

MOSAIC

NEWSLETTER 2005

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Our Vision

Our vision is of a Canada that welcomes all people, that supports their right to equality and choice as they determine their goals and aspirations, and that acknowledges their contributions in enriching and strengthening our communities.

Our Mission

Our mission is to support immigrants and refugees by listening to and responding to their needs. We do this through advocacy and through accessible, practical and diverse services that enable them to meet their personal goals while building bridges to the larger community.

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CREDITS and Thanks to

Editorial Committee

Kelly Pollack, Jiri Adler, Peter Paul Harnisch, Gary McFarlane

Contributors

Jiri Adler, Lida Amiri, Sherman Chan, Patrick Coady, Guillermo Comesaña, Janice Greenidge, Ninu Kang, Nina Miller, Deeqa Mohamud, Eyob Naizghi, Victor Porter, Alvaro Ramirez, Saleem Spindari, Dennis Tsang

Photos

Peter Paul Harnisch

Copy Editing

Noa Glouberman

Layout and Design

Shirin Karmali and Chava Glouberman

The Faces of MOSAIC

Lida Amiri, Brett Button, Guillermo Comesaña, Hai Yan (Kelly) Gao, Huang Lan, Sandy Lam, Athaula Abthul Majeed, Bhapu Mehmi, Ana H. Ramiraz, Diogenes Miguel dos Santos, Saleem Spindari, Khean Toch, Patricia Turner, Hong Zhu

MOSAIC

1720 Grant St., 2nd floor
Vancouver, BC V5L 2Y7
mosaic@mosaicbc.com

**For more information on
our services please call:**

Settlement Services 604.254.9626
Family Programs. 604.254.9626
Employment Programs . 604.254.0244
Language Centres. 604.684.8825
Interpretation Services. . 604.254.8022
Translation Services 604.254.0469

www.mosaicbc.com

Our Clients, Our Inspiration

by Eyob G. Naizghi, MOSAIC Executive Director

Imagine being assigned to complete a study on the current state of humanity. You would most likely begin your research by turning on the news, reading a newspaper or magazine, or eavesdropping on other peoples' conversations. What conclusions would you draw if these were your only sources of information? Violence, hatred, war, terrorism, religious and racial oppression – it would not be surprising if your findings were less than favourable.

Unless, of course, your research included an analysis of the groups whose main purpose is to help people, no matter race, religion, citizenship, employment status or income level. Fortunately, there are many of these organizations in operation today... MOSAIC is one of them. Despite a tough stretch for the world between 2004 and 2005 – the tragic tsunami in Southeast Asia, acts of terrorism in London and the Middle East, war in Iraq raging on – the caring and courageous staff at MOSAIC continue their important work providing support and services to immigrants and refugees who have come from other countries in hopes of starting better lives for themselves and their families in Canada.

Though it is unlikely that MOSAIC staff members work as hard as they do just to ensure a good impression is made in the event a researcher decides to do a study on humankind, they do draw their inspiration from somewhere. That source is present in this year's edition of our annual newsletter. As you read through the articles in this issue, you may begin to notice how many personal stories – from the mouths and in the words of our clients – have been included. You may also get the sense that the inclusion of these anecdotes was no accident.

For example, in Dennis Tsang's article, *Sowing Seeds for Success*, former clients recount their experiences with career services provided by MOSAIC. Their stories exemplify not only MOSAIC's small role in familiarizing them with the Canadian job market, but also their resilience and determination. Despite numerous obstacles, they continue to pursue work in their original fields of expertise. The same can be said of Alvaro Ramirez's article – *Journeying toward*

a Job – which describes his own ongoing voyage toward meaningful employment in Canada. These stories, among others, show that, while MOSAIC can be described as a catalyst for change in the lives of Lower Mainland immigrants and refugees, it is the clients themselves, through hard work and perseverance, who provide us with our inspiration to continue doing the work we do, providing essential support and services to all newcomers.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all those who contributed their personal anecdotes to this newsletter, as well as the MOSAIC staff members who helped make this year an exceptional one. I know that all our staff are as proud as I am to be a part of these and so many other success stories. We hope you enjoy reading about them as much as we have enjoyed bearing witness to them.

Where were you in 1976?

Where will you be in 2006?

Join MOSAIC in celebrating 30 years of serving immigrants and refugees.

Help us

- reflect on yesterday
- celebrate today
- plan for tomorrow

Watch for details on exciting events that will tell the MOSAIC story and the stories of the many people who have passed through our doors.

Watch for our anniversary theme contest and much more!

Call 604.254.9626 to join the excitement!

MOSAIC – 30 years strong!

Training for the Olympics

Athletes are not the only ones who must practice

by Jiri Adler

Just think... in a few short years, British Columbia will play host to one of the world's largest and most prestigious sporting events – the Olympic Games. They really are coming, so interpretation and translation professionals best be prepared; in 2010, Vancouver and its surrounding areas will transform from a relatively quiet multicultural community into a bustling meeting place of hundreds of thousands of people from every corner of the planet.

In 2010, we will hear hundreds of languages spoken in the streets of Vancouver. We will have the chance to talk to people who hail from countries much different than our own. We will be able to learn all about these people and their various cultures. Or, will we? We must make certain we do!

Certainly, bi-lingual and multi-lingual volunteers will successfully fill particular roles during the various Olympic events, such as greeting athletes and visitors, and performing other casual duties. In fact, MOSAIC encourages all of its clients and volunteers to get involved in these capacities in 2010. But what about foreign journalists and dignitaries, among others, who rely on precise information beyond casual salutations and directions? Who will they depend on to relate information to them in their own language? This is where professional interpretation or translation services will most certainly be required, and as such, it is important that the province and professional community as a whole prepare to provide visiting workers and other participants with the various levels of language services they will require.

The success of this unique and exciting opportunity largely depends on systematic training, as well as the allocation of adequate budgets solely for interpretation and translation purposes. If the province meets these requirements, we can make the 2010 Winter Olympics not only a successful international sporting event, but also the largest and most successful cross-cultural communication event in the world.

Now, that result is really something to look forward to – something that would leave a lasting and meaningful legacy to benefit B.C. residents for decades to come.

MOSAIC

gratefully acknowledges the commitment and support of the following funders, who have made significant financial contributions during the past year. Their support has enabled MOSAIC to continue to deliver quality service and programs to our communities.

BC Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch
Canadian Heritage
Central City Mission Foundation
Chris Spencer Foundation
City of Vancouver – Community Grants
F. K. Morrow Foundation
Public Health Agency of Canada
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
Justice Canada – National Crime Prevention
Law Foundation of BC
Ministry of Attorney General
Ministry of Children and Family Development
Ministry of Community Services
Ministry of Economic Development
Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance
Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Status of Women Canada
United Way of the Lower Mainland
Vancity Community Foundation
Vancity Credit Union
Vancouver Foundation
Victoria Foundation
Windows of Opportunity Coalition

Learning from Tragedy

Finding lessons in the greatest of human disasters

by Nina Miller

The deadly tsunami that struck Southeast Asia last December sent waves of shock around the planet, followed by an incredible outpouring of sympathy. People everywhere grieved the loss of so many innocents to the disaster. At the MOSAIC Vancouver Language Centre, where 11 ESL students originally from Aceh, Indonesia and Sri Lanka – areas hit hard by the tsunami – studied, the impact was especially tragic.

When classes resumed after the winter holidays, instructors returned to the Language Centres to find that, among the students, one had lost 16 relatives in the tsunami disaster, and others had not yet been able to make contact with their families back home. Staff members wondered how they could reach out to and interact with these students in the face of such devastation: What should I say? Can I no longer broach such common ESL topics as family and country of origin? What kind of assistance and support can I offer? How do I even begin to relate to what some of my students are going through?

In response to these concerns, a volunteer grief counsellor from Coastal Health's disaster response unit was brought into MOSAIC to facilitate a debriefing session with staff at the Language Centre. As instructors shared their feelings and perceptions about the new circumstances they now faced within their classes, it became increasingly clear that the situation was not totally unique; in fact, many other refugee students studying at the Language Centres had, like those hailing from countries devastated by the tsunami, survived tremendous adversity and struggled with incredible amounts of grief and trauma in their lives. As such, instructors were already intimately familiar in dealing with students who had been subject to extreme tragedy.

Through the debriefing session, staff concluded students personally affected by the tsunami did indeed have a strong support system among their own communities in Vancouver, and offering them clinical counselling was not an urgent matter. Instead, instructors decided to show their support for the students by leading their classes in a variety of fundraising efforts, such as a bottle drive, a

silent auction and a bake sale, which, in total, helped raise over \$500 for the Red Cross.

Instructors also organized a fundraising dinner for staff and friends, inviting the 11 students to attend as speakers. The stories the students told painted a picture of the hardships they endured in the wake of the tsunami, and their concern regarding the Indonesian Government, which they felt was using the disaster to further repress the Aceh people. One other thing was made clear that night: that the students are driven to tell their stories, and are desperate to build awareness of their plight.

Despite the tragedy, something positive did come out of the tsunami that devastated Southeast Asia in late 2004: the experience helped build community within MOSAIC's Language Centres. Students from other countries were able to show their care and concern for their fellow classmates; they also learned the positive effects an outpouring of support and charity can achieve. As for the instructors at the Language Centres, while the issue of supporting students through periods of grief and trauma continues to be an ongoing concern that poses many ethical questions, it is sure to push the teachers to further develop themselves, not only as educators, but also as program support workers and caring human beings.

Internationally Trained, Locally Valuable

Doctors trained outside of Canada set their sights on working in B.C.

by Patrick Coady

In June 2005, dozens of internationally trained medical doctors (known as international medical graduates or IMGs) belonging to the Association of International Medical Doctors of B.C. (AIMD BC), met to discuss policies barring them from practicing medicine in British Columbia, and how they might help alleviate the province's medical/doctor shortage, and put their skills and experience back to work in Canada.

The story begins in October 2003, when the first doctors met to discuss forming a group that would allow them to work together on common issues. A few of the first active members of AIMD BC were Dr. Ryve Loshaj, an immigrant from war-torn Kosovo, where she had worked with badly wounded soldiers in field hospitals; Dr. Vesna Stajic of Bosnia, with over 20 years experience as a senior anaesthesiologist; Dr. Najat Al-Refai, who had attained a masters in cardiology in her native Yemen, where she worked at a university hospital by day and an outpatient cardiology centre by night; Dr. Rosanna Velleca Lima, a Brazilian pediatrician with a masters in endocrinology and a PhD in perinatology, who had recently completed a year-long fellowship at B.C. Children's Hospital.

AIMD BC has set some straightforward goals for itself. Association members aim to facilitate access to the licensing process for international medical doctors living in the province, collaborate with stakeholders in identifying and developing appropriate assessment, orientation, upgrading and integration programs for B.C. IMGs, and provide members with licensing information and support, as well as information for finding meaningful employment within the healthcare field. Toward this end, members developed a comprehensive website and established regular monthly meetings, along with working groups for specific initiatives.

The group makes it a habit to meet with MLAs, government officials and high-ranking individuals within the healthcare industry. There has also been extensive media coverage of IMG issues in the Vancouver Sun and Province, Victoria Times Colonist, North Shore Times, Globe and Mail, Canadian Immigrant Magazine, CKNW Radio, CBC Radio and Television, Global TV, Channel M, and Reader's Digest Magazine.

All of this activity has yielded extremely positive results. AIMD BC now boasts over 250 members, and has seen the introduction of a provincially funded bridge or orientation-training program for IMGs come to fruition at St. Paul's Hospital. Among the first graduates of this program were Dr. Alfredo Tura and Dr. Oleg Baranoff, who have since been instrumental in working with MLA Lorne Mayencourt to facilitate the first multi-healthcare stakeholder meeting, scheduled for August 2005.

Dr. Tura and Dr. Baranoff represent a new wave of doctors active in AIMD BC – doctors who are dedicated to working on behalf of all IMGs and medical residents of British Columbia. The hard work and dedication of these two doctors, along with many others, is what allows AIMD BC to continue to support all IMGs and focus on effecting positive change.

Visit AIMD BC at www.aimdbc.com.

Hidden Homelessness

Assessing the current state of housing for immigrants and refugees

by Sherman Chan

According to a recent study, immigrants, refugees and refugee claimants in the Greater Vancouver Regional District are experiencing high levels of “hidden” homelessness. The Profile of Absolute and Relative Homelessness among Immigrants, Refugees, and Refugee Claimants in the GVRD, conducted by MOSAIC Settlement Services and the UBC Department of Geography, reveals that the social networks operating among immigrant, refugee and refugee claimant communities appear to mitigate against the worst forms of homelessness, and the groups of people represented in the study are actually underrepresented in the population using homeless shelters.

The first demographic represented in the study – successful refugee claimants – described their initial housing experiences in Canada as typically being in the cheapest accommodations available, in poor residential environments. They cope by sharing rents and crowding. Nearly all are dependent on social assistance and in situations of housing stress. But they are not “living on the streets,” largely due to their coping strategies and – in a number of cases – help extended to them by social organizations or members of their ethno-cultural communities.

The existence of self-help is even more apparent among clients of settlement non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In this demographic there is significant sharing of resources within familial networks and ethno-cultural or religious communities. About 15 per cent of those using settlement services receive some form of housing assistance, ranging from help locating housing to financial assistance to the provision of housing. According to the study, clients of settlement NGOs that receive some form of help can avoid the services of homeless shelters. Significantly, even those living in precarious circumstances extend whatever help they can to others in their close networks.

Based on these and other findings, researchers were able to draw several conclusions; first, current levels of

social/shelter assistance are exceedingly low, especially in light of the lack of affordable housing. When clients settle in unsafe housing, in inexpensive and marginal areas of the city, they tend to enter a cycle of homelessness, and require the help of others. Second, help is available. The extent to which mutual aid is provided to newcomers is a clear example of what is called “ethnic resources” or “social capital.”

But systems of reciprocity do not include everyone – this is the third finding of the study. Refugee claimants are the most likely of all newcomers to fall between the cracks of both ethno-cultural communities and the welfare and housing provisions of the state. Fourth, immigrants, refugees and refugee claimants appear to be particularly susceptible to relative homelessness, making their difficulties in the housing market essentially invisible (thus, “hidden” homelessness). Finally, homelessness is a spectrum of conditions rather than a single absolute state; therefore, there must be a spectrum of policy responses to homelessness.

For the full report, visit www.mosaicbc.com/The_Profile_of_Absolute_and_Relative_Homelessness.pdf.

Sowing Seeds for Success

Career-exploration programs help newcomers re-enter their original fields of expertise in Canada

by Dennis Tsang

Though immigration to Canada has steadily risen over the past 70 years, the composition of this trend underwent significant change at some point during the 1960s. Statistics show that, at this time, the number of immigrants arriving from Europe and the United States decreased, while the presence of visible minorities grew; eventually, the latter group came to represent 80 per cent of the total immigrant population between 1991 and 1996.

As an immigrant and a member of a visible minority myself, it is easy for me to relate to the challenges one encounters as a newcomer to Canada. Besides getting settled in a new country, amidst an unfamiliar culture, finding employment is a struggle most immigrants must face soon after their arrival. This can be an incredibly daunting task, even for those already familiar with the English language.

Here are the stories of three recent immigrants and their journeys towards employment in B.C.

Ioan Buda, Mechanical Engineer, Romania and Veronica Buda, Software Engineer, Romania

If you happened to be at the Vancouver International Airport on November 12, 2004, you may have noticed a young Romanian couple arriving, for the very first time, in Canada. These two people were myself, Ioan Buda, and my wife, Veronica; we had come to make our new home in Canada. Though we were exhausted after the long flight, the natural beauty of Vancouver made a wonderful first impression on us.

After applying for our SIN cards a day after our arrival, we started to gather information about the best career-exploration program in Vancouver, to help us gain employment. Our Romanian friends recommended MOSAIC, so that is where we decided to go first.

After an interview and assessment we started in the Career Connections Program. Class began on January 5, 2005, and the amount of interesting information and interaction we received made the next five weeks pass quickly. My wife and I learned how to conduct a successful job search, explored the nature of the Canadian labour market, improved our English skills and, last but not least, developed realistic job goals for ourselves. The chance to see ourselves in the eyes of interviewers lifted our self-confidence. We also made our first friends in Career Connections, and are still in touch. By the end of the program, we felt ready to try and reenter our own, original professions in Canada.

In the following weeks, Veronica networked with a private software company and secured a volunteer position for herself. After three weeks spent voluntarily proving her abilities, she was offered a permanent job in her field. I started looking for work within the mining industry while participating in Career Connections. Two weeks into the program, I had a lengthy phone interview with an established mining company in Manitoba. Upon completion of the program, I was flown in for a face-to-face interview with the same company, and was later offered permanent work.

While a career-exploration program does not actually offer jobs to its participants, it does help immigrants explore the many different ways they may go about re-entering their own professions in Canada.

America Uribe, Medical Doctor, Mexico

It was the dream to start a family in a land of freedom that fueled my husband's and my decision to immigrate to Canada in the spring of 2005. Though initially we were quite stressed, worried and insecure about the

move, our experience as newcomers was wonderful from the moment our plane landed...

At the airport, an immigration officer handed us a package containing information about settlement in Vancouver, giving my husband and myself an immediate sense of belonging. The package contained a list of local agencies offering job-search programs. As I read through this list, the name "MOSAIC" intrigued me. Later, at a meeting with my case manager, it was recommended I participate in a four-week job-finding club at MOSAIC, called the Employment Access Program.

Because I had never attained any job-search experience in Mexico, Employment Access taught me how to build an effective resume, cover letter and thank-you letter, among other things. The most important thing I gained from the program, however, was the honing of a very important skill – the ability to "network" with potential employers successfully. The course also helped me build up my self-esteem, to help put my newly acquired skills to good use.

Originally trained as a doctor, I did some research about the Canadian health-care industry while still in Mexico; I learned that re-entering the field after immigration would be a lengthy and daunting process. While the Employment Access Program could not offer me an actual job in health care, it did help me learn to open myself up to new people and deal with new situations. I now feel ready and confident to approach potential employers, no matter where I encounter them.

Because my experience in clinical research was not recognized in Canada, I started networking with hospitals and clinics while I was still a participant in Employment Access. Three weeks after the course commenced, I received an e-mail from the British Columbia Children's Hospital, with whom I'd had an interview the week before. I was offered a job and am currently working in the Rheumatology Division as a research assistant. It is a great honour for me to work with a team of distinguished doctors, and I am enjoying every minute of this valuable experience.

And while I am working I am preparing for my examinations to enter a medical specialty program.



Growing Pains

Giving Kurdish youth a voice

by Saleem Spindari

Ask any teenager and they'll tell you: puberty is a tough stage to go through. But how would it feel to have to navigate the trials and tribulations of adolescence as an immigrant in a foreign land? With the help of MOSAIC's Settlement Department, a group of Kurdish youth is preparing to reveal and discuss the unique struggles they must face as Canadian newcomers.

As part of its continuing effort to support and serve immigrant communities in the Lower Mainland, the Settlement Department will host a forum for Kurdish youth at the beginning of August 2005, to open up discussion about the unique problems they face when they first immigrate to Canada with their families. The decision to host the forum was made when members of the Kurdish community identified a need to address the issue of youth-related problems, and turned to MOSAIC for information and guidance.

According to the teens, a lack of communication with their parents, bullying at school, few role models to look up to and a wide spectrum of cultural differences – from language to clothing to food – are among the issues they face in their struggle to adapt to Canadian society. Some of the youth said they sometimes feel the need to take on two personalities in an effort to juggle the disparities between their home life and the outside world. According to the teens, in order to please their parents, they must “act as Kurds” when they are at home, doing things in a “traditional” manner. At school and in other social settings, however, the pressure to conform to the standards of society and act as “normal” Canadians do can be overwhelming. This duality, meant to ease the situation, often becomes the root cause of much angst and confusion. The youth plan to bring these and other issues to light during the forum.

A blueprint for the Kurdish Youth Forum was drawn up after extensive consultation between the Settlement Department and various groups and individuals from the Lower Mainland's Kurdish community. Community

leaders, settlement and community workers, and between 25 and 35 Kurdish youth will participate in the day-long forum. The ultimate aim of the discussion – which will materialize as a report that will be forwarded to community leaders, government offices and other service providers – is to identify and bring to light issues surrounding the hardships faced by Kurdish youth navigating adolescence as newcomers to Canada.

Our New Language Centre Opens!

MOSAIC is pleased to announce the opening of our North Shore Language Centre, in partnership with the North Shore Multicultural Society. The new Language Centre, which opened in January in the same location as the North Shore Multicultural Society, delivers day and evening ELSA classes.

Come and visit us at
207 – 123 East 15th St., North Vancouver
and see how we are growing!

Stop Human Trafficking

Canadians meet to discuss a global problem

by Victor Porter

In a United Nations report entitled *The Ugly Face of Human Trafficking*, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan states: "The trafficking of persons... is one of the most egregious violations of human rights which the United Nations now confronts." Described as a modern-day form of slavery, human trafficking – the illegal trade of children, teenagers, men and women – subjects its victims to force, fraud and coercion for the purpose of sexual exploitation and forced labour. Labour trafficking includes various forms of labour: from domestic service to agricultural, construction and factory work. According to the same report, "the transnational nature of trafficking requires [all countries] to coordinate efforts for prevention and punishment."

Thus, in B.C. and across Canada, police agencies are focusing their efforts to combat the practice at domestic and international levels alike. On May 18 - 19, 2005, over 200 representatives from Canadian government and non-government organizations, law-enforcement agencies, and victim services met to examine the nature and scope of international human trafficking, and develop an integrated and collaborative approach to protect current victims, prosecute alleged traffickers and prevent further incidents from occurring.

The Pacific Northwest Conference on International Human Trafficking aims to increase participants' awareness of and skills in dealing with the issue, and provide opportunities to discuss Canadian and international means to curb this growing crime. This year, conference presenters emphasized the need to take a multidisciplinary and collaborative approach in combating human trafficking and affording protection to its victims.

The conference was co-hosted by the National Crime Prevention Strategy, Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada; the Victim Services and Community Programs Division, B.C. Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General; the Border Integrity Program, "E" Division, RCMP; Community Programs, "E" Division, RCMP; the Vancouver Police Department; the Justice Institute of B.C.; the University College of the Fraser Valley; and MOSAIC.

During deliberations, the six staff members who represented MOSAIC highlighted the need to implement concrete measures to protect victims of trafficking, and explained what kind of support can be offered to individuals affected by the crime. All six are members of the Vancouver Coalition Against Trafficking, as well as the Canadian Council for Refugees Sub-Committee on Trafficking.

Read "The Ugly Face of Human Trafficking" by visiting www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/resources/faces/10-Traffick_faces_en.pdf.

Parents Mean Business

Teaching immigrants to be better parents, and better entrepreneurs

by Deeqa Mohamud and Lida Amiri

Product and service providers are often “adding value” to their offerings, to ensure consumers are getting the most in return for their time and money. The same principle of adding value is now being applied to immigrant services, as well. Recently, a group of Kurdish, Somali and Vietnamese parents were given a very unique, value-added opportunity to improve their parenting skills while simultaneously earning certification that can help them become successful entrepreneurs.

MOSAIC Family Programs, in partnership with the West Coast Childcare Resource Centre and thanks to a financial contribution from the Public Health Agency of Canada, delivered a free training program to 13 MOSAIC Community Action Program for Children program participants between April and June 2005.

The skills that participants developed during training included identifying and defining childhood developmental stages; promoting nutrition, healthy living and positive discipline; guiding children’s behaviour in a positive way; planning for safety and emergencies; and discerning between various types of family childcare services. And, in order to allow parents and those with limited knowledge of English to attend the program, MOSAIC provided free, on-site child-minding services, as well as bus tickets and interpretation support in Kurdish, Somali and Vietnamese.

Participants went away from the program with a certificate of graduation and a set of tools they will be able to use with their own children. This unique training program also allow participants to take two additional small-business workshops, in order to earn a Home Daycare Certificate, which would provide them with the option to run a daycare from their own home.

Are you a performer or an artist?

MOSAIC’s 30th Anniversary celebrations will include a week-long series of immigrant and refugee-related programming at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre in September 2006.

Submissions of the following for entry into this festival are welcome and encouraged:

Music • Writing • Dance • Storytelling • Poetry
Song • Theatre • Visual Arts • Performance Art
Spoken Word • Film • Video • Comedy • and More!

Important details:

- All contributors selected for the festival will be paid as professionals!
- Submissions will be juried for selection in late 2005.

Please send or drop off your CD, DVD, VHS tape or paper samples with complete contact information as soon as possible. Send to:

30th Anniversary Selection Committee
c/o MOSAIC 1522 Commercial Drive
Vancouver, B.C., V5L 3Y2

Journeying toward a Job

A newcomer's path to employment in Canada

by Alvaro Ramirez

In May 2003, shortly after arriving in Vancouver with my wife and son, I applied for a permanent-residence visa; soon, my thoughts turned to finding a job so I could earn a living and support my family. Naively, I thought it would be easy to find work in Canada – after all, this was the land of opportunity! Unfortunately, I quickly found out that was not exactly the case...

July 2003: I decided to take a first step toward finding employment by enrolling in a job-search program offered by MOSAIC. I couldn't have made a better decision. Through the program, I learned how to research, apply to and interview for a position in my field – electrical engineering. By the end of the course, I felt comfortable sending out resumes and meeting with various Lower Mainland-based businesses.

September 2003: As it turned out, the knowledge and practical experience I gained through the job-search program at MOSAIC became useful for my wife, as well. At home, she and I practiced every aspect of attaining employment, from creating effective resumes to answering interview questions, self-marketing and promotion. Eventually, my wife got a job in customer service at a local grocery store chain – a job she still holds today.

October 2003: About a month after my wife landed her first job in Canada, I was hired as a chocolate maker in a candy factory. While I was employed there, a technology firm called me to schedule an interview. Because it was more in line with my academic and employment background, I was eager to find out more about the job.

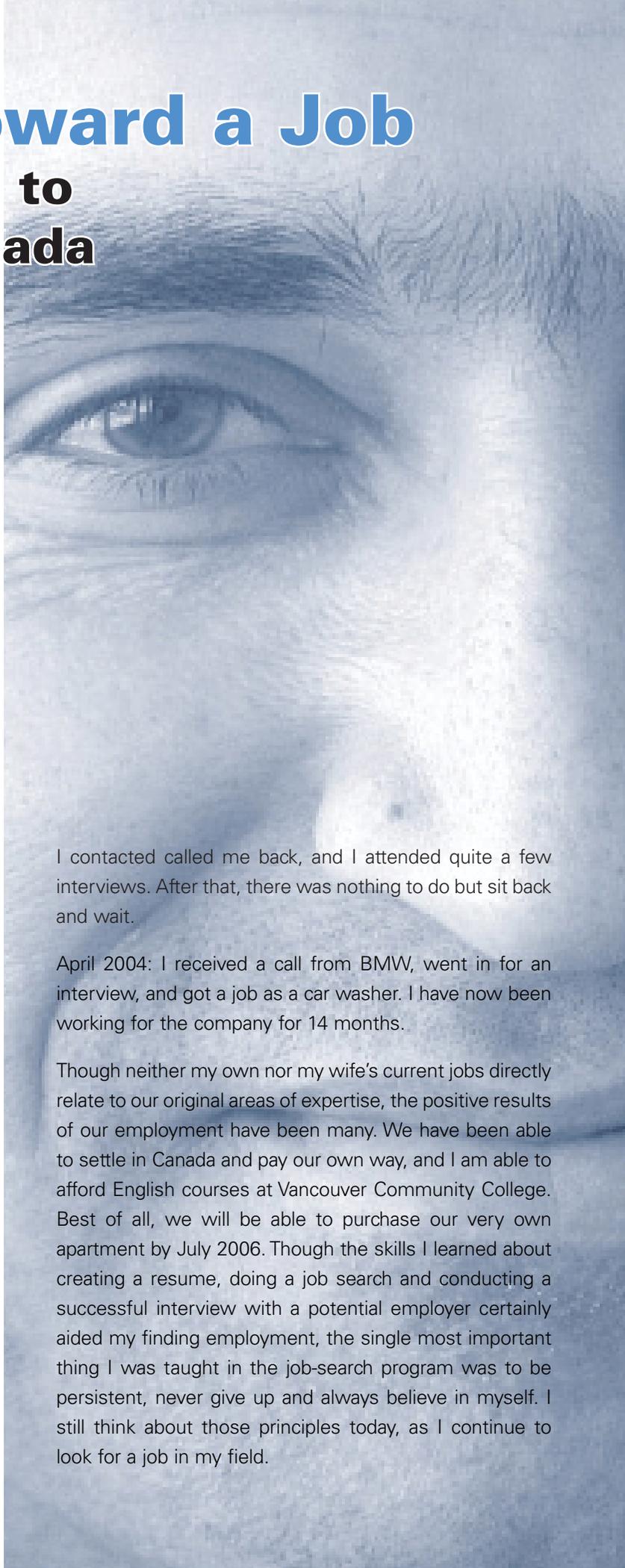
November 2003: After a successful interview, I started working at the technology company as an assembler. I remained in that position for approximately three months, when I was laid off due to downsizing.

February 2004: I started sending out resumes again and searching for new employment. Many of the companies

I contacted called me back, and I attended quite a few interviews. After that, there was nothing to do but sit back and wait.

April 2004: I received a call from BMW, went in for an interview, and got a job as a car washer. I have now been working for the company for 14 months.

Though neither my own nor my wife's current jobs directly relate to our original areas of expertise, the positive results of our employment have been many. We have been able to settle in Canada and pay our own way, and I am able to afford English courses at Vancouver Community College. Best of all, we will be able to purchase our very own apartment by July 2006. Though the skills I learned about creating a resume, doing a job search and conducting a successful interview with a potential employer certainly aided my finding employment, the single most important thing I was taught in the job-search program was to be persistent, never give up and always believe in myself. I still think about those principles today, as I continue to look for a job in my field.



A Spiritual Solution

Using Buddhist principles to prevent domestic violence

by Guillermo Comesaña and Ninu Kang

For 15 years, MOSAIC Family Programs has offered services and educational programs to men involved in domestic violence. Men in Change, the newest addition, puts a unique twist on the prevention of family violence. Through Buddhist principles, instructors hope to help participants change behaviours that can lead to hurting members of their families.

Cultures that value strength and power tend to produce hierarchical and, often, patriarchal family systems. Since many Men in Change participants were socialized in such cultures, their interpretations of these values can lead them to overpower, control and, perhaps, abuse their loved ones.

Before they can modify their understanding of power and privilege, participants must address their own anger – an emotion many men misuse to overpower and control others. Men in Change instructors help the men develop an understanding of their anger and the skills to manage it. To this end, the program incorporates the ancient Buddhist practice of “mindfulness,” which teaches participants to observe their anger, rather than act on it. One Vietnamese monk, Thich Nhat Hanh, has written extensively about the Buddhist perspective on anger and aggression.

Based on the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh, a tale entitled “The Man and His Elephant” illustrates the Buddhist approach to understanding and managing anger.

The Man and His Elephant

Once upon a time in India lived a man named Zeb. As a child, Zeb inherited his father’s elephant, named Jumbo for its size and strength, after his father fought with Zeb’s uncle and left home. The fight occurred when the uncle defended Zeb’s mother from her husband’s fury. The incident left Zeb frightened and helpless, but he found solace in Jumbo’s company. Nobody dared tease or bully Zeb when Jumbo was around.

As an adult, Zeb married Zitah, who bore him two children. The first years of family life unfolded peacefully until, one day, Zeb and Zitah argued over household issues and agitated Jumbo, who charged Zitah. She ran into the house while Zeb calmed the animal.

As time passed, the same incident occurred more frequently. Jumbo’s vigilance and moodiness forced everyone to stay away from his owner. Although the elephant’s temperament gave Zeb a sense of power and control over his family, Zitah and the children grew distant from Zeb, and were very wary around him and his elephant.

Zeb decided to seek help. A friend told him to go see an old man with many years experience taming elephants. When Zeb found the old man, he discovered they had both inherited elephants. They discussed the similarities of their situations, and Zeb left.

Years later, Zeb met the old man while riding his elephant with Zitah and the children. They all looked happy, even Jumbo. When the old man asked what caused the transformation, Zeb said the conversation they had had helped him observe the animal. Every time Jumbo was agitated, Zeb would embrace him and ask what was making him upset. Slowly, he realized Jumbo was trying to protect him from feeling humiliated, powerless,

afraid or not in control, as he had been doing since Zeb's childhood. Zeb also realized he no longer needed this kind of protection. On the contrary, it was isolating him from the most important people in his life: his family.

Zeb's new perspective brought peace to his whole family, including Jumbo, who transformed from a controlling force to a helping one, providing the entire family with a sense of safety and security. As they parted, the old man thought, "The script karma sometimes imposes on us are not so irreversible after all."

Building Skills Together

Parents and children adapt to life in Canada

by Janice Greenidge

In the spring of 1999, Building Blocks Vancouver launched its first-ever Mother Goose groups: parent-child programs based on singing and telling English-language nursery rhymes, songs and stories. Since then, Mother Goose has helped to empower newcomer parents and children alike, with early English-language and communication skills.

Recently, the title and scope of the programs changed to better meet the challenges faced by immigrant parents and their young children upon their arrival in Canada. Renamed Building Blocks Vancouver Parents and Children Together (BBV-PaCT), the groups have expanded to include more vital parenting skills, such as health and social information, hands-on activities like making play dough, information swaps and recipe exchanges, socialization, healthy snacks, and other formal learning opportunities. The overall objective has also evolved; now, the various programs strive to provide support to each family as it is strengthened by newfound parenting skills, enabling parents to create positive family patterns during their children's formative years.

Despite so many changes, the songs and rhymes offered by Mother Goose have remained the most popular features of the programs – especially with the children. For example, whenever Home Visitor Huong Le phones a particular client, the client's young daughter asks for the phone. "When I say hello to the child, she responds by singing 'Roly-Poly, Roly-Poly...' and rolls her arms and hands as she sings, just like we do in group!"

Two BBV-PaCT groups run weekly on Mondays and Fridays at MOSAIC, and the third runs Mondays at the South Vancouver Neighbourhood House. For more information, you may contact a Building Blocks Vancouver staff member at 604.254.9626.



MOSAIC's Annual General Meeting

**Thursday,
September 29th,
2005**

**at 5:30 p.m.,
The Floral Hall,
Van Dusen Gardens**

Located at Oak & West 37th Ave.

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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

We thank the individuals and organizations that, through memberships and donations, supported MOSAIC in the past year.

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