

2014-2015

Annual Report



# I am DIVERSEcity!





# Our Vision

We are a community where everyone feels they belong and can achieve their goals.  
I am DIVERSEcity!

# Our Mission

We build and strengthen diverse communities by delivering the broadest range of services that embrace cultural inclusiveness and that celebrate the strengths found in our differences.

# Our Values

- Respect
- Diversity
- Resilience
- Care
- Innovation
- Trust
- Leadership



**DIVERSEcity**  
community resources society

## DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society

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## Message from the President



2015/16 is the year when the question of diversity and its place in Canadian culture will need to be clearly defined.

What does it mean to be Canadian and can many cultures really stand together as one? Does your culture and your way of thinking change Canada or does Canada change your way of thinking? Does being Canadian change your cultural viewpoint? Do those born-here Canadians see themselves as BEING the culture of Canada or do they see their culture as being one that CONTRIBUTES to mosaic of an international Canada? How does your culture view its place in this, our country? What defines what is Canadian?

These are questions that DIVERSEcity intends to address in this coming year. This new community campus is dedicated to **dialogue**. Politically incorrect, honest, heart wrenching and heartfelt, respectful communication about the issues that really matter and the decisions that change the face of this country. The services and programs that we deliver will be impactful, relevant, inclusive and if you are willing, will involve **you**.

Canadians recognize that our country will only be strong if we work together, if we are employed, safely housed, healthy, sharing societal values and communicating. We are writing the historical page of national narrative that includes everyone, that celebrates the differences and builds on the diversity of our strengths. Our new mission statement reflects the changes we see globally, in our own country and in this community of Surrey. DIVERSEcity intends to be the heart of where the communication begins in Surrey.

DIVERSEcity wants you to join us in that dialogue and in this statement. Please stand together with us and say, "I am Canadian, I am DIVERSEcity."

Welcome to the conversation.

Shara Nixon  
President, Board of Directors



## Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Welcome to the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society. It has been a tremendous year for the agency with the culmination of our move to our newly constructed community campus.

2014- 2015 marked a year of new beginnings for the agency. With the majority of our contracts now under federal funding, this involved changes in program delivery, reporting and evaluation of our programs. In the background, our new community campus was taking shape and form with each month that passed by. Planning for the best use of the space and flexibility in programming were ongoing discussions throughout the year. Then on February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015, DIVERSEcity finally made the move we were all waiting for.

Each of our service delivery areas continued to focus on refining our services to ensure continuous improvement to ensure our goals of each program were met and that our funders were assured that we were managing public funds with the utmost financial prudence and transparency. Our social enterprise, The Language Store, also underwent continuous improvements to ensure that the agency continued to find innovative ways to become financially independent all the while providing employment opportunities for new Canadians.

I would like to acknowledge my incredibly dedicated and talented executive team, management team, all staff and volunteers. You truly made this transformative year dynamic and vigorously sought out the positive opportunities as we turned this corner. I am excited to share our new strategic platform that was delivered from many stakeholders. It is truly reflective of a new era for our agency.

To the Board of Directors at DIVERSEcity, I thank you for your ongoing commitment to the work we do and for ensuring that the community campus would indeed be a reality for the agency.

This AGM is an extra special one as we celebrate the grand opening of our community campus. It represents the commitment and behalf of all those that stand together and share our vision and proudly say “Together, we are all DIVERSEcity!”

Neelam Sahota  
Chief Executive Officer





# Settlement & Community Programs



"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

- Helen Keller

"No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent."

- John Donne

## Summary of Year (April 1, 2014 - March 31, 2015)

The **Settlement & Integration Program (SIP)** significantly shifted this year as all previous funding across the province returned to federal management under Citizenship and Immigration Canada. This year, this program supported over 2700 local clients with their settlement needs through information and orientation, case managed support, and the provision of diverse workshops, courses, and drop in groups to meet the needs of the different populations of the regions from seniors, to youth, to women,



and through first language support. Services were provided in English, French, Punjabi, Hindi, Mandarin, Spanish, Farsi, Korean, Karen, and Arabic. These services were funded by Citizenship & Immigration Canada, as well as the BC Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training (for non-CIC Eligible clients). The Annual Income Tax Clinic was offered in partnership with Surrey Libraries for the first time this year.

DIVERSEcity's **Better at Home Newton** program continued to focus on providing support for senior residents in the Newton area through the provision of light housekeeping, grocery shopping, transportation, lawn care, and friendly visiting. DIVERSEcity has continued to collaborate with new partner agencies within the region to build upon best practices and better serve the community as funding for this program in Surrey has been expanding to include other delivery partners. Our program funder, the United Way of the Lower Mainland, has confirmed that DIVERSEcity's Better at Home program will expand into the Fleetwood and Guildford areas as of April 1, 2015.

**The Food Security-Kitchen & Garden-Program** continued to be in demand. The Community Kitchen Program was delivered at several sites across Surrey and engaged over 850 individuals. With the move to DIVERSEcity's new Community Campus in February 2015, the program finally has its own state of the art program kitchen! The Community Garden program continued to operate out of the Hazelnut Meadows Garden. In partnership with the City of Surrey, DIVERSEcity also established a second garden, located at Lionel Courchene Park. The garden, named the Growing Roots Garden, was also utilized as a research garden through specialized funding from the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia. This resulted in a Newcomer Garden Toolkit to help support other agencies and municipalities in duplicating this project across North America. The City of Surrey will also use this information to inform future land use policy. Both gardens resulted in the provision of fresh food to over 400 low income residents of Surrey.

**The Canadian Immigrant Integration Program (CIIP)** continues to provide settlement orientations to eligible new Canadians before they arrive in Canada. In the province of British Columbia, DIVERSEcity continues to collaborate with Vancouver Community College to offer pre-arrival support to immigrants. This fiscal year saw 845 referrals, of which 640 enrolled and benefited from the information and guidance provided by the project staff. The source countries of our client referrals are India, the Philippines, China and the UK/Gulf region.

DIVERSEcity continued to provide settlement services to Francophone newcomers through the newly named **OASIS Program (orientation et assistance aux services d'intégration francophone à Surrey)**, which was launched in the fall of 2014

(See the OASIS AGM report for details.) The program saw participation from over 200 French speaking clients from Congo, Cameroon, Belgium, Kenya and other countries.

## Impact

The **Settlement and Integration Program** continued to provide an integrated service model with first language service and specialized programs for target groups. These programs included the Transportation Systems Course, Introduction to Computers and the Internet Course, Financial Matters Course, English Conversation Circles, Women's Health and Well Being Drop In Program, Welcome to Surrey Monthly Tours Drop In Program, Young Adults Drop In Program, Youth Integration Course, and Volunteer Program. The contract also continued to provide a case management structure called Guided Pathways for clients whose settlement needs were more complex and required a more enhanced service model. The Annual Income Tax Clinic was offered at three libraries (Guildford, Surrey Centre and Strawberry Hills) in addition to DIVERSEcity's site.

This year, DIVERSEcity's **Better at Home Program** in Newton undertook an initiative to further engage the area's ethnic seniors through specially designed culturally appropriate programming which has doubled participation in the last year. This strategic outreach initiative has resulted in the participation of over 190 new seniors-60% of which speak a second language. Each month, the program provides over 200 services through contractors and a strong volunteer team.

**The Community Kitchen Program** secured numerous Memoranda of Understanding agreements with community partners for kitchen sites allowing greater access for community members. On a monthly basis, the Community Kitchen provides targeted programming to seniors, mothers with children aged 0 to 6 years, and parents with children aged 6 to 12. This year the Community Kitchen program was offered within other agency programs, such as the Moving Ahead Program and OASIS, with tremendous success and positive outcomes for clients.

**Hazelnut Meadows and the Growing Roots Community Gardens** successfully assigned all available 105 plots to low income local community members. The program delivered adult, children's and seniors workshops, along with additional activities such as work parties and pop up market stands allowing gardeners to sell surplus produce and connect with their neighbours. Over 20 different language groups and cultures are represented in the Community Garden program on a regular basis.

**The Canadian Immigrant Integration Program (CIIP)**'s holistic service approach ensures that each and every service user of CIIP





receives comprehensive needs assessment and referrals that are specific to their destination in Canada and their individual life situation. Service users who are able to follow through the support process reported higher level of confidence in their ability to settle down shortly after their arrival in Canada. In particular, they reported better preparedness in having their foreign credentials recognized while finding transitional employment options to meet their immediate needs. Since majority of CIIP service users are university degree holders, employment guidance offered through CIIP program plays a significant role in our country's ability to

leverage the talents that new Canadians bring and at the same time facilitate the attainment of the social and economic integration of the newcomers.

DIVERSEcity **Francophone Settlement** was maintained this year, and the new and enhanced OASIS Program was established in the fall of 2014. Please see the OASIS AGM report for more information.

## Acknowledgements

- Thank you to our staff who are the heart, face and energy of all our endeavours.
- Thank you to our volunteers, without whom our Income Tax Clinic and Better at Home programs (among others) would not be able to function.
- Thank you to our community partners- City of Surrey, Surry Libraries, United Way, Options Community Services Society, SUCCESS, Progressive Intercultural Community Services (PICS), Vancouver Community College.
- Thank you to our funders – CIC, BC Ministry of Jobs Tourism and Skills Training, Colleges & Institutes of Canada, United Way of the Lower Mainland, Vancity Foundation, Real Estate Foundation of B.C .

## Summary of Highlights

- Settlement & Integration Programs (BC & CIC funded) served over 2700 clients in this year.
- All participation targets for settlement related courses, drop in programs, and workshops were achieved.
- Over 3500 volunteer hours supported the department's various activities thanks to the efforts of about 130 volunteers.
- A total of 742 income tax returns were completed by 36 Clinic Volunteers.
- DIVERSEcity, in partnership with other settlement community agencies and the City of Surrey, hosted World Refugee Day in June 2014 at Guildford Recreation Centre with a participation rate of over 300 individuals.
- The Better at Home Newton program doubled its recruitment rate and now regularly provides over 200 services per month.
- In March 2014, DIVERSEcity opened up its new state of the art Community Kitchen at the new site.
- In November 2014, the department received confirmation from Vancity Foundation that funding has been provided for a new urban rooftop container garden at our new Community Campus to complement the Community Garden Program.
- The Canadian Immigrant Integration Program (CIIP) served 640 clients of which 42% from India, 26% from the Philippines, 17% from China and the rest 15% from the UK and the Gulf region.



# Maria

## *From Mexico*



### Client Story

**M**aria and her husband, Jose, are originally from Mexico. They had a comfortable life in Mexico until certain social problems arose there that directly affected their personal safety. To provide a safe living environment for themselves and especially for their young children, they decided to emigrate to Canada.

Prior to their arrival in Canada, both Maria and Jose obtained university level of education and they worked as professionals in their own respective field for some years.

Through a friend's recommendation, Jose received the settlement services at DIVERSEcity some time after he moved to Surrey, BC. He said that the support at DIVERSEcity helped him better understand and use the many other resources available at the community. So when his wife and children arrived, he brought them immediately to meet with

the settlement counsellor at DIVERSEcity office.

With Maria, Jose and the family, a settlement plan was developed. Maria enrolled into LINC classes and at the same time started actively searching for work opportunities. To enhance her work experience, she followed through the action plan by working as a volunteer to support the deliveries of settlement and integration services.

Maria approached her volunteer work with great enthusiasm. In no time, she became effective in providing support for group orientations, distributing events flyers, and providing language support when required. She updated her resume to reflect her most recent work experience in Canada. With this new resume and the job search tips she has learned, she applied for more job vacancies and obtained multiple job offers. Maria was able to choose a

position that was most favourable to her lifestyle.

Today, six months after Maria moved to Canada, she is enjoying a new lifestyle, a new job that promises learning and growth opportunities, a volunteer work that she loves, and most importantly, she and her family are feeling safe and happy here in their new home.

Maria is aware that there will be some time before she can reach higher English level and have her foreign credentials fully recognized in Canada. Nonetheless, she is so thankful for the support that she has received that she took on an active ambassador role in her community to promote the settlement and integration services to all her connections. Because of her efforts, more immigrants, new or who have lived in Canada for some time now, came to seek the services at DIVERSEcity.



# Orientation et assistance aux services d'intégration francophone à Surrey (OASIS)

"Often the most powerful way to communicate a new Direction is through Behavior"

- John P. Kotter, author of *Leading Change*

## Summary of Year (April 1, 2014 - March 31, 2015)

DIVERSEcity has provided first language settlement services to francophone newcomers since 2007 in the Surrey, North Delta and surrounding areas. This fiscal year started the same as usual with one full time Settlement Worker. However, in November

of 2014, DIVERSEcity was granted additional funding to lead French settlement services in this region. This has proven to be a beneficial experience for the agency, our partners, our French speaking clients and our communities as we saw an increase in the dedicated funding for program activities. This enhanced funding supported the hiring of a part-time bilingual (French-English) Manager at DIVERSEcity – the realization of a goal that the agency has been working towards for several years.

DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society, in partnership with Le Collège Éducacentre, under this new enhanced funding, started delivering a new French settlement program called OASIS (orientation et assistance aux services d'intégration francophone

I am DIVERSEcity !





à Surrey). The program name, OASIS, which means a fertile spot in a desert where many come to partake of a common need, symbolically represents the assistance provided to help newcomers in need of settlement support services in Canada's official language – French. OASIS offers information and orientation workshops, community connections and outreach within Surrey, Delta, Langley and Region to French speaking newcomers (first language and for those who identify French as their preferred official language) in a culturally sensitive and inclusive approach.

OASIS aims to bring the diverse cultures of French speaking newcomers together to facilitate and establish a stronger French speaking community, while helping new immigrants in their integration into the wider Canadian society. Indeed, OASIS acknowledges that although speaking French represents a great advantage for francophone newcomers, finding work and becoming established still pose major challenges, given the fact that the language of economy in British Columbia is primarily English.

### Impact

- 80 OASIS clients have received access to information and services within the established francophone and wider community needed for settlement through participation in activities and services.
- Francophone clients have increased awareness of

resources related to their settlement needs through participation in activities and services.

- Francophone clients have increased connections to French speaking communities and public institutions;
- Francophone clients learn of employment opportunities - acquire knowledge and skills on the Canadian work environment and participated in local labour markets, broader communities and social networks.
- As a result of the establishment of OASIS, many community organizations have acknowledged DIVERSEcity's commitment to providing settlement support services to French speaking immigrants in both official languages.

### Acknowledgements

It is a great pleasure to acknowledge and thank those who made this dream come true during this first year of OASIS delivery: the OASIS team who devoted their time, energy and worked tirelessly to make sure that clients remained the focus of their work, Collège Éducacentre located in Vancouver, a valued partner and the DIVERSEcity management team, past and present, who saw the need and stepped in to fill the gap existing in the Francophone communities in Surrey, Delta and surrounding areas.

## Summary of Highlights

Collaboration with other services and agencies helped to accomplish the following outcomes:

- The development of 80 individual Settlement Plans
- 124 individual information/orientation sessions
- 12 group orientation sessions
- 10 community kitchen/nutrition workshops
- 2 Citizenship & Civic Involvement Courses
- 22 sessions of French/English Conversation for Everyday Living
- 2 sessions of the Parenting Course
- 12 sessions of Accessing your Community in Surrey and Surrounding area
- 2 sessions of Community Volunteering
- 5 Men's Group sessions
- 1 Women's Group
- 1 Business Start-up session
- 1 Youth Passport session
- 4 Workplace English sessions
- 13 Workplace Conversation sessions
- 7 Study/Education Link sessions
- 12 Crisis Counselling client sessions



# Language Programs

"The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance."

- Alan Watts

## Summary of Year (April 1, 2014- March 31, 2015)

April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 saw the beginning of the new Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program at DIVERSEcity. Management of settlement services for immigrant and refugee newcomers was moved from the province of B.C. to the federal government under the auspices of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).

Due to long waitlists, Language Programs was able to secure funding for four additional LINC classes and additional daycare support to its services at its Fleetwood location until March 31, 2015.

After the first successful year of delivering services to clients under the CIC contract, Language Programs was required to make significant cuts to meet the second year of reduced contract funding. As a result, after more than a decade at the site,



DIVERSEcity was forced to close its Fleetwood location at the end of March 2015. The closure affected 6 classes and a daycare providing support to those classes and added significantly to an already long wait list for language training and daycare.

## Impact

The change in funders did not initially impact client services. This popular language program had already seen long service wait times for language training under the province and that

## Summary of Highlights

Despite many changes and pressures DIVERSEcity's in-demand LINC program continued to serve clients of Surrey and exceed its targeted contract numbers:

- 1334 clients received language training (target number 910)
- 391 referrals to CIC funded programs (target number 175)
- 51 clients for ESL 6&7 for the workplace (target number 18)
- 121 clients received transportation assistance (target number 97)
- 172 guest speakers a year (target number 160)



continued under the federal government. However, the second year of the two-year contract would see service reductions effective April 2015. In the meantime, changes to the citizenship process saw more clients wanting language training so they could qualify for citizenship ahead of the residency requirement changes. This added to the already long waitlist. DIVERSEcity offered clients the option of taking the CELPIP test at its main location to meet their language requirements for citizenship.

### Acknowledgements

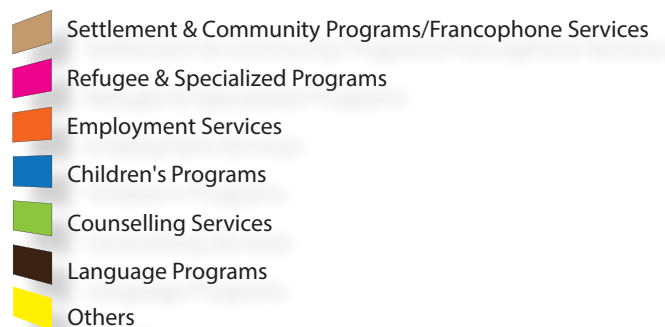
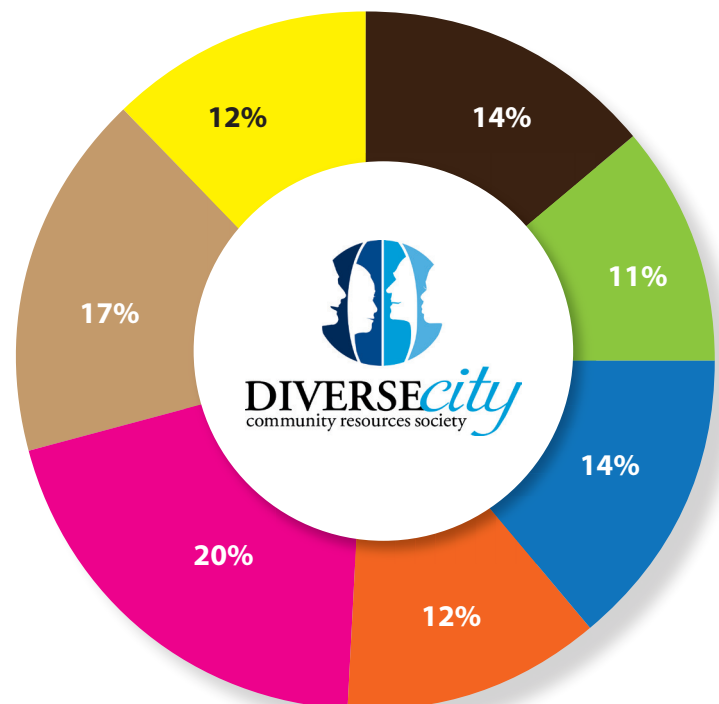
Through its committed instructors and staff, Language Programs continues to promote the independence of new Canadians by providing them with the language training and settlement information necessary for their inclusion in Canada and to assist them in pursuit of their personal, educational and employment goals.

The program, as usual, relies on volunteers who give of their time and share their experiences of Canada. In many cases, Canada is an adopted home for the volunteers. They provide a valuable symbol of the sense of belonging and inclusion that newcomers can achieve. We greatly appreciate their participation in the LINC program.

### Client Story

Our client is a 30 year-old construction worker in Canada on his own recovering from a recent traumatic car accident. As a result of his injuries he has ongoing back and muscular issues and frequently is in pain. In spite of pain and injuries, his attendance in LINC has been perfect, he is always in good spirits, and he actively participates in class and class activities. He often engages staff in English conversations while on break because he is eager to improve his language ability. The teacher has suggested other possible ways for the client to increase his language ability through volunteer involvement, and accessing other services such as libraries. Recently the client learned he was progressing to the next CLB (Canadian Language Benchmark) level and was ecstatic that he was acquiring the language. He feels lucky to have the opportunity for language training and knows that due to his injuries he may be looking for different work in the future. With the confidence he is finding in acquiring a new language, the client is feeling that this is the time to make some changes in his life and employment. We are providing him with a list of training options to consider.

## Spectrum of Services 2014-2015





# Employment Services

"Forever 21 gives hope to people who come here with almost nothing. All of this was started by a simple immigrant with a dream."

*-Do Won Chang, Funder and CEO, of Forever 21*



## Summary of Year (April 1, 2014 – March 31, 2015)

Branded with a new service delivery area and managed

by a new manager, the Employment Services team delivered four funded programs & supported 203 clients to meaningful employment, while strategically engaging with key stakeholders and launching a public profile campaign that published 12 inspiring immigrant jobseekers' success stories.

All of DIVERSEcity's Employment Services programs are specially designed for immigrants facing multiple barriers to employment such as English language, foreign credentials, lack of Canadian work experience and cultural differences and settlement issues.

The Immigrant Trades Training Initiative (ITTI), Microloans and Future Leaders programs were all successful in meeting contract targets for the year. Our partnership with the WorkBC program, in partnership with the Fleetwood/Guildford and Whalley WorkBC Centres, has thrived in the last year. In particular, services delivered from the Newton itinerant location expanded its one-on-one case management and job readiness training to include job development support.

An Employer Appreciation & Networking Luncheon was hosted on Thursday, November 20, 2014 at the Surrey Central library. Certispect Inc, Dynamic Windows & Doors, and Westminster Savings Credit Union were among the 17 employers that were recognized for having

## Summary of Highlights

- **WorkBC** at Newton itinerant site: total for the year is 28 clients case managed; 15 have found employment since receiving services.
- **The Immigrant Trades Training Initiative (ITTI)**: 112 clients were served (100% of the contract target)
- **Future Leaders** Program: 47 youth graduates (106% target of the contract target) were served and 42 were employed.
- **Microloans** Program: A total of 10 loans were approved of the 16 loans applications that were submitted. The value of the approved loans totalled \$44,000.





provided work experience placements to new Canadians, immigrants and refugees. Presented with a certificate of appreciation by DIVERSEcity CEO Neelam Sahota and Surrey Board of Trade CEO Anita Huberman, this event meant to recognize the key role the business community plays in any employment support programs to job seekers. In order to engage multiple stakeholders who are critical to the newcomers' successful economic integration, DIVERSEcity's Employment Services launched an electronic newsletter, consolidating information about job fairs, discussions on the future directions of skills training, as well as documenting immigrant and refugees' job search stories. These stories tell the struggles newcomers face when they first arrive, and persistence and resilience in their effort to succeed. It paints a very real picture of the amazing skills these individuals bring to Canada. It acts to inspire new arrivals who are currently struggling to adapt, as well as the business community to consider this talent pool for their recruitment challenges.

As the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training announced the funding framework of the BC-Canada Job Fund, DIVERSEcity submitted proposals in March 2015 to provide employment support to immigrants and refugees to learn about the Canadian labour market, explore

educational & training opportunities and to prepare them to enter/re-enter the Canadian workforce.

### Impact

Through our partnership with Pacific Community Resources Society (PCRS) who delivers the WorkBC program in Fleetwood and Guildford, DIVERSEcity's **WorkBC program** is able to deliver one-on-one case management services to immigrant job seekers in Newton. This contributes to the continuum of services we are able to provide to clients who are already accessing settlement or language services at DIVERSEcity. In addition to dual language delivery of career planning and job search skills, the program staff was also able to connect clients with our pool of employers who are actively recruiting. From the 28 clients who were case managed in Newton, 15 have since become job-attached.

**The Immigrant Trades Training Initiative (ITTI)** supported 112 clients with international work experience in a trade to acquire Canadian certification. By challenging the Inter Provincial "Red Seal" designation, tradesmen are able to practice their trade anywhere in the country, eligible to higher positions with higher compensation. With the shortage of skilled workers in





Client  
Story

# Ish Kumar

Technical Service Representative  
at **Shaw Cablesystems**  
-Employment Program of BC (EPBC) Client

**T**his is Ish and his story on how he got a job with Shaw Communications Inc. after 25 days of landing in Canada.

Ish, 35 years old, arrived in Canada in Nov 2014, as a Permanent Resident from India under Federal Skilled Worker Plan. He was connected with DIVERSEcity's Canadian Immigrant Integration Program (CIIP) before landing in BC. The Program Coordinator Pam Kaur had provided him with pre-departure settlement and employment orientation/referrals while he was still in India. This prepared Ish with knowledge of Canadian employment culture.

He brought a MBA degree from India,

along with 10+ years of professional experience in the Insurance and Finance sector. In his last job he was working as a Regional Sales Manager in India's one of the leading general insurance company.

After his landed in BC, he came to DIVERSEcity's location in Newton; Pam Kaur referred him to DIVERSEcity's WorkBC program.

As the Case Manager, Rupinder Malhotra met with Ish one-on-one and developed Ish's resume, and cover letter as well as practiced interview skills. Pam and Rupinder also connected Ish with former DIVERSEcity clients who are now working in leadership roles with RBC and Scotia Bank for informational interviews.

Knowing that job search could take a while, the staff team at DIVERSEcity advised Ish to look for "transition jobs" while searching for dream career jobs. They supported Ish to apply for transition jobs in Customer Service and Banking.

However, after few weeks of no responses, Ish decided to try labour jobs and through a family friend he then started working in a furniture warehouse. After working for more than 12 hours of physical labour on his very first day, Ish was very discouraged and depressed.

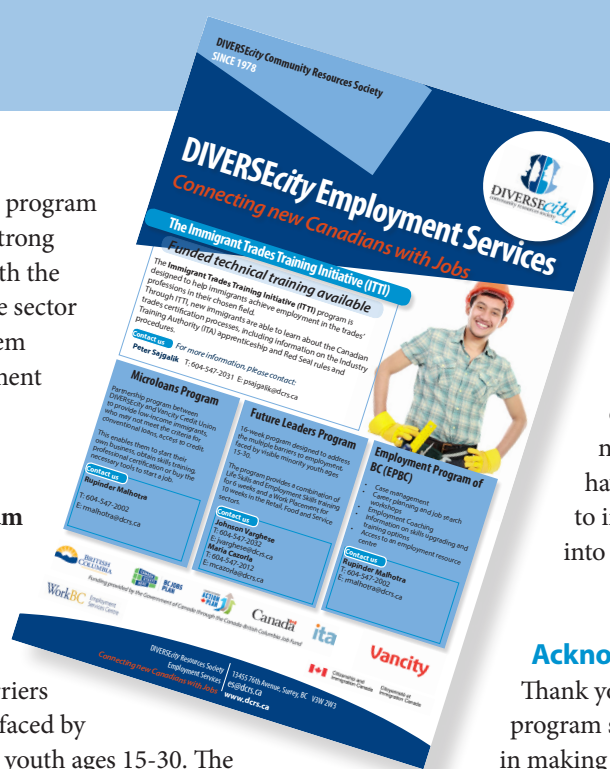
Rupinder had communicated with Shaw Communications Inc. a few months ago about Shaw's recruitment for multilingual sales associates, and



trades, the ITTI program has developed strong relationships with the employers in the sector & supported them in their recruitment challenges.

### The Future Leaders Program

is a 16-week program designed to address the multiple barriers to employment faced by visible minority youth ages 15-30. The program provides a combination of Life Skills and Employment Skills training for 6 weeks and a Work Placement component for 10 weeks in the Retail, Food and Service sectors. This year, 44 youth participants received wages while attending class as well as opportunities for certificate training, such as Food Safe, First Aid, and Cashier & Customer Training. The program also provided local businesses that have recruitment needs, with young employees who are highly motivated and who are prime candidates for becoming loyal, long-term



employees.

The **Microloans Program** assisted 17 immigrants seeking credit to buy tools, start a home based business or fulfill their educational goals. It provided newcomers to Canada, who do not have any credit history, the ability to increase their likelihood of getting into an income-generating activity.

### Acknowledgments

Thank you to DIVERSEcity's program staff for their support in making effective referrals and ultimately supporting successful client outcomes.

We also want to acknowledge our funders who made these programs possible: Industry Training Authority (ITA), Options Community Services Society, Pacific Community Resources Society, Service Canada, and Vancity Credit Union.

although no client - job match was made then, Rupinder thought Ish would be a great candidate and forwarded his resume to her contacts at Shaw.

Ish was immediately called for an interview! However, he was informed that there was no position available at the time and Shaw will contact him once there is an opening.

A week later, the In-Home Solutions Representative position became available, and Ish was called for a second interview and later was offered this full time job!

In an email to Rupinder, Ish wrote: "I wanted to share with you my experience

... because you have played a major role in my good beginning here."

"I never expected and imagined to start my career with such a reputed brand in Canada: Shaw Communications Inc.

And that too within just 25 days of job search period after landing, as my first job. Many people said and were saying that it's not possible to get a good job in the beginning.

At that time, only you (Rupinder Malhotra) were there to motivate me, and had trust in my skills. You helped me in preparing my Canadian style Resume which interviewers liked and praised. And with your referral only I got

a chance to appear in an interview.

So my learning and message to any newcomer is to always have faith in his skills and take full advantage and guidance from immigrant serving agencies as you did for me.

So far my experience is that this country values skills and if you have it there is no way you will not succeed. The need is to brush up our skills according to their requirements. There are jobs available but how you connect with them is the key."

# Fee Based Services

The Language Store, Skills Training Centre and CELPIP



## The Language Store

### Summary of Year (April 1, 2014 - March 31, 2015)

The Language Store is a successful social enterprise that provides interpretation and translation services in over 65 languages to government agencies, health authorities, educational institutions, corporations and individuals where language support services are needed to communicate with members of our community in official or informal capacities. The vast majority of our work is with WorkSafe BC and BC's Ministries of Social Development and Child and Family Development. This can include interpretation services in court proceedings or medical services,

translation services for official documents, and a host of other purposes where it is essential to communicate with immigrants and refugees with limited English language capabilities.

The demand for services is driven by the ethnic/linguistic composition of key geographic segments within the Lower Mainland which is undergoing significant change with the growth of new immigrant populations particularly Farsi, Karen, Somali, and Arabic speaking individuals. The Language Store's service capabilities extend across the Lower Mainland from the North Shore to the outer reaches of the Fraser Valley. The primary geographic market for our services is the community of Surrey representing over 55% of our service demand. Other primary centers

for the provision of our services are Vancouver, Burnaby, New West, Richmond and Abbotsford. We serve the needs of over 5,000 clients per year while employing the services of over 230 interpreters, many who have started their employment in Canada with this first opportunity. The Language Store is one of the leading service providers of face to face interpretation services in the Lower Mainland market.

In the past year the Language Store team has continued to enhance its capabilities and capacity including the hiring of over 20 new interpreters, streamlining processes, providing on-going training and development for interpreters and initiating the implementation of state of the art technology to automate its request processing, assignment and financial processes. The Language Store has achieved significant progress over the last year in creating a strong foundation for continued growth and expansion in this rapidly growing marketplace.

### Impact

Language barriers can be one of the most challenging and emotionally threatening factors for immigrants particularly as they interface with our health and legal processes and systems. The interpretation services provided by DIVERSEcity are specifically designed to provide the highest levels of quality, professionalism and responsiveness delivered in a culturally sensitive manner to ensure that clients who are in the highest need for these services receive the support that they need in these challenging situations.



## Summary of Highlights

Over 5,000 clients served, 230 interpreters engaged and employed, over 60 languages and cultural groups served.

## Acknowledgments

The dedication of our staff team and interpreters working cohesively to provide the highest levels of quality and response in the industry.

### Skills Training Centre

## Summary of Year (April 1, 2014 - March 31, 2015)

The Skills Training Centre provides employment focused training programs designed to deliver specific skills and training aligned with the needs of key targeted employment opportunities in the local market place. The current offerings include Cashier and Customer Service training and Bank Teller training. The past year has seen a rationalization of some of our course offerings due to computer facility constraints and the need to redesign our course and training offering to more closely meet the needs of the employers and our clients.

In the past year we served 115 clients and conducted over 15 training sessions.

As we move forward we are redesigning

and implementing new training offerings that maximize the capabilities of our new expanded computer lab and facilities of our new campus.

### Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program (CELPiP)

## Summary of Year (April 1, 2014 - March 31, 2015)

DIVERSEcity has been an official CELPIP test center for over 4 years and over the last year has experienced significant growth in the number of clients served and the revenues derived from this operation. The CELPIP tests are one of the two language proficiency tests that are accepted by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) for Permanent Residency and for Citizenship. Through its partnership with Paragon Testing Enterprises, the developer and owner of CELPIP, DIVERSEcity is one of the largest and premier testing sites in the country.

In the last year, testing revenues grew by 84%. The number of clients/test takers also grew in this proportion to a total of 2,400 from 1,300 the previous year. In addition, late in the year and enabled by the move to our new building, we were able to expand our computer lab facilities to accommodate larger test sessions and to provide a platform for further growth in the year ahead.

In the fourth quarter, we also introduced and piloted two variations of the CELPIP test preparation course designed to provide prospective test takers with preparation instruction, materials and skills to enhance their performance and success in taking the tests. We are now finalizing the commercial versions of these course offerings for further rollout this year.

## Impact

Through its CELPIP programs, DIVERSEcity provides highly accessible and responsive support to clients in assisting them to obtain Canadian Citizenship and/or Permanent Residency through preparation and testing for English language proficiency.

## Summary of Highlights

- Over 80% revenue growth
- Over 2,400 clients served

## Acknowledgments

To the hard work of our staff and contractors and the on-going support of our partner Paragon Testing Enterprises.

### Client Story

## Crystal Chen

**M**y name is Crystal Chen and I have banking experience from my home country. I was referred to the Skills Training Centre through a WorkBC Centre early this year. After numerous attempts at applying for jobs I wasn't getting anywhere; this led me to extreme frustration. My limited Canadian experience was soon overcome when I met with the Program Coordinator, Pam Uppal. She taught me a different prospective that initiated a new found confidence. Her encouragement and guidance was appreciated.

The training itself is very comprehensive; I learned how different the roles of a teller are in Canada and how much focus is put on customer service and sales experience. The Bank Teller Training has armed me with information that has led me to securing interviews, understanding computerized systems, and passing interviews. I am now working as an education service marketing coordinator and accumulating customer service experience and continuously seek banking sector opportunities simultaneously. I would like to thank Pam for her guidance and insight and for restoring my confidence, and DIVERSEcity for all the work they do serving newcomers.

# Counselling Services

“Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending.”

- Author Unknown

## Summary of Year (April 1, 2014 - March 31, 2015)

In the spring of 2014, Family Services was restructured through the creation of Counselling Services and Children's Programs. In May of 2014, there was a change in Manager of the department, which brought a renewal of energy to the programs and staff. A Manager of Clinical Services was added in December 2014 to enhance clinical supervision and to build the capacity of the department through a co-manager.

The Counselling Services department welcomed the addition of two new opportunities through which to serve the community; the

Lens on Life project and the Community of Practice. Both of these projects were funded by the Community Action Initiative. In the Community of Practice project, DIVERSEcity acted as community host for the Fraser Region in engaging service providers to build on their Motivational Interviewing skills. As host, DIVERSEcity coordinated a launch for professionals in October, 2014 and subsequent monthly sessions in both Surrey and Abbotsford for professionals.

One other program change this year was the change in the name of the Children Who Witness Abuse program. Based on client feedback, the program was renamed Achieving Balance for Children. The name change was made to help address the stigma and to accurately capture the work done within the program. The move to our new Community Campus in February 2015 had some impact on the Counselling Services staff team as there were some significant changes to their work spaces. This has continued to be a challenge; the department Managers continue to seek out and implement both short term and longer term solutions.







As part of our ongoing commitment to our clients and community, we actively engage in various committees and partnership tables: Surrey Coalition Against Domestic Abuse (SCADA), Children's Partnership, Surrey Child and Youth, Delta Child and Youth, Delta Opposes Violence Everywhere (DOVE), Network to Eliminate Violence in Relationships (NEVR), Substance Use Awareness Team, Langley Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Committee, as well as language/cultural specific

networks for service providers.

## Impact

**Substance Use** / Fraser Health: **304** clients received support services through the Substance Use program, **132** of whom were new to the service between April 1, 2014 and March 31, 2015. The primary areas of challenge, according to client reports at the time of intake, were in the areas of Family Relationships, Education, and Criminal Involvement/Legal Issues with Criminal Involvement/Legal issues as the dominant issue faced by referred clients (57% rated as poor). Services are provided in Punjabi and Spanish.

**Family Counselling** / Ministry of Children and Family Development and Fraser Health Authority: **152** clients received services and an additional 26 clients were referred for services that were subsequently withdrawn. Some of the clients whose

services were withdrawn received preliminary screening, intake and assessment which resulted in a decision to discontinue with the service based on suitability and/or referral to alternate services. Services are provided in Punjabi, Hindi, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, Vietnamese and Spanish.

**Stopping the Violence Counselling and Outreach** / Ministry of Justice- Crime Prevention Division: **222** women were provided with counselling and outreach services through this program. The needs of those seeking support are complex and they are supported in healing from their experiences and navigating a new way of living independently. Services include individual counselling as well as outreach services intended to support women through the court process and with their needs in the community.

**Achieving Balance for Children** (formerly Children Who Witness Abuse)/ Ministry of Justice/Crime Prevention Division: **83** children participated in the Achieving Balance program; through individual, family and/or group based support. Often, counsellors work with sibling groups together and separately to ensure that the family unit is supported holistically.

**Relationship Violence Prevention Program** / Abbotsford Community Services (Ministry of Justice): **74** men participated in the Weekly RVPP program. This group based program is more probation mandated clients who engage in a 17-week curriculum that is delivered in first language and from a cultural perspective for Punjabi speaking men. In addition, 7 families were provided with counselling through supplemental support for **22** sessions. The intention is to reduce and, ideally, eliminate, relationship violence offences.

## Summary of Highlights

- **Substance Use** : **304** clients received support **132** of whom were new to the service
- **Family Counselling**: **152** clients received services
- **Stopping the Violence Counselling and Outreach**: **222** women were provided with counselling and outreach services
- **Achieving Balance for Children**: **83** children participated in the Achieving Balance program
- **Relationship Violence Prevention Program**: **74** men participated in the Weekly RVPP program
- **Child and Youth Mental Health**: **108** children and youth were referred for services and 85 accessed clinical counselling in first language
- **HIV, Hep-C, STI Awareness**: **18** community workshops were facilitated to reach individuals from the South Asian, Karen, Vietnamese, and Arabic communities
- **Lens on Life** : **42** youth aged 16-24 years have received support through the initiatives of the Lens on Life project
- **Child and Youth Empowerment Camp**: **113** children accessed this unique camp experience



**Child and Youth Mental Health** / Ministry for Children and Family Development: **108** children and youth were referred for services and 85 accessed clinical counselling in first language through the CYMH program that serves Delta and Surrey in Punjabi, Korean, Mandarin, Spanish, and Arabic languages. These youth present with significant mental health challenges, and some, with complex trauma stemming from their experiences in their home countries and through their migration to Canada.

**HIV, Hep-C, STI Awareness** / Fraser Health Authority: Over a period of 10 months, **18** community workshops were facilitated to reach individuals from the South Asian, Karen, Vietnamese, and Arabic communities. In addition, outreach services facilitated 60 individuals in being tested for HIV and connecting with Fraser Health community nurses for further information on Hepatitis C and Sexually Transmitted Illnesses.

**Lens on Life** / Community Action Initiative: In partnership with Pacific Community Resources, **42** youth aged 16-24 years have received support through the initiatives of the Lens on Life project, with the majority of youth supported through the group based activities. The project provides Karen and Somali youth an opportunity to express themselves through art; an experience where the only limitations are the ones they set themselves. The art is a communication tool in articulating the youth's journey through the refugee experience and settling in Canada and will become a tool to use in family sessions. Clinical support is provided in addition for youth on a voluntary basis through one to

one counselling.

**Child and Youth Empowerment Camp** / Vancouver Foundation, Vancity Credit Union, City of Surrey, Rotary Club of Delta: Through the 2014 summer and 2015 spring break camps, **113** children accessed this unique camp experience. The Child and Youth Empowerment Camp is a highly innovative therapeutic camp that assists children in managing issues that may include the experience of direct or vicarious violence or trauma, abuse, bullying, anxiety and other emotional or mental health challenges.

## Acknowledgements

The team greatly appreciates our funders as instrumental partners in meeting the needs of our clients: Ministry of Justice- Victim Services and Crime Prevention Division, Fraser Health Authority, Ministry of Children and Family Development, Abbotsford Community Services, Community Action Initiative, Vancouver Foundation, City of Surrey, and Rotary Club of Delta. In addition, we acknowledge our community partners for their collaboration and support: City of Surrey, Surrey School District, Surrey Libraries, Options Community Services, Pacific Community Resources Society, Umoja Operation Compassion Society, Delta School District, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Simon Fraser University, and Langley Community Services.

## Client Story

A woman was referred by her doctor for counselling as she was experiencing significant anxiety and depression that prevented her from participating in her own life. She was unable to work, could not manage to attend to activities with her children and felt hopeless. Her counsellor, Jin, saw her strengths and focused the sessions primarily on what was going right rather than what was going wrong. She asked the client to journal every day about what she was thankful for. Over time, she developed a more positive outlook and was able to learn tools, through counselling, to manage her anxiety and depression. As the client continued with her counselling, she started to make some positive changes and was able to attend to her children more and was able to secure employment.

We had a young girl who left home to live with friends as she felt her family did not have time for her. When she left, her family was distraught and didn't know what to do. There were multiple legal parties involved and the issues became very complex. By the time the family was able to start working with our counsellor, there was limited contact between the girl and

her own family. Our counsellor was able to work with the girl, her family, and the friends she was staying with and eventually, she returned home to her family. The family has learned how to make time for one another and put more value on the strength of their family and less on material achievements.

### Testimonials:

**Substance Use Program:**

*"TJ is the reason I was able to reunite with my family because he helped me when nobody else would. He is one of the good guys."*

**Family Counselling:**

*"Your excellent service changed my daughter's life and my life. I cannot forget. Thank you for your wonderful service."*

*"I felt really relaxed to speak in honest way about my problems, I was not judged in any way. Thank you for all the help I received."*



# Children's Programs

"My scars remind me that I did indeed survive my deepest wounds. That in itself is an accomplishment. And they bring to mind something else, too. They remind me that the damage life has inflicted on me has, in many places, left me stronger and more resilient. What hurt me in the past has actually made me better equipped to face the present."

- Steve Goodier

## Summary of Year (April 1, 2014 - March 31, 2015)

Effective April 1, 2014, Family Services was restructured through the creation of Counselling Services and Children's Programs. In the newly established Children's Programs department is the IMPACT (Immigrant Parents And Children Together) Program, Multicultural Early Childhood Development Outreach Services, the First Steps Early Years Refugee Settlement Program and Sports & Me Program. In March 2015, the Manager of Children's Programs began a maternity leave and a replacement manager was hired to backfill the one year leave.

This year also saw the innovative and collaborative First Steps Early Years Refugee Settlement Program successfully secure funding

from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) in the repatriation of immigrant settlement contracting from the B.C. Government. Although this was a milestone success, the administrative and reporting requirements have had a significant impact on the program staff. Despite these challenges to managing and administering the program, client services remained the same. In fact, new activities based on client feedback were developed, including Read with Me to promote early literacy, PreNatal Yoga, English Conversation Circles, basic First Aid sessions and Introduction to Water Safety. The Program also had an ice skating field trip that was a very unique and enjoyable experience for families. Graduation Ceremonies were introduced into the Exit Plan as a way for families to celebrate their accomplishments and better support their transition into mainstream services.

First Steps continues to see a high demand for services that exceeds the space available and current staffing levels which results in clients being turned away. With an anticipated 7% reduction from CIC's funding contribution for fiscal year 2015-16, this challenge is not expected to be overcome easily. Another challenge this year has been the low attendance in the Dad's group due to their limited



## Summary of Highlights

- **First Steps** served 163 families (230 children aged 0-6, 77 children aged 6-12, 163 mothers and 16 fathers) and 11 clients successfully graduated from the program this year.
- A total of 75 unique adults and 67 children participated in the **IMPACT Program**, representing multiple nationalities including increased numbers of Burmese and Afghani participants.
- **Make Children First** initiative served 178 families and 169 families received translation services at family place and other centers including DIVERSEcity's Counselling Services department.
- **Outreach and Multicultural Program** served 147 families, including 40 referrals to various other community services.



availability on Saturdays. The Sports & Me program introduced a “Special Helper” component to encourage leadership and positive behaviour. However, the Vancouver Foundation funding for the Sports & Me program ended in the spring of 2015, resulting in a decrease staff hours and program capacity starting April 2015. Alternative funding proposals have been submitted and decisions are pending.

Positive connections were developed between families and the IMPACT program. Highlights of the program include learning about community resources, supporting families to feel confident about their parenting, and providing a non-judgmental environment for families to improve their parenting skills and be able to expand their networks. A new collaboration between the program and Surrey Libraries led to the hosting of a successful interactive story time activity. This year saw increased diversity amongst program participants, which empowered them to value their cultural differences. Another new development was the participation of grandparents in the program, who are eager to develop parenting skills to assist in raising their grandchildren.

In both the Make Children First and Success by 6 initiatives, families with children 0-6 years old were connected to a wide variety of support programs within Surrey and were also supported to navigate different services such as Public Transit, signing up for Library cards and applying for the Leisure Access

Pass with City of Surrey Parks and Recreation. Despite changes in funding processes, both these contracts were successfully renewed for the upcoming year.

### Impact

First Steps’ family-focused model for service delivery is very beneficial for clients as its integrated nature supports them in accessing multiple resources and services. The Joint Management Committee, a multi-sector stakeholder and funders committee, has maintained its commitment to this collaborative and innovative initiative to support refugee families with young children. Children participating in Sports & Me showed significant improvements in their behaviour, with one child’s teacher praising him for being a leader and helping his classmates.

The IMPACT Program provided an opportunity for parents to improve their parenting skills in a friendly environment where they could also socialise with other caregivers. A mother commented that she was very happy to find a family who speaks the same language and they then met each other outside of the program as well. One successful example of the positive connection between families was a Karen mom with 2 children living in Canada for approximately 5 years, who was referred by her counsellor. Based on the feedback from her counsellor and IMPACT Program staff observation, this particular participant has



improved significantly in her communication skills, and showed more confidence in reaching out to educate herself by asking questions and having regular attendance in the CAPC parenting program.

The Multicultural Early Childhood Development Outreach services connected clients to local programs such as Family Places through Make Children First, and some families began going together as a group without Program staff. More families are aware of support services and programs through word of mouth in the community and are asking staff for support to get connected. The language and cultural support of our Outreach Worker through our Outreach and Multicultural Program enabled the South Asian community to derive maximum benefit from the “pop-up centre” initiative in the Gurdwara, which was delivered in partnership with Success by 6 partner agencies.

### Acknowledgements

We wish to thank our First Steps partners for their integral role

in the successes achieved by the program this past year: Ministry of Children and Family Development, United Way of the Lower Mainland, CIC, Vancouver Foundation, City of Surrey, Surrey Schools, Fraser Health Authority, Children’s Partnership, Early Years Refugee Project Practice Network and our service delivery partners – Options Community Services Society and Umoja Operation Compassion Society. Last, but certainly not least, Thank You to every staff member of First Steps.

We wish to thank all IMPACT staff, as well as our funder, the Public Health Agency of Canada, the CAPC Children Matter Coalition and the City of Surrey for their support in sustaining a successful program.

We wish to thank all staff, funders and community partners for their continued collaboration and support in the crucial impact the Make Children First and Success by 6 initiatives continue to make in the lives of children and families.

### Client Story

**T**his client came to Canada in May 2013 from Congo. She came with her husband and 3 children. They were received by ISS and later ISS found a place for them in Fleetwood. When the outreach worker from First Steps was given her referral, she called them and later visited them at home to invite them to the program.

At the program, the mother did not seem to engage with her children and did not talk to anyone. After a while the dad raised concerns that the basement where they were staying was off the bus route. It was very difficult for them to use transit as the nearest bus was only reliable during peak hours and after that the bus would come after an hour. The other problem they had was the place was not safe. With this information, the staff connected with the senior manager at Options and advocated with ISS to relocate this family to a better place. They later moved to Newton.

After some time, we realized the mom was not adapting well and was not fully attending to the children as required. Complaints came from the school and also the school bus. The children were not being picked up on time, and most of the time the bus driver would take the children back to school as there was no one to meet them at the drop off location. Through this, the Ministry of Children and Families was involved. This created tension between the mom and the program staff as the mom thought the staff were against her. Later, after a long time without seeing her, the staff that was working with this client reached out to her after being told about incidents that had happened at her home. Twice at night, after 11 pm, she had knocked on a neighbor’s door

with the children saying that they were either locked out or they did not have keys to go into their house. This raised concern with the staff. The First Steps staff took a different approach of calling a case meeting with all service providers working with the client to see how best we could assist the client. With all the information gathered, we divided tasks amongst staff who would be helping the client with different issues. We also found out that the mom was pregnant.

After this meeting, we invited the mom back to the program with the help of the Moving Ahead staff who were working with this family as the mom was more open to those staff. This meeting was successful and mom again started attending the program. We helped her with every issue she had by connecting her with the right services. Through this, she was registered with the Recreation Center and has been attending programs with her 4 children. We also did Kindergarten Readiness with mom to help her develop skills around the school days routine for her children.

Mom is now very happy and attends the program regularly. She loves the program and her children also like coming to the program.

Dad did volunteer work with UMOJA’S sewing classes as he was a tailor back in Africa. Now dad has opened a small tailor business and the family is very happy. Their future looks very bright.

Their success is because the staff at First Steps did not give up on them, and also because of the collaboration the program had with other community services.

# Moving Ahead Program

"I am not what happened to me, I am what I choose to become"

- Carl Jung

## Summary of Year (April 1, 2014 - March 31, 2015)

This year started with successfully transitioning the Moving Ahead Program (Surrey, North Delta, Langley region) from a B.C. Provincial Government contract to Citizenship & Immigration Canada's (CIC) National Settlement Program. This transition highlighted the power of the partnership with DIVERSEcity's subcontracting partners - Pacific Community Resources Society, Options Community Services Society, and Langley Community Services Society – as the change in the funder and contract model resulted in numerous administrative changes, including submission of a program application using CIC's Call for Proposals format, new program and financial reporting templates, timelines and requirements. This additional administrative burden was supported by the collaborative approach of the partnership at both the front-line staff and management levels. In addition, the B.C. Vulnerable Immigrant Populations Program or VIPP Alliance (a community table comprised of all the Moving Ahead contracts throughout the province) proved instrumental in supporting the province's VIPP service providers in successfully transitioning to

CIC by providing a critical communication conduit for the changes and for helping CIC to better understand the VIPP programming and client needs as these changes did have some impact on both client and activities eligibility.

The formal third-party evaluation of the BC VIPP Programs was completed, albeit 3-months later than the original December 2014 deadline. Interviews with community stakeholders, partners, staff, and VIPP Alliance members were conducted, in addition to input gathered from clients. The final report was submitted to CIC for review and to inform the future funding for vulnerable refugee newcomers to Canada.

In September 2014, CIC granted an upward amendment to the contract to deliver a literacy program in Langley for Langley VIPP Moving Ahead clients. As this amendment was granted from BC-wide contract slippage for this fiscal year, these additional activities were only funded until March 31, 2015. Although challenging to start and operate for a 6-month period, the outcomes for clients who participated were immense. The loss of these classes is expected to be great.

While the Moving Ahead Program celebrated many successful outcomes, it continues to overcome both funding and operational hurdles. There were changes to DIVERSEcity's Moving Ahead manager between December 2014 and March 2015. The complexity and level of needs that each client brings remain a challenging aspect of VIPP service provision, while the need for

## Summary of Highlights

- A total of **502 clients** were served by the Moving Ahead Program, providing clients with case managed wrap around planning and support, achieving over the targeted unique client target projection of 407 for this fiscal year.
- All Moving Ahead Program literacy classes were full, with a waitlist and clients are experiencing great success.
- **The Community Kitchens have served 247 clients over 24 kitchens**, exceeding the target for the overall program within the first year.
- **82 Moving Ahead Program clients have found employment** after attending pre-employment information and orientation workshops.





additional language and essential skills services in the community and a lack of government and community based employment, housing and health services tailored to this population are all challenges that must be addressed. A sector wide 7% reduction in budget going into 2015-16 is expected to impact the delivery and scope of the Moving Ahead program while contributing to the uncertainty of future funding opportunities. The Call for Proposals from CIC is expected in June 2015.

### Impact

The sector and community partnerships established through the Moving Ahead Program demonstrated how a collaborative, consultative model is possible and ultimately supports clients in a holistic manner through shared resources, ensuring that the program has the maximum outreach. It is expected that the VIPP evaluation report will reflect positive feedback from community partners who work with VIPP Moving Ahead Program staff in supporting mutual vulnerable clients.

The combination of one to one Case Management Support and Workshops that covered Information and Orientation across a vast domain of topics has enabled the delivery of maximum assistance and support to Moving Ahead clients. Dedicated DIVERSEcity Case Counselors establish a trusting relationship with their clients to assist them in fulfilling their settlement needs. As the language

capacity for vulnerable clients can be a significant barrier to settlement, the language assistance and knowledge of community systems that Case Counselors provide enables clients to navigate services and procedures that are part of settlement into the community. Simultaneously, clients had access to workshops that empower clients to be independent users of systems and services.

Some of the most successful and impactful aspects of the workshop component of Moving Ahead include the Literacy workshop series, Learning Ahead and the Literacy classes in Langley implemented with extra funding from CIC. These services provided access to literacy classes for the isolated and vulnerable Karen population in Langley. Held at the Langley Community Services Society offices, the accessibility and location of these services were fundamental to





their success. These classes provided previously isolated clients with the opportunity to socialize and develop pre-literacy skills in a comfortable and familiar environment. Similarly, the Living Well and Parenting workshops enabled clients to develop skills in dealing with issues such as health and wellness, coping with depression and trauma and adjusting to gender role and parenting role changes. These workshops were delivered by a DIVERSEcity clinical facilitator in first language when possible and supported by a first language Case Counsellor to support the delivery, which increased the popularity and impact to all clients.

The Community Kitchens and Nutrition workshops provided peer learning and support in building skills around healthy cooking methods, practicing safe food handling and adapting to using new kitchen tools while engaging in group activities. The workshops taught clients how to cook on a budget, identify low cost options and how to create a food budget which assisted clients in gaining financial independence and provided a space to interact within the community.

### Acknowledgements

Thank you to the B.C. Provincial Government, Ministry of Jobs,

Tourism and Skills Training, for their vision and support in establishing a program model that meets the needs of vulnerable refugee clients arriving and settling in this province.

Thank you to CIC for maintaining funding this fiscal year, and next, while the model was evaluated and for considering how the best practices developed in this model can be shared with other provinces and contractors across the country.

Thank you to our partners of the B.C. VIPP Alliance – MOSAIC, Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia, SUCCESS, Abbotsford Community Services, Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society, and Rosy Janze, Alliance Coordinator.

Thank you to our regional partners - Pacific Community Resources Society, Options Community Services Society, and Langley Community Services Society – as well as the numerous community partners (both private and public) that have supported the work of this program.

Thank you to Jane Godfrey, DIVERSEcity's outgoing Moving Ahead Program manager for her dedication to the program, its staff and clients.

## I am DIVERSEcity !





# Kyaw Munn Thwe

## *From Burma*

### Client Story

Kyaw is originally from Burma. Due to the political turmoil he illegally escaped out of the country and became an asylum seeker in Malaysia. As there are no refugee camps in Malaysia, refugees are scattered throughout the country, with most of them living in the Klang Valley. Kyaw spent his life in Malaysia for more than a decade.

In November 2013, he and his family got the opportunity to resettle in Canada. They resettled in Canada as a government assisted refugee and lived in Quebec City for a year. Kyaw is illiterate in his own native language and has faced significant hardships in the Québec labour market. He decided to move to BC in November, 2014 because he had heard that Greater Vancouver is often considered one of the most integrated cities in Canada.

Recognizing the complex needs of Kyaw, his friend referred him to the Moving Ahead program to receive assistance in settling into his new community.

In the beginning it was very hard for the Kyaw to navigate the social services and systems in BC. The Moving Ahead Counselor worked with Kyaw to set up reachable goals and helped immediately with needs such as accessing the healthcare system in BC and applying for income assistance while the Kyaw was searching for work. Kyaw's son had active TB and the Moving Ahead Counselor arranged for the family to get access to TB control in New Westminster. The Moving Ahead Counselor also referred the client to English Language instruction classes and Employment program at DIVERSEcity.

Kyaw received income assistance for two

months and now the family is no longer on welfare as he is gainfully employed. Kyaw now continues to study English in the evening as a level two student. Through participating in the Moving Ahead workshops, he gained knowledge about Canadian systems and culture and obtained a BC class 7 driver license with the help of an interpreter. The client is now able to use public transit and able to access any services available to assist him with his settlement needs.

Kyaw and his family continue to thrive in their new community and they continue to build a new life of opportunity and safety here in Canada. Kyaw is thankful for the opportunities that the Moving Ahead Program has enabled. "Without the support from Moving Ahead program we would be lost and would not be able to settle down in a new society."



## Settlement and Community Programs

Information and Orientation Services  
Francophone Settlement Services (OASIS)  
Services Pre-Arrival to Canada (CIIP)  
Food Security, Community Kitchen Program  
Food Security, Community Gardens Program  
Volunteer Program  
Better at Home  
Safe Harbour Program  
Annual Income Tax Clinic  
Welcome to Surrey Tours  
Women's Health & Well-being Drop In  
Young Adults Drop In (for ages 19-30)  
English Conversation Circles  
Transportation Systems Course  
Financial Matters Course  
Immigrant Seniors Support Services

## Moving Ahead Program

### Language Training & Literacy Programs

Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)  
Literacy & Essential Skills Program (Moving Ahead courses)  
English Conversation Circles

### Employment & Skills Training Services

Employment Program of BC (EPBC)  
Immigrant Trades Training Initiative (ITTI)  
Future Leaders Program (from 15 to 30)  
Microloans Program  
Cashier & Customer Service Training Course  
Bank Teller Training Course  
Workplace Conversation Drop in  
Employer Resources (Get in the Know)



## Counselling Services

Children & Youth Empowerment Camp (CYEC)  
Child & Youth Mental Health Counselling  
Achieving Balance for Children (ABC)  
Substance Use Counselling  
Family Counselling  
Multicultural Women's Stopping the Violence (STV) Program  
Relationship Violence Prevention Program(RVPP)  
HIV, Hep-C and STI Awareness Program  
Parenting Workshop Series (Moving Ahead Workshop Series)  
Youth Powered- Lens on Life  
Immigrant Seniors Support Services

## Programs for Children and Youth

First Steps Early Years Refugee Settlement Program  
IMPACT Parenting Program  
Make Children First  
ECD Multicultural Outreach Services  
Youth Point Course (for ages 13-18)

## Interpretation & Translation Services

## CELP Testing







I  
am  
DIVERSEcity !

*It is only with the support of our Staff, Volunteers, Board Members,  
Clients, Community Partners and Funders that we have been able to achieve  
the milestone of celebrating 37 years of service to the Community!  
Our sincerest appreciation goes out to all our Stakeholders.  
Thank you!*