



ANNUAL REPORT OCTOBER 2018 HALTON MULTICULTURAL COUNCIL





Message from the Executive Director

We are celebrating 40 years of serving the community this year! HMC has a long and rich history and has been supported by many amazing staff and volunteers who have helped to drive us in our commitment to help newcomers settle and integrate into a community that is welcoming and inclusive. We wish to honour those who have served HMC over these 40 years and recognize the privilege we have had in serving people to help them on their immigration journey.

HMC was conceived by concerned citizens who wanted to provide a local response to supporting the Vietnamese Boat People and how to generate interest in people sponsoring these families. The conversations grew to be how do we make our community more welcoming and inclusive for all newcomers and how do we help the community to be aware of and involved in the rich ethnic cultures and histories that newcomers bring. Many ethnic organizations joined the new group and the early supporters included the following:

- *Beth El Jewish Community,*
- *Oakville Italian Club,*
- *Polish Alliance,*
- *German Canadian Club,*
- *Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton,*
- *Croatian Folklore Ensemble,*
- *Oakville Portuguese Canadian Club,*
- *Mardi Gras Society, and*
- *Kerr St. Citizens Advisory.*

HMC officially became the Oakville Multicultural Council on April 27, 1978 under the leadership of our first President, Mr. Bill Allison. The then Oakville Social Planning Council (which is now Community Development Halton) was HMC's early host and mentor until we opened our first office at 110 Chisholm Street in Oakville in 1980.

In the 1980's HMC was starting to provide settlement services with the support of the federal and provincial governments, and they organized many cultural events such as bringing cultural and ethnic awareness events to Canada Day celebrations through cultural booths and entertainment. There were community presentations on ethnic customs and beliefs like wedding and funeral customs and foods from around the world. HMC continues these traditions today through our annual Multiculturalism Day in June and our "New Year's Around the World" each February. By 1986 the Council had a staff of 3 to carry out the work of the Council and its members.

In the 90's and early 00's, HMC is growing and our name changes to the Halton Multicultural Council and although the new name is used throughout the 90's it becomes official in 1998. There are 9 staff now and HMC is leading the Race Relations Advisory Committee and had an employment program to support newcomers to Halton.

In 2007 HMC sees an expansion in the federal investment and our Youth Settlement team starts to offer settlement directly in the schools, making settlement more accessible to more families. Other programs to support employment, housing, youth, seniors and volunteers are added and HMC moves to Speers Road to accommodate all the additional staff and space needs for clients. Over the next few years HMC opens offices in Milton and Burlington as the steadily increasing number of newcomers need more services.

Today, HMC serves over 6,000 people annually and has 4 offices across Halton. We are well partnered in the community and work hard to make sure newcomer issues are present at all of our community meetings. We have maintained the traditions of sharing culture and are very proud of the Multiculturalism Day picnic which draws more than 2500 people per year. Our staff is knowledgeable and passionate about serving newcomers and we continue to grow with innovative employment services for refugees and for internationally trained foreign professionals.

A big thank you to everyone who has been involved to bring HMC to this point in our history – we could not be here without the help and support of our staff, volunteers and our Board of Directors and their personal investment in time and commitment to this work. Our future is bright as the newcomer population in Halton is growing exponentially. We look forward to serving our community and will continue to advocate and celebrate the achievements of newcomers in Halton.

Financial Report

Income Statement

	2017/18	2016/17
Revenue	\$ 4,309,049	\$ 4,093,392
Expenditures		
Salaries and Benefits	2,760,227	2,722,454
Other Operating Expenses	1,241,435	1,185,851
Amortization	108,256	95,849
Net Operating surplus (deficit)	\$ 199,131	\$ 89,238

Balance Sheet

	2017/18	2016/17
Net Assets		
Current Assets	\$ 680,237	\$ 544,875
Capital Assets	978,579	986,395
Total Assets	\$ 1,658,816	\$ 1,531,270
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities	\$ 274,367	\$ 223,984
Deferred Grants	593,401	643,505
Long-Term Liabilities	37,188	109,052
Fund Balances	753,860	554,729
Total Liabilities and Fund Balances	\$ 1,658,816	\$ 1,531,270

Community Settlement

We are there, where you need us!

At HMC we are proud of what we are and what we do for our community! It's been 40 years helping newcomers to make sure they feel Halton is their home!

Our group of dedicated Community Settlement Specialists works hard to provide services in different languages (12 languages). With the help of community partners, our settlement specialists were able to help people who needed our support and expertise in different locations in Halton region. By connecting and coordinating efforts with other service providers in the community, we strove to help newcomers overcome language, transportation, and location barriers so everyone in our community felt welcomed, safe, and had access to the resources and services required.

The team also engages in client advocacy on behalf of our clients and contacts hospitals, health services, Halton region housing, employment and social services centre, Legal Aid, Halton legal services, Halton regional police, school boards, English classes locations, municipal and regional authorities, IRCC, Employment services, etc.

Community Settlement Program

(April 2017 to March 2018)

4,234 Unique Clients Assisted

7,182 Visits – **74,511** Services Provided



"I am glad that there is an organization that helps us obtain our permanent residence and provide assistance in education and community resources for me and my children"

R.G - Client in Oakville

Community Connections

HMC's Community Connections program helps newcomers to integrate into Canadian lifestyle, providing them with social supports to ease the transition.

This program focuses on building connections between the mainstream community and immigrant newcomers. Several activities are organized by program staff and run by volunteers. Through their experience at HMC, volunteers are enriched with greater awareness of the immigration and settlement process and obtain greater understanding and appreciation of different cultures. With this awareness and understanding, volunteers are better able to assist newcomers in achieving their goals. Through this exchange, newcomers gain greater insight into Canadian culture, norms, and systems, become connected to people and services in the community and are also afforded an opportunity to practice speaking English in a supportive and welcoming environment.

Newcomers are able to participate in the broader community more independently and have an increased capacity to meet personal goals.

Over this past year, we have offered a wide range of volunteer positions in the following areas: Board of Directors, Conversation Circles, Career Mentoring, Settlement Mentoring, Senior Group, Income Tax, Tutoring, and Special Events.

Our dedicated volunteers facilitated 322 hours of English conversation that gave newcomers an opportunity to practice their English spoken skills in a comfortable, welcoming environment.

Participants learned about Canadian culture and variety of topics with the help of volunteer facilitators. Newcomers from all over the world and with a variety of language abilities came together to discuss a range of topics, have questions answered, shared stories, and approached to overcome barriers.

Conversation circles took place all across Halton Region, allowing Newcomers the chance to access groups in their area. All conversation circles had newcomers attending from several countries of origin and different linguistic backgrounds. Our newcomer clients were encouraged to take control within the conversation circle and gear it towards their individual needs. They appreciated the opportunity to interact, practice and communicate in English, meet people from around the world, share stories and experiences in a safe environment.



Community Connections Program

(April 2017 to March 2018)

English Conversation Circles
322 Hours – 161 Sessions

Newcomers attended to improve fluency, build vocabulary and gain confidence in speaking English.



418 Group Sessions
2,812 Participants



Youth Settlement



A Parent Session at Joshua Creek organized by YSS Carole

One of the major concerns of newcomers to Canada is childhood education and schooling facilities in order to ensure education continuity. Youth Settlement Program is an important part of HMC Settlement services facilitating the newcomers families transition to the Ontario education system and the community.

We continue

Providing information and referrals to newcomers on the base of both stationary and itinerant module settlement services. The partnership with HDSB and HCDSB achieves newcomers' easy accesses to HMC connections programs and broader community service resource.

We support

Preparing newcomer families with knowledge such as school routines, pathways, and extra- curriculums for their better adapting to the Ontario education system through the HDSB Summer Orientation; reducing the students' transition stress and anxiety.

We assist

Conducting *Living Library*, *Symposiums* and regular *PD sessions* to school professionals to enhance the cross cultural understanding.

We extend

Promoting health and wellbeing by delivering information sessions to newcomer parents on topics including *Bully Prevention*, *Cyber Safety*, *Teenager Mental Health*, etc.; empowering and motivating them to be positively involved in their children's education.



A parent info session in Milton delivered by YSS Samina



Living Library

Understanding of different world views and challenge the single stories through discussing

4 Sessions

400 Teachers, School Administrators attended

Youth Settlement Program

(April 2017 to March 2018)



Community Connection Youth

The Community Connection Youth Program is focused on providing opportunities to Newcomer youth ages 12-28 years old to build social connections within the community, increase inclusion, instill a sense of community integration, engage in creative, recreational, and educational activities within the scope of after-school and in-school programs.

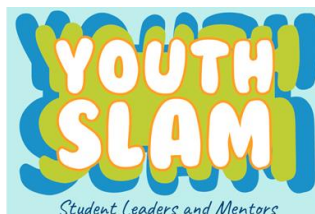
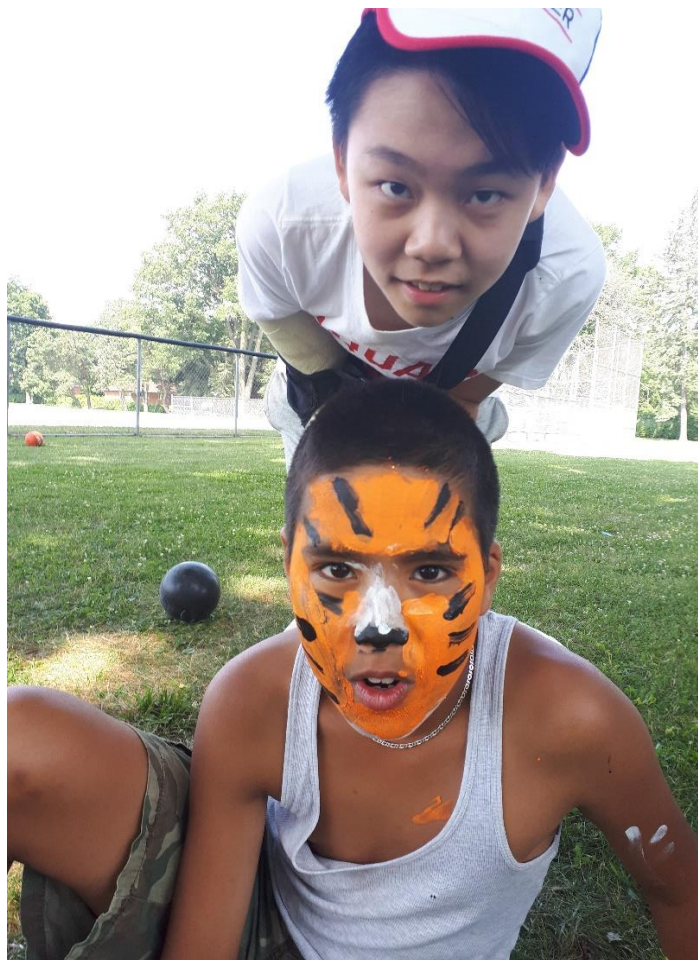
Our activities consist of programs such as; Art, Recreational, Educational, Leadership, Literacy, and Mentoring Programs.

Some notable accomplishments include;

- Collaboration with the Town of Oakville for numerous events to establish a positive relationship with youth in developing connectedness and sense of belonging
- The summer program continues to have high attendance and engagement of newcomer youth through the creation of new friendship and community
- Partnership with Art House and YMCA in Burlington & Milton for offering art classes, arranging Bike Tours, and Table Tennis Tournament
- Arranging a University Fair Field Trip
- The program also **won the Multicultural Community Capacity Grant** with Town of Oakville. The program is held at QEPC

The program also provides volunteering opportunities for youth to contribute to the social cause and motivates them to give back to the community like donations of items painted at schools for Mothers' and Father's day to Women Centre of Halton and Mission Services.

Overall, the program engages and connects the youth in a positive manner to their community and gives them confidence, self-belief, and making them feel welcomed.



Youth SLAM helps newcomers to develop essential life and leadership skills and get involved in the community

Youth Tutoring



After school weekly tutoring sessions for Newcomer Youth in 3 Halton locations

Leadership Development



In partnership with YMCA

A program to help newcomer youth develop their leadership and other skills that benefit them in their school and life.

Youth Programs - what are we trying to do?

- Increase student engagement in school and/ or community
- Reduce youth isolation and promote successful positive experiences
- Increase developmental assets, relationships and empower youth to make positive decisions
- Maximize student success through mentorships and peer mentorships
- Increase youth knowledge for making informed decisions
- Facilitate relationships inside school/ community by providing age appropriate programs
- Support language acquisition and learning of Canadian culture



Weekly Art Workshop for Youth

In partnership with Art House. Youth attend 6 weeks workshop to learn artistic skills & techniques to express themselves.



March & Summer Break Activities

Ice Skating, Laser Tag, Zumba, Art Workshops, Kickboxing and lots of fun



Offered in 3 locations



Career Accelerator

Career Accelerator for Internationally Trained Health Professionals enables highly skilled newcomers to devise a personalized career plan and gain relevant Canadian experience in the health or social service sector to aid their career progression.

HMC Connections provides a platform to bring together foreign-trained healthcare professionals, employers, service providers, and other community partners to overcome the systemic barriers around the recruitment and integration of foreign-trained healthcare professionals into the Ontario labor force. One of the initiatives is to arrange 12-week paid work placement/35 hours per week, coaching and mentoring sessions.

Career accelerator program has already made a huge difference in the life of many healthcare professionals as they found alternative careers in their field of practice.



Coordinated **weekly study group** for **12** International Medical Graduates (IMG's) preparing for MCCEE, MCCQE1 and OSCE exams. **1** successfully matched with **Neurology Residency Program** at the University of Toronto.



HMC intervention made a massive positive impact on me!

"I was a specialist in my country, but here, only an IMG (International Medical Graduate). I applied to several allied health positions and even tried dropping my resume in hospitals, but I was advised to submit online. I struggled a lot to find an appropriate position for my experience and at last, decided to go for a survival job. It was during this time that I learned about HMC Connections. I made a call and shortly after, I was called back by Ms. Sondos Parker. Despite her busy schedule, she squeezed in an appointment for me the same day.

I received a lot of counseling and was given resources to work on. There was a very keen follow up with meetings to improve my resume, interview coaching, and job search. She helped to connect me with a potential employer, and I got an interview as a Physician Assistant at the speed of light. I thank God the interview went very well, and I'm grateful to Sondos for her effort and commitment to my well-being.

Now, I am working in the clinic working directly with patients. Which is 10 times better than the survival job I had been going for and gives me clinical experience in the Canadian healthcare sector which will open up new opportunities for me. There is a constant follow up, mentoring, and my coordinator works as a bridge between my employer on a number of administrative issues and me.

HMC Connections has made a world of difference to me and indeed, my family. They gave me a chance as an IMG when nobody else would. I certainly recommend it to fellow IMGs."

Career Accelerator Program client

Transitional Services

It is our hope to keep growing and offer the services and resources to make a direct, positive impact for those who are committed to improving their personal adaptation process.

Transitional Housing Services

During the 2017 - 2018 year, the TH program **provided temporary housing facilities to 16 families. Out of these 16 families, 5 were able to buy their own home, 11 moved to market rent** and one single mother was accepted in a local program that provides rent assistance and support to mothers in her situation. The daughter of this last family was granted with the Appleby College Centennial scholarship.

The TH services enable deserving families to focus on academic upgrading, career development, financial stability, and access to other programs that solidify their settlement journey and allows them to move out of TH program quickly.

Intensive Crisis Management

This position was created with the funding support of Halton Region, to provide intensive, one on one support for critical situations that require a high level of advocacy and regular follow up.

A situation is considered critical when the client is homeless, requires immediate legal support or requires assistance that can't be provided by our settlement staff.

Our crisis manager meets with clients on a regular basis and assists them with access to legal services, housing or emergency shelter and supply of basic needs until the situation is stable and the client can go back to regular settlement services.

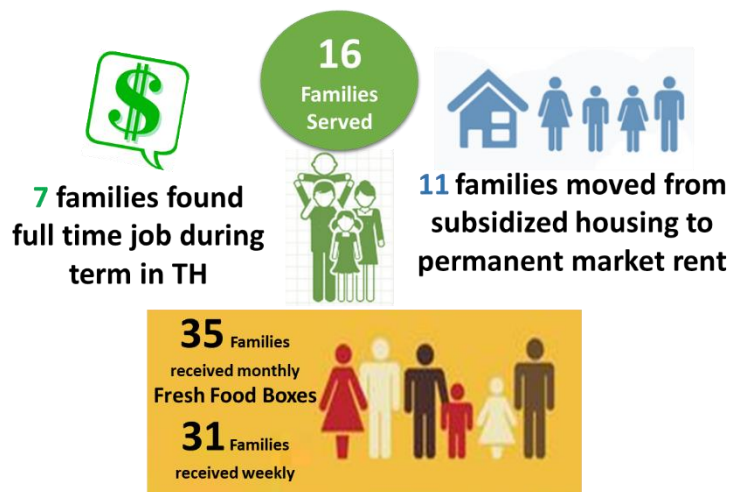
Job Coaching and Active Language Acquisition Program

By identifying the gap and lack of services for a specific population this program, with the support of IRCC, is focused on providing language support for refugees and permanent residents who are struggling with learning or cannot attend regular LINC classes.

With the support of one English teacher and two job coaches, the participants will have the opportunity to enhance language skills through activities different than the classroom environment while empowering them to access the labor market and improve their living conditions.

Transitional Housing Program

(April 2017 to March 2018)



"HMC played a critical role in providing guidance and counseling in all aspects of the settlement process from employment opportunities to transitional housing. The coordinators at HMC were extremely supportive, knowledgeable and helpful in the achievement of our short term and long term goals and relieved us from the anxiety about our day to day living expenses.

It was HMC's outstanding settlement support and guidance that helped us to plan and become the owner of a house within one year while we were in the transitional housing program.

Please accept our cordial thanks. I really appreciate all the programs offered by HMC especially the Transitional Housing Program, which basically saved us, held our hands before we could have fallen apart.

I would remain in contact with you and HMC for any of upcoming guidance required."

R. Hashmi

Employment Support

Newcomers to Canada are an important part of the Canadian economy. Skilled immigrants with professional designations make up 55 percent of all 250,000 newcomers to Canada each year. For many new immigrants, finding and maintaining gainful employment after immigration is a critical requirement in establishing stability and security for oneself and one's family. Given the numerous challenges faced by newcomers in the job market today, an employment support service that is timely and relevant is of great significance.

Employment services program is a core service offering of HMC that renders employment support services as part of a successful settlement and integration process to newcomers to Halton. The program is designed to provide the newcomer job seekers with the requisite skills, tools and opportunities to achieve self-sufficiency, independence and ultimately facilitate their successful integration and settlement in Halton community.

Our employment services are customized to the needs of newcomers. There is an Employment Specialist available

to answer questions or give feedback on job search documents such as resumes, cover letters, portfolios and practice interviews.

Employment Support program staff continue to reinforce their relationships with employers and broaden the above-mentioned services in the effort to facilitate more chances for new immigrants to build valuable working connections.

We Help Clients in

- Developing career action plans
- Preparing targeted resumes and cover letters
- Enhancing job search strategies
- Developing skills and techniques for various types of interviews
- Current labor market conditions
- Understanding Canadian workplace culture, assertiveness, work expectations and employment standards

Employment Support Program

(April 2017 to March 2018)



41 %

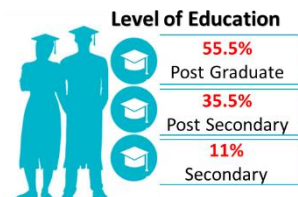
819 Unique Clients
486 New Assessment
950 in Person Visits
5,163 Services Provided



59 %

Job Readiness Workshops

# of sessions	90
# of participants	824



"I used to believe that my IT professional background and project management experience could be easy for me to find a job here in Canada. But after I applied for several positions, I found out that my assumption was wrong. It is more difficult than I expected. After accessing employment support program at HMC, I understood how to create the professional resume and how the interviews happen in Canada. Due to the cultural differences and language barriers, many interview process and approaches are quite different. Finally, I got my current job in June. I want to thank HMC for setting up this great platform, which can definitely help lots of people, especially the newcomers. Their professional services and useful suggestions were valuable for my career development in Canada."

Employment Support Program Client

Interpretation, Translation and Training

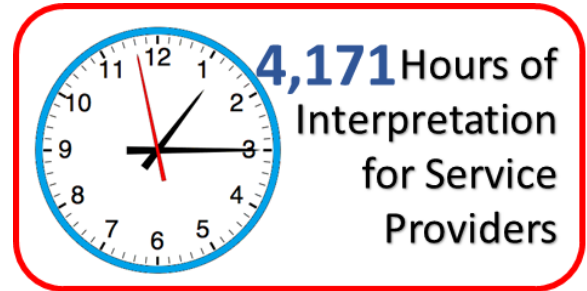
HMC Connections has been providing Interpretation, Translation and Transcription services for the last 40 years, with the help of a 550 professionally accredited Interpreters and Translators covering 150 language and dialects.

This year we have been able to develop and design the Language Dispatching System (LDS) to improve the effectiveness of our services. The services enhanced many skilled immigrants' connections and supported them during their transitional period towards their integration and contacts within the community.

A new module of Interpretation; "Cultural Brokers," has been introduced by HMC, which offers the combination of interpreting language within the context of two cultures and bridging the communication gap, and willingness to advocate, mediate and mentor especially in the healthcare area.



1,200 Translated Documents
more than 150, 0000 words



HMC Connections Training Services

HMC Connections runs different training on Diversity and Cultural Competency. This training is aimed at providing participants with an insight into cultural differences and impact of social experiences in shaping our behavior and how to improve cross-cultural communication in an empathetic manner.

HMC Connection works continuously in many different projects to support people of all ethnicities, genders, sexual/gender identities, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, abilities and beliefs. We work in partnership with Halton Regional Police, Halton Healthcare, Ontario Works, Halton Equity and Diversity Roundtable, Halton Region, Halton District School Boards, City of Burlington and many more.

This year we provided **24 Cultural Awareness training** for Burlington Firefighters, Halton Regional Police New Recruits, Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital, Joseph Brant Hospital, Burlington Library, and others.

"I have been working with HMC for the last 10 years. They offered me the full career path as a Language Interpreter and Cultural Broker. I completed the required certification from CILISAT, Community Interpreter's Certificate and the number of different training with HMC. I regard HMC as the best and most professional organization I have ever worked for. I share the same values and beliefs with HMC to serve the community to the best of our capabilities. I wish HMC the best for the coming years!"

Language Interpreter & Cultural Broker
Kwal Leung Law (Herman)

Language Program



The Language Program at HMC plays a vital role in the social, cultural, economic and political integration of new immigrants into Canada by providing essential language and skills development training up to the standards mandated by IRCC.

Research has shown the inability to communicate in English or French becomes a barrier to full participation in many opportunities including the labor market, education, social, civic and community activities.

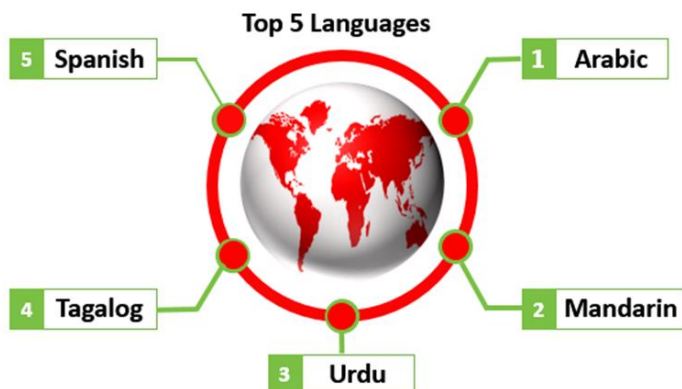
Under the HMC Connections Language Program, full PBLA implementation in all classrooms continued after April 2017, and by March 2018, more than 80 % of the required assessments had been prepared, administered and successfully completed which enabled students to apply the acquired skills to their settlement needs. The assessment results were excellent; over 90% of the clients improved at least 1 CLB skill.

The Language program continued in Summers as well with emphasis on Grammar which benefited the students appreciably and students resumed the regular classes in Fall with greater confidence in their abilities.

According to the 2016 Census, there were 7,000 Halton residents who do not speak English or French. This represents a 40% increase since 2011. HMC Connections is fortunate to have a language training location that has a strong and ever-increasing demand and looks forward to expanding to meet growing needs in order to help this non-English speaking population to overcome the barriers to full participation in the local community.

"HMC has given me knowledge not only about English language but also information about Canada such as taking driving licence, citizenship, waste collection, etc. I feel very grateful for everything that HMC has given me." - Client from CLB 5-7

"When I came to Canada, I was not very proficient in English language which made me hesitant to shop and go out on my own. Having attended the LINC classes, I feel more confident in my ability to communicate and carry on my daily activities like shopping, going to the doctor, to the bank, and even to the gym!" - Client from CLB 4-5



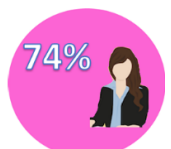
Language Program

(April 2017 to March 2018)

261 Clients Attended

3,782 Instructional hours

6 Part-time classes & **1** Full-time class
2 Part-time Summer class
 (Literacy to CLB 7)



Special Events

Multiculturalism Day 2018

HMC has much to be proud of when it comes to multiculturalism. We embrace different cultures from across the globe and value the distinct contribution each culture makes to our broader community.

The event aims to bring together annually the community to promote multiculturalism and openness between cultures. Our goal is to put on an event that not only celebrates Halton's regional diversity, but creates an opportunity for community members to come together – interactively – across our diverse identities, to learn, listen, share, and grow. On Friday, June 22 we celebrated Multiculturalism day showcasing more than 15 cultures around the world.

It was an excellent opportunity for Halton residents to enjoy the day, everyone children and adults had lots of fun activities



Annual Gala 2018

HMC Connections annual "Mapping the Immigrant Journey" Awards night and Gala, was held on Friday, March 23, 2018 at the Milton Banquet and Convention Centre. This year we showcased the Pakistani culture with great entertainment and traditions, delicious cultural food and a buffet dessert table

New Year's Around the World

HMC Connections gave the Halton community a glimpse into the traditions of other countries at it's New Year's Around the World celebration event was on Wednesday, February 21, 2018. The event featured booths that represented at least 11 countries and areas, including Canada, Iran, Pakistan, India, the Philippines, China, Afghanistan, and Romania, as well as traditions from Latin America and the Middle East.



Thank you HMC Connections Staff and Volunteers!

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude and appreciation for all of the hard work and dedication provided by our staff serving the Halton community. We are very fortunate to work with a dedicated and enthusiastic staff who have shown year after year their ability to advance the mission of this organization and to become the model service provider in the region.

We also acknowledge and appreciate our committed volunteers for giving a significant amount of their valuable time to assist and welcome newcomers to Halton. HMC relies heavily on volunteers from the community to help deliver its services. There are not enough words to describe how amazed and grateful we are for your dedication, compassion and generosity.

Thank you to all the wonderful volunteers who give their time, enthusiasm and energy to volunteering for HMC. We couldn't do our job without you. Thank you.

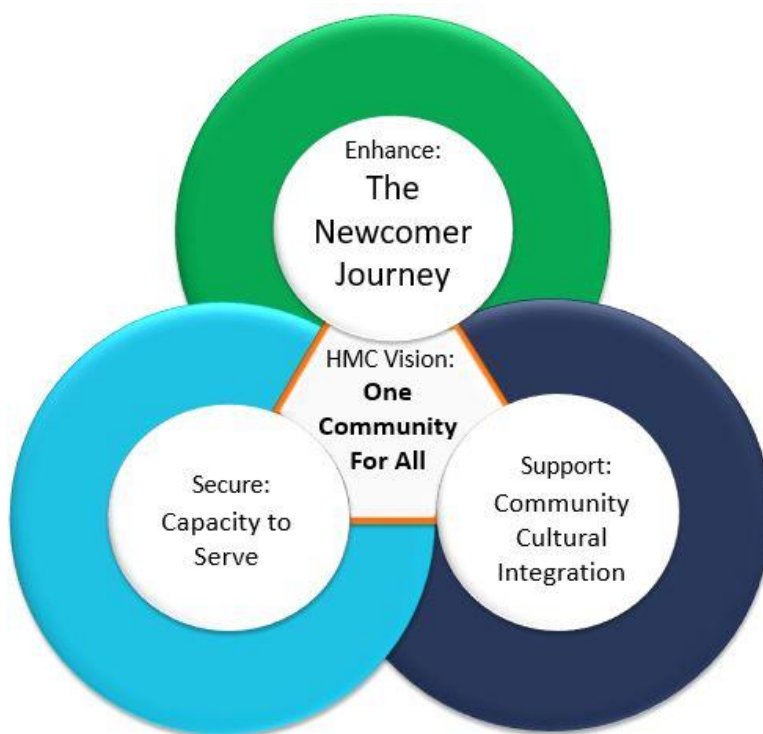
HMC Connections STRATEGIC PLAN

Mission – HMC helps newcomers settle and integrate into a community that is welcoming and inclusive.

Vision – One Community for All

Values

- Fostering mutual respect and understanding of each other.
- Building awareness and understanding regarding cultural communications and differences.
- Supporting the community to be inclusive, diverse, supportive and respectful.
- Empowering newcomers to live, work and belong while helping to preserve their own culture and uniqueness.
- Advocating for newcomers' rights and services.
- Establishing strong accountability to all of our stakeholders



Halton Multicultural Council

2017-18 Annual Report



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

- Immigration Refugee and Citizenship Canada
- Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
- Region of Halton
- United Way Halton/Hamilton
- Maple Lodge Farms
- RBC - Royal Bank of Canada
- Oakville Community Foundation

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

DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE HALTON MULTICULTURAL COUNCIL?

To receive updates and highlights of HMC Connections programs and events please visit our website and join our weekly newsletter or email events@hmcconnections.com

One Community for All