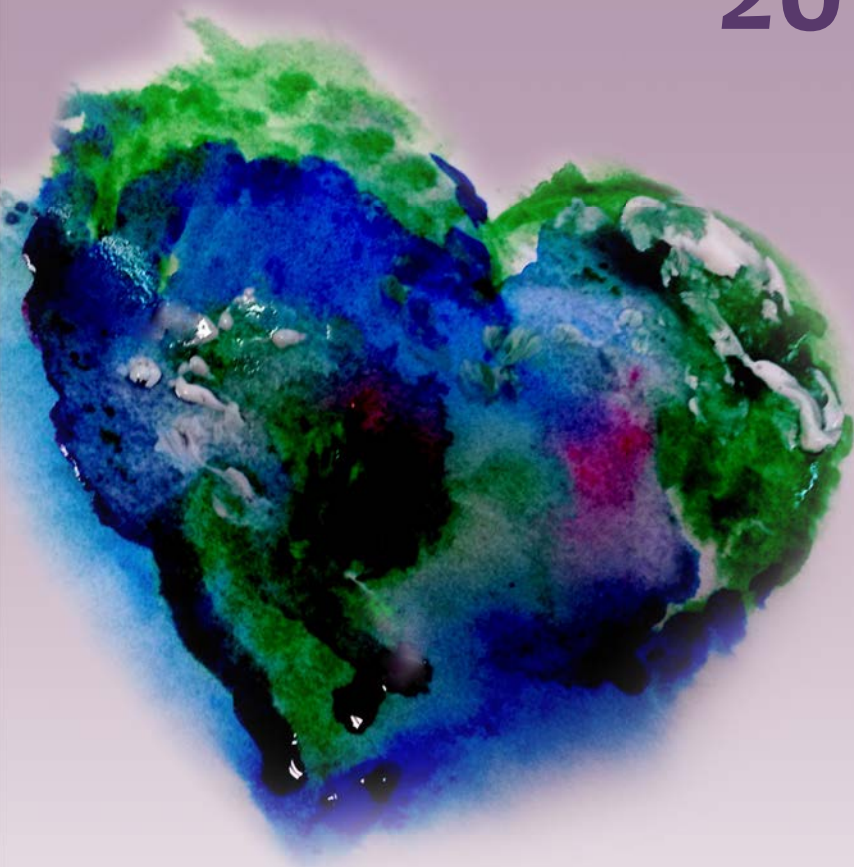


# CIWA Youth Forum

## 2015



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“We are more alike  
my friend, than we are  
unlike.”

- Maya Angelou

# Introduction by Chief Executive Officer, Beba Svigir

Welcome to CIWA's third annual Youth Forum. The forum aims to highlight the individual experiences of mentees and mentors, their journey to Canada and involvement in the Youth Mentorship Program at CIWA. Additionally, this year's Youth Forum includes Calgary's Inaugural Daughters' Day Awards. This award originated in Edmonton and for the first time, Calgary will be recognizing exceptional daughters who have made life better in their communities, demonstrated exemplary leadership skills and accomplished outstanding successes. This year, three daughters will be recognized for their significant contribution to their communities.

The theme of this year's event is 'Building Communities, Empowering Youth, and Celebrating Daughters. The event, publication and all related work has been coordinated by Youth Mentorship Program staff and participants.

Through this program, we want to support integration of immigrant youth and at the same time offer opportunities for mainstream youth to engage in the learning process that enriches their understanding of the world, multiculturalism and appreciation for newcomers living in this city.

This publication will guide you through the different experiences young immigrants face integrating into Canada, as well as the benefits mainstream youth experience by virtue of engaging in the process.

I would like to thank CIWA staff, program participants, community supporters and all of you reading this publication for supporting this initiative and attending this event. I can assure you some of the participants in the event are carving their way to become successful community leaders of the future.

## About CIWA

Calgary Immigrant Women's Association has provided exciting opportunities for immigrant girls and women from all backgrounds to come together and develop skills to succeed in Canadian culture since 1982.

Through innovative programming including settlement, language training, employment skills, and family services, CIWA supports immigrant women and empowers them through capacity building and networking opportunities. This allows them as well as their families to integrate into our diverse and great city.



### CIWA Statistics:

- CIWA provides service in 120 community locations
- CIWA served 18,219 clients in the last fiscal year
- Over 1000 volunteers support CIWA programming
- Staff speak a combined total of 38 different languages.
- CIWA is the winner of Federation Literacy Award 2014



**"CIWA has inspired me to not be afraid. I can be a shy person and not feel confident about who I am, but CIWA has inspired me to take part and meet new people who accept me for who I am. I feel like a new person, and because of CIWA I am always looking for something new to join or do." – Mentee**

# About Youth Mentorship Program

Youth Mentorship Program enhances intercultural understanding and provides youth with opportunities for personal growth and community involvement through one-on-one support and group sessions.

The program is available for immigrant girls between the ages 12-29. Mentors and mentees engage in activities that focus on social, personal and academic goals of the mentee. The guidance and friendship the mentor provides, assists the mentees to successfully integrate in Canada.



**"I want to take away from Youth Mentorship Program, friends and meaningful connections."**

**- Mentee**



**"What I want to take away from the YMP experience is knowing that I have made a significant positive difference in someone's life."**

**- Mentor**

Maya Angelou once said "I am a woman phenomenally. Phenomenal woman, that's me!"

That phrase is everything I aspire to be

I aspire to make a difference and inspire young girls like me

I came to Canada young and close minded

Didn't care for multiculturalism, didn't care to be reminded

Of all the amazing people who have changed the course of history

And all the different colours of diversity

I am now open minded, curious hearted

This is what gets empowerment started.

- Sara Abdelrahim (Mentee)

**"My favourite memory with CIWA is Youth Forum, it was beautiful to see everybody come together and create such a fresh and encouraging space where we learnt so much about each other and provided a lovely sense of community"** - Mentor





# Youth Mentorship Program Statistics

**Number of participants:** 90

**Number of countries represented:** 28

**Number of languages represented:**  
33

**Number of participants taking leadership role in Youth Forum 2015 planning:** 41

**Group orientation, training sessions and workshops:** 20

**Number of field trips:** 5 including Calgary Tower, China Town, Glenbow Museum, Heritage Park and Beauty and the Beast Broadway show

**Number of community presentations by participants:** 20

**Number of volunteer hours contributed:** Over 1400 hours

“It isn’t where you came from; it’s where you are going that counts”

- Ella Fitzgerald



# Welcome to Youth Forum 2015!

“Building Communities, Empowering Youth, Celebrating Daughters”

In the past few months, participants of the Youth Mentorship Program at CIWA have worked diligently to plan this event to make it a memorable experience for all guests attending it. Mentors and mentees have worked hand in hand to make the event multicultural as well as family friendly. The feature presentation of the event is the stories that the participants have shared through the video log as well as through this publication. Special thanks to all participants of the steering committee comprising of Main stage, Publication, Promotions and Games/Activity teams. This wouldn’t be possible without their relentless support and dedication.

The event aims to encourage fun and positive interactions, so get ready for an exciting day. Feel free to ask questions and leave a mark forever at the “Message tree” and the “Photo booth”.





**“I express love for my community by trying to treat everyone and everything with respect. I look for opportunities to make it a better place and always try to keep an open mind.” – Mentor**

## Mentee Experiences:

- “My mentor has been like my older sister who has guided me whenever I needed her and has always been beside me to help.”
- “My mentor influenced me to try out new things and be explorative. It was my first time to go to the Glenbow Museum. I learnt more about Art and History when she took me there. Also, we do a bunch of stuff that I have never done before, but somehow the things we are doing turns out to be educational which is a good thing.”
- “My mentor influenced my life in a good way. I wanted an escape from my daily routine and my plans with my friends never worked out and I felt more committed towards meetings with my mentor.”



**“Usually we end up laughing at basically anything. We find everything funny, it’s a way for us to feel comfortable.” –Mentor**



**“My funniest moment in YMP was when we couldn’t find one shop that was right in front of us while we are doing a scavenger hunt.” -Mentee**





# Mentor experiences



“.. But as the day went on it became so much more comfortable, and I remember laughing at so many unique responses, and at the jokes YMP staff were putting out. It was a really good day as well as one of the days where we really laughed a lot and I enjoyed myself.” -Mentee



- “My mentee has helped me appreciate the little things in life. Spending time with my mentee has helped me realize that those simple thank you, laughs, smiles, hugs and pats on the back are the most fulfilling and priceless responses that anyone can ever receive.”
- “My mentee has shown me what it’s like to almost have a little sister who looks to you for answers and advice. Being able to give her a guided tour of adolescence is something I wished I had, so I’m more motivated to really make a difference in her life.”
- “My mentee has shown me how passionate a young person can be. She is so incredibly involved and committed to so many different causes and projects. Despite being busy at school she still manages to make meaningful contributions in her community.”



“I wish to take all the memories and experiences I have had with CIWA and use them later on in my life. It is a great program, which helps girls reach out in their communities while enjoying themselves and making new friends.”  
– Mentee

# Accomplishments

- Youth Mentorship Program mentee received the Gerda R. Bloemraad Scholarship for the year 2014
- Youth Mentorship Program mentor received the CIWA Youth Volunteer of the Year 2014 award for her exemplary service
- Youth Mentorship Program mentee has applied to Mount Royal University for Fall 2015 in a program of her choice. Against the stereotypical and conventional career choices pertinent to her culture, she now has family support to pursue the direction of her choice



“And I hope that everything that I have learnt through this program, be it teamwork, leadership, I want to use these new skills so that I can keep moving towards a better future. I want to remember all the time I have spent in this program because it has allowed me to be myself, to reach out to others and help them.” - Mentee



## A Hidden Treasure

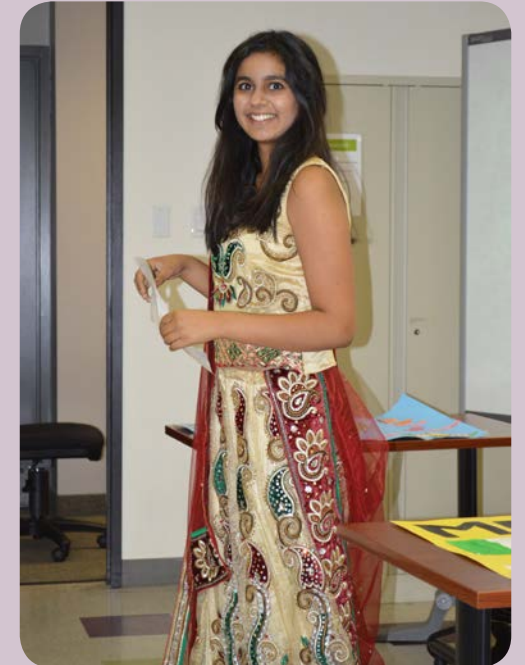
I wandered high and low  
Trying to touch the sky-  
Where is the road  
That has lead me by

What is what  
We cannot say  
No matter, all is well,  
There is no decay

We have done so much for nothing  
And nothing for so much  
It is a cycle  
Of give and take

We can be confined cocoon  
Or a free weed  
We can be stubborn lotus  
Or an uncontained seed.

Purnoor Tak – Mentor





# Daughters' Day Awards

Daughters' Day Awards celebrates the lives, contributions, and achievements of all daughters.

The annual event was created in Edmonton and highlights the importance of the daughters in our lives, regardless of age. It raises awareness about gender discrimination as well as recognizes daughters who are making a significant contribution to their communities.

CIWA's Daughter's Day Awards recipients will be presented as part of Youth Forum. Applicants were nominated in December, 2014, and a jury has selected three award recipients for this year.

*Daughter's Day Awards are generously supported by Gerda R. Bloemraad*

**"Being a daughter means feeling cherished, cared for and empowered."**

**"Being a daughter means being respected, loved and heard."**

**"A daughter is someone who can be trusted by her family and make them happy."**

# Daughters' Day Awards Jury

## **Dr. Aradhana Parmar - Chair**

Dr. Aradhana Parmar immigrated to Canada from India. She is an Associate Professor of the Development Studies Program at the University of Calgary. Over the years, Dr. Parmar has worked hard to bridge the gap between the community and the University. She believes building such bridges will help students think critically and broaden their outlook, as well as eliminate sexist and racial biases from the society.

## **Dr. David Swann**

Dr. David Swann is a Member of the Legislative Assembly for Calgary Mountain View and has been elected to the position since 2004. Dr. Swann practiced as a family physician from 1975 to 1984 and then as a public health consultant from 1988 to 2004. David has been involved in a number of anti-sanctions and anti-war movements from 1995 to 2004, which included three trips to Iraq.

## **Laura Manickaraj**

Laura Manickaraj has dedicated much of her life to living with people with developmental disabilities in L'Arche communities, since 1987 in Calgary. For a number of years Laura has been living with cancer, which limits what she can do but her commitment to the lives of others often supersedes her own illness. Laura was a Daughters' Day Award recipient in 2014 in Edmonton.

## **Pam Krause**

Pam Krause is the President and CEO of the Calgary Sexual Health Centre (CSHC). An advocate and activist on issues related to women's equality and social justice, Pam has worked and volunteered in the Calgary non-profit community for the past 20 years. Pam's leadership has been recognized by being named a Global Television Woman of Vision.

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**BUILDING COMMUNITIES - EMPOWERING YOUTH - CELEBRATING DAUGHTERS**