WELLAND HERITAGE COUNCIL AND MULTICULTURAL CENTRE MULTICULTURAL NETWORK OF NIAGARA FALLS



ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT 2016-2017

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

The Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre (WHCMC) provides newcomers and Canadian Citizens (community members) with services and programs that strengthen individuals, families, and the community, while creating a cultural awareness and understanding amongst all citizens. We assist all individuals to function with independence and dignity in society.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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"We receive calls of thanks from former clients telling us where they are now and the goals they have accomplished. They are employees, employers, entrepreneurs, professionals, students, and developing their families."

Ann Simunic

As President of the Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre, I wish to thank the Executives and the Board of Directors for their dedication in 2016-2017. I would also like to thank and acknowledge our very talented staff who work tirelessly to provide encouragement and support to our clients, including newcomers, job seekers, and entrepreneurs.

In this, our 41st year of serving the community, we are proud to say that we are continuing to provide quality programming and services, accommodating the needs of those accessing our Agency.

Our Agency has truly grown to be a centre where we provide programs and services that strengthen individuals, families, and the community, while creating cultural awareness, providing advocacy, and opportunities. We receive calls of thanks from former clients telling us where they are now and the goals they have accomplished. They are employees, employers, entrepreneurs, professionals, students, and developing their families in Welland, the Niagara Region, communities in Ontario, and other provinces in Canada.

I would like to thank the representatives and members of the cultural halls for your continued support to the Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre. In our 41st year, we continue to work together to provide opportunities to celebrate our various heritages including our Welland Multicultural Festival and World Ball where you can hear and see the wonderful talent we have in Welland that has originated from different cultural groups. We thank the Membership Council for your participation in community events that create an awareness of a city of diverse cultures. Thank you to our community sponsors for the various fundraising events.

We are also very fortunate for the many volunteers who donate their time and services throughout the year. Without their generosity WHCMC would not be where we are and be able to execute what we do. I am very grateful to those who volunteer for us.

We have so many great things happening and I am excited to see what the spirit of the staff, and councils of The Welland Heritage Council brings this coming year!

MEET OUR NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



"Our passion is to be of service to others, and what gives us the greatest satisfaction is to know we have made a difference in someone's life."

. Fanet Madume

As I celebrate my first year as the Executive Director, I look forward to building on the organization's accomplishments, as well as continuing to encourage innovation, cross sector relationships, and strengthening our collective voice while we continue to improve the quality of life for our community citizens and newcomers to find a path for growth and independence.

Twelve years ago, my family arrived in Canada and the first place we called home was "The Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre". The Welland Heritage Council eases the anxiety that many newcomers face as they try to integrate in a new environment. Our lives have been forever changed. I was hired as a Bookkeeper in 2007 and promoted to Financial Manager, a position I held for 8 years. Last year, I was appointed the new Executive Director and as I reflect on the many blessings, I often wonder: whatever happened to the families that have passed through our doors; where did life carry them - where are they now?

Since 1976, the Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre has helped thousands of immigrants settle in the community. Our passion is to be of service to others, and what gives us the greatest satisfaction is to know we have made a difference in someone's life. Our work is so rewarding and we must continue to provide these exceptional services, as we play a critical role to create a more vibrant community in this great peninsula. We are proud to serve our region and believe we have great potential to increase our impact while fostering a deeper understanding of our existence.

Many thanks to our Board, Membership, Funders, Community Partners, and staff who work tirelessly to make this possible.

I look forward to working with you on the challenges and opportunities ahead.

HISTORY AND CONTINUED PARTNERSHIPS

Over the past **41 years**, the **Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre** has helped thousands of immigrants overcome barriers to integration and has watched with pride as they build new lives for themselves here in Canada. Our greatest contribution to our community is to help immigrants gain the necessary skills to live and work in Canada, so that they can become successful participating members of our society. Many former clients are our valued volunteers helping to build a stronger, more culturally aware community. Our organization is a vital link to the economic growth of Niagara through assisting immigrants to settle in our communities and offering continuing support in their new endeavours in Canada. In recent years our services have expanded to include employment and entrepreneur supports for Canadians as well as newcomers.

The Multicultural Network Services of Niagara Falls started in 1995 as a satellite office and provides settlement services in Niagara Falls.

We have continued our fundraising activities to support needed programs and develop stronger partnerships within the business communities by becoming members of five of the Chambers of Commerce in Niagara. Developing a stronger network with other organizations in the Niagara Region has proved to be our best strategy to continue to provide quality services to members of this community.

In keeping with our philosophy of diversity and inclusion, our network of community partners encompasses the public, private, and non-profit sectors. All of the community's ethnic halls and cultural associations are partners of the Welland Heritage Council. We attend meetings with Regional, Welland, and Niagara Falls inter-agency groups to share information and resources and discover ways to work more closely together.

Communication with our organizational members occurs both formally, through regular meetings, joint ventures, and partnerships, and informally, through the many working relationships we have developed over time.

PROGRAMS

SETTLEMENT COUNSELLING AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES

We offer settlement services to ensure seamless and successful newcomer settlement and integration. Funded by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI), the Newcomer Settlement Program (NSP) provides information and referral, advocacy, needs based workshops and group sessions, one-on-one counseling, and other support to assist clients to pursue pathways of citizenship, increase their ability to enter and thrive in the Niagara Region, and to establish healthy connections in the community.

2016/2017 SNAPSHOT

Unique clients served under NSP: 433

New client intakes: 140

Client Visits: 1602

Total one-on-one services rendered: **1712**

Workshops and info sessions: **31**

Workshop attendance: **584**

Telephone and media based services: 906

"I came to Canada without knowing a single word of English and I felt like nobody could understand me. I would phone the Arabic speaking Settlement Counsellor and she would pick up no matter the time thanks to this program, and this was the best thing that happened to our family because without this program, we would have been very lost. The Welland Heritage Council helped our family with translation during medical appointments as well as with a lot of paperwork. We are very grateful to the staff and all of the welcoming people we were connected with through this program."

Hiba A.

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM

The Refugee Resettlement Program funding delivers core settlement services to government or privately sponsored refugees, the majority of which come from Syria. We provide support for both the sponsored refugees during their settlement phase as well as support to the churches or group of five that has sponsored them. Many of these newcomers have settled in our community and we are currently the only organization in the Niagara Region that is funded for this program. Services include one-on-one settlement support in clients' first language, medical and/or other language interpretation as needed, weekly conversation circles, preparing clients for employment and self-sufficiency after their sponsorship term ends (Month 13), finding volunteer placements, as well as youth mentoring. This project contributed to many partnership initiatives in our community, which has facilitated clients' access to healthcare, early years, and employment services. We've followed a personalized plan of integration for each client in this program, and through our multi-sectoral network of resources, we are able to serve clients ranging in demographics and in needs.

Our numbers demonstrate that we have served 10 Government Assisted Refugees (GAR), 19 Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSR), and 29 Blended Visa Office-Referred Refugees (BVOR) of which 31 are youth.

41 clients come from Syria, 6 from Ecuador, 6 from Burma, 4 from Colombia and 1 from Eritrea.



MULTICULTURAL NETWORK OF NIAGARA FALLS

Settlement Services

2016-2017 was another good year for settlement services at the Multicultural Network of Niagara Falls.

We kept in touch with existing clients and reached new clients by making routine calls and working with other service providers in the area, including Ontario Works, Project Share, YMCA, the District School Board of Niagara, public libraries, and Women's Place of South Niagara. While many of our clients learned about us by word of mouth and through the media, we also received referrals from the MP's office and local agencies.

Recent changes in both immigration and citizenship regulations make our ongoing services in Niagara Falls a vital resource.

Our sincere appreciation to the Niagara Falls Public Library for their strong partnership and support.

EMPLOYMENT SOLUTIONS

In 2016/17, we helped 330 people secure employment.

90% of individuals who accessed our office for assistance were able to achieve their employment and training goals.

We assisted many youth in securing their first job through our Youth Job Link Program (new to Employment Solutions in 2016).

At Employment Solutions, we connect great people to great companies.

Job-hunting is hard work. We lighten the load by matching job seekers with employers and coaching them through the job search process. For employers, the services that we provide are more than just job postings. We offer highly personalized services from defining employer workforce needs to helping them hire new employees. Employment Solutions has achieved many successes over the 2016-2017 year.

We have worked with over 2000 job seekers and employers in the community and have matched their skills and needs successfully. In cases where training is the best option, we work with both job seekers and employers to support training. We assist them with applications to access funding such as Second Career or The Canada Ontario Job Grant. With the addition of the Youth Job Link program, we were able to assist many young people find their first jobs! We have had over 400 hours donated to our offices by volunteers and continue to grow rewarding relationships in the community with partners including: The Hope Centre, Open Arms Mission, Canadian Mental Health Association (REAL Work), NCDSB, DSBN, Community Living, Niagara Peninsula Homes, Niagara Women's Enterprise, Workplace Safety Group, Service Canada, Literacy Link, and the Niagara Region, among others.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)

English as a Second Language (ESL) classes are offered to adults 18 years of age and older who are Refugee Claimants, Convention Refugees, Government Sponsored Refugees, Landed Immigrants, Permanent Residents, or Canadian Citizens. The classes are funded by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration through the District School Board of Niagara and in 2016-17 were offered in Welland and Niagara Falls.

Classes run Monday to Friday, 9:00 to 2:00. We have levels ranging from pre-Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) to level seven CLB.

We have two terms per year, from September to December, and January to June. We administer summer school for students who wish to study in July, providing a program for their school-age children through our Canada Summer Jobs program. At the end of each term, students receive a report card to show their performance in class.

The lesson plans are prepared to cover the four language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. We also focus on conversation and integrate what students learn in class to the real world by covering different themes during the year like health and safety, employment, adapting to Canadian culture, housing, and recreation including Canadian holidays. We teach students about the Canadian workplace culture and the language skills for success in the workplace.

We integrate technology into teaching ESL by using our computer lab and Smart Board. Using the computer lab we provide exercises for all levels to practice listening, reading, and writing skills.

We are so fortunate to have the generosity of volunteers who come to the centre to assist the students who need extra help by providing one-on-one attention so they can reach their goals faster.

IMPROVING PROSPERITY FOR NIAGARA'S WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS

The Improving Prosperity for Niagara's Women Business Owners project continued moving forward with solutions to the identified barriers from the first phase of the project, developed together with women business owners and stakeholders through meetings at different locations in Niagara.

The solutions identified included the need for more networking, mentoring, and additional training opportunities. Three committees were formed in the fall of 2016 to propose ways to implement each of the suggested solutions.

In January 2017, Success Circles, a peer-to-peer networking and mentoring initiative, were launched in cities across Niagara (Welland, Port Colborne, St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, and Fort Erie). These Circles provide an informal network for women entrepreneurs to mentor one another through shared experiences.

Through the Additional Training Committee, workshops at no cost for women entrepreneurs were planned such as Financing Solutions, and a tool kit for women entrepreneurs in Niagara is in the works.

The final year of this project (April 2017 – March 2018) will consist of evaluating the success of the implemented solutions, sharing the results of the project with our community, and securing the sustainability of the solutions for years to come.

Watch for an invitation to our Results Dissemination Meeting in early 2018!

WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Our Women's Entrepreneurship Development Program, funded by the Ontario Women's Directorate (now Ministry of the Status of Women), has provided an incredible opportunity for women in Niagara to learn how to start their own businesses over the past four years. What was originally funded as a 2 year pilot project was extended once again due to the results of the program, helping women to improve their economic circumstances through learning to start a business.

Our 8 week class was offered in Welland at our Centre; in Fort Erie at the Fort Erie Multicultural Centre; and in Niagara Falls at the Niagara Falls Public Library Victoria Avenue location.

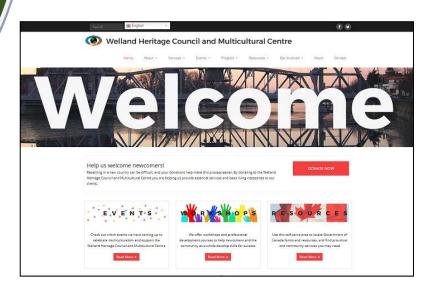
The program is open to all women who meet the income eligibility criteria. This past year's graduates began businesses such as Fitness and Healthy Lifestyle Consultant, Catering, Event Planning, Administrative Office Consultant, Home and Garden Workshops and Consultant, Handmade Skincare Products and Makeup Workshops, Magnetic Therapy Bracelets and Dog Collars, Physical Therapist and Personal Trainer, Pet Sitter, and Interior Decorator. Other businesses are in progress but require more time to become ready to launch successfully. For example, pictured in the photo below is a graduate from a 2014 class who celebrated the grand opening of her mobile pet grooming business with a ribbon cutting ceremony in May, 2016.

At the conclusion of the class, the graduates had the opportunity to apply for a microloan through our community partnership with First Ontario Credit Union, and be mentored for 4 months by generous volunteer business owners. We're excited to announce funding has continued for 2017 and thank the Ministry of the Status of Women that women in Niagara will continue to have this amazing opportunity to improve their economic security!





Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada's Youth Internship Program (YIP)



Through YIP, the Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre's website, Facebook, and Twitter were completely remodelled to reflect the modern and innovative online presence of some of Canada's biggest non-profit organizations. Our website now features our most frequently accessed services and resources on the front page, and has been translated into five languages (English, French, Arabic, Spanish, and Shona) to optimize accessibility. Among other changes, the website now features a robust *Resources* section that links directly to the applications and guidelines section of the Government of Canada's Immigration and Citizenship page, making it easier for clients to find and access necessary government resources.

After remodelling the website, our Facebook and Twitter were updated to reflect our current services and a highly researched Social Media Strategy was put in place. Content that is relevant to our clients, supporters, newcomers, and the community at large is now published daily on both platforms. Some examples of published content include "Tips Tuesday" which provides tips to newcomers such as how to get a driver's license or where to access health services; news articles relevant to women business owners; "On this Day" which recounts historical Canadian events; "Frequently Asked Friday" which addresses common questions that come from our clients and the community; information about our services and events; photos from day to day activities; international celebrations; community events; and more!





The Canada Summer Jobs program is sponsored through Service Canada and enabled us to hire two students in the summer of 2016 to assist at the Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre.

The Youth Cultural Coordinator Position provided our student with the opportunity to create a summer program for the month of July for the elementary school age children of parents studying in our English Class. One highlight included attending a day at The Shaw Festival thanks to a program they had for refugee youth which included a workshop, backstage tour, trying on costumes, and viewing a play. Towards the end of the program, the children decided to do their own fundraising by having a one day lemonade stand that they promoted ahead of time, and as a result raised enough funds to purchase back to school supplies!

The Settlement Assistant Position provided the student with the opportunity to interact with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds accessing our settlement services. The student also assisted in administering our annual fundraisers such as the International Luncheons and the Welland Dragon Boat Festival. The student assisted with the organization of the Shaw Festival trip and helped make it possible by successfully applying for a grant that provided the transportation needed to and from the event, providing valuable grant writing experience.

EMERGENCY SHELTER

The emergency shelter continues to house newcomers in our community. The shelter offers a safe place for refugees new to Canada to live temporarily. The emergency shelter is often times the refugees' first home in Niagara, because many don't have anywhere to live when they arrive.

Our clients stay there for about eight weeks until they are settled. We currently have 10 apartments. Throughout their stay and after families move out of the shelter, our staff perform general maintenance and ensure that everything in the apartments is functioning properly, and that there are appliances and furniture for new families when they arrive.

It takes many hands to keep the shelter running. We welcome donations of new or gently used microwaves, coffee makers, tea kettles, silverware, blenders, cutting boards, tea towels, brooms, dust pans, buckets, and mops.

"The shelter offers a safe place for refugees new to Canada to live temporarily."

- Janet Madume

EVENTS



EVENTS AND FUNDRAISERS

9th Annual

Ladies Night Out FUNraiser!

Thursday May 12, 2016, 7-10 pm Riverstone Event Centre 414 River Road, Welland

Music Buffet Vendors Fashion Show Door Prizes PhotoBooth MEET WELLAND FIREFIGHTERS

TICKETS: \$30.00 per person or \$275 table of 10 Available at: Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre 26 East Main Street, Welland, 905.732.5337





The Welland Heritage Council holds a series of events each year to raise funds to support our Agency and the needs of the Emergency Shelter and its occupants.

Ladies Night Out FUNraiser – May 12th, 2016: Our 9th Annual Ladies Night Out event featured a fashion show, vendors, a buffet of appetizers, raffles, door prizes, and a photo booth! The Riverstone Event Centre was filled as ladies gathered for an elegant and fun night out with family and friends for a great cause!

14th Annual Dragon Boat Festival – June 11, 2016: The Welland Dragon Boat Festival was held at the world class Welland International Flatwater Centre. 27 teams signed up to participate in a day of races culminating in the awards ceremony. There were food vendors as well as other vendors selling a variety of products and services. The day would not have been a success without the hard work of our dedicated volunteers. The festival is an excellent way for us to reach out to the community, with free admission and no experience required to enter a team!

40th Annual International Luncheons and World Ball - June 7th – 17th, & 24TH 2016: We celebrated our 40th Annual International Luncheons. A series of luncheons were held at Welland Market Square for two weeks to celebrate the cultural cuisine of our community. To finish the month of cultural celebration, the World Ball was held at Casa Dante Lodge 19 and featured a parade of flags carried by representatives of each cultural group and a full-course Italian meal, followed by a World Entertainment Concert.

"International Woman of the Year Named by Welland Heritage Council".

- The Welland Tribune

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

We celebrated our 13th Annual International Women's Day event on March 3. The theme for this year's International Women's Day was "Celebrating Freedom". Freedom from war, freedom from oppression, and the freedom we hope for women starting new lives in Canada.

Every year we honour the achievements of a newcomer woman who has been in Canada less than 10 years, whose story then inspires other newcomer women in attendance that they can succeed as well. Through our event's newspaper publicity, the community learns about these successful newcomer stories, resulting in positive feedback about immigrants.

The event began with an explanation of the origin of International Women's Day and the flag's colours, followed by our inspirational speaker, Muna Ahmed. Muna shared about her experience coming to Canada as a refugee from Somalia, and how she was able to rebuild a successful life here, now working at Polyglots Immigration Service and assisting newcomers like she once was.

Our International Woman of the Year for 2017, Reshaa Mohammed, also inspired the women with her example of continually educating herself since coming to Canada in 2008, along with volunteer work and currently working as a Child Care Practitioner while being a mother of 5 (including twin girls)! The trophy Reshaa was presented with remains on display at our centre throughout the year.

HIGHLIGHTS

2016-2017 REFLECTIONS

- Expanded our newcomer programs to assist privately sponsored groups
- Leveraged 1534 volunteer hours
- Trained 14 women entrepreneurs for the fiscal

2017-2018 LOOKING FORWARD.

- Expansion to a second Employment Solutions location
- Welland Multicultural Festival bringing nations together
- Becoming an information hub via social media
- Beamsville/Grimsby English as a Second Language classes

FINANCIALS

The WHCMC Summary of Financial Position at the end of fiscal year 2016-17 is as follows:

Total Assets: \$202,874



Grants & Funders - \$1,150,416

Shelter Program - \$53,617

Local Program - \$35,204

Total \$1,239,237

Grants &

Funders: 93% Shelter Program: 4%

Local Program: 3%



THANK-YOU

ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

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TO OUR FUNDING PARTNERS

Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (Settlement Services)

Ministry of Status of Women

District School Board of Niagara

Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development

Status of Women Canada

Service Canada

Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada

Niagara Prosperity Initiative via United Way of Niagara Falls and Greater Fort Erie

Niagara Region





Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada

Innovation, Sciences et Développement économique Canada













Condition féminine Canada







Thank you to our Board of Directors who volunteered extensive hours to govern this organization and make decisions to assist with all our extensive programs in Welland and Niagara Falls.

Board of Directors

Executive

President: Ann Simunic

1st Vice President: Paul Pudge

2nd Vice President: Mark Holmes

Treasurer: Joseph Lamberti

Secretary: Caroline Pudge

Directors

Debi Anderson

Graziano Ramundo

Klara Szabo

Margita Galat

Michelle Allenberg

Paula Esposito

Thank you to our staff for going above and beyond the call of duty

For your dedication and loyalty to the organization, its programs and the clients who gain knowledge through sharing your expertise.

INTRODUCING THE TEAM

Executive Director: Janet Madume

Bookkeeper: Janet Madume/Mariana Popova

ESL Teachers: Elham Meleka, Sherry Main, Lisa Smith

ESL Coordinator: Mariann Zorgel

Settlement Counsellors: Kenneth Gwena, Sima Nahli

Outreach Coordinator/Community Convenor: Mariann Zorgel

Youth Coordinator: Sima Nahli

Women's Entrepreneurship Program: Lori Webster

Women's Business Prosperity Project: Josie Faccini/Lori Webster

Social Media Strategist: Kelsie Chasse

Maintenance: John Holoday

Canada Summer Jobs Students 2016: Nicholas Printup and Alice Hansen

Program Manager: Carrie-Ann Demers **Program Supervisor:** Kelly Jones

Employment Counsellors: Kathryn Santoro, Ina Dziarkach

Employment Coordinator: Maja Dobric

Job Developers: Nathan Venema, Kelly Jones

Employment Initiatives Coordinator: Patricia Stirling

Administrative Coordinator: Angie Tomaino

TO OUR MEMBERSHIP COUNCIL

Canadian Slovak League ● Casa Dante Lodge 19 ● Club Rheingold ● Club Social ● Croatian Folk Arts Council ● Croatian National Home ● Hungarian Self Culture Society of Welland ● Mandolin Orchestra of Niagara ● Latino Group

TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are an integral part of all services and volunteers have been generous with their time. They have been very committed to all of our programs and events. In 2016-2017, volunteers donated 1534 hours!

TO OUR SUPPORTERS & PARTNERS

• Youngs Insurance Brokers • First Ontario Credit Union • Country Corner Market • Riverstone Event Centre • Community Legal Services • Employment Help Centre Beamsville and Grimsby • Niagara Peninsula Homes • City of Welland • Canada Revenue Agency • Red Cross • Scotiabank • Welland/Pelham Chamber of Commerce • Niagara Region Public Health • Open Arms Mission • The Hope Centre • ProKids Program • Venture Niagara • Goodwill • Welland Tribune • Niagara Women's Enterprise Centre • Women's Place of South Niagara • Niagara College • Salvation Army • Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants • Brock University • Niagara Workforce Planning Board • John Howard Society • Job Gym • Fort Erie Multicultural Centre • Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre • Fort Erie Chamber of Commerce • Port Colborne/Wainfleet Chamber of Commerce • Niagara Falls Chamber of Commerce • Niagara Falls Public Library • Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre • Niagara Chapter-Native Women • St. Vincent de Paul • CERF Niagara • Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce • YMCA Niagara • Canadian Mental Health Association • Convergys • Eastdale Secondary School • École Secondaire Confédération • Canadian Tire Store • Metis Nation of Ontario • Centre de Santé Communautaire • Niagara Immigrant Employment Council • District School Board of Niagara • Welland Public Library • Bowes IT Solutions • Niagara This Week • Welland Rose Festival • The Residence and Conference Centre • Welland International Flatwater Centre • Welland Rotary Club ...and the many, many businesses and social agencies who contribute their time to our workshops, and who donate prizes or monetary gifts for our events.

TO THE CITIZENS OF WELLAND

Who continue to participate in our fundraising events and who share in the experience of meeting, welcoming and appreciating the talents and skills that our country's newest citizens and Canadians bring to our community.

Thank you for contributing to the success of our organization and helping us make dreams a reality for both newcomers and Canadian citizens.



Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre

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