

Calgary Reflections

Immigrant Women and Diversity



CIWA

Calgary Immigrant Women's Association

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Introduction

Canada welcomed 257,515 immigrants in 2012¹. Of those, 35,764 (14%) settled in Alberta and 16,685 chose to make Calgary their home². Calgary has over 1.2 million people and is home to more than 200 different ethnic origins. Calgary's population is almost 25% foreign born³ which is 5% more than the national average⁴. Furthermore, in the 2011 census 288,495 people in Calgary reported their mother tongue as not English or French. The top five languages were Chinese, Punjabi, Tagalog, Spanish and Arabic⁵.

Our cultural mosaic and diversity will continue to grow as immigration will account for more than 80% of Canada's overall population growth by 2031⁶. This will mean that nearly one half of Canadians aged 15 and older will be foreign born or have at least one foreign born parent. The proportion of visible minorities will rise to 30% percent of the population by 2031⁷ and three in ten Canadians will have neither English nor French as their mother tongue⁸. In Calgary, approximately 30% of the population is expected to be foreign born and 38% of the population will be visible minorities¹⁰.

Between now and 2021, a million jobs are expected to go unfilled across Canada¹¹. Alberta is projected to generate over 606,000 jobs and could face a cumulative labour shortage of up to 114,000 workers across all sectors¹². Calgary will be competing nationally and internationally to meet its labour force needs. Tapping into the immigrant labour pool and preparing for increased diversity is essential to businesses and our city's continued economic prosperity.

Calgary Reflections: Immigrant Women and Diversity explores, celebrates and reflects on ethno-cultural diversity in Calgary, the experiences of immigrant women and the communities that have welcomed them.

The **Immigrant Women Reflections** section glimpses into the lives and experiences of nine beautiful immigrant women who were willing to share their stories, their successes, their joys and their heartaches. Each woman is at a different stage in her life journey, has come from a different home country and has had varying successes and challenges integrating into life in Calgary. All of the interesting facts about these women's home countries have come from the CIA World Fact Book (www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook) or have been corroborated by multiple reliable internet sources.

Calgary has opened its arms to newcomers and endeavored to make its workplaces and communities diverse and inclusive. The **Community Reflections** section delves into the different ways organizations, both business and cornerstone community services, have strived to foster inclusive workplaces and contribute to the successful integration of immigrants.

The **Tips, Resources, and References** section includes suggestions on how to create diverse and inclusive workplaces and communities as well as provides information on using plain language in everyday communication. It also contains a select list of immigrant serving agencies and community organizations and a variety of websites that provide additional information related to diversity and inclusion in Calgary.

Each story you will read is the result of an individual who graciously shared their time and unique perspectives. As you read, we hope you find another reason to celebrate the diversity that we are privileged to have in Calgary; that you are inspired to enter into dialogues about diversity and inclusion in your homes, workplaces and communities. Finally, we hope these reflections of Calgary's ethno-cultural diversity will strengthen your pride of living in a dynamic and prosperous city.

Immigrant Women Reflections



Aneela

Aneela is an outgoing and bubbly 38 year old mother of three. She and her family moved from Pakistan in July 2005 for professional opportunities for her husband who was a pharmacist. When she arrived Aneela did not know any English and was frightened of many things she saw.

Looking back at her first years in Canada she laughs as she recalls being afraid to use a debit card and insisting on only using cash. For her first six years in Canada, Aneela stayed at home raising her children, two of which were born in Canada. She had never been to downtown Calgary until 2011 when life circumstances pushed her out of her comfort zone.

After landing in Canada, Aneela's husband found work as a security officer while he studied and challenged the pharmacy exams. Subsequently, he was able to secure employment as a Pharmacy Technician. In 2010, the deterioration of his health began to affect his ability to work and their family began to struggle to make ends meet. Aneela felt desperate and afraid but was

anxious to help her family in any way she could. In Pakistan, Aneela was a housewife and her time was taken up with cooking, cleaning and caring for the family. She had left school after grade eight to care for her mother whose health was not good. Aneela did not know what to do to support her family and prayed to find a way to help them.

In 2011, Aneela was referred by a community organization to the Childcare Training Program for Low Literacy Immigrant Women offered through the Calgary Immigrant Women's Association, in partnership with Bow Valley College. She was overjoyed to be accepted into the program.



Aneela spent four months learning workplace English skills and another four months training for certification as an Early Childhood Development Assistant. She finished her training with a two month work experience placement at a daycare centre where she was hired on afterwards. Aneela works with a group of tenacious toddlers. It warms her heart each morning to arrive at work and to hear the children call her name and be excited to see her.

On the wings of success, Aneela is currently studying at home in the evenings to improve her English so she can qualify for the next level of early childhood education certification. She hopes to take the courses online, which is especially inspiring considering that Aneela had never used a computer prior to the Childcare Training Program.

Canada has changed Aneela's world and her approach to it. Here, she feels safe and that she matters. For example, she knows that if she calls 911, help will come. In Pakistan she was afraid to go out on her own for fear of being robbed or worse. The freedom and opportunities that Canada provides have made her very grateful. Aneela's approach to parenting has changed and she encourages the toddlers she cares for to make their own decisions whereas in Pakistan, children are not raised to be independent until they are much older. Most importantly, the opportunities that her children have in Canada are beyond what she could have hoped for herself.

Looking back at her journey so far, Aneela recognizes the importance of remembering the hard times because it creates gratitude for the way her life is today. Aneela is proud of her ability to support her family and is confident that life is only going to get better for her family. She feels like a new woman and has an unshakeable confidence in her skills, her English and the opportunities that lie in front of her. Aneela is happy to tell people her story and it begins with her exclaiming, **"I am a new Aneela!"**

Pakistan is a multilingual country with more than 60 languages being spoken.

With a population of over 190 million, Pakistan is the sixth most populated country in the world.

Pakistan has the second largest Muslim population next to Indonesia. In all, 96% of the population are Muslims and just over 1.5% are Christians.

Despite a Muslim majority, there are 656 gurdwaras (Sikh houses of worship) and 327 active Hindu temples.

About 20% of the population in Pakistan lives below the International Poverty Line. Approximately 42% of the total national income is claimed by 20 per cent of the population.

Pakistan's literacy rate is projected to reach 60% by 2015.

Pakistan is the 4th largest producer of cotton in the world. Textiles account for 50% of Pakistan's exports and 8.5% of its GDP.

Farzaneh

In her home country of Iran, Farzaneh completed a Bachelor in Sports Education and throughout her career there worked in many positions in the sports industry. Prior to immigrating to Canada, she was very busy working three different jobs; a swim coach, a sports expert in a government ran athletic organization and vice president in a motorcycle and car federation. She cherished her life and loved being active. Growing up, Farzaneh excelled in activities like gymnastics, horseback riding and swimming. She was one of 18 women in Iran who were awarded with Best Overall Sportswoman designation and her story was featured in a video. Furthermore, she garnered the role of youngest vice president in the sports organization. Despite her busy schedule, Farzaneh also found time to volunteer with Red Cross and was trained in disaster relief.

For an Iranian, Farzaneh was married late in life, in her thirties. Her husband is an engineer who worked in a South African oil company. He wanted to move to

Canada to have more opportunities to grow professionally, so in May 2010 they arrived in Calgary.

Due to his international experience, Farzaneh's husband was able to secure employment as an engineer. Farzaneh has had a harder time acquiring a professional niche - only finding work in retail and restaurants. She found the workplace very different from Iran. In her opinion, the general workplace culture in Canada is familial with a significant emphasis on teamwork.

Farzaneh grapples with how to re-engage with her passion for sports in Canada. She is working towards her certification as a lifeguard and swim instructor.



Farzaneh is also looking into learning opportunities that could take her professional career in a different direction altogether. Having a professional job is very important to Farzaneh as it allows her to feel that she is engaged and contributing. The struggle to reinvent herself can be disheartening, **“In my country I was like a lion, now I feel like a mouse.”**

In keeping with her desire for engagement, Farzaneh is a volunteer with two immigrant serving agencies, Centre for Newcomers and Calgary Immigrant Women's Association. Through her volunteer work she helped organize a cross-cultural community event and was trained to provide breast cancer awareness workshops within her community. In addition, she has already completed many English classes through Maple Leaf Academy and has registered for more.

The most significant new experience for Farzaneh in Canada has been that of motherhood as she welcomed her son into the world in the summer of 2012. Farzaneh and her husband had waited to come to Canada to have children. They feel that their son's prospects and future will be good here. For Farzaneh, Iran's political and economic landscape is not stable and every day the social system seems to change. Canada has provided her with a sense of stability. Farzaneh felt that a career in Iran was not only based on skills but dependent on who you knew and a lack of contacts could mean no career, but in Canada people are able to work hard and be recognized for their professional accomplishments.

Farzaneh is grateful for the high standard of living and quality of life-style Canada provides. She misses her family tremendously but is grateful that she and her husband are now in the position to be able to sponsor her parents to come to Canada.

Iran's population is over 78 million. More than one million people are refugees from Afghanistan.

Iran is surrounded by 8 other countries and the Caspian Sea.

The country's literacy rate is 77%.

Although Iran allows women to vote and drive, there are many restrictions imposed on them. Iran's constitution dictates whether women can work outside the home and the subjects they can study at university. Women are not equal with men in marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance.

Iranians have woven beautiful rugs for over 2,500 years. After oil, Iran's second largest export is carpets.

Iran is one of the world's oldest continuous major civilizations, with historical and urban settlements dating back to 4000 BC. One of the greatest Iranian cities, Susa was constructed on the Central Plateau on and around 3200 B.C.

Hana

Hana has a very gentle but tenacious spirit. Life has been tumultuous, at best, but she has learned how to overcome challenges and thrive. She was born in Ethiopia in 1966 and has witnessed the struggles that her home country went through. Life was difficult for her family. Her father worked very hard to support their large family and there was a lot of pressure to contribute. During her schooling, Hana loved to study geography and history and was fortunate to graduate high school.

Sponsored by a church to come to Canada in 2000, Hana wanted the opportunity to work and create a better life. In Ethiopia a woman is expected to be married and to have children, a life she may have wanted but was not fully realized. Hana did marry but her husband left her and immigrated to Canada without ever letting her know where he was. Fortunately, one of her sisters immigrated to Canada earlier and helped Hana adjust to life in Calgary.

Upon arriving in Calgary, Hana enrolled in English classes at Bow Valley College and by the time she finished her studies she felt confident in her listening, speaking and reading skills but not her writing.

After finishing English classes, Hana sought out employment. She has worked as a machine operator, a laser cutter, and as a cleaner. Finding work has not always been easy. Her friends and community help her find work between jobs.

In 2004, Hana encountered some serious health problems and needed brain surgery to avoid complete paralysis. Hana is grateful for the care she received, **“I am so lucky, they did surgery and now I am fine.”** Canada’s healthcare system saved her life and provided for physiotherapy and medication.



Hana has limited movement in her left arm; however, she can lift and carry light objects. She still experiences some pain and gets tired easily. To combat this, Hana maintains a healthy diet and tries to minimize stress.

Despite these challenges, Hana currently holds a full time job as a cleaner. She likes working and being with her coworkers because they are helpful and friendly. Furthermore, she finds her supervisor very approachable, kind and supportive. Hana is proud of her ability to work and enjoys the fact that it keeps her mind occupied. She does not receive any government assistance and although she may struggle occasionally, she is able to support herself. One day Hana hopes to be able to re-train or find employment in a position that is less physically demanding.

Hana feels well connected and supported through her church, her sister and two nieces. She likes to give back to the church and support her community of friends. Hana prides herself on being friendly and makes an effort to say hi to all the other tenants in her apartment building, "All the people in the building know me. I love them."

For fun, Hana watches movies and the news as she likes to keep current on what is going on in the world and in Calgary. One of her favourite TV shows is American Idol as she enjoys watching people perform and sing.

Despite missing her family in Ethiopia, Hana loves Canada. She has never seen anyone fight in Canada and cannot describe how peaceful life is here. Hana feels she has truly changed and learned many things from Canadians. She communicates and deals with people differently now and her approach to life has changed too. Hana is grateful for how much she continues to learn, the healthcare system and the opportunity to work.

In Ethiopia there are more than 80 different ethnic groups and over 200 dialects spoken throughout the country.

Only 43% of Ethiopians over the age of 15 are able to read and write.

Almost 45% of Ethiopia's population are 15 years old or younger.

Ethiopia follows the Julian calendar consisting of 12 months of 30 days each and a 13th month of 5 or 6 days. It is roughly 7.5 years behind the Gregorian calendar.

More than 70% of Africa's mountains are in Ethiopia. Probably due to the high altitude in their country, Ethiopians are famous for being great long distance runners.

Coffee was discovered in Ethiopia in the region of Kaffa. In addition, a grain called sorghum, and castor bean are believed to have originated in Ethiopia.

Elena

When Elena, an economist from Russia, and her husband, an IT technician, began to toy with the idea of moving to Canada, it took them around a year to commit to the decision. Although they were relatively happy in Russia, had decent jobs and could afford an apartment of their own, Elena and her husband wanted more opportunities and new experiences. They made their decision to move to Canada shortly after learning that they were expecting a child. Some people in Elena's home town, a municipality of 350,000, have never left the city and so her decision to move was not overly supported by her friends and family. Nevertheless, Elena wanted more freedom and the opportunity to experience a society with less bureaucracy and crime.

In February 2009, Elena and her husband landed in Canada with their one year old son. As she was doing research about settling in Canada, she fortuitously connected with a woman in Edmonton whose grandparents lived in Calgary. Although Elena had just inquired about which hotels to stay at upon arrival, the woman's grandparents met Elena's family at the airport and offered to house them for six months. Since then, they have become her extended family.

During their first six months in Canada, Elena remembers her family having only \$100 left but not feeling vulnerable as she was confident in the support networks that are available to newcomers. The Russian community in Calgary reached out to her family with support through clothing and toys; Elena still remembers seeing her floor covered with toys for her son, more than he ever would have had in Russia. The kindness Elena received from strangers during her first months in Calgary emboldened her to adopt the same attitude to people and life.



After failing to secure professional employment on her own, Elena found a bridge to work program at an immigrant serving agency. Slowly, her life began to move in an unexpected direction. Through the career counselling she received, Elena decided to change her professional career. She always had a passion for women and children, and had even done volunteer work at a childhood development centre in Russia, but she had never considered it a career choice. She found the inspiration to pursue certification as a social worker. The bridge to work program assisted her in developing a 10 year plan and provided her with a work experience placement helping people with disabilities. She secured employment in a literacy program for immigrant women and children.

During this time, Elena applied to the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary. However, she first had to study English, as a requirement of her application. For three and a half months she took classes during the day and worked in the literacy program in the evening. Her sacrifice and efforts paid off when Elena received word that she was accepted into the Master of Social Work Program and began her studies in September 2009.

During her studies Elena became particularly interested in domestic violence. In the second year of her Master's program, Elena attained a practicum, followed by employment with SHIFT: The Project to End Domestic Violence founded by The Brenda Strafford Chair in the Prevention of Domestic Violence at the University of Calgary. Working as a coordinator with SHIFT allows Elena to apply her knowledge of finance and research skills with her passion for people – the perfect blend of both of her degrees.

To this day, Elena has kept her very detailed 10 year plan that she created in the bridge to work program. She looks back at the plan, to acknowledge each step and to celebrate that she achieved it all within two years; **“You have to work hard to reach your goal but the opportunity is there – you just have to find it.”**

Elena loves Canada and feels that she has found a place that she truly belongs.

The Russian language uses the Cyrillic alphabet instead of the Latin one on which English is based. Russian is one of the five most spoken languages in the world.

Russia covers 1/8 of the total land of our planet and neighbors more countries than any other country on earth.

While the majority of the population is Russian, there are more than 120 other ethnic groups, speaking many languages and following disparate religious and cultural traditions.

The country adopted voting rights for women around the same time as Canada, in 1918.

With a population of around 143 million, there are approximately 10 million more women than men in Russia.

Moscow is the biggest city in Europe with a population of 10.5 million. Population projections estimate it to reach 16 million by 2020.

Mahmuda

Mahmuda immigrated to Canada in November 2011 from Bangladesh with her youngest daughter and husband. At 56 years of age, she does not let any of her fears stand in the way of embracing life to the fullest.

In Bangladesh, Mahmuda finished high school and married. After that she raised three wonderful children there and helped her husband run a business, a battery factory. Her husband is 70 and retired, but she is still very proud of what a talented business man he is. Mahmuda's oldest daughter immigrated to Canada and resides in Toronto with her two children. Her son lives in London, England. They are an international family.

Although she comes across as fearless and confident, Mahmuda was very frightened when she first came to Canada. Having only learned a little English in Bangladesh, she felt very self-conscious and did not want to speak at all. Mahmuda would go to the grocery store and listen to others speak and realized that there were many words she did not know. Eventually, she came to the conclusion that people work hard to communicate with one another, so she decided to give English a try.

The other empowering observation that Mahmuda made was seeing the number of seniors working and being active in the community. In Bangladesh, older people are not permitted to work and are often dependent on their families as there is no pension. Feeling inspired, Mahmuda found Calgary Immigrant Women's Association and joined the Retail Training Program and a community group for seniors called Grandma's Kitchen. These programs helped her find employment, friendship and the opportunity to contribute.



After finishing the program, Mahmuda secured a part time job at a dollar store. She likes helping customers and enjoys stocking merchandise. However, she is a little hesitant of dealing with cash and making a mistake when counting money. Her coworkers are very kind and helpful and her boss is supportive. Mahmuda was amazed to see her boss perform the same tasks as all the staff, including cleaning. It makes her feel better about herself to realize that everyone is on same level and treated equally.

Life in Bangladesh was relatively good for Mahmuda. She had servants, cooks and drivers. In Canada, she has to do everything by herself but she is proud of that and feels more confident. Mahmuda feels more engaged; she is happy that she can organize her house the way she wants, she can cook whatever she wants, and she has a strong sense of opportunity and freedom.

Mahmuda is happier being a woman in Canada than she was in Bangladesh. She feels that Bangladesh is very conservative and most women are housewives. In Bangladesh, women cannot go out of their homes as freely since there are many restrictions on what they are allowed to do. In Canada women can do anything, whether it is something monumental or small deeds. Mahmuda feels that even the small things are appreciated and accepted in Canada: **“Here nobody notices if you are rich or poor, short or tall; here everyone is just human.”**

In Calgary, Mahmuda has had the opportunity to make friends from all over the world. She enjoys learning about their lives and experiences. Not ready to retire yet, she is anxious to stay busy and to be a part of the community. Mahmuda never passes up an opportunity to learn and enrolls in many training and information workshops offered for newcomers.

When Pakistan declared its independence from India in 1947, Bangladesh was East Pakistan, even though it was separated from West Pakistan by 1000 miles of Indian territory. The War of Independence was fought in 1971. Bangladesh declared independence from Pakistan on March 26, 1971.

Bangladesh has a population of 161 million making it the eighth largest in the world.

Bangladesh has been a functioning Parliamentary Democracy since 1991.

Bangla (the official language of Bangladesh) is spoken by over 220 million people worldwide, making it the world's 3rd most spoken native language.

In Bangladesh only 57% of the population over the age of 15 can read and write.

Around 45% of Bangladeshis are employed in the agriculture sector with rice as the single-most-important product.

Vineeta

At 37 years of age, Vineeta has spent over 12 years at home raising her children, which has resulted in a significant employment gap in her resume. To add to the challenge, she needed to restart a professional career in a new country. Vineeta came to Canada in 2007, with her husband, an engineer on a work permit for an oil and gas company.

In India, Vineeta earned her Master's degree in Biochemistry and worked for the World Health Organization (WHO) in their leprosy division. She loved her work and was involved in many projects; she organized skin camps, conducted research, and helped with patients' concerns. Leprosy is not a socially acceptable disease in India and the majority's attitude towards the victims is that they are cursed by God, therefore, people don't want to help them. Vineeta was very passionate about her work and is proud to have served people with leprosy, **"It kept me full. I felt lucky to be giving whatever knowledge I had."**



Shortly after her contract with WHO ended, Vineeta married and started a new life. Her son was four years old when they immigrated to Canada and her daughter was born a year after her arrival in Calgary.

Life in Canada is very different for Vineeta but she feels happy here. Prior to coming to Canada she had never had the opportunity to learn how to drive. She is very proud that she was able to get her driver's licence as it provided her with more independence. Vineeta loves that there is less pollution, corruption and it is less crowded in Canada.

Vineeta misses her family and friends in India. She is somewhat introverted and finds it hard to make friends. She has noticed that people in Calgary seem to live very individual lives. Vineeta hopes that re-entering the workplace will help her expand her networks.

Her son is almost 10 years old and enjoys school. Her daughter is four years old and attends daycare. Vineeta is impressed by the education system in Calgary. Teaching techniques are more collaborative and hands on, with an emphasis on practical application. She is grateful that her children are happy and settled which gives her the energy and freedom to pursue her professional aspirations.

Not having worked in Canada before, Vineeta struggles to know what to do and she sometimes feels frustrated, “I have an education but I cannot use it here”. After a lot of research and with much support, Vineeta developed an action plan and started putting the pieces together. She joined an administrative training program and would like to find a clerical position, preferably within the health care industry. While working, she hopes to be able to save money to help provide for her family and to save for the courses required to attain her biochemistry technician certification. Vineeta volunteers with Alberta Health Services to enhance her professional experience and to contribute to society.

Vineeta is passionate about helping people and committed to returning to a career in health care. Her impression of Alberta Health Services is that it has great technology but the doctors are overloaded. Unlike healthcare in India, Vineeta is inspired by how the healthcare system is not motivated by profit. She wants skilled immigrants to be able to integrate more efficiently into the healthcare profession. Vineeta aspires to share her knowledge and help alleviate the burden. With an action plan in place, she feels confident that she will achieve her goals in Calgary.

India is the second most populous country in the world, with over 1.2 billion people who call it home.

India is the largest democracy in the world.

Close to 30% of India's population lives below the International Poverty Line.

Every major world religion is represented in India. Additionally, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism all originated in India.

Hindi and English are the official languages of India. The government also recognizes 22 other languages. Apart from these languages, there is an estimated 2000 dialects spoken in the country.

Around 43% of children under the age of five are underweight in India.

India has the 3rd largest military force in the world, and has never invaded another country.

Rhoda

Rhoda is a 34 year old mother of two boys and a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in the Philippines. Her husband came to Canada five years ago as a temporary foreign worker and secured work with a meat processing company. They spent four years apart and when he finally received his permanent residence status through the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program, Rhoda and her two children joined him in April 2012.

Life in the Philippines, even with a professional designation, did not provide as many luxuries as some may assume. Rhoda worked hard all day long and when she got home she had to tend to the needs of her children and her home. Although she was able to afford two nannies to look after her children during the day, she mostly lived pay cheque to pay cheque and was unable to think about savings. In Canada, she does not feel that her standard of living has decreased. Her husband, who now works in the food service industry as a restaurant manager, was able to purchase a modest four bedroom home for their family in Calgary. An equivalent sized house in the Philippines would be unimaginable for them.



Rhoda appreciates that in Canada the gap between the rich and the poor does not seem as severe as in her home country. Although she had some trepidation about discrimination, she is happy to see that people are treated equally in Canada. She appreciatively exclaimed: **“I have never felt racially discriminated against in Canada.”**

Although the taxes in Canada are higher than in the Philippines, Rhoda is happy to pay them because of the benefits they provide. Rhoda observed that in the Philippines injuries or chronic diseases are

more fatal and the cost of medical care is overwhelming. Another benefit of Calgary's infrastructure that Rhoda is very impressed with is a monthly rate for a bus pass and the ability to go wherever she needs to go by using the public transit system.

Rhoda was accepted into a bridge to work program for foreign trained accountants just two months after she arrived in Canada. The program provided an optimal opportunity for her to improve her English and learn about Canadian workplace culture. Rhoda had a work experience placement at a small accounting firm and now works there full time. Her job has provided her the opportunity to learn different types of accounting software. She feels that the Canadian workplace is much more individualistic than in the Philippines.

Once she is able to save money for the courses, Rhoda plans on working towards becoming a Certified General Accountant. In the meantime, she is volunteering with the Centre for Newcomers and their tax clinic. Part of the volunteer commitment includes training from Canada Revenue Agency. She is pleased to have an opportunity to learn and to give back to the community.

Rhoda loves the amount of time she is able to spend with her children and the variety of activities they can do as a family in Calgary. Both of her boys learned how to ride a bike in Canada. Rhoda wants the best for her children and is grateful that in Canada there are opportunities for them to study and learn. Post-secondary education in the Philippines is very expensive and there are no financial support programs such as student loans. Rhoda is not worried about what profession her children will eventually choose, as long as they complete their education and are happy.

Being employed, seeing her children happy in school and having her family settled in a home makes her feel more Canadian. Rhoda is working on building her social network and takes every opportunity to get to know people through work, other mothers at her children's daycare, people in her community and even those she meets at the bus stop.

The Philippines are made up of 7,107 islands, totaling about 300,000 km². Only around 1,000 of its islands are populated.

The Philippines has a population of over 90 million people and an annual growth rate around 2%, making it one of the most populous and fastest growing countries on Earth.

More than 180 different languages and dialects are spoken in the Philippines. The official languages of the Philippines are Filipino (which is based on Tagalog) and English.

Although the male-female relationships are considered conservative in the Philippines, women enjoy a tremendous amount of political freedom; they have been senators, cabinet officers, Supreme Court justices, administrators, and heads of major business enterprises.

The Philippines is the world's number one producer of coconut and one of the largest exporters of tropical fruits.

Ana

Ana was a teacher of Spanish Literature and Spanish as a second language in Colombia. She taught at the university and in high school. Life in Colombia was full of activities, friends and warm weather.

Ana and her family immigrated to Canada in October 2011. They decided to come to Canada for professional opportunities and a better future for their children. They also wanted the benefits of being Canadian citizens.

Shortly after arriving, Ana enrolled in a three week employment program through Calgary Catholic Immigration Society. Ana recalls that the facilitator asked each participant about their career and goals. When Ana shared that she was a teacher in Colombia and wanted to be a teacher in Canada as well, the facilitator explained to her the arduous process of teacher certification in Alberta and suggested that she may want to consider a profession in childcare. He was pleasantly surprised when two weeks into the program Ana told him she had found a job that utilized many of her professional skills.



Ana works at an international drilling company that provides rigs for oil and gas companies in South America and Africa. She does translation and interpretation during business meetings, records expenses, maintains agendas, books travel and assists in meetings. She has learned a tremendous amount about the oil and gas sector and Canadian workplace culture. Ana enjoys her job a lot and feels that it has been the most positive part of being in Canada for her.

One of the challenges Ana has faced in Calgary is that it took her husband a year to secure employment in his professional field, electronics engineering. Not being able to find fulfilling employment is disheart-

ening and can cause a lot of emotional stress. Ana is also anxious about her 12 year old daughter's transition into the school and community. In Colombia, her daughter had a lot of friends with common interests and hobbies whereas in Calgary, she has had a hard time finding friends that she can relate to. Ana has enrolled her daughter in sports and various activities but she is still struggling to make friends and to feel that she belongs. Ensuring the emotional welfare of her family is Ana's main priority.

Both Ana and her husband are impressed by the services that are available to immigrants in Calgary. Ana feels that, **“in Canada everything is organized to your service and benefit”**. She was amazed when a doctor who had prescribed her some medicine called her after reviewing her blood tests and wanted to change her prescription. She did not have to take the time to see the doctor; instead he just faxed the prescription to the pharmacy. Ana and her husband are very appreciative of the quality of life and the level of social equality they have found in Canada.

Although Ana desperately misses her family in Colombia, she has noted that in Canada, friends have become her family. She has met people through immigrant serving agencies, her neighborhood and even became friends with someone they bought furniture from through Kijiji. The one drawback to Canadian culture is that sometimes it is too quiet; Ana attended a hockey game in Calgary and was shocked at how subdued people were compared to a soccer game in Colombia where people scream, play instruments, and celebrate throughout the entire game. Ana loves to feel the energy and excitement in crowds at sporting events or festivals.

There are many good things awaiting Ana and her family in the future. Ana is expecting another child in the summertime. She is also looking into certification with the Alberta Teachers Association and is confident that she has all the necessary qualifications and experience to reach her goal of becoming a teacher in Canada.

Colombia is the most bio diverse country in the world. It is home to more than 1754 species of birds, the largest in the world. Colombia consists of highlands as well as rain-forests and tropical grass-lands.

Coffee production contributes to more than 20% of the revenue of Colombia. Nearly 12% of world's coffee is produced in Colombia.

Colombia's literacy rate is 92.5%.

More than 4 million Colombians have been internally displaced, and more than 100,000 continue to be displaced each year due to the armed conflict between the government and the “Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia” (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia).

In 2012, Colombia's government committed to increasing women's rights. On average, women work 10 or more hours per week and get paid 20% less. Also, there are high rates of violence against women.

Dodani

Dodani and her family came to Canada from Chile when she was eight years old. Her parents decided to immigrate because they wanted more professional opportunities and a better life for her and her brother. When they first arrived in Montreal in 2000, they stayed with a relative for a short while. Later they found a one bedroom apartment that they would call home for three years. Dodani's father built a makeshift partition in the living room and set up a bunk bed for her and her younger brother to use as their room. Their little home got much smaller when a baby girl was welcomed into their family in 2001.

The biggest challenge for their family was learning French as their second language. Dodani remembers feeling frustrated and overwhelmed when she joined school, **“It was bad, I didn’t understand them and they didn’t understand me.”** She was in a program that provided French language learning support within the public school system. After acquiring a strong enough knowledge of French to succeed, Dodani

decided to transfer to another school that was closer to her apartment. There her life took a turn for the worse due to her teacher berating her and singling her out in class. She remembers the teacher telling her, “You don’t get this, you’ll never learn.” Dodani’s mother was so enraged about how her daughter was treated, she went to the school principal to voice her concerns but it had no effect.

During this time, Dodani’s father, an electrician in Chile, was able to carve out a career in home renovations and construction. After three years in Montreal, her father secured a good job in a granite and slate company that provided enough money to rent a home with a bedroom for everyone. It also meant another new school for Dodani. Dodani made friends easily in Montreal, often with other immigrant girls. This helped ease her transitions through five different schools.



When Dodani entered her teenage years she fell into the wrong crowd and started partying. She was suspended from school, her grades deteriorated; she constantly fought with her parents and stopped liking who she was. When a professional opportunity in Calgary arose for Dodani's father, he asked his family to move to Calgary with him. Dodani wanted a fresh start and said yes.

However, her first year in Calgary was very tumultuous. She remembers calling her boyfriend from Montreal every night in tears and feeling very depressed. In addition to missing her friends, Dodani faced the challenge of learning English. She decided to enroll in a French school in her first year in Calgary and then transferred to a French immersion in her second year. In the French immersion school Dodani started making more friends and she received attention and care from her English teacher. Dodani was disheartened when her lack of English meant she would require four years, instead of three, to graduate high school. However, she eventually realized being trilingual would help her in her career goals in the travel industry.

Dodani is currently enrolled in her first year of a Travel and Tourism Diploma program at SAIT. After her diploma she would like to work for West Jet internationally. She has a passion for helping people and giving back to the community. She volunteers through her church and helps teach Sunday school. Dodani also loves taking the time to listen to the stories strangers on the bus want to tell or cooking a meal for her family.

As a strong woman who has overcome many major transitions in her life, Dodani feels confident in her ability to take advantage of the many opportunities and experiences her future holds.

The name Chile comes from the native nomads that first occupied the land. The meaning of the word Chile in native tongue means "Where the land ends".

Exports account for 1/3 of Chile's GDP. Commodities such as copper, fruit, fish products, paper and pulp, chemicals, and wine make up 3/4 of total exports. Over 1/3 of the world's copper comes from Chile.

Chile is 4300 km long and approximately 175 km wide; it has 6,435 km of coastline. The total geographical area of Chile is 756,626 square kilometers.

Chile's first female president was elected in 2006 and served until 2010.

Divorce was legalized in Chile in 2004.

Chile had to endure a 17 year military dictatorship between 1973-1990. The total number killed, tortured or imprisoned for political reasons was 40,018.

Community Reflections



URS Flint: Bob McCullagh

Bob McCullagh is the HR Team Leader of Organizational Development at URS Flint and manages a team of five to offer programs for the 12,000 URS Flint employees. As a project-based oil and gas construction services business, finding qualified employees is critical to their operations. Including diverse workers in their workforce has been an organic process based on business needs. URS Flint recognizes that the skill sets they are looking for in their employees are not unique to Canada which allows them to meet their labour needs from a variety of sources.



URS Flint has worked with select immigrant serving agencies to host work experience placements for foreign trained professionals and has been involved with the Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council (CRIEC) which runs a mentorship program for professional immigrants. Bob estimates that they have hosted around eight professional immigrants and have hired about five as a result.

Hosting experience placements is dependent on the projects that are currently running, the quality and meaningfulness of work available and the availability of staff members who are able to mentor the individuals. Hosting work experience placements for foreign trained professionals has been a positive experience for the company. Mentees benefit from specialized training and work experience placements that enable them to better understand Canadian workplace expectations. Hosting companies benefit from pre-screened foreign trained professionals and a venue where they can discuss needs, challenges and supports that may arise through consultations. Bob has observed that foreign trained professionals are always eager to learn and understand Canadian workplace contexts. For him it is good to have their point of view and to see how they apply their skills.

Bob feels that many foreign trained professionals recognize that in order to integrate into the workplace they may have to take a lower position initially and improve their language skills, adjust to the Canadian workplace, and gain occupation specific knowledge. In return, the company benefits from talented diverse teams with broad skill sets. The other benefit is that they have a number of people who can be promoted in short order.

URS Flint uses the federal government's Temporary Foreign Worker program to help fill the critical shortage of skilled tradespeople in Canada. If they are unable to fill trade positions within Alberta, they expand their search to Western Canada, followed by the rest of Canada and then begin a search overseas. Many URS Flint projects require upwards of 200 specific tradespeople, such as welders, for anywhere from 12 months to three years. When a project is completed they aim to transfer the TFWs to new projects. When recruiting TFWs they look for countries that have trades training similar to Canada's and for individuals who are interested in training and travelling. URS Flint helps TFWs attain certification in Canada if required.

Diversity and inclusion in the workplace have not been specific goals for their company but due to their recruitment needs they have emerged as outcomes nonetheless. Bob explains that **“more diverse teams bring new ideas and new knowledge to the projects and the work that we do. It's been great.”** As with all companies, URS Flint has a unique culture and the recruitment of an individual means that he or she needs to fit within that culture. For example, URS Flint has specific expectations relating to gender equality and safety in the workplace that all employees are expected to abide by regardless of cultural background.

In order to foster a culture of diversity and inclusion Bob recommends bringing a mentoring skill set into an organization because he has seen that strong mentors are strong leaders. Mentoring provides opportunities for employees to develop leadership skills which then prepare them for upcoming roles within the organization. He also recommends taking an open minded approach. Partnerships with immigrant serving agencies are ideal because one can be upfront about concerns and discuss them openly.

During the recent Olympics, the range of ethnic diversity within the company enriched the enthusiasm and excitement at URS Flint for the games. It presented an opportunity for employees to share their heritage and wear jerseys for their teams. URS Flint also recently celebrated diversity by dedicating a day where employees were encouraged to wear traditional clothing and prizes were awarded for best outfits. Small initiatives such as these create conversation about diversity in the workplace and allow it to become a part of the cultural norm.

Bob predicts that in the next five to ten years at URS Flint, diversity will continue to be the normal way of doing business. URS Flint has embraced diversity and from a talent and employee development perspective, it is already the norm.

TD Bank:

Jeremy Robinson

Jeremy Robinson has been with TD Bank for 13 years, seven of them in his current position, Customer Service Manager. As a manager, Jeremy feels the best part of his job is the diversity of people and customers he works with. In Jeremy's branch there are approximately 25 staff members many of whom speak different first languages, which is critical to providing customer access to the bank's services. Jeremy wants all staff and employees to feel important and equipped to achieve their goals and potential; he wants them to do their best work and to be able to showcase each person's talents. This requires openness to whatever backgrounds people come from.



TD Bank has not encouraged diversity and inclusion accidentally; it has been a deliberate and well thought out strategy. They have prioritized a diverse and inclusive workplace not only because it is the right thing to do but because it reflects the communities that they operate within. TD has prioritized diversity and inclusion by committing to the following:

- Expanding leadership opportunities for women
- Expanding leadership opportunities for members of (visible) minority groups
- Creating and promoting an inclusive culture for people with disabilities
- Enhancing and promoting an inclusive environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and allied employees, customers and clients
- Creating and promoting an inclusive culture for Aboriginal employees and customers
- Serving diverse communities

At a branch level, some of the ways diversity goals are achieved are through hosting networking events internally and externally, raising awareness, and giving individuals the opportunity to share. Most branches have a diversity coordinator whose role is to be sensitive to, and aware of, how diversity

affects that location, engage employees in conversations, and address any relevant issues. Furthermore, each employee must complete a mentor training course which includes diversity and inclusion content. Finally, all employees are encouraged to volunteer within the community and select which organizations they would like to contribute their time to. This flexible approach to corporate social responsibility expands TD Bank's reach into the community in as many ways as the number of unique employees they have.

Jeremy feels that the key to TD Bank's success with their approach to diversity is the level of commitment they have. It is a commitment that goes beyond words and an approach that is supported by their leadership. Jeremy emphasizes that **“commitment enables diversity to become a reality at a grass roots level and actively demonstrates that it is not just talk.”**

Diversity in the workplace does come with challenges; there is a greater opportunity for miscommunication, each culture has different expectations and communication styles which can result in misunderstanding. However, misunderstanding or miscommunication leads to an opportunity to learn and grow as they are open to one another. Overall, Jeremy loves that his workplace provides the opportunity to learn something new each day about people which makes it a fresh and fun place to work.

Jeremy has worked with various immigrant serving agencies such as Bow Valley College, Immigrant Services Calgary, Calgary Immigrant Women's Association and Calgary Catholic Immigration Society. He loves getting out into the community by attending networking events for professional immigrants, visiting employment programs to provide resume critiques or presenting information on the banking industry in Canada. These types of activities allow him not only to give back to the community but also to serve as a potential recruitment source. Jeremy estimates that in the past five years, 8 to 10 new hires at his branch have been secured through immigrant serving agencies and many have moved up through the ranks within the bank. For the most part the professional immigrants he hired were all excited to work for TD Bank and brought with them a passion which sets them apart.

As a native Calgarian, Jeremy has seen the face of Calgary change and revels in the opportunity to meet and learn from people who are from all around the world. He feels fortunate to be part of the changing ethos of Calgary.

Cerebral Palsy Association in Alberta: Mariana Nimara

Mariana Nimara is the Director of Administration for the Cerebral Palsy Association in Alberta (CPAA). In her role, Mariana helps support 40 employees in Calgary and Edmonton as well as 630 volunteers across the province. The CPAA advocates for and supports people with cerebral palsy and other disabilities with the goal of creating a life without limits for all. The foundation of their work is to create equal rights in society and the workplace, in other words, diversity and inclusion is their business. CPAA accomplishes its goal by walking the talk and encouraging employers to do the same. Ultimately, CPAA's vision and mission drive their organization's progressive approach to diversity and inclusion in their workplace.



An inclusive and diverse workplace at CPAA means that they are able to attract the right skills and the best minds to create value through programming and services for their clientele. CPAA's hiring and HR practices are designed around acknowledging similarities and differences and fostering respect for everyone regardless of ethnicity, age, gender, ability, etc. At CPAA, people are truly their greatest asset. Mariana oversees an integrated human resources model which means that their staff and volunteers are treated equally from the recruitment processes and policies to engagement and development strategies.

The Senior Management Team at CPAA focuses on the needs of each individual and creates an environment necessary for everyone to achieve their full potential. Each person has a development and performance plan that is not just referred to once a year, but provides a structure for ongoing communication and feedback between staff and their supervisors. They take the time to understand an individual's life and work options and to assess their capacities with an open mind. They strive to empower individuals to do their best in a position that best matches them. This method requires time, commitment, creativity and flexibility.

Another strategy that CPAA uses to increase diversity and inclusion in the workplace is by hosting work experience placements through immigrant serving agencies and practicum students through educational institutions.

These win-win models provide the organization with various levels of contribution and the students with challenging tasks and rewarding experiences that develop their professional skills. During a placement, CPAA supports the students by providing clear goals, timelines and a mentoring relationship with their supervisor. Understanding workplace objectives and ensuring a realistic timeline is in place create a clear path to success and are reinforced through touch-base meetings and ongoing communication.

The CPAA works with the business community and partners to increase awareness of diversity and inclusion. Overall, Mariana feels that the business community seems open and interested in equality and opportunities for all, although there is still much need for advocacy. Furthermore, ensuring that a company can handle the demands and challenges that come with a more diverse workplace requires forethought and planning.

Diversity and inclusion are a means to increased productivity by tapping into a broad spectrum of employee talent and ideas. It also builds effective organizations and increases retention by creating an environment that fosters opportunities for individuals to achieve their goals. However, Mariana cautions that diversity and inclusion should not be limited to programs and policies but should encompass employee engagement in the organizational culture; **“It’s about respect, feedback, contribution and the feeling of inclusion for all. It’s a huge responsibility for any organization.”**

Creating a diverse and inclusive organization places tremendous responsibility on the leadership. The senior management team must be fully on board for it to work. Having a passion for diversity and inclusion impacts the way we are able to work with people from different backgrounds and our openness to different ideas. True leadership is grounded in bringing out the best in your employees by recognizing and fostering their abilities. True leadership recognizes the beauty in difference.

Cervus Equipment:

Kari Hirsekorn

Cervus Equipment is an international company that operates 46 dealerships and repair centres of agricultural, industrial and commercial equipment in New Zealand, Australia and Canada. They sell and service John Deere agricultural equipment, Bobcat and JCB construction equipment, Clark, Sellick and Nissan industrial equipment, Doosan material handling equipment, and Peterbilt transportation equipment. Kari Hirsekorn, Accounts Payable Supervisor, has been with Cervus for over five years and oversees accounts for Cervus Canadian industrial and construction dealerships.



As a native Calgarian, Kari has watched the cultural make-up of Calgary change dramatically over the past 25 years. She recalls going to university and not having the opportunity to learn alongside visible minorities. Fortunately, as she entered the workplace, her exposure to diversity increased. Kari worked for a wholesale tire company that was managed by a Korean woman. She mentored Kari and taught her everything she knows today about accounting. The relationship and the opportunity to learn from the ground up changed Kari's career path and opened up new professional opportunities. To this day they remain good friends.

Today, Kari reflects on the lives of her teenage children and how multiculturalism, inclusion and tolerance are the norm for them. Kari feels that she now learns from her children as much as she endeavors to teach them.

Within Cervus, diversity and inclusion are important because the workplace has become global and the labour pool in Canada is changing. Cervus is proud to be open and to adapt with changes within our cultural mosaic. The company is committed to being open minded and non-judgmental in its hiring processes.

It has a transparent process and is looking for the best qualified employees regardless of their backgrounds. When reviewing resumes, Cervus is careful to look for the qualifications and skill sets of their applicants, not where the experience and education is from. The interview process helps narrow down

the relevance and transferability of the applicant's experience. Cervus also believes in investing in their people through professional development opportunities and supporting staff who want to work towards certification.

For Kari, **“a diverse workplace helps people to open their mind to different cultures, backgrounds, and ways of viewing the world.”** Diversity and inclusion fosters an atmosphere of growth and learning for employees and employers. Cervus continues to examine their policies and methods of supporting and encouraging diversity in the workplace. They would like their workforce to continue to reflect their customer base. Interestingly, Kari notes that for a while their office seemed predominantly female and diversity meant the inclusion of more males.

Some of the challenges that come along with an increase in diversity are that people feel more comfortable within their own cultural groups which can create a lack of social cohesion. Kari encourages her team to enjoy extra-curricular activities that help strengthen relationships and allows them to talk about non-work related topics without the distractions of the office. She feels it is very important for all members of the team to have respect for each other. There can be challenges within communication, particularly in written communication and the use of idiomatic expressions. In order to ensure clear communication, Kari has open conversations with her staff and encourages them to seek clarification with one another.

Cervus has been involved with work experience programs for professional immigrants through Calgary Immigrant Women's Association and with practicum placements through CDI College. Kari estimates that they have hosted about nine individuals. The work experience placements are a good opportunity for companies that want to increase diversity and inclusion and for the individuals to gain professional experience. Kari feels that it is a much better approach to recruitment because there is an opportunity to try it out and see if there truly is a good fit for the individual and the company. The relationship that Cervus has developed with immigrant serving agencies and CDI College in Calgary has been so positive that their office in Saskatchewan is looking for similar partnerships.

desnoyers-schuler Inc./ Brave Communications: Kelly Schuler

Kelly Schuler cofounded desnoyers-schuler Inc. in 1999 and is the Executive Director of Brave Communications, a social enterprise which grew out of desnoyers-schuler. The latter (desnoyers-schuler Inc.) works with non-profits, different levels of government and community development organizations to create strategic communication and marketing plans and tools that promote organizational and behavioral change in the area of health, wellness and sustainable living. Brave Communications provides leadership performance training through a series of workshops and customized training programs.



Kelly's professional background is in the arts and business with a focus in cross cultural communications. She has had the opportunity to work at Concordia University with an academic leader in the field of multiculturalism; they developed multicultural programs, publications, organized symposia and conducted research. In addition, she also had the pleasure of working in several different countries.

On a personal note, Kelly's family roots go back over 100 years in Alberta. When she looks at her family history she is reminded that Canada is a country of pioneers. As newcomers today are also pioneers, she believes it is natural to honour our common roots and embrace newcomers.

Since desnoyers-schuler's inception, Kelly has seen lots of change in organizational attitudes towards diversity. The key benefit of a diverse and inclusive workplace is that businesses are dealing with multicultural markets and audiences and this better equips them to serve the needs of the marketplace. Interaction with multiculturalism should start from within an organization to be successful.

Kelly has observed a greater emphasis on embracing diversity, being strategic about the sensitization of cultural differences, and building on people's strengths. Cultural diversity needs to be interwoven into the culture of an organization to benefit all. Sensitivity, communication and a mentoring skillset are key components of overarching strategy that promotes inclusion.

One of the strategies that Kelly recommends to clients in order to support cultural diversity is to create a champion and invest in his or her training. The champion can act as a liaison and mentor within the organization. Another method is to provide orientation sessions on cross cultural communication for all employees in order to enlighten, raise awareness and create dialogue around diversity. An easy way to maintain a dialogue and interest in multiculturalism is to highlight cultural events, cultural and religious holidays as well as through the arts. Kelly also suggests that employers think about creating opportunities and not have an all or nothing approach to diverse employees; for example, mothers should not have to choose between work and family, so looking at ways to redefine a position in terms of hours of work, and location, etc. can increase access to talent pools.

In keeping with the notion of Canada being a country of pioneers and in acknowledgment of the changing demographics, Kelly asserts that, **“investing in diversity and inclusiveness means tangible benefits for organizations now and for generations to come”**.

Within her own company, Kelly has a team of three to five contract employees. She has hosted professional immigrant women and international students through internships. The internships have provided an opportunity to improve internal best practices through teaching the interns, and learning from the teaching process. In addition, it provided cultural sensitivity opportunities for her team while benefiting client projects. The contribution that the interns have made to desnoyers-schuler Inc. has been significant; one intern, who had a background in IT, developed a survey system for a client that helped transition their office to virtual work possibilities.

Kelly feels that it is most important to address the nuances of communication. People can excel or be limited by their ability to communicate with confidence. Kelly's tip for avoiding communication misunderstandings is to recognize that there will be mistakes and to show respect however you can. Respect helps build trust and open dialogue. A difference in views towards management styles is another challenge for the employee and employer relationship. Workplace values such as taking initiative, can be seen as impolite in other cultures, therefore, Kelly feels that having openness, a culture of learning, and team building makes a world of difference. In the end, clear communication leads to success.

Calgary Local Immigration Partnership: Jaime Enachescu

Jaime Enachescu has worked in the immigrant sector for over 20 years as a volunteer, board member and staff member. In the past four years, Jaime has worked with the United Way of Calgary and Area which has allowed her to continue her support of the immigrant sector.

United Way's vision is "A Great City for Everyone". Calgary is a very prosperous city and **"in order for Calgary to continue to grow as a vibrant city that offers excellent quality of life, we need to maximize on all of our communities and their assets"**, Jaime explains. This includes newcomers to Canada who are choosing Calgary to be their home. However lots of newcomers do not have adequate access to the many opportunities in Calgary.



One of Jaime's roles at the United Way is to work in collaboration with the City of Calgary and the Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary on a new initiative called the Calgary Local Immigration Partnership (CLIP). CLIP is a collective impact initiative where they are gathering committed and influential partners to positively change the settlement and integration outcomes for newcomers to Canada.

Similar Local Immigration Partnerships (LIP) have been operating in Ontario since 2005. CLIP is the first LIP in Alberta. Citizenship and Immigration Canada developed the LIP model based on the results of a research project, Characteristics of a Welcoming Community. The research project identified 17 characteristics of welcoming communities and has provided a framework for the LIPs. LIPs are meant to build bridges within the community and help determine a city's unique priorities. Therefore, each LIP is very different in their structure and approach.

CLIP has four overarching objectives:

- Develop a multi-sector council at the community level so that newcomer needs are integrated seamlessly into community planning, identifying community specific strategic priorities and the implementation of action plans

- Engage mainstream human services providers in the active inclusion of newcomers
- Strengthen local capacity to integrate newcomers in all facets of the society
- Improve outcomes for newcomers in economic social, political and civic participation

CLIP's structure will include a Council, Project Teams and Community Conversations. The CLIP Council will consist of approximately 20 community members that are willing to play a leadership role in Calgary to promote and implement the vision of CLIP. The Project Teams will lead the implementation of the priorities and engage stakeholders to achieve their goals. Community Conversations are engagement events for the wider community to provide input and feedback on the work of CLIP. The conversations will be organized according to stages of immigration:

- Preparation
- Arrival (first few months)
- Adaptation (education and employment)
- Security (accessing institutions)
- Belonging (participating in the community)

The information and research gathered at the Community Conversations will form the basis for setting priorities for CLIP. The Council will endorse a strategic plan based on the priorities identified, delegate implementation to Project Teams and evaluate progress each year.

For many newcomers, finding employment that matches their skills, education and experience is one of the biggest challenges. At the same time, employers are in need of highly qualified people to fill the many vacancies. The immigrant sector has worked to engage employers to support networking opportunities, mentoring initiatives and work experience placements for immigrants.

With the recent immigration changes announced by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, employers will play a greater role in the immigration process for newcomers and take on additional responsibilities. Immigrant serving agencies will have the opportunity to support employers in the integration of their immigrant employees. An example of this change could be offering settlement support and English learning classes in the workplace. As a result of the shift, Jaime hopes to see increased collaboration between the immigrant sector and employers through unique and creative programs and services. CLIP will encourage collaboration between the immigrant sector and employers and support the many initiatives already taking place in Calgary.

Calgary Police Service: Bill Dodd

Sergeant Bill Dodd is the Diversity Resources Team Leader within the Community and Youth Services Division of the Calgary Police Service (CPS). The team is comprised of nine sworn members and one civilian who act as liaisons between the CPS and the community through cultural associations, immigrant serving agencies, community associations, faith based organizations, and educational institutions, etc. The purpose of the Diversity Resource Team is to go out into the community and create a relationship of trust within diverse communities and to bring the perspective of diverse communities back into CPS to ensure that the needs of community are reflected in their service and processes.



Connecting and building relationships within diverse communities is critical to the CPS because they are effective only with the engagement of the citizens. Bill states, “A lack of engagement means that there is a greater risk for victimization and criminalization.” In some countries, police services are oppressive or are debilitated by corruption so it is easy for newcomers to extend the same mistrust and fear they had in their home countries to the CPS.

Some of the methods the CPS uses to engage with diverse communities are to attend cultural events, offer “You and the Law” workshops for newcomers, and educate people about their rights and responsibilities. An example of a strategy used to bridge the gap between newcomers and the CPS is to take a group of new police recruits to an English class. When students are asked whether they would call the police if they were in trouble, only a few of them will say yes. The police recruits are then matched with a student and they work through a series of activities. At the end of four hours they ask the students again if they would call the recruit they have just gotten to know if they were trouble now and almost all say yes.

The Diversity Resource Team also attends multi-cultural events through immigrant serving agencies, cultural associations and community associations because they want to support the community, be a visible presence, celebrate with and be recognized as active members of the community.

The Diversity Resource Team has an advisory council comprised of community members. The council has been instrumental in collecting information from within communities, understanding the needs of the community, and in the prevention of overlooking important components of diversity and inclusion. Bill runs new ideas and initiatives past the council who in turn, help him think about his ideas in a fresh light.

Bringing back the concerns and needs of diverse communities into CPS operations is a large scale commitment which affects everything from how they take witness statements in the field, the hiring and training practices of new recruits, the use of physical space, the format of printed materials, and the availability of interpreters. It is a massive undertaking and with a paramilitary organization change can come slowly. However, Bill is grateful that Police Chief Rick Hansen has made the Diversity Resource Team a priority as only five years ago the team had been cut to only three positions. The Police Chief also increased funding to critical programs that focus on community engagement such as resource development, preventative education and mentorship.

Ideally, the CPS employee composition should reflect the composition of the community and although there are many diverse members on their team, it is still dominated by a non-diverse population. Even though the recruitment teams expend their efforts to include outreach to diverse communities, they are also responsible for meeting recruitment quotas. The work of the Diversity Resource Team is critical as increasing relationships of trust within diverse communities helps change their perceptions towards the service to a viable and desirable career path.

Bill's advice to organizations that want to be more diverse and inclusive is to:

- Take a critical look at the organization to determine the barriers to inclusion; look at what has been done but more importantly what can be done better
- Take the time to listen to people who have ideas; ideas can come from any level within an organization
- Run ideas past the community to garner their unique perspectives
- Empower people committed to making change through the allotment of resources and support

On a personal level, Bill is appreciative for the amount of diversity that Calgary has; **“I enjoy Calgary much more than I did 20 years ago. Our kids are exposed to more culture, diversity education and they are more knowledgeable, empathetic, and open.”**

Calgary Board of Education: Dianne Roulson

Calgary Board of Education (CBE) has 225 schools, more than 107,000 students and 13,436 employees. There are over 26,600 English language learners within the CBE which account for 47% of the total number of English language learners (ELL) in all of Alberta's public schools. Of the English language learners, approximately 50% are Canadian born from immigrant families in addition to those from Francophone, First Nations, Metis and Inuit backgrounds. Within the CBE over 140 languages are spoken by the students and their families. Almost 3700 students identify as First Nations, Metis and Inuit. There are 15,600 students with special education needs, and 600 international students from 40 countries at 58 CBE schools.

Dianne Roulson has been with the CBE for 25 years in various positions and in her current role as the Advisor for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for two years. Her responsibilities are tied directly to working with others to create conditions for the CBE being and becoming a responsive, just and inclusive learning community. Dianne expands further, **"It's not something else we do; it's about our way of being in our work together in everything we do."**



The overarching purpose of the CBE as developed by the Board of Trustees is: Each student, in keeping with his or her individual abilities and gifts, will complete high school with a foundation of learning necessary to thrive in life, work and continued learning. Creating the conditions for each young person to thrive is both compelling and demanding. To this end, CBE has prioritized the following strategies: personalize learning, build capacity, engage the public and steward resources. All of these strategies permeate the CBE's operations, classrooms and service units while every individual works to fulfill them.

In June 2012, the Board of Trustees approved the Chief Superintendent's interpretation of diversity to mean the full range of uniqueness within humanity. The CBE does not see diversity as applying to only some students, families and staff; diversity is about everyone. The CBE acknowledges that students are diverse as learners and it values that uniqueness.

CBE's ethos of being and becoming a responsive, just and inclusive learning community has a long history. In the 1990s, the scope of equality/equity began expanding into the needs of support staff, equal opportunities for women, gender equitable classroom practices, student achievement by gender,

anti-racism, equitable distribution of resources, GLBT youth, gender equity as well as gender and language bias.

As a result of CBE's purpose and strategies, there has been a significant shift toward a more holistic approach that affects the culture within the organization. Each school intentionally works to foster a culture that attends to the safety and wellbeing of each student. A practical example is that paying attention to the uniqueness of students permeates every part of everyday - it is not just something that is considered during a diversity awareness week or special workshops. It is a part of how everything is done and is reflected in the language people use, in the instructional core, and in the inherent understanding that diversity is about everyone and about how we live in the community with one another.

In addition, there are diversity and learning support advisors that help bridge ethno-cultural and linguistic diversity between the students' home life and school. The diversity and learning support advisors collectively speak over 20 languages and represent the major cultural backgrounds of the students. The CBE has extensive interpretation and translation services and partners with The Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth to provide settlement services to immigrant families.

The CBE deliberately aims to hire a workforce that reflects the larger community from teachers to facilities operations staff. Students need to feel a sense of belonging to be fully present in their learning; a sense of belonging is reflected in the adults around them. In turn, the CBE also wants their staff to feel the same sense of inclusion.

The work is both a privilege and demanding. It requires being mindful of how every individual is able to interact and feel a sense of belonging within the organization whether it is through the physical space, what is said or not said, and the tools used. A current example is creating a sense of belonging and safety for transgendered youth within the student information records. CBE staff work closely with Albert Education staff to make sure that school and district records reflect and honor students' gender identity.

Attending to the uniqueness of each learner, in a sense, means that the CBE will never figure out everything once and for all, but rather signifies the responsibility and commitment to continuously pay attention and respond. Dianne believes, **"We need each other to strengthen and expand our view of the world. A lot of uniqueness in humanity is invisible – in the things we don't necessarily think about but must consider."**

Tips, Resources and References



Tips for Fostering Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace

- Decide what culture the company would like to have and commit to it at a senior management level. An organization's mission and values should be reflected in all levels of operation. Put an action plan in place with tangible strategies and goals to make the workplace more inclusive.
- Ensure that human resource policies reflect the desired culture. A standard policy that encourages diversity and inclusion is a zero tolerance harassment policy. Consider non-punitive policies to deal with conflicts that arise from people having different points of view and backgrounds.
- Establish an ongoing, open and respectful dialogue on diversity and inclusion. Get feedback from your employees for ideas on how to make daily business and operations more inclusive for employees and customers/clients.
- Create an internal champion of diversity and inclusion. The champion can provide suggestions for improvement within the company, organize activities that increase awareness about diversity, and mentor others.
- Treat everyone equally without consideration for age, race, culture, physical ability, appearance, education or religious background and without setting them up for failure or ridicule. To create cohesion within the team, focus on the skills and benefits that people bring, not the differences.
- Discourage cliques or other exclusive groups. Design policies and practices that encourage and reward people who work together.
- Arrange for diversity training and/or cross cultural communication training for the leadership team and staff members delivered by a skilled facilitator/organization.
- Write staff memos and communications in plain language. Take the time to explain important policies and procedures to staff verbally while showing them in writing and with pictures when ever possible.
- Re-think work schedules, where possible, to accommodate the unique needs of mothers, religions and culture.

Tips for Fostering Diversity and Inclusion in the Community

- Recognize how your culture affects the way you perceive others and the world around you.
- Don't make assumptions about others based on ethnicity, culture or ability.
- Be open to new ideas and experiences. Encourage your family, friends and community to do the same.
- Take the time to get to know your neighbors and co-workers. Listen to their stories and perspectives. Share your own story.
- Learn more about cultural holidays and celebrations and check out events in the city.
- Celebrate significant dates within your community such as International Women's Day (March 8), Canadian Multiculturalism Day (June 27), International Human Rights Day (December 10), to name just a few.
- Discourage conversations that could be considered hurtful toward diverse individuals.
- Volunteer at an immigrant serving agency or in an organization that serves diverse populations.
- Learn about the home countries, religions and cultures of people in your community. Conduct research on the internet, ask questions, attend events, visit places of worship, or learn a new language.
- Don't assume that a visible minority is a recent immigrant or has poor English language skills.
- Encourage community organizations that you belong to look at their diversity and inclusion practices and strategize on how to improve these.

Plain Language Tips and Examples

Plain language means writing in a clear and precise manner. It does not mean to talk down to or dummy down the content of your message. Plain language appeals to a large cross section of people by providing the most simplified form of messaging. Employees who understand written direction and essential workplace documents (signs) will have less confusion on the job. They will need less clarification, make fewer mistakes and will likely feel less frustration.

Plain Language includes:

- **Writing style:** use a positive tone and choose references readers will understand.
- **Format:** use design elements that help the reader move through the information easily.
- **Organization:** readers can easily find the information they need.
- **Text choice:** choose words that the reader will easily understand.

Some of the basic tips for creating plain language document are:

- Use a simple sentence structure (subject, verb and object).
- Use a personal, conversational and direct tone. Do not use passive voice.
- Present information in a logical and precise order.
- Avoid the use of technical terms or jargon. When technical terms are necessary explain them at the level of your reader.
- Avoid the use of acronyms and abbreviations.
- Avoid long and complex words and sentences. Omit surplus words and use simple wording on a consistent basis.
- Use short paragraphs made of 4-5 sentences. When possible, simplify paragraphs by using bullets (i.e. for instructions or describing processes).
- Engage the reader through the use of questions and answers.
- Use pictures with real people and objects when appropriate.
- Use a large easy to read font (11pt or 12pt) and limit the number of fonts used in a document to one or two.
- Include plenty of white space.
- Use clear headings for information and tables. Bold or underline headings and titles. Do not overuse bolding or underlining. Do not use all caps.
- Left justify text (avoid right justification and centering) and avoid hyphenation of words at the end of a line.
- Use text boxes to highlight key points.

Examples of plain language in workplace documents:

Original Message	Plain Language Message
<p>While employed by the Company, you agree to work on a full-time basis exclusively for the Company and agree that you shall not, while you are employed by the Company, be employed or engaged in any capacity, in promoting, undertaking or carrying on any other business that competes with the Company or interferes or could reasonably interfere with your duties to the Company without our prior written permission.</p>	<p>While working for our company you are not allowed to do the following, without our written permission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be employed or involved with a company that competes with ours • be employed with another company that interferes with your ability to work full time with us
<p>As the applicant, it is a requirement that you provide a mailing address and quote the job number when an application for employment is submitted.</p>	<p>You need to give us a mailing address and include the job number when you apply for a job.</p>
<p>Whenever medical attention is required for a work related injury, the employee will report to the person holding a Survival First Aid Certificate when practicable and if applicable. If necessary, the employee will then report to the NEAREST medical facility to ensure prompt attention to, and the least possible aggravation to his/her injury. Following this, if fit to do so, the employee will report back to his supervisor, advising of his status and the name of the attending physician.</p>	<p>When you need medical help go to an employee who holds a Survival First Aid Certificate. If you need more care, go to the nearest medical centre.</p> <p>If you can return to work, report the injury to your supervisor, and give your supervisor the name of the doctor who treated you.</p>

Check out the resources section for links to plain language resources.

Resources

Diversity and Inclusion

Alberta Human Rights Commission

<http://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/>

- Diversity Planning Tools

http://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/publications/diversity/diversity_planning_tools.asp

- Tips on How to Make a Difference

http://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/education/help_make_a_difference/tips.asp

- Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces:

http://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/publications/diversity/human_rights_fund_reports/diversity_resources_Alberta/wic.asp

Alberta Employment and Immigration

Employing a Diverse Workforce: Making It Work

<http://alis.alberta.ca/pdf/cshop/employdiverse.pdf>

Alberta Enterprise and Advanced Education

Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace (free online course)

<http://eae.alberta.ca/apps/fqr/fqr/course/>

City of Calgary

www.calgary.ca

- Diversity and Inclusion

<http://www.calgary.ca/CSPS/CNS/Pages/Social-research-policy-and-resources/Diversity-and-Inclusion.aspx>

- Creating Inclusive Communities

<http://www.calgary.ca/CSPS/CNS/Pages/Publications-guides-and-directories/Creating-Inclusive-Communities.aspx>

- Cultural Diversity

<http://www.calgary.ca/CSPS/Recreation/Pages/Arts-and-culture/Cultural-diversity.aspx>

- Cultural Diversity Resources

<http://www.calgary.ca/CSPS/Recreation/Pages/Arts-and-culture/Cultural-resources.aspx>

Diversity in the Workplace

<http://diversityintheworkplace.ca/wordpress/>

Variety of resources, articles, links and tools available

Ethno Racial People with Disabilities Coalition of Ontario

Building Inclusive Communities for Ethno Racial People with Disabilities Project: Building Inclusive Communities Tips Tool

http://www.whiwh.com/BIC_tips.pdf

Hireimmigrants.ca

Maytree Foundation

- Diversity, Equity and Accommodation

<http://www.hireimmigrants.ca/manage-diversity/diversity-equity-accommodation/>

- E-learning courses

<http://www.hireimmigrants.ca/resources-tools/elearning/>

Includes free courses on cross cultural communication, inclusive hiring practices, diversity management, etc.

- Managing Diversity in the Workplace

<http://www.hireimmigrants.ca/manage-diversity/>

Federation of Canadian Municipalities and Laidlaw Foundation

Building Inclusive Communities: Cross Canada- Perspectives and Strategies

http://www.ohcc-ccso.ca/en/webfm_send/228

Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition

Inclusive Community Organizations a Tool Kit

<http://www.ohcc-ccso.ca/en/inclusive-community-organizations-a-tool-kit>

Volunteer Alberta

Intersections

<http://volunteeralberta.ab.ca/intersections>

Provides suggestions and information for organizations on multiculturalism and building diverse and inclusive communities (for non-profits and staff – applicable to organizations)

Plain Language

CLAD Online Thesaurus - Clear Language and Design

East End Literacy, Toronto, ON

www.eastendliteracy.on.ca/ClearLanguageAndDesign/thesaurus/

Clear Language at Work

www.clearlanguageatwork.com

- Handbooks and Online Learning
<http://clearlanguageatwork.com/handbooks-online-learning/>
- Clear Writing Principles Checklist
http://clearlanguageatwork.com/documents/Clear_Writing_Principles_Checklist.pdf
- Thesaurus
<http://clearlanguageatwork.com/complimentary-resources/plain-english-thesaurus/>

Dictionary of Plain Language

Duncan Kent & Associates, Vancouver, BC

www.techcommunicators.com/pdfs/style-diction.pdf

Plain English at a Glance

Plain Language Action Network – Plain English Network, US

www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/quickreference/glance.cfm

Plain Language Network:

www.plainlanguagenetwork.org

- Plain Train: Plain Language Online Training Program
Janet Dean and Cheryl Stephens
www.plainlanguagenetwork.org/plaintrain/index.html
- Rules for Writing in Plain Language
William D. Lutz
www.plainlanguagenetwork.org/Resources/lutz.htm

Immigrant Serving Agencies

There are many agencies in Calgary that provide services for immigrants including language training, settlement and integration services and employment services. Included below is a select list of organizations that are actively involved in employment initiatives.

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society

<http://www.ccis-calgary.ab.ca/>

Calgary Immigrant Educational Society

<http://www.immigrant-education.ca/>

Calgary Immigrant Women's Association

www.ciwa-online.com

Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council

<http://www.criec.ca/>

Centre for Newcomers

<http://www.centrefornewcomers.ca/>

Immigrant Services Calgary

<http://www.immigrantservicescalgary.ca/>

Bow Valley College

www.bowvalleycollege.ca

For a complete list of organizations and programming available for immigrants please see:

Directory of ESL Programs and Immigrant Services in Calgary

<http://www.immigrantservicescalgary.ca/esl-directory>

Alberta Human Services: Employment Training and Career Services Directory

<http://humanservices.alberta.ca/services-near-you/2433.html>

Community Organizations

Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies

<http://www.aaisa.ca/>

Calgary Board of Education

<http://www.cbe.ab.ca/>

- Learning the Value of Calgary's Public Schools
http://www.cbe.ab.ca/aboutus/documents/learning_the_value_of_Calgarys_public_schools.pdf
- Diversity and Learning Support
http://www.cbe.ab.ca/programs/diversity_advisors.asp

Calgary Catholic Separate School District

<http://www.cssd.ab.ca/>

- Community of Caring
http://www.cssd.ab.ca/default.asp?V_ITEM_ID=265

Calgary Multicultural Centre

<http://www.calgarymulti.com/>

Calgary Local Immigration Partnership

- Characteristics of a Welcoming Community
<http://p2pcanada.ca/library/characteristics-of-a-welcoming-community-report/>
- CLIP Governance Structure
<http://p2pcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/CLIP-GOVERNANCE1.pdf>

Calgary Police Service

<http://www.calgary.ca/CPS/Pages/home.aspx>

City of Calgary

<http://www.calgary.ca>

Ethno Cultural Council of Calgary

<http://www.ecccalgary.com/>

Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary

<http://www.isccalgary.ca/index.asp>

United Way of Calgary and Area

<http://www.calgaryunitedway.org/>

For a complete list of ethnic organizations and associations please see one of the following:

Calgary Multi-Cultural Centre

<http://www.calgarymulti.com/ethnic-community-organizations>

Inform Alberta

Ethno-Cultural Services Directory

<http://www.informalberta.ca/public/common/viewComboList.do?comboListId=1000058>

Useful Sites – Statistics and Reference Information

Alberta Enterprise and Advanced Education

<http://eae.alberta.ca/labour-and-immigration.aspx>

Alberta Human Services

<http://humanservices.alberta.ca/working-in-alberta.html>

Calgary Economic Development

<http://www.calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com/>

Citizenship and Immigration Canada

<http://www.cic.gc.ca>

City of Calgary

<http://www.calgary.ca/>

Government of Alberta: Office of Statistics and Information

<https://osi.alberta.ca/osi-content/pages/default.aspx>

Immigrating to Alberta

<http://www.albertacanada.com/>

Statistics Canada

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/>

Human Rights Laws

Alberta Human Rights Act

<http://canlii.ca/en/ab/laws/stat/rsa-2000-c-a-25.5/latest/rsa-2000-c-a-25.5.html>

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-15.html>

Canadian Citizenship Act

<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-29/>

Canadian Employment Equity

<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/e-5.401/index.html>

Canadian Multiculturalism Act

<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-18.7/>

Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination

<http://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/about/partnerships/CMARD.asp>

- ¹ Citizenship and Immigration Canada. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2012-preliminary/01.asp>
- ² Citizenship and Immigration Canada. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2012-preliminary/02.asp>
- ³ Calgary Economic Development: Live In Calgary, Calgary Demographics. <http://www.liveincalgary.com/overview/calgary-facts/demographics>
- ⁴ Statistics Canada. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-003-x/2007001/figures/4129888-eng.htm>
- ⁵ Statistics Canada: 2012. Calgary, Alberta (Code 4806016) and Alberta (Code 48) (table). Census Profile. 2011 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE. Ottawa. Released October 24, 2012. <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>
- ⁶ National Post: Canada Census 2011: Immigrants and Newcomers drive population growth. Tobi Cohen August 2, 2012. <http://news.nationalpost.com/2012/02/08/canada-census-2011-immigrants-and-newcomers-drive-population-growth/>
- ⁷ Statistics Canada: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-551-x/91-551-x2010001-eng.htm>
- ⁸ Statistics Canada: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-551-x/2010001/ana-eng.htm#a3>
- ⁹ Statistics Canada: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-551-x/2010001/c-g/c-g012-eng.htm>
- ¹⁰ Statistics Canada: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-551-x/2010001/c-g/c-g013-eng.htm>
- ¹¹ Globe and Mail. "Why Canada needs a Flood of Immigrants"; Joe Friesen, Jan. 10, 2013 <http://m.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/time-to-lead/why-canada-needs-a-flood-of-immigrants/article4105032/?service=mobile>.
- ¹² Government of Alberta News Release, (2011), "Alberta continues to forecast strong job growth: Challenges ahead in attracting and maintaining labour force"
<http://alberta.ca/can/201112/31633FF788671-097D-BE7F-900D27DA91B44C70.htm>

Acknowledgements:

This publication was made possible through the funding provided by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.



Citizenship and
Immigration Canada

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Photography by: Candice Ward Photography

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