

# SPRING 2002 BULLETIN

## Building a Welcoming Community !

### Catholic Immigration Centre / Centre catholique pour immigrants

219 Argyle Ave.

Ottawa, Ontario K2P 2H4

Tel: 613-232-9634 Fax: 613-232-3660

E-mail: [cic@cic.ca](mailto:cic@cic.ca)

Website: [www.cic.ca](http://www.cic.ca)

## 2001 WAS A GREAT YEAR!

It's not every day you can make a statement like that, but we at Catholic Immigration Centre can make such a boast. And we make it not because of the great things we have done over the past year, but because the hours of work that boards, committees and staff have put in over many years are now coming to fruition.

I need not remind you that at one stage we faced bankruptcy and financial turmoil. The weight of carrying debts made program work much more difficult for our Executive Director and his crew. This year, through the generosity of one of our supporters, The Sisters of Charity, we have been able to see the end of our mortgages and debt burdens. Many thanks for their support. On Saturday, November 17, 2001, we celebrated our sixth annual "Around the World" Gala at the Canadian Museum of Nature. We had a great night, where we honoured the sisters for their continued support and belief in our cause, as we renamed our Newcomer Centre the "Bruyère Centre for Immigrants".

This gift of charity, and other donations over the past few years, will enable us to direct more of our efforts to the program work of Catholic Immigration Centre. We have an important role to play in the life of this expanded city and we want to play such a public role. We will not forget that we are a service agency but we do want to find ways of raising policy and public issues that influence the life of the people who come to our centre.

The work of the Foundation is also leading us in new directions and will enable us to expand into new areas of work. There are new ventures in the cards, so stay with us, and contact us about these new ventures in person or by mail.

We have a staff of which we at the Board are proud and it is because of them that our future is bright. It is a wonderful time to be Chair of the board and I can say, without fear of contradiction, that other people have laboured and we are now benefiting from those labours.

*By Allan Rix, President of the CIC Board of Directors*

## ***NEW PIONEERS, 2001***

The day the Catholic Immigration Centre boat floated down the Rideau Canal, as part of the 2001 Tulip Festival Flotilla, was a perfect day. The sky was clear, there was a soft breeze bouncing off the water, and there was an excitement in the air that brought an easy smile to everyone's face, or maybe it was our music. Two hundred thousand people heard about us. We even made it to the front page of the business section of the Ottawa Citizen the following Sunday.

Thanks to Greg Steele, the skipper, and his crew we didn't sink. Thanks to Miguel Cerejido and Simon Clark for the great artwork, decorations and sound. Thanks to Murray Bond, Kebba Jobateh and the Cherun-Meru dancers for the fantastic entertainment that pulled in the crowds. And last, but not least, thanks to Dale and Lynn Munro, Ilse Turnsen and Greg Pierre for lugging things around and helping us make a lot of noise. The entire day would not have been possible without the support of **Richcraft** – a warm round of applause.

*By Elena Whyte, Development Manager*

## **RECOGNITION / RECONNAISSANCE!**

A travers le monde, l'année 2001 était dédiée aux bénévoles! **Bénévole**: quel mot chargé de signification riche en diversités, en coloration personnelle offerte pour la construction de la mosaïque humaine! **Bénévole**: "personne qui veut du bien", contrairement à celle qui, dans notre monde, fait prévaloir la violence. **Bénévole**, pour toi, nous avons voulu **dire** un merci spécial et **re-connaître** les grandes et les petites choses qui t'habitent et que tu accomplis quotidiennement pour changer le monde en le rendant plus humain, plus heureux!

**Reconnaissance** pour tes engagements de toutes sortes en temps de réjouissance comme en temps de grisaille. **Merci** pour tes espoirs partagés, ton temps donné généreusement et, souvent, tendrement, ta confiance audacieuse, ta patience constante, ton ouverture aux différences qui engagent toute ta vie à "vouloir du bien"! **Merci** pour ta contribution dans la grande aventure de bâtir **ensemble** un monde où il fait bon vivre! C'est cela, **la vie accueillie et partagée**, que nous avons célébrée avec toi, en février 2002.

C'est avec joie, que le mercredi, 27 février, la direction et le personnel du Centre catholique pour immigrants accueillèrent ses nombreux bénévoles. L'atmosphère était à la fête! Nos invités sont venus nous rencontrer et nous consacrer de leur temps et de leurs richesses. Quelles heureuses retrouvailles remplies de simplicité et de re-connaissance! Nous nous sommes accueillis mutuellement, et, après la signature du livre d'or, nous avons partagé un goûter durant lequel nous avons exprimé notre appréciation et notre merci. Chacun est reparti avec un "**Certificat de reconnaissance**". Nous avons rejoint ceux qui ne pouvaient participer à cet événement en leur faisant parvenir un certificat personnel avec notre cordial merci.

*Gisèle Bourdon, Programme d'accueil*

## **DONATE FOR A FRIEND!**

Another year has come and gone and if you're like me, you are wishing for a brainstorm of an

idea for gifts for Mother's Day, birthdays, anniversaries, whatever. Buying presents for friends and family can be fun, but if you are short on time or ideas, it can be nerve-wracking. Some friends are particularly hard to give gifts to because they don't seem to need or want anything. Should I get them another CD? Another book? Another piece of pottery?

This year I decided to give many people on my gift list a very special gift, a glimpse into one of my favourite charities, the Catholic Immigration Centre. I serve on the board and donate money and time to Catholic Immigration Centre because I am convinced that the work we are doing is making a difference. I know my friends and family want to make a difference also, so I am giving the Catholic Immigration Centre a gift in their name.

Do you want to join me? Simply send a donation in the name of a friend, family member or co-worker. We will send them a lovely card telling them about your gift. Next year, we will ask them if they want to renew their involvement by making their own gift. They will receive no other solicitations from us unless they then make their own gift to our agency.

You can give any amount. This year I am not in a position to spend too much money so I have given a bit less than what I would have spent on a present for each of these friends and family members. You can give as many or as few gifts as you wish.

A donation to the Catholic Immigration Centre in the name of a friend is perfect for:

- someone who wants to make our world a better place
- someone who has "everything"
- someone who has shown interest in refugee and newcomer issues

Wouldn't it be nice to give a gift that really makes a difference? To do so, contact Elena Whyte, Development Manager, Catholic Immigration Centre, for a *Donate for a Friend* form.

*Haig McCarrell, Board Chair, Catholic Immigration Centre Foundation*

## **WHAT'S ON AT CIC?**

### **WHAT'S GOING ON AT SETTLEMENT?**

There are quite a number of changes in our staff as we address the need to communicate with newcomers from Afghanistan, Iran and Albania, as well as improving our proficiencies in Spanish and many South Asian tongues. We are very busy working in partnership with agencies to reach out to many more clients. In 2001, we helped over 4000 refugees and immigrants, up from 3000 in the year 2000. We saw an increase of refugees from Afghanistan, Congo, Sudan and Colombia; many fleeing their homes because of civil strife and terrorism. Our immigrants are from all over the world, notably from China and South Asia, many of them highly skilled in their home countries.

The tragedy of September 11 has funneled public concern and focus on suspected terrorists. Unfortunately, it has also created negative backlash on newcomers and affected Canada's immigration policies. The new Immigration and Protection Act emphasizes security and intelligence measures, as well as being more selective in choosing who can come to Canada. Although there are positive changes in some aspects of family sponsorship, there are other less positive impacts in many aspects of the legislation. It is foreseeable that we will have increased

number of cases, necessitating additional time working through demands required by the new legislation. In addition, the hardened attitude of the public towards immigration calls for more efforts from us to inform Canadians so that we can continue to build a welcoming community for newcomers.

While our agency has a mandate to provide services for government-sponsored refugees, we are recognized as the more effective agency helping refugee claimants getting direct referrals from Immigration Canada. In July 2001, during the Francophonie Games, we received over 40 clients claiming refugee status. Together with the Somali communities, a major victory has been the settlement of the Court Charter Challenge for cases with unidentified documents. We have continued to work with agencies to make recommendations to reduce limbo for refugees by responding to Bill C-31 and the new immigration legislation, which has toughened the process in applying for refugee status in Canada.

*By Sharon Kan, Manager of Settlement*

## **HOUSING: A CHALLENGE FOR NEWCOMERS**

After arriving in Canada, finding an appropriate permanent accommodation is one of the major challenges for newcomers who settle in the City of Ottawa.

During the first few weeks in Reception House where the newcomers are temporarily accommodated, they will attend workshops and orientation sessions which include topics such as employment, health, education, types of services available in the community and the Resettlement Assistance Program, coordinated by Reception House. The Housing Program, where newcomers receive key information about how and where to look for an apartment and related issues like rent increase, viewing the apartment, leases... as well as rights and responsibilities under the Tenant Protection Act, is an important first step for newcomers. Newcomers usually stay at Reception House for 4 to 5 weeks before moving to their permanent accommodation.

Experiences with local landlords are very positive since newcomers are quite responsible in paying their rent and taking care of their accommodations. Landlords frequently call us to seek potential tenants when apartments becomes available.

In 2001, the City of Ottawa experienced dramatic decreases in the number of available apartments; the vacancy rate was 0.2 %. This year, due to the economic slow-down, the vacancy rate has increased to 0.8 %. However, rents are still high. According to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the average monthly rent for two bedroom apartments is \$754. This is a continuing financial challenge for newcomers arriving to settle in our City.

Housing Service is one of the services that we provide at Reception House in order to help newcomers searching for permanent accommodation. If you have, or you know someone who has, apartments available for rent, please call Mr. Heng Chau, Housing Coordinator at Reception House, at 789-4338.

*Chamroeun Lay, Manager, Reception House*

## **EVICITION PREVENTION PROGRAM: WORKING AGAINST HOMELESSNESS**

The Catholic Immigration Centre is now offering this new program in partnership with the

settlement services team. With Ottawa in a very serious housing crisis and with an extremely low vacancy rate, the Eviction Prevention Program is a particularly valuable service.

The objective of the Eviction Prevention Program is to support new Canadians with their housing needs, and most importantly, to assist in preventing homelessness. As new Canadians, many clients are facing a completely different system than what they may have encountered in their own countries. This program enables clients to access services that will assist them not only in adjusting to the Canadian housing system, but also to increase their ability to understand their rights and responsibilities within it.

Clients are assessed on an individual basis according to their specific needs. Some of the services available are as follows:

- workshops on the Tenant Protection Act
- linking clients with social programs and services
- walk-in crisis services
- mediation between tenants and landlords
- informing clients of their rights and responsibilities, within the scope of housing issues
- contacting landlords on behalf of clients for repairs or other issues
- providing assistance with applications, hearings and appeals to the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal.

This program is funded by the city of Ottawa as a part of a two-year pilot project designed to combat homelessness. The program has been available at the Catholic Immigration Centre for the past year and has exceeded the expected outcomes. High numbers of crisis cases have clearly confirmed the need for the existence of such a program. It is our hope that this program will remain available to our clients beyond the current funding schedule.

*By Pauline Anderson*

## **PASTORAL PARTNERSHIPS**

The focus of the pastoral program at Catholic Immigration Centre is on newcomer integration into local communities with the cooperation of many faith communities. We have attempted to expand CIC's partnerships with faith communities in order to promote the various forms of participation in our common goal of *Building a Welcoming Community*. The forms of participation include education and sensitization activities, sponsorship and pastoral care of newcomers. We created and maintained partnerships with various refugee-serving agencies and networked in order to collaborate in advocacy and protection of refugees. In this vein, we collaborated with partners through the COR (Coalition in Ottawa for Refugees). This group gathers monthly to share resources and information, and to network about the needs of newcomers in the Ottawa area. The highlight this year was the planning and implementation of a Sponsorship Volunteer Workshop.

One highlight for us in the past year was when a church community, which had been waiting for the past two years to sponsor a family, was introduced to a newcomer family which was looking for a worshipping community. The newcomer family has since become very active in this faith community. The husband sings in the choir, the wife helps to teach the children's liturgy program each Sunday and their children are active as altar servers and are in the youth choir. This family feels welcomed and has stated in its own words "that in this church community, we feel like we

now have found new family". The benefits of this program are certainly exemplified by how well this family has integrated in such a short period of time.

In 2001, over 270 clients were served and 18 different faith communities were approached.

*By Julie Salach-Simard*

## **SHARING EXPERIENCES....**

Whether it's stepping outside into a winter storm, learning new languages or getting that first job, immigrating to a new country can be an extremely overwhelming, tense and confusing time for new immigrants.

For many immigrants, those first months in Canada can be extremely difficult. They've come in search of a better life, often putting behind them memories of a war-torn country or former difficult life.

Luckily, some new immigrants have the benefit of support programs such as the **Host Program** at Catholic Immigration Centre. This program pairs individuals as well as families with friendly Canadian volunteers willing to help Newcomers adjust to Canadian life. They are also assisted in practical matters such as finding affordable child care, continuing education and job search.

On a recent Thursday evening, five volunteers gathered to share their experience as a Host. This is the first match for all of the Hosts sitting around the table and there is no mistaking the excitement in their voices as they speak. "I'm very pleased", says Judy who is matched to a woman from Yugoslavia, "I really didn't expect to find someone so compatible. I didn't expect the friendship to be anything like this, I am really very pleased!"

Francis, matched with an Ethiopian man, describes how his Newcomer didn't want to relocate to Toronto because his best Canadian friend would not be there.

Manon Dion, Host program counsellor, says she loves to hear stories like these. "It's so great to hear these types of stories" she says "it makes me really glad that I'm working here. I guess I don't just *work* in the program, I really *believe* in it because it is really making a difference in someone's life," she says enthusiastically.

These five Hosts at the sharing session agree one hundred percent, and were exhilarated when they suddenly realized that what they were doing was indeed making a difference.

For Kathy, a host paired with a family from Iran, that exhilaration came from knowing that when the family had no one else to turn to, she was able to provide her services to help the family's friend move. "It felt great to help out this lady who was in a terrible situation."

Mary-Ellen, paired with a family from Sudan, also knows that feeling. At the sharing session, she describes her first day alone with her female Sudanese newcomer, breaking down the language barrier and communicating despite the fact that neither spoke the other's language. "I was so proud that she trusted me and herself enough to stay and communicate for an entire day." By the end of the sharing session one thing is clear: sharing a couple of hours a week with a newcomer to Canada may not seem like a life changing experience, but it is. As Manon said, "What (the hosts) are doing is something so simple, but it is something that is so big as well".

*By Kearie Daniel, Host Program  
(Watch for a continuation of this sharing experience in the Fall Bulletin.)*

## **NEW PIONEERS 2002... STUCK AT THE LOCKS**

Not even bad weather and strong currents could stop the Catholic Immigration Centre from participating in the Tulip Festival Flotilla this year. A combination of high water levels, too much rain and strong currents made it impossible for Catholic Immigration Centre's boat *New Pioneers* to get through the first set of locks at Burrits Rapids in the Rideau Canal system.

But we are very determined people, especially when we want to be included. We quickly came up with an alternative plan: get hold of anything that floats! Dow's Lake Pavillion very generously lent us their 17-foot work 'putt putt' which we covered in tulips (the theme was 'Tulipmania') and right on cue, sent down the canal under the experienced hands of our Skipper, Jack Raymond, and 1<sup>st</sup> Mate, Telius Jean-Baptiste.

There was no way 12 performers and their drums could fit in our tiny boat so we set up two performances: one at Dow's Lake and another at the Pretoria Bridge, where the official Tulip Festival commentators were stationed. Perhaps we didn't call too much attention with our boat, but we certainly did get noticed and heard when the magnificent Sacred Drums from Burundi began to play. The group 'Remesha Drums' delighted the crowds at both locations and woke up the dead with their joyful, high energy dances and heart pounding beats. Thank you guys, you certainly helped us make up for the loss of our boat.

Special thanks to our two sponsors, **Cistel Technologies** and **Great West Life**, who support us through thick and thin.

*By Elena Whyte, Development Manager*

## **GIVING IS 'GOOD BUSINESS'**

Many individuals in Ottawa have been assisted by the Catholic Immigration Centre (maybe even you!) and in the future, hopefully, this tradition will continue and grow. Many individuals and corporations in Ottawa share the goals of the Centre.

With the establishment of the Catholic Immigration Centre Foundation in May of 2001, it is now easier than ever for individuals to benefit the Centre through the Foundation Planned Giving Program. Progress, in terms of legislative and regulatory changes, has resulted in additional tax incentives for individuals to donate to the CICF. The planned giving program of the Foundation permits donors to realize their philanthropic objectives while maximizing tax and other financial benefits.

When you next consult your estate lawyer or financial advisor, why not think about:

- Gifts of Insurance
- Gifts of Registered Money
- Gifts by Will
- Gift Annuities
- Remainder Trusts

- Donations in Your Lifetime

Your first step, if you are thinking about a gift to the Foundation, is to decide whether you wish to make it through your estate or whether you'll make a donation today. In either case, meeting with a representative of the Catholic Immigration Centre Foundation, your financial advisor and lawyer to determine which option is best for you is the next step.

*With thanks to Vincent Dagenais Gibson LLP/s.r.l*

## **SIXTH ANNUAL “AROUND THE WORLD” GALA**

### **GALA VOLUNTEERS**

Awatiff Jabanny, Pascale Julien, Mairi Stewart, Tom Hall, Isle Turnsen, Judy Jatt, Patti Haughian, Sofia de la Barra, Leah Nalley, Dora Cardenas, Molly Reynolds, Molly Cheadle, Pedro Diaz, Telius Jean-Baptiste, Martynn St-André, Nona Nalley, Patricia St-Martin, Stephanie Lepsoe, Mara Munro, Ruth Chapple, Barry Blake, Katherine Clark-Nolan, Marie Cita Gérome, Bella Biovanni, Mario Perez, Sabrina Ostler, Vanessa Wen, Emilie Gelinias, Kieran Wyatt, Julie Salach-Simard, Rahma Abdulkador, Thao Duong, Jessica Ryan, Christine Legault, Greg Pierre, Sarah Carr, Helena Kelly, Manon Dion, Anna Szymanowicz, Jean-Denis Gabikini, Solomon Regassa, Faqir Faqiri, Richard Rivard, Maria Ghazzaoui, Lucila Spigelblatt.

### **AUCTION DONORS & SUPPORTERS**

Hamid Ayoub, Embassy of Japan, Sisters of Charity, Casa Luna, East Wind Importers, Embassy of the Slovak Republic, Elena Whyte, Kunststadt Sports, Lawrence Greenspon, Dilemme, John Landry, West Coast Video, Embassy of Mexico, Royal Investment Services, Girol Books Inc., Ottawa Police Services, Neilson's Dairy, Monelle Vadier, Royal Thai Embassy, Georgette Saikaley, Giraffe, La Tulipe Noir, Embassy of Portugal, High Commission of Malasia, RCMP, Hellen Blanco Jewellery, Diplomat's Choice Interior Design & Rooftop Gardening, Taing Jewellers, High Commission of Eastern Caribbean States, Thorne & Co., A.K. Project Services, A Touch of Class Fashions, Amphibus Lady Dive Inc., Archdiocese of Ottawa, Artful Glebe Framing, Bluesfest Ottawa, Cartier Place Suites, Cistel, Don Alfonso Restaurant, Embassy of Angola, Embassy of Chile, Feleena's, Fettuccine's, Florida Fitness, Griffins, High Commission of Nigeria, Le Moulin Wakefield, Les Filles de la Sagesse, Meiz Majdoub, Mozaic Imports, National Arts Centre, Norma McCord, Rideau Carleton Raceway, The Ottawa Senators, Shanghai Restaurant, Sheraton Hotels, Wilderness Tours, YMCA, Bell Unger & Morris, Mukesh Gupta, Vincent Dagenais Gibson, Richard Stursberg, Dehon Church Group, LASI-World Skills, and, of course, all those anonymous friends of Catholic Immigration Centre!

### **GALA SPONSORS**

Archdiocese of Ottawa, FirstMark Technologies, Franklin Templeton Investments, Living Languages Services, Ottawa Citizen, Snelling Paper, VIA Rail

## **NEW DATE FOR OUR**

**7<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
'AROUND THE WORLD' GALA**

**SPRING 2003**

**OUR BUILDING HAS A NEW NAME!**

**CENTRE BRUYÈRE CENTRE  
pour/for  
IMMIGRANTS**

Cet édifice est dédié aux Soeurs de la Charité d'Ottawa dont la foi et la générosité appuient la mission du Centre catholique pour immigrants.

This building is dedicated to the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa whose generosity and belief sustain the Catholic Immigration Centre's mission.

**THANK YOU!**

Every sign of support gives us energy to continue. Thank you for your lending your support to our agency in these troubled times.

Chaque marque de soutien nous donne l'énergie pour continuer. Nous vous remercions d'appuyer votre organisme au cours de cette période difficile.

**RAFFLE 2001 WINNERS – MARCH 15, 2002**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Prize:** Airline Tickets (\$5000) - K.V.Vaerenberg, #00381
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize:** Casa Luna Shopping Spree (\$1500) - Max Wolpert, #01514
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize:** Personal Computer (\$1400) - Maurice Menard, #04111
- 4<sup>th</sup> Prize:** 25" Television and VCR (\$530) - Claire Cross, # 02480
- 5<sup>th</sup> Prize:** Skyview Balloon Ride (\$350) - Sadie Hammond, #01933
- 6<sup>th</sup> Prize:** Two nights at a B&B (\$250) - Marie-Marthe Carrier, #00481
- 7<sup>th</sup> Prize:** 12 Weeks of Salsa Dance Lessons (\$120) - Bernie Warren, #00206

**CATHOLIC IMMIGRATION CENTRE  
MISSION STATEMENT/NOTRE MISSION**

To promote and facilitate the reception of newcomers to Canada, to sensitize the community to address newcomers' needs, and invite it to respond, and to assist newcomers in realizing their full potential in Canadian society. / La mission de centre catholique pour immigrants est de promouvoir et faciliter l'accueil des nouveaux arrivants au Canada, sensibiliser la communauté aux besoins des nouveaux arrivants et l'inviter à aller au devant, et aider les nouveaux arrivants à se réaliser pleinement au coeur de la société canadienne.

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS / CONSEIL D'ADMINISTRATION**

Stella Chileshe	Fr. Jacques Faucher	Vincent Gilpin
Sr. Jeannine Gauthier	Fr. Everett MacNeil	Antoine Hawara
Luise Czernenko Reid	Brian Greene	Jeff Holmes
Sr. Fernande de Montigny		

### **CATHOLIC IMMIGRATION CENTRE FOUNDATION MISSION STATEMENT/NOTRE MISSION**

Our mission is to provide funds for the Catholic Immigration Centre / Notre mission est de faire la collecte de fonds pour le centre Catholique pour immigrants.

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS / CONSEIL D'ADMINISTRATION**

John Landry	Meiz Majdoub	Haig McCarrell
Gonzalo Peralta	Richard Stursberg	Vince Gilpin
Mukesh Gupta	Ralph Priestman	Russell Gibson
Edward Cheung	Raj Rasalingam	

### **CONTACT/COMMUNIQUER**

Information in the CIC BULLETIN is contributed by staff, volunteers, Board members and consultants. If you have any questions about the CIC BULLETIN, please contact Elena Whyte, Development Manager, at 232-9634, ext. 359 or by e-mail at [elena@cic.ca](mailto:elena@cic.ca).

Les informations contenues dans ce Bulletin du CCI ont été offertes par des membres du personnel, des bénévoles, des conseillers et des membres du C.A. Si vous avez des questions à propos du Bulletin, veuillez communiquer avec Elena Whyte au 232-9634 poste 359 ou par courriel [elena@cic.ca](mailto:elena@cic.ca)