INTEGRATING IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES HELPS BUILD A BETTER COMMUNITY

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# TABLE of CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Focused Future For MOSAIC</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsive Policing by the RCMP</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOSAIC’s Family Place Benefits Children And Their Parents</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internationally Trained Professionals: The Road To Recognition</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving Hope To The Internationally Trained Professional Immigrant</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOSAIC Volunteers Deliver Random Acts Of Kindness</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women - Tell Your Stories And Fight for Legal Aid</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Bold Future For Interpretation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Through Popular Theatre</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOSAIC Services</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Has Its Benefits</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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- Settlement Services . . . 604-254-9626
- Family Programs . . . . 604-254-9626
- Employment Programs . . 604-254-0244
- Language Centre . . . . . 604-684-8825
- Interpretation Services . 604-254-8022
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MOSAIC
Summer 2003
In this past year, it was exciting to watch the passionate and heated participation of front-line staff in our strategic planning process. Their true commitment and dedication to the immigrants and refugees we serve couldn’t be more apparent. And their commitment to respond to changes in these challenging and uncertain times is appreciated. In 2002, with the direction and support of the Board of Directors, the whole organization went through an eight month rigorous process and developed an operational strategic plan. This plan will serve MOSAIC for the coming five to seven years. Strategic plans envision the course of an organization’s future by considering challenges and opportunities. The direction of the organization is set, and the plan is made concrete through breaking down the goals into achievable tasks.

After reviewing the international, national, local, and internal impacts and constraints on our ability to provide services, it became apparent that the most significant strategic issue for MOSAIC is “SUSTAINABILITY”!

We identified six broad strategic areas: financial stability, organizational development, membership services, marketing and communication, programs and services and partnership development. Sustainability will come through value-added client services, building financial stability and retaining our staff and volunteers — the very backbone of MOSAIC. We have been quietly celebrating this internally driven strategic development, and now it is time we share it with our support groups, partners and community members. With this newsletter we celebrate the steps taken collaboratively with our communities and the work we’re doing. I hope you enjoy the wonderful and telling stories.
Responsive Policing
By The RCMP by Sherman Chan

To help the RCMP understand and create policies sensitive to the diverse cultural communities in Canada, MOSAIC received funding to develop Diverse Cultures, Responsive Policing: A Policy Framework Document. This document will be used to guide ethno-cultural groups and the RCMP in co-operative policy development and evaluation. Sensitive policies will help ensure sensitive services!

Over 70 individuals have contributed to the development of this policy framework. Participants to the project included: immigrant, refugee and community service providers; women service providers; the RCMP Diversity Management Branch; members of the RCMP Commissioner Advisory Committee on Visible Minorities; academics; Montreal city government; the Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba governments; Regina Canadian Heritage; Montreal and Regina city police departments; RCMP Corporals from the Training Academy; Aboriginal Police and Recruiting.

The RCMP have stated that it is a priority to improve the understanding of Canada’s diverse population. They are working to better reflect the community at all levels. The national, regional, and provincial associations representing the interests of ethno-cultural groups, through the development of this policy framework, have expressed a commitment to work with the RCMP in this regard.

The framework document will be distributed widely and is posted on-line in English and French at MOSAIC’s website: www.mosaicbc.com/whats_new.html

We at MOSAIC are very pleased to have helped with this important project. We thank the Department of the Solicitor General of Canada, under the Voluntary Sector Initiative, for their funding and support.

Great News — the highly successful Building Blocks Vancouver program, will soon be expanding to include three new sites with three new partners: Kiwassa, South Vancouver and Mount Pleasant Neighborhood Houses. Currently the program provides home visits to Vietnamese and Latin American families, as well as Aboriginal families in conjunction with the Aboriginal Friendship Centre. The city-wide project will bring on board five new Home Visitors working out of the new sites and will expand into new ethnic communities. We also welcome Janice Greenidge, the new Program Manager!

Building Blocks Vancouver is a joint initiative of the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society, MOSAIC, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, and the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority.

Program To Support NEW MOMS Expands!
Parenting is a challenging job under the best of circumstances, but just imagine taking away traditional family supports, economic stability, fluency in the language and ability to access community services. This is what many of our newly immigrated parents in the English Language Services for Adults (ELSA) program face. Clearly, there is a need for ongoing parenting support and education. Since we believe it is important for parents to be an integral part of their children’s program and be supported as their children’s prime educator, we developed the Family Place and Parent Time Program.

During our family time, parents are encouraged to set aside the stresses of their daily lives and focus on time with their children. Parents with their children play in the different learning centres, work on arts and crafts and during circle time rhyme and sing songs together. By providing this positive time, with support and modeling from skilled early childhood educators, we hope parents can enhance their skills and feel empowered in supporting their child’s development. Participants attend the program once a week for three hours.

Parents can also attend Parent Group Sessions to discuss their concerns, cultural differences in family roles and explore new ideas with other parents. The program introduces concepts of child development and the importance of play and communication with their children. This program is led by a trained parenting facilitator/ESL instructor. Sessions also include guest speakers from a variety of agencies and services on topics such as nutrition, dental hygiene, language development and child development and behaviour. We also introduce parents to relevant community services.

Over the past year, 42 families including 48 children have participated in this program. Participants have overwhelmingly expressed their appreciation for having this opportunity to connect with their children, other parents and the community at large. Parents have reported improved communication with their children and a change in the way they engage in activities with their children at home.

We look forward to developing services further by focusing on the creation of a peer-mentor component and by starting an ESL Nobody’s Perfect group. As well, we are producing multilingual parent-child story and activity kits for parents to borrow for use at home.

We thank the United Way Success by 6 program and the Vancouver Foundation for funding the Family Place Program and helping families.
Internationally Trained Professionals: The Road to RECOGNITION

by Kelly Pollack

It’s been an exciting year — BC Internationally Trained Professionals Network (BCITP Net) was created by MOSAIC, Immigrant Services Society of BC, and Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society. Through BCITP Net we are working to form associations for internationally trained professionals. These associations will provide a unified voice and will meet with regulatory bodies and governments to advocate for a clear process to access professional employment.

Our first step was to discover the number of internationally trained professionals in BC and their professions. Not an easy task, as the only available data came from Citizenship and Immigration immigrant landing information. However, we found there is a broad mix of internationally trained professionals in BC, with the highest numbers trained in the many engineering fields. Next, we hosted public consultations. Over 400 internationally trained professionals attended throughout a number of regions in BC — Vancouver, Surrey, Victoria, Nanaimo and Vernon. They discussed the issues they face trying to access their professions, and their need for information and clarification about regulatory licensing processes. They also networked, which was valuable as they got to meet with others in the same profession.

Many of the internationally trained professionals expressed a desire to form associations, providing direction to BCITP Net. Their priorities were to advocate for change to licensing processes, and to make them more transparent and accessible. They also want to network and share information and to bring in speakers to clarify the steps for licensing and to gain work in their professions. BCITP Net will provide resources over the next year to support the development of an association for doctors and another for engineers. We will continue to connect with internationally trained professionals in the regions outside the Lower Mainland, and we will look at the development of other associations, or networks for internationally trained professionals.

Check out our new website at www.bcitp.net
Giving HOPE To The Internationally Trained Professional IMMIGRANT by Justine Mills

A woman came to see me for an intake appointment the other day. She is a social worker from El Salvador and has worked as a janitor here for two years (she was recently laid off). Like so many other professional immigrants who arrive here, she took a job to survive in a new country and was now wondering about her options for the future. Did she have any chance of finding work in her field as a social worker? Had she waited too long to re-enter her field? Would her skills/qualifications be recognized here?

These are common questions asked by internationally trained professional immigrants who attend our programs. And how do we support these individuals? Perhaps, more than anything, we offer a combination of hope and a realistic action plan. For the social worker, we looked at the options of how to become re-certified, the timeline in doing so, other alternatives for training and employment that could utilize her skills and the process of building a plan for the future. I think it is important to know that there are many ways of achieving professional goals in a new country. And as internationally trained immigrants continue to succeed in this process, our communities will recognize, utilize and appreciate the skills they contribute.

In addition to providing clients with hope, MOSAIC Employment Programs provide many services and resources that address the needs of internationally trained immigrants. These services and resources include Career Exploration and Job Search Workshops, Sector Specific Workshops, Negotiated Financial Assistance for Training, and Credential Brokering Services. MOSAIC is also taking a leading role in the development of Occupational Fact Sheets and the formation of professional associations through the BC Internationally Trained Professionals Network. Future programs include an Immigrant Loan Program designed to assist skilled immigrants to overcome the financial hurdles that keep them from using their skills here in Canada.

Internationally trained professional immigrants, like all newcomers to Canada, arrive filled with hope for a new future. An important part of our job is keeping their hopes alive and to ensure that there are resources in place to help them realize their potential.
When you least expect it, you may be chosen by a MOSAIC Kindness Club volunteer to be the lucky recipient of a random act of kindness! The Kindness Club is a new initiative launched by the MOSAIC Volunteer Program. The program encourages positive interactions and exchanges between newcomers and the host community, and it highlights the active role immigrants play in our community.

Here’s how it works: volunteers receive a booklet of hundreds of ideas for acts of kindness (everything from delivering flowers to a senior’s centre to donating blood). They also receive recipient cards that are to be left at the scene of their kind acts; these cards explain the program. Then, off they go to perform at least one kind deed per month for the next six months at the place and time of their choice. Kindness Club members get together at bi-monthly coffee gatherings to share their stories. There, they might partner up with another volunteer, or even decide on group activities.

The Kindness Club is open to both newcomers and “host” community volunteers, so the positive outcomes are many. The community is helped by the volunteer’s kind deeds. And newcomers are out meeting people in their community, unconstrained by restrictions on time, English language knowledge or formal volunteer expectations. Plus, “host” volunteers play a leadership role in welcoming newcomers, introducing them to the neighbourhood and explaining Canadian customs. All volunteers benefit from sharing positive cross-cultural experiences.

Thanks to the three volunteers who helped develop the Kindness Club: Kelly Parkatti, Kyung Hee Kim McDonald, and Svitlana Portnova (current coordinator).

For more information call Laurie at 604-254-9626 ext. 246, or email her at volunteers@mosaicbc.com.
WOMEN
Tell Your Stories and Fight for LEGAL AID!

by Perminder Flora

Many women face family law matters alone, without legal representation. MOSAIC’s Stopping the Violence Counselling Services for Women, together with other community organizations and West Coast Legal Education Action Fund (LEAF) are working on the Family Law Legal Aid Affidavit Campaign. The campaign is an effort to give voice to the struggles women experience when they deal with legal issues without legal representation. Through using sworn affidavits from women, LEAF hopes to prove that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms obliges the government to provide legal aid to those in need.

MOSAIC is inviting immigrant and refugee women to information sessions, where LEAF will explain the campaign and provide free legal information on:

- Divorce and Separation
- Guardianship
- Custody and Access of Children
- Spousal and Child Support Payments
- Division of Property

If you have gone to court without a lawyer or did not get legal aid for your family law case, please consider coming to an information session. Here you can learn more about family law and decide whether you’d like to give a written statement confirmed under oath (affidavit) to a volunteer from LEAF.

If you are interested in learning more or attending an information session please contact: Perminder at MOSAIC 604-254-9626 or email to pflora@mosaicbc.com

MOSAIC organized and hosted a meeting with the Honorable Denis Coderre, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration on May 18th. Community participants shared concerns regarding the impact of the planned elimination of Legal Aid for immigration matters effective March, 2004. The cut in service will negatively impact a claimant’s ability to have a fair hearing.

Other issues raised were the status of the promised Refugee Appeal Division, the review of the Immigration and Refugee Board, the implementation of the regulation of immigration consultants, foreign credentials and the regularization of people with no status. The meeting was cordial and the Minister left with a clear picture of the issues that concern immigrants and refugees in the West Coast Region.
A Bold Future For INTERPRETATION

by Jiri Adler

Our Community Interpretation Services struggles with the sad reality that there are some small ethnic communities that are not served adequately. It is difficult to find qualified interpreters for some languages. And when qualified interpreters are found often there is not enough work to sustain them. It is obvious that an innovative approach is necessary – and that videoconferencing is part of the solution.

Because it takes place on the World Wide Web, videoconferencing is a readily accessible communication tool. Using a minimum of a personal computer, camera, microphone and an Internet connection, people in two or more locations can see and hear one another.

Happily, MOSAIC is well on its way to providing those in need with interpretations using videoconferencing. We have initiated market research and a marketing campaign. We have installed and tested videoconferencing equipment. MOSAIC has also conducted two videoconferencing workshops for graduates of the Vancouver Community College Interpreting Course for Languages of Smaller Diffusion. Addressing the need for interpreters of small language groups, this VCC course was only offered after long lobbying efforts.

The next time you talk to an interpreter it may be over the Internet!

For more information call our Community Interpretation Services at 604-254-8022 or e-mail interpretations@mosaicbc.com

First Time Mothers to Receive Milk COUPONS

MOSAIC’s Building Blocks Vancouver program has received a $13,230 grant from the Central City Mission Foundation to create a milk program. Building Blocks supports and teaches new mothers of Vietnamese or Spanish background, through weekly visits by Maritza Andino and Huong Le, how to give the best care possible to their babies and preschool children. The grant money will provide three cups of milk per day to 85 children over a one year period. The milk is distributed using a coupon system through Canada Safeway. The coupons were printed and made available to Building Blocks in March 2003 and are enthusiastically accepted by all of the families. Since this includes good nutritional and dental care, the milk program is a valuable service to families strapped for cash.

Thanks again to the Central City Mission Foundation for their generous donation to the Building Blocks program!
In November 2002, Building Blocks Vancouver found itself in dire need of donations for the annual children’s December holiday party. The Minerva Foundation was approached for funding, but unfortunately, gifts for the holiday did not fit their mandate. However, their Executive Director, Danna Murray, in the spirit of the season, made a personal contribution and collected donations from her own family, friends and community. The $1,300 donation was used to purchase gifts, and the holiday party was a success! Thanks again to Danna Murray and her family, friends and community! You made a lot of children happy!

Do You Know Your Bowling VOCABULARY?

It may not be as quintessentially Canadian as hockey, but bowling is a sport and a social event that everyone can participate in. In mid-March, our entire Language Centre program was invited to participate in a bowling excursion. As part of our settlement language curriculum, we introduce students to Canadian culture and encourage students to form their own social support networks. What better way to break the ice, foster team spirit and learn a new sport than to go bowling?

Thanks to funding from the Gaming Commission, over 130 of our English Language Services for Adults (ELSA) students enjoyed what was for most, their first bowling outing at a local bowling lane. Everyone was excited to have an opportunity to play together in a relaxed environment so different from the classroom. Students got a break from the rigorous demands of their daily lives and a chance to connect with each other in a fun, friendly way.
Parents from the Latin American and Vietnamese communities participated in an innovative parenting project at MOSAIC. Through using the Popular Theatre Approach, parents learned a variety of skills and strategies to establish open communication and positive relationships with their children. They also learned how to counter criminal recruiters' tactics of isolating children through intimidation and manipulation. From September 2002 to March 2003, more than 40 parents benefited from the 36 group sessions offered. The groups encouraged parents to express through games, activities and theatre scenes the challenges of raising children in a different surrounding culture. In August and September of 2002, MOSAIC and Victor Porter, a Popular Theatre practitioner with 20 years of experience, delivered 40 hours of intensive training to 21 community members and workers. Training others in the method has opened new avenues of support, community and skill-building to the broader community:

The training in Popular Theatre proved to be an educational tool for myself as an individual, as well, a tool to use in facilitation and group work. I have been able to apply the process and methodology of Popular Theatre on a weekly basis during my leadership classes with grade 7 and 8 students; using the games I have learned as a basis for building team work and resolving group conflict. The most exciting piece of my work is beginning to unfold as I am building Popular Theatre into my newest project, working with young women and high-school girls. The methodology of theatre as dialogue allows these young women and girls to communicate issues of violence against women through scene building and later enacting scenes of intervention and possible alternatives to the challenges in their lives with the hope of decreasing their level of victimization and susceptibility to these challenges. The training I received in Popular Theatre Methodology has proven to be a valuable and tangible asset in both my personal and professional career.

Vi Nguyen,
Vietnamese Youth Development Worker,
Pacific Community Resources Society

The Popular Theatre Approach methodology originates from the Popular Education Movement that arose in Brazil in the early 1960’s. The Popular Education Movement draws upon real life experience as a valuable resource for knowledge and learning. The ultimate objective of this approach is for people to affect social change through active participation. The Popular Theatre method uses stage acting as a way for communities to express their concerns, to reflect upon the dilemmas they face and to share possible solutions for these problems. Theatre games and exercises are performed to explore particular areas of concern in peoples’ lives and to brainstorm and rehearse potential resolutions. This project was made possible thanks to the generous support of the Community Mobilization Program, National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention, Department of Justice Canada.
Key Words for HEALTH CARE

The Translations Department has produced “Key Words for Health and Medical Care” in fifteen languages. The newest addition is the Arabic/Persian version. This guide of health and medical terms is produced to assist volunteer interpreters, people with English as a second language and health care professionals who see non-English speaking patients regularly or in emergency situations.

To order please visit www.mosaicbc.com/whats_new_bilingual.html

Occupational Fact Sheets for NURSES

MOSAIC and the Immigrant Services Society of BC in partnership with the Registered Nurses Association of BC have developed a fact sheet for internationally educated nurses. The Fact Sheet provides information on how to become registered to practice as a nurse in British Columbia. This is the first in a series of fact sheets that will provide internationally trained professionals information on becoming registered in their profession in BC.

The fact sheet for nurses has been translated into French, Chinese, Farsi and Hindi and are available for downloading from the MOSAIC website at:

www.mosaicbc.com/internationally_trained_professionals.htm

Funding for the project was provided by the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women’s Services and Human Resources Development Canada

Literacy Kits Make Learning FUN

Parents like them, Kids like them too!

Halina Mickiewicz and Aldona Kaminska, from the Language Centre childcare and family resource program team, have put together 20 parent-child literacy kits for participants to borrow for home use. The entertaining and educational kits include children’s books (in some cases multilingual), puzzles, games and felt story boards or puppets with rhymes and songs on cassette. The kits are popular with parents and children alike. With a little training, the kits help parents increase the quality time spent reading and playing with their children. Parents report that their kids just love it.
BRITANNIA Bursary AWARD

Each year MOSAIC awards bursaries to students from the graduating class of Britannia Secondary School. These students are from an immigrant or refugee background and want to pursue post-secondary education. The awards are made on the recommendation of Britannia’s Scholarship Committee to students who have demonstrated tenacity and academic standing.

Congratulations to this year’s awards winners: Tongxin Feng, Jimmy Li, Samuel Liu and Andrey Luchnaninov!

COALITION Formed To Help Support International STUDENTS

In the wake of several shocking attacks on international students in the Lower Mainland, MOSAIC created a positive approach to safety awareness. We built a coalition of community-based service agencies to provide safety education and referral information to international ESL students. The coalition is called Safety Awareness Project for International ESL Students. The next step for the Project is to produce a Community Safety Tips and Resource Guide in comic book format. The guide will be available in Korean, Japanese, Chinese and English, and will be posted on our website.
**Bilingual Counselling** serves communities in a variety of languages, providing information, counselling, referrals, and advocacy.

**Building Blocks Vancouver** provides support to first time parents through home visits.

**Community Outreach Programs** work with diverse communities and the public with the aim of developing organizational structures that embrace diversity.

**Employment Programs**
A variety of programs include employment counselling, access to skills training for EI clients, skills training for clients on BC Employment Assistance, job search skills and career exploration. General information sessions are held each Tuesday at 3 p.m. at 1522 Commercial Drive.

**English Language Services for Adults (ELSA)**
A beginners English program for immigrants and convention refugees. A licenced childcare facility is available on site.

**Family Support Programs** assist communities by providing group support to women with children to break isolation and promote healthy families and communities.

**Language Services** offer interpretation and translation services in 64 languages and 40 alphabets, simultaneous interpretation, language fluency evaluations, and focus groups in target languages. These services are offered on a fee-for-service basis.

**Legal Advocacy Project**
provides summary advice, legal representation and referral for immigrants and refugees with regard to issues such as immigration, family, social assistance, housing and employment.

**Multicultural Victim Support Services Program** offers support to victims of crime with emphasis on cultural sensitivity and service in the client’s first language.

**Volunteer Program** assists immigrants and refugees to take an active part in community life.
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Here is my donation of
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All donations of $10 or more will receive a receipt for income tax purposes. Other donations will receive a receipt only upon request.

Check if you do not wish a portion of your donation to be applied to membership (Membership fees: Individual - $10; Professional Individual - $25; Group/Organization - $100)

I wish to pay by VISA: _______

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Join MOSAIC and share the news and exciting developments. As a member you will receive our newsletters and be entitled to vote at the Annual General Meeting. To support MOSAIC’s programs and advocacy work, fill out the form and become a member today!

Memberships are annual from April 1 to March 31. For more details, please contact Sandra at 604-254-9626 or e-mail mosaic@mosaicbc.com

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SUMMER 2003