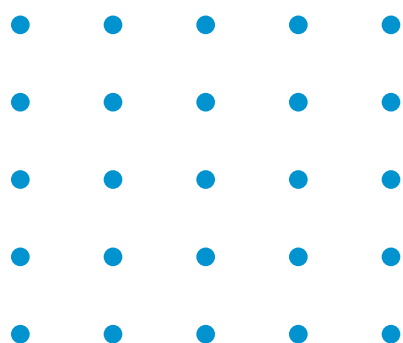
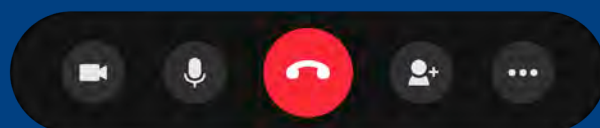
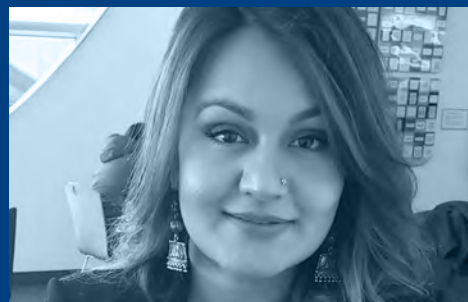
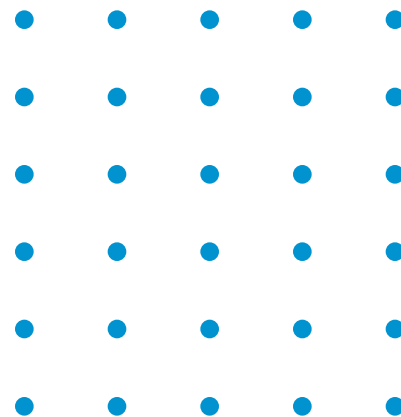




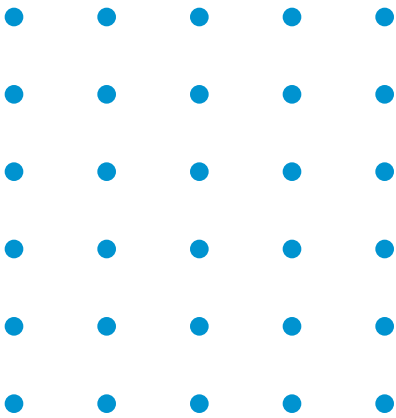
Everyone Belongs Here



ANNUAL REPORT 2020–2021

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society recognizes that our work takes place on the ancestral, traditional and unceded territories of the SEMYOME (Semiahmoo), ᑕᑭᑕᑦᑭᑦ (Katzie), kʷikʷəłəm (Kwkwetlem), ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ (Kwantlen), qiqéyt (Qayqayt), xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam) and s̓cəwəθən məsteyəxʷ (Tsawwassen) First Nations. The knowledge and traditions of these communities are significant in providing context to the work we do, and DIVERSEcity recognizes the importance that reconciliation has in building truly inclusive and strong communities. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.



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DIVERSEcity Employment Specialist, Don, celebrating safely with Future Leaders graduates last summer.

WHO'S ON THE COVER?

The people behind DIVERSEcity provide the expertise and passion in everything we do, and they also led the innovation that saw the organization pivot successfully during COVID-19. On our front and back cover are just a few of our amazing team members (starting on the front, top row, from left to right):

- **Kristi Pinderi** became our dedicated LGBTQ+ Support Worker this year, and accepted the AMSSA Riasat Ali Khan Award in 2020 on DIVERSEcity's behalf.
- **Zara Al-Zaim**, former IMPACT Parenting Program Coordinator became Assistant Manager, Child & Family Services this year.
- **Richa Karkee** is leading the new Violence Prevention Services department as its Manager.
- **Leo Ramirez**, Community Kitchen Coordinator, took our community kitchen program online during COVID-19, and helped lead our new food hamper programs.
- **Golnoosh H.** is one of the counsellors supporting women survivors of domestic violence using our new Roots of Safety service planning model.
- **Harsh Thakkar**, Manager, DIVERSEcity Interpretation and Translation Services, was a Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Award winner of 2020.
- **Ece Unlu**, our new Recruitment Specialist, was hired — and now hires others — virtually due to COVID-19.
- **Garrison Duke**, Director, Employment and Language Programs, received an Honourable Mention in the 2020 *Surrey Now-Leader's* Community Leader Awards. He also heads up our Immigrant Entrepreneur Program, which won a CANIE Award.
- **Vandna Joshi** was appointed Senior Manager, Employment Programs, after several years leading Youth Employment.
- **Amie Johnson** joined DIVERSEcity to help us navigate COVID-19 restrictions. She is now our full-time Manager, Quality Assurance.
- **Farqaleet Ali**, our IT Support Specialist, helped us all stay connected virtually throughout this challenging year.
- **Jenny Mourad** helps spread the word about the great work DIVERSEcity does as the organization's Digital Marketing & Content Coordinator.
- **Rachna Katariya** who started here as a volunteer, is now a Manager, Finance, and helped with this report's Funding Overview.
- **Wasan Abdulrazzaq**, a First Steps Outreach Worker, won a Shakti Award for Resilience in 2020.
- **Raphael Ochil**, Youth Programs Coordinator, organized virtual youth workshops to prevent youth isolation during COVID-19.
- **Nazia Kakar**, moved from Youth Employment to Team Lead, Employment Specialist, with our adult employment programs.
- **Dean Lin** pivoted DIVERSEcity Skills Training Centre to new heights with online courses during COVID-19.
- **Nanette Caldwell** has been one of the first voices you hear when calling DIVERSEcity's main line. As she heads toward retirement, we say a warm thank you for her years of service!

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO & BOARD PRESIDENT

To say the 2020–2021 year was challenging is truly an understatement. The global COVID-19 pandemic has affected — and continues to affect — our community’s personal and economic wellbeing. The newcomers and underserved populations we support at DIVERSEcity are experiencing continuing barriers as they navigate their way through the pandemic and the racial intolerance that came to a tipping point over the last year.

This year has also been a time of great **introspection** for us all. We have witnessed the disparity in our community, affirming our need as a values-based organization and registered charity to be a leader in its fair and equitable recovery.

If there can be a positive take on these difficult times, it is witnessing the strength, determination and **intentionality** of DIVERSEcity leadership and staff as they support our clients and each other through the challenges. They did this with **respect, integrity and compassion** — three of our organization’s core values.

Our fourth value is **growth**, and we have driven purposeful expansion over the last year, seeing DIVERSEcity grow in innovation, services, space and reach, while nurturing personal growth for our team.

As Surrey’s first settlement services organization, with a 42+ year history, DIVERSEcity has evolved with online delivery of its programs and services, from

settlement to employment to mental health services. Our staff began supporting newcomers, seniors, youth and children by phone and virtual platforms like Zoom, highlighting the continuing need for digital literacy in combination with in-person support.

In another example of growth, our social enterprise DIVERSEcity Skills Training Centre not only shifted its courses from in-person classrooms to online training, it also expanded its reach to new students and partnerships with WorkBC Centres from across the province.

We also applied for and were awarded specialized funding for programs that specifically supported people to manage the stressors of living during a pandemic, including food security hamper programs for our most vulnerable populations, youth and seniors programs focused on preventing isolation, as well as employment programs to help jobseekers learn new skills for a post-COVID labour market.

In addition to our new and expanding service areas, we’re excited to be the new conveners of the **Surrey Local Immigration Partnership**. We hope to build on the amazing work this community partnership does in bringing diverse voices together to build an equitable and inclusive city.

To meet the needs of our growing areas of service delivery, we’re pleased to announce DIVERSEcity has also expanded physically with



Neelam Sahota
CEO



Bob Appleton
President

the purchase of our Newton Town Centre Campus. This location at #1107 – 7330 137 Street, Surrey, BC, is where everything first started more than four decades ago. We have leased this property for our English language programs since those early days, and are now expanding this location to include our Health Promotion programs.

As we continue to navigate through these complex times, it is crucial for us to strengthen our commitment to be champions of **equity, diversity and inclusion, and allies to BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and underrepresented communities** to advocate for change to systemic issues that these communities continue to encounter.

Introspection, intentionality and allyship will continue to be the lens from which we operate.

As we look ahead, we have difficult but necessary work to do to embody our commitment to these principles. With the vision and support of our Board of Directors, incredible staff and volunteers, we look forward to **building back better and more equitably** for all British Columbians. •

MISSION

To inspire belonging in a strong integrated community by empowering newcomers to Canada.

VALUES

Growth
Respect
Integrity
Compassion

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

People and Culture
Innovation
Profile
Growth

At DIVERSEcity, we help newcomers and other diverse communities build the life they want in Canada.

2020–2021 Board of Directors



Upkar Singh Tatlay
Vice President



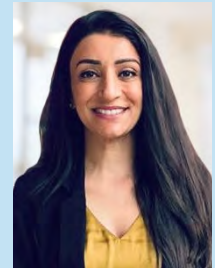
Jane Shin
Secretary



Sonia Parmar
Treasurer



Jason Wong
Director



Amy Gill
Director

Executive Team



Garrison Duke
Director, Employment
& Language Programs



Amanee Elchehimi
Director, Health
Promotion



Laura Mannix
Director, Community
Development

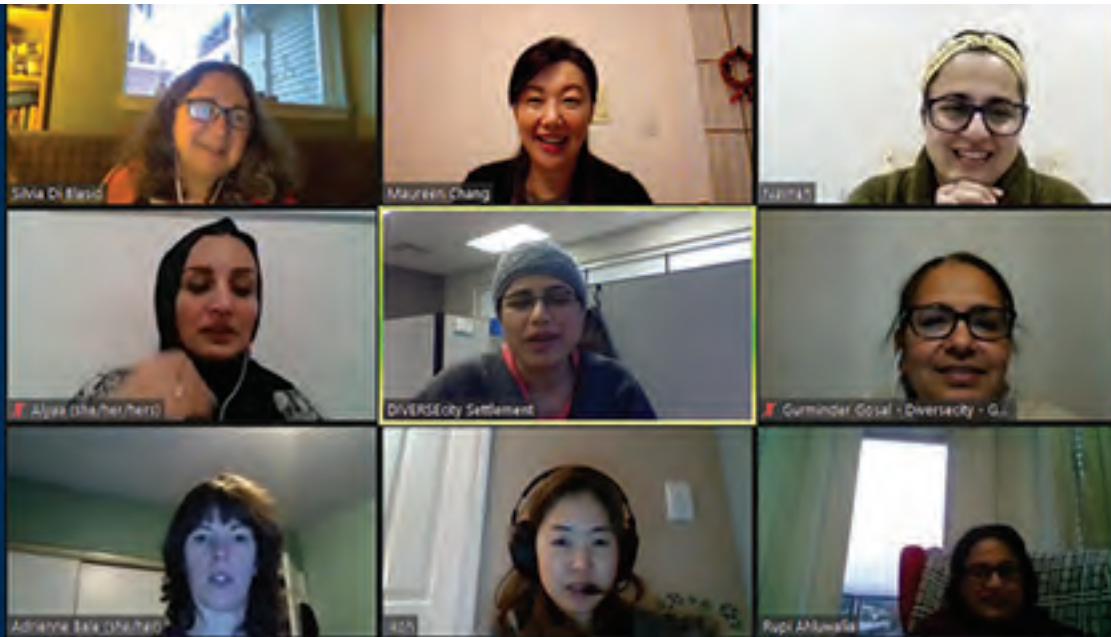


Sonny Somani
Director, Operational
Excellence



Gavrielle (Gavy) Tran
Director, Finance

SETTLEMENT & INTEGRATION PROGRAM



The Settlement Services team quickly adapted to holding their meetings virtually.

Supporting Newcomers Find Belonging



The **Settlement Services** we provide at DIVERSEcity are the path to a better life in Canada for all newcomers — permanent residents and refugees, as well as refugee claimants, temporary foreign workers, international students and naturalized citizens. Our compassionate staff support newcomers with all aspects of their journey from employment to housing to finances. With resilience and commitment to the communities they serve, our settlement workers adapted to a mix of remote and in-person services this year to support more newcomers than ever, helping them as they navigated life in a global pandemic.

1,602

PERMANENT RESIDENTS
RECEIVED SERVICES, TOTTALLING
2,333 ONE-ON-ONE SESSIONS

1,274

FAMILY SESSIONS FOR
IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

375

PERMANENT RESIDENTS
ATTENDED 30 VIRTUAL GROUP
WORKSHOPS

LANGUAGES SERVED

Punjabi	27%	English	9%	Spanish	4%
Arabic	26%	Mandarin	9%	Hindi	3%
Korean	14%	Swahili	7%	Urdu	1%

GUIDED PATHWAYS COACHING



NEWCOMERS SUPPORTED



INDIVIDUAL & FAMILY SESSIONS

Our Guided Pathways coaching, in Punjabi, Arabic, Hindi, Urdu and English, provides case management support to guide immigrants and refugees who need additional assistance through the settlement process. Our coaches work with newcomers to create an action plan that helps them build their lives in Canada.

CANADA LEARNING BOND PROGRAM



ONE-ON-ONE SESSIONS



PARTICIPANTS IN 13 GROUP WORKSHOPS

DIVERSEcity connects low-income newcomer parents to the Canada Learning Bond. Through individual sessions and workshops in Arabic, Punjabi, English and Swahili, we guide them in starting an RESP account to save for their child's post-secondary education with an initial \$500 government grant.

BC SETTLEMENT SERVICES



NON-PERMANENT RESIDENTS SUPPORTED IN 1,278 SESSIONS



GROUP WORKSHOPS

In addition to providing settlement services to permanent residents, DIVERSEcity's BC Settlement Services support refugee claimants, temporary foreign workers, international students and naturalized citizens with immigration, settlement and employment support.

DIVERSEstory

Overcoming a Challenging Arrival

Starting over in a new country is hard enough, but throw in a global pandemic on top of the challenges a newcomer faces can feel overwhelming. DIVERSEcity settlement client Raj* knows this all too well.

"As a newcomer, landing into a new country without any relatives and during COVID times was very stressful," she says. "Also, being untutored in Canadian educational and financial systems without any proper guidance, made it very challenging for me to find a suitable career path for myself. Having a background in social services, I

was constantly looking for some educational upgrading in my field."

But finding the right information was difficult, and she felt alone. "A lack of proper guidance almost brought me to the brink of devastation and depression," Raj says. "But, to my fortune, I came to know about DIVERSEcity and connected with Rupinder, a newcomer information and support worker in Punjabi, and she motivated me and provided information to attend educational workshops for settlement in Canada, which helped me regain my confidence. Because of her encouragement and constant pushes,

I was able to get a grant from the government and got into the Community Support Worker Diploma program at Western Community College."

Raj is set to graduate in November 2021. "I feel content and happy. This diploma has increased my access to job opportunities and has secured my future. DIVERSEcity's help has definitely made a difference in building a foundation toward my new career path." •

**Name changed for privacy.*



CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES



The happy faces of our youngest clients are the true reward of our work.

Children and Parents Thriving Together

Our **Child & Family Services** are designed to help children and families thrive in Canada. Through our various programs, offered virtually due to the pandemic, we serve refugee and immigrant families with child development and parenting education, outreach support, accessing community resources and building social networks with other families.

TOP CLIENT LANGUAGES

ARABIC & TIGRINYA

AVERAGE TIME SPENT IN CANADA

1–3 YEARS

TOP COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

**SYRIA, ERITREA,
AFGHANISTAN, IRAQ,
INDIA & PAKISTAN**



FIRST STEPS EARLY YEARS PROGRAM



First Steps, jointly managed by DIVERSEcity, Options Community Services and Umoja Operation Compassion Society, supports newly arrived refugee children (up to five years old), through play-based early childhood education, as well as their older siblings through our Middle Years Activities, and parents with information and workshops.

I CAN COOK! PROGRAM

18 PRESCHOOLERS 30 SESSIONS

Kids learned healthy, age-appropriate recipes and cooking skills through virtual sessions. Parents were able to bond with their kids in the kitchen, while kids tried eating more vegetables and fruits.

POWER GIRLS STEM PROGRAM

23 PARTICIPANTS 2 COHORTS

This partnership with SFU's Science ALIVE program aims to empower racialized girls aged 9–12 to gain more confidence and approaches to learning science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programming.

CHILD AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT CAMP

61 PARTICIPANTS 3 COHORTS

This emotional regulation camp aims to teach children and youth (aged six to 17 years old) different techniques to understand and validate their emotions. It provides healing techniques that empower the child through activities and equips them with coping mechanisms.

IMPACT PARENTING PROGRAM

59 PARTICIPANTS 88 SESSIONS

IMPACT is an immigrant parenting program that teaches healthy parenting tips in a nurturing and warm environment, with additional focus on the mental health of the parent and the importance of self-care. It provides a space for parents to connect with like-minded individuals and share their experiences in a non-judgmental environment.



Preschooler learning about healthy eating in our I Can Cook! Program.

“QUOTABLE

“In this program, I learned about my new life in Canada and learned how to improve my parenting skills as a mother. Additionally, I learned how to listen to my kids and be patient with them. Whenever I meet refugee families who are just now settling into Canada, I always recommend First Steps to them.”

— HABA, FIRST STEPS CLIENT

YOUTH PROGRAMS



DIVERSEcity Youth Programs support teens and young adults from diverse cultural backgrounds in English and their mother tongues.

Giving Newcomer Youth a Brighter Future

Youth Programs at DIVERSEcity offer settlement and integration support for newcomer and refugee youth with both one-on-one services and group-based programming. Based on the complexity of their needs, we can help them through our DIVERSEyouth program or our RISE Youth program. With COVID-19 restrictions, our youth hub located at our DIVERSEcity City Centre Campus was closed and most of our services were delivered online. It was a challenge but the Youth Programs team was able to maintain youth engagement and accessibility virtually, never forgetting the overarching goals of helping them build their confidence and succeed in their personal journeys.

DIVERSEYOUTH PROGRAM



DIVERSEyouth provides learning and enrichment opportunities in English through workshops and training for newcomer and refugee youth aged 13–24. Program sessions focused on building community connections, self-confidence and self-esteem, all while developing transferrable skills in areas such as cross-cultural communication, leadership development, citizenship skills building, employment readiness, educational support, arts expression, recreation and building community awareness in support of their settlement needs. With special COVID-19 funding from the United Way of the Lower Mainland, DIVERSEyouth launched a special series called Youth Expressions! with a focus on expressive art therapy, healthy communication, physical health, social emotional learning, leadership capacity and mindfulness.

RISE YOUTH PROGRAM



YOUTH



ONE-ON-ONE SESSIONS



GROUP WORKSHOPS

RISE Youth offers enhanced case management for immigrant and refugee youth aged 13–24, who experience complex and multiple challenges in settling into their new community. We help newcomer youth use their strengths and resources to increase their capacity to cope with barriers they are facing, and to increase their skills and knowledge to independently settle and integrate into home, school and community. Youth were supported in English and their first languages both in one-on-one settings (online and occasionally with in-person services based on client needs, such as accompanying them to appointments or in-home consultations), and online group-based workshops.

TOP 4 LANGUAGES SERVED

Arabic	45%
English	30%
Karen	17%
Burmese	5%



DIVERSEstory

Refugee Youth Builds Confidence

Gawa* was born and raised in a refugee camp in Thailand. It's all she ever knew, so when she and her family arrived in Canada as sponsored refugees, she suffered anxiety, homesickness and social isolation. She needed emotional regulation support, and was referred by family members to DIVERSEcity's RISE Youth program.

With COVID-19 restrictions in place, Gawa connected with a RISE Youth case specialist via Zoom to start discussing the challenges, emotions and pressures she was grappling with. "Together, [Gawa] and I used these opportunities to have a dialogue to further unpack her current emotional state and create a safe space for her so she could confidently access

community supports and resources to help her settlement needs," says the RISE case specialist.

With the program's help, Gawa was able to access English classes (she recently achieved CLB level 5), food security programs, medical services, employment services and skills training. She also connected with other newcomer youth clients at DIVERSEcity.

"She became more confident and recognized she had the capabilities to not just identify, but to also set up new goals for her action plan based on what she wanted for herself, in terms of her interests, passions and aspirations."

"The RISE youth program is very



important to me," says Gawa. "I am happy to know about this program because it helped me overcome my problems. By joining the workshops and receiving practical supports, I've become more confident to deal with my situation. With the help of the RISE Youth case specialist, I have found a job and can access health care services in BC." •

**Name changed for privacy.*

SENIORS SERVICES



DIVERSEcity's Seniors Services support seniors in creating connections in the community.

Helping Seniors Live Independently

Helping seniors live healthy lives with independence and connection is at the heart of DIVERSEcity's **Seniors Services**. Our services this year have been focused heavily on supporting them throughout the pandemic by providing vulnerable seniors groceries, hot meals, housekeeping, wellness calling and other vital supports.

10K+

INDIVIDUAL SERVICES PROVIDED

266

SENIORS SERVED

10+

CLIENT LANGUAGES WITH
ENGLISH & PUNJABI THE TOP TWO

BETTER AT HOME AND SAFE SENIORS, STRONGER COMMUNITIES

622

GROCERY SHOPPING & DELIVERY

4,738

MEAL PREPARATION & DELIVERY

4,284

PHONE CHECK-INS

Through our Better At Home contactors and Safe Seniors, Stronger Communities volunteers, we provide non-medical services to help seniors live independently for longer. Supporting seniors at risk of isolation due to COVID-19 became our focus this year, with grocery shopping and delivery, meal or food delivery, prescription drop off and pickup, as well as phone wellness checks and virtual friendly visits. DIVERSEcity is one of 25 hub agencies for these United Way programs.

“ QUOTABLE

“Despite these unpredictable times, we were able to reach out to vulnerable older adults and provide services so they did not feel alone or uncared for. We made sure our clients knew they mattered and we were here to help with resources. Our efforts and support gave our clients hope and made them feel cared for.”

— SHABINA AND DALJIT, SENIORS SERVICES TEAM

THERAPEUTIC ACTIVATION PROGRAM FOR SENIORS (TAPS)

DIVERSEcity's TAPS program provides specialized supports focused on integrating and linking immigrant seniors to DIVERSEcity and other seniors services in the community. We provide one-on-one needs assessment, referral and support, telephone check-ins, and currently virtual activities such as yoga classes, chai time, music, games and conversation.

SOCIAL PRESCRIBING PROGRAM

Through DIVERSEcity's Social Prescribing Program, in partnership with the Surrey-North Delta Division of Family Practice, our seniors community connector helps seniors create personalized wellness goals and connects them to non-medical community services at DIVERSEcity and in the community to help them stay active and connected.



DIVERSEcity's Shabina and Daljit supporting seniors in the community during the pandemic.

NEWCOMER FAMILY AND FRIENDS CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM



CAREGIVERS SERVED

Our Newcomer Family and Friends Caregiver Support Program provides specialized supports for caregivers, who are often seniors themselves, caring for an ill or end-of-life spouse. Caregiving is never easy, but our clients have additional complexities due to language, income, culture, isolation and family structure. Once COVID-19 hit, we offered one-on-one support by phone, virtual support groups and education workshops in partnership with Fraser Health.

“ QUOTABLE

“I am the caregiver of my mother who is 93 years old, diagnosed with terminal cancer. The DIVERSEcity caregiver program has supported me throughout my caregiver journey. This program's educational workshops have increased my knowledge about caring for my mother and the caregiver support group helped me to increase my self-esteem. Thank you.”

— JAGDISH, CAREGIVER PROGRAM CLIENT

COMMUNITY, VOLUNTEER & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS



DIVERSEcity and funder SurreyCares Community Foundation held a socially distanced event in our Hazelnut Meadows Community Garden in August 2020 to launch DIVERSEcity's Food Accessibility Fund for Migrant Families Affected by COVID-19.

Finding Belonging and Nourishment

DIVERSEcity's **Community, Volunteer & Civic Engagement** programs help newcomers and other diverse residents find belonging in Surrey. From joining a community garden or kitchen program, to learning how to volunteer, to preparing for citizenship, our staff and clients are building a stronger community for all.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM



DIVERSEcity's Volunteer Program connects newcomers to volunteer opportunities at DIVERSEcity and in the community, while also engaging established Canadian volunteers who want to help newcomers succeed. We provide an excellent resource for volunteers to improve their skills, practise English and make new connections in the community, including at our **Annual Income Tax Clinic**, where volunteers support residents with tax filing. Our virtual **Annual Volunteer Fair**, with 61 participants, was also a great success, connecting volunteers with partner organizations.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS



Becoming a naturalized citizen is a goal for most immigrants in Canada. Our 12-week Citizenship Preparation and Civic Engagement Course, Conversations for Citizenship sessions and civic engagement workshops, all held virtually this year, help them reach this goal, while finding connections and belonging in the community.

COMMUNITY GARDENS



CLIENTS



GARDEN PLOTS



GARDEN WORKSHOPS

DIVERSEcity's Community Gardens program support Canadian families, immigrants and refugees in addressing food security by growing their own fruits and vegetables — including varieties from their home countries — at no cost in two accessible community gardens in Surrey. Workshops, held virtually this year, develop clients' knowledge about organic gardening, composting, seasonal gardening and organic pest control.

“QUOTABLE

“Thank you for caring and putting your heart and soul into teaching this material in a fun, positive and interactive way. I really enjoyed our time together.”

— CITIZENSHIP COURSE PARTICIPANT



FOOD SECURITY



COMMUNITY KITCHEN PARTICIPANTS



FOODFIT PARTICIPANTS



FOOD HAMPER CLIENT FAMILIES



GIFTCARDS & HAMPERS

As COVID restrictions hit, our long-running Community Kitchen program pivoted quickly to virtual workshops on healthy cooking, affordable meal planning and food safety. We also launched the FoodFit program to further promote food literacy and physical activity in a holistic way. Seeing the increase in food insecurity as a result of the economic impacts of the pandemic, DIVERSEcity's food security team organized two food hubs that provided low-income families with immediate access to sustainable and nutritious food through food hampers and gift cards.

DIVERSEcity staff and volunteers pitched in to support food-insecure newcomers with our food hamper programs.



REFUGEE & SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS



The people we support through our refugee programs come from many countries of origin.

Overcoming Complex Barriers to Settlement

To support newcomers facing significant barriers or trauma in their resettlement journey, DIVERSEcity's **Refugee and Specialized Programs** take a personalized approach to helping them rise above adversity. During COVID-19, these programs, including our flagship RISE Program, LGBTQ+ services and Healthy Self, Healthy Families Workshops, were able to transition quickly to offer remote services, including virtual accompaniments and language support over the phone, while continuing to help some of our most vulnerable clients with in-person accompaniments and support.

109

FAMILIES SERVED

195

ADULTS SUPPORTED

257

KIDS & YOUTH HELPED

FAMILIES' TOP COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

COUNTRY	% OF CLIENTS	COUNTRY	% OF CLIENTS
Syria	34%	Uganda	3%
Congo	19%	Sudan	2.5%
Burma	15%	South Sudan	2%
Burundi	5%	Somalia	2%
Iraq	5%	Morocco	0.8%
Eritrea	3%	Saudi Arabia	0.8%
Ethiopia	3%	Palestine	0.8%

LANGUAGES SERVED

Arabic	47%
Swahili	19%
Karen	13%
English	9%
Kirundi	5%
Burmese	2.25%
Kinyarwanda	2.25%
French	1.5%
Albanian	1%

RISE PROGRAM

1,973

ONE-ON-ONE INFORMATION
SESSIONS

788

FAMILY CASE
MANAGEMENT SESSIONS

281

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

155

ACCOMPANIMENTS

Our Refugee and Immigrant Specialized Experience (RISE) Program supports refugee and immigrant newcomer families experiencing multiple and complex barriers to settlement. Using a trauma-informed and strengths-based approach, we empower newcomers with one-on-one culturally informed case management in first languages to support them in their journey. Starting with a needs assessment, goal setting and action planning, we support newcomers by accompanying them to appointments, offering informational and orientation workshops, and one-on-one mental health support, and helping them access housing, health care, education, government benefits and all other settlement needs.

HEALTHY SELF, HEALTHY FAMILIES WORKSHOPS

68

FAMILIES HELPED

49

VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS

Healthy Self, Healthy Families Workshops focus on mental wellness and coping strategies for newcomers struggling with the settlement process. Facilitated by a family counsellor with language assistance from RISE case specialists, participants learn new skills to help them relieve stress, navigate through trauma, practise self-care and make connections in the community.



LGBTQ+ SERVICES AND PEER SUPPORT GROUP

37

ONE-ON-ONE SESSIONS

24

TOGETHER NOW LGBTQ+ PEER
SUPPORT GROUP SESSIONS

This year, DIVERSEcity launched one-on-one settlement support for LGBTQ+ immigrants and refugees with a focus on empowerment so they can have greater control of the support they receive, the process itself and, ultimately, the results. This service is in addition to Together Now, our free peer support group for LGBTQ+ newcomers of any immigration status. It is a safe and welcoming space where participants can meet new people, learn about local resources, access counselling services and be part of an inclusive community.



DIVERSEstory

Rising Above Barriers

Tola* is a gay man who experienced many traumatic events, persecution and systemic oppression in Uganda because of his sexuality. He, like many other LGBTQ+ refugees, landed in Canada with idealized expectations of building thriving livelihoods. But the reality wasn't that easy. Having immigrated to Canada with his son, he faced many challenges, including struggling to find a good job. He found himself living in poverty, while facing social and cultural isolation, on top of serious health complications. They were on the brink of being homeless.

Being a gay Black man, a refugee, a single father living in poverty, and a person living with a permanent disability left Tola with little sense of belonging or worth.

Enter DIVERSEcity's one-on-one LGBTQ+ services. "We helped Tola find an affordable one-bedroom apartment that was within his budget and offered the needed space for him and his son," says Kristi, DIVERSEcity's LGBTQ+ support worker. He also connected Tola to DIVERSEcity's food security programs and its Together Now LGBTQ+ Newcomer Peer Support Group. "Tola's active participation in Together Now showed him that he is not alone."

"Together Now has been an opportunity to understand and learn how to handle challenges that we as LGBTQ+ newcomers face in our daily lives," says Tola. He says he now has an increased sense of belonging and feels like he's part of something meaningful. •

**Name changed for privacy.*

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS



When COVID-19 cases were low in summer 2020, we held a socially distanced outdoor graduation ceremony for our Future Leaders graduates.

Training and Career Skills for Newcomers and Youth

For newcomers, youth and underserved adults, finding a job can be a challenge. DIVERSEcity's free **Employment Programs** help them overcome obstacles like language barriers, lack of experience and foreign credential recognition to build the careers they want. Our programs help them learn job search techniques, access skills training, get work experience and connect with hiring employers. Newcomers with entrepreneurial goals can also access guidance to launch their own business. While COVID-19 put up some barriers to service delivery, our programs quickly found their footings via virtual platforms.

H.E.A.L. FOR WORK PROGRAM

4

COHORTS

37

PARTICIPANTS

Supporting newcomer women who are survivors of violence or trauma, the H.E.A.L. (Hope. Employment. Adaptability. Learning.) for Work Program offers trauma counselling, short-term certificate training, skills training, substantive education and/or work experience. We emphasize empowerment, safety and confidence, while providing a support network as they enter the labour market. COVID-19 restrictions saw us expand our reach virtually to clients outside Surrey.

S.A.H.A.R.A. PROGRAM

4

COHORTS

25

PARTICIPANTS

The S.A.H.A.R.A. (Substance Abuse Health and Recovery Awareness) Program serves multi-barriered men, overcoming trauma, depression, criminal records and substance use, who are seeking a sustainable career path. Our program offers counselling and coaching support, occupational certificates, skills training, substantive education and/or work experience. We help in their job search journey to regain their confidence, and develop new job and digital literacy skills.

“ QUOTABLE

“The H.E.A.L. program has a plan for everyone, especially women, to become strong and fight for a brighter future.” — **H.E.A.L. PARTICIPANT**

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

86% COMPLETION RATE **78%** EMPLOYMENT & POST-SECONDARY OUTCOMES

Our innovative youth employment programs — including Future Leaders, Future Troopers and Start it Right! — coached **160 newcomer youth** last year to upgrade their skills, enrol in post-secondary education and gain work experience. With financial assistance, tuition allowances, group workshops and individualized coaching from our six certified employment specialists, DIVERSEcity helps youth create an action plan, setting them up for success and confidence in the Canadian workplace.

51

PARTICIPANTS (AGED 15–30) IN
FUTURE LEADERS, FUNDED BY
SERVICE CANADA

64

PARTICIPANTS (AGED 17–29)
IN **FUTURE TROOPERS**, FUNDED
BY MINISTRY OF ADVANCED
EDUCATION & SKILLS TRAINING

17

PARTICIPANTS IN **START IT
RIGHT!**, FOR NON-PERMANENT
RESIDENTS (AGED 15–29),
FUNDED BY RBC FOUNDATION

PARTICIPANTS' TOP PLACES OF ORIGIN

India
Middle East
Africa
North America
Asia

STATUS

Permanent residents **65%**
Canadian citizens **23%**
International students **9%**
Temporary workers **2%**
Refugee claimants **1%**



Photo of Sukhjeevan.

DIVERSEstory

The Future is Bright

Sukhjeevan's experience with DIVERSEcity's Future Leaders youth employment program gave her a lot of hope after her arrival in Canada. "The name of the program struck me," she says. "I remember thinking, I'm eligible for a program called 'Future Leaders'? Here, in a totally new country, I was eligible for a program for leaders."

Sukhjeevan took on what the career program had to offer with enthusiasm, including skills training at Rhodes Wellness College. As she moved closer to her goal, however, she remained concerned about

connecting with others. "I remember thinking will people like me?" recalls Sukhjeevan. "Will I be able to fully express myself? Will they understand me?"

But her worries slowly began to melt away as her peers, on their own journeys of immigration, were open, helpful and friendly. "It was an amazing experience for me."

When COVID-19 made its way to Canada, services went virtual, but, instead of making things harder, the switch actually worked in Sukhjeevan's favour as a mother to two young children.

Throughout her time with Future Leaders, Sukhjeevan gained more and more confidence in her abilities. "You know, sometimes when you're working on something and there are little doubts, silly things that you don't have the courage to ask? All those things were cleared up. I actually started thinking that I am a master at things like building resumés."

Sukhjeevan also appreciated that the program took extra steps to ensure her success. "Having someone help with it all, it's not only that it felt really good, it felt like a family." •



Participants in our entrepreneur programs have a lot of talent to share, from weaving to painting to creating other products and services.

IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEUR PROGRAM

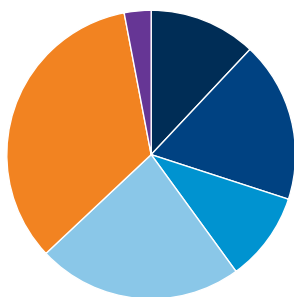


Research shows that immigrants are entrepreneurial, but they need help navigating the Canadian business landscape. Our Immigrant Entrepreneur Program, sponsored by TD, helps them along this journey. Through one-on-one consultation, business training workshops and a business startup bootcamp complete with *Dragons' Den*-style pitch experiences, we aim to help newcomers plan, launch and grow their own business.

CWB BUSINESS INCUBATOR FOR WOMEN MAKERS AND CREATORS



This program, funded by Canadian Western Bank (CWB), supports intercultural women to turn creative skills into self-employment business opportunities. Graduates from the program can then join Infinity Womenpreneurs, a collective business community with an e-commerce website to sell their wares: infinitymarketplace.square.site.



ENTREPRENEUR CLIENTS: LENGTH OF TIME IN CANADA



“QUOTABLE

“Florence has been an amazing leader. She did a very good job of tailoring the course to people's requests for knowledge. For example, I wanted to have a better understanding of how to handle tax issues, and she scheduled a session with CRA representatives. She also did a good job of keeping everyone motivated by ensuring there were opportunities for everyone to practise presenting in every class. Even though there were many people in the class, when I missed a class, she noticed and sent me a personal note to check in. That attention to detail is the main reason that I finished the course. I felt like I would let her down if I gave up. She worked so hard for all of us. It was inspiring to also work hard because it felt like she believed in us.”

— IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEUR PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

SKILLS TRAINING CENTRE



DIVERSEcity Skills Training Centre in-person class at a local WorkBC Centre following COVID-19 restrictions.

Getting Jobseekers Ready for the Workforce

DIVERSEcity Skills Training Centre, a social enterprise certified through Buy Social Canada, offers fee-based training courses to prepare Canadian and immigrant jobseekers for the workforce with job-ready skills, information and confidence. Since the start of the pandemic, classes have been held virtually via Zoom, expanding our reach across BC. We also offered in-person group sessions at different WorkBC centres around the Lower Mainland, with COVID-19 safety precautions in place. Whether in-person or online, our courses are known for quality training of the latest in-demand skills, and our students provide consistently positive feedback. In early 2021, we also launched the free IT Business and Logistics Certificate Program, in partnership with Discovery Community College, to help skilled immigrants learn pivotal skills for the Canadian workplace.

531

TOTAL STUDENTS

25%

INCREASE IN ENROLLMENT
THIS YEAR

6

DIFFERENT ONLINE COURSES
OFFERED IN 2020–2021

“QUOTABLE

“Thank you so much for putting me in the Basic Computer Skills course; it was exactly what I needed — to learn how to manoeuvre around the computer and Word and Excel. Christina is a wonderful teacher, full of enthusiasm and positive energy! She was so helpful and patient!”

— SKILLS TRAINING CENTRE STUDENT

SKILLS TRAINING COURSES

SKILLS TRAINING COURSES	TOTAL STUDENTS
Customer Service Basics	125
Essential Computer Skills for the Workplace	242
Microsoft Excel Essentials	39
Basic Computer Skills	96
Introduction to Sage 50 Accounting	4
Financial Customer Service Basics	25

LANGUAGE & LITERACY PROGRAMS



Our Early Childhood Education program delivered at-home learning activity kits to help our youngest students with online classes.

Learning English a little differently this year

Our **Language Training and Literacy Programs** offer a range of free English language classes to permanent residents, namely through our Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program, from pre-literacy to Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) 6. For clients who need extra support, we also offer LINC Assistance and Readiness Classes (LARC), plus two Community Adult Literacy Program (CALP) classes. Our English Conversation Circles also help students practise English skills in real life. For those with children up to five years old, we offer an Early Childhood Education program. Due to COVID-19, all classes transitioned to full online delivery, and the learning curve for teachers and learners was very steep, but together they were empowered and acquired valuable new digital literacy skills.

386

LINC STUDENTS

34

CHILDREN TAUGHT

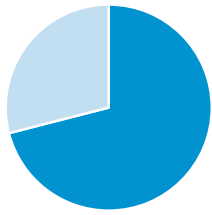
42

CALP STUDENTS

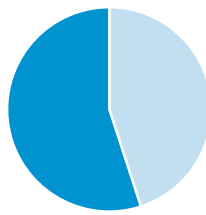
Our early childhood educators assembling at-home learning activity kits for our children's classes.



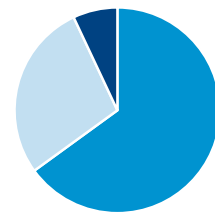
STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



71% WOMEN
29% MEN



45% IMMIGRANTS
55% REFUGEES



65% 25-44 YEARS OF AGE
28% 45 YEARS OR OLDER
7% OTHER

TOP 3 CLIENT LANGUAGES

Arabic	22%
Punjabi	20%
Somali	10%



DIVERSEstory

Making Good Progress

When Ruqi Hao first came to Canada from China, he could not speak any English. “Language was my big obstacle. I always asked other people to help me. I could not write emails or answer phone calls in English, and I was scared to talk to people,” Hao says. “I felt down all day. I even believed that I had made the wrong decision to immigrate to Canada. It was a tough time.”

Hao then applied to DIVERSEcity’s LINC program and studied hard to learn English for three years. “DIVERSEcity school is my unforgettable place, and it is also my first step to adapt here since I moved to Canada. I deeply admire that there are a lot of professional teachers and friendly classmates at school. The school has many activities to improve our English skills. For example, we

did some quizzes, presentations, discussions, spelling tests, field trips, potlucks and other interesting activities. We had an excellent study atmosphere. We learned a lot about cultures, history, local news and social skills in class. Teachers pushed us to progress,” he says.

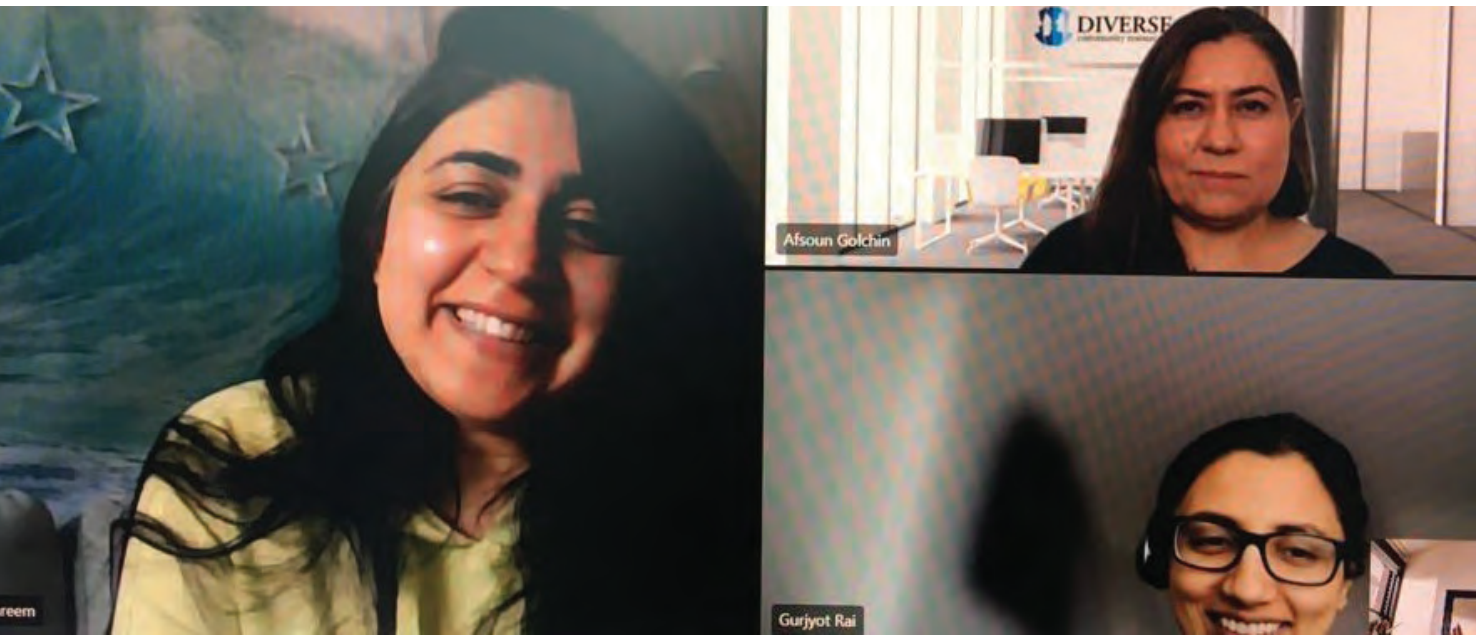
Hao appreciates the LINC program’s scheduled approach to learning English. “We had a tight schedule in class and many assignments after class. Also, we were supposed to have four assessments each month including speaking, writing, reading and listening. We had to set a topic at the beginning of each month and write reflections after each assessment. It helped us recall information we had learned. Whether rain or snow, I never asked

for a day off because I loved that class.”

With a solid foundation in English at CLB 6, Hao applied to Douglas College, where he furthered his English language learning for further fluency and started studying accounting. “I have been progressing well. I think that vision without action is a daydream,” Hao says. “I am working toward my dream and I am sure I can reach it one day.” •



MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES



Our compassionate counsellors and team at DIVERSEcity are here to support our newcomer and underserved clients.

Everyone Needs Help Sometimes

Formerly known as DIVERSEcity's Counselling Services, our Mental Health and Substance Use Services provide therapeutic, harm-reduction services to clients and their families experiencing mental health and/or substance use challenges. We provide free, compassionate, culturally informed and confidential counselling and support services in several languages. In addition to our longstanding counselling programs, this year we also introduced a new program called Journeys, focused on the concurrent disorders of mental health and substance use. As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to pivot our services to a blended model that included both remote and in-person offerings, which allowed our highly trained counsellors to continue building trust with the people we support.

146

UNIQUE CLIENTS
SERVED

4

COUNSELLING PROGRAMS:
FAMILY; CHILD & YOUTH
MENTAL HEALTH; SUBSTANCE
USE & JOURNEYS CONCURRENT
DISORDERS COUNSELLING

6–68

AGE RANGE
OF CLIENTS

TOP 5 CLIENT LANGUAGES

ENGLISH, PUNJABI, ARABIC, MANDARIN & FARSI

VIOLENCE PREVENTION SERVICES



Women survivors of violence in our H.E.A.L. for Work Program get support from our Violence Prevention Services counsellors.

Supporting Survivors of Violence

Our **Violence Prevention Services**, previously delivered as a part of DIVERSEcity's Counselling Services, provide counselling and practical supports to survivors of family violence as well as those families affected by or at risk of involvement in gang violence. With the COVID-19 restrictions, we shifted our services to a blended model that included both remote and in-person offerings, and were able to continue providing vital supports to children, youth and women. We provide free, trauma-informed and survivor-centered safety planning, psycho-educational supports, court accompaniments, referrals to other resources and responsive case management to aid in our clients' journeys toward healing.

109

UNIQUE CLIENTS
SERVED

4

PROGRAMS: STOPPING THE
VIOLENCE; PEACE PROGRAM,
ROOTS OF SAFETY & SAFE
COMMUNITY CLINICAL
COUNSELLING

8

MEMBERS IN OUR SURVIVOR
ADVISORY PANEL, WHICH
HELPS GUIDE OUR ROOTS OF
SAFETY SERVICE FRAMEWORK

“QUOTABLE

“I have tapped into my inner strength again and am feeling great because of my counselling sessions.”
— STOPPING THE VIOLENCE CLIENT



INTERPRETATION & TRANSLATION SERVICES



DIVERSEcity Interpretation and Translation Services helps newcomers communicate without barriers.

The people, the expertise and the social impact

Language should never be an obstacle in a country as diverse as Canada. **DIVERSEcity Interpretation and Translation Services** connects people and organizations, helping them communicate without barriers, across cultures and languages. We are the largest interpretation and translation service in the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley, with a network of 300+ professionals who provide services in 88+ languages, including many rare ones, Indigenous languages and American Sign Language. We are a Buy Social-certified social enterprise and proud to be one of the four selected providers to the Province of British Columbia under the Corporate Supply Arrangement (CSA).

300+

INTERPRETORS &
TRANSLATORS

13K

CLIENT APPOINTMENTS

25K

HOURS OF INTERPRETATION

WHAT WE DO

- Consecutive and simultaneous interpretation
- Dial-in (phone) interpretation
- Court interpretation
- Video remote interpretation
- American Sign Language (ASL)
- Document translation and back translation
- Audio and video transcription services
- Video subtitles service

WHO WE WORK WITH

- Province of British Columbia
- Ministry of Children and Family Development
- Provincial Health Services Authority
- Courts, corrections
- School districts, governmental organizations, non-profits
- Businesses, individuals and private organizations

FUNDING OVERVIEW



*Includes IMPACT Parenting Program and Child and Youth Empowerment Camp for 2020-2021.

Thank you

FUNDERS & PARTNERS 2020-2021

FEDERAL FUNDERS

Employment and Social Development Canada / Service Canada
Health Canada
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
Public Health Agency of Canada
Women and Gender Equality Canada

PROVINCIAL FUNDERS

Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training
Ministry of Children and Family Development
Ministry of Health
Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation
Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions
Ministry of Municipal Affairs
Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and Emergency BC
Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

CORPORATE FUNDERS

Canadian Western Bank
Coast Capital Savings
First West Credit Union

Paragon Testing Enterprises
RBC Foundation
Shaw Communications
TD Canada Trust
Vancity Community Foundation

OTHER FUNDERS & PARTNERS

Ace Community College
BC Clinical and Support Services
BC Family Hearing Resources Centre
BC Society of Transition Houses
Breakfast Club Canada
Canadian Council for Refugees
Canadian Medical Association Foundation
Canadian Mental Health Association
Canadian Women's Foundation
Centre for Child Development
City of Surrey
Community Food Centres Canada
Family Caregivers of BC
Fraser Health Authority
Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association
ISSofBC
Kwantlen Polytechnic University
Lu'ma Native Housing Society

Métis Nation BC
MOSAIC
New Horizons Village Society
NutritionLink Services Society
Options Community Services
Pacific Immigrant Resources Society
PC Children's Charity
Provincial Language Service
Roots Community Health Centre
SurreyCares Community Foundation
Surrey Libraries
Surrey School District 36
Surrey Seniors Planning Table
Simon Fraser University
Sources Community Resource Centres
TD Community Engagement Centre (SFU)
Umoja Operation Compassion Society
United Way of the Lower Mainland
University of British Columbia
Vancouver Foundation
WorkBC
WorkSafeBC

We thank all other community partners for in-kind contributions, speaking & more!

DIVERSECITY SURREY COMMUNITY CAMPUS

13455 76 Avenue
Surrey, BC V3W 2W3

DIVERSECITY NEWTON TOWN CENTRE CAMPUS

#1107 – 7330 137 Street
Surrey, BC V3W 1A3

DIVERSECITY CITY CENTRE CAMPUS

#202 – 10070 King George Boulevard
Surrey, BC V3T 2W4

FIRST STEPS CENTRE

#201 – 7380 King George Boulevard
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