began an internship at Seneca College where

she is working in the anatomy department. Through the Mentorship Partnership program, Nadia has applied to places she wouldn't even have known about if it wasn't for the assistance and guidance of her mentor. Job searching is very different in Canada from back home and she has found the assistance and help of programs at the Welcome Centre invaluable.



One of the most difficult parts of moving to Canada was driving here, after 25 years driving on the left side of the road; it was a huge shift driving on the right. To improve her confidence, Nadia took lessons and every time Nadia was in a car as a passenger, she did "imaginary driving, I'd be looking out the window and pretending I was driving." Her advice to other newcomers? "Get your driver's license as soon as you can because there are many places that aren't easily accessible by public transport."

Her additional advice for newcomers, "Most people make the mistake of avoiding Welcome Centres, I don't know why. Go to the Welcome Centre, it's a one-window operation, everything's done there, and they are such friendly people!"

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)



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



**Back issues:** Visit [www.durhamimmigration.ca](http://www.durhamimmigration.ca) for back issues of The Citizen by clicking on the Creating Community tab, and then clicking on the Diversity Newsletter heading.

You can also sign up for the newsletter online. Please feel free to forward The Citizen to others.

