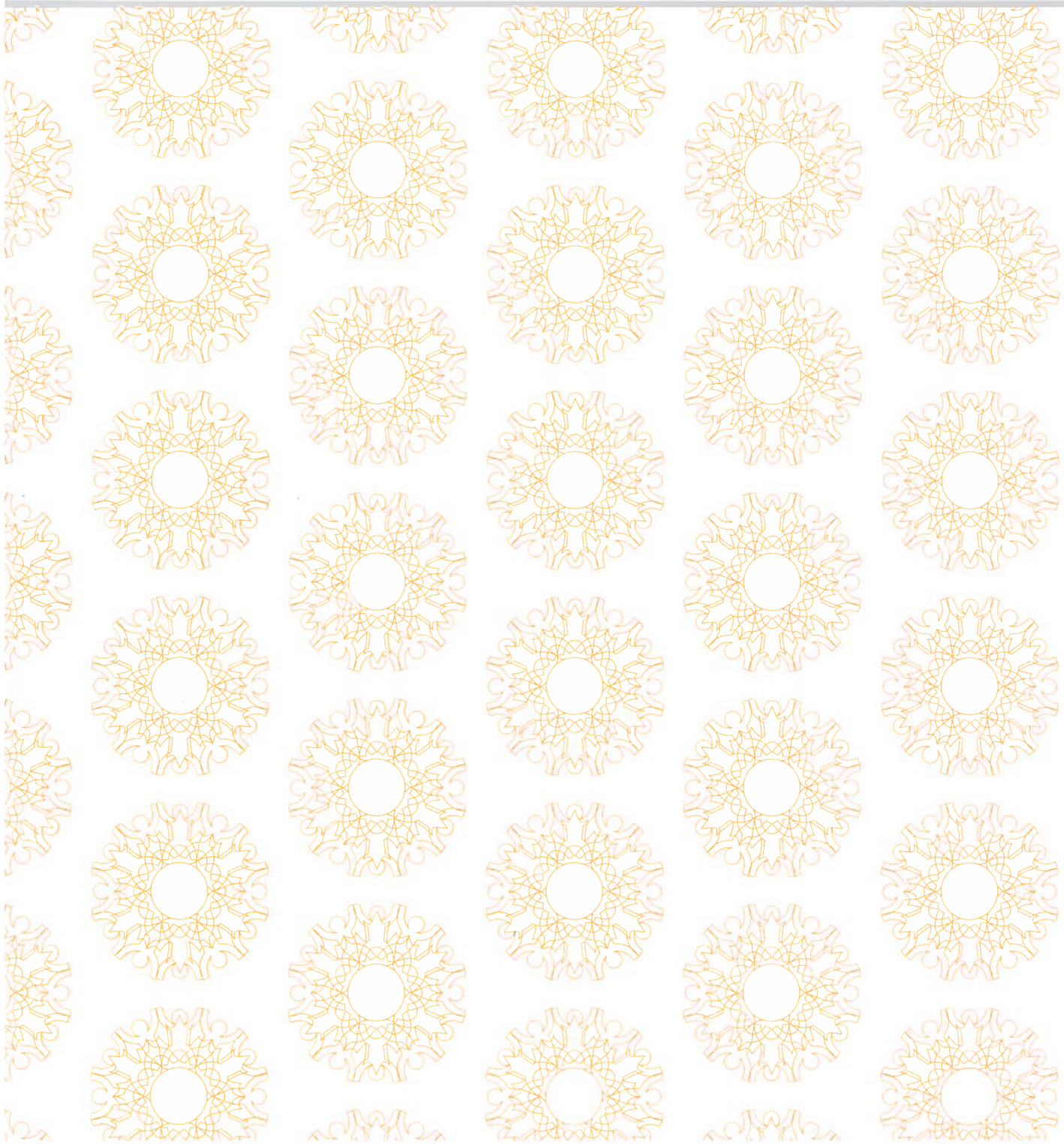


ImmigrantCentre

2015-2016 ANNUAL REPORT

MISSION

To deliver innovative and effective Settlement Services in Manitoba.

VISION

To be Manitoba's community leader in providing Settlement Services for newcomers to connect, integrate, and fully participate in Canadian society.





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INTERVIEW WITH THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

OUR STAFF'S ENERGY AND DRIVE HAS ALWAYS INSPIRED ME

Tell us how your first full year as Executive Director has been?

It's been a successful year for me and I'm continuing to work together with the staff, board members, volunteers, funders, community partners and clients to make the Immigrant Centre the community leader in providing settlement services for Newcomers. This year we helped an amazing 15,545 clients and had 52,631 hits on our website from 155 countries.

What has been a highlight for the Centre as a whole?

This was an exciting year for the Centre, too. On January 3, 2016, we opened our new program, the Pre-Arrival Centre (PAC). Now clients can get the pre-arrival information and post arrival information all in one place. For the last six months we are seeing the results and we can say they are very positive.



Did the Centre face any challenges?

This year, like every year, we have faced some challenges. We started seeing some of the Syrian Refugees for example who need help with many issues including finding employment. Although our staff of 40 speak 30 languages, unfortunately we don't have any who speak Arabic. So we found recently arrived refugees with fluent English and Arabic who were willing to volunteer their time to translate our key documents and interpret for Syrian clients. And now, thanks to funding from our Community Partner, Royal Bank of Canada, we have been able to hire one of those volunteers as a staff interpreter. This is giving him Canadian work experience and is an amazing resource for our staff who have been getting by using online translation tools and a lot of patience and creativity.

You've been working at Immigrant Centre for over 25 years now. What motivates you to come in to work every day?

The energy and drive of our staff has always inspired me and I want to thank them all for their dedication and commitment when they are doing their job. This has given me a lot of satisfaction and determination to help the Immigrant Centre grow.

I want to let all the volunteers who help the Immigrant Centre know that we couldn't do our job without them. I also want to give a big thank you to the Board members for all their support and trust in me. And of course, we wouldn't be here at all without all our amazing funders.

BOARD CO-PRESIDENT

David Ashcroft

As our access to news and information broadens beyond traditional channels, so does our exposure to a more democratized view of the globe. That broader perspective serves to highlight the unfortunate fact that peace, stability, and opportunity, are not evenly distributed.

In such an environment, it's hard to discount just how fortunate we are as Canadians; and, from such abundance, it's equally hard to discount the value of the social and economic contributions that stem from immigration. As we welcome newcomers to Manitoba and help them connect, integrate and participate fully in Canadian society, we acknowledge the important role they play in shaping our collective future.

Immigrant Centre mobilizes the hearts and minds of many passionate and helpful people. The tireless efforts of staff, volunteers, and Board of Directors, all help to ensure that new arrivals' first experiences of Canada are all they can be. We all believe investing in the early success of newcomers and immigrants will create lasting value for individuals, families, and our community as a whole.

OUR PARTNERS



Recent Asper Business School graduate, Stephanie Liang,

became an RBC Career Launch Associate to gain work experience, mentorship and networking opportunities. Associates are placed into three different three-month rotations, with one at one of RBC's partnered not-for-profit organizations.

"When I first arrived at the Immigrant Centre, I was amazed to see how many services are offered here to new immigrants and best of all, they are free of charge! Prior to this, I didn't know much about not-for-profit organizations. I thought that because the centre was funded by the government, that money was not an issue but I was very wrong. There are so many governmental restrictions in place on how and where funds can be used that funding is a problem.

My responsibilities are to provide support on different social media platforms, on how we can raise funds and donations so that Immigrant Centre can continue providing these crucial services to newcomers. So far, it has been a great experience. Not only have I increased my knowledge of charities and not-for-profit organizations, I have also developed skills that I believe are very beneficial to my career. I enjoy working in such a diverse environment where everyone is very friendly and I am very grateful to be given this opportunity where I can provide support and contribute to my community."



Hadid Musa left Eritrea and arrived in Winnipeg on January 25th 2016.

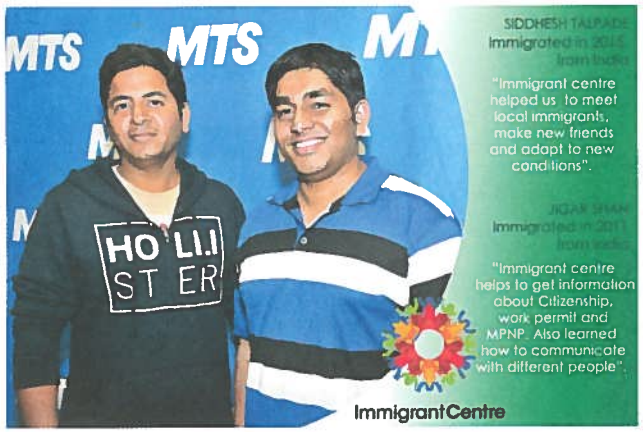
He was excited to experience snow for the first time, although he said the novelty quickly wore off! By March he was already volunteering for 3-4 hours every day at Immigrant Centre as an Arabic translator. He helped staff to communicate with clients, including many Syrian refugees, face-to-face and phoned clients at home to remind them about appointments. He also translated key Immigrant Centre forms and resources, and client documents including Drivers Licences and School Certificates. His work as a volunteer was so helpful that Immigrant Centre decided to hire him and applied to a new RBC Fund to help organizations better assist Syrian refugees in their Settlement process.

On May 24th Hadid was delighted to join our staff. He continues to support our clients, while gaining Canadian workplace knowledge and experience himself. He told us: "I love working in this diverse environment, I'm happy when I see people from different cultures and places. That's the place I like to be in."



The "Positive Parenting as Told Through Cultural Community Voices" showcase, took place in January and was emceed by Terry MacLeod host of the CBC Weekend Morning Show.

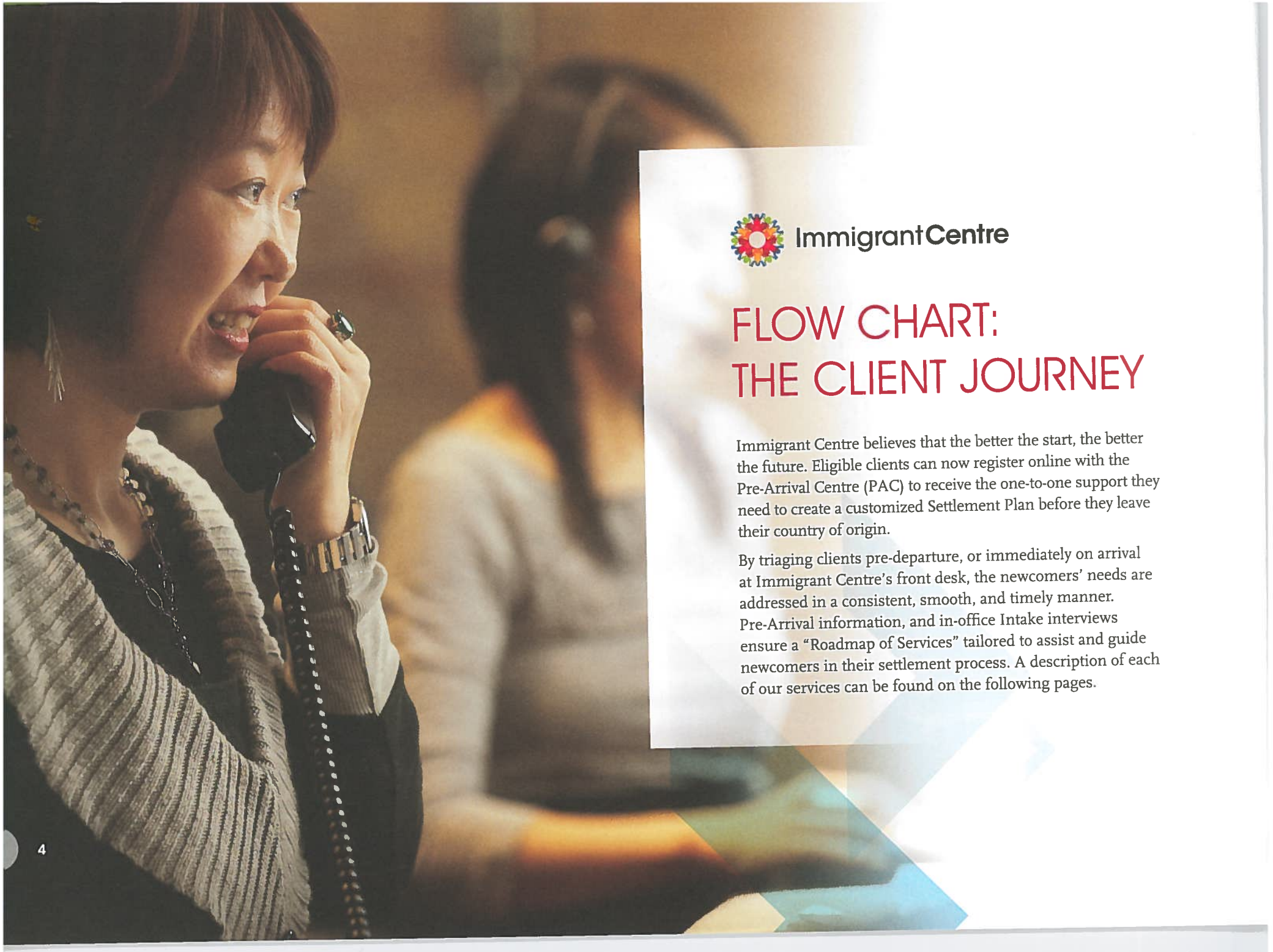
It featured amazing newcomer storytellers teamed with professional Winnipeg artists. Through video, theatre, spoken word and graphic illustration, the performers presented their experiences of positive parenting, both the differences and the similarities, through a creative and artistic lens. It was followed by a safe and open forum for the audience to discuss their multicultural parenting stories with the performers, and a cake and coffee reception. The enriching and moving evening would not have been possible without our funding partner The Winnipeg Foundation, and project partners: The General Child and Family Services Authority, Healthy Child Manitoba, Graffiti Art Programming, The Prairie Theatre Exchange and The Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council Inc.



MTS's in-kind donation of our internet costs allows us

to connect our clients to access employment opportunities, settlement resources and immigration forms that are only available online.

Our on-site and off-site MTS-sponsored client events offer new experiences, a warm welcome and a lot of fun to immigrants who are often working their way through the ups and downs and barriers that face anyone establishing themselves and their families in a new country.

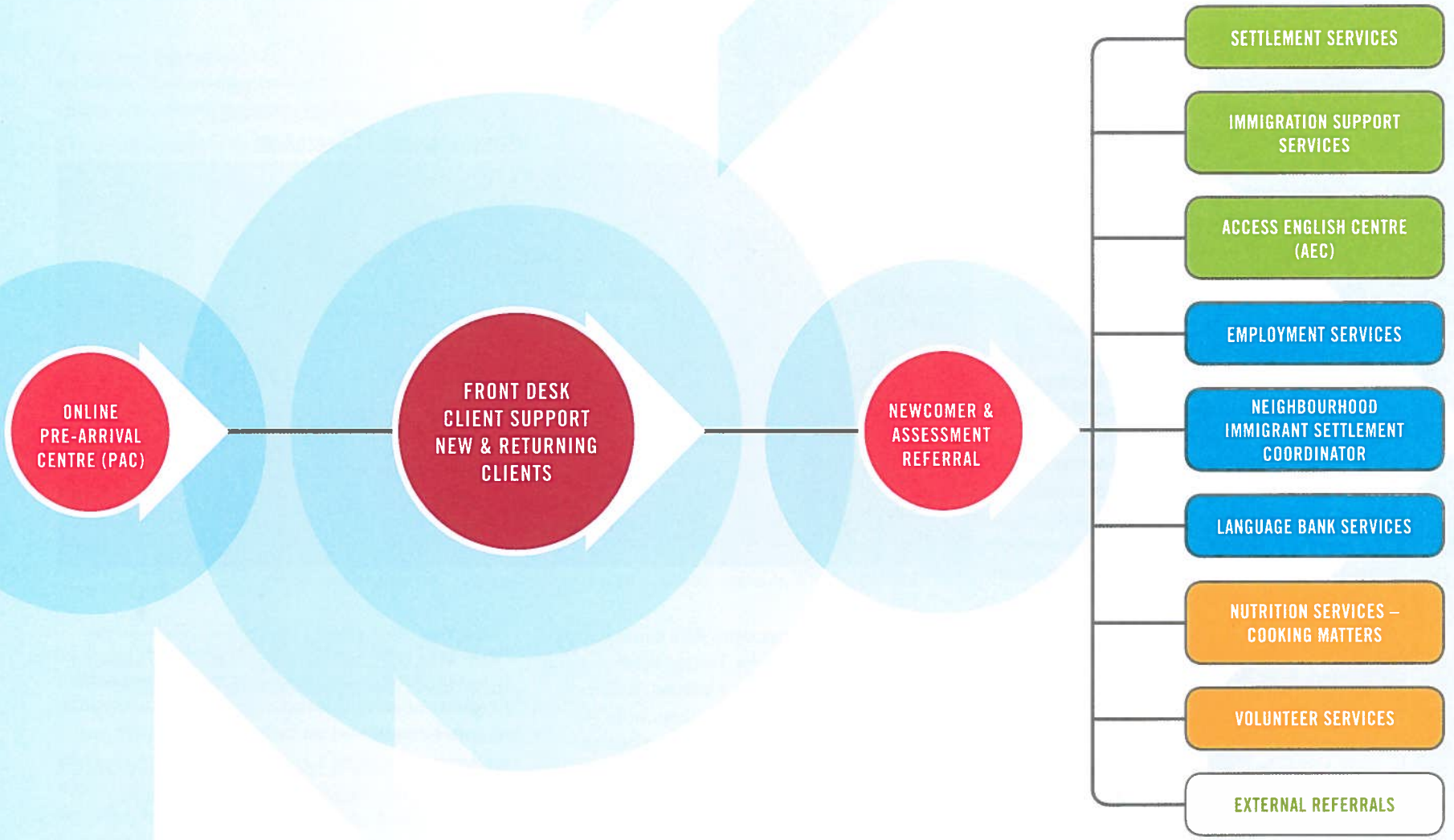


ImmigrantCentre

FLOW CHART: THE CLIENT JOURNEY

Immigrant Centre believes that the better the start, the better the future. Eligible clients can now register online with the Pre-Arrival Centre (PAC) to receive the one-to-one support they need to create a customized Settlement Plan before they leave their country of origin.

By triaging clients pre-departure, or immediately on arrival at Immigrant Centre's front desk, the newcomers' needs are addressed in a consistent, smooth, and timely manner. Pre-Arrival information, and in-office Intake interviews ensure a "Roadmap of Services" tailored to assist and guide newcomers in their settlement process. A description of each of our services can be found on the following pages.


ONLINE PRE-ARRIVAL CENTRE (PAC)
FRONT DESK CLIENT SUPPORT NEW & RETURNING CLIENTS
NEWCOMER & ASSESSMENT REFERRAL
SETTLEMENT SERVICES
IMMIGRATION SUPPORT SERVICES
ACCESS ENGLISH CENTRE (AEC)
EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
NEIGHBOURHOOD IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENT COORDINATOR
LANGUAGE BANK SERVICES
NUTRITION SERVICES – COOKING MATTERS
VOLUNTEER SERVICES
EXTERNAL REFERRALS

PRE-ARRIVAL CENTRE (PAC)

Since January 2016, the Pre-Arrival Centre (PAC) has been providing bilingual (French and English) pre-arrival information and support for newcomers destined for Manitoba.

Its team of four Facilitators and a Manager, provide tailored information, resources and support to individuals and families around the world who are immigrating to Manitoba. The focus of this 2015-2016 fiscal year for PAC has been the development of high quality pre-arrival services. Starting in November of 2015, the PAC team has been working hard to develop and gather the information, resources and content for services, while creating the methodology for data collection and service delivery, and developing the PAC website. Additionally, the PAC team has been enthusiastically promoting PAC services through the development of promotional tools such as brochures, newsletters and flyers, while simultaneously networking and developing partnerships with many different stakeholders in the settlement sector. The work that the PAC team has done, and its support from the Immigrant Centre's staff and board members, has led to overwhelmingly positive feedback from PAC clients.



THE PAC TEAM, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: JESSICA PRAZNIK, ELVI TANGHAL, MANAGER JULIO LOPEZ, ABU DUKULY AND DIANE INGABIRE.

PAC services are offered online in French and English in order to connect with Newcomers before they arrive in Manitoba. Eligible clients can register on PAC's website: www.ic-pac.com to gain access to PAC's resources, discussion forums and webinars through their individual PAC accounts. The heart of PAC services for clients are their interactions with PAC Facilitators. Each client is delegated one of our Facilitators who meets virtually with them first to perform a needs assessment, then continuously until they arrive in Manitoba. During these ongoing meetings Facilitators develop a tailored Settlement Plan for their clients and provide them with Manitoba- specific employment and settlement information. With the help of PAC Facilitators, clients are informed on how to prepare for their move, have a realistic expectation of what they will encounter when they arrive in Manitoba, have the knowledge and tools on where to go for assistance if barriers arise and have caring and friendly support to assist them while they are going through their pre-arrival stage of their immigration journey. The PAC team is excited and eager to continue assisting newcomers who are immigrating to Manitoba.

"Let me be delighted to tell you that Pre-Arrival Centre of Manitoba has helped us a lot during these past weeks in a sense that we were guided on the "first-things-first" before landing to Manitoba. The advice and lectures of our facilitator, made us understand more about the 'real' rather than the 'reel' expectations when moving to Canada." ARRIVED PAC CLIENT

SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Newcomer Assessment and Referrals Services (NARS) provides an initial client assessment to identify client need. After assessment, clients are referred to internal or external services.

The second piece of Settlement Services is Information and Orientation. This provides information to newcomers to help them get acquainted with Canadian life and culture. The variety of topics covered include: housing, banking, transportation, weather, shopping, health, law and education. The staff offer assistance and information with forms such as; Child Tax Benefits, GST/HST Credit Application, Manitoba Child Benefit, 55+ and Rent Assist.

Settlement Services are not limited to newly-arrived immigrants. Long term support and assistance are also available. Staff provide information on Citizenship, PR Card Renewal and Family Sponsorship.

In the Settlement department we have 12 team members who speak 17 different languages, which ensures a better service to our clients.

Highlights	2015/2016
Total Clients for NARS:	2596
Total Clients for Information and Orientation:	2727

I will always be thankful to Immigrant Centre. I moved to Canada about 6 years ago and did not know where to go and what to do. A year later, I got to know about Immigrant Centre. They helped me with all my immigration process and gave me a hope for a better future. I am became permanent resident and started volunteering here and again they helped me with a family sponsorship. I wanted to do the same to help other people. After a few years of working as a volunteer, I applied for a position here. I am very proud and happy to be a part of Immigrant Centre. JAPREET

IMMIGRATION SUPPORT SERVICES

Because of the lack of services in Winnipeg for temporary residents and Canadian Citizens Immigrant Centre secured diversified funding to allow us to keep our doors open to everyone. The Immigrant Centre provides assistance with Immigration forms for clients applying for their permanent residency and information about family reunification to Canadian Citizens who want to bring family members to Manitoba.

Highlights	2015/2016
Total Clients Served:	1392

"I have no word to express my sincere gratitude to you. Your generosity, dedication and going out of your way to support me is so overwhelming. All the time, the energy, and words of kindness not forgetting going home very tired, are highly appreciated. I shared my experience with you with my husband and kids and they cannot wait to meet you one day. We wish you all the best in all your undertakings. May you prosper in whatever your hands touch to done. Thanks, Thanks and Thanks!!!!" CLIENT



IMMIGRANT CENTRE'S WELCOMING SETTLEMENT TEAM CAN PROVIDE SERVICES TO CLIENTS IN 17 LANGUAGES.

ACCESS ENGLISH CENTRE (AEC)

The sixth year of the Access English Centre has been successful for many reasons, including the higher-than-ever number of students who reached their goals of improving their English in our classes. Another key outcome is the AEC volunteer facilitators who became full-time workers in either the Immigrant Centre or other not-for-profit organizations. The AEC mission, vision, and values are the reasons for which facilitators and students keep returning to our classes. The program's structure and professionalism is highly respected in the Manitoba EAL sector. We are the only organization that offers full training to volunteers who facilitate adult EAL classes across the province. The Adult EAL Volunteer Workshops, facilitated by University teachers, are offered to volunteers three times a year.

Highlights	2015/2016
Average Weekly Conversation Groups:	30
Total New Clients:	831
Total Volunteer Hours:	2,472

"I am happy that I can practise my English here because of my status I can't take classes in regular schools. The AEC is my only opportunity, I learn I have fun and I make many friends." AEC STUDENT

"Working at Immigrant Centre is an amazing experience where I teach but I learn too. Working in a professional environment and at the same time giving back to the community, encourages me to work hard and become a productive member of the society." AEC VOLUNTEER FACILITATOR AND IMMIGRANT CENTRE VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Employment Services has four initial stages and ongoing supports to help clients stay motivated and improve their employability skills:

Assessment, Action Plan and Resume: An individual assessment of the client's employment and education history, skills and goals, allows us to create a custom action plan and resume that they can use in their job search.

Job Search: Clients learn about effective job search strategies using the open and hidden job market. Clients practice marketing themselves to employers by phone, in person, through emails and cover letters.

Job Interview: The job interview process and how to prepare effectively is explained. Clients then meet with an Employment Facilitator to practice for actual job interviews.

Canadian Workplace Preparation: Clients learn about Canadian culture including employers' expectations, employment rights and responsibilities including Employment Standards, SAFE Work, WCB and Employment Insurance.

Ongoing Services: Job Clubs, Employer Visits, Job Fairs, Computer Training and more!

Highlights	2015/2016
New Clients:	762
Clients Employed:	438
Job Fair Attendance:	1743 *Job Seekers* 29 *Employers*
Computer Training Attendees:	737

"I feel more confident with this workshop and more clarified what was I doing wrong". JOB INTERVIEW WORKSHOP ATTENDEE

NEIGHBOURHOOD IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENT COORDINATOR

The Coordinator of the Neighbourhood Immigrant Settlement Workers (NISWs) is based at the Immigrant Centre and provides mentorship, support, orientation and guidance to NISWs in providing settlement support to newcomers in their own neighbourhoods across the city.

In the fourth year of this program, the Coordinator trained and co-facilitated NISWs to run Newcomer Support Circles and the Share our World Program. NISWs were also assisted in their program planning and program evaluation as well as strategies in outreach. The Coordinator mentored new NISWs to conduct Cultural Adaptation presentations at Entry program.

The Coordinator chaired regular NISW meetings and many orientations and provided on-going support to all the NISWs. Guest speakers were invited to the monthly meetings, which became a venue to discuss and share challenges, trends and resources.

The Coordinator met with various Service Providers and helped connect the dots between NISWs and the newly arrived Syrian families.

Highlights	2015/2016
Number of Presentations:	30
Number NISW Meetings:	12
Number of Contacts with Service Providers:	67

"As a new NISW I found that NISW meetings are very valuable and important. It is empowering to see that such a team exists to make sure that our newcomer families are receiving the best possible service and continuing support to make their settlement as smooth as possible."

MARK BALE, NISW

LANGUAGE BANK SERVICES

This year Language Bank Services completed a total of 4,054 services including Notary Public, translation and interpretation requests. Fifty one different languages were requested, with the greatest numbers being for written Chinese, Arabic, Amharic, Russian, Spanish, Ukrainian, Punjabi, Tagalog and Mandarin and Vietnamese.

As always a huge thank you must go to the over 400 interpreters and/or translators registered with Language Bank Services. Their professionalism and willingness to help ensures continued service to both clients and the community at large.

Highlights	2015/2016
Number of Languages Provided:	51
Number of Volunteers Interpreter/Translators:	160
Completed Translation/Notary Public Services:	3,213
Completed Interpreter Services:	841
Total Services Provided:	4,054



NUTRITION MANAGER HEATHER GIESBRECHT TAKES AN ENTHUSIASTIC GROUP OF STUDENTS ON A GROCERY STORE TOUR

NUTRITION SERVICES – COOKING MATTERS

Many immigrants face barriers to food security such as lower family income, language barriers, different food products, time constraints, limited nutrition knowledge, lack of transportation, and feelings of isolation. Long-term studies show that the health status of many immigrants is generally good upon arrival; however, the longer they live in Canada, the more likely they are to develop nutrition-related chronic diseases. Nutrition Services empowers newcomers to make healthier choices for their families by educating children, youth, and adults about preparing low-cost and nutritious recipes, understanding nutrition labels and navigating Canadian grocery stores. This year, in addition to our regular programing, we also initiated a new cooking class in Arabic to address the unique needs of newcomers coming from Syria and surrounding countries. Our partnership with the University of Manitoba led us to connect with Arabic-speaking nutritionists in Winnipeg who are volunteering to translate recipes and teach the classes.

Nutrition Services is funded by **Share Our Strength (S.O.S.)** and **Royal Bank of Canada**.

Highlights	2015/2016
New Clients:	403
Hours of Client Service:	2065
Number of Volunteers:	20
Other agencies supported by Nutrition Services:	8

"I thought juice was better than fruit. Now I know, I was wrong. My daughter is 15 years old. She needs more nutrition so I think your presentation is on time for me. I will use your good advice to build healthy bodies. Maybe it will change my life." CLIENT

VOLUNTEER SERVICES

The objective of Volunteer Services is to connect individuals with valuable volunteer experiences, which in turn increases the effectiveness and capacity of the Immigrant Centre to empower newcomers through high-quality and responsive services. By having a well-established and funded volunteer program, the Centre is able to multiply and stretch its resources.

Many of our volunteers are immigrants who are hoping to give back to their community and support newcomers in whatever way they can. Employers are looking to hire people with Canadian work and volunteer experience; therefore, Volunteer Services supports newcomers and those born in Canada in their journey to stable employment, by providing opportunities to expand their skills and nurture their confidence.

Volunteer Services screens applicants and matches volunteers to meaningful and focused opportunities. These include: 1-1 English Tutor, 1-1 Citizenship Tutor, Conversation Group Facilitator, Translator and Interpreter in the Language Bank, Computer Training Facilitator, Citizenship Class Facilitator, Cooking and Nutrition Class Assistant, Photographer, Videographer and Administrative Assistant.

Volunteer Services also coordinates the direct delivery of five programs at the Immigrant Centre: Sewing and Quilting Class, Citizenship Class, Citizenship Ceremony Ambassador, Driver's Education Class and the 1-to-1 Tutor (English and Citizenship) program.

Highlights	2015/2016
Average New Volunteers per Month:	17
Average Active Volunteers per Month:	123
Average Volunteer Hours per Month:	1,102
Total Volunteer Hours for Fiscal Year:	13,248.25
Monetary Value of Volunteer Time: *(calculated at $20 per hour)*	$264,925

CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS

Laurette's Story



In the early part of 2013, Laurette Wright was invited to attend a Citizenship Ceremony by her friend Rosi Larcombe, a long-time Immigrant Centre volunteer. Her first ceremony as a volunteer was on April 10, 2013 and she has been part of the team at the Via Rail Station ever since, greeting and seating the soon-to- be New Canadians and their guests and making everyone feel welcomed.

Through her work in the legal community, Laurette had dealt with the Immigrant Centre's Language Bank to request interpreters, but it wasn't until she actually came to the Centre to sign up as a volunteer, that she realized the full extent of services and programs that are offered here.

"It is so involved" she says of the Immigrant Centre. "Everything is right there." To date, Laurette has volunteered at over 120 Citizenship Ceremonies, and she still feels inspired every time she attends one. "We take so much for granted. Every time I leave after a ceremony, it is so uplifting. Everyone is so excited when they come in...so hopeful. We still cry when people go up for testimonials."

In addition to volunteering at Citizenship Ceremonies, Laurette shares her artistic flair with the seniors at the complex where she resides, planning and decorating for events, teaching aquacise and low impact aerobic classes and helping with her church group. An avid reader, she loves to dance and particularly enjoys baking and creating chocolate delicacies for her family and friends.

Iva's Story



Iva Wilson does not remember exactly how long she has been volunteering at the Immigrant Centre, but she thinks that it must be about 13 years. She recalls that she first heard about the Immigrant Centre from a customer when she was working at The Bay. At the time, Iva was taking a Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) course at the University of Manitoba, and thought, "this would be a great place to volunteer" so she called and made an appointment.

Iva started out volunteering as a One-to-One English Tutor, and then moved on to facilitating Conversation Groups. She has now been a Conversation Group Facilitator for eight years. Her first conversation class was with a group of six women from Serbia, spouses of truck drivers who had immigrated to Manitoba, and "it just grew from there". She still hears from one of the women, who has since moved out of the province.

Asked why she continues to volunteer, Iva says, "I do this because I like meeting people. I love learning about other countries and listening to their stories. You learn that there is more than one way to do something."

Volunteering as a Conversation Group Facilitator has made her appreciate what we have here, and discussing world topics with her students has made her more aware of what is happening in the world. It has also given her the urge to travel. "I hear about all these different countries and cultures and I just want to travel. My atlas is falling apart" she laughs.

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR
ON THE SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

To the Members of Immigrant Centre Manitoba Inc.

The accompanying summary financial statements, which comprise the summarized statement of financial position as at March 31, 2016 and the summarized statement of revenue and expenses for the year then ended, are derived from the audited financial statements of Immigrant Centre Manitoba Inc. (the "Organization") for the year ended March 31, 2016. We expressed a qualified audit opinion on the financial statements in our report dated June 10, 2016. The financial statements, and the summary financial statements, do no reflect the effects of events that occurred subsequent to the date of our report on those financial statements.

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by Canadian generally accepted accounting principles. Reading the summary financial statements, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements of the Organization.

Management's Responsibility for the Summary Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation of a summary of the audited financial statements.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the summary financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Canadian Auditing Standard 810, Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements.

Basis for Qualified Opinion

In common with many not-for-profit organizations, the Organization derives revenue from the general public in the form of donations, the completeness of which is not susceptible to satisfactory audit verification. Consequently, we were not able to determine whether any adjustments might be necessary to donation revenue, excess of revenues over expenses, assets or net assets.

Qualified Opinion

In our opinion, except for the possible effects of the matter described in the Basis for Qualified Opinion paragraph, the summary financial statements derived from the audited financial statements of the Organization for the year ended March 31, 2016 present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Immigrant Centre Manitoba Inc., and its financial performance in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Wieler & Wieler Certified General Accountants
Professional Corporation

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

for the Year Ended March 31, 2016

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION	2016	2015
ASSETS		
Current assets	615,796	491,599
Capital assets	490,788	564,254
	1,106,584	1,055,853
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Liabilities		
Current liabilities	412,105	341,494
Long-term debt	185,615	219,879
Deferred contributions related to capital assets	305,716	344,488
	903,436	905,861
Net Assets		
Investments in capital assets	(34,591)	(32,778)
Internally restricted net assets	237,739	182,770
	203,148	149,992
	1,106,584	1,055,853

STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENSES	2016	2015
Operations		
Revenue	2,356,201	2,146,473
Expenses	2,270,739	2,082,868
	85,462	63,605
Other income (expenses)		
Interest and miscellaneous	2,388	2,249
Amortization of deferred contributions	70,341	72,590
Amortization of capital assets	(105,035)	(120,195)
Excess of revenue over expenses for the year	53,156	18,249



As a reward for the community spirit and commitment shown in providing multiple free banking presentations to the clients of the AEC, RBC gave team leader Dale Voluntad, RBC Branch Manager and Mutual Funds Representative, a cheque for $500 which he was proud to present to Jorge Fernandez and AEC Manager, Walter Luzzi.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive

Leslie Wilder
CO-PRESIDENT

David Ashcroft
CO-PRESIDENT

Rob Vineberg
VICE-PRESIDENT

James Popel
SECRETARY

Cec Hanec
PAST-PRESIDENT

Directors

Dr. Namita Bhatnagar
Florence Carey
Milton Corado
Sabena Singh
Holly Toupin
Diana Wiesenthal

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD AT THE 2015 AGM



SUCCESS STORY

Alma De Leon: "I'm so happy to work there"



ALMA WITH HER HUSBAND LARRY AT THE GARDEN CITY BUS STOP. ALMA'S NEXT GOAL IS TO PASS HER DRIVING TEST.

It's been just over a year since Alma De Leon and her family arrived in Canada from the Philippines on May 31, 2015.

In that time, she's been through a lot. She struggled through several seasonal jobs and one job she didn't like before she finally found a permanent, full-time job at Sobeys – this means that she can finally buy a house for her family.

Alma has four children and a husband named Larry. She says that life was very difficult for her when she first got here. Everything was different, and although she applied to many jobs, she had a difficult time finding a permanent job that could support her and her family. Then one day things finally started looking up.

"I was walking from City Hall after finding out that I failed their screening test, just crying," Alma said. "And I walked down the street and I saw the sign, Immigrant Centre, and I went in."

Alma went in and met Esther, the receptionist, who asked her for her Permanent Resident card. Dismayed, Alma didn't have it, and agreed to come back another day with the card. She was running another errand and miraculously found the card in her pocket, and went back to Immigrant Centre that afternoon. That day, Esther was able to set her up with a career counselor named Amie and Alma was on her way to finding meaningful employment.

"Amie helped me with a resume, and then she gave me coaching about interviews. She also helped me to find jobs to apply for. We found this job at Sobeys in December, and I went down and personally applied for it, and I got the job!" said Alma. "Immigrant Centre also gave me the opportunity to attend a computer workshop, which was very helpful. I learned a lot about Microsoft Word, and I can now... type. It's helped me when I want to update my resume now," Alma said.

Alma started working at Sobeys on January 15, 2016. She works in the Home Meal Replacement department, preparing sandwiches, meals, and preps the ready-to-go meals, and sometimes she works at the service counter.

"I love my job – I love cooking, I love food," Alma said. When asked what the best and worst parts of her job were, she said, "the worst part is absolutely taking the bus through the wintertime, but when I reach the store and walk into the kitchen it all goes away because I am so happy to work there. And the best part is that I get to express my creativity through the cooking and plating of the food."

The best advice she has for new Canadians is: "Don't be shy asking for help. The people at Immigrant Centre have the skills to help you and the devoted time to help each individual immigrant."

ImmigrantCentre

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