



# Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association (CAIWA)

#110 - 5017 49<sup>th</sup> Street  
Red Deer, Alberta  
T4N 1V4

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## Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

September 26, 2016





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### 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.



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### President Report

With the dedication and support of our faithful board members, Executive Director, staff and volunteers, CAIWA has successfully completed 25 years of assisting the immigrant women and their families from our community and surrounding area. It is our aim to continue to provide as much help as possible so they may become confident and comfortable members of our community. With the economic downturn it has become more challenging to find work placements for our YESS students and I commend our staff for the efforts they have put forth in these difficult times.

We are very grateful to our funders for making it financially feasible for us to put forth such excellent programs and the staff who have done an outstanding job of training/guiding/counseling our clients through these opportunities. Our partnership with the Red Deer College is continuing to be very beneficial.

We continue to seek new ideas and training facilities that may be of value. The expansion into the "Club Cafe" area will open up new opportunities, adding more space for useful programs and services for CAIWA to present to our immigrant families. We look forward to the challenges of bringing these forward to completion.

Thank you on behalf of our CAIWA board, to all who have contributed to our cause. Your dedication is greatly appreciated.

Helen Andrew



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## Executive Directors' Report

Twenty five years ago, a number of brave and visionary women decided to create an organization dedicated in working with, and supporting the immigrant women of Central Alberta and their families. The result was the establishment of Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association (CAIWA) on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of September 1991. This makes the year 2016 the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CAIWA, and we could not be more proud of what we have accomplished collectively in these past 25 years.

While CAIWA, like many volunteer-led organizations has had its share of challenges, today it is one of only three dedicated social service providers to the immigrant community of Central Alberta, and has proudly served and continues to serve hundreds of immigrants every year, with special emphasis on immigrant women, their children and immigrant youth.

As in recent times, CAIWA had a successful year in 2015/16. We continue to focus on the issues important to the well-being, financial, and integration of immigrant women and their families. As such, with the support of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), we have strengthened the HIPPY program by increasing the number of program workers, so they can work with an increased number of families. We have also added a HIPPY program worker exclusively dedicated in assisting the newly arrived Syrian refugees.

The ever more popular HIPPY program continues to have a sizable waiting list due to increasing demand by the Central Alberta immigrant communities. As such, we are planning to request funding for more HIPPY workers in future application. In addition to the HIPPY program, we continue to offer the IRCC supported Financial Literacy program and the Service Canada / Alberta Works supported Youth Employment Success Strategy (YESS).

This fiscal year, we have also started a Government of Alberta sponsored program named SAFE Families - Community Action to Prevent Family Violence. This is a three year long research program led by CAIWA in partnership with Red Deer College. In addition, we are working in partnership with the Red Deer College, another research program known as "Making Life Easier" and focused on the experiences of immigrant women in Canada.



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We also continue offering Computer classes for immigrants, workplace English for immigrants, outreach programs and collective kitchen for immigrant women, both to the immigrant communities of Central Alberta and the new Syrian newcomers. Our partnership with the Food Bank is also going strong, with CAIWA delivering Food Bank provided foodstuff to needy immigrant families.

Last but not least, CAIWA has rented the former Club Café on Ross Street in downtown Red Deer, with the intent of establishing there an Immigrant Women's Community Center. The historic building is being renovated to create a multi-functional space suitable for 50 people that can be used for conferences, seminars and meetings. The location has also a space and infrastructure (ventilation system, electrical, plumbing and lighting) for a commercial kitchen that can be used for CAIWA's collective kitchen program. In addition, it has an area suitable for a child care training program, with a capacity of 16 children.

We plan to use the facility to provide entrepreneurial support and job skills training for local immigrant women preparing to enter the hospitality/food service industry and child minding levels 1&2. This training will provide the immigrant women the skills required to compete and enter the local labor market, and/or provide resources and information for immigrant women looking to start their own businesses (childcare, coffee shops, etc.).

The multi- media conference space will also provide a workspace for artists and craftsmen while allowing us to showcase the artistic talents of our newcomers on many levels.

To conclude, I would like to take this opportunity to express my whole-hearted appreciation to our board, our funders, our staff and the countless volunteers that have worked relentlessly to support this association for the last 25 years, and continue to work harder and harder, so that this association can achieve its holistic goal of assisting the immigrant communities of Central Alberta.

Thank you,

Halima Ali  
Executive Director



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### CAIWA Programs

#### Home Instruction for Parents and Preschool Youngsters

The Home Instructor For Parents Of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) program started the 2015-2016 school year with 112 clients on September 2, 2015 and was completed by June 30 2016. We provided an orientation session to introduce our Home Visitors and the HIPPY program to our clients. September 18, 2015 was Orientation Day (Red Deer), and September 25, 2015 was Orientation Day in Ponoka for clients from Ponoka, Lacombe, and Blackfalds.

The HIPPY program is provided for immigrant families who have children age 3-5 years old. Home Visitors are visiting families one hour per week to deliver the HIPPY curriculum to the caregiver (mother/ Father/caregiver) as the first teacher at home.

In 2015-2016 the HIPPY Red Deer site implemented three orientation meeting in Red Deer, Ponoka, and Lacombe. provided seven workshops for Home Visitors. provided events such as Graduation Party, New Year celebration, Adopt A Reader party and Welcoming Syrians. HIPPY staff also contributed actively in two community events; the International Children's Festival and Kindergarten Here I Come!

The Home Visitors work extremely hard each week to connect families with other services that they may also require. Community support is also an important factor in the succes of this program and we should acknowledge CIRR, HIPPY Canada, Red Deer City, CAIWA, volunteers, Churches, Librarians, Christmas Bureau, Food Bank , Superstore who assisted us financially, emotionally and physically.



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### **Youth Employment Success Strategies (YESS)**

The Youth Employment Success Strategies program (YESS) is a collaborative effort between CAIWA, Service Canada and Alberta Works. It was designed for youth between the ages of 15 and 30 years, who are unemployed and ready to work. The program provides a training allowance for students while they are attending the group based employability skills classes (GBES) and a work place subsidy for employers, to provide work placement opportunities. During the past year we have had 27 participants, in 3 intakes, representing 12 different countries. Each intake was in the Group Based Employability Skills (GBES) for 10 weeks followed by a 12 week work placement.

The GBES portion of the program covers Essential Skills, Financial Literacy, Computer classes and Workplace Language. Essential skills cover topics such as communication; problem solving; time management; workplace ethics; job search skills; customer service; the generation gap; leadership; resumes; cover letters and interview skills. Financial Literacy helps newcomers understand the financial benefits and responsibilities of being in Canada including banking, budgeting, credit, insurance, and taxes and will preparation. Computer classes are tailored to the needs of each intake while covering Microsoft Word, Excel, Publisher, and PowerPoint. Participants are responsible for putting together a Power Point presentation of what they have learned, for their graduation celebration. Workplace Language covers idioms. Giving feedback; filling out forms, business telephone etiquette, following an agenda, expressing urgency and following directions. The program is also enriched with community visits; guest speakers; experiential learning exercises; DISC training (introduction to the dimensions of behavior); exposure courses such as CPR and First Aide and a SMART Connections Event. SMART Connections invites local employers to provide our participants with information regarding the expectations of their workforce and what they would like to see when reviewing resumes or interviewing. The employers also conduct mock interviews with each of the participants and these connections often result in work placement opportunities or full time employment.

To date, 12 youth have completed the work placements or started full time jobs at companies like Mr Lube; Red Deer Child Care Society; Central Alberta Sexual Assault Support Centre; the City of Red Deer; Central Alberta Refugee Effort; G&G Plumbing; Red Deer Museum and Art Gallery; McDonalds; Chapters and COSMOS Group of Companies. 3 participants returned to school to further their studies and 4 were unable to complete the work placements for a variety of reasons. 8 of the participants who graduated from the GBES at the end of August are still waiting for placement opportunities due to the down turn in the economy. During this time we also provided opportunities for participants to volunteer at community events. Response to this program was good and we have a waiting list for the next intake, should there be one.



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### **NESS- Newcomers Employment Success Strategy (NESS)**

This fee for service program was funded entirely by Alberta Works and targeted newcomers over the age of 30 years who were unemployed and ready to work. This program provided 16 weeks in Group Based Employability Skills (GBES) and 6 weeks work placement. The curriculum for this program was very similar to that of the Youth Employment program.

We enrolled 20 adults in 3 intakes; representing 13 different countries. 13 found employment at places such as Sears; Cosmos Group of Companies; Red Deer Child Care Society; CAIWA; Nossack Meats; Associated Cabs; Catholic Social Services; CBI and Central Alberta Residential Society. 1 participant returned to school to take the Health Care Aide program; 3 did not finish the Group Based Employability Skills (GBES); and 3 did not find employment for a variety of reasons.

### **Financial Literacy**

The Financial Literacy program introduces the Canadian banking system to newcomers through small workshops or individual coaching sessions. The program covers Banking; Budgeting; Credit; Taxes; Insurance; Will preparation and Investments. This is a well-planned program delivered with accuracy and in a very simple language often with interpretation. Community partnerships with financial institutions such as ATB and Primerica have helped to enrich this program and volunteer professionals such as lawyers and accountants also contribute to the success. Partnerships with the Central Alberta Poverty Reduction Alliance (CAPRA) and other settlement serving agencies have allowed us access to information and connections that are vital to the success of this program.

During this last year we provided instruction for 151 adults, surpassing our target of 110.



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### **Collective Kitchen**

*This group of 5 or 6 immigrant women pool their time, money and abilities in order to come up with healthy, delicious and money-saving dishes that they then take home to their families. They meet once a week, every Sunday, either morning or afternoon.*

*Participants plan recipes together, make up grocery lists, go shopping and collectively prepare their meals.*

*Each participant's contribution generally comes to about \$ 3 per portion. Everything is done in a take-charge atmosphere seasoned with pride, dignity and humor. They get to know each other, practice English, and break the isolation. Our collective kitchen is not just about cooking, it's about giving back and sharing with the community.*

*This year from June 2015 To July 2016 we had 324 Participants.*

### **Food Bank**

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.



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### Research Projects

#### Making Life Easier:

Red Deer College department of Sociology in partnership with the Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association (CAIWA), were successful in the application for the Community and College Social Innovation Fund supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The grant will fund a three-year research and community project (July 2015-June 2018) to gain a deeper understanding of formal and informal programs and services used by immigrant women in Central Alberta, and seek innovative ways to improve these programs and services to make life easier for immigrant women and build a stronger Central Alberta community.

In the first year, we are conducting a survey to gain insights into the use of programs and services by immigrant women. This is followed by a Photovoice project in the second year where immigrant women will articulate their experiences of resiliency and triumph in building their new life in Central Alberta. In the third year, we will hold exhibitions of photos taken by immigrant women, and their interpretation of the photos, for them to share with Central Alberta and other communities their experience of challenges and successes in building their new life in Central Alberta. Focus groups and workshops will also be conducted in the third year to solicit input, to identify innovative ways to improve existing programs or design new programs and services for immigrant women.

A total of 150 women were interviewed for this part of the research and out of these 32 women will be selected to participate in the second phase of the project (Photovoice). These women will identify, represent and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique. Currently a pilot project with 6 women has been completed.

The third year will be dissemination of information and engendering change; exhibition of photos at suitable places for maximum impact; focus groups, workshops where immigrant women share and interpret their photos with groups of individuals that directly and indirectly influencing immigration policies and program funding; conferences and publications. Central Alberta community service providers and elected leaders will then develop strategies to improve the programs and services so to benefit immigrant women.



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### **Community Safety Program:**

CAIWA received funding from the Alberta Human Services to address domestic and sexual violence among immigrant women. This is a two and half year project starting November 1, 2015 ending April 30<sup>th</sup> 2018.

CAIWA is collaboratively working with RDC Sociology, Psychology and Social Work Departments to conduct a research to support vulnerable immigrant families affected by domestic and sexual violence. The research team includes three RDC professors, students and CAIWA project coordinator

Six focus groups with a total of 47 people were conducted with immigrant women, men and service providers to share their ideas on domestic violence, meaning of domestic and sexual violence in the context of their community, knowledge of support services, personal experiences with domestic and sexual violence and shared examples of domestic and sexual violence.

A total of 70 one-on-one interviews will be conducted with immigrant women and men. The participants will have an opportunity to share how domestic and sexual violence is defined by their culture and their thoughts on how to best respond to it in their community. The results from the research would help to shape policies to better address violence and promote safety and harmony in families.

After the interviews, RDC will analyze the data which will be presented to the Steering Community in order to develop strategies that will help reduce domestic and sexual violence. Community service providers will develop strategies to reduce the occurrence of domestic and sexual violence among immigrants.

**Thank You**