

The Citizen

DURHAM REGION'S
DIVERSITY FOCUSED NEWSLETTER
Issue 27, Summer 2016



Power of language: Words and images have power

You often hear people say, "a picture is worth a thousand words" and it's true. An image can tell a story, convey a critical message (what does this sign tell you?!), and can evoke powerful emotions. Words have the power to support, comfort, teach and enlighten, but words can also divide, hurt and confuse.



Images are used all the time to remind us of something. Brand recognition is critical for businesses eager to promote their products. Images can have different cultural meanings, however, and so sometimes, we may need to explain the significance of a certain image. Why do we associate owls with

being smart or wise? Why do we associate apples with teachers? What do you think of when you see a red maple leaf? A lit candle has multiple meanings, it can mean peace, remembrance, or thanksgiving. Rainbow flags, in North America especially, have become equated with the LGBTQ community and symbolize celebration and pride.



We each have the power to use positive images and words in our everyday interactions with each other, words and images that build community and create welcoming spaces for everyone. Take advantage of the many resources available in our community to learn more. School boards, municipalities and not-for-profit organizations across Durham have adopted inclusive language guidelines and have policies and procedures in place to help ensure resources are accessible to all. Look for symbols and images that speak to you and use them to create meaningful space around you.

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

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Settling in Canada: The importance of your smile



Why is your oral health important? In Canada, good oral health refers to the health of your teeth and mouth and is important for all ages. Maintaining good oral health is necessary for keeping your teeth free from **cavities** and preventing gum disease that can lead to serious infection and pain. Pain can result in loss of sleep, difficulty eating and can impact a child's ability to learn and attend school. Healthy smiles last a lifetime and improve your chances of success in work and other areas of your life.

Have you heard about Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO)? If you are a new resident to Ontario, you may not know the province has a dental program that your child may be eligible for. The program is called Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO) and provides free preventive, routine, and emergency dental services for children and youth aged 17 and under from low-income households. The program includes regular visits to a licensed dental provider and covers the costs of treatment including: **check-ups**, cleaning, fillings, x-rays, **scaling**, and urgent or emergency dental care.

To enroll in HSO, please call 1-844-296-6306 or visit Ontario.ca/healthysmiles. For more information or assistance with enrollment, please contact the Durham Region Oral Health Division at 905-723-1365 ext. 4569 or visit durham.ca/oralhealth.

Supporting innovation: Durham hosts first international Soft Landing Program



In May, Spark Innovation Centre hosted five Brazilian companies for an International Soft Landing "Touchdown" Program created in partnership with the Region of Durham's Economic Development team. The companies learned all about doing business in Canada from Spark's advisors and partners, and about the numerous resources available in Durham Region.

The program focused on providing emerging and earlier stage innovative companies the opportunity to learn about doing business in Canada. The program is comprised of in-depth workshops focusing on key areas including marketing, sales, legal, intellectual property, financial and human resources.

A networking event offered an opportunity for the Brazilians to meet with local **start-ups** and discuss business opportunities. The companies took part in a full-day bus tour of the Region, which highlighted some of the local attractions and what it would be like to live, work and play in the Region. Participants learned about real estate, the rental market, local projects, and large Durham-based companies while checking out the beautiful waterfronts and thriving communities. The week ended with a great showcase of all that Durham Region has to offer.



For information on the Spark Centre, visit www.sparkcentre.org. For more information about doing business in Durham Region, visit www.investdurham.ca.

Creating inclusive communities: Durham shines at the David C. Onley Awards for Leadership in Accessibility

All of Durham should be incredibly proud of the incredible agencies, individuals and collaborations that have been awarded the 2016 David C. Onley Awards for Leadership in Accessibility. An amazing FOUR out of ELEVEN awards went to Durham. A huge congratulations to everyone involved in the initiatives listed below (and thank you!).

Champion Award: Abilities Centre: The Abilities Centre opened its doors in 2012 with a commitment to promoting inclusion and enriching the quality of life for people of all ages and abilities. Four years later, it continues to raise the level of discussion, policies and practices on accessibility in Durham region and beyond. Recognized as a Community Hub, the Centre serves local, national and international communities by providing resources and research tools that promote inclusivity and accessibility. Staff have helped members follow their passions, explore their creativity and connect with their community.

Champion Award: Durham Region Employment Network: Since 1993, the Durham Region Employment Network (DREN) has been committed to making workplaces and hiring processes accessible to people of all abilities. They have created a network of 35 community organizations that share leads, research best practices, and boost business awareness. DREN's awards programs and conferences inspire local businesses to expand their talent pool and increase inclusion. Their website brings thousands of job seekers together to find opportunities and services tailored to their skills and needs, making employment more accessible and achievable across the region.



Champion Award: Durham Region Police Service:

The Durham Region Police Service is dedicated to helping children with disabilities participate in sports, while promoting accessibility in the community. For the last 31 years, they have partnered with the **City of Pickering**, the **Campbell Children's School**, the **Grandview Children's Centre** and now the **March of Dimes** to host the annual Durham Regional Police Children's Games. This popular event gives local youth with disabilities the chance to discover new inclusive sports, challenge and overcome barriers, and participate as organizing volunteers.

Employee Engagement Award: Mark Wafer, Ashburn: Mark Wafer is a tireless advocate, employer and champion of people with disabilities. For more than 20 years, he has engaged businesses, labour organizations and government to improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Mark practices what he promotes, having hired more than 130 people with disabilities. His message that inclusion is good for business has **resonated** across the country, making him sought after as a keynote speaker. One of his initiatives to educate businesses about the benefits of inclusive hiring resulted in jobs for more than 1000 people over six years.

For more on the awards, visit news.ontario.ca/medt/en/2016/06/ontarios-david-c-onley-award-recipients.html.

In Durham and Ontario, differences are celebrated, respected and **accommodated**. It is important to know, as newcomers settle and learn to understand Canadian society, that discrimination based on a person's ability, is not only illegal but is socially unacceptable and is not tolerated.



Creating inclusive communities: Celebrating PFLAG



Many communities across Canada celebrate Pride over the summer months. Pride is an opportunity for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ) community to come together (with friends, family and allies) to celebrate acceptance and advances in the rights of the LGBTQ community. It is also a time to remember that in

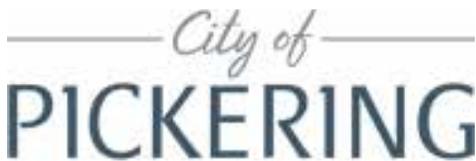
many parts of the world, people who are LGBTQ are targeted and live in fear and shame. During Pride, we honour those who continue to fight for LGBTQ rights. We are proud that in Canada we do not need to hide who we are and can live openly with equal rights. This is not to say that discrimination doesn't exist in Canada, it does but there are many safe and positive spaces where each person can live their **authentic selves**.

PFLAG is an organization that provides support to the parents, friends and allies of the LGBTQ community, as well as supporting LGBTQ community members themselves. One of the newest PFLAG chapters is in Peel Region and it is unique in its focus on the South Asian community. Vijay and Sushma Agarwal founded PFLAG Peel in response to their own son coming out and the cultural stigma the family faced within their own community. They find that many in the community remain silent about LGBTQ family members but argue that education and awareness are key to acceptance by families and the wider community. Sushma has also written a book about her family's coming out journey. PFLAG Peel provides education and awareness as well as a safe place for individuals who may be questioning their own sexuality or sexual or gender identity. You can find out more about PFLAG Peel through their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/PFLAGPeelRegion.



PFLAG Durham is an important part of the Durham community, providing training and support for organizations and individuals and families. For more information about PFLAG Durham, visit www.pflagdurhamregion.ca.

Celebrating cultural inclusion: City of Pickering



The City of Pickering has struck a new Cultural Advisory Committee (CAC). This group will assist with the implementation of the City of Pickering Cultural Strategic Plan. The plan identifies strategic directions for policy, investment, partnerships and programs for the next 10 years. The Committee is made up of community organizations, stakeholders, and members of

the public. In 2016, the CAC will focus on providing feedback to staff on heritage promotion, a new community event toolkit, and public art development.

Bring your lawn chair and find a place at Pickering's annual Summer Concerts Series. Concerts take place two times each week. Sundays from 2 to 4 p.m. in Esplanade Park (behind Pickering City Hall), and Thursdays from 7 to 9 p.m. in Millennium Square (bottom of Liverpool Road). Concerts **kick-off** on July 7, and continue through Aug. 25. (No concert on Aug. 11). New in 2016, concert goers can enjoy a variety of games and activities provided at our Destination Pickering Tent. Activities include giant chess, **Jenga**, chalk drawing supplies and more. For full concert listings please visit www.pickering.ca/greatevents.



Supporting two-way integration: Town of Whitby



The Town of Whitby's Ethno-cultural and Diversity Advisory Committee is hosting a number of programs and events this year to welcome newcomers and celebrate diversity through education and awareness. This summer, the Committee is launching the "Whitby Cultural Passport," which encourages families to explore Whitby and learn more about their community by completing the passport. Start exploring your community today and earn your "Whitby Cultural Passport!"

The Committee is also hosting a free bus tour for newcomers to Whitby on Saturday, Sept. 24 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The tour will start and end at the Whitby Central Library, and include many points of interest including recreation centres, library branches, municipal and Regional headquarters and historical sites. Don't miss out on this fun trip that helps you learn more about your community!



If you are looking to learn more about the experience of refugees in Whitby, or what leading practices in accessibility are making employment more inclusive, check out our upcoming Diversity Forums. At these forums, there will be a panel of experts speaking on these topics.

- **Refugees in our Community:** Thursday, Oct. 20 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Whitby Central Library
- **Accessibility: Education & Employment:** Wednesday, Nov. 30 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Whitby Central Library

For more information on these programs, and the work of the Ethno-cultural and Diversity Advisory Committee, please contact diversity@whitby.ca or go to www.whitby.ca/diversity.

Celebrating Citizenship: Oshawa Public Libraries

Becoming a Canadian Citizen is a time for celebration! It is the start of a new journey within Canada where new Citizens can vote, travel on a Canadian passport and truly feel a part of their adopted new home. Citizenship ceremonies are held throughout the year and in May, Oshawa Public Libraries hosted its third Canadian Citizenship Ceremony in partnership with Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Institute for Canadian Citizenship, and The Robert McLaughlin Gallery.

The event began at The Robert McLaughlin Gallery for Roundtable Discussions, where over 50 citizenship candidates and their family members gathered to talk about what it means to be Canadian. Themes ranged from personal safety and freedom, to Canada's natural wonders and beauty. At the conclusion of the discussions, a bagpiper led candidates in a joyful procession into the McLaughlin Branch of the Oshawa Public Libraries for the official Citizenship Ceremony.

The ceremony, presided by Citizenship Judge Albert Wong, was eloquent and personal. Candidates were commended for their courage to make a home for themselves in a new country, acknowledging the hardships and deep emotions that often come with leaving their past homes and lives behind.

After the candidates took their Oaths of Citizenship and officially became Canadian Citizens, a reception was held to both celebrate and welcome all new Citizens to our Canadian family.



Supporting two-way integration: Canadian-isms and phrases that don't always mean what you think

The Citizen has been around for six years now and one of the articles that always receives positive feedback is the glossary. This is usually the last article we write and it's always fun to try to explain different words and phrases in plain language and we always find that the idioms, the Canadian-specific words and some of the phrases we use in the workplace are actually the hardest to understand if you try to take each word literally. Integrating into the workplace and into a new community is hard; we hope that knowing some of these expressions will help. We've taken our favourite words and phrases from the past few years and are sharing them again, let us know if we've missed any!

*Don't forget your **bear bells** when you go camping!* Bear bells, are quite literally, small bells that you attach to your backpack or rucksack to scare away bears. Bears are naturally shy and will stay away from you if you stay away from them!

*Would you like to **carpool** tomorrow?* Carpool/carpooling refers to people who live near each other and share driving responsibilities to travel to and from the workplace.

*My **creepometer** is on high!* A 'creep' is an untrustworthy person, an 'odometer' is the mechanism in a car that shows how fast you're driving – the slang term 'creepometer' is your own internal assessment of a person's trustworthiness.

*Could I have a **double-double** please?* This is a very Canadian slang expression that refers to the type of coffee most popular at Tim Hortons coffee shops – a medium coffee with two teaspoons of sugar and two servings of cream.



*I thought he was going to **drop his Coopers**.* Slang for indicating that two people might be getting into a physical fight, comes from hockey where if a player takes off their gloves (made by the firm Cooper) and throws them onto the ice, it signifies that they are going to get into a fist fight with another player.

*We need an **extra hand on deck**.* Refers to having an extra person around to do general tasks.

*I bought some new **flip-flops**!* Summer sandals, typically plastic with between-the-toe posts (named for the sound they make when you walk in them!).

*She's a real **foodie**!* Someone who loves good food.

*You'll need to **hit the ground running**.* A common phrase meaning to be ready or prepared.

*It's **just not cricket**!* An old-fashioned British slang phrase meaning that something is not right.

*You should come, it's **open mic night**!* This is short for open microphone, a social event where the audience participates in the event by singing, telling stories, reading poetry or something similar.

*I had the best **Poutine** in Montreal!* French-Canadian delicacy of French fries, cheese curds and gravy – yes, gravy! Must be tried!

*I'll need you to **quarterback** this project.* A slang phrase for planning, leading and taking charge of an event or a task, comes from football where the quarterback is the person who is in charge of telling others on the team the plan for each play.





Did you get everything we need for the *s'mores*? The best part of camping! You need two graham crackers, a piece of chocolate and a marshmallow. Put the chocolate on top of one of the crackers. Then you need to roast the marshmallow (preferably on a wooden stick) over a campfire until it's perfectly brown on all sides (i.e. melted just enough) then squash the marshmallow between the two graham crackers (and don't drop the chocolate).

When we report to the Board, it's important that we are all *singing from the same song sheet*. A slang phrase that means that everyone involved

in an event or group is saying, believing and understanding the same thing.

We had a great walk after the snow storm, we made *snow angels* on the hill. The impression made in fresh snow when you've dropped into it and moved your arms and legs up and down in unison (the hard part is getting up without destroying the angel!) – usually an activity for children but it's amazing how large some of the angels are!



It was a great weekend for *spring-cleaning*! A colloquialism referring to cleaning, tidying and organizing around the house, garden and garage as the seasons change.

Could you *stick handle* this for us? Slang for leading an event or meeting, comes from how hockey players move the hockey puck across the ice.

Our favourite thing to do in the early spring is visit a *sugar bush*. The area in a forest or on a farm where the sap of certain maple trees is collected and turned into maple syrup (yum!).

Don't forget your *toque*, it's cold outside! A very Canadian expression for a winter woollen hat.

Summer is great for *weekend get-aways*. Leaving home for a weekend somewhere else is VERY popular in the summer, but beware of the 401 at 4 p.m. on a Friday!

New to Canada?
Join us for:

NOW Newcomer Orientation Week (NOW)
an orientation program for high school students

Three days to help you start school!

Learn tips for success

Make friends

August 29th - August 31st
8:30 am - 2:00 pm
Donald A. Wilson Secondary School
581 Rossland Road West, Whitby

To register for this **FREE** program, contact your school or call:
The SWIS Durham Office : (905) 686-2661

Logos: DDBS, CDCO, and others.

New to Canada?
Join us for:

WIN Welcome and Information for Newcomers (WIN)
an orientation program for students and families

Give your child a great start at school!

Wednesday, August 31st
St. Bernadette Catholic School
41 Bayly Street East, Ajax
9:00 am - 2:00 pm

To register for this **FREE** program, contact your school or call:
The SWIS Durham Office : (905) 686-2661

Logos: DDBS, CDCO, and others.



Creating cultures of imagination: Summer reading



Go WILD this summer with your local Durham library and the TD Summer Reading Club!

This summer, be **rugged**. Be daring. Be adventurous. Be wild! Whether it's outdoors, outrageous or out of bounds, the unexplored is calling. With TD Summer Reading Club books, activities, and an unleashed imagination, you can let go and find your WILD this summer.



Saturday, June 25 is TD Summer Reading Club Day. Starting this day, visit your local library anytime to register your kids for the Club and be a part of lots of fun events. Pick up a kit, which includes a reading journal and exclusive access to the TD Summer Reading Club website www.tdsummerreadingclub.ca.

There are also lots of free programs that your child can be a part of. Check your library's website for details. Visit www.durhamimmigration.ca > Learning > Library Programs to find the library closest to you.

Ride for FREE on Durham Region Transit! Durham libraries have once again partnered with Durham Region Transit (DRT) for the Ride to Read program. Children ages 4 to 13 (up to Grade 8) are eligible to receive a sticker on their library card that will allow them to ride DRT buses free of charge. Children under 10 must be accompanied by a fare-paying adult.



Don't forget, libraries have books for all ages, and in many different languages. Don't hesitate to ask one of the library staff if your local library branch doesn't have children's books in your home language, as they may be able to get them for you from another library. So, don't hesitate! Sign up for adventure, fun and WILD times!



Creating inclusive communities: Age-friendly Durham



The Regional Municipality of Durham is developing an age-friendly community strategy and action plan for Durham Region. In Durham, seniors, like the LGBTQ community and people with disabilities, are valued members of society. Developing inclusivity plans ensure that communities meet and value the needs of everyone.

The Region is undertaking a number of consultation activities to gather feedback on key Regional services, within the context of the World Health Organization age-friendly planning framework. These activities include focus groups, a region-wide survey, a municipal roundtable discussion and a community forum on Friday, Sept. 30 at Deer Creek Golf and Banquet Facility in Ajax from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The initiative will also include a review of data to create a profile of Durham's senior population, and the development of an interactive map to help residents locate seniors' services throughout Durham Region.

Provincial funding obtained through Ontario's Age-Friendly Community Planning Grant Program has allowed the Region to move forward with more co-ordinated planning, which will help meet the needs of Durham's aging population. For more information, please visit www.durham.ca/AgeFriendly.

Building inclusive communities: Embracing Diversity, Engaging Our Community



The Town of Ajax embraces and values diversity, promoting an engaged, healthy and inclusive community. The Town is strongly committed to equity and diversity through its policies, procedures, service delivery, amenities and employment practices. As the population of Ajax grows and changes, and to ensure the Town is able to respond to the needs of all residents, Ajax Council approved the Diversity and Community Engagement (DACE) Plan in 2010.

In an effort to continue embracing diversity and engaging our community, we will be delivering the following initiatives which will respond to the changing needs and interests of our residents:

First Municipal Diversity Conference: The goal of this conference is to provide a forum for shared learning as we discuss various aspects of diversity to build an inclusive community. This exciting initiative will be held on Saturday, Oct. 22, 2016 at the Ajax Community Centre in the HMS Banquet Hall.

Diversity and Community Engagement Plan - Phase 2: The Town of Ajax values the thoughts and opinions of our residents and community organizations. Understanding, discussion and community building will be the focus as we embark on Phase 2 of the DACE Plan. We look forward to receiving ideas, suggestions and recommendations on ways the Town can enhance community relations and inclusiveness, while embracing our diversity. We want to ensure that our foundations are strong as we continue to be a municipality that values, respects and promotes the various **intersectionalities** of diversity. Look for more information on Phase 2 of the DACE Plan this July.

For more details, visit www.ajax.ca/ourdiversecommunity.

Celebrating reading and literacy: Ajax Public Library hosts a Tamil Reading Circle

The Institution of Academic and Fine Arts of Durham and the Ajax Public Library have come together to form a wonderful partnership. This partnership benefits the children of the Tamil community and others by providing them with a program called Tamil Reading Circle. This is the first time something like this has been conducted in a Durham public library. The program was launched in May 2014 with the objective of helping to increase fluency in speaking and comprehension of the Tamil language and culture among Tamil students and others.



The reading circle runs for two hours on the third Sunday of each month at the McLean Community Centre branch library. Every session includes a themed reading followed by learning Tamil arts and crafts, cultural music or dance and children's yoga. The children enjoy themselves learning new words and working with one another and making new friends. The parents of the children are extremely happy that the Institution and the library are taking the initiative to empower children to learn Tamil in a fun and friendly environment. Teachers from the institution, library staff and many youth volunteers contribute to the success of this program. For more information, visit the Ajax Public Library calendar of events page at www.ajaxlibrary.ca.





Local Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council: Call for a new Member-at-large

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

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

The LDIPC is currently recruiting one member from the Faith/Ethnocultural sector.

Application Process

Please send a letter detailing your interest in becoming a member of the LDIPC.

Please ensure your letter includes the following:

- Your full name
- The municipality in which you live
- Your organizational affiliations (if any)
- In addition, please answer the following questions (maximum 250 word response for each):
 - Why you are interested in becoming a member of the LDIPC?
 - How do you think you can contribute to the work of the LDIPC?
 - Which sectors do you represent and how do you influence them?

Applications are due at noon on Friday, July 22.

Applications should be emailed to ldipc@durham.ca. If you do not have access to email, please send your application to the following address:

Local Diversity & Immigration Partnership Council
c/o Audrey Andrews
605 Rossland Rd. E.
P.O. Box 623
Whitby, ON L1N 6A3

For more information, visit www.durhamimmigration.ca > About > LDIPC

Welcome Centre Immigrant Services: Pickering welcomes a new manager

*"Wherever I have lived and travelled overseas, I have experienced a tremendous **outpouring** of hospitality. I want to show that same generous spirit of welcome to newcomers to Canada, and in particular, those coming to Durham Region."*

Pam DeWilde first became involved with supporting newcomers to Durham Region through her involvement with the Inter-Church Immigrant Support Group. At that time she also contributed to the Local Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council as the Faith and Cultural Representative. After working as an Employment Counsellor in Oshawa for three years with the Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre (DRUHC), she became immersed in the work on refugee sponsorship. Pam worked for World Renew, a national Sponsorship Agreement Holder, as a Program Associate, assisting sponsorship groups, including groups from Durham Region, submitting

refugee sponsorship applications and preparing for the arrival of newcomers from Syria and other areas of conflict and **displacement**. Pam is pleased to rejoin DRUHC in a new role, as Welcome Centre Manager - Pickering.



She is motivated by a strong desire to make Durham Region a welcoming and inclusive place for newcomers along with their families and friends.

For more information on the Welcome Centre Immigrant Services, both in Pickering and in Ajax, visit www.welcomecentre.ca.

Glossary

Accessibility - changes made to plans, procedures or equipment to ensure that a person with a disability can achieve the same things that a person without a disability can

Accommodated - when the needs of a person (with or without a disability) are met

Authentic selves - the real person without hiding any aspect of who they are

Cavities - holes in teeth that can cause pain and discomfort, usually these are filled with a special mixture by a registered dentist to fix the tooth

Check-ups - a visit to a health care provider (doctor, dentist or nurse) to see if a person is well and healthy

Displacement - when someone is forced to leave their home against their will, usually as a result of war or a natural disaster

Intersectionalities - the many ways that each of us is unique, the many parts of who we are as individuals that create that uniqueness

Jenga - a game where players attempt to remove the highest number of blocks of wood from a tall structure made of the smaller blocks, the player who causes the entire structure to collapse loses the game

Kick-off - the start of something

Lending - providing or giving something

Outpouring - the reaction of a group or community to something dramatic or emotional

Resonated - when a person understands something at a deep, emotional or intellectual level

Rugged - tough

Scaling - in the case of a visit to the dentist, this involves a dental hygienist removing tartar from teeth with a metal tool

Start-ups - a new business/businesses



Success story: One-time newcomer paying it back

Stan Squires is known to many in Clarington as one of the leaders of the Orono and Community Syrian Refugee Sponsorship Group. An immigrant himself, Stan shares some of his story with us.

I came to Canada after a university friend visited Expo 1967 and told me that Canada was an amazing country. I arrived from England the day before Canada Day in 1969 to a small town in New Brunswick. Canada Day was spent driving to summer school at University of New Brunswick, Fredericton.



Although I faced nothing like the challenges faced by many new Canadians with language and cultural differences, I faced great resentment living in Cape Breton as the steel plant had been suddenly closed on Black Friday 1968 by a British company called Hawker Siddely. It left the whole economy and many family lives in ruins. While not a target, I also observed racism in many areas, against First Nations and Black people. I lived in Cape Breton at the time of the Donald Marshall (wrongful) conviction for Sandy Seale's murder, and it split the community with so much bitterness. Trying to settle in a new community takes effort. I tried to work hard and get involved in the community. I volunteered and tried to demonstrate that I really cared about those in need and wanted to make a difference.

My wife and I moved to Durham from Toronto in 2004 as my wife's new job was in Clarington. Durham is one of Ontario's best kept secrets. It has beaches, lakefront, forest land, urban and rural communities. But the greatest asset of Durham is the wonderful compassionate people living here. Despite Durham's rapid growth, the amazing, kind and compassionate people of Orono and Clarington that I have met and worked with, particularly with the Syrian sponsorship, reinforce our decision to stay.

As with many other Canadians, I wept at the horrors going on in Syria and felt that I had to do something, however small. Once I started, I found that people were so compassionate and caring. We have had such an incredible response from more than 150 donors, volunteers, small businesses, service clubs, schools and churches. As I now hear the horror stories from our sponsored family, it reinforces the decision to try to make a difference.

My advice for newcomers arriving in Durham? Get involved. Join. Make a difference. Someone somewhere needs your help. Whether it is a church, service club or other community group, everyone has something to offer and there are so many opportunities to help others less fortunate than yourself.

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 | **Portal:** www.durhamimmigration.ca



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



Back issues: Visit 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.