



DENSA Ukrainian Dance Company performing at HMC's Annual Community Leadership Awards Night & Fundraising Gala



## NEWSLETTER

# MAY 2014

ONE COMMUNITY FOR ALL

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD

## A Spectacular Gala!

HMC's 2014 Gala was a huge success. On April 25<sup>th</sup> 2014 at Oakville Conference Centre we held "Mapping the Immigrant Journey" which was a celebration of multicultural dance and food. This year we showcased local entrepreneurs in the Halton community. Over 200 people enjoyed the "Canadian Fusion" cuisine along with the colourful and energetic entertaining which included the *DENSA Ukrainian Dance Company*, *Korean Dance Studies Society of Canada* and *Latin Energy Inc*. We also had an original poem written and performed by local poet Greg Frankston, or Ritallin as he is known.

The immigrant entrepreneurs in our showcase were Jenny Goh of the *Milton School of Music*. As well as Yury Wu of *Taste of Columbia Free Trade Coffee and Gift Shop* located in Oakville. They were showcased with a video discussing their story and business success.

HMC presented the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Recognition Award for Youth (R.A.Y.) at his years Gala. This award is given to a youth in the local community who is involved in the community and has a passion for social justice, equity and inclusion within Halton. This year's winner was Aiza Abid who created the *Aiza's Teddybear Foundation* that collects teddy bears to be delivered to children at McMaster's Children's Hospital and other local mother and children homeless shelters. Congratulations Aiza, keep up the great work!

HMC also presented the Bill Allison Community Leadership Award to Mr. Louis Tsai for his leadership in the Halton Community. Mr. Tsai was grateful for this honour, during his acceptance he expressed how the work he leads would not have been possible without the support and dedication of coworkers and volunteers and agencies throughout the years.

Great entertainment, great prizes and great fun is what made this year's Gala a success. We would like to thank the Gala Committee for their hard work and dedication and all who supported and attended this year's event. Hope to see you all for next year's gala in 2015!

Kim Jenkinson, Executive Director

Trivi Mehendale, Board President



Mr. Louis Tsai accepting the award with wife Alice from Bill Allison, Former HMC President

This year HMC honoured Mr. Louis Tsai by awarding him the Bill Allison Community Leadership Award for his exceptional community service and his leadership. Mr. Tsai was born in Hong Kong China, he always had a strong passion for Travel and need for education. Mr. Tsai moved to the United States to study at Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, Georgia. After marrying his wife they moved to Canada to build a life together.

Mr. Tsai has been in many leadership roles for a variety of agencies such as, *Hamilton Chinese Cultural Association*, *Hamilton Multicultural Council*, *United Way-Burlington & Hamilton Wentworth Division*, *North Central Community Association Sports Burlington* and *Halton Region Chinese Canadian Association*. His ongoing passion to promote volunteerism and giving back to the community has provided Mr. Tsai with the ability to lead groups and have a strong presence within the community.

Due to his hard work and passion Mr. Louis Tsai was presented the award at HMC's Annual Awards Night and Fundraising Gala on Friday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014

# Community Settlement

*Service bridging with other service providers in our region*

As part of our commitment to support the newcomer settlement process in our community, HMC partners with multiple organizations to serve as a bridge between their services and the needs of immigrants to our region. Among these partnership initiatives we have been hosting "Small Business Information Sessions" provided by Halton Region Business Development Centre.

The first small business session was held on July 2012 with 32 participants. Since then, 13 sessions have been offered at Speers, Milton, and Burlington HMC offices for 164 clients.

Based on their feedback, attendees greatly appreciate the service bridging between HMC and other organizations. The majority of participants of small business sessions have business background in their home country. Through the session, they have the opportunity to learn about the local resources and figure out how to transfer their skills and experience to Canada by starting a business here.



In one of our clients own words:

*"Thanks for inviting me to attend this seminar which is very constructive for a newcomer. (I) benefited from this workshop; I have noticed that it is not so difficult and complicated to set up a small business in Canada with the full support from the local small business centers, as well as some useful channels to legal and financial services. This leaves us more options while searching for employment opportunities".*

## Community Settlement Success Story

A family of 4 arrived to Canada from the Middle East in 2012. In need of basic information and services, they accessed our agency settlement services. When they visited our office, the family was in need of affordable housing. They were referred to HMC Transitional Housing program and after the regular process they were assigned one of the family units of the program. Through internal referral at HMC, this family received support with their children school enrollment. Both parents were referred to LINC classes in order to improve their English communication skills which they needed to find a job and succeed in Canada.

This family needed to secure a basic income as they were not eligible, nor did they wish to receive social assistance from Ontario works: They both wanted to work!

Through the support of HMC services the husband managed to find a job at a restaurant as kitchen assistant. In order to secure a better income for her family the mother decided to utilize her skills as a hair dresser and after a reference from a community member and interview secured a position.

With her basic income needs met, the family continued their process of adaptation to their new life in Canada. However, there have been some bumps in the road, especially for one of their children. Coming to a new country and facing a different language and culture is not so easy after all! In order to support the child, HMC youth settlement program has assisting this family. Through a couple of referrals to local service providers for the child, their child is now achieving good grades at school.

With HMC services and programs support, the family was able to complete our transitional housing program term and has been able to move out to a new rented apartment. They are currently doing well and continue working on their goals to make Canada their home. They also know HMC can give them a assistance any time they face new challenges on their settlement process in our Community.

## HALTON EQUITY & DIVERSITY ROUNDTABLE



### Join the Halton Equity and Diversity Roundtable (HEDR)!

On Friday, May 30, 2014 from 10:00 am – 11:00 am, the Halton Equity and Diversity Roundtable (HEDR) invites you to our Official Launch and Ontario Trillium Recognition event at the Queen Elizabeth Park Community and Cultural Centre (Multi-Purpose Room 1 – C094) on 2302 Bridge Road, Oakville.

HEDR is a new community collaborative of over 60 organizations, groups, businesses, and individual community members that is committed to building systemic inclusion and equity in Halton. HEDR started in March 2013 after the community requested more resources and training on equity and diversity issues. Due to the work of many community members and organizations, including HMC as our fiscal sponsor, we received funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Please join us on Friday, May 30 to find out more about the resources and training we will be providing to the community and how you can get involved!

[Find out more about us:](#)

[www.hedroundtable.com](http://www.hedroundtable.com)

Twitter: @HEDRoundtable

[plam@hedroundtable.com](mailto:plam@hedroundtable.com)

905-842-2486 x 227

Our offices are located in  
HMC 1092 Speers office



HMC and YMCA's Newcomer Youth Leadership Development Program (NYLD) show their support of HEDR's mission by providing art work for HEDR's upcoming media launch!

## Community Connections

Community Connections Program is all about connecting newcomers to their community through programs and services that support newcomers in establishing lasting and meaningful connections with various organizations and individuals within our communities. In 2013 the Community Connections Program piloted the **Career Mentorship Program** for internationally trained professionals in fields such as Education, IT, Banking/Finance, Accounting & Engineering. The objective is to provide support and assistance to internationally trained professionals in overcoming barriers they may face in their search for employment and their integration into the Canadian labour force.

In 2012 HMC was approached by the YMCA of Oakville to partner for a leadership program called the **Newcomer Youth Leadership Development Program (NYLD)** for newcomer youth between the ages of 14 and 18. The program was piloted from October to December 2012. The initial program was a success with over 10 newcomer youth attending the 8 week program. Because of its initial success we have continued to offer **NYLD** for three additional sessions from October 2013 to December 2014. The program focuses on building leadership and essential life skills. We focus on topics such as: communication skills, building and creating human connectedness, public speaking, job readiness among other things. This program has reached over 75 youth and their families and developed a positive relationship with the YMCA which is prominent in our community.

## Youth Settlement Program

During the month of May, Youth Settlement Workers work with the Halton District School board and the Halton Catholic District School Board worked on two information sessions of Student support for professionals of Peel and Halton working with the newcomer population as mandated by the Peel and Halton Community Connection committee. The first discussion forum was about working with family complexities in the South Asian Diaspora, where Dr. Jasjit Sangha facilitated the discussion about Interracial Marriages, Racism, Identity, women pressure, social pressure, elder abuse, LGBTQ community, mental health, family separation due to work reasons and, women isolation.

The Second Session was Understanding Special Needs, looking through a newcomer's cultural lens. Dr. Andrea Hunter, Assistant Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at Mc Master University talked about the importance of acknowledging Cultural differences, and how cultural sensitivity facilitates the interaction and promote positive outcomes when working with newcomer families.

School staff such as, ESL and Special Education teachers, Diversity Team members, Youth Settlement workers, and Community Partners from different backgrounds and ethnicities were engaged in this rich discussions, which brought awareness and open mind perspectives to understand and help our newcomer families and children facing these complexities.

"Intercultural dialogue is the best guarantee of a more peaceful, just and sustainable world."

-- Robert Alan

## Language Program

**LINC** is an English language training program developed by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and implemented across Canada. At HMC, the distinguishing features are relatively small class sizes, computers in the classroom, the CNC program, and access to Settlement Program. Classes are part-time (12 hours per week), and the program accommodates students at the Literacy, Beginner, and Intermediate levels.

HMC's **ELT Program**, in addition to improving Business Communication skills and offering a work placement which will give the candidates Canadian Work Experience, references, and

networking opportunities, provides extra skills and knowledge to improve job competitiveness in the fields of Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Office Management and Administration by including hands-on training in QuickBooks, Simply Accounting, Advanced Excel, and basic Payroll procedures.

Spring in the CNC classroom 2014 is a time filled with imagination. The children are exploring creative activities that help to build their autonomy and develop their emerging skills. English language development and pre-math are also priorities. With many of the children approaching school age, daily CNC programs often include practicing numbers, letters, and words.

### SUCCESS STORY

The client immigrated to Canada from Iraq three years ago and settled in Oakville. She was made aware of the LINC Program at HMC by her relatives and was enrolled in the Literacy 1-2 class to learn English. Even though the client started off with a shaky attendance record, yet a dramatic change took place after the client received and accepted encouragement and guidance from the instructor to not relinquish. Through interesting and applicable lessons and activities in the class, the client's communication skill improved. This helped her in obtaining a volunteering opportunity at her child's school which had the possibility of becoming a permanent position. With the continual learning opportunity at HMC LINC Program and the practicum experience acquired through volunteering, the client progress has been rapid. She is now attending a higher level class and is also eagerly awaiting her Canadian citizenship application time to arrive. The client was thankful to Canada, HMC, the LINC Program, and the LINC instructor for the learning opportunities she received to help make her and her family's life a better one.

## Labour Market Access Program

The Labour Market Access Program has proven successful in organizing Networking events. These events take place twice a year. The events are designed to assist agency clients in professional networking, foster career-long contacts, facilitate meeting with other newcomers with similar goals, and find out about the latest news in one's professional field. As we all know and teach our clients in class and at the job search workshops, the majority of jobs in Canada are not advertised and hiring is done based on referrals from current employees and friends. Many of the newcomers want to know how skills and experience acquired in their home country compare to skills and experience requirements by Canadian employers. Newcomers also want to know how they can bridge those skill gaps as soon as possible so that they can start working in their own occupation.

In this setting, professionals of all experience levels have real face-to-face time with the employers of Halton and Peel region. We were there to help alleviate their anxiety by introducing them to employers and professionals and encouraged them to use what they have learned in the Job Search Workshops (JSW) and in class. Participants had the chance to gain an insider's perspective on different industries.



During this interaction they received advice and feedback on the most appropriate ways to perform their job search process. They were given insights from diverse sectors, got information on labour market trends and particular recruitment processes and requirements for different positions.

The activity allowed participants to feel empowered and gain confidence when selling their skills to employers. Also, it helped some of them to realize the need for further training.

There is a need for engaging employers with the newcomers in the job market. They had provided answers to questions related to technology used in each occupation, skills and training needs in a particular occupation and also certification and licensing needs of that occupation.

# MULTICULTURALISM DAY



**FRIDAY,  
JUNE 27th, 2014**

**4pm to 8pm  
FREE PARKING &  
ADMISSION WITH  
FLYER**

**FUN FAMILY  
ACTIVITIES  
CULTURAL  
ENTERTAINMENT  
CULTURAL  
DEMONSTRATIONS**



Bronte Creek Provincial Park  
1219 Burloak Drive, Oakville  
Green Shelter (Parking Zone A)

**Buses Leave HMC Offices  
at 3:30pm/Return 8pm**

Please Reserve Your Seat

**PLEASE BRING A PICNIC AND  
COME CELEBRATE WITH YOUR FAMILY**

Tel: 905-842-2486  
Email: [events@haltonmc.com](mailto:events@haltonmc.com)  
[www.haltonmc.com](http://www.haltonmc.com)



Canadian  
Heritage

Patrimoine  
canadien



# Transitional Housing

## HOW A HAND CAN CHANGE A LIFE

Muhammad, his wife Razia and their four kids arrived in Burlington from Pakistan two years ago. Their dream was no other than offering their kids a bright solid future based in successful education and a safe place to live. This family of six faced some of the struggles that are common to many newcomer families; however their dedication and discipline to follow their dreams never fade.

The family was living in a two bedroom unit when a Transitional Housing became available. The settlement worker who knew the family through the school presented the application advocating especially for the kids, who despite the crowded conditions and the lack of an ideal space to focus on studies, were always attending the public library for long hours to keep their high marks.

This family joined our program in February 2013. Once they found themselves living in a townhouse, spacious and well kept; they felt really empowered to make a better living and work hard toward their goals.

This family is about to finish their tenancy, but they leave the program with two kids accepted for health sciences at Ottawa university, the third girl also awarded for academic achievements at her school, Muhammad is financially more stable and Razia has done an amazing job improving her basic level 1 in English to the level 6 that she has right now.

In Muhammad's words:

*"Thanks to the affordable rent, I was able to provide a computer to my kids. This helped them a lot with their academic success"*

Special thanks to our funders and major donors for their continuing support:

- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
- United Way of Oakville
- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- Royal Bank of Canada
- Maple Lodge Farms

Thank you also to our community donors, supporters and volunteers who have shared their generosity and time!

### ***For More Information:***

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## Mapping the Immigrant Journey by Ritallin

(Poem from HMC Annual Community Leadership Awards Night & Fundraising Gala 2014)

if one were to draw a map of the immigrant journey  
it would begin with formation of a fervent dream  
to make one's way from home to find a new place  
in Canada oftentimes going there sight unseen  
the map would dutifully point up to the north  
to a land described as both strong and free  
a place where opportunity is surely plentiful  
one of the best places on this earth to be  
when the final decision has been made to go  
and make way across ocean to find a new land  
friends and family left behind when saying goodbye  
may be in support while others never understand  
it's a huge decision – to leave behind all you know  
to travel to a country where one must begin again  
face the challenge of foreign ways becoming one's own  
especially if there are few upon which one can depend

it's never as easy as the hype claims it to be  
when you arrive and must find a way to survive  
this is Canada – the country is cold and impressive  
in size, in complexity and the new shape of one's lives  
dramatic indeed is the shift needed to find shelter  
and work that will sustain in one's occupation or trade  
after arrival one finds that those jobs one expected  
to find right away are at the very least delayed  
in arriving so what else can a newcomer do  
except find a toehold wherever work can be found  
many people who've been here for quite a long time  
know this story and its lessons never cease to resound  
in the lives of our immigrants who started a new life  
uncertain if success was an attainable goal  
but through hard and long work the road slowly eased  
and the immigrant assumes a more meaningful role

the cartography beneath a newcomer's novel journey  
maps out a direction often over rough terrain  
but the lessons imparted through struggle and progress  
instruct and inspire the longer each newcomer remains  
within the borders of this country where they surely sought  
opportunity to do something incredible and bold  
the pride of accomplishment once settled and thriving  
is an overwhelming and beautiful truth to behold

this nation of immigrants was built by all who decided  
to contribute to construction of an impetuous project  
that unites in one nation the full international diversity  
of the globe in our dominion in ways that defy logic  
for without a doubt some of the people here brought together  
in most other places worldwide would result in a war  
but in Canada we've learned to build a prosperous country  
instead of sectarian violence to settle ages-old scores

if one were to draw a map of the immigrant journey  
it would begin with formation of a fervent dream  
and end when one's aim to create a new existence  
in Canada comes true – another stitch in the seam  
the map would dutifully point up to the north  
to a land described as both strong and free  
a place where the quilt of humanity is well crafted  
one of the best places on this earth to be.

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