



Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

October 27, 2015





Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association (CAIWA)

#110 5017 49St.
Red Deer, AB
T4N 1V4

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

CAIWA'S VISION

The vision of CAIWA is to make sure that immigrant women and their families are empowered to achieve their full potential as members of Canadian society.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

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, a strong support network will be built, benefiting all those who participate and our community.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of CAIWA is to provide a network of support to enable immigrant women and their families to attain a satisfying and secure life in Canada. We will achieve our mission by providing opportunities for growth, through education, training, employment skills and leadership.

President Report for 2014-2015

CAIWA has been left in a challenging situation in the passing this past summer of our Board treasurer, Kavenia Campbell. Kavenia provided an invaluable service and gave her utmost support and assistance to our board. Her knowledge and dedication were greatly appreciated. We miss her presence at our meetings, and her vast source of information and guidance.

We are very grateful to our funders, our Executive Director, Halima Ali, her staff and all volunteers who make it possible to carry on with our agenda of assisting Immigrant women in our community and beyond.

The dedicated work of our complete staff and volunteers has continued to make our Programs successful and productive. Immigrant families have benefitted from learning/experiencing/gaining confidence through our very important avenues of training.

We continue to seek new programs and have applied for several new opportunities in that respect. It is our hope that we will obtain funding for these programs, some new and some that we currently have in place. CAIWA has attained an excellent reputation in the community for the success we have shown in our training of individuals, and improving the lives of immigrant women and their families. Our partnership with The Red Deer College is a very beneficial asset which will expand our capability of future training and opportunities.

I wish to express our thanks, on behalf of the board, for all the work and dedication taken on by the entire staff and volunteers that continue to dedicate themselves to our Association.

We look forward to another successful year for the Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association.

Helen Andrew,

President

Executive Directors' Report

For CAIWA, the year 2014/15 has proven to be one of consolidation of the current core services while at the same time laying the seeds for future growth. On the program front, we added a new program to our current services, the Newcomer Employment Success Strategy (NESS!), in January 2015.

The NESS program is sponsored by the Alberta Government. The intent of this program, which is a competency based, occupation oriented training program, is to provide unemployed and marginally employed newcomer Albertans with a blend of occupation-related skills, work experience placements, employability & essential skills, and workplace English as a Second language (workplace English communication skills).

We have also used the presentation of the findings of the WES program to strengthen and renew our partnership with local institutions including the Red Deer College, the City of Red Deer, Red Deer County, local employers, local providers of social services, and other local stakeholders.

Waiting lists for core popular programs like HIPPY and YESS programs have again increased with waiting periods in some cases of more than one term. A summary of the accomplishments of each program is presented below.

The number of staff remains at nine full time and eight part-time employees.

Lastly, as always I would like to acknowledge that CAIWA's growth and development could not have been possible without the support of our funders and the hard work and dedication of our tireless directors, volunteers and staff.

Therefore, I would like also to take this opportunity to thank our funders and each of our directors, volunteers and staff for their commitment to CAIWA and the immigrant community of Central Alberta.

Halima Ali

Executive Director

CAIWA Programs

CAIWA's programs are intended to improve the opportunities of immigrant women and their families in Central Alberta by developing their skills and well-being, while at the same time providing community connections when they are required.

1. Home Instruction for Parents and Preschool Youngsters (H.I.P.P.Y) program enrolled 108 preschoolers and 99 parents

H.I.P.P.Y. (Home Instruction for Parents and Preschool Youngsters) offers free instruction and supplies to newcomer families in order to prepare for Kindergarten. Every week, Home Visitors and the Coordinator meet to review the educational material to be presented. Home visitors then take the lesson to family's homes every week of the school year. They teach a parent, activities from the curriculum, so that they may teach their children. Each week a new lesson is delivered.

This year we registered 123 immigrant families from 15 different nationalities and extended our services to families living in Ponoka and Lacombe.

The program provides many benefits for our families

Parents are the first teachers of their children which helps to strengthen family bonds. Children are prepared for the expectations of the Canadian school system.

The Home Visitor establishes a relationship with the family and provides a connection to many other services in the community. Through group meetings, women meet other mothers who share similar challenges, develop friendships and become more socially engaged. Mothers who complete the 3 year program with their own children are then eligible to become Home Visitors themselves; providing income for their families.

In all, a highly successful program.

2. YESS program- Youth Employment Success Strategy program enrolled 32 participants

The Youth Employment Success Strategies program, a collaborative effort between CIC; Service Canada and Alberta Works, was tailored for youth between the ages of 15 and 30 years. There was a training allowance for students while they were attending the group based employability skills classes and a work place subsidy for employers to provide work placement opportunities. During this time we had 32 participants representing 14 different countries. Each intake of 8 participants was in class for 12 weeks followed by a 10 week work placement. We are proud to share that twenty-five (25) youth completed the work placements at companies like Honda Red Deer; G&G Plumbing; the City of Red Deer; Parkland CLASS; Proform Concrete and Fusion Auto Glass and three (3) participants returned to school to further their studies and four (4) were unable to take advantage of this opportunity for a variety of reasons (new babies or mental health issues). During this time we also provided opportunities for 41 volunteers to be involved in community events. Response to this program was good and we have a waiting list for the next intake, should there be one.

3. NESS- Newcomers Employment Success Strategy (NESS)

This program is funded entirely by Alberta Works and targets newcomers over the age of 30 years. There is only a small possibility of obtaining Learners Benefits during class time and no workplace subsidy is available to offer employers as an incentive to provide work placements. Our first intake which began in March, had 6 participants involved in the Group Based Employability Skills classes. We will have 2 subsequent intakes for a projected total of 30 participants.

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Our second NESS intake was a complete success. Each student increased their English ability in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Furthermore, every student who participated in the program has obtained fulfilling employment along their chosen career path. We are also very pleased to see the improvement in presentation and interview skills, and a pronounced improvement in confidence. They know where they want to go, the skills to make it happen, and the drive to get it done.

4. Immigrant Women's Economic Security- Project

Status of Women Canada left a \$300,000 economic footprint in Central Alberta benefiting immigrant women. Within this fiscal year April 2012 – March 2015, CAIWA, Red Deer College professors and students, stakeholders, community services providers, elected leaders, employers and immigrants carried out activities set under the Women's Economic Security project. The purpose of the project was to address the barriers that immigrant women face in economic security. The Gender Based Analysis conducted by students identified more than 30 barriers that affect immigrant women's prosperity. Approximately 75 immigrants participated in 5 focus groups and 45 one-on-one interviews. Also, 40 employers participated in 9 focus groups and 7 one-on-one interviews. Results from these focus groups and interviews identified over 30 barriers. Between April 2013- March 2014, CAIWA organized and facilitated consultations / round table discussions and one Community Planning Day in Central Alberta four times with around 400 participants comprising stakeholders, community service providers, elected leaders and immigrant serving agencies from Red Deer, Olds, Innisfail, Sylvan Lake, Lacombe and Ponoka. During the consultations participants discussed 100 potential solutions to the barriers faced by women and develop an Action Plan to be implemented in Central Alberta. These solutions were later distilled to 5 themes that include language; unrecognized credentials, job acquisition; employer accommodation; and expanding immigrant women's horizons.

The Steering Committee composed of 14 members participated in 9 extensive meetings and a series of sub-committees and developed an Action Plan with the following outcomes:

- *CAIWA received the Newcomer Employment Success Strategy program(NESS) for adult immigrants 30 years old and above through funding from the provincial government (Alberta Works)*
- *Red Deer College through the Sociology Department has received a three year SSHRC funding to continue the project, particularly within the rural and small municipalities within Central Alberta to address the effectiveness of the services available to immigrant women.*
- *CARE received funding for a pilot project to hire and Employment Engagement staff member to work specifically with employers for education and assistance on creating plans for employing immigrants.*
- *CARE, in response to the need for additional ESL classes, received additional funding for mere ESL and for childminding program*
- *CARE partnered with Kerry Wood Nature Centre to offer ESL classes on site with child care organized by the Kerry Wood staff*
- *Red Deer Lifelong Learning Council Executive Director, who was co-chair of the Steering Committee has taken a leadership role in addressing the language goals identified in the Action Plan*
- *A further role for the Lifelong Learning Council is that of funding, with adult literacy as a priority*

- *Red Deer Public Library receive funding from the Ministry of Advanced Education for additional adult literacy program*
Burman University in Lacombe is interested in providing higher level ESL program and will be

5. Financial literacy 90 attended in different workshops

The Financial Literacy program is a pilot project to provide financial literacy information to new immigrants, while helping them to overcome the cultural and language barriers that may hinder their understanding Canadian financial system. Information sessions and workshops with handouts, help immigrant women & their families (including the HIPPY program participants) learn about financial management including: budgeting; bill payment, banking, finding insurance, using credit, savings & planning for the future. Making smart financial decisions even on a small scale will help immigrant families make best use of the money available, avoid problems with credit, avoid financial scams, be financially responsible, contribute to the economy of the country, and teach their children to do the same.

Breast Cancer Screening Program – 440 served

The Breast Cancer Screening Program is designed to educate immigrant women on their breast health, and help them to participate in screening programs, by booking clinic appointments at doctor's offices and the imaging centre. Approximately 4100 brochures or information fliers were distributed, 440 newcomers attended workshops or requested doctor's appointments, transportation and interpretation services.

6. Computer classes – 61 served

Computer classes are open to everyone at CAIWA .. Classes are designed to eliminate language barriers and are taught by a certified computer instructor who makes learning easy and fun.

7. Collective Kitchen -66 participants

The intent of this project is to provide immigrant women with social time in a familiar environment (a kitchen) where they can learn new recipes, practice their language skills and make new friends. Although they have only met twice, the response has been positive.....Food is provided by the Red Deer Food Bank and the venue is provided by the Adventist Community Service Centre.

8. Food Bank- 99 families served

The CAIWA Food Bank has been in operation 3 days a week, since Sept 1, to help the newcomers of the community , with food security in a culturally sensitive environment. . We have received donations from community members as well as the Red Deer Food Bank. Registration is require. ...Food provided by the Red Deer food Bank.