



Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
September 16, 2013





Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association (CAIWA)

#110 5017 49 Street,
Red Deer, Alberta
T4N 1V4

Tel: (403) 341-3553
Fax: (403) 309-3807
E-mail: caiwa@telus.net

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.

President Report for 2012-2013

The Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association has completed another successful year of programs which assist Immigrant women and their families. We now have waiting lists for some of the courses we offer. This helps to assure us that we are heading in the right direction. Thanks to our executive director, Halima Ali, our entire staff and all the numerous volunteers who have put in many hours of diligent, productive work.

We trust that funding will continue to be available and that we will sustain and expand our level of assistance to our Immigrant Women and their families.

The CAIWA office continues to operate well under the supervision of our Executive director, Halima Ali and with that leadership the staff maintains a sincere dedication to their positions.

It is always a pleasure to visit and work with such a wonderful group of people.

Thank You to all our staff, volunteers and funders who have been so generous in many ways over the past year, we look forward to our continuing success in 2014.

Let's keep our expectations high!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Helen Andrew".

Helen Andrew
President -

Executive Directors' Report

On the heels of last year's tremendous growth at CAIWA, the year 2013/2014 can be categorised as a consolidation year in which we worked hard to expand and strengthen our internal capacity and ensure the delivery of exceptional services to our growing clientele.

This year the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation has renewed the Central Alberta Breast Health Education & Awareness program grant for a further two years, to March 2015. Moreover, the rest of the CAIWA programs, except for the Leadership and Civic Participation program, have multi-year commitments from their respective funding sponsor. The CIC funded Leadership and Civic Participation program will end August 2013, as it completes its 3-year funding cycle. A summary of the accomplishments of each program is presented below.

The number of full time staff remained at ten (10) employees, with a further five (5) employed as part-time employees. Again I would like to acknowledge that CAIWA's growth and development could not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of our tireless directors, volunteers and staff. Therefore I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their commitment to CAIWA and to the immigrant community of Central Alberta.

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. The program is composed of a Leadership Component and Civic Participation Education component.

The three year funding cycle of this program, sponsored by the Multiculturalism Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, will end August 2013.

- Leadership Program:

Ten (10) participants graduated from the leadership program this year. Eighteen (18) graduates from the last two years have agreed to form committees dealing with education, immigration, justice and health and wellness issues.

- Civic Participation:

Twenty four (29) participants completed 3 full day workshops

SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

- Computer classes for immigrant:

This program is run at CAIWA's computer laboratory. 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.

of Clients served this year: **48**

This program is currently funded by the Life Long Learning and Red Deer & District Community Foundation

- 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 and third intakes were each 8 clients for a total of 22 clients served for the year.

of Clients Served this year: **22**

This program is funded by Service Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Alberta Works

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.

of clients served this year: **170**

This program is funded by Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation.

- **Women's Economic Security Program**

WES is a three year project that is designed to support women and community partners to work together to develop and implement a community plan to promote women's economic security and prosperity in the Central Alberta communities of Red Deer, Ponoka, Olds, and Lacombe. The three years divided into three categories. Year one is working with immigrant women to identify gaps, barriers, and existing opportunities. Year two is developing a community plan. Year three is for the implementation and assessment of the project.

CAIWA has partnered with Red Deer College to do an analysis on the gaps and barriers faced by immigrant women in Central Alberta. Two professors and four students from RDC have worked with CAIWA in conducting focus groups and interviews. We also have a consultant working together with CAIWA and RDC to collect information from employers and conducting consultation groups. We have connected with more than fifty agencies, companies, institutions, private sectors, businesses, public sectors, local and federal elected makers and other community stakeholders.

In order to identify the gaps, barriers and opportunities, we held 6 focus groups with 51 immigrant women and men. Focus groups were conducted by CAIWA and Red Deer College professors and 3 students. We also had one-on-one in-depth interviews with 40 immigrants. Altogether we had 91 participants. Twelve types of barriers were identified: Non recognition of foreign credentials, language barrier, lack of Canadian experience, lack of financial means to upgrade credentials, lack of affordable childcare, information deficit, inadequate employment services, discrimination (of gender, age, and racial), cultural differences, bureaucratic hazards, social network beyond ethnic community, and social isolation.

We also conducted 9 employer focus groups with 32 participants from various sectors which include Scientific, Engineering, Education, School Boards, Trades

Oriented/Manufacturing Employers and Service Industry Employers. Five main barriers were identified by employers which include language barrier, credentials, culture, work habits and job acquisition.

In order to develop interventions in the areas that were identified as key priorities during focus groups and interviews of both immigrants and employers we are conducting consultations with stakeholders, service providers, employers, community members, civic leaders, institutions and others. Out of the many barriers identified, five key themes will be discussed at consultations. These are language barrier, credentials, job acquisition, employer accommodation, and expanding immigrant women's horizons. The first consultation was on June 5 at RDC. About 51 participants met and discussed some outcomes and interventions and changes to existing services and programs. The second consultation was at Olds Council Chamber. About 11 participants also met to create a list of measurable outcomes. The long list of interventions from the consultation include, providing mentors for ESL classes and at workplaces, improve access to ESL classes, provide affordable childcare, coach immigrants to write resumes and to prepare interviews, employers to provide job shadows, workplace English and many more.

More consultations are in progress. A community plan will be due on November 30th, 2013. Year three will be implementation of the community plan.

This program is funded by Status of Women

- **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). **54 moms** and **63 kids** received a certificate of completion of the curriculum ages 3, 4, and 5. Home Visitors received a certificate of appreciation awarded by the Coordinator for their dedication, commitment and support to the HIPPY families.

Four of the five Home Visitors are previous HIPPY parents.

This program is funded by Citizenship & Immigration Canada

- **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:

I am pleased to report that CAIWA is finally being recognized in Red Deer for the services it offers to immigrant women and their families. As a consequence, many funding organizations are partnering with us to access the immigrant community in Central Alberta. In the meantime our clients, the immigrant women of Red Deer and their families are becoming more aware of the value of our services.

As always I would like to recognize and 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