



Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

September 4, 2012



Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association (CAIWA)

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MISSION STATEMENT:

To raise the level of awareness of immigrant women and their families and to assist them in achieving their full potential as members of the Canadian society.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

We value and respect the knowledge experience and skills of immigrant women and believe that, by sharing their wisdom and solutions to the challenges of adapting to a new country, they can build a strong support network that will benefit all participants while empowering the community at large.



CENTRAL ALBERTA IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

President Report for 2011-2012

It has been another successful year for the Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association. The programs we have available have proven to be very beneficial not only for the Immigrant Women and their young ones but also for the age group who are striving to find employment.

Once again we are very appreciative of our executive director, Halima Ali and her administrative capabilities. The office runs smoothly and has a very good, positive atmosphere. These qualities make it easier for the staff to be more productive in their individual assigned programs.

Thank you once again to all the staff, volunteers and funders on behalf of the board of CAIWA for helping us maintain such a high level of success. It is a pleasure to preside over such a positive, effective board; your attendance is greatly appreciated.

May we all face the year ahead with our expectations high and be ready to face new challenges.

Thank you



Helen Andrew
President -
Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association

Executive Directors' Report

This has been a year of tremendous growth for CAIWA. We have been engaged in increasing our outreach to the immigrant community, in evaluating and assessing their needs, strengthening our existing programs and introducing 2 new needed projects.

This year we are the proud recipients of a grant from the Status of Women, called "Community Planning for Women's Economic Security in Rural and Remote Communities in Canada". This 3 year program is a gender based analysis of the economic barriers faced by immigrant women; the support or training needed by the women to overcome these obstacles and the bridging that is required in the business community to remove these barriers.

Our other new and exciting program is the Youth Employment Success Strategies (Y.E.S.S.) program that required a partnership between CAIWA and 3 different government departments: the CIC, Service Canada and Alberta Works. Twelve weeks of in-class training, that provides life skills and employment preparation and ten weeks of work experience will help immigrant youth to gain the skills and experience needed to obtain employment.

At the beginning of December 2011, we moved into our new, ground floor location. Initially the extra space was to be used for childminding, but with the addition of the two new programs we were required to use this space for 2 offices and a classroom. We are all very pleased with our new space.

The number of staff members has increased to 10 full time employees and 5 part time Home Visitors. This growth and development could not have been possible without the dedicated help of our directors, volunteers and staff and I would like to thank everyone for their hard work and commitment to CAIWA's goals.

C.A.I.W.A. PROGRAMS

Community Engagement and Capacity Building

- **"SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY:**

New Canadians working for "Active Community Participation" is an education, awareness and leadership development project designed for new Canadians. This program will assist in the development of strategies aimed at overcoming barriers to their involvement in the community. This Leadership Program will also help newcomers

benefit from local institutions, by engaging them fully and actively in all aspects of the Canadian society

We have completed the second year of a three-year program sponsored by the Multiculturalism Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Clients served: **10** participants graduated from the leadership program this year
10 graduates from the last two years have agreed to form committees dealing with education, immigration, justice and health and wellness.
2 immigrants were involved in a leadership group that was responsible for bringing the Citizenship Ceremony back to Red Deer. This project was initiated by our leadership group the previous year and continued by this year's participants.

Testimonial: Margarita- "I am applying what I have learned in my daily job, and because I feel better with the skills that I acquired from this program, I am comfortable being a better supervisor to my Home Visitors group. I am more open to listen, trying to always give constructive feedback, acknowledge their efforts and celebrating any kind of achievement by showing appreciation. I know the importance of team values to be able to work together in a good and healthy environment. I learned how to use the Interview Matrix, to get different points of view and opinions from a large group in a short time. Over all, I think I am now a better coach and leader. Thanks."

- **Civic Participation:**

Sponsored by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, this program is enabling immigrants to work with, learn from, and contribute to their new community.

Clients Served: **24** participants in 3 full day workshops

Testimonial: Carolina: "I am thankful for the opportunity to take part in the Civic Participation workshops. As a new immigrant in Central Alberta, I feel that these workshops awoke in me a sense of belonging in my community and gave me an insight about how much I can actually contribute to my community. The civic participation workshops were a great opportunity for me to appreciate more of my own background and the cultural differences and richness of others in my community. I have a clearer concept of what a community is and what aspects are valued in the Canadian culture to build welcoming and successful communities. Most importantly, the workshops provided me with practical tools to be a better leader as they helped me to identify my values, strengths and weaknesses as a person. After taking part in these workshops I feel motivated to get more involved into my community because I realize that I have lots to give and learn from the people and place that welcomed me in Canada. Thanks a lot to CAIWA and Leslie for all the effort they put into delivering these workshops. I hope they continue to be supported as they are doing a great job."

SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

- **Computer classes for immigrant:**

This program is run at CAIWA's computer lab, donated by IBM. Its objective is to assist immigrant women and their families to learn basic and advanced word processing programs. The ultimate objective of this program is to help new immigrants achieve their full potential by eliminating a significant barrier to their success, both in the workplace and community at large. This program improves immigrant women and their family's employment opportunities and helps them learn new skills.

This program is currently funded by the Life Long Learning.

Clients served: 30 this year

Testimonial: Liang: "I took a 40 hour computer class at CAIWA with Mr Elvino. His class is fun and easy to understand. I learned Microsoft Office 2007 (Word 2007, Excel 2007, Power Point 2007, Publisher 2007 and Access 2007) and some knowledge or tools to fix some computer problems. It was very useful for me, especially Microsoft Excel, he taught us lots of tricks that I never knew before. I am not scared of Excel any more. I should say this computer class is very useful and worthy to learn. I really appreciate Elvino.

- **Youth employment Success Strategies (Y.E. S.S.)**

This program is designed to help youth (15-30 years) from the immigrant/refugee community in Red Deer, who are experiencing difficulty locating and maintaining employment. This program provides 12 weeks of life and employment skills workshops followed by 10 weeks of work experience. The activities enable immigrant youth to overcome barriers by providing them with life and employment skills in a culturally welcoming environment. Students are matched with culturally similar adults who will act as mentors and provide support to the youth for their action plans. This program will serve 22 clients and run for a total of 42 weeks. The first intake served 6 clients; the second intake was 8 clients and there is a waiting list for the 8 spaces available in the final intake.

Clients Served: 14

Testimonial: Fatima: "I am a recent graduate of Y.E.S.S. and I feel more confident about my abilities than I did in the beginning. Through this program, I learned how to conduct myself accordingly, in the Canadian workplace. I'm more determined than ever to apply my new found skills to my career, for the best outcome ever!"

FAMILY HEALTH AND WELLNESS

- **Breast Cancer Screening Program:**

Sponsored by Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, this program is intended to promote breast cancer screening for hard-to-reach immigrant and refugee women living in Red Deer & surrounding area, and direct them to existing health facilities. This project is designed to overcome cultural and language barriers unique to newly immigrated women in Central Alberta and will include workshops, education & outreach, information dissemination, (brochures, posters, etc.), booking and transportation to existing facilities and translation services during medical appointments.

Served Clients: 157 this year

Testimonial: Maria F: “I am glad to have this information. Because of that I know that I have to do self-examination and the doctor referred me to do a mammogram. I know I have to do this every year. On my own I never did, but CAIWA made the appointment, provided transportation and interpretation.”

- **Safe Homes, Safe Community a Prevention of Family Violence Program**

This program was designed to raise the awareness of family violence and bullying for recent immigrants and refugees living in Red Deer, and educate them on Canadian laws and cultural norms. The project was designed to overcome cultural and language barriers unique to newly immigrated families. It is no longer funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), but because the desperate need for counselling had been determined during the program, the services are provided voluntarily by Tabitha Phiri who has a Masters Degree in Family Counselling, until we can secure funding from another source.

- **Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)**

This home visiting program is offered to help newcomer parents and their children to interact for the purpose to get the child ready for kindergarten. Lessons, books, materials and supplies are provided for the program and it is funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Clients served: Age 3(28), Age 4(24), Age 5(7) Total 59 clients

Testimonial: Amparo, a HIPPY Home Visitor from El Salvador said: “*I have had various jobs since coming in Canada in 1985. When I started doing HIPPY and knew the benefits of the program, I got so excited to work with the families. Since last year I have had a wonderful experience watching and witnessing the changes in the*

mother's lives and their little ones. Every week moms and their children are so excited to know what they are going to be doing next. It is also a pleasure to see the mothers progressing in their English language skills as well as getting more confident to teach their children. I love doing HIPPY and helping introduce a change in people lives and their children".

- **Outreach Program:**

The association's staff, reach out to immigrant women facing challenges and barriers in integrating into the Canadian society. The goal is to help them find solutions or strategies in eliminating these barriers through referrals to government agencies, community agencies and/or the private sector. Recently, we were able to hire a college student (with funding from Volunteer Alberta) to film and produce a promotional video of CAIWA and the programs we offer. This can now be seen on You Tube.

CLOSING REMARKS:

While CAIWA faced some challenges associated with our growth, this past year I am very optimistic about the future. CAIWA is being recognized in Red Deer for the services it offers to immigrant women and their families and many funding organizations are partnering with us. In the meantime our clients, the immigrant women of Red Deer and their families are becoming more acquainted with the value of our services and requesting more and more of these services.

I would like to thank the CAIWA Board members and staff, their families and all those volunteers that made so many personal sacrifices and donated so much of their time to support CAIWA and the immigrant community of Red Deer. Many thanks also go to the funders, both government and private, that made these services possible.

THANK YOU



Halima Ali
Executive Director
Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association