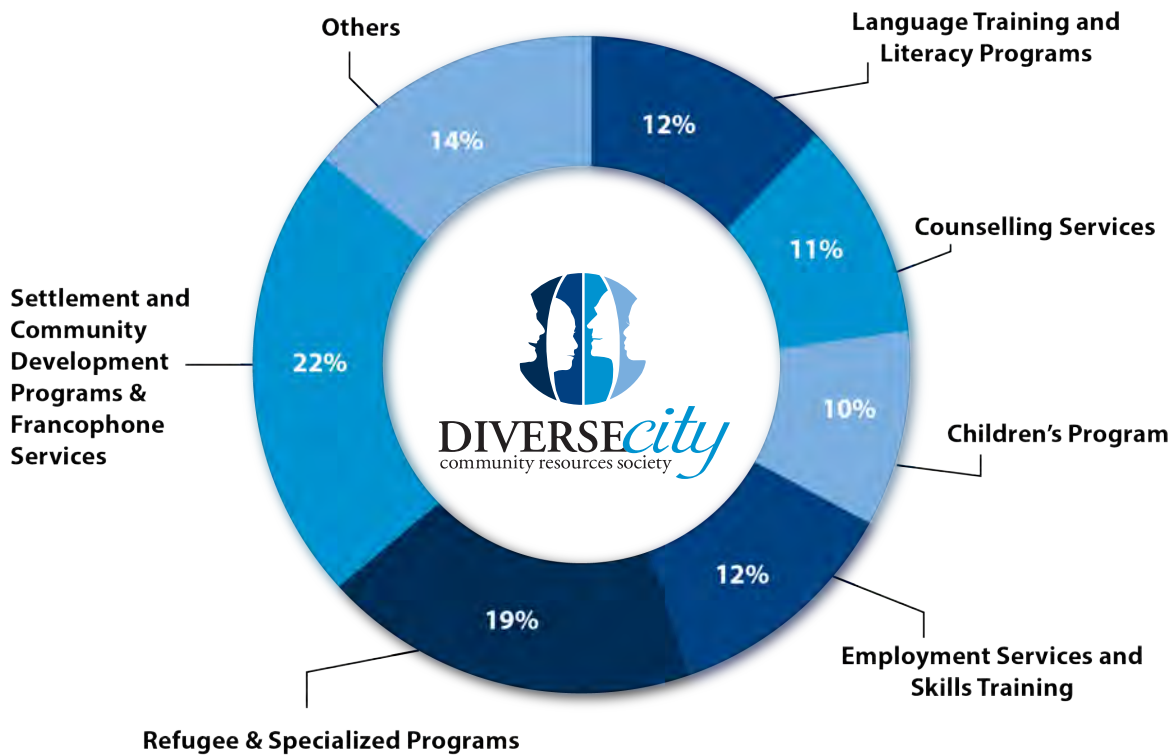




**DIVERSE***city*  
community resources society

# Annual Report 2016-2017





“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.*”

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

*Respect • Diversity • Resilience • Care • Innovation • Trust • Leadership*



**DIVERSEcity**  
community resources society

**DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society**

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

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

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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Today's hot topics – immigration, racism, assimilation, diversity, us vs. them, misappropriation, snowflakes, terrorism, fear, the good old days, threats to our way of life, illegals, borders, war, refugees, lives matter and fake news.

Some of us are shocked that we are still fighting battles we naively thought we had won in the 60's. Some of us laugh wryly because we are only now seeing what they have been dealing with for years. Some of us are tired, tired of the fighting, the lies and ugliness of it all. Some of us are loaded for bear. Some of us have blocked social media; others of us waste hours arguing with strangers in public forums.

Historically, attitudes about any subject change when people are willing to engage and listen to one another. Listening with the intent to understand, not the intent to respond. True engagement is being able to mirror back to the other person that you understand what they are feeling and trying to express.

DIVERSEcity is all about engagement. How do we fulfill our mission statement about celebrating our differences? Some days it seems more like a siege than a celebration.

Celebration means that each of us will make every attempt at respectful engagement with those around us. Those who look like we do and those who don't. Those who believe like we do and those who don't. Engagement means really listening to their truth behind their words. Behind hatred is fear. Behind anger is pain. Behind accusations is misunderstanding.

Let this be the year that we truly engage with one another. Let this be the year that we honestly confront our own bias. Let this be the year that we clean our own house first and then carry the mop and bucket to our neighbour, our community and then to the world.

I AM so proud to be a Canadian, so proud to be part of DIVERSEcity, so grateful to be given the opportunity to be continually learning from those around me.

Thank you for your patience.

Thank you for being part of this journey with me.

I AM DIVERSEcity.



*Shara Nixon*

Board President



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

---

This past year has provided many opportunities to showcase DIVERSEcity's well-honed leadership in the area of newcomer and refugee settlement. Building off of the previous year, with support from funders, DIVERSEcity continued to cultivate innovative programs and practices that provided positive tangible impact to the community and laid the groundwork for capacity building in our clients and fellow community partners.

DIVERSEcity worked closely with our partners and forged new relationships with the intention to share expertise and create strong and culturally inclusive communities. Our staff acted as key resources in delivering forums, virtual exchanges, webinars, round tables, small business and networking fairs, job fairs with local employers and trainings to public and health institutions, the school district and industry conferences. These events not only provided for knowledge-sharing but also brought key players together such as funders, employers and newcomers, health care providers and seniors, community resources and clients. It is this type of community bridging and engagement that DIVERSEcity continues to uphold and hopes to foster in years to come.

Recognizing the severity of the crisis in Syria, the Province of British Columbia set up a one-time investment to enhance federal and provincial refugee programs and provide additional resources for communities welcoming refugees. Refugee Response Teams (RRTs) were formed in five regions of the province, including the Fraser Valley, which was led by DIVERSEcity. The purpose of the Fraser Valley RRT was to develop and implement a Community Refugee Response Action Plan by focusing on key issues such as data collection and information sharing amongst community service providers, public education, healthcare access, housing, language assessment and training, employment and labour market attachment. The team was set up to act as a local resource for information and communications about refugee resettlement in the Fraser Valley. To work with so many key providers in the region of the Fraser Valley was both challenging and rewarding and we thank each and every one of our partners who collectively came together to ensure that refugees settling into the Fraser Valley are in very capable hands.

DIVERSEcity's services continue to expand and in 2016-2017, we expanded our First Steps Early Years Refugee Program site to accommodate an increase in families attending the program. We worked closely with the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to address the waitlist challenges for newcomers to access language instruction in Surrey and as a result, increased our service offerings to accommodate additional Language Instruction to Newcomers to Canada (LINC).

In order to support the unprecedented growth in our Interpretation and Translation Services, DIVERSEcity invested into a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software this year. As innovation is a key driver that shapes how we provide services, we hope to add

other areas of the organization to a CRM platform to better assist with streamlining information gathering and producing analytics for outcomes measurement. These initiatives are all part of our continuous quality control processes.

In September 2016, DIVERSEcity was honoured with the Riasat Ali Khan Award which was presented to us by the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies (AMSSA) for exemplifying innovation and community collaboration to provide outstanding service to the community. Our Moving Ahead Program, First Steps Early Years Refugee Program, Child and Youth Empowerment Camp, Settlement Orientation and Trauma Integration Skills Program, Refugee Support Fund and Annual Bundle-Up Campaign and community trainings were highlighted.

DIVERSEcity has now been the recipient of the Riasat Ali Khan Award three times. We are humbled and encouraged by the recognition and will continue to ensure that innovation and community collaboration are the cornerstones of our service to the community.

As we reflect on the past year, I'd like to thank the entire management team, all the staff and our volunteers at DIVERSEcity. Their dedication and commitment to providing such impactful services to the community is an inspiration to me each and every day. My heartfelt thank you also goes out to our Board of Directors who continue to be a tremendous resource to myself and the organization through their leadership and vision. To our clients, past and present, thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve in your journey in settling into your new home. And last but not least, thank you to our funders and supporters for entrusting us to carry out much needed services to our community.

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



*Neelam Sahota*

Chief Executive Officer

# SETTLEMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

## SUMMARY OF THE YEAR

The Settlement and Integration Program has provided comprehensive support to new and/or recent arrivals to help them navigate the system and develop a sense of belonging. Our core services include individual and group orientations on living in Canada, rights and responsibilities as permanent residents, where to find support for learning parenting skills, improving English skills finding job, or starting up a small business.

The two pre-arrival programs (namely Planning for Canada and India 2 Canada) have addressed the needs of preparing for living in Canada before landing. These services offered distance orientations to permanent residents to Canada on job search preparation, foreign credentials recognition, and other settlement-related needs.

DIVERSEcity's Better at Home Program has continued to offer in home services to local Surrey seniors. Over 250 clients in the community benefit from Better at Home services.

DIVERSEcity also continued to work with the Surrey Senior's Planning Table on initiatives such as the Annual Intercultural Showcase and a new project called Elderstory in which the personal stories of local seniors were collected and published.

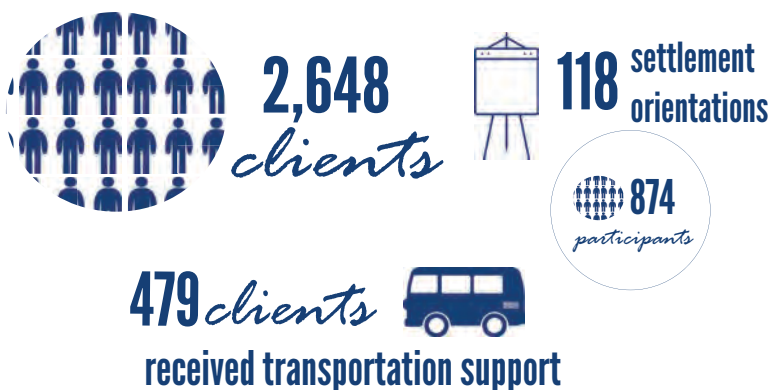
The Food Security Kitchen & Garden Program has continued to be a unique service offered by DIVERSEcity. The Community Kitchen Program was delivered at several sites across Surrey and engaged local seniors, children 6-12 years of age, and caregivers of children 0-6 years of age in workshops and hands on cooking sessions. The Community Garden Program continued to successfully operate out of the Hazelnut Meadows and Growing Roots Gardens.



## IMPACT

Throughout this year, we have conducted three surveys to solicit feedback from our service users. The highlights of the surveys' results are included below:

- 100% of surveyed users reported that they received information and services needed to address their settlement needs through the services they received at DIVERSEcity.
- Average 99.25% of surveyed users reported that due to their interaction with DIVERSEcity, they learned about resources that helped with their settlement needs.
- On average, 88.75% of surveyed users reported that they have learned about life in Canada, Canadian laws, or Canadian rights and responsibilities after participating in DIVERSEcity programs.





- On average, 81% of surveyed users reported that they have an increased ability to communicate in English after participating in DIVERSEcity programs.
- On average, 97.40% of users surveyed reported that they are connected to the community and public institutions.
- On average, 94% of surveyed users reported feeling less isolated due to the involvement with DIVERSEcity's settlement and community programming.

## Surrey Annual Intercultural Showcase

**100** plus over a dozen  
attendees dance performances  
and cultural booths

“Thanks for your patience. With your guidance, I finally thoroughly understand how it [Permanent Resident Application] works and am confident to be able to finish the application.”

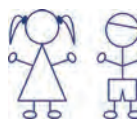


**11** Community Kitchen Sessions

**149**  
participants



**126**  
immigrant youth



**43**  
benefited from Youth Integration program  
immigrant and non-immigrant  
children attend youth camps

**200**  
trips

were provided to seniors in  
need of transportation to  
appointments

**250**  
grocery shopping  
trips

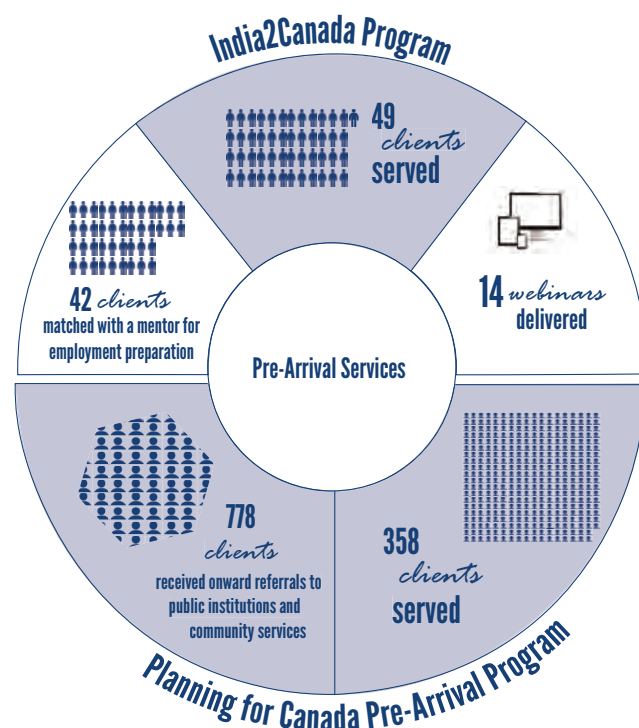
**Better  
at Home**



United Way helping seniors remain independent.

**1,300**  
housekeeping  
visits

“Thank you for your much help offered to us in a selfless manner. Every time we met you, we received a wealth of information, and of course, also the information provided to us after our appointments. Now we are starting to have a clearer picture; we will work hard, and in the future if we have questions, we will bother you again. Bless you!”



“When I first came to DIVERSEcity, I was in a very difficult situation. The settlement worker has never been heartless. For the first time in my years in Canada, I got to know that there is a place where I can go for genuine support when I am in need of assistance. Settlement worker helped me through the most difficult time in my life. I didn't know what to do and where to get help. DIVERSEcity gave me direction.”

# LANGUAGE TRAINING AND LITERACY PROGRAMS

## SUMMARY OF THE YEAR

This year started with a new Manager and a reduction in LINC class offerings at 16 and 1 child-minding centre. As a result of Operation Syrian Refugee, and the federal government's commitment to resettle Syrian refugees, we received additional funding from the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to address the long LINC waitlists in Surrey.

By January 2017, we had doubled our LINC class offerings to 32 as well as the child-minding centres, operating 2 instead of 1. This required the setting up of a new site and changes to the department's management structure were also made to support the expanding department.

The number of students and children who require additional learning supports saw an increase this past year. In order to support our LINC students, an increased effort to coordinate with internal resources such as the Settlement and Integration Program, VIPP Moving Ahead Program, and Counselling Services was made. Also, building upon the agency's experience delivery pre-literacy and literacy classes, we continued to develop appropriate models to meet students' learning needs. We expect that this work will continue into the coming years. The name of the department underwent a change to reflect this emerging focus on literacy programming and was previously known as "Language Programs."



## CLIENT STORIES

This is the story of a client who, when we first met, was apprehensive, inhibited and lacked confidence in her abilities. She spoke about the restrictions on her life in Iran and how her husband was persecuted due to his faith – experiences which had left residues of anxiety and low self-esteem, interfering with her ability to learn English and settle comfortably in Canada.

After several months of instruction, guidance and encouragement, this client's confidence began to grow and developed into a passion for learning English. She learned at an astonishing rate, continuing her own studies at home and in libraries. At the same time, her Moving Ahead Program counsellor supported her with settlement issues and guided her to taking on previously daunting tasks independently. She gained enough confidence to attend Employment Fairs hosted by DIVERSEcity's Employment team.

In only a year, this client had advanced from English CLB 1 to CLB 4, which was enough to land her a full-time job. When I last spoke with her, she had progressed from an entry level position to work more closely aligned with her long term goals and was saving money in order to sponsor her parents. She was bubbly, glowing and full of praise, attributing all her successes to the help she received at DIVERSEcity.

-Crystal McFeetors  
Literacy and Essential Skills Learning Guide



### Moving Ahead Literacy Class

This is the story of a little boy who started attending DIVERSEcity's daycare when he was 4 months old while his mom was in the Moving Ahead Literacy Class. He attended that daycare for 1 year and, soon after, attended LINC daycare until his recent graduation on June 29, 2017. He was one child among several who will be attending kindergarten in September, 2017. I am confident that this child will be very successful in his transition to Kindergarten. His social, cognitive, language, fine motor and gross motor skills are right where they need to be. He is also very confident and has quite the sense of humour. We will certainly miss him but are very fortunate to have been a part of his journey.

- Janet Ali  
Early Childhood Development Coordinator

24% of clients  
are refugees

# EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

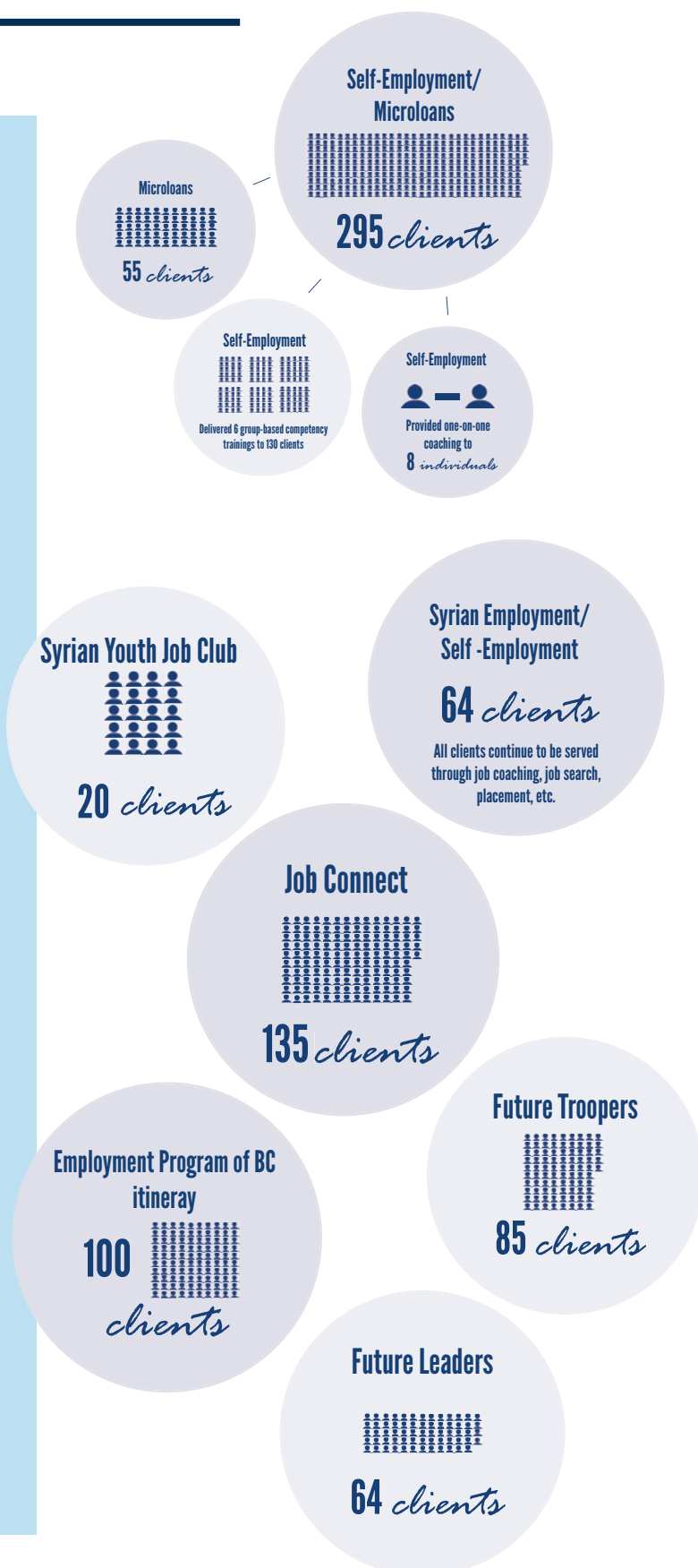
## SUMMARY OF THE YEAR

DIVERSEcity's Employment programs have been supporting newcomers to Canada to successfully integrate into the labour market and achieve sustainable employment for 35 years. We have various funded programs through the provincial and federal government which continue to serve immigrants and refugees by providing employability and soft skills to be successful in the Canadian workplace.

We continuously strive to provide exceptional service to newcomer job seekers and simultaneously identify service gaps that might still exist between the identified needs of clients and existing program delivery. This past year, we developed and delivered training and employment programs to support the newly arrived Syrian refugees given our first language and cultural competencies to meet the needs of specialized groups.

In our efforts to reduce the gap between the needs of our clients and service delivery, our focus this year has been on enhancing services to aspiring immigrant entrepreneurs, developing new fee-based trainings under the banner "DIVERSEcity Skills Training Centre" and organizing events such as Youth Education & Job Fair, Employer Appreciation Luncheon, Immigrant Entrepreneur Fair and Internationally Trained Professionals' Networking Fair.

The Employment Services team has been actively engaged in networking with employers and other stakeholders. Two of DIVERSEcity's staff team members also presented at the 2016 ASPECT conference & 2017 BC Career Development Conference to showcase these employer-engagement tools. To demonstrate the collaborative service model of partnership between Employment organizations and Immigrant serving organizations, Pacific Community Resources Society and DIVERSEcity jointly presented a webinar "Serving Immigrant Clients: Immigrant Employment Collaboration" hosted by Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation."





<b>May 4, 2016</b> <b>Youth Education and Job Fair</b>  <b>25</b> exhibitors <b>150</b> job seekers	<b>June 22, 2016</b> <b>DIVERSEcity Employer Luncheon</b>  <b>8</b> awards <b>60</b> attendees <b>97</b> invited	<b>October 12, 2016</b> <b>1st Annual Immigrant Entrepreneur &amp; Small Business Fair</b>  <b>12</b> exhibitors <b>3</b> speakers <b>103</b> attendees	<b>November 12, 2016</b> <b>Internationally Trained Professionals' Networking Fair</b>  <b>13</b> exhibitors <b>6</b> panelists <b>100</b> attendees
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## IMPACT

DIVERSEcity's Self-Employment Program started in October 2016, providing group-based trainings and one-on-one coaching to assist immigrants and refugee entrepreneurs acquire the tools needed to plan, launch and grow their own business.

During the six month period (October 2016 to March 2017), the program delivered 6 group-based competency trainings; provided one-on-one coaching; provided services to a total of 250 individuals and organized the 1st Annual Immigrant Entrepreneur & Small Business Fair in October 2016.

Saman participated in the 1st Annual Immigrant Entrepreneur & Small Business Fair, and then received our one-on-one support to start his own landscaping business. Saman sent in his application to Vancity and was approved for \$10,000 to purchase a truck, tools and marketing material for his new business! Saman wants to work residentially as a sole proprietor however he will also want to grow over the next two years into a commercial business and hire a few staff to ease his workload.

With the influx of Arabic speaking refugees, DIVERSEcity's Syrian Refugee Employment and Self-Employment Program was designed to move clients towards sustainable employment. The



**Saman Khaksar with Andy Leong, Account Manager at Vancity's Coquitlam Branch.**

program offered classroom trainings as well as ongoing mentorship. Additional workshops and one-on-one support were offered for clients who were interested in pursuing self-employment.

Ten clients participated in the self-employment portion of the program to varying degrees. Of these clients, a couple have continued to move ahead and one has progressed to the early stages of starting a business (registering business name, business plan, etc).



# DIVERSEcity's SKILLS TRAINING CENTRE

## SUMMARY OF THE YEAR

DIVERSEcity's Skills Training Centre (STC) offers fee-based courses that are designed to assist Canadian and immigrant job seekers prepare for entrance to today's workforce. Skills Training Centre continues to develop and deliver new and needed training programs. In August 2016, it became part of the Employment Services department, resulting in the department's name change to "Employment Services and Skills Training." With this expansion came the addition of an Assistant Manager to support the growth in the portfolio in the fall of 2016.

## IMPACT

The movement of STC to the Employment Services department improves the alignment of course offerings with funded programs and facilitates the identification of employment training needs and gaps. New course offerings since the Skills Training Centre moved to the Employment Services department include the Computer Skills for Office Administration and Supervisory Skills training. Long standing core courses such as the Customer Service & Cashier Training continue to be delivered. Several courses are also now being delivered in dual language English-Arabic. STC has also been able to offer interactive workshops facilitated by diversity and inclusion strategist, Alden E. Habacon as part of our growing work with employers. Participating employers learn practical tools to recruit, onboard and retain immigrant talent. This workshop series adds to our earlier work on the Get in the Know! Website ([www.getintheknow.ca](http://www.getintheknow.ca)) and Guidebook which provides employers with resources to create an inclusive and welcoming workplace for newcomers.



### Representatives from TD and CIBC speak to students of DIVERSEcity's Bank Teller Training.

*Our guest speaker component presents students an insider look at a day in the life of a successful banking professional. Our partnered community financial institutions gives the chance for students to ask questions, gain inside information on hiring methods and suggestions on developing a strong resume and cover letter.*

### Skills Training Centre



**290** clients

# CANADIAN ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INDEX PROGRAM (CELPIP) TESTING SERVICES

## SUMMARY OF THE YEAR

The CELPIP tests are one of two language proficiency tests that are accepted by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) as proof of language proficiency 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 6 years and over the last year has continued to experience significant demand for its testing services for both Citizenship and Permanent Residency. The number of clients served and the revenues derived from operations were roughly equal to those of the past year with over 3000 clients/test takers served.

Over  
**3,000**  
clients  
served



## IMPACT

Through its CELPIP testing, 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.

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 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.



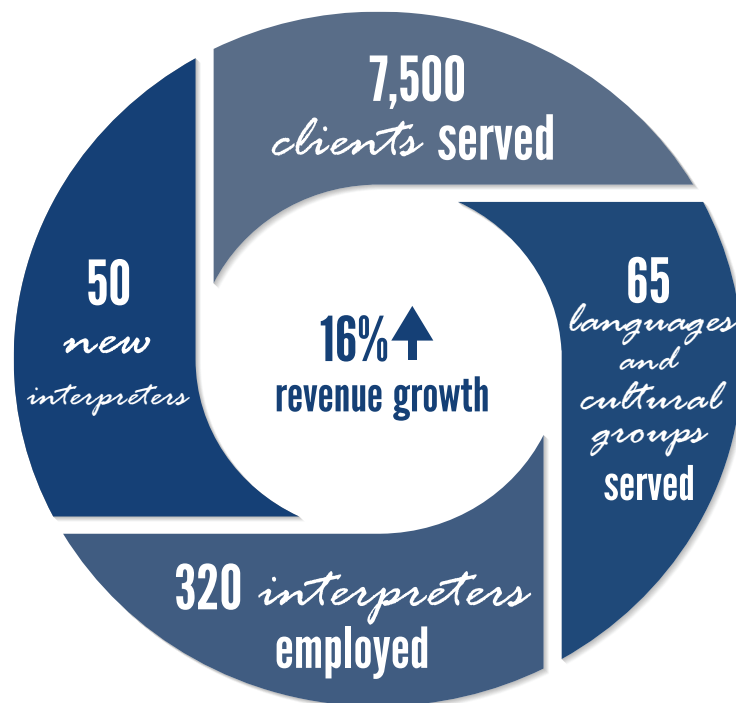
# INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION SERVICES

## SUMMARY OF THE YEAR

DIVERSEcity provides 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 department achieved significant growth over the past year with revenues increasing by over 16%. 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. 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 Westminster, Richmond and Abbotsford. Over the past year, we served the needs of over 7,500 clients while employing the services of over 320 interpreters.

In the past year, the Interpretation and Translation team has continued to enhance its capabilities and capacity including the hiring of over 50 new interpreters, streamlining processes, providing ongoing training and development for interpreters and implementing state of the art technology to automate its request processing, assignment and financial processes. Overall, we have achieved significant progress over the last year in creating a strong foundation for continued growth and expansion in this rapidly growing marketplace.



### Interpretation and Translation Department Year End Party 2016

*To all those who have contributed so much with their  
passion and commitment to excellence, we say:  
Thank you!*

## IMPACT

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 need to have professional and trained interpreters to support communications between service providers and clients is vital to ensure support services are delivered in the most effective and impactful way. Through the provision of this key language support capability, DIVERSEcity continues to support the needs of thousands of clients in navigating and engaging our healthcare, legal and social support systems throughout the communities of the lower mainland.

The past year has seen tremendous growth in our Interpretation and Translation services 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.

“The staff I have dealt with have always been polite, helpful and have always provided excellent service. I have dealt with many providers in the past and your organization is one of the best! Thank you very much.”

**- G.T., from  
WorkSafe BC**

“I have been using DIVERSEcity's interpretation service for years now. I am very happy with the excellent service they provide. The accounts representatives are very flexible and accommodating with my service request. Sometimes I have to book interpreters on a short notice, and they would do their best to accommodate my requests. The interpreters are also very professional and punctual. Overall, I am really satisfied with their service.”

**- Jason, from  
Orion Health Surrey**

“I would like to say the interpretation services are great! Very quick response from when I send the interpretation request to faxing back the confirmation. Very friendly staff at the call centre.”

**- R.C., from  
WorkSafe BC**



# COUNSELLING SERVICES

## SUMMARY OF THE YEAR

2016 was another busy year for the team of counsellors providing much needed support to children, youth and families in the South Fraser region.

Here are some of the highlights of the year:

- The Lens on Life project, funded by Community Action Initiative was completed successfully, surpassing the initial targets set by 14% through the core initiatives. The project supported Karen and Somali youth and their families through group based activities and individual clinical support to reduce stigma surrounding mental health.
- The Child and Youth Empowerment Camp served 59 children during the summer of 2016 and was then held for 2 weeks during Spring Break at our Community Campus; bringing the highly regarded camp home to serve 43 children from Surrey and Delta.
- DIVERSEcity commissioned a report on LGBTQ+ migrants by SFU students of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies. The report highlighted the gaps in services, the barriers and risks faced by LGBTQ+ Newcomers with a commitment by the agency to initiate services to address those gaps to be announced mid-2017.
- The Manager of Counselling Services and Manager of Clinical Services profiled the expertise of the agency through multiple community based training opportunities. Training focused primarily on understanding trauma in relation to refugees from conflict zones and included the Surrey School District, Delta School District, The Public Health Agency of Canada and Public Safety and Anti-Violence Community Sector.
- The work of the Counselling team was highlighted through various media sources including CBC radio, The Province newspaper and the Vancouver Metro.

## IMPACT

DIVERSEcity's Counselling Services is a community leader in meeting the mental health needs of newcomers in the South Fraser region. With the increased awareness of the needs of refugees through the Syrian crisis, DIVERSEcity's Counselling services department was immersed in serious and crucial work.



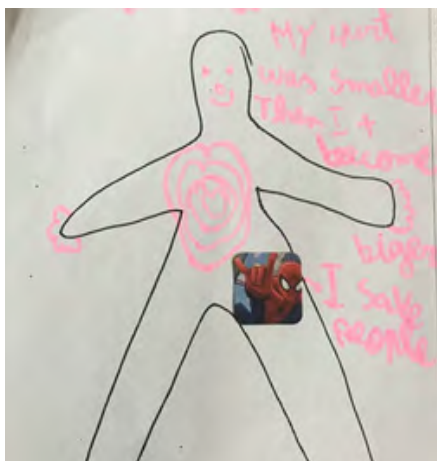
In 2016, we had the unique opportunity to demonstrate our expertise by developing and implementing an innovative program for Syrian refugees; the IKEO (Invitation to Know Each Other) project, funded by the United Way of the Lower Mainland. The IKEO project engaged Syrian families in trauma informed, concurrent groups for parents and young adults and children.



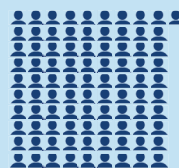
Groups focused on settlement themes including: public and personal safety, health, and parenting. The sessions for adults were provided in Arabic to support communication and facilitated by a Clinical Counsellor and an Arabic Settlement staff. Children's groups were facilitated in English to support their learning of the language. The IKEO model stands as an example of client centered, best practice.

“My heart was smaller but it became bigger.”

### Children and Youth Empowerment Camp (CYEC) participant



**91**  
individuals  
registered for the  
Relationship Violence Prevention Program

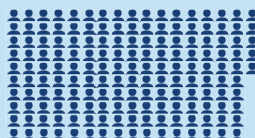


**90%**  
completed the program

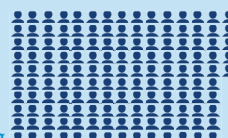
**238**  
individuals  
accessed Substance Use  
services through individual  
and group based counselling



**166**  
women  
were provided with Stopping the  
Violence Counselling and Outreach  
services



**146**  
families  
in the South Fraser region  
received Family Counselling



**102**  
children  
participated in the  
Child and Youth Empowerment Camp



**128**  
children  
engaged in the  
Achieving Balance for Children program



**118**  
children +  
youth  
were provided with Child and Youth Mental Health  
counselling



**90** | **119**  
parents | children  
registered in the IKEO Project

**57** | **74**  
parents | children  
participated in the  
IMPACT (Immigrant Parents and Children Together) program

# CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

## SUMMARY OF THE YEAR

The 2016-2017 year saw a significant increase in the number of families needing support from Children's Programs. This resulted in an increased interest in training related to early years; a number of trainings were delivered or coordinated by the Children's Programs manager this year, including: the Regional Training for CAPC providers in the Vancouver region, parenting, early childhood development, discipline versus punishment for settlement workers, early literacy related trainings on Surrey Libraries' Milestone Kits, and the LIVE 5210 health promotion training provided by Fraser Health.

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 the families arriving during Operation Syrian Refugees.

The First Steps Program increased its drop-in programming to nine per week in order to meet the demand for support to Syrian refugee families with young children. This dramatic increase within a very short timeframe was challenging but we met the challenge! New and innovative ways to meet the needs of all First Steps families were cultivated and implemented successfully by the First Steps partners, Options Community Services Society and Umoja Operation Compassion Society.

The Peer Ambassador project under the United Way's Avenues of Change – Guildford West engaged volunteer Peer Ambassadors in conversations related to Early Literacy and Health Promotion.



## IMPACT

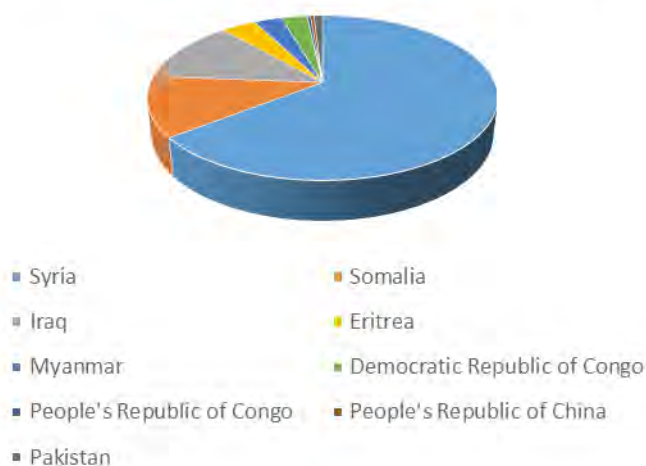
A young Syrian widow along with her 3 month old daughter, sister, brother and mother came to Canada as Government Assisted Refugees. The family first landed in Montréal and then later moved to Surrey. Upon meeting her, she appeared to be quite overwhelmed and struggled with the language and integration, in addition to grieving the loss of her husband who was murdered by terrorists in Syria.

Through multiple home visits by Arabic speaking outreach workers and consistent attendance and participation in the family drop-in programs she became more connected with others with similar experiences and began to develop trust with staff. Outreach workers worked hard to find English classes with childcare and affordable housing. She was finally granted a home through BC Housing and was able to enroll in English classes.



700  
clients  
served

First Steps Demographics 2016-2017



“I get together with parents I met in the program in my home, in their homes, or in the community.”



**300 families reached**

She felt more hopeful about her life in Canada and began to attend drop in programs more regularly. The client recently shared that she feels safe and comfortable and is happy to be learning how to parent her child and access the necessary resources to be a successful parent.

She is appreciative of the support she has received to become independent and the skills she has learned to problem solve on her own. She credits her success to the fact that staff spoke Arabic and had training and experience in working with refugees who have experienced

“This program has had a positive influence on my parenting.”



**42 Peer Ambassadors trained**  
to Health Promotion and Early Literacy messaging

**15**



**Peer Ambassadors completed**  
their 6 month commitment to the project



**150 families connected**

to community supports such as libraries, Strong Start, food banks, recreational centres, Middle Eastern Friendship Centre and more

**Largest client groups from:**

Syria  Iraq   
Congo  Somalia 

“I have made new connections with other parents.”



# REFUGEE & SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS

## SUMMARY OF THE YEAR

This past year the world witnessed a global refugee crisis of historic proportions, with the number of refugees and displaced people reaching 65 million world-wide – the largest number since World War II. In response to this international humanitarian crisis the Canadian Government enabled the record high resettlement of 25,000 refugees. As the contract holder for the Vulnerable Immigrant Populations Program (VIPP) for Surrey/North Delta/Langley, the Moving Ahead Program (MAP) expanded its services significantly to meet the emerging needs of newly arrived refugees who face significant barriers to settlement. Surrey became home to 30% of the Syrian refugees who arrived in BC under the Operation Syrian Refugee initiative .

This year proved to be the most challenging one yet. The demand and need of clients who faced multiple barriers to settlement increased as the settlement trajectory of those who came through Operation Syrian Refugee remained unpredictable due to the systematic challenges that were occurring in the housing, health, employment and school systems. These systems were overburdened and challenged to meet the needs of newly arrived vulnerable refugee populations. MAP staff and partnership were resilient and the program was able to not only continue to meet the emerging and complex needs of its clients but build capacity within those community systems to ensure any external barriers that made resettlement so challenging was minimized.



## IMPACT

MAP provided an intensive case-managed, integrated approach and innovative group workshops which enabled successful settlement and adaptation of vulnerable clients and their families. The MAP service model empowered clients who experience complexities such as living below the poverty line, have language barriers, health issues, large families, single parenting, protracted time in refugee camps, little exposure to systems or processes, grief, trauma and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), with little or no education and work experience, low rate of youth high school graduation and vulnerability to criminal influences, isolation, poor parenting skills, and domestic violence which are all barriers to settlement.

MAP worked within the community to foster an understanding of refugee needs and capacities to grow reciprocal processes for integration. This included providing consultation for institutions such as Fraser Health Authority on how to make their services and systems more accessible for refugees. The collaborative approach of MAP ensured clients were being serviced indirectly as well as providing that holistic one-to-one support that made the program so successful.



**84%**  
*MAP clients*  
reported  
feeling less isolated due to  
their involvement with MAP  
programming.

**426**

*clients*

who faced  
significant barriers to settlement were served  
under the Moving Ahead Program this year.

**85%**

*MAP clients*

reported to  
have increased knowledge of life in  
Canada, Canadian laws, rights and  
responsibilities through participation in  
MAP activities and services.

**33**

*refugee clients*  
in  
need of

financial relief received  
assistance through DIVERSEcity's  
Refugee Support Fund. The Fund provides  
emergency financing for basic supplies, rent  
or transportation and medical bills not  
covered by other sources or programs.

“Through our partnership with DIVERSEcity’s MAP program, we are able to provide Fraser Health staff with information on the current issues, themes and best practices when providing care to refugee patients and clients. This partnership has increased the capacity of our staff to provide high quality and culturally competent care to newcomers.”

**-Sana Fakhri, MPH, Leader, Diversity Services, Fraser Health**

## REFUGEE SUPPORT FUND

Inspired by the generosity and support shown by the community during Operation Syrian Refugee, the DIVERSEcity Refugee Support Fund was established to provide newly arrived refugees with the basic necessities and other needs that government funding will not cover.

**100% of all  
donations go  
straight to  
refugee clients  
who DIVERSEcity  
supports.**

The DIVERSEcity Refugee Support Fund has assisted newly arrived refugees in Surrey through emergency support by providing financial aid for:

- medical treatment not covered by insurance
- emergency housing and accommodation
- baby care supplies
- family reunification
- funding refugee claimants permanent residency applications
- food and rent

To learn more about the DIVERSEcity Refugee Support Fund or to donate please go to directly online through our website: [www.dcrs.ca](http://www.dcrs.ca)





# OASIS (ORIENTATION ET ASSISTANCE AUX SERVICES D'INTÉGRATION FRANCOPHONE À SURREY)



Black History Month Event at DIVERSEcity, February 2017

## IMPACT

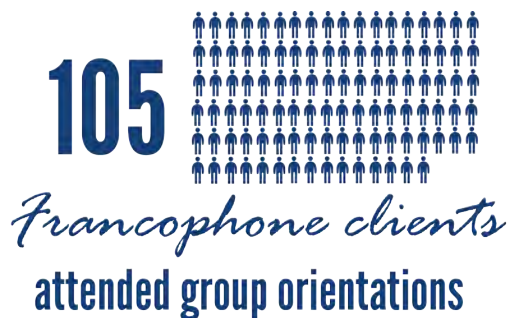
DIVERSEcity continued to build partnerships and understanding with francophone organizations, as well as settlement and community organizations as well. Building bridges between the francophone and Anglophone settlement worlds was a definite goal of ours. The dialogue within the B.C. settlement sector has indeed been ignited and DIVERSEcity plans on playing a key and significant role in this work going forward.

## SUMMARY OF THE YEAR

March 31, 2017 marks the end of DIVERSEcity's growth period in the delivery of settlement services to French-speaking newcomers settling in the region as our funding for this expansion came to an end. This has dramatically reduced the agency's capacity to deliver OASIS and to work in partnership with francophone organizations for the successful settlement and integration of French speaking newcomers into the local French minority community.

In its final year, OASIS was successful in serving a total of 130 French speaking newcomers in partnership with College Educacentre. OASIS services included orientation workshops, one-on-one settlement support, language and support groups, employment support services, and community integration programming.

We would like to thank all those who worked hard and contributed to the success of OASIS.



# CLIENT SUCCESS STORIES

## Moving Ahead Program

“This program has changed my life; it helped me find and believe in myself as a woman. Through this program, I learned that it is my right to live and be a priority for once! I simply can't tell you that after 33 years of being on this earth, I finally have charge of my life. Were it not for MAP; I would have been still cramped with my other five children and spouse in the 2-bedroom unit we used to live in until a week ago. Now, I am enjoying a 4-bedroom unit with BC Housing. I was also able to access a Day Care Subsidy for my three toddlers so that I can attend my English class. Through the MAP individualized English classes, I was able to learn English at my pace without feeling shy, stressed or peer-pressured; now I go throughout my everyday needs without needing any English support. MAP counselors helped my husband to find employment and quit Welfare Income Assistance since few months. I felt alien when I first came to Canada, yet because of the wrap around nature of MAP service, now, I feel home.”

**-Hanan Al Awad, a former, Syrian refugee client with Moving Ahead**



**Part of our Moving Ahead Team who work hard every day to see their clients succeed.**



**DIVERSeCity at the Surrey Welcomes Refugees Event**

“Through MAP, I was able to make friends during the different activities we had, after feeling lonely for a quite long, first year in Canada. Through my participation in this program, I learned how to parent my children in a loving, firm way to help them thrive to their worth. I learned how to take care of myself and know that I, too, a human being who deserves to enjoy life. MAP helped me find a BC Housing unit, find a family doctor, use the public transit and learn much other useful information that eased my life in Canada. I even learned how to order a cup of coffee when I need to.”

**-Rukia Fahed, a former client of Moving Ahead**

## The Syrian and Arabic Refugee Employment & Self-Employment

This group of Syrian refugees first made themselves known to DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society and the Employment Services Team while attending a job fair where they were the life of the event. They were full of laughs, helped one another to fill out applications, and told stories of their lives in Syria as well as their new lives here in Canada.

This interesting group of men from Syria, ranging from 27 to 42 years of age, brings with them diverse work experiences including chicken butcher to crane operator. The group was introduced to Jesse Thiessen, a new member of the Employment Services team, who learned to speak Arabic by visiting and working in Jordan, Syria and Egypt.

The group was surprised and impressed with Jesse's ability to have a conversation with them through a blend of English and Arabic. The group quickly rallied around Jesse and started to explore ways of achieving economic independence in their new country.

When an opportunity arose for all of them to work together at a local fish plant, Lions Gate Fisheries, they jumped at the opportunity, in large part because they knew that they could all work together. The first site tour was another outing filled with a good mixture of laughter and eagerness to work.

Before the group entered the plant, everyone was required to suit up in hairnets and work coats. For those with beards they also needed a beard net and the final outfit brought on some chuckles as well as an impromptu photo shoot.

When the group heard that filleting fish was one of the work stations, Waeel confidently said, "Put me there, I will cut them all!" We all shared a laugh, including the site supervisor. On the first day of work, Waeel was there processing fresh fish and looking forward to his turn at the cutting station.



**(Left-Right) Jihad Aleez, Waeel Alkrfan, Abdulhadi Almjureesh, Rajat Algablawi**

**Country of Origin:** Syria | **Landed in Canada:** 2016

**Skills Profile:** Wide range of backgrounds working in Syria from a driver, butcher, working in Agriculture, Construction, and Trades.

Beyond the lightheartedness, these guys have been very eager to do a good job and have demonstrated great work ethics. After a few weeks on the job, the group's supervisor, Cody Waterfield said, "They are hard workers – which we like!"

Equally important to this story is the Lions Gate Fisheries. From the outset, they have shown a continued commitment to accommodate this hardworking group by working through language barriers, creating time and space for prayers and Lions Gate Fisheries takes pride in their commitment to sustainable fishing practices, and likewise providing a proud opportunity for these refugees first Canadian jobs.

**Congratulations to this extraordinary group on their new jobs. Keep up the good work!**



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society would like to thank 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 39 years of service to the community.*

### Funders and Community Partners

Department of Immigration, Refugees,  
Citizenship Canada  
Employment & Social Development Canada  
Ministry of Jobs, Trade, Tourism, Skills Training  
and Labour  
United Way of the Lower Mainland  
Public Health Agency of Canada  
Ministry of Children & Family Development  
Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General  
Fraser Health Authority  
Colleges & Institutes Canada  
BC Gaming

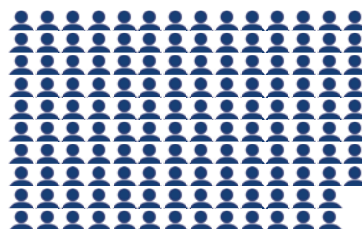
Vancity  
The Co-operators Foundation  
TD Bank  
Pacific Community Resources Society  
Options Community Services  
Umoja Operation Compassion Society  
City of Surrey  
Surrey Schools  
Abbotsford Community Services  
Immigrant Employment Council of BC  
KPU  
SFU Surrey

## VOLUNTEERS

*Throughout the incredible support of our volunteers, we are able to provide outstanding services to our clients. Thank you for all your time and hard work.*



**4,389**  
*hours*



**170**  
*volunteers*

**DIVERSEcity Community  
Resources Society Main Campus**

13455 76th Ave.  
Surrey, BC V3W 2W3

**Volunteer and  
Community Programs**

#202-7380 King George Blvd.  
Surrey, BC V3W 5A5

**Language Training and  
Literacy Programs**

#1107-7330 137th St.  
Surrey, BC V3W 2W3

**First Steps Centre**

#201 - 7380 King George Blvd.  
Surrey, BC V3W 5A5

**Lionel Courchene Growing  
Roots Community Garden**

9839 155 St.  
Surrey, BC V3R 0R6

**Hazelnut Meadows  
Community Garden**

14069 68 Ave.  
Surrey, BC V3W 2H3

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