



**DIVERSE***city*  
community resources society

**2015-2016**



# 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

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## DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society

**Community Campus**  
13455 76th Avenue  
Surrey, BC, V3W 2W3

**First Steps Centre**  
#201-7380 King George Boulevard  
Surrey, BC, V3W 5A5

Tel: 604-597-0205 | Email: [info@dcrs.ca](mailto:info@dcrs.ca) | website: [www.dcrs.ca](http://www.dcrs.ca)

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## Message from the President



What does it mean to be a Canadian? What parts of your culture should you have to give up in order to assume your new identity as Canadian? What parts of your culture should you bring to Canada with the intent of changing the way Canada views itself or interacts with the world? At what point are you defending a Canadian way of life or enhancing a Canadian way of life and at what point are you being small minded or even racist?

Thank you for coming to our 2016 AGM. As you can see we deal with some deep and fundamental questions in our everyday work. Inside this building is a microcosm of cultures, belief structures, superstitions, stereotypes and assumptions. We have enough difference just inside this building alone to create conflict and yet we continue to strive to work together in peace.

The things we share are more important than the things we disagree on. First and foremost being Canadian means being willing to listen and to defend another person's right to practice their religion, their sexuality, and their culture. Being Canadian is all about inclusivity. These rights are protected under our Canadian Bill of Rights and under the Canadian Constitution. This means that we don't allow other countries' disagreements to continue here on our soil. Thus in order to be Canadian, we are forced to make peace with our past, to forgive, to try to understand and to move forward into a better life.

Each of us has different ways of looking at the world but the core values here at DIVERSEcity resonate for us all. Respect, Diversity, Resilience, Care, Innovation, Trust and Leadership aren't just words on the wall, they are our daily reality.

We all want a better world, a happy life, safe place to be, to feel accepted, included and understood. So we listen, we learn, we challenge, sometimes we fight but we respect our journey because we all want the same destination. Thank you for being part of this conversation. Welcome to DIVERSEcity.

**Shara Nixon**  
President, Board of Directors

## Message from the Chief Executive Officer

This past year has been defined by global factors that have influenced and tested the way we do business as a community service provider. As the Syrian refugee crisis unfolded before our eyes, it not only highlighted the ongoing plight of refugees world-wide but also presented a challenge to the immigrant services sector in Canada: to assist in the settlement of an unprecedented wave of refugees arriving in a short time frame with many needs and challenges.

DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society, along with our fellow community service organizations, various levels of government, private citizens, health authorities, the RCMP and the school districts, amongst many other stakeholders united to embrace the challenge and provide as many positive outcomes for the resettlement of these newcomers. This challenge brought forward new ways of collaboration, finding efficiencies and also highlighting where there were challenges and we could all do better. DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society continues to lead in the areas of immigrant and refugee settlement and leads the Refugee Response Team in the Fraser Valley which has been a BC Provincial Government initiative.

DIVERSEcity itself has had a year of internal settlement with having our first full year in our Community Campus as well as our first year under our new strategic platform. Our strategic objectives of increasing profile, innovation, revenue growth and enhancing our people and internal culture have been at the forefront of each of our decisions. I am pleased to report that we have made purposeful headway in each of these objectives in our first year and are laying the foundation for both strategic and organic growth in each of these vital areas in the next 2 years of our strategic plan.

As we grapple with unprecedented growth in our surrounding communities from immigration and migration, DIVERSEcity's mission to build and strengthen diverse communities has never been more relevant. We have forged new partnerships and strengthened existing ones to ensure that we position ourselves as a strong player in our local community but also find increasing ways to remain flexible and innovative to ensure real-time challenges can be addressed in a timely and responsive manner.

As you read through this AGM Report, you will note that our programs and services provide real-time and lasting impact. I am honoured to be working alongside the best of the best and would like to thank my incredibly hard-working management and executive team, staff, volunteers, and supporters who have all made this past year a success and have all come out with life-long learning from our mutual experiences and ready for new challenges. I would also like to thank our Board of Directors for their ongoing support and for their leadership in steering our organization with dedication.

I look forward to embracing our challenges and celebrating our successes in this coming year.

**Neelam Sahota**  
Chief Executive Officer





# Settlement & Community Programs



*"The whole is greater than the sum of its parts."*  
Aristotle

## Summary of Year

This past year, DIVERSEcity's **Settlement and Integration Program** supported over 3,000 local clients with their settlement needs through information and orientation, case managed support, and the provision of diverse workshops, courses, and drop in groups designed to meet the needs of local populations. These included seniors,

youth, women, ethnic and linguistic groups, and refugees-including those recently arrived from Syria. Many services were provided in first language. These languages include English, French, Punjabi, Hindi, Mandarin, Cantonese, Spanish, Farsi, Korean, Karen, and Arabic. In the summer of 2015, the funder, Citizenship & Immigration Canada (CIC) released a national Call for Proposals (CFP) for contracts to start April 1, 2016. However, with the change in federal government leadership in the fall of 2015, the climate of refugee resettlement in Canada shifted dramatically with the implementation of Operation Syrian Refugee, resulting in a delay in the review and negotiation of new funding contracts for April 1, 2016.

Prearrival programs expanded from one program to two distinct support streams. **Planning for Canada** serves the pre-departure preparation needs of newcomers from all over the world. Throughout last year, over 1,000 newcomers received the guidance from this online advisory service. The other program, **India 2 Canada**, was launched in December 2015. This new program is to respond to the pre-landing needs of new Canadians who are from India. **India 2 Canada** supports newcomers' integration journey through peer support of Canadian mentors who are currently residing in Canada. From its inception to March 2016, 13 newcomers benefited from this service stream.



DIVERSEcity's **Better at Home Program** expanded from Newton into two new neighbourhoods this past year: Fleetwood and Guildford. The program continued to focus on providing support for

senior residents through the provision of light housekeeping, grocery shopping, transportation, lawn care, and friendly visiting. By partnering with independent contractors, the program grew significantly and over 290 new clients joined the program during this period.

The **Food Security Kitchen & Garden Program** continued to be in demand. The **Community Kitchen Program** was delivered at several sites across Surrey and engaged local seniors, children 6-12 years of age, and caregivers of children 0-6 years of age in workshops and hands on cooking sessions. The **Community Garden Program** continued to operate out of the Hazelnut Meadows and Growing Roots Gardens. However, this year, DIVERSEcity, developed an urban rooftop garden at our new community campus consisting of 20 container garden plots. The first harvest is expected in the summer of 2016.

## 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.

Prearrival programs facilitated the skills and confidence building of our service users. With 70% of our service users coming to Canada as skilled workers, the program played a significant role in imparting the career development knowledge and skills required for a successful transition from our service user's residence country to British Columbia, Canada. The staff of both Planning for Canada and India 2 Canada worked hard to guide our service users to start their preparation at an early stage while they are still residing outside

Canada. The support enabled our service users to save time in having their foreign credentials recognized in British Columbia. It also helped them apply effective career search strategies and reduce the frustration and time associated with finding the initial work opportunity upon their landing.

DIVERSEcity's Better at Home Program for seniors increased by over 290 clients from April 1st, 2015 to March 31st, 2016. In the twelve months, over 1,200 housekeeping visits were made, 100 senior clients benefitted from group activities, almost 200 grocery shopping trips were made, over 150 trips were provided to seniors in need of transportation to appointments, and over 600 friendly visits were made in person by local volunteers. 12% of DIVERSEcity's Better at Home clients over the reporting period are 85 years of age or older, 22% live alone, and 14 unique language groups were represented amongst them.

DIVERSEcity's Food Security Kitchen Garden Program maintained a strong relationship with the City of Surrey. Several community recreation centres hosted DIVERSEcity's Community Kitchen Program and two of three of DIVERSEcity's community gardens exist on City of Surrey park land. On a monthly basis, the community kitchens and gardens provide targeted programming to seniors, caregivers of children aged 0 to 6 years, and children aged 6 to 12. During the twelve months, over 500 people participated directly in kitchen or garden activities. Over 100 children 0-5 years of age benefitted from a caregiver's participation, over 140 children 6-12 benefitted directly from program activities, and over 100 seniors and 100 parents were impacted directly from programming. Nutritious, fresh, organic produce from the gardens alone fed over 400 low income individuals in the community.

## Acknowledgements

- The Settlement and Integration Program thanks Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (formerly CIC) and the B.C. Ministry of Jobs, Tourism, and Skills Training for their continued support to this program. We would also like to recognize the contribution of our partners, the City of Surrey, Vancity Credit Union, and Hannam Market for their collaborations for developing a healthy and diverse community. Finally, we thank our devoted staff and volunteers who worked tirelessly to meet the needs of our clients.

- The Planning for Canada Program thanks program funder, the Colleges and Institutes of Canada, for their unwavering support over the years of our collaboration. Secondly, we wish to thank Vancouver Community College, our partner in the province of British Columbia, for their cooperation for supporting our mutual clients. Last but not least, kudos to our dedicated staff and volunteers who worked hard to provide individualized support to our clients.

- The India 2 Canada Program acknowledges the trust and the support of program funder, Abbotsford Community Resources Society. In addition, we appreciate the contribution of our staff and volunteer mentors who made the distance learning possible for our program beneficiaries.





• The **Better at Home Program** thanks program funder, the United Way of the Lower Mainland, for their continued efforts in supporting program growth and development. In addition, a sincere thank you to the dedicated staff, volunteers, and contractors whose daily efforts have made a significant difference in the lives of local seniors.

• The **Food Security Program** would like to thank funders, the United Way of the Lower Mainland and the Province of British Columbia, for their continued support of this program. Furthermore, the program would like to recognize the highly skilled Food Security Program staff, volunteers, and clients who have worked together to grow green gardens, create magical meals, and truly build a cohesive community.

### Success Stories

The client came from South Korea thirteen years ago under family sponsorship immigration. After arrival, she and her husband were not able to find a job for a couple of years and started a restaurant business. With limited English, lack of resources, and no previous business experience, the business continued to struggle. They had to abruptly close the restaurant. Breaching the lease contract was costly but they were unaware about how to minimize the repercussions. To make things worse, the husband wasn't able to deal with the financial hardship and stress, and left her without notice.

When the client first accessed settlement services in August 2015, she was distressed, helpless and disoriented. On our first session, she stated that "I was too naïve and dependent. Now, I'm alone. The burden is all on my shoulder and it is just too heavy." She and the settlement worker set up a plan together. Since then she came to see the settlement workers for over ten sessions. For the short-term goal, the client received income assistance and CPP with the assistance from settlement worker. This service assisted the client release financial stress. For the mid-term goal, she started her English class and volunteering at Sunday school as a teacher assistant. She was referred to Work BC but decided to find a job six months later once she become more stable emotionally.

*"As a settlement worker, working with her and witnessing how she gradually become empowered has been incredibly rewarding. It took time, energy, and a collaborative effort."*

### Summary of Highlights

- The **Settlement and Integration Program** served over 3,000 clients. All clients received one on one information and orientation support; over 200 group orientations provided; over 1,800 clients attended group orientations; and over 400 clients attended field trips connecting newcomers to the local resources
- 2,800 volunteer hours supported the department's various activities thanks to the efforts of 120 volunteers.
- 33 volunteers supported DIVERSEcity's **Annual Income Tax Clinic** and completed over 1,000 tax returns for low income Surrey residents.
- In June 2015, DIVERSEcity, in partnership with other settlement agencies and the City of Surrey, hosted an annual **World Refugee Day** event at Guildford Recreation Centre with a participation rate of over 200.
- In November 2015, DIVERSEcity hosted its first ever **DIVERSEcity in the Arts Exhibition & Fundraiser** at our community campus to profile the work of 17 local immigrant artists while raising funds for recently arrived Syrian refugees. Over 30% of art pieces displayed were sold.
- In March 2016, DIVERSEcity hosted two **Spring Break Visual Arts Camps** for local and refugee children interested in learning about art from local immigrant artist role models. Twenty five children participated.
- The **Planning for Canada Program** supported over 1,000 clients; 40% of clients received guidance for foreign credentials recognition; 100% received onward referrals to the community services or local resources
- The **India 2 Canada Program** was launched and 13 clients have been enrolled; 2 were matched with a career mentor; all 13 received various levels of career development guidance
- The **Better at Home Program** provided over 3,400 different services over 12 months to local Surrey seniors by a team of dedicated staff, contractors, and volunteers.
- Over 5,000 participant services took place through activities connected with the **Food Security Kitchen Garden Program** over the last 12 months.



Success  
Story

## Altaume & Mohsin From Syria

**A**ltaume and Mohsin have three young kids. They had lived in Syria as refugees before being sponsored by the Canadian government to move to Canada as permanent residents. When they arrived in Surrey, they were overwhelmed with the changes. Neither Altaume nor Mohsin was able to speak much English. Though they got help for finding a home, they found it daunting to navigate day to day life since they had no social relations in Surrey, did not speak the language, and unsure when and how they could find work to bring in income. In addition, they also had to cope with health concerns of various kinds.

With the support of our settlement and integration, as well as First Steps Early Years Refugee program, the family developed a step by step approach to tackle all of the challenges. In less than one year, the health condition of the family members greatly improved. The kids were enrolled into daycare or grade schools. Mohsin lit up the spirit of the family by being the first person enrolling into an informal English conversation group that we offered nearby their home. She started conversing in English and gained more confidence in the family's ability to settle down and become part of the new home. Altaume made connections through our support to a few businesses who could offer him work, using his carpentry

experience. He felt much more connected and hopeful for their future in Canada. "... Not only did DIVERSEcity help me and my family get through our difficulties, they gave me confidence. There is nothing to pay that back!"

-Altaume

The enhanced support provided by our Guided Pathways Settlement service was a key success factor in the successful settlement journey of this family into their new community here in Surrey. The Guided Pathways service is a case management approach that provides enhanced settlement support to families who need this level of assistance to ensure access to needed services.



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

*"Nothing is impossible for a willing heart."  
/ "A Cœur vaillant rien d'impossible."  
Jacques Coeur*

*"The program name, OASIS, 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 other official language – French. With a very restricted program activity budget this past year, orientation et assistance aux services d'intégration francophone à Surrey (or OASIS), managed to assist many French-speaking newcomers to the region with their settlement and integration needs."*

**Michel Ndiom, Manager of Settlement & Francophone Services**

## Summary of Year

DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society has provided first language settlement services to francophone newcomers since 2007 in the Surrey, North Delta and surrounding areas. In November of 2014, DIVERSEcity, in partnership with Le Collège Éducentre, under this new enhanced funding, started delivering a new French settlement program called OASIS (orientation et assistance aux services d'intégration francophone à Surrey). The federal government's Call for Proposals, in the summer of 2015, was completed successfully. The results of this funding Call have been delayed a full fiscal year as a result of the new federal government's implementation of Operation Syrian Refugee.

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) using 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. The activity budget for OASIS this year was significantly more restrictive in comparison to last fiscal year. The OASIS staff team of three has had to be motivated and resilient in their desire to delivery OASIS services. They together served 145 new clients, exceeding the target of 120.

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

OASIS has established itself as the premier service to the culturally diverse French speaking newcomer population in the Surrey, North Delta and surrounding communities. Our client demographic is comprised of part Sub Saharan Africa countries (Cameroon, Congo, Burundi), Middle East and Maghreb countries (Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria), Europe countries (France, Belgium) without forgetting Madagascar, Mauritius and Antilles. OASIS believes that it is critical to support Canada's minority French speaking population in B.C. and most particularly the Francophone newcomer population, who must be able to retain the ability to maintain French as their first language in their new country where it is an official language. We collaborate with ethnocultural groups such as the Cameroonian and the Congolese communities to address the health and social needs of their communities so that barriers are reduced. The language of economy in B.C. is primarily English and although all newcomers need to develop English language skills, we provide genuine opportunities for francophone speaking immigrant and refugee families not to lose their francophone identity.

The leadership provided by OASIS can be seen in the fact that the team has exceeded its annual target and participated as a major partner at the BC Francophone Welcome Day organized by the French Federation of B.C. on March 19, 2016. DIVERSEcity's leadership role in the establishment of OASIS has also been acknowledged by Francophone partner organizations in the province.

## Summary of Highlights

- OASIS has provided services to 145 unique clients
- 87 Individual settlements plans were created
- 238 Individual information /Orientations delivered
- 20 Group orientation sessions delivered
- 36 French /English Conversations
- 2 Sessions of Parenting course
- 7 Sessions of Accessing your community in Surrey and surrounding area
- 4 Men's Group Sessions
- 6 Women's Group Sessions

## Acknowledgements

It is with great pleasure that we acknowledge and thank those who made this dream a reality during this second year of OASIS delivery:

- The OASIS team who devoted their time, energy and worked tirelessly to make sure that clients remained the focus of our work
- Collège Éducentre located in Vancouver, our OASIS service delivery partner, and other francophone agency partners including: La Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique (FFCB), Association francophone de surrey (AFS), RésoSanté Colombie-Britannique, Conseil Scolaire Francophone (French School Board) and L'école Gabrielle-Roy.
- DIVERSEcity's 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
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, OASIS funder

I am DIVERSEcity ! 



## Success Story

The OASIS staff team served Nadia a client in many capacities during the period of June 2014 to August 2015. Nadia landed in British Columbia in 2013 and struggled like most of French speaking immigrants to settle. She could not speak nor write English properly and found refuge in speaking French (her first language) with some friends and relatives. She was quite aware of her need to speak English as she was getting tired of depending on people to move around in the community. She experienced cultural shock and was discouraged. She became quite depressed.

Once she was referred to OASIS, the staff encouraged her to have her English level assessment conducted at the Surrey Language Assessment Centre with the aim to refer her to LINC classes. As soon she started classes, she suddenly became conscious of her potential and requested

to be part of a group where she could practise speaking both French and English. She was registered in our English-French conversation circle. Over the months, she expressed the desire to work as well. We realized that she needed opportunities to gain Canadian labour market experience. She had no job search skills and unfortunately knew nothing about networking. We advised and invited her to join our volunteer group.

When she arrived, she met new people and learned more about the Canadian work culture. After a few weeks, she informed us about a part time Reception Assistant position that was vacant in one of the local organizations. We encouraged her to apply and she was accepted. Nadia's commitment and positive attitude helped her to gain control of her life and obtained her first job in Canada. At OASIS, we are privileged to have provided Nadia needed support for her success. We applaud her resilience and commitment to succeed.



# Language Programs

*"In reviewing the 2015-16 year, it has been a year of setting the foundation for many new ways of delivering Language Programs. The introduction of Portfolio Based Language Assessment (PBLA) is an example, as is the building of partnerships with employment and post-secondary programs. The coming year, 2016-17, will be the fruit-bearing year of all the seed-planting that took place in 2015-16. The retirement announcement of our Senior Manager of Language Programs, Lenard Langlois, was another change that would set a new scene for DIVERSEcity's Language Programs starting in the spring of 2016."*

**Tahzeem Kassam, Chief Operating Officer**



## Summary of Year

In the summer of 2015, Citizenship & Immigration Canada (CIC) released a national Call for Proposals (CFP) for 3-year **Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)** contracts starting April 1, 2016. With a change in federal government leadership in the fall of 2015, the climate of refugee resettlement in Canada shifted dramatically with the implementation of Operation Syrian Refugee. As a result, the review and negotiation of new funding contracts based on our CFP 2015 submission was delayed. And, in an effort to reduce the extensive wait times for LINC programs given the large number of Syrian clients settling in Surrey, the newly named Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC, formerly CIC) provided some additional funding to LINC providers in the last quarter of this fiscal year. DIVERSEcity received funding to add two classes as this was what our space capacity permitted.

The Portfolio Based Language Assessment (PBLA) was instituted this year. LINC Instructors were required to participate in training sessions and LINC providers were required to start implementation. Feedback

from both LINC instructors and students indicate that PBLA was initially a challenge to implement, but is now being considered to be a positive change in LINC programming. Many students have started to embrace the opportunity to take more ownership of their learning within the LINC curriculum, and some have expressed that the artifacts they created are useful tools for monitoring their skills' progress and for setting new learning goals. In turn, instructors took on the challenges of implementing PBLA, by having lead instructors attend training, and then guide and mentor other instructors with the process. As instructors have become more comfortable with the PBLA process, most instructors express that PBLA positively promotes the philosophy of learner-centered instruction.

Of new arrivals to our LINC program this year, 60% fell in the age range of 24 to 44 years of age which is typically the most productive age group for an economy. This bodes well for the future of the region as the area grows and new industries require workers. It also indicates that the demand for **Supported Childcare** while clients attend LINC classes will continue. With year after year reductions to

LINC funding, our childminding capacity continues to be reduced, and the number of spaces available has impacted our ability to accept waitlisted clients who require childminding to attend LINC classes. With the large number of Syrian refugee families with young children, we expect this to be a significant pressure point in the coming year. As we look forward, we plan to review and implement strategies to reduce the student waitlist. One way to do this is to increase our childminding spaces. We will also be looking at other ways to support students' language and essential skills learning, including the delivery of the LINC curriculum and reviewing our current technology so that we can provide our instructors with a wider variety of teaching tools.

The influx of refugees from Syria has been the most notable impact this year on our **Moving Ahead Program (MAP) Literacy and Essential Skills** programming. The vast majority of these learners have minimal previous education, are at pre-literacy or literacy levels in English, and often have trauma as well as multiple health related issues. Due to the high level of support needed by this population, there is a greater demand for volunteer classroom assistants who speak Arabic.

The Literacy Success and Learning Ahead programs offer a structured, supportive and sensitive environment, including offering classroom start-up material, additional classroom help from volunteers who speak targeted languages, smaller classroom sizes, transportation support and child minding in the afternoon. Upon intake, each learner sets language learning goals with the Literacy and Essential Skills Guide which are used to produce their Individual Learning Plan. The supportive structure of these workshops allows for a transitional period to prepare MAP clients for the more stringent expectations and independent learning environment of a LINC classroom setting. These workshops also include informal networking with other participants and obtaining information on settlement related issues.

In the fall of 2015, we were successful in receiving funding through the

Provincial government's **Project Based Language Training (PBLT)** funding Call. We delivered a 5-month English for the Workplace class designed to raise the workplace English language proficiency of clients and make it easier for clients to join other labour market programs or to integrate and succeed in the Canadian workplace. Through this program, as well as others across the agency, have provided the opportunity to bridge our clients more successfully with appropriate programs at KPU. It is expected that this partnership with KPU will continue to be developed in the coming year.

## Impact

The impact of DIVERSEcity's LINC (or Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) program is significant. As the first point of contact for many newcomers in the agency, LINC is well aware the number one concern of new arrivals is to gain access to language classes and to learn English. LINC classes provide the language and settlement information that gives newcomers access to the community, to resources and most importantly to employment that will allow them to create a new life in Canada and to reach their personal and professional goals.

Twenty-four percent (24%) of our LINC students are refugees and finding a way to best support their learning is a priority. The MAP literacy workshops have allowed multi-barriered vulnerable refugees who are initially unable to attend LINC classes the opportunity to obtain the basic literacy skills needed to begin the road towards independence in a Canadian environment. The majority make the successful transition to continue their literacy development in LINC classes and many have found full-time employment. One very successful client who started at CLB level 1 has now progressed to level 4, has completed the Future Leaders course, and is now working full-time at Subway.

## Acknowledgements

The staff of Language Programs, teachers, coordinators, administrative assistants and childcare staff deserve special acknowledgment this year for maintaining their high standards in a year of contract uncertainty, staffing changes, the introduction of new learning assessment tools, and additional trainings required to standardize delivery of the program in the classroom and in administration. With these uncertainties and almost weekly changes, the staff maintained their professionalism and continued to place clients at the front of their concerns.

The Literacy and Essential Skills Guide, and volunteers, who continue to support our multi-barriered vulnerable refugee clients improve their essential and literacy skills to support their successful resettlement here in Canada, deserve a special acknowledgement. The work that they do each day with individual clients in taking small steps towards their literacy goals is often overlooked.

Thank you to our funder, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

## Summary of Highlights

Throughout 2015-2016, **DIVERSEcity's** LINC program worked to address the needs of new arrivals into Surrey. With morning, afternoon and evening classes, the program served:

- 588 clients served in LINC: 24% (or 147) were refugees; 37% (or 219) family class; 34% (or 199) economic immigrants; 5% (or 28) others
- 12 children of LINC students participated in our Support Childcare program

In addition, 40 clients attended the VIPP Literacy and Essential Skills workshops this fiscal year.

## Success Story

**Z**iba Assadullah, a young mother from Afghanistan began her English language training in DIVERSEcity's LINC Literacy class. She was able to place her one child in our supported childcare which helped eliminate one barrier to her participation in class. It became apparent that due to her lack of previous classroom experience in her home country that she needed additional support. Ziba was placed in a Moving Ahead class at DIVERSEcity which, with the assistance of volunteers, provided one-on-one basic English support. After some months in the class, the client returned to the LINC Literacy class. Over the next two years, which included a break to have a child, Ziba showed remarkable determination to learn. Her client file shows nearly perfect marks on the progress tests she took to move levels. Today, Ziba continues to work hard and is determined to find her place in her new community and country.



# Employment Services

*"The addition of a new youth employment program this year solidified the vision created through an internal strategic planning process. We now see a clear roadmap through which the team of Employment Specialists will build towards in the coming years."*

*Susan Liu-Woronko, Manager of Employment Services*



## Summary of Year

While Microloans, Future Leaders & EPBC programs continue to provide excellent career advising support to job seekers in B.C., DIVERSEcity responded to a major call for proposal by the Government of B.C. that concluded in the wrap up of the ITTI (Immigrant Trades Training Initiative) program & the start of a new youth employment program, titled Future Troopers. This new program contract solidified the vision created through an internal strategic planning process & created the roadmap through which the team will build towards in the coming years.

DIVERSEcity hosted the Surrey Board of Trade's March 2016 Business to Business networking evening, showcasing the new Community Campus building and the variety of services we offer.

**The Microloans Program**, funded by Vancity Credit Union, continues to provide alternative credit to newcomers who do not have credit history in Canada, to upgrade their credentials, purchase equipment or start their own business. From delivering this program, the team has observed a gap in services that support newcomers to explore other avenues of economic independence than the traditional 9-to-5 employment. Many who aspire to start their own business experience difficulty in navigating the Canadian rules & regulations or lack the financial literacy required for a small business operator. This area has been identified as a priority for program & funding development in the coming year.

In addition to five Employment Specialists who provide services from the Fleetwood/Guildford and Whalley **WorkBC** Centre locations,

## Summary of Highlights

- **Microloans Program:** A total of 5 loans were approved of the 13 loans applications that were submitted. The value of the approved loans totalled \$65, 000.
- **Employment Program of BC at Newton itinerant service for Fleetwood Guildford:** total for the year is 35 clients case managed; 16 have found employment since receiving services. For the Whalley catchment pilot, 7 clients were served with two job attached.
- **Future Leaders Program:** 45 youth graduates (93% target of the contract target) were served and 42 were employed.
- **Future Troopers Program:** During the first 5 months of the program, we have served 8 clients towards employment in warehousing, security and construction trades.
- **Immigrant Trades Training Initiative:** 112 clients were served (100% of the contract target).
- **Project Based Training Electricians:** All 13 clients finished and passed the course through Kwantlen Polytechnic University and graduated with Level 1 Electrician Certification. Seven are working in the electrical field.



our partnership with Pacific Community Resources Society (operator of Fleetwood and Guildford ESC), has allowed DIVERSEcity's to deliver EPBC service 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. The Employment Specialist is able to provide the full spectrum of services from case management to job development, the true one-stop-shop of services. With this success, and a two-month pilot program with the Whalley ESC, the team is looking forward to expand and offer the same type of itinerant EPBC to newcomers from the Whalley Catchment in the coming year. This stream of service focus on serving older immigrant adults with career transition needs.

The two youth employment programs, the **Future Leaders** and **Future Troopers**, together serve immigrant youth between the ages of 15 to 30, with long term career exploration & short term entry level employment. The Future Leaders Program, funded by Service Canada, prepare youth clients with customer services skills for a career in the retail & food and beverages industry, whereas the Future Troopers, funded by Ministry of Jobs, Tourism & Skills Training, are streamed to employment in warehousing, security and constructions trades. This program maintains DIVERSEcity's work with ITTI in connecting newcomers to great careers in trades.

Before wrapping up in September 2015, the ITA-funded **Immigrant Trades Training Initiative (ITTI)** supported immigrants and refugees 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. The **Electrical Apprenticeship Training**, in partnership with Kwantlen Polytechnic University, this program has been designed to help new immigrants achieve the basic skills to enter electrical trade in the entry level position and start their apprenticeship with ITA. With the shortage of skilled workers in trades, both the ITTI and the electrical apprenticeship training programs had developed strong relationships with the employers in the sector & supported them in their recruitment challenges.

Through our **Get In The Know website**, DIVERSEcity continues to provide resources to small & medium enterprises, who may not have a stand-alone HR department, with strategies & step to step guide on how to tap into the immigrant talent pool.

## Impact

The Employment Services Team's mission is to support new immigrants and refugees toward economic independence. The Employment Services team, consists of 11 Employment Specialists who are Career Development Practitioners, one Marketing & Communications Assistant, and one Manager. This year, we delivered 5 government-funded programs & supported 237 clients in their journey to meaningful employment, connecting them with 72 local employers.

DIVERSEcity continues to engage Surrey businesses as key stakeholders in achieving our mission. Many of our employer partners provide newcomers with their coveted "first job" that provides a critical



Success Story

# Karen

Customer Service Representative  
at **Tim Hortons**  
-Employment Program of BC (EPBC) Client

**K**aren was a participant in the Future Leaders, a youth employment program for newcomers. This program targets visible or ethnic minority youth looking for work. The outcome of this program is for youth to enhance their skills and obtain Canadian work experience by providing them placement within the retail, food, or service industry sectors. At the end of the workshops, participants will be certified in, Cashier/Customer Service Training, Food Safe, WHMIS and First Aid certificates. Along the way, students will learn valuable life skills and employment skills.

Karen finished her high school at Johnston Heights Secondary School in Surrey but did not know what career she wanted to pursue. She volunteered at her church in many

of their programs, loves cooking and has a team working spirit. She was thinking of either going to culinary arts or being a social worker. Karen also did not have Canadian work experience, a support network & financing to pursue her career goal. She was referred to the Future Leaders Program to help her overcome these barriers.

Karen was eager and motivated to learn the Canadian workplace culture and practice mock interview questions. She met 8 other immigrant and refugee youth also struggling to find their footing in their new country and formed the friendship & network that may provide support behind the span of the program. With the living allowance provided to them during the 6-week facilitated training, this seed money forms the basis to

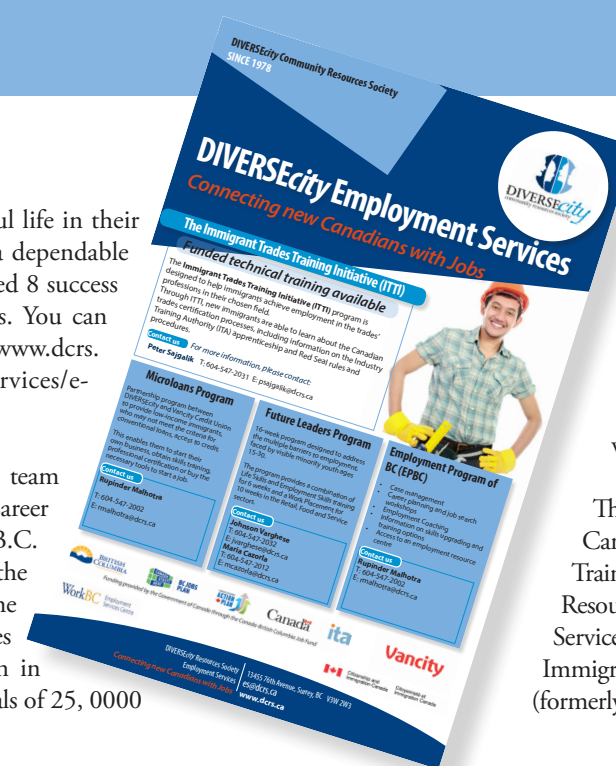
their long term career development. And with the 10-week work experience placement, she finally got that coveted "First Job" in Canada.

Karen was placed in Tim Hortons at the Guildford mall for 10 weeks of work experience; both as front counter customer service staff & cashier. Karen decided to pursue culinary arts and is currently completing the program at Vancouver Community College and while continuing to work at Tim Hortons.

Karen is enjoying the culinary arts program and said that "[Future Leaders Program] helped me to identify my goals and is looking forward to work towards becoming a chef".

foundation on which to build a meaningful life in their new country; the employers in turn gain a dependable & hard working employee. We have profiled 8 success stories showcasing these win-win scenarios. You can find these stories on our website <http://www.dcrs.ca/services/employment-skills-training-services/e-newsletters/>.

This year, the Employment Services team also shared its expertise with fellow Career Development Practitioners through the B.C. Career Development Association. At the 2016 Career Development Conference, the DIVERSEcity team presented on Strategies to Support Refugees Economic Integration in March 2016, responding to the recent arrivals of 25, 000 Syrian refugees in Canada.



## Acknowledgments

Thank you to DIVERSEcity's Employment Specialists for their phenomenal professional excellence.

Thank you to all the local employer partners we have worked with this past year.

Thank you to our funders – Service Canada, Province of B.C., Industry Training Authority, Pacific Community Resources Society, Options Community Services, Vancity Credit Union, and Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada (formerly Citizenship & Immigration Canada).





# Fee Based Services

## The Language Store, Skills Training Centre and CELPIP



*"With the arrival of hundreds of Syrian refugee families this past year, the importance of Interpretation (verbal), and to a lesser extent Translation (written), became highlighted for many in the community. The significance of the work that we have done every day for the past 20+ years – helping service providers communicate effectively and accurately with newcomer clients – has had a spotlight shown upon it. The need to have professional and trained interpreters in these communications between service providers and clients is one that we hope will be better understood by service providers who are in a position to provide services to newcomers without sufficient English language skills. DIVERSEcity will continue to support the community of service providers in doing this."*

**Mike Glass, Business Development Manager**

### The Language Store

#### Summary of Year

The Language Store is a highly successful social enterprise providing interpretation and translation services in over 65 languages to over 140 organizations, including Federal and Provincial government organizations, local municipal governments, health authorities, major corporations, private businesses and community-based agencies throughout the lower mainland and the Fraser Valley. With over 20 years of experience, we have continued to grow and enhance our service offerings to become one of the premier suppliers of interpretation services in the Province. The Language Store is also consistently ranked as one of the top service providers in BC in customer performed supplier feedback surveys with notably superior ratings in quality of service and responsiveness.

The Language Store achieved significant growth over the past year with revenues rising by 28% to \$1,200,000. The demand for our 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. In 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. Over the past year, we served the needs of over 7,500 clients while employing the services of over 230 interpreters. 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 50 new interpreters, streamlining processes, providing on-going training and development for interpreters and implementing 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 7,500 clients served, 230 interpreters engaged and employed, over 50 new interpreters on-boarded, over 65 languages and cultural groups served, and revenue growth of 28%.

#### Acknowledgments

The past year has seen tremendous growth in the Language Store in addition to significant enhancements in our technology and efficiencies in our processes and workflow. Our success is entirely due to the tireless commitment of our staff team and our dedicated and highly skilled base of interpreters. To all those who have contributed so much with their passion and commitment to excellence, we say "Thank you!"

#### Testimonials

*"Being a community interpreter is very meaningful. Working with organizations in different sectors helps expand my knowledge base. I am glad to help immigrants and newcomers overcome linguistic barriers so that they can access diverse resources and integrate into the local community."*

**Jasmine - DIVERSEcity Interpreter**

*"It is my pleasure to talk about my story and how DIVERSEcity is leading the road in the professional venue of interpretation. I was interviewed by you in year 2012 when I completed the course in the Introduction of Interpreting, I remember you were such a sharp recruiter and an experienced coordinator, from the interview questions you asked, they showed the rigorous bar DIVERSEcity sets in its approach and standards in this industry. The professionalism and development DIVERSEcity provides has been both academic and hands-on and the learning has been endless. The opportunity that you provided for the training of "Interpretation for Mental Health" was a typical case. Your spurring and encouragement has played a big part in my climbing this path!"*

**Yi Shen – DIVERSEcity Interpreter**

### CELPIP (Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program) Testing Services

#### Summary of Year

The CELPIP tests are one of the two language proficiency tests that are accepted by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) for Permanent Residency and for Citizenship. Through our partnership with Paragon Testing Enterprises, the developer and owner of CELPIP, DIVERSEcity is one of the largest premier testing sites in the country. We are honored to play a role in the successful road to citizenship for so many newcomers.



DIVERSEcity has been an official CELPIP test center for over 5 years and over the last year has continued to experience significant growth in the number of clients served and the revenues derived from operations. In the last year, testing revenues grew by 28%. The number of clients/test takers also grew in this proportion to a total of 3,072 from 2,400 the previous year. This growth was enabled by the move to our new building and the continued expansion and enhancement of our computer lab testing facilities accommodating larger



test sessions and providing a platform for further growth in the year ahead.

#### Summary of Highlights

3070 clients served, and 28% revenue growth.

#### 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.

#### Acknowledgements

Over the past year, through the hard work and dedication of the CELPIP team and the excellent ongoing support of our partner, Paragon Testing Enterprises, DIVERSEcity has continued to grow and to provide the highest levels of quality in its language testing services. Through the commitment of the team, DIVERSEcity has consistently ensured its clients receive the highest levels of service and support possible to enable their current and future success.

### Skills Training Centre

#### Summary of Year

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 revenues grew by 27% as the demand for our training offerings continues to grow as we reach new markets and enhance the profile of our training center. In the year ahead we will be continuing to broaden our course delivery by introducing a Microsoft Office Computer Course and are working at other course additions that leverage the enhanced facilities and resources available within DIVERSEcity.

#### Impact

The students who take our courses obtain critical introductory training, skills development and employment oriented instruction that creates pathways to success in the Canadian labour market.

#### Summary of Highlights

170 clients served (30% growth over previous year), 22 training sessions conducted (compared to 15 in the previous year), and revenue growth of 27%.

#### Testimonial

"The course was fantastic and the instructor was great. Knowledge was imparted in a kind, cooperative understanding, supportive and professional way. The Customer Service training provided me with new skills and a valuable understanding and insights of the Canadian workplace. This training through DIVERSEcity has given me confidence in my ability to seek employment opportunities as I move forward."

Customer Service student

# Counselling Services

"Within the counselling services programs, we often see people at their most vulnerable, but we also see them find resolution and balance. While we can't ignore the need, we want to highlight the strengths of each and every person brave enough to ask for help, and strong enough to face their fears. This year, we want to acknowledge those who chose a better, brighter and bolder path".

Corina Carroll, Manager of Counselling Services and  
Anil Baines, Manager of Clinical Services

#### Summary of Year

Within the Counselling Services department, we continue to think of innovative ways to meet the needs with limited resources. There is no deficit in the passion and commitment of the team; they seem to only be limited by the number of hours in a day!

A consistent highlight of the year is always the Child and Youth Empowerment Camp; a unique 4-day camp that focuses on internal



strengths, supporting emotional regulation and identifying positive coping strategies for children and youth who benefit from this level of intervention. The camp is free and includes a parent orientation prior to camp as well as a family lunch on the last day.

Reaching senior women has always been a goal of the counsellors and thanks to a private donation, we were able to implement Chai

I am DIVERSEcity! 🍁



#### Success Story

Our Child and Youth Empowerment Camp is a unique opportunity for children and their parents to benefit from the tools we share that help children understand and regulate their emotions. We have been honoured to witness incredible progress made by some of the children who attend:

In the summer of 2015, we had a young boy referred to camp after experiencing a very challenging year in his family life. He embraced the camp curriculum and activities immediately and on the second morning his mother told us that the previous evening the two of them were engaged in an argument and then her son told her to breathe and demonstrated what deep breathing looked like. He also assured her that if they were both calm, they would be able to solve the problem together. She told the counsellor that although she had often suggested her son "take a deep breath" she had never thought to show him how. She seemed so proud that he had learned and shared this with her. She then said, "That was after only one day at camp, I can't wait to see what happens next!"

At our 2016 spring break camp, a boy who had experienced significant family trauma refused to let his mother leave his side. We quickly mapped out a strategy for her to slowly move from his side, to the corner of the classroom, to the hall and eventually she was able to drop him in the morning and pick him up after. The counsellors were able to use the very tools that are taught in the camp to assist the boy and the other children in the group showed support to him through the entire camp. He expressed to the counsellor that on the third day, he didn't cry for the first time in a year. In the camp, he was actively engaged and made new friends with whom he exchanged numbers. He was so appreciative of his progress and asked to return for the following year.







Time; a tea group for Punjabi and Arabic speaking women. The groups provide an opportunity for women to come together, support one another, take time to practice mindfulness and have access to guest speakers on health and wellness.

populations and engaged in work with children, youth, families and seniors. Our intention has been to raise awareness, reduce stigma and respond to the complex needs of newcomers through a trauma informed and culturally safe approach. We have also made significant contributions to building community capacity through training opportunities provided to professionals from Fraser Health, Ministry of Children and Family Development, Surrey School district, and social service and settlement organizations.

#### Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the following funders: Ministry of Justice- Crime Prevention Branch, Ministry of Children and Family Development, Fraser Health, Community Action Initiative, and Abbotsford Community Resources.

We would like to thank our service partners: Pacific Community Resources Society, Options Community Services, Surrey Libraries, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Simon Fraser University, and Langley Community Services Society.

The Managers, Corina Carroll and Anil Baines would like to thank our amazing team from 2015/2016! You all inspire us to want to do more!

Toward the end of the year, counselling services became a leader in the community in identifying and addressing the unique needs of the newly arriving Syrian refugees. From offering various trainings offered to service providers in Surrey and Langley to a webinar on trauma for settlement agencies throughout Western Canada, the team demonstrated their commitment to not only providing direct support to children, youth and families, but building the capacity of the community.

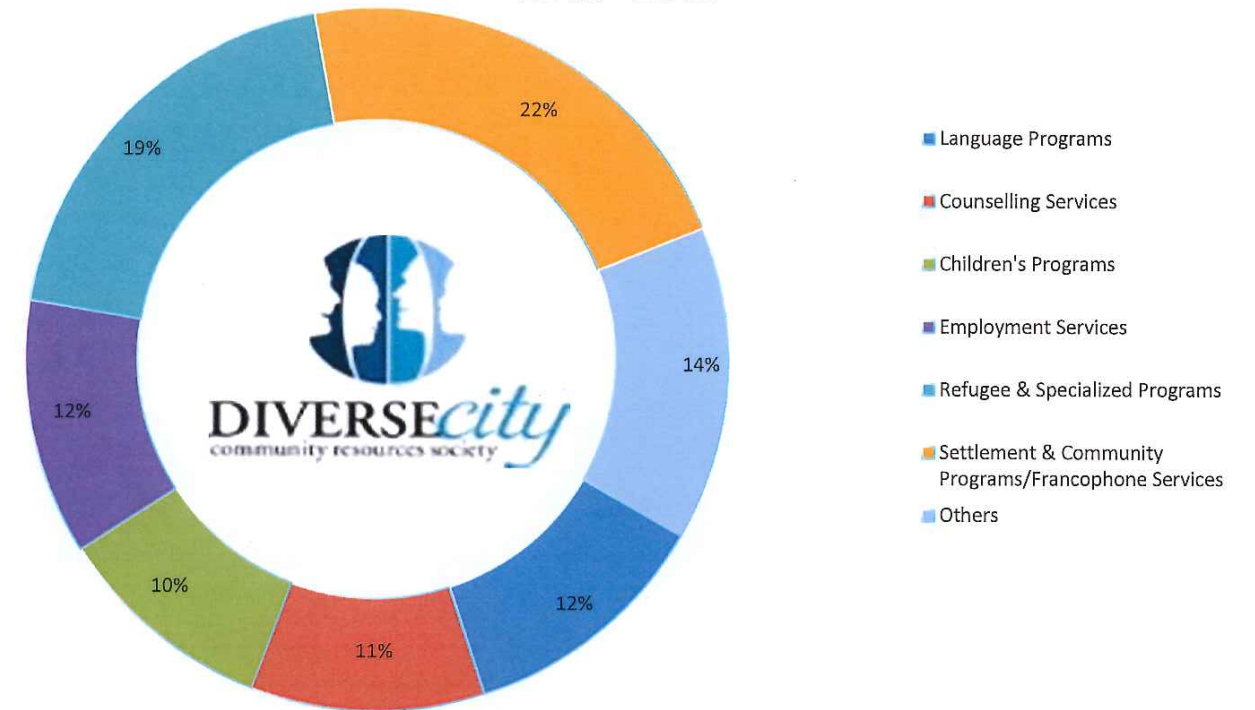
#### Impact

The recent Syrian refugee crisis has highlighted the need for holistic programming that looks beyond basic needs. As such, the Counselling Services department has endeavored to reach vulnerable immigrant and refugee populations with innovative and responsive programming. We have advocated for changes in programming specific to vulnerable

### Summary of Highlights

- **Family Counselling/** Ministry of Children and Family Development and Fraser Health Authority: **117** clients received services. Services are provided to families in Surrey, Delta, White Rock and Langley in Punjabi, Hindi, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, Vietnamese and Spanish.
- **Stopping the Violence Counselling and Outreach/** Ministry of Justice- Crime Prevention Division: **204** women were provided with counselling and outreach services through this program in Punjabi, Farsi, Korean, Mandarin, Arabic, and Spanish.
- **Achieving Balance for Children** (formerly Children Who Witness Abuse)/ Ministry of Justice/Crime Prevention Division: **102** children participated in the Achieving Balance program.
- **Child and Youth Mental Health/** Ministry for Children and Family Development: **100** children and youth accessed clinical counselling in first language through the CYMH program that serves Delta and Surrey in Punjabi, Korean, Mandarin, Spanish, and Arabic languages.
- **Substance Use /** Fraser Health: **207** clients received support services through the Substance Use program. Services are provided in Punjabi and Spanish.
- **Relationship Violence Prevention Program /** Abbotsford Community Services (Ministry of Justice): **70** men participated in the Weekly RVPP program. The intention is to reduce and, ideally, eliminate, relationship violence offences.
- **Child and Youth Empowerment Camp/** First West Foundation, City of Surrey, Rotary Club of Delta: Through the 2015 summer and 2016 spring break camps, **93** children accessed this distinctive camp experience.
- **Chai Time/** Private donor: On average, **20** senior women participate in the weekly Chai time groups with as many as 40 participating at particular events.
- **Lens on Life/** Community Action Initiative: In partnership with Pacific Community Resources, **93** Somali and Karen youth have received support through the initiatives of the Lens on Life project.
- **Community of Practice/** Community Action Initiative: DIVERSEcity completed their duties as host for the Motivational Interviewing Community of Practice with a regional event for **26** participants on Motivational Interviewing.

### Spectrum of Services 2015 - 2016





# Children's Programs

*"The 2015-2016 year was a catalyst for change: new programming, new clients and overall growth that will be developed and nurtured through the coming year."*

*Jessica Forster-Broomfield, Manager of Children's Programs*

## Summary of Year

The funding for Children's Programs was a big focus area this year. Both the federal government's Call for Proposals (CFP) and the United Way of the Lower Mainland were undergoing significant change for the fiscal year starting April 1, 2016. This took a significant toll on the First Steps Early Years Program – its managers and staff – with the uncertainty of funding beyond this fiscal year.

The last quarter of this year saw an incredible increase in clients as the government approved resettlement of a high number of Syrian families across Canada, 47% of those landing in British Columbia were children under the age of 12 years old. With an increase in funding from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and United Way of the Lower Mainland, we were able to provide increased programming through the First Steps Early Years Refugee Program to support their specific needs as a large group of very recently arrived families.

The Department also welcomed a new project: the Peer Ambassadors Program under the Avenues of Change, Guildford West project,

funded by the United Way of the Lower Mainland. The project is delivered in partnership with Fraser Health Authority and Surrey Libraries. DIVERSEcity is responsible for recruiting, training and managing Volunteer Peer Ambassadors who have been trained in either early years' Health Promotion or Early Literacy, in order to support families with children 0-6 years old living in Guildford West.

## Impact

The trend of this year was independence and empowerment. Overall, the Children's Programs staff reported that many clients were becoming more confident in accessing mainstream programs by themselves. They were proactive in asking about services and resources available and eager to get themselves and their children connected to local services.

## IMPACT Parenting Program

The families get a chance to discuss parenting topics and meet new people with a sense of belonging to a group of parents who all come from different backgrounds. This parenting program is successful in improving parents and their children's social skills by encouraging them to be an active part of the community.



## Summary of Highlights

- Families participating in the **Multicultural ECD Outreach Programs** are primarily South Asian, Vietnamese, Somali, Dari/Pashto and Arabic speaking due to contractual requirements and first languages of the staff. The Make Children First Program served **142** families and the Outreach Multicultural Program served **198** clients.
- The **IMPACT Program** served **72 families (or 126 clients)** and retained its diverse demographics, including participants from China, India, Somalia, and one participant from the UK. There was also a significant increase in participants from Burma and Afghanistan.
- The **First Steps Early Years Refugee Program** served **570** clients and also had a diverse clientele with the largest groups from Iraq, Somalia, Afghanistan and Myanmar and a large increase in Syrian clients in the last quarter.

## Multicultural Early Childhood Development (ECD) Outreach Programs

Families are becoming more involved in community, particularly in accessing the recreation centre programming with their Leisure Access Passes and the Libraries' programming.

## Avenues of Change Guildford West Project – Peer Ambassadors Program

The Peer Ambassadors Program was launched in November 2015 and successfully recruited, screened, and trained 14 Peer Ambassadors with strong connections to the Guildford West neighbourhood. Each Peer Ambassador has a native language other than English which expands the reach of this strategy to reach the Spanish, Arabic, Tagalog, Chinese, Punjabi, Hindi, and Burmese speaking communities. The collective group of Peer Ambassadors received training on trauma informed practice, volunteerism and leadership.

## First Steps Early Years Refugee Program

Due to the arrival of many Syrian families, the First Steps Program successfully received additional funding from the United Way of the Lower Mainland and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada in order to increase programming and support for these families. Additional support for 6-12 year old children to access the MyZone program at Newton Recreation Centre on Wednesday evenings was also provided due to short term funding from the Leon and Thea Koerner Foundation.

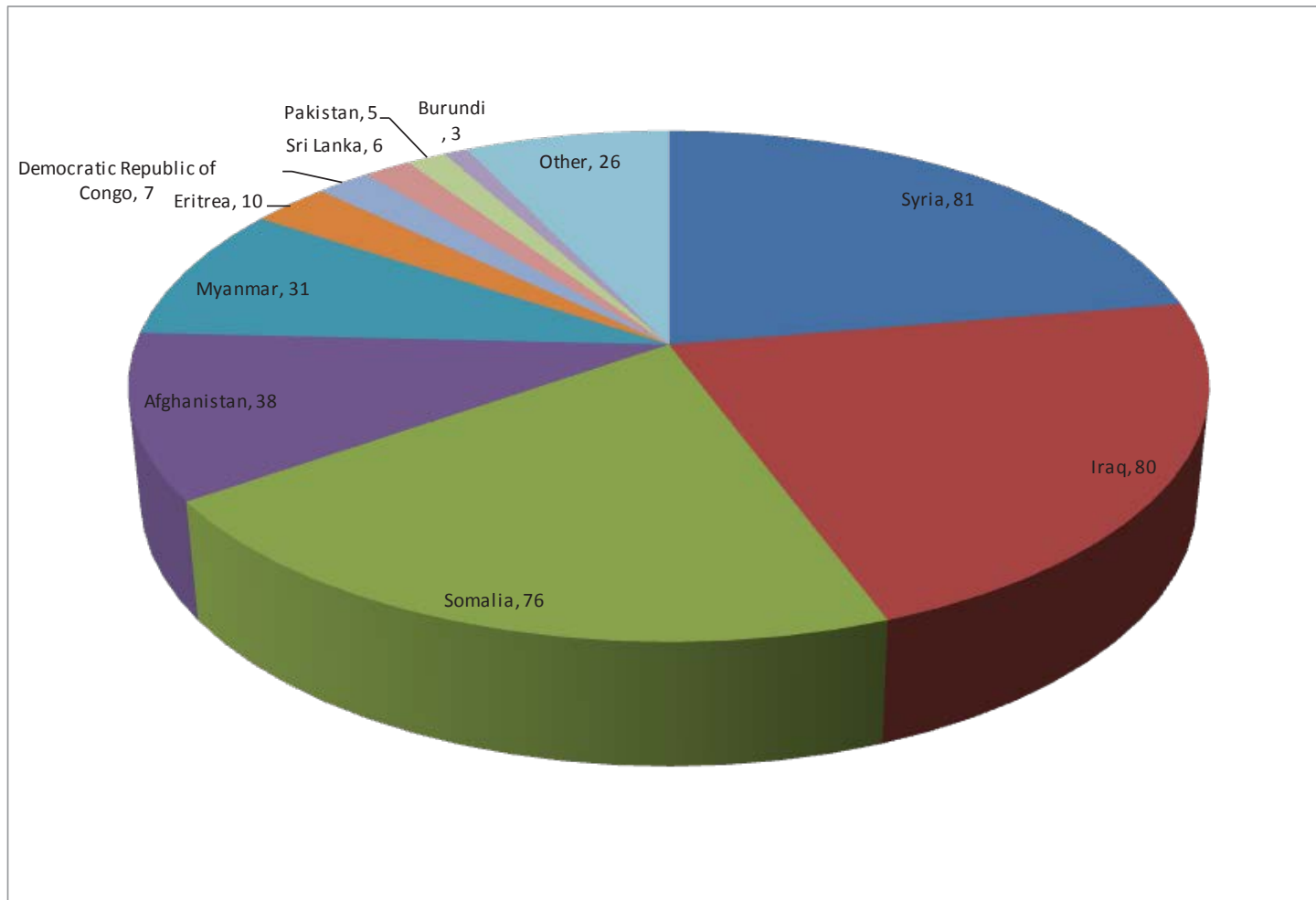
## Acknowledgements

A special thank-you is due to our service delivery partners for the First Steps program- Options Community Services and UMOJA Operation Compassion Society and for Peer Ambassadors Program: Fraser Health and Surrey Libraries. Our Multicultural ECD Outreach Programs and IMPACT Parenting Program are each part of a collaborative between Surrey service providers including Options Community Services, UMOJA Operation Compassion Society and Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association. Partnerships and collaborations are a large part of the success of Children's Programs. These partnerships and collaborations create programs that provide holistic client service and work collectively to improve access to mainstream community programming for families with refugee and migration experience. A gracious thank you to our funders and in-kind contributors; Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada, United Way of the Lower Mainland, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, City of Surrey, Sources, Fraser Health, Surrey Schools, and Surrey Libraries.





## 2015-2016 Demographics for First Steps Early Years Program



### Success Story

**T**amina (name has been changed for privacy) joined the First Steps program in 2013. She arrived in Canada as a refugee claimant; a single mom with two kids. She was very isolated, without social supports, and felt very frustrated as to how to start her life in Canada. Through the First Steps program, she has worked on identifying her own strengths; her self-esteem has greatly improved as a result. She has since joined an Employment Program and has become a volunteer with DIVERSEcity. She feels positive and hopeful about the future for herself and her children.



## Refugee & Specialized Programs

*"To see the resilience and strength of the human spirit continue to ignite despite experiences of great suffering and hardship is an incredible sight. This is something we continuously witness in the clients we assist and we are humbled by their experiences and the compassion it teaches us."*

**Laura Mannix, Manager of Refugee & Specialized Programs**

### Summary of Year

This past year has been one of growth, great resilience and reaching new frontiers for the Vulnerable Immigrant Populations Program- Moving Ahead. It started with the national Call for Proposals (CFP) by the funder, Citizenship & Immigration Canada or CIC. The process was arduous and resulted in some significant program model changes that were to take effect April 1, 2016. However, with the change in federal government leadership in the fall of 2015, the climate of refugee resettlement in Canada shifted dramatically with the implementation of Operation Syrian Refugee, November 4, 2015. We saw the arrival of a third of all newly arrived Syrians in British Columbia (824 Syrian refugees) resettle in the Fraser Valley Area, mostly in Surrey within a 3 month period. As a result, the changes proposed in the CFP 2015 submission have been delayed as the funding contract was extended for the 2016-17 fiscal year.

One of the most challenging aspects of service provision of the year was assisting Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada in finding housing in the Fraser Valley area for a significant number of Syrian families who were staying at temporarily at the Sheraton Hotel

in Guildford. With affordability and large families as a barrier to finding appropriate housing locally, **Moving Ahead Program (MAP)** staff successfully resettled these families and provided family support to those who were experiencing trauma and shifts in family dynamics. The implementation of the **Refugee Settlement Coordinator** role mitigated the referral process of hundreds of Syrian refugees arriving to Surrey weekly from ISSofBC's Welcome House through outreach, initial needs assessment and referrals to the appropriate community resources in the area. This new role ensured that no newly arrived refugee to the area was left without assistance and that any urgent needs of clients were met. MAP staff have been on hand to assist other settlement organizations in the area to work with refugee clients who have multiple complexities, further highlighting the incredible collaborative approach the community has had in welcoming newcomers.

While there has been great emphasis and publicity around the arrival and settlement of Syrian refugees, there has been an on-going need to also highlight the plight of all refugee populations. The MAP team has worked hard to ensure that all newly arrived refugees receive the same community resources and consideration in order to minimize any disparities amongst clients which can cause division among refugee populations settling in the community. One way to do that was through the implementation of the **DIVERSEcity's Refugee Support Fund**, a source of funds that can offer relief in times of emergency for refugee clients, and expanding **DIVERSEcity's Annual Bundle Up Campaign**. This year's donation drive enabled over 150 refugee clients to take home donated items such as baby care and medical supplies, food, clothing and housing items. This successful campaign was made possible by several organizations in the

### Summary of Highlights

- 463 eligible refugee clients were served this year under the Moving Ahead Program
- 96% of vulnerable immigrant and refugee clients have indicated that they have learned about key resources and information that has helped them reach their settlement needs through the Moving Ahead Program.
- 93% of vulnerable immigrant and refugee clients have indicated that they have developed social connections and feel less isolated by participating in Moving Ahead activities and services.
- Over 290 newly arrived Syrian refugees to Surrey were connected and referred to the appropriate community services or assisted under the VIPP Moving Ahead Program





community such as SFU, Immigrant Employment Council of BC, United Way, Surrey schools and members of the public who donated items that were most in need.

The Moving Ahead Program continued to provide innovative programming and individualized support to vulnerable immigrant and refugee newcomers through an integrated, holistic and client-centered model despite a 7% reduction of funding this year. Any capacity of the program that may have been reduced through funding cuts was mitigated through new partnerships to create new initiatives clients could participate in which included the **FLIGHT Exhibition with Cameras for Change**, in which refugee clients were able to learn new skills around photography, socialize and capture photos of what life in Canada represents to them to be displayed for the public to get an insight into the refugee experience. This initiative enable MAP clients to meet friends, have an opportunity to be expressive through art and publically educate the community.

#### Impact

The Moving Ahead Program is an integral catalyst in resettling vulnerable refugees in the community. Due to its unique nature, the expertise and commitment of its staff, it is the bridge that links newly arrived vulnerable refugees with the rest of the community. As MAP Counselors are from the same cultural background as their clients and speak the same first language, they provide the language assistance and cultural brokerage needed to connect clients with resources that assist their settlement goals.

*"The Moving Ahead Program helped me in many ways, starting from connecting me to the resources I needed to educating and orienting me to life in Canada. Over time, I gained the confidence to navigate and utilize services independently."*

**Nazar Danno. A former Iraqi Moving Ahead client**

Other community providers such as health care practioners, the RCMP, schools, private sponsors, provincial employment and housing services all benefit from the assistance of a MAP Counselor in enabling better accessibility for their clients to those services. The one-to-one case management and unique group workshops ensure a supportive transition to independence after a client is exited from the program.

*"Moving Ahead is an extremely beneficial program for many of the clients I work with. The staff are amazing, thoughtful, genuine and ever so giving of their time and expertise. They are passionate about their work and will often go above and beyond to assist the families they serve".*

**The Centre for Child Development – Family Services Worker**

*"You guys are doing a great job. Having you present with the patients is an excellent advantage because through you I can understand them, their culture and their medical issues. I notice also that your clients trust you with all their issues, which is an indicator of how strong the trust you have already built with them."*

**Dr. Mandeep Sidhu, a Family Physician**

*"The Moving Ahead team is the shoulder one can always depend on to ensure a smooth process for clients."*

**Ministry of Social development- Income Assistance worker**

As the only vulnerable populations program in Surrey, Delta and Langley, the Moving Ahead Program (MAP) played an integral role in assisting with a collaborative community approach in welcoming newly arrived Syrian refugees. As leaders in the community of providing intensive and holistic services to refugees with complex needs, the role of DIVERSEcity's MAP expanded significantly this year from providing direct client services, to having a significant role in supporting and preparing other community service providers in working with vulnerable refugee clients. Through a newly established partnership with Diversity Services at Fraser Health, MAP staff were able to share their unique skill set and knowledge of working with refugee populations, and the local services available to refugee populations to assist in their settlement, to train health care professionals on how to provide better services for refugee clients. Over 80 health care workers participated in these training sessions to prepare for the large volume of refugee clients that are accessing provincial health care systems.

#### Acknowledgements

The Moving Ahead Program is funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and is built on well-established sub-contract and community partnerships that have resulted in seamless, client centered service delivery model which integrates the strengths of the diverse partnerships and reduces duplication of services to clients. DIVERSEcity's Moving Ahead Program partners with Options Community Services, Pacific Community Resources Society and Langley Community Services Society. This provides a climate where integration for both client and the community is supported.

We would also like to thank our partners in the B.C. Vulnerable Immigrant Populations Program Alliance, which has provided a cross-regional approach to sharing best practices, professional development

and in developing the Moving Ahead Program model to be a comprehensive, coordinated response for vulnerable refugees and for B.C. communities that welcome them. The leadership of the Alliance has been much appreciated over the past several years, and will be continued through partnership with the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies & Service Agencies (AMSSA) of B.C.

This year saw the development and implementation of Refugee Readiness Training which is delivered through a partnership between the Moving Ahead Program and Fraser Health Authority Diversity Services. This initiative provides consultation on how health care services can be more accessible for refugee clients and has enabled a platform where gaps in services and challenges can be addressed at the front-line level.

The Moving Ahead Program staff are extremely dedicated to assisting their clients to reach independence in pursuing their settlement goals. Without their dedication, compassion and expertise, the program would not have the impact that it does – THANK YOU!







# Reza

Success Story

When Reza first approached DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society to meet with his Moving Ahead Counselor, he appeared overwhelmed by fear, apprehension and a concealed anguish under a veneer of politeness and shame. His whole presence displayed the vivid image of an abandoned man trapped in the prison of his condition. As a newly arrived refugee from Iran seeking assistance with settlement in the community he soon realized he was in an empathetic place with supportive services and he began weeping out of jubilation and relief.

A week later, when the initial eligibility screening interview was conducted, Reza explained about the social and emotional arduousness of his life in Canada in the two months after his arrival before finding out about DIVERSEcity. During those two

months, he thought of a return to his home country, where he had run away from, in spite of legitimate menaces to his life. He felt his return would be better than his experience of unbridgeable social isolation in Canada.

Battling with a deep rooted trauma, depression and anxiety, language barrier, social isolation and a deluge of invidiously daunting feelings and questions about future uncertainties in his life, Reza became a client in the VIPP Moving Ahead Program (MAP) at DIVERSEcity.

His dedication for improvement was always beyond doubt. He demonstrated that by his continuous and consistent participation in the program. Through effective referrals and advocacy from MAP, he participated in individual and group cognitive therapy. After his initial level 2 English assessment, over a

period of 8 months, he astonishingly finished all seven foundation levels of English in the Adult Continuing Education program. Throughout this period, his participation in the program was high, and his road to mental recovery from his depression was appraisable due to his personal perseverance and dedication. In spite of all odds, he finished his grade 12 and through many meetings and orientations in MAP, he decided to pursue a program at BCIT.

Months later after his exit from the program, through follow up, we are pleased to report that he finished his Auto Painting program at BCIT and has a full time job in the same industry. He always thanks MAP for helping him to explore and find his resiliency and become who he wanted to be in Canada.





## DIVERSEcity Programs

### 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)
- Syrian Refugee Family Program: Invitation to Know Each Other
- Parenting Workshop Series (Moving Ahead Workshop Series)
- Youth Powered- Lens on Life
- South Asian Seniors Chai Time

### Programs for Children and Youth

- First Steps Early Years Refugee Program
- Sports & Me Program for Refugee Children ages 6-12
- IMPACT Parenting Program
- Make Children First
- ECD Multicultural Outreach Services
- Avenues of Change Peer Ambassador Program

### The Language Store

### CELPIP Testing

### Refugee & Specialized Programs

- Moving Ahead Program
- Refugee Readiness Training
- DIVERSEcity's Refugee Readiness Fund
- DIVERSEcity's Annual Bundle Up Campaign
- World Refugee Day

### Settlement and Community Programs

- Information and Orientation Services
- Francophone Settlement Services: Orientation et d'Assistance des Services d'Intégration à Surrey (OASIS)
- Planning for Canada Program
- India2Canada Pre-Arrival Support Program
- Food Security, Community Kitchen Program
- Food Security, Community Gardens Program
- Volunteer Program
- Better at Home
- 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
- Youth Point Course (for ages 13-18)

### 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) Partnerships
- Immigrant Trades Training Initiative (ITTI)
- Future Leaders Program (from 15 to 30)
- Microloans & Entrepreneur Programs
- Cashier & Customer Service Training Course
- Bank Teller Training Course
- Employer Resources (Get in the Know)

[www.dcrs.ca](http://www.dcrs.ca) | [www.getintheknow.ca](http://www.getintheknow.ca)

*DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society thanks its staff, volunteers, Board of Directors, clients, community partners and funders for their ongoing support and commitment to our mission as we celebrate the milestone of 38 years of service to the community.*