



# Calgary Immigrant Women's Association

# The Grapevine

News for CIWA's Supporters and our Community

Volume 5, Issue 1

Fall/Winter 2005

## Season's Greetings from CIWA!

### Highlights

### Welcome

### 05/06 Board of Directors

### News and Updates

### Awards and Recognition

### Upcoming Events

Alberta announced a new immigration policy in October 2005, which envisions that "Immigrants and their families choose to live in Alberta, where they are able to fully participate in community life and are valued for their cultural, economic, and social contributions." With Calgary currently receiving 56% of all immigrants to Alberta, CIWA staff continues to rise to the high demands for services. I find it refreshing to see headlines supporting the need for immigration. Preliminary estimates forecast that 400,000 jobs will be created; and immigrants will fill many of these. Attraction and retention requires welcoming communities and community-based accessible services; this is where CIWA flourishes. Partners, funders, corporations, donors, and volunteers support us in our work. You know who you are, and we thank each of you for your support. The thousands of people CIWA encounters enrich our lives, and we are committed to strive for excellence in everything we do. My wish for the season is less meetings and sustainable resources to match the demands on our sector. To value the undervalued and build a Calgary that is inclusive and diverse. My thanks, appreciation, hope, and warmest wishes to you all. Let Us Celebrate Diversity...One Woman at a Time!

### CIWA Board of Directors 2005-2006

*Our thanks to a dedicated committee of volunteers who give generously of their time and experience to help CIWA reach its full potential!*

Zemeta Chefeke, *President*  
Loretta Melnychuk, *Vice-President*  
Brenda Ingham, *Treasurer*  
Brenda Pereira-Needham, *Secretary*

Rosanna Helm    Susan Costello  
Olivia Pavel    Liza McCoy  
Parviz Mohamed    Parin Meghani  
Diane Colton    Claudia Malacrida  
Julia Schurtz    Jolanta Warpechowska-Gruca

**Reserve Directors**  
Doris Beavis    Preet Gill

### On a Winning Streak...Victory for All

On November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2005, CIWA was announced as a winner at the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Better Business Bureau Ethics Awards at Westin Hotel, Calgary. As the "2005 Winner, Southern Alberta Better Business Bureau Ethics Award," CIWA was recognized for its ethical leadership practices and ongoing social responsibility in supporting immigrant women in Calgary. Executive Director, Edna Sutherland was present to receive the award and express her gratitude for the success.

In More Good News ... Edna Sutherland received an Alberta Centennial Medal on November 15, 2005 in recognition of her service to Alberta as a dedicated worker for immigrant women. Congratulations to Edna on a job well done!

Nancy Hayes, a volunteer with CIWA for 3 years as a group facilitator for the New Friends and Neighbourhood Groups was nominated for a YMCA Peace Medal Award in September. While she did not win, her commitment was honoured with two tickets to the awards luncheon held in Calgary.

### Do You Want to Save Taxes for 2005?

Donate to CIWA before December 31 and you will get a charitable tax receipt for 2005. Cheques and all major credit cards accepted, minimum amount \$20. A donation form is available on our website.

We do not sell, rent or trade our mailing lists.



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## CIWA Student Recognized for Lifelong Learning

LINC student Nisa Amin was nominated for a Lifelong Learning Award from Literacy Alberta earlier this year. Although Nisa did not win the award, she received a letter commending her on her work from the Minister of Further Education, Dave Hancock. Nisa is a committed student who began learning with CIWA in the Pebbles in the Sand program. She graduated from Pebbles into the LINC program and is now in LINC 3. This is a remarkable accomplishment and CIWA congratulates Nisa on her hard work and dedication.



Above: Nisa Amin (right) receiving congratulations from Minister Dave Hancock and Dept. Manager Celia Logan.

## Award Winning Youth Program Volunteer

Chika Ibelo, a Youth Program volunteer, was awarded a Shell *Spirit of the Future Award* in July 2005 for outstanding dedication and commitment to our Youth Program. She received a \$5,000 scholarship, and CIWA received a matching amount for its services. Congratulations Chika!

## United Way Campaign

This year, the agency United Way Campaign was organized by the Language and Childcare Department and ran from November 1<sup>st</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup>. Several of the LINC classes joined in marching with the agency on the opening day of the United Way Campaign on September 1. The weather was fabulous and we had a great

march. Each of the three main groups in the department planned a different activity. The Pebbles facilitators took around a 50/50 draw. "Just like during the Saturday night community hockey game!" comments Loretta, one of the facilitators. Gretel Oehler, CIWA's Financial Manager, was the lucky winner and she donated the money right back to CIWA. A "Guess How Many Jellybeans in the Jar" contest took place, and the winner took home a giant jar of beans! Also, the children and Childcare workers worked hard making beautiful bookmarks to sell to the agency.

The LINC students and teachers presented an ethnic food fair for two days in November. Posters were placed in the building to advertise the fair, which resulted in a high turnout with many occupants coming to sample the food. It was a wonderful success, raising more than \$500 for United Way.



Above: Ethnic Food Fair ... a different flavour brings many hungry customers!

## News from the Family Conflict Program

A new project called "Crossing the Bridge" began in October, funded by Alberta Children's Services under the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying Community Incentive Fund. CIWA welcomes the two project counsellors who collectively speak English, French, Arabic, Dutch, and Polish. The project provides cross-cultural counselling services in first language, support groups, integration services, referral, advocacy, volunteer support, follow-up, and outreach. It responds to the needs of immigrant and refugee women facing domestic violence issues as well as addressing systemic barriers. Preventative work will occur through community education and awareness with the help of partners.

## News from the LINC Program



### Literacy Champs in the Making

The Literacy Support class has prepared a letter for you to demonstrate their success in learning English and to describe some of the activities they have participated in since class began in August. Although each level of LINC is different, it is a very good description of the kinds of activities that the students do each semester.

*November 4, 2005*

Dear friends,  
How are you? We are happy in school because we study English. In August, we speak only Hi, Hello, A.B.C. Now we talk about shopping, doctor, pharmacy, groceries, telephone, weather, clothes, colours. We also write, read and listen.  
We do many things.

1. Terry Fox run
2. Go shopping at Safeway and second hand store.
3. Go to pharmacy talk to doctor
4. Go to Alberta's birthday party at Olympic Plaza.
5. Go to barbecue in the rain
6. Eat apples and small grapes from Grace's garden
7. Eat baklava to celebrate Id finish Ramadan
8. Make popcorn and fruit salad.
9. Eat chocolate when we finish first in class.
10. Give candy to children for halloween

Next week we will take food for United Way. We thank Galina. She helps every student speak English.

But the most important thing: we meet wonderful people from many countries. We thank Grace and CIWA for opportunity to learn English.

ASSISTANT ALI Tajrid Taseir  
Sincerely,  
Helen Lillian Zura  
Gian Mualle Ence  
Ya mei Gu Ying  
Nuriye Bachra  
Ying Viviana

Above: Letter of Success from LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada)

## Employment Services Department Strives for Results

CIWA Skills Training and Employment Department is a hotbed of activity, hosting several workshops and meetings all designed to support immigrant women in their search for meaningful employment and increase their accessibility to the job market.

For further information on workshops, to book appointments, or to register, please contact Silvia Vidal at 263-4414 ext. 18. [employment@ciwa-online.com](mailto:employment@ciwa-online.com).



## Employment Services Events Calendar

**Networking Breakfast Meetings for Unemployed Professional Immigrant Women:** the chance to network with various corporate representatives and employment agencies across Calgary. Registration Required

Time: 7:30-10:00 am Place: McDougall Centre  
Dates: Nov 30 2005; Jan 19 2006; Feb 28 2006; Mar 28 2006.

**Making Connections Club:** the chance for new Canadian women to practice business English, network with friends, share experiences and learn valuable job search skills in a fun and social atmosphere. Registration Required

Time: 6:00-8:00 pm Place: CIWA Main Office  
Dates: Nov 28 2005; Jan 19 2006; Feb 16 2006; Mar 16 2005

**Communicate with Confidence:** practice speaking English in an informal, yet structured environment so as to become more accurate and fluent and thus "Communicate with Confidence". This program, of 6 classes, focuses on communication skills within the workplace. Registration Required

Time: 5:00-7:00 pm Place: CIWA Main Office  
Dates: 1<sup>st</sup> Session-Feb 6, 13, 20, 27 & Mar 6 2006.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Session-Mar 13, 20, 27 & Apr 3, 10 2006

**Résumé Clinic:** one-on-one sessions for women who would like to enhance their current resume or obtain assistance with creating a new one. Covering letter writing is also available. By Appointment

Time: 5:30-7:30 pm Place: CIWA Main Office  
Dates: Every Tuesday, beginning January 10 2006

**Job Interview Skills:** the opportunity for women to practice interview skills through safe and fun role-playing. By Appointment

Time: 9:30-11:30 am Place: CIWA Main Office  
Dates: Every Wednesday, begin January 11 2006

**Cross-Cultural Communication and Job Strategies Workshop:** assists immigrant women to adapt more easily into Canadian culture by increasing their awareness of cultural communication differences between their own cultures and those of mainstream Canadians. Registration Required

Time: 9:00am-12:00pm Place: CIWA Main Office  
Dates: TBD

**Making Changes Program:** a pre-employment, life skills orientation program. This course is done in partnership with the Making Changes Employment Association of Alberta. Registration Required

Time: 9:00 am-3:30 pm Place: CIWA Main Office  
Dates: March 13 - April 24 2006

## WANTED: CIWA BOARD DIRECTORS

We invite you to join a group of dedicated and diverse volunteers who are working toward making a positive difference in the lives of immigrant and refugee women and their families in our community.

**Currently:** we have openings for Reserve and Director-at-large positions.  
**In 2006:** we will have openings for Officers, Reserve, and Director-at-large positions.

(Officer Positions include President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer)

We also need volunteers for our Board Committees.

### *What do you need?*

- A CIWA membership and Security Clearance
- 5-10 hours a month to dedicate to Board work
- An understanding of gender and immigration & refugee issues
- Knowledge of critical areas such as Fund Development, Board Governance, and Personnel Development.
- The commitment, time, and heart to support CIWA's vision

**Note:** these volunteer BOARD positions do NOT entail direct work with clients.

For more detailed information and an application form:

Email: [ciwarecruitment@shaw.ca](mailto:ciwarecruitment@shaw.ca)

Application Deadline: January 31, 2006

We wish you all a wonderful holiday season and a 2006 filled with peace and joy!

*Zemeta Chefেকে, CIWA President and All the CIWA Board of Directors*

## Arts and Crafts Market: Christmas Craft Sale

CIWA's Arts and Crafts Market is hosting a Christmas Craft Sale, where you can pick up hand crafted gifts to give to your family and friends this holiday season. Proceeds from the sales will support CIWA programs.

DATE: December 1<sup>st</sup> 2005      TIME: 11am - 1.30pm  
PLACE: First Street Plaza, 138-4<sup>th</sup> Ave SE, Main Floor Lobby

## Skills Training and Employment Services Department Art Exhibition: December 5 - 9 2005

Come and join CIWA for an amazing World Art Show, featuring several talented immigrant artists. Gallery showing is December 5<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> at the *City Hall Atrium*. Buy an art piece and support CIWA's clients.

Right: Art by Lucero

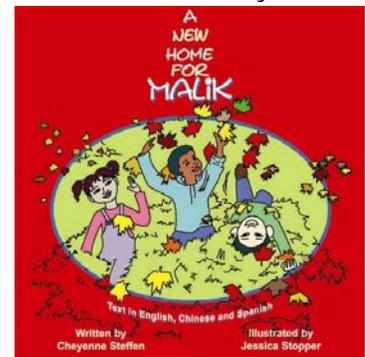


## First Accredited Settlement Workers in Canada are Albertans!

Alberta became the first province in Canada to establish accreditation standards for Settlement staff under the direction of the Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA). Congratulations to Janeth Alonso (CIWA Volunteer & Community Development Coordinator) on receiving level III Accreditation. She was presented along with other staff from the Province at the Settlement Conference "Homesteading to High Tech" in Edmonton. Edna Sutherland chaired the AAISA Training Committee that initiated the accreditation process.

## "A New Home for Malik"

Malik is a 5 year-old boy who just moved to Calgary from Sudan. Everything is new and so different for him! Join Malik and his new friends in their adventures at pre-school and in the city.



The story is written in three languages - English, Chinese and Spanish.  
\$10 per copy (\$2 for shipping)

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## Let's Hear It For the Girls!

The Youth Program at CIWA had a very successful year in 2004-2005. We were able to expand our program from 8 locations to 15 different schools in Calgary! This upcoming school year is no exception. We have added a new school to our list of programs and welcome any new student attending any of our schools to join our informative and fun group sessions. This year we will be in Al Madina Elementary School on Wednesdays at lunch from 11:55 to 12:40. All grade 6 girls are encouraged to stop by and take part. Please speak to your ESL teacher if you're interested in being a part of the Girls Culture Club, or if you would like to see a club take place in your school. Locations posted on our website. [www.ciwa-online.com](http://www.ciwa-online.com)

## Cultural Facts: Did You Know...?

The traditional practice for *East Indian* women after childbirth is to rest and relax for 40 days (or 6 weeks). The family helps in taking care of the baby and the mother is pampered with special meals and body massage.

In *Afghani* culture, girls get married at a very young age. Once the girl is engaged, the groom is supposed to give gifts to the girl during festivals such as EID, and it becomes a prestige/status issue if the would-be in-laws' family does not give gifts.

In the *Sudanese* culture of the Dinka and Nuer tribes, the man chooses the bride. The complete marriage that involves both sets of parents is called "day marriage" and is highly respected by all people in the country. Tribe elders and church leaders bless the occasion, and then the man pays cattle to the girl's parent as the price to take the girl forever.

The customs and traditions of the *Chinese* culture have evolved to a great diversity among these people. One commonality, however, that unites them is the emphasis on family lineage, with each individual occupying a specific place in the family tree. As a result, individuals can be identified according to their relations with one another. There are specific names for uncles, aunties, and cousins for the mother's side and father's side, for example. When a person gets married, they also call their in-laws by specific names, including the wives, husbands and children of their in-laws!

## Crossing Over: Parenting and Cultural Diversity

This year, the Cross Cultural Parenting Program has run 9 groups thus far. There is an upcoming group for the LINC students in November, and the facilitators training will also take place at the end of this month. Those interested, please register ASAP as space is being filled up. A group is being formed at the Cappi Smart School for the New Year. This year, the program also launched the Cross Cultural Parenting Manual - 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, with lots of updated information and new chapters on Bullying, Parenting Teenagers and much more. The launch was a success and copies are selling like hot cakes - get yours today!

## Literacy Bags and Pebbles

In May 2005 the *Pebbles in the Sand* program received \$3000 from *Raise a Reader/Literacy Alberta* to be spent on furthering Family Literacy. What a great way to start the summer! It was decided that the money would be used to create Literacy Bags for each of our participants in Pebbles. Each bag contained supplies to engage their young children and grandchildren in reading and other projects at home. The Pebbles facilitators scoured many stores, searching for ways to stretch the money to provide more Literacy Bags for the families.

Each bag contained: 2 children's books, construction paper, 2 lined exercise books, scissors, 3 pencils, pencil sharpener, 2 erasers and 12 crayons. We were able to make up 200 bags, and have distributed 99 bags to date.



This means future class participants will also benefit from this great project. A big thank you to CIWA's Volunteer Co-operative that sewed the bags for us in very colourful material.

Pebbles participants and their children attending SMILES (Small Multicultural Immigrants Learning Early Strategies) childcare were thrilled and very grateful for these Literacy Bags. It was a joy to give them and *Raise a Reader/Literacy Alberta* is thanked for the funds.

## Cultural Competency in the Workplace: How Aware Are You?



As an agency that caters specifically to immigrant women and their families, it is vitally important that CIWA upholds a practice of cultural sensitivity within the workplace. In other words, practice what you preach. Be open to new things, be aware of new people, acknowledge differences, taste new foods, and take pride in that extra bit of knowledge you acquire. Diversity in the workplace is inevitable, especially with the increase in immigration to Calgary. Embrace it sooner rather than later, and your workplace will be better for it. CIWA has instated a Cultural Competency Committee to oversee many of the key topics, and a cultural sharing initiative began this fall. At monthly staff meetings, staff from CIWA and other agencies are invited to talk about cultural traditions, customs, and issues in working with clients from specific cultures. To date, CIWA has revisited the Sudanese, Chinese, and East Indian cultures, with more to come.

## Edna Smiles for the Camera



Executive Director, Edna Sutherland, having just accepted the award on behalf of CIWA for ethical business practice and accountability by the Southern Alberta Better Business Bureau.

## Voluntary Sector Stats

Canada has the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest voluntary sector in the world. There are 161,000 non-profit and voluntary organizations in Canada.

- With revenues totalling \$112 billion, non-profit and voluntary organizations play a substantial role in the Canadian economy.
- The voluntary sector draws on 2 billion volunteer hours, the equivalent of 1 million full-time jobs.
- The 161,000 organizations employ 2 million people and depend on 19 million volunteer positions (filled by more than 6.5 million individual volunteers).

### Social Services Sector

- A total of 19,100 organizations in this sector.
- 297,300 paid employees work in social service.
- This sub-sector accounts for 19% of all volunteers.
- Accounts for \$11 billion of the total revenue generated by the voluntary sector.

### Other Facts

- In 1997, the GDP of the voluntary sector was \$57.5 billion (6.9% of total Canadian economy). With the value of volunteer contribution added to this, the GDP equivalent is \$71.5 billion (8.6% of total economy).
- This makes the voluntary sector four times larger than the agriculture sector, twice the size of the mining, oil, and gas extraction industry, and 11 times larger than motor vehicle manufacturing.

Source: "Greater Than The Sum of Our Parts: Discussion Paper" by the Voluntary Sector Awareness Project. Pg 15, 16, and 18.

## A Word of Thanks

Last but not least, CIWA wishes to thank each and every one of its funders, donors, corporate sponsors, supporters, and members for your new and continued support. Please know that each one of you is valued, and each makes a difference in the lives of immigrant and refugee women in Calgary. CIWA's appreciation knows no bounds.

Produced by: Kiran Birdi

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