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ISSUE NO.

02

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SURREY LIP NEWSLETTER

Engaged & Inclusive



The City's Role

The City of Surrey
opted to become
one of only two B.C.
municipalities to
lead its Local Immi-
gration partnership.
Here's why.

Under Canada's Constitution
responsibility for immigration
is shared between the federal
and provincial governments,
with municipalities playing
no official role.

Yet a newcomer's experi-
ence is overwhelmingly
local: the neighbourhood he
lives in, the labour market
she *(continued on pages 2 & 3)* >



(The City's Role: continued)

> experiences, schools, policing, libraries, recreation, and on and on.

Meanwhile, the municipalities that newcomers choose to live in are profoundly affected by those choices. The quantity and nature of services provided, the languages that services are provided in and the manner in which they are delivered—a large proportion of what a municipality

does must be transformed. In the case of Surrey, newcomers are expected to comprise half of the population within the next 10 years, so the effects are significant.

Looked at through this lens, it seems natural that the City of Surrey decided to become one of two B.C. municipalities to take on the leadership of its Local Immigration Partnership. It is understandable too that six of the 30 seats on the LIP's steering committee should be occupied by people representing some of the diverse arms of local government.

A Key Part of the Social Plan

Aileen Murphy is a Senior Social Planner within the City's Planning Department, and the former co-chair of the highly successful Surrey Welcoming Communities Project. The focus of Social Planning is people, and she explains that a great deal of its current focus stems from the adoption in 2006 of a Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents, or Social Plan.

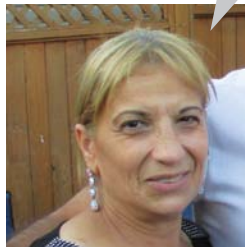
Among the Plan's key elements are diversity and inclusion, she says: "Culturally sensitive approaches to service delivery

IT'S HAPPENING HERE

Leadership of the Local Immigration Partnership marks an important new turn for the City of Surrey, but hardly a beginning. To illustrate some of the programs already in existence we talked to a few participants.

I go to classes almost every day—Zumba, fitness, belly dance, but especially English. I try to take every English class I can. We talk about the countries we came from and how it's different here. Sometimes I help the teacher. —Salime Mansour

The intent of the program is to help the women become self-sufficient and teach them small business skills. Most of them had lived in camps. They had never been in a city. Many are illiterate, and many are single mothers. There are so many gaps that need to be filled. It is difficult for them, but we have seen a lot of progress. —Nima Bolow

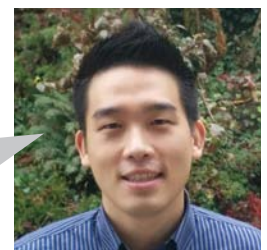


A native of Lebanon, **Salime Mansour** has been a dedicated student of English Conversation programs offered by Parks, Recreation and Culture. Since Spring 2013 five sessions of the English Conversation program have been filled to their capacity of 250, with several sessions seeing an overflow of up to 256 participants per session.



A native of Somalia, **Nima Bolow** is working as a facilitator in a pilot project offered through a community partnership that includes the City of Surrey's social planning department that is teaching self-sufficiency skills to women from Somalia. War-torn and drought-affected, the African country has been the largest source of government-assisted refugees in Surrey over the past few years.

I've put in about 600 hours and it's been lots of fun. There is a great variety of experiences and you see things you wouldn't otherwise. —Nicholas Jang



A native of South Korea, **Nicholas Jang** has been a volunteer with the Surrey RCMP's Auxiliary Program. Participants receive 260 hours of training and contribute to many aspects of policing, including representing the force at public events. In 2013 alone 100 constables volunteered over 24,000 hours of their time.

A native of China, **Wendy Guan** has volunteered as a library champion with Surrey Libraries, which helps newcomers discover Surrey libraries. She recently helped with the Diwali program at Fleetwood library, attended by more than 300 people.



The libraries offer a lot more than many people realize. I'll approach people who look a little lost. Sometimes I can speak to them in their own language. We have a lot of fun, but we also feel like we are helping. —Wendy Guan

(The City's Role: continued) within municipal programs and greater promotion of the benefits of cultural and ethnic diversity." That has already resulted in many new programs, as well as modifications to established ones—but, says Murphy, "without a specific immigrant strategy, the City's efforts have not been coordinated and strategic." For her department, LIP offers the opportunity to tackle challenges in a more comprehensive way.

One of the first places many immigrants go is the local library, says City of Surrey Libraries Deputy Chief Librarian Surinder Bhogal—for help with their job search, to learn how things are done here, to study the language, to meet others through participation in programs, or simply because it's a welcoming public space with accommodating hours. She bases that on research and observation, but also on personal experience. "When I arrived in Canada 17 years ago, the library was my first stop," she says.

"I see the growth in newcomers continuing," Bhogal says, noting that, like many other organizations, the library has responded with new initiatives including a dedicated newcomer family services librarian.

Levelling the Playing Field for Jobseekers

The City of Surrey employs some 340 people, making it one of the largest employers south of the Fraser River, and a natural fit as a place to work for many newcomers. In fact, given growing skills shortages, it's imperative that the City tap this resource, says Manager of Human Resources Lana McKay. There are obstacles, however, including language, cultural differences and issues around accreditation. The City already goes beyond policies intended to give newcomers a more level playing field by proactively working with other organizations to help people from other cultures understand what Canadian employers expect and are looking for. But more of that kind of coordination and shared understanding is needed. In the short time she's been with LIP, McKay says, "I've increased my own knowledge, and I'm passing that on."

Public safety is one of the City of Surrey's highest priorities, and a concern that affects newcomers directly, since a significant proportion live in vulnerable neighbourhoods. The Surrey RCMP, which is contracted by the City to provide policing services, is well aware of that, says Rosy Takhar, Crime Prevention and Community Services Manager. The RCMP offers several programs and strives to have a workforce that is reflective of the community it serves. "I'm hoping LIP will identify any gaps that need be addressed," says Takhar.

As Healthy Communities Manager within Surrey Parks, Recreation and Culture, Lori Bowie heads a department with more than 20 people. On one level, maybe that's surprising. But a look at the programs on offer

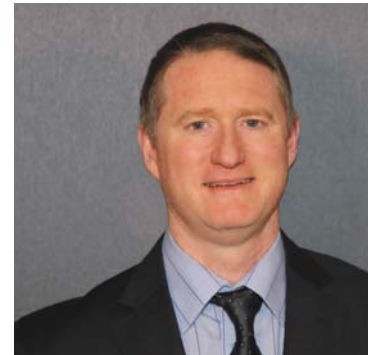
soon dispels any doubts. There are dozens, in fact, arrayed within several sub-departments including Youth (youth leadership teams), Health Promotion and Sports Development (sports and activities familiar to various cultures, or that serve girls and women) and Diversity and Inclusion (English language improvement and newcomer tours).

LIP is an opportunity and a cause for optimism, says Bowie. "My heart is connected to the idea of community health," she says, and LIP is aligned with that as well. "It's a huge challenge, but you are energized by what other people are doing."

Interested in finding out more or joining us? See the back page of this newsletter for contact information.

MEET THE CITY MANAGER Vince Lalonde

Vincent Lalonde has been with the City of Surrey for 18 years and was its chief engineer for five before being named city manager early in 2014. He claims he is still learning about the immigration field, but does admit to knowing Surrey pretty well. After chatting with him, we agree with the latter and suggest that, as for immigration, he's a very quick learner.



Immigration is a new file for you. How does it differ from some of the things a chief engineer would be concerned with?

You might be surprised at the similarities. Surrey is attractive as a place to live partly because we have a lot of land, which helps with housing affordability and job creation. But that also means we have to pay special attention to transportation and urban development and how those link to mobility, especially for newcomers. So: Careful planning and wise investment!

What are some of your early impressions about how newcomers are welcomed and how the City can help? When someone leaves their country of origin they leave behind a lot. They arrive with few bonds and they need an opportunity to create new ones. Helping them with that is a key role that the City can play.

How does the LIP fit in, do you think? I'm impressed by the breadth and complexity of social services offered. But they involve a lot of agencies, so there are gaps and overlaps. Getting to the next stage requires concrete actions geared to making arrival and integration successful, and that's where the LIP comes in.



MEET YOUR COORDINATOR Olga Shcherbyna

A native of Ukraine who moved here a little more than a decade ago, Olga Shcherbyna combines professional expertise with personal understanding of the newcomer experience.



What drew you to working in this field?

My professional background in Ukraine was in economics and accounting, but the trouble was, numbers don't excite me. After moving here I became involved in community initiatives aimed at social cohesion and civic involvement, and through that was introduced to the field of social planning—something that does not exist back home! I went to school at UBC to better understand how cities and other community stakeholders can work together to make communities more engaged and welcoming.

What's rewarding about working with the LIP? Short answer: everything. I feel lucky and honoured to be part of a community coming together to build an inclusive and healthy city where all residents feel welcomed and enjoy equal access to employment, services, housing and other important aspects of life.

LIP UPDATES

Immigrant Advisory Roundtable

The Surrey Local Immigration Partnership is expanding its structure to include the direct participation of newcomers. An information and selection meeting in November attracted 45 newcomers, from whom 15 to 18 roundtable members will be selected.

an inclusive community. It has been awarded to CitySpaces Consulting.

A Service Mapping project will identify immigrant and refugee services and programs and social inclusion initiatives. It has been awarded to Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia Society.

Project Appointments

The Surrey Immigration Integration Research project will undertake community research and consultation to assess both newcomers and long term residents' perceptions of Surrey as

A Surrey Local Immigration Project website will be developed by Ion Brand Design.

Refugee Children's Booklet

One of the legacies of the Surrey Welcoming Communities Project is

the booklet Art and Stories by Child Refugees in Surrey, a project directed by Immigrant Services Society of B.C. It can be downloaded from our website, www.surrey.ca/lip



Holiday Hours

Surrey City Hall will close on Wednesday, December 24, reopening on Monday, January 5, 2015.

Steering Committee Member Organizations

These are the organizations that provide leadership direction to the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership.

- 1 City of Surrey
- 2 The Surrey Board of Trade
- 3 Alexandra Neighbourhood House
- 4 Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of BC (ASTTBC)
- 5 City of Surrey, Human Resources
- 6 City of Surrey Social Planning (Contract Manager)
- 7 City of Surrey, Parks, Recreation & Culture
- 8 Surrey Libraries
- 9 DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society
- 10 Training Group at Douglas College
- 11 Human Resources Management Association (HRMA)
- 12 Fraser Health Authority: Population and Public Health
- 13 Fraser Health Authority: Primary Health Care
- 14 Immigrant Employment Council of BC
- 15 Immigrant Services Society of BC
- 16 Kwantlen Polytechnic University
- 17 Oak Avenue Neighbourhood Hub Society
- 18 Options Community Services Society
- 19 Pacific Community Resources Society
- 20 Progressive Intercultural Community Services (PICS)
- 21 Semiahmoo House Society
- 22 SFU Surrey
- 23 S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Surrey Delta Service Centre
- 24 Surrey School District #36
- 25 Surrey RCMP
- 26 Sources Community Resources Society
- 27 Surrey Interfaith Council
- 28 Umoja Operation Compassion Society
- 29 Vancity Credit Union
- 30 YMCA

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Let us answer with a word that sums up a lot of what we're about: **Welcome!**

There are many ways to get involved with the Surrey Local Immigration Project, whether as an organization or as an individual. Surrey LIP will host city-wide community consultations and everyone is welcome to join. You can also request to be on our Surrey LIP stakeholder list and receive updates on a regular basis.

Please contact **Olga Shcherbyna**, Surrey LIP Coordinator, for more information. Email: oshcherbyna@surrey.ca Phone: 604-592-7059

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