



# The Grapevine

*News for CIWA Supporters and the Community*

**Summer  
2010**

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# "Think Pink"

## National Denim Day Fundraiser



On May 11th, CIWA participated in the CURE Foundation's National Denim Day. The day was filled with a variety of "Think Pink" activities to help promote breast health awareness.

Staff, volunteers and clients showed their support by wearing pink and denim, baking and buying pink decorated treats and goodies, guessing the number of pink jelly beans in a jar and attending a breast health presentation.

Lois Harrison, Director of Health Promotions for the Canadian Breast Foundation, shared valuable information about breast health.

At the end of the day, CIWA raised \$937.35 for the CURE Foundation. We would like to thank everyone who supported the event. It was a huge success!!



CIWA Volunteer



"Think Pink" Bake Sale



CIWA Staff and Volunteers

# New Department!

Over the past several years, CIWA has experienced a tremendous amount of growth and diversity of services offered to our clients. In response to the needs of our clientele, we have focused much of our energy on expanding employment services and employment bridging programs. As a result of these efforts, we are pleased to announce that CIWA has created Employment Services Department. This new department will allow us to continue to focus on the employment and skills training needs of immigrant and refugee women. The Employment Services Department consists of the following programs:

- Bridging the Gap for Foreign Trained Accountants Project
- Links to Success: Skills Enhancement and Internships for Young Immigrant Mothers Project
- Childcare Training for Low Literacy Immigrant Women Project
- Office Administration Program for Immigrant Women
- Employment Skills Program
- Employment Services for Low Literacy Immigrant Women
- Essential Skills Curriculum for Immigrant Women in the Service Industry Project
- Health Literacy Curriculum for Low Literacy Immigrant Women Project

The Employment Services Department will focus on increasing the quality of support to our clients by providing valuable employment and professional skills training, job search support, and opportunities to connect to the Canadian workplace. In addition, the department will strive to strengthen and build new relationships with the corporate community.

## Case Management System (CMS)



Last year, CIWA began working with Sierra Systems to develop a new Case Management System (CMS) which will help us to accurately track our clients, programs and services and gather more comprehensive quantitative and qualitative data. The new CMS has the following features:

- Management of client enrolment in classes, workshops and courses
- Unified data management and client information tracking systems
- Expanded features and functionality to accommodate growth
- Increased staff productivity and client services
- Multiple levels of security to protect data and ensure accuracy



# Meet our President and Board Chair

## Gerda R. Bloemraad



Gerda R. Bloemraad  
CIWA President and Board Chair

Gerda R. Bloemraad, born in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, has been CIWA's President and Board Chair since 2008.

Prior to coming to Canada in 1975, Gerda and her family lived in Thailand, Spain, Greece and England. Gerda's late husband was a geologist; a profession which gave them the opportunity to live in different parts of the world.

After living in Canada for six years, Gerda and her family decided to make Canada their permanent home. Adjusting to life in Canada was difficult. Although Gerda had some knowledge of the English language, she still experienced difficulties communicating with native English speakers. She also had to learn how to navigate through the Canadian school and health care systems, for the most part on her own. Completing day to day tasks, the ones we often take for granted, were harder because of the lack of knowledge and familiarity with her new surroundings.

Over time, Gerda adapted to Canadian society and culture and became actively involved in the communities of Saskatoon and Toronto, where she previously lived. Aside from being CIWA's President and Board Chair, she sits on another board and carries out some contractual work for her previous employer. In her spare time, Gerda enjoys reading, spending time with her family and travelling.

When asked why she became involved with CIWA, Gerda spoke about the experiences she had as an immigrant woman, of her understanding the challenges and obstacles immigrant women face, and her desire to support others in need. Being part of CIWA not only allows Gerda to share her personal experience, but use her expertise as a lawyer too.

When Gerda hears the success stories of clients overcoming seemingly insurmountable barriers with the help and support of CIWA, she is motivated to continue her work.

## Calgary Learns– Life of Learning Award

Linda Faulkner was recently awarded Calgary Learns' Life of Learning Award (LOLA) for her exceptional skill, creativity and understanding as a Pebbles in the Sand facilitator. The Pebbles in the Sand Program serves women with multiple barriers to traditional learning. They are typically refugees who have less than seven years of formal education.

Linda is an engaging and energetic instructor who, for the past seven years, has encouraged multi-barriered refugee and immigrant women to be decision-makers in their own educational process. She constantly looks for innovative methods or materials to enhance the learning in her classrooms. She has been known to combine crafts, music, dance, and everyday activities such as cooking into her lessons. She believes that creating learning opportunities based on the participants' interests and needs. Students are empowered to choose topics and themes. These are the successful ways Linda engages her students.

Linda is a natural leader and an exemplary employee. Her dedication truly makes our city a better place to live and learn in.



Linda Faulkner



# Kind Hearts Helping CIWA

We would like to thank our volunteers, Jolanta Warpechowska-Gruca and Maria Neuwirth, for their dedication and support of CIWA programs and services.

Jolanta, CIWA's former President and Board Chair, held a fundraising event on her birthday. Guests were asked to make a donation to CIWA in lieu of birthday gifts.

Maria Neuwirth, CIWA member, donated a handmade quilt to support this fundraiser. The quilt will be raffled off to support CIWA programs.

On behalf of all of us at CIWA, thank you Jolanta and Maria.



Jolanta Warpechowska-Gruca and Maria Neuwirth

## CIWA Staff Going Above and Beyond



Arnida Guillermo and Annaliza Vergara

Everyday CIWA staff work collaboratively with community organizations to ensure immigrant women and their families become contributing members of Canadian society. Staff often find themselves going beyond their regular duties to assist their clients.

Arnida Guillermo, the Filipino Community Development Program Coordinator supports the integration of Filipino families into Canadian society. They experience reunification barriers, cultural differences, parenting issues, social isolation, intergenerational conflicts, etc.

Last month, Arnida, travelled to the Philippines with Annaliza Vergara, a woman terminally ill with ovarian cancer. Annaliza wanted to return to the Philippines and spend her last days surrounded by family, in particular a nine year old daughter she had not seen in two years. Health care professionals from the Foothills Medical Centre, Annaliza's employer, Alberta Health Services volunteer resources, and Arnida worked together to fulfill Annaliza's request. Annaliza arrived in the Philippines on May 17<sup>th</sup> and passed away on May 31<sup>st</sup>. Our condolences go out to her family and friends.

# Volunteer of the Month

CIWA is proud to recognize the outstanding commitment and dedication of our volunteers.

Janeth Alonso, Volunteer Program Manager, ensures all volunteers are appreciated for their hard work.



Cynthia Masemola  
January 2010 Volunteer of the Month



Oxana Franchuk  
February 2010 Volunteer of the Month



Gloria Canonigo  
March 2010 Volunteer of the Month



Diana Barrientos  
April 2010 Volunteer of the Month



Fatima Custodinho  
May 2010 Volunteer of the Month



Astrid Ordonez  
June 2010 Volunteer of the Month

# Featured Programs

## **Office Administration Program for Immigrant Women**

With the support of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, we are piloting the Office Administration Program for Immigrant Women. The program will help unemployed and underemployed immigrant women with educational and professional experience in administration.

The program will serve the following administration professionals:

- Administrative Assistants
- Receptionists
- Data Administrators
- Health Service Administrators
- Human Resources Professionals
- Payroll Administrators
- Volunteer Coordinators

The program consists of 14 weeks of language, soft skills and technical training followed by a ten week work experience placement. Intakes will take place on July 12, 2010 and January 17, 2011. Participants' daycare costs and travel will be covered. For more information about the program please contact Mara Hawkins, Employment Services Department Manager, at (403)263-4414 ext. 179 or email [employmentservices@ciwa-online.com](mailto:employmentservices@ciwa-online.com).

## **Civic Engagement for Immigrant Women and Youth**

Civic Engagement for Immigrant Women has transitioned into a three year funded program. This transition is due to the success the project had in the previous year.

The program retains its original focus of informing immigrant and refugee women about their civic rights and responsibilities in Canada; however, it has broadened its scope and now includes a youth component.

Immigrant women and youth are equipped with tools and strategies that enhance their knowledge of Canadian government systems and procedures. It encourages participants to volunteer in the community and voice their opinions through voting and other civic engagement opportunities.

Through Train the Trainer sessions, women and youth learn the skills necessary to facilitate culturally sensitive workshops. This provides facilitators with an opportunity to become leaders in their community.

To schedule a Civic Engagement for Immigrant workshop in your community, please contact Civic Engagement Program staff at (403)263-4414 or email [civice@ciwa-online.com](mailto:civice@ciwa-online.com).

# Bulletin Board

## Wanted: Volunteers

We are always looking for volunteers who are willing to support immigrant women and their families in their integration to Canada.

If you are interested in volunteering for CIWA or would like to receive more detailed information on positions available, please contact:

**Janeth Alonso, Volunteer Program Manager**

Email: [volunteer@ciwa-online.com](mailto:volunteer@ciwa-online.com)

Phone: (403)517-8830

## Thank you to our funders

Government of Canada · Government of Alberta · United Way of Calgary and Area · City of Calgary – FCSS · Calgary Learns · The Calgary Foundation · Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation · ConocoPhillips · RBC Foundation · The Co-operators · Strategic Realty Management · Catholic Charities · Nexen·

## New CIWA Board of Directors

### President and Board Chair:

Gerda R. Bloemraad

### Board Members:

Ana Avramovic

Tina Chahal

Linda Cheung

Donna Chin-Fatt

Aamir Jamal

Jagjit Kaur Singh

Lindy Kennedy

Saawan Logan

Rose Minton

Vivienne Momoh

Aarti Rana

Joanne Roberts

Archana Sandhu

