

Everyone  
welcome.

EST  1979



NEW  
CANADIANS  
CENTRE  
PETERBOROUGH

**ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT  
2022-2023**

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



I am happy to report that the New Canadians Centre had another strong year working towards our vision of a vibrant and inclusive community where newcomers thrive and are valued.

With COVID-19 restrictions lifted, we were able to fully resume in-person programs and services – how wonderful it was to get back together sharing food, culture, and good company!

The ongoing effects of the Taliban's take over of Afghanistan, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and other global conflicts have been felt at the local level: for the second year in a row, we helped more than 150 Government Assisted Refugees resettle in Canada, along with many Ukrainians and privately sponsored refugees.

Canada continues to welcome record numbers of new permanent and temporary residents and we are seeing the impact of this across all of our programs and services – a trend that is expected to continue as Canada relies increasingly on immigration for population growth. People who are new to Canada have tremendous contributions to make towards the economic, social, and cultural vitality of our community, and NCC is proud to be at the heart of enabling this potential.

On behalf of the board, I extend thanks to our Federal, Provincial, and Municipal funders as well as to the more than 600 individual donors who supported our work this past year.

I want to make particular note of the tremendous contributions of our more than 250 volunteers who collectively contribute thousands of hours of service.

And we are fortunate to have a group of more than 40 incredibly dedicated employees who show up with enthusiasm and compassion, day in and day out, working towards our mission.

**Simon Liston**  
Board Chair

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Simon Liston  
Petra Kukacka  
Elizabeth Lee Rahman  
Edward Kloosterman  
Emilio Ojeda

*Chair*  
*Vice-Chair*  
*Secretary*  
*Treasurer*  
*Director*

Ghada Hussein  
Ponvily Ravindranathan  
Robert McDonald  
Dr. Saji Mon Ravi Mannosseril  
Shelbi Kilcollins

*Director*  
*Director*  
*Director*  
*Director*  
*Director*

# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As we continue to welcome record numbers of new permanent and temporary residents to Canada, we acknowledge that the New Canadians Centre's work is part of a long history of settlers arriving on lands that have been stewarded by Indigenous peoples since time immemorial.

We are committed as an organization to being allies and active treaty partners as we work to help more settlers establish themselves in the traditional territory of the Michi Saagig, Chippewa, Huron-Wendat, and Haudenosaunee nations and lands covered by Treaty 20 and the Williams Treaty.

This year, we created an NCC Truth and Reconciliation Action Plan and humbly commit ourselves to supporting our clients, volunteers, and employees to deepen our understanding and to realize a vision of nation building that grows from mutual respect and understanding between Indigenous peoples and settlers.

For many years, NCC organized Multicultural Canada Day in Peterborough: a fantastic celebration of diversity and inclusion, which drew thousands of participants as one of the area's largest annual events. As someone who grew up here, I am proud that our community's Canada Day activities focused specifically on celebrating multiculturalism. I have fond memories of experiencing the food and cultural performances.

In 2021, with the confirmation of unmarked graves at the Kamloops Residential school and multiple other locations, and reflecting on the state of truth and reconciliation work in Canada, we decided to refocus our July 1st activities on increased appreciation of Indigenous knowledge, stewardship and land-based learning.

Celebrating the richness of multiculturalism and our client's pride in being Canadian remains a cornerstone of NCC's work. We highlight newcomers' stories and achievements year-round through our communications and events, and in particular through a new focus on Canadian Multiculturalism Week in June and Welcoming Week in September – we hope you'll join in the many activities we have planned.

**Andy Cragg**  
Executive Director

## Our Vision

A vibrant and inclusive community where people who are new to Canada thrive and are valued.

## Our Values

Respect, Equity & Inclusion, Collaboration, Dedication, Celebration

## Our Mission

We empower people who are new to Canada, so they can be recognised as equal and valued members of Canadian society, and we provide leadership to cultivate their meaningful economic, social, and cultural inclusion in our community.

**1371**

**CLIENTS SERVED**

**993**

**NEW CLIENTS**

**378**

**RETURNING CLIENTS**

**90**

**SOURCE COUNTRIES**

**61**

**LANGUAGES SPOKEN**

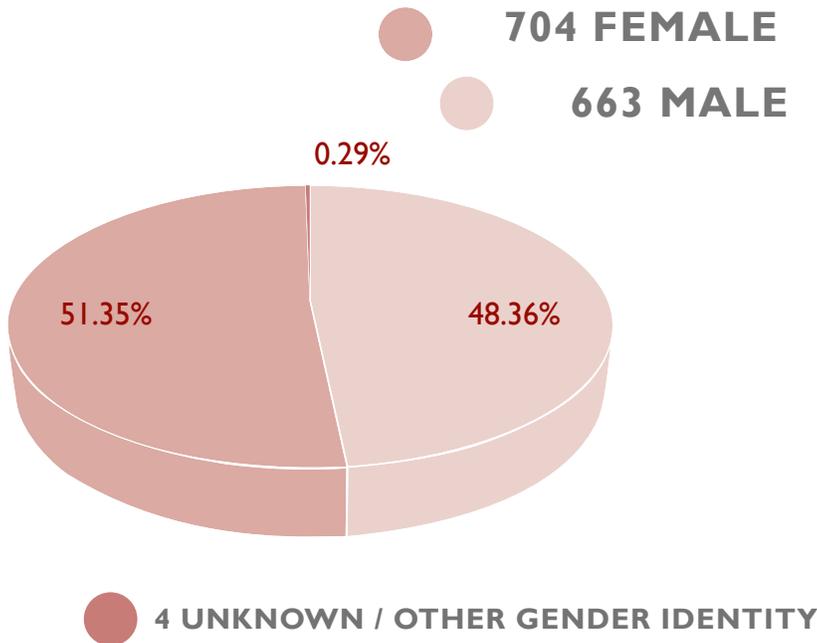
**NEW CLIENT IMMIGRATION PROFILE**

Immigration Category	2022-2023	2021-2022
Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel	256	-
Canadian Citizens	30	41
Convention Refugees	2	-
International Students	72	81
Other Temporary Foreign Worker	119	34
Permanent Residents		
Family & Economic Class	247	91
Protected Class	170	232
Refugee Claimants	12	9
Unknown Status	23	28
Visitor	62	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>993</b>	<b>536</b>

**Top 10 Countries**  
 Syria, Ukraine, Afghanistan, India, Colombia, Philippines, Mexico, Iraq, China, Nigeria

**Top 10 Languages**  
 English, Arabic, Ukrainian, Spanish, Russian, Dari, Farsi, Hindi, Tagalog, Pashto

**GENDER BREAKDOWN**



**AGE BREAKDOWN**



## SETTLEMENT SERVICES

NCC's settlement services are at the core of our mandate. While some clients need guidance on where to find information or resources in the community, others seek support from our staff when they are going through difficult times. Our settlement counsellors offer one-on-one assistance on a range of questions. They also refer clients to specific programs and services at NCC or at other agencies and organizations in the community.

With help from community volunteers and experts, the settlement team organizes workshops about important aspects of a new life in Canada. Becoming a Canadian citizen is a goal for many clients and the Citizenship Preparation workshop is a popular choice. 139 clients had help from the volunteer tax preparers at Happy Wanderers to file their taxes at 4 NCC tax clinics.

A key service we provide is English language proficiency assessment. With a standard ranking of their English language level, newcomers can be referred to formal English classes that are at the appropriate level. This year, 299 Language Assessments were completed - over twice as many as last year!

During this past year, restrictions from the COVID pandemic were lifted and the settlement team shifted its services from online only to a mix of in-person, phone and online services. We introduced drop-in services at the office so that appointments were not necessary. As a result, our office quickly became a hub of activity again after several years of the pandemic.



**Above photo:** The Peterborough Petes donated tickets for Ukrainian newcomers to attend the games. Everyone had a great time!

## UKRAINE INITIATIVE

After the war broke out in Ukraine, our region saw over 200 Ukrainians looking for a safe and stable place to settle with their families. While early arrivals had family members to welcome them, many others came without any direct connection to this community.

Before federal and provincial government assistance programs were fully in place, with the generosity of our community, we raised over \$30,000 in donations. These funds were distributed through our Client Emergency Fund.

The welcome and kindness of our community was seen in people offering temporary home stays, donations of clothing and household items, befriending Ukrainian newcomers and helping them to navigate life in a new country.

We hired a part-time Ukrainian Community Liaison who played an essential role in connecting people and resources, and in offering additional support to Ukrainian families. Many thanks to all community partners who stepped forward to help at this critical time!

We were happy to share how your donations and acts of kindness paved the way for Liza Maslova and her family, and many others, to start their new lives in Canada.

**Left photo:** Liza Maslova and her family holding the Ukrainian flag signed by everyone who has helped them in Canada.



**Above photo:** Newcomer youth went Axe Throwing for the first time at the Peterborough Axe Club.

## YOUTH AND FAMILY PROGRAMS (INCLUDING SETTLEMENT WORKERS IN SCHOOLS)

Our youth and family program offers a variety of activities and services that engage and support newcomers of all ages. Our childminding staff run an on-site, regulated Care For Newcomer Children (CNC) model childminding program. This is a big help for parents who attend meetings, language and social programs at the NCC.

When the COVID pandemic isolated many of our clients, we continued to reach out to youth, to women and to families, to keep them informed and connected. When the pandemic restrictions began to lift, we noted an increasing level of participation among youth in activities such as the After School Drop-In at Downtown Youth Space, and social and recreation activities like Axe Throwing or attending a Magic Show at Market Hall.

A highlight was the new “Welcome to Schools” initiative organized in partnership with the Kawartha Pine Ridge District and the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland Clarington Catholic School Boards to introduce newcomer families to the local school system. We also continued our partnership with Peterborough Youth Services to provide mental health counselling for young people who were new to Canada.

The team offered the Family Literacy in Peterborough (FLIP) program for families who were interested in building their English literacy skills in the summer. We continued the program into fall and winter, with a wider focus on developing practical skills such as using transit, grocery shopping on a budget, navigating the community.



### FILL IT WITH JOY AND HOPE

When Fatma moved to Turkey from Syria in 2012, she had to learn a new language and grow in a new environment. Fatma not only learned Turkish, but was at the top of her class at school. This is one of the ways Fatma has proved that being a newcomer doesn't stop one from excelling in a new home.

Last year, Fatma has proven again that she can create a life for herself from scratch. Speaking the most English amongst her family, she helped interpret for them as they established their lives in Canada - attending appointments at banks, doctors and more.

Wanting to expand her language skills, impact on the community, and make new friends, Fatma joined the New Canadians Centre's Young Leaders group (NCCYL). The group seeks to empower youth by offering a platform where they can discuss issues that affect them, explore their own stories and how they can help.

Fatma helped other newcomer youth come out of their shell and attend New Canadians Centre's events and programs. She worked hard at the Youth Explore Program, preparing for post-secondary opportunities and her future career.

Fatma is happy for her experiences at the New Canadians Centre, sharing “Life is but a moment - fill it with joy and hope because nothing is worth the sadness. I cannot express enough my thankfulness to NCC for what you have done for me. Thank you for what you do, NCC.”



# WORKPLACE INTEGRATION

53

CLIENTS MATCHED TO EMPLOYMENT

Finding employment is a significant and often challenging part of settlement for those who are new to Canada. Newcomers arrive with a range of work experience and credentials; many face a very different system of finding work compared their home countries. Those who have specific skill sets, such as lawyers, doctors, electricians or plumbers, may also face the daunting task of re-certification.

This past year, NCC staff came together with the goal of helping newcomers to join the workforce and integrate in the workplace. They connected clients to potential employers, helped clients to create job applications for the Canadian market and to practice interview skills. They also organized skills development programs such as food handling and First Aid certification.

We also initiated a new “English in the Workplace” program - a customised occupation-specific language learning opportunity for workers with support from their employers.

## YOUTH EXPLORE PROGRAM

We organised the second annual Youth Explore Program over four days during March Break for high school students. The event featured collaborations with community partners like Trent CareerSpace, Contact North, the John Howard Society, as well as Employment Planning and Counseling (EPC).

Thanks to these contributions, youth were able to learn about post-secondary co-op programs; develop their communication skills and try out different jobs using virtual reality; take part in an engaging career panel; and participate in a job fair featuring nine local employers.

Attracting close to 30 youth each day, the event served as an engaging chance for youth to not only consider, but play an active role in planning their educational and career goals for the future.



Above photo: Newcomer youth at the Youth Explore Program, a 4-day career exploration camp over March Break supporting youth with skills building for employment & career exploration through

## AHMAD EL NIME'S STORY



Ahmad El Nime arrived in Canada in January 2023 and came to NCC filled with energy and purpose. We helped Ahmad channel his desire to provide for his family into improving his language skills and finding employment. From his initial placement with the Canada's Dinosaur Park and Reptile Sanctuary to

a full time permanent position in roofing, we were with him every step of the way. Despite a difficult start as refugees, the El Nime family is now active in the community. We are proud to be part of Ahmad's new life here in Canada!

## JAHNAVI TOLKANATI'S STORY

Jahnavi Tolkanati is an international student at Trent with big dreams in business and a heart bursting with passion and love for her community. She dreams of one day opening her own business here in Peterborough.



When Jahnavi came to NCC for help, we coached her for her very first interview and are happy to share that she has landed her first job as a cashier! She will also start volunteering at the NCC soon. Jahnavi has taken her first steps towards her dreams, and we'll be here with her for the rest as well!



## TARIQ ARBAB'S STORY

Tariq Arbab and his family arrived in Toronto in August 2022. After initial processing, they jumped into taxis bound for Peterborough, where we were ready with a warm welcome.

Over the next few weeks, we worked closely with Tariq's family providing information and arranging appointments to orient them to their new life in Canada. Although being a young head of his new household in Canada, Tariq did not appear to be overwhelmed. He was very brave, positive and humble. He was proud of his country, Afghanistan, and proud to be starting this new chapter in Canada.

And he did it in record time! After just one month, Tariq and his family made the difficult decision to move to Ottawa to be closer to friends and family. Tariq initially found a job at Walmart. Shortly after that, he succeeded in a competitive recruitment process and was hired at the Ottawa International Airport.

Throughout his first year, Tariq and his family contacted us regularly sharing updates about his family's progress. One day, we received a special email from Tariq. While working at the airport, Tariq met the Honorable Sean Fraser, Member of Parliament and Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship, the department that brought Tariq and his family to Canada. Tariq excitedly thanked MP Fraser for his work resettling Afghan refugees. This selfie made it to MP Fraser's social media!

We are proud of Tariq for his courage, generosity and drive. We are grateful to have been a part of his family's first steps in Canada, and we look forward to seeing his success continue!

## RESETTLEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

# 152

NEW GOVERNMENT-ASSISTED REFUGEES (GAR)  
109 from Afghanistan

# 52

NEW GAR FAMILIES

Our Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) focuses on supporting newly-arrived government-assisted refugees to settle in Canada. While these individuals and families arrive in Canada to new opportunities, they continue to experience the trauma and challenges of being displaced from their homes and families.

This program continue to grow this past year as Peterborough played its part in welcoming a large cohort of Afghan refugees in addition to the ongoing government-assisted refugee program. Our community showed its generosity through the countless hours of volunteer support, in-kind donations, and genuine interest and compassion for the families.

With double the number of clients and an ongoing lack of affordable housing, families stayed in temporary accommodations for much longer periods of time.

We increased the staff team to provide better support for these families and relied more heavily on volunteer support teams, drivers and assistants. In addition, we rented a second refugee reception house and utilized hotels to a much greater degree.

By the end of the year, we successfully welcomed over 150 people who began their settlement journey here in Canada!

**Above photo:** Sean Fraser, Member of Parliament and Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship, posted a photo on Instagram with Tariq Arbab after meeting him at the Ottawa International Airport.

# CASE MANAGEMENT

## 163

### CASE MANAGEMENT CLIENTS

As NCC continued to see greater numbers of newcomers from a wide range of backgrounds arrive, we determined that an adjustment to our client services was needed.

This past year, we re-organized our team structure and created a new “Case Management” team of staff. This team focuses on providing services and supports to individuals and families who face multiple challenges or more complex settlement situations.

Many of these clients come to Canada through the Resettlement Assistance Program. After living in Canada for a year, it is clear that they can benefit from additional support to navigate health care, social service and other systems that were essential to their settlement process. The Case Management team works together with many community partners to ensure that these families have the support they need.

In addition, increasing opportunities for one-on-one coaching and support can make a big impact on building fundamental skills and knowledge, and reduce the likelihood of clients facing crises. For example, learning computer skills is essential for everything from paying bills to communicating with government departments. This type of life skills coaching program was just initiated, and will help clients to make progress towards their goals and will be a focus for the coming year.



### ESTHER ODDI'S STORY

Esther Oddi arrived from Cameroon late at night on April 20, 2022 with her twin daughters Merveille and Chekina. They were very exhausted and anxious about their travels. As NCC staff we welcomed them with smiles and enthusiasm. That early morning marked the beginning of their journey.

Esther and her girls are from the Central African Republic. Their parent language is Sango and they also speak French. In spite of not being able to read or write, Esther has made big strides in one year.

She learnt how to use public transportation and is now learning how to navigate the community. With the team's support, she obtained her essential documents and found permanent housing. She secured two part-time jobs in her first year and kept up with her English classes. She has made friends in the community through her classes, her church and with our volunteers.

Merveille and Chekina enjoy their time in school and after-school activities. You can recognize Esther and her children by the colorful and traditional clothing they love to wear around the community. They are so happy to call Peterborough their home!

Esther's dreams are to buy a home, open a bakery and help pay for her children's post-secondary education.

“I am thankful for the Canadian government that brought me here! I am thankful for God for bringing me an amazing volunteer team that I consider my family in Canada! I am thankful for NCC for their continuous support!”



# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



*Holiday Wreath Making*

For individuals and families who are new to Canada, the best way to feel that they are truly “home” is to be a part of the community. Our Community Connections programs and activities are a key part of fulfilling this goal.



*Ukrainian Flower Crown making at Women’s Group*



*Winter Fun Day*

Over this past year, we have maintained a strong set of ongoing group programs, like English language learning groups and our Women’s Group. At the same time, we have expanded our programming in both Peterborough and Northumberland.

Every month, we organise activities to engage newcomers in the local community while building networks and friendships. Some highlights from this past year include: apple pie making and holiday ornament making workshops; trips to a Peterborough Petes hockey game and an Electric City Football Club Game; the Curve Lake Pow Wow; Lang Pioneer Village; and special social gatherings like Soup and Salsa and the annual Winter Potluck.



*Winter Celebration*



*Spring Celebration*



*Soup and Salsa*



*Harvest Fall Potluck*



*Try Curling at the Peterborough Curling Club*



*Trip to Curve Lake Pow Wow*

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We organised the first Canadian Multiculturalism Festival in Peterborough in June. Through the week, a series of “Try It” workshops gave newcomers and community members opportunities to experience new foods, sports and crafts. We also collaborated with the Downtown Business Improvement Association to organise a Multicultural Food Crawl and Food Sampling Day with six local restaurants. The Festival wrapped up with a panel discussion with Trent faculty and our ED on the narrative of immigration and multiculturalism in Canada.



“Try It” Indian Spices

On July 1, we hosted the first in-person “Lessons from the Land” event with the support of Diverse Nature Collective, Kawartha Land Trust, Pathways to Stewardship and Kinship, DNA Stage and Community Race Relations Committee of Peterborough. All were welcome to reflect on how to heal our relationship with the land and with Indigenous Peoples. They could participate in medicine walks, traditional games, drum teachings, a beading circle and participate in virtual film screenings organised by ReFrame Film Festival.



Photo credit: Nimkii Osawamick, DNA Stage, who led the drum teachings

The return to in-person activities gave us an opportunity to mark Welcoming Week for the first time in Peterborough. We organised a fun “One Night in Havana” Community Dance and Picnic and other members of the Peterborough Immigration Partnership also organised events.



Pablo Terry & Sol de Cuba played at One Night in Havana

We retained our focus on empowering newcomers to share their stories to build bridges of understanding and empathy. We organised a Storytelling Circle and a poetry workshop to provide hands-on training in storytelling. The Living Library public education program continued its outreach online and in-person, with 7 newcomer speakers, 19 speaking engagements and an audience of over 500 people.



Participants from the “Write Real Words” workshop with poet Niambi Tree

In addition, we engaged groups and classrooms with 10 readings of “Building a Home”. This children’s book was produced in 2021 and takes us on the journeys of 6 children who are settling into a new life in Canada. The book is available in 9 languages on our website, with printed copies available for purchase.



Community Development Coordinator Bisham Ramoutar with Tanys Howell, Refugee Lead for the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board

# NORTHUMBERLAND



Pottery Painting

Over this past year, NCC’s office in Northumberland was busier than usual. In the spring of 2022, the war in Ukraine forced many to leave that country and travel to Canada to find a safe place to live. A number of these families arrived in Northumberland. We supported them with information, referrals and connections to much-needed community resources.



Apple Picking at Moore Orchards



Pumpkin Carving

Offered initially in response to newcomer isolation due to the pandemic, our Community Connections program became stronger as COVID restrictions were lifted. There were regular activities that engaged families and individuals in activities around the county such as apple picking, Hallowe’en pumpkin carving and a youth bowling night. With consistently high participation levels, this trial program has now become a permanent part of our community outreach in Northumberland.



Holiday Cookie Decorating



Women’s Group Bowling



Spring Wreath Making event



Gingerbread House Making



Women’s Group volunteering at the Northumberland Fare Share Food Bank



Baking Apple Pies at the Women’s Group

# VOLUNTEER PROGRAM



CERTIFICATE FOR YOUR VOLUNTEER SERVICE AT THE  
**NEW CANADIANS CENTRE**

This certificate is awarded with gratitude and many thanks to

## *Our Volunteers*

for your contributions to the community,  
going above and beyond to support newcomers,  
and dedication to making Canada a better place to live.

With well over 200 active volunteers this past year, we benefited greatly from the knowledge, expertise, energy and efforts of our community. Volunteers worked with clients as tutors, support team members, community navigators, drivers and social conveners. They also played key roles as presenters and facilitators of English language classes and conversation groups, our Women's Group, Canadian citizenship preparation courses, arts programs, special events and activities.

***You are the backbone of the NCC. From the bottom of our hearts – Thank You!***

## VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

### PETERBOROUGH



**BARBARA HERRING** is a long-time volunteer at the New Canadians Centre. She moved to Peterborough from Toronto in 2010 and has taken on several volunteer roles since then. Barbara supports a number of newcomer families, including by leading support teams for government-assisted refugees. Her kindness has earned her the title of "Honorary Grandmother"! She also helped facilitate dance sessions with the women's group, tutored clients in English, and helped to set up at events.

Not only does she participate in our programs, she has made great recommendations to improve our services. For example, she suggested a "Bring your Mail to the Group" day for clients so that they can receive support with interpreting mail and report cards. Barbara also brings a wealth of knowledge to the NCC, drawing on her expertise in equity and diversity. We are so lucky to have Barbara!

## VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

### NORTHUMBERLAND



**YASMIN ALFUTAYH** is a newcomer from Syria that has lived in Northumberland since 2016. She was very supportive during our events last year. In particular, she generously offered her van and assisted in taking care of over 30 pumpkins for our pumpkin carving event. She often arrives early to events to help with setting up activities and always stays to the end to help with clean up.

Yasmin is very talented in arts and crafts and has shared her skills with us as the instructor for the Spring Wreath event, one of our most successful events in Northumberland. As a new volunteer to NCC, we see great potential for her continued involvement!

## YOUTH VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

### PETERBOROUGH



**MARIA MAHFUZ** is a Grade 12 high school student from Bangladesh who moved to Peterborough in 2019. Maria began volunteering with the NCC in 2021 on the Youth Welcome Team, where she helped welcome newly-arrived families and came up with the idea to bake home-made treats for the families. She also donated her brother's English Language Learning books to families at Glebe House.

In addition, Maria has taken on several roles with the New Canadians Centre's Young Leaders (NCCYL) Council. As the Media Coordinator, she always took initiative during weekly NCCYL meetings, was very diplomatic and well spoken, and tried her best to create an inclusive environment. This year, Maria became the NCCYL President, showing her leadership and public speaking skills while sharing her experiences at different events. Throughout all of her volunteer work, Maria truly encompasses NCC's mission and values.

# VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

## BECKY ROGERS COMMUNITY PARTNER OF THE YEAR

*This award is dedicated to the memory of Becky Rogers (1955-2017), a tireless advocate for immigrant integration, diversity and multiculturalism in our community*



The Peterborough Newcomer Health Clinic, in close collaboration with the New Canadians Centre and Peterborough Family Health Team, has made a significant positive impact since its launch in January 2023. With the shortage of family doctors in Peterborough and the changing nature of healthcare services, access to healthcare is very limited for unattached patients. This leaves vulnerable clients with few options.

Dr. Madura Sundareswaran realized that this was a big gap in local health care and developed a small pilot project to conduct initial health screenings, referrals and immunization catch-up for vulnerable newcomers. With the assistance of RPN Kim Chep, patients are followed for a period of approximately six months.

In addition, Dr. Sundareswaran is enlisting the help of nurse navigators and coming up with creative ideas to help illiterate patients track their insulin levels independently. Her goal is to empower each client with the knowledge, understanding and tools to be able to manage their health on their own after their file is closed, and she is certainly on track to do so!

## DINDIN VILLARINO COMMUNITY PARTNER OF THE YEAR

*This award is dedicated to the memory of Dindin Villarino (1970-2017) who believed in the power of human connection and kindness to create a thriving and inclusive community in Northumberland.*



The “Northumberland for Ukraine” initiative was established to support families fleeing the war in Ukraine and arriving in Northumberland. Led by organiser Olena Hankivsky, the initiative has welcomed more than 30 Ukrainian families by providing a warm welcome to Canada. The group organised very quickly following the outbreak of the war and continues to be a resident-led initiative, one that is unique in the ecosystem of supports provided to displaced Ukrainians.

Since the spring of 2022, over 250 residents have come together to help. They have provided accommodation through homestays, donated clothing and household items, assisted with employment search and transportation, and much more. Volunteers have also organised numerous fundraisers to assist with resettlement expenses. As a group, they have committed to providing six months of wraparound support for each Ukrainian family.

In December 2022, with Northumberland for Ukraine’s support, Café Lviv in Port Hope was established. Over 15 Ukrainian families are involved in the operations of the restaurant which serves authentic Ukrainian cuisine.

Congratulations and our thanks to Northumberland for Ukraine, and all partners, homestay hosts and volunteers who have been instrumental in this resettlement effort across Canada!

# VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

## RUTH HENNESSEY SPIRIT OF GIVING AWARD

*This award is named after Sister Ruth Mary Hennessey (1936 – 2020) in honour of her generosity, leadership and commitment to welcoming newcomers and refugees in our community. Sister Ruth's involvement in the work of refugee resettlement began in the 1970s when she and many volunteers in the Peterborough community came together to welcome refugees fleeing the communist regime in Vietnam. It became clear that stable housing was a key factor in supporting the settlement of refugees and this laid the seeds for the establishment of Casa Maria Refugee Homes with Sister Ruth at the helm.*

*As the lead consultant for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Peterborough, the Sponsorship Agreement Holder for private sponsorship of refugees, Sister Ruth was generous and enthusiastic in sharing her knowledge. She exemplified the notion of welcome – "Mi casa es su casa". We honour her legacy.*



Elizabeth Rahman is a tireless advocate for inclusion and cross-cultural understanding. More than 30 years ago, Elizabeth was one of the founding members of the Kawartha Muslim Association. She suggested the name of the mosque (Masjid Al-Salaam, the Peace Mosque) rather than more traditional names, to send a message of peace to the wider community.

In 2003, Elizabeth co-founded the Abraham Festival and remains an active community organiser. The network brings together Jews, Muslims, and Christians for interfaith understanding and to teach compassion, justice, and peace. They organise an annual event that has, in the past, highlighted issues related to diversity, conflict and peace, the environment, and the role of women in faith. They have also shared their message with the community through outreach events such as panel discussions, film nights and dances.

With the support of the wider community in Peterborough, the Abraham Festival exemplified the goal of supporting each other as extended family by sponsoring two Syrian refugee families in 2015.

In 2019, Elizabeth co-founded The Oasis, a community centre based on Islamic principles that hosted jummah prayers at St. James United Church. Through her work on the Oasis and the Abraham Festival, she collaborated with St. James United Church to host the "Hope Abides" multicultural, multi-faith gathering to support those who have experienced any type of loss. This partnership extended to the organising of a gathering to provide friendship and support following the earthquake in Syria and Türkiye in 2023.

Elizabeth is a founding member of the Multifaith Network formed in Peterborough after 9/11. She is past Chair of the Kawartha/Lakeshore Regional Multifaith Committee (a sub-committee of the Canadian Multifaith Federation), which supports chaplains in government institutions such as prisons & hospitals; and Secretary of the Spiritual & Religious Care Partnership Council at Peterborough Regional Health Centre.

Elizabeth has served for many years on the Coordinating Committee of the Peterborough Immigration Partnership and the New Canadians Centre Board of Directors.

Amidst all of these roles, Elizabeth's real passion and contribution is one-to-one connection and support for people who are new to Canada. She leads with respect, empathy and compassion and is an inspiration for what can be achieved when we genuinely listen to each other.

**Thank you for walking with us,  
every step of the way!**



**NEW  
CANADIANS  
CENTRE**  
PETERBOROUGH

## **WE ARE...**

The New Canadians Centre Peterborough is a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to supporting immigrants, refugees, and other newcomers in Peterborough and surrounding areas. We are governed by a volunteer Board of Directors.

## **OUR VISION**

A vibrant and inclusive community where people who are new to Canada thrive and are valued.

## **OUR MISSION**

We empower people who are new to Canada, so they can be recognised as equal and valued members of Canadian society, and we provide leadership to cultivate their meaningful economic, social, and cultural inclusion in our community.

## **OUR VALUES**

Respect, Equity and Inclusion, Collaboration,  
Dedication, Celebration

Everyone  
welcome.



**The New Canadians Centre  
gratefully acknowledges our  
funders:**

**IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP  
CANADA (IRCC)**

**EMPLOYMENT & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
CANADA (ESDC)**

**DEPARTMENT OF CANADIAN HERITAGE**

**THE FUND FOR GENDER EQUALITY,  
SUPPORTED BY A COLLABORATION  
BETWEEN COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS OF  
CANADA AND THE EQUALITY FUND, WITH  
SUPPORT FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF  
CANADA.**

**MINISTRY OF LABOUR, IMMIGRATION,  
TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT  
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FOUNDATION**

**NEW CANADIANS CENTRE PETERBOROUGH**

221 Romaine Street  
Peterborough, ON K9J 2C3  
Tel (705) 743.0882 Fax (705) 743.6219  
info@nccpeterborough.ca  
www.nccpeterborough.ca



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