Everyone welcome.





ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT 2024-2025

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Dear Members of the NCC Community,

As the Chair of the Board, I want to acknowledge the dynamic environment in which the New Canadians Centre operated this past year. Amidst the often challenging public sentiment regarding immigration, the essential work of welcoming and integrating newcomers remains as critical as ever.

This year, I am proud to report on significant steps we have taken to strengthen the foundation of the NCC for the future. A truly momentous achievement was the purchase of our building, securing a permanent home for the organization at the location we have occupied since 2012. This provides invaluable stability and continuity for the newcomers we serve and our dedicated team.

Further reinforcing our sustainability, we successfully renewed our core funding agreements with the federal government for the next three years, and we have initiated a 5-year financial plan to diversify our revenue. Support from donors is an important part of our plan and we are so grateful for the more than 400 individuals and businesses that contributed over \$300,000 to our work last year.

We are also preparing for a significant transition as our Executive Director, Andy Cragg, will be concluding his nearly six-year tenure in June. Andy has overseen a period of considerable growth and positive transformation, and we are deeply thankful for his leadership and dedication. We look forward to announcing the next Executive Director this summer.

These milestones underscore our commitment to being prepared and proactive in serving newcomers. They are made possible by the unwavering commitment of our staff, volunteers, funders, and donors. Thank you for your continued support as we navigate the challenges and champion the invaluable contributions newcomers bring to our community.

Ghada Hussein Board Chair

Ghada Hurr

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ghada Hussein Chair
Elizabeth Rahman Secretary
Ponvily Ravindranathan Treasurer
Kim Blackwell Director
Ghazi Jarrar Director

Edward Kloosterman Director
Simon Liston Director
Karen Lynch Director
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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



In a year which saw shifting immigration policies and changing public attitudes towards migrants, our vision remained clear: a vibrant and inclusive community where people who are new to Canada thrive and are valued.

Last year, we supported 2,148 unique clients - a record-breaking number - navigate their day-to-day settlement challenges, including the impact of policy changes that made it harder for families to access permanent residency and stay in our community; that halted private refugee sponsorships, a key mechanism for family reunification; and that reduced access to crucial publicly-funded language classes.

We also launched new programs and services to help newcomers find meaningful employment, a key challenge with the unemployment rate for recent newcomers being almost double that of the Canadian average, and over 20% for newcomer youth.

And we continued to maintain the high quality of our programs and services - I am proud that an incredible 96% of our clients rated our services as good or excellent.

This is truly a testament to the passion and dedication of our staff and volunteers who are personally invested in welcoming newcomers to our community.

Regardless of changing immigration policies and levels, the broader demographic reality is Canada's continued reliance on immigration for almost 100% of our population growth. In this context, NCC's services for newcomers and our work to foster a welcoming community will undoubtedly remain at the forefront of the social and economic success of our region.

As I prepare to move on from my role, I reflect on this key ingredient of our success: NCC is fundamentally about people helping each other through friendship, solidarity, empathy, and a genuine desire to create the kind of community that we all want to live in. I am grateful that I got to be at the heart of this work, and I look forward to being part of it with you for years to come.



Andy Cragg
Executive Director



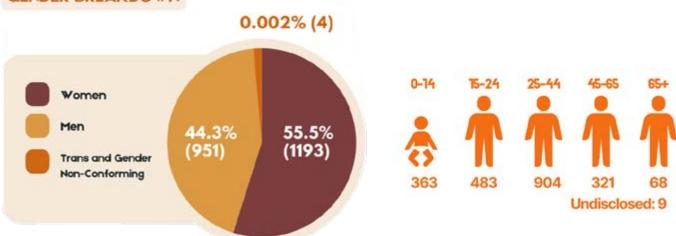
NEW CLIENT IMMIGRATION PROFILE

IMMIGRATION CATEGORY	2024-2025	2023-2024
Canadian Citizens	71	69
International Students	223	259
Temporary Foreign Workers	195	179
Permanent Residents	376	385
Refugee Claimants	77	50
Unknown	10	48
Visitor	105	154

OP 10 LANGE
English
Arabic
Spanish
Ukrainlan
Russian
Dari
Hindi
Farsi
French
Urdu

Syria
India
Nigeria
Ukraine
Afghanistan
Philippines
Iran
Pakistan
China
Colombia

GENDER BREAKDOWN



SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Settlement Services remain at the heart of NCC's newcomer support. When a new client arrives at our office, a Settlement Counsellor meets with them to gather essential information and address any immediate questions or concerns. Support ranges from assistance with government documentation to orientation to local services.

Many clients arrive with complex situations and multiple needs; our staff provide direct assistance or connect them with other NCC programs or specialized community resources.

This year, we continued to serve a significant number of temporary residents, including international students and their families, temporary foreign workers, and refugee claimants. These groups often face heightened challenges due to limited access to government supports, and many sought help with housing, food security, and employment.

In March, the federal government ended special measures under the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET), prompting increased demand for support among Ukrainian clients navigating the transition.



Tools 101 Workshop for Newcomer Women



HOPE TO HOME: SUSANA'S JOURNEY OF COURAGE, COMMUNITY, AND GIVING BACK

My name is Susana Fernandez. In 2022, I made one of the most important decisions of my life: immigrating to Canada. I left Mexico with excitement, fear, and hope - seeking new opportunities for my family. Fate brought us to Peterborough, a quiet and welcoming city.

Everything was new: the language, the weather, the customs. We were disoriented, but not alone. Selah House, a shelter for refugees, welcomed us with warmth, and guidance. Through them, we met the New Canadians Centre (NCC), which has been key to our integration.

NCC helped me from the start - offering English classes, job workshops, and a space where I felt welcome. The women's group strengthened me emotionally. Step by step, I built friendships and found stability for my family.

Now, in 2025, I volunteer at NCC to support others starting from scratch. The NCC gave us more than services - it gave us hope. Thanks to them, I can now dream big and give back.



REFUGEE CAMP TO STUDENT LEADER: ALBATOUL'S JOURNEY

Born in Syria in 2007, Albatoul Alshraideh fled war at age seven and spent years in Jordan's Zaatari Refugee Camp. At nine, she arrived in Canada through private sponsorship. She did not speak any English nor had she undergone any formal schooling.

Through determination and resilience, she caught up academically and no longer needed English language support by the time she was in high school.

Albatoul's leadership flourished - she was elected student trustee for the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board, representing thousands of students.

Her journey has not been easy - she mourned the loss of her baby brother and supported her father through a leukaemia diagnosis. Yet she pressed forward with strength and grace.

Now, in 2025, she celebrates her acceptance to the University of Ottawa, where she plans to study law.

Albatoul's journey is a powerful reminder of what newcomer youth can achieve when given the opportunity, support, and belief. She is not only a survivor - she is a shining example of what it means to lead with courage, empathy, and strength.

YOUTH AND FAMILY PROGRAMS

The NCC's Youth and Family Program supports newcomer children, youth, and their families through partnerships with both the public and Catholic school boards.

Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) assist parents with school registration, connect with teachers and staff to support students, and meet directly with high school youth. They help families navigate the education system and address emerging concerns.

A highlight of the year was the successful "Welcome to School" event held in September.

Beyond the classroom, NCC engages youth through after-school programs, volunteer opportunities, and leadership development. Newcomer youth regularly gather for recreational and educational activities, and also access employment and career counselling to support their transition into the workforce.

To further support families, NCC provides on-site childcare during programs such as the Women's Group, settlement appointments, and workshops. Children enjoy safe, engaging activities while their parents access services.

A memorable highlight this year was the first-ever Youth-Led Multicultural Night, which welcomed over 100 guests for an evening of food, performances, and cultural sharing - entirely organized by newcomer youth!



WORKPLACE INTEGRATION

In 2024, NCC supported 103 clients in finding employment through personalized counselling and job-matching support.

Employment is a critical step in the newcomer journey, yet many face unique challenges—from language barriers to a lack of Canadian work experience. Our employment team focuses on clients facing multiple barriers, offering individualized support to meet their goals.

Services include one-on-one job search assistance, resume and interview preparation, and mentorship in specific career fields. Our staff also work closely with local employers to facilitate strong matches and support both parties through the hiring and onboarding process.

To enhance job readiness, NCC offered several training workshops this year, including food handling, first aid, and customer service & cashier training. A new partnership with UTIMUS brought hands-on training in construction, including certifications in working at heights, backhoe, and forklift operation.

We also launched a new youth employment initiative, funded by Employment and Social Development Canada, which provided targeted skills training. The first cohort focused on construction and manufacturing, and a second cohort will begin training in hospitality in Fall 2025.

Through these services, NCC continues to help newcomer clients build confidence, gain skills, and access meaningful employment opportunities in our community.





BUILDING SKILLS, GAINING CONFIDENCE: AHMED'S EMPLOYMENT JOURNEY

Ahmed Ali Yakub, a 25-year-old privately sponsored refugee from Somalia, arrived in Peterborough in Summer 2024. Despite some experience working in a warehouse overseas, he was not confident communicating in English and had never interacted with a Canadian employer.

From February to March 2025, Ahmed enrolled in NCC's Breaking into the Sector (BITS) Program. He diligently improved his soft skills and workplace English. He also gained certifications for forklift and scissor lift operation, enhancing his employability for local entry-level manufacturing roles.

Through BITS, Ahmed secured an interview with a local wholesale distributor. Though unsuccessful, this first Canadian interview experience was a valuable lesson.

With newfound confidence, Ahmed applied for more positions and interviewed with Ritz Plastics for a Machine Operator role. Impressed by his recent NCC training and dedication, Ritz Plastics offered him the job. Ahmed started work in the middle of April and appreciates the company's efforts to ensure he feels comfortable, competent, and welcome in his new position.



FROM FACTORY FLOORS TO FLIGHT INTERIORS

Roshan Alkhalil arrived in Peterborough in April 2023 with her family and a wealth of skill developed through years of hard work.

As an older child in a family of six, she took on responsibility early. While living in Turkey, she worked in a factory producing suitcases and high-end leather goods - honing her precision and mastering industrial sewing.

Eager to build a new life in Canada, Roshan enrolled in English classes, earned her driver's license, and completed the Breaking Into the Sector (BITS) pre-employment program. Her determination was clear from the start.

When her employment counsellor at the New Canadians Centre connected her to an Upholstery Technician opportunity at Flexjet, Roshan saw a perfect fit. She excelled in the sewing and blueprint assessment and secured the position.

Today, Roshan works in a role that reflects both her technical skill and her professional potential. She is thriving as a young tradeswoman and has quickly become a role model for other young newcomers in the Peterborough community.

RESETTLEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (RAP)

The New Canadians Centre's Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) plays a vital role in welcoming government-assisted refugees (GARs) to Peterborough and helping them navigate their first few months in Canada.

In the past year, we supported 27 families - a total of 105 individuals - from diverse countries including Colombia, Somalia, Afghanistan, Syria, Sudan, Cuba, and Eritrea.

Upon arrival, families face numerous challenges: addressing urgent health needs, applying for government documents, securing housing, and enrolling children in school.

Many arrive with little or no English, and some have limited literacy in any language. Our RAP staff work closely with each household, offering personalized support and connecting them to local services that help lay the groundwork for a stable future.

This growing diversity enriches our community but also presents unique challenges, such as language barriers and adapting to unfamiliar systems.

Still, Peterborough continues to be a welcoming home. While a few families chose to relocate to join loved ones in other cities, we are proud that most have chosen to stay - contributing to the vibrancy and resilience of our community.

Together, we are helping to build a stronger, more inclusive Peterborough.

CASE MANAGEMENT

This year, the Case Management (CM) team at the New Canadians Centre supported 148 newcomers, most of whom had arrived through the government-assisted refugee program.

These individuals and families often face complex challenges and require wrap-around support during their first months in Canada.

CM staff work closely with clients to help them stabilize and build the confidence to manage their day-to-day needs. This includes support with budgeting, paying rent and bills, accessing health care, and learning essential skills such as using Google Maps or email.

Some clients face particularly difficult circumstances - like serious health issues or parenting alone without family nearby.

The CM team offers personalized care, connecting families to trusted services, community agencies, and social networks, including other newcomers and long-term residents.

The team also advocates for clients navigating systems that can be overwhelming, ensuring they feel supported and empowered every step of the way.

A highlight this year was seeing several clients secure stable housing in a newly-built, rent-geared-to-income complex - a significant milestone on their journey to independence and belonging in Peterborough.

The ultimate goal of the CM team is to help newcomers not only settle but thrive in their new community.



HOW IBRAHIM FOUND HIS PATH AND PURPOSE IN CANADA

When Ibrahim Said Mohamad first entered Case Management, he was quiet, anxious, and unsure of his path forward in Canada. Medical and language barriers made it difficult for him to work or pursue his goals. But with persistence, resilience, and the right support from the New Canadians Centre, Ibrahim began to make progress.

The Case Management team helped him navigate Canada's healthcare system so he could address his health and prepare for employment. With guidance, he secured his first few jobs and eventually landed a permanent position as a Superintendent's Assistant.

Along the way, Ibrahim's confidence grew. He became more sociable, stepped into a leadership role among his peers, and emerged as a valued member of the NCC community.

Today, he is thriving - proof of what is possible when determination is met with the right support. Ibrahim's journey reflects the strength and potential that newcomers bring to our community.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Our Community Connections program has grown significantly this year, welcoming more newcomers into a wide variety of activities, events, and groups.

In total, over 200 individuals participated, reflecting the increasing demand for connection, learning, and community engagement.

Our goal is to help newcomers feel at home in Peterborough - by meeting others, exploring the region, and learning how to navigate local resources. English learning continues to be a cornerstone of connection.

Thanks to our dedicated volunteer facilitators and tutors, we expanded our English conversation groups and one-on-one tutoring - offered in person, online, and out in the community.

With so much happening, here are just a few highlights:

 Seasonal activities like pumpkin-carving, fall crafts, and winter wreath-making

 Excursions to Camp Kawartha, Lang Pioneer Village, and Lakefield College School

Our weekly Women's GroupOur festive Winter Celebration



These moments foster belonging and create lasting friendships - one conversation, activity, and shared experience at a time.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



NORTHUMBERLAND

Our work in Northumberland County continues to grow and thrive. What began as a one-person settlement service has expanded into a dynamic team offering settlement support, employment services, language assessments, community connections, and volunteer opportunities.

This year, 247 newcomers connected with NCC in Northumberland. We hosted 22 group activities, providing opportunities for newcomers to build friendships, explore the area, and feel more at home in their new community. Highlights included:

9 monthly Women's Group meetings

 3 community trips: Applepicking, a hike at Presqu'ile Park, and a visit to the Alderville Pow Wow

 8 recreational events: Swimming, skating, bowling, a summer picnic, museum visit, and a community potluck



We also launched the **Northumberland Welcome Pass**, a new initiative offering newcomers free or discounted access to local businesses and attractions. This is an exciting step toward deeper community integration.

These gatherings are more than just social outings. They help newcomers build a sense of belonging, gain confidence, and find their place in the community.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Volunteers are at the heart of the New Canadians Centre. They work with our clients as tutors, community navigators and social convenors. They also play key roles as presenters and facilitators of English language groups, our Women's Group, citizenship preparation courses and special events.

From the bottom of our hearts - Thank You!

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

PETERBOROUGH

MARYAN MOHAMED is a beloved leader and tireless volunteer in Peterborough's Somali and newcomer communities. Since 2019, she has supported every Somali government-assisted refugee family arriving through NCC - offering rides, home-cooked meals, hospital visits, interpretation, cultural guidance, and so much more. She treats each newcomer like family, often showing up before we even call. From setting up internet to teaching Somali recipes, Maryan's compassion and reliability have inspired others and deeply shaped the newcomer journey in our community.



NORTHUMBERLAND

MARINA DI FRANCESCO has been retired for several years, but her deep interest in helping people new to Canada led her to join NCC as a volunteer in 2023. Inspired by her father and grandparents who emigrated from Italy, Marina feels a strong urge to give back. A friendly, happy, and enthusiastic presence, she has supported three newcomer couples so far. Passionate about cultures and language, Marina is learning Spanish and always eager to connect through empathy and kindness.



YOUTH VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR PETERBOROUGH



to simply offering a warm smile, she makes others feel seen and supported. Her positivity and leadership continue to brighten every space she enters,

and we are so grateful for her inspiring contributions.



NORTHUMBERLAND



DHUHA GHAKHAR is a passionate, dedicated young leader supporting newcomer youth in Northumberland. Inspired by her family's journey from Pakistan, she offers friendship and guidance in the ESL room each lunch hour, creating a warm, welcoming space for new Canadians. Through school and her volunteer work with the New Canadians Centre, she bridges cultures with empathy and joy.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The Becky Rogers Community Partner of the Year Award is dedicated to the memory of Becky Rogers (1955 - 2017), a tireless advocate for immigrant integration, diversity and multiculturalism in our community.



ST. JAMES UNITED CHURCH is a welcoming, hope-filled, and compassionate faith community that lives its values through action. Whether hosting multi-faith gatherings, sharing hot dogs at NCC events, or donating community theatre tickets to newcomer families, St. James consistently shows up with generosity and heart. Their ongoing support reflects a deep commitment to inclusion and kindness, making them a cherished partner in our shared vision of building a more connected and caring community

The Dindin Villarino Community Partner of the Year 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 YOUTH WELLNESS HUB NORTHUMBERLAND (YWHN),

opening this summer, will offer youth a welcoming drop-in space to access mental health, social, and community supports - all under one roof. With a focus on prevention and early response, the Hub helps bridge gaps in accessing care. Since joining YWHN, Alexis Forde has been a passionate champion of newcomer inclusion, working closely with NCC to ensure newcomer youth voices help shape programming from the very beginning.

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.

Ferne Cristall (1954 – 2025), a dedicated political activist, feminist, and passionate advocate for immigrants and refugees, is this year's recipient of the Ruth Hennessey Spirit of Giving Award.

Ferne's belief in a broad definition of family and community was central to her life and work. She developed and championed an English as a Second Language (ESL) program in Peterborough. Her classroom became a welcoming hub, where she tirelessly supported students from diverse backgrounds, bolstering their confidence and ensuring they felt welcome and safe.

A former student shares, "I was treated differently by others as a refugee, but Miss Cristall always had my back. She encouraged me to chase my dreams, even though I did not speak any English when I first arrived in her classroom. Room 210 at PCVS was a safe and happy place for me."

Among many social justice endeavours, Ferne was an active contributor to the ReFrame Film Festival since its inception. Her dedication was recognized with the YMCA Peace Medallion in 2006.

After retiring from teaching, Ferne was instrumental in the Abdullah Sponsorship Group, working to reunite a Syrian refugee family. Her colleagues and community members established the Ferne Cristall ELL Fund at the Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough in her honour. Each year, the Fund provides a scholarship to an English language learner who, despite facing challenges, has shown an unwavering commitment to learning. Ferne has left a profound legacy of compassion and community building. We are grateful for the many gifts she has shared with us and the sparks of hope that she has helped to ignite.



DONORS

The New Canadians Centre expresses our gratitude to the 417 individuals who made a financial contribution in the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Financial support from community members is our second-largest source of funding and enables us to deliver many of our programs and services. More than that, it is tangible indication that our community believes in the work we are doing together to make our community more welcoming and inclusive.

We want to recognize the following individuals who made substantial financial contributions in the last year:

\$5000+

Gail Burton

Glenda & Edward Hunter

Greg Bishop & Neera Jeyabalan

Robert & Nancy Martin

Betty & Bill Morris

Part Time CFO Services Inc.

Peterborough Concert Band

\$2,000+

Gerry & Deb DiLeo

Jennifer Fraser

Hajni Hos & Steve Ross

Laura Keresztesi & Andy Cragg

Ed Kloosterman & Valerie Anderson

Linda & Alan Slavin

\$1,000+

Barb Chisholm & Tom Miller

Catherine Downey & Paul Benoit

Barbara Herring

Jen & Paul Hitchmough

Armand & Denise La Barge

Yvonne Lai

Jane LowBeer & Richard Peachey

Brayden McGregor & Jackie Vanek

Barbara Moffat

Robert Ross & Glen Spurrell

Nancy Thomson & Dave Warda

Sylvia & Edmond Vanhaverbeke

Bobcaygeon Brewing Company Ltd

CUPE Local126

Lakefield College School

\$500+

Jim Abel

Sheila Collett & Ben Taylor

Paul Cragg

Cameron Douglas

Susan Green

Lucinda Hage & Murray Leadbeater

Eleanor & George Hamilton

Jo Hayward-Haines

Gwyneth James

Debby & Red Keating

Simon Liston

Dave McNab & Kristy Hiltz

Eric & Elaine Monkman

Carolyn & Jim Moore

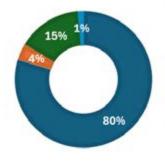
Gail Morrison & Dick Risk

Craig Paterson Ravi-Inder Soligo Jennie Versteeg

Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation District 14

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT 2024-2025:

Total Revenue: \$4,121,593



- ■80% invested into Programs & Services
- 4% Fundraising & Promotion costs
- 15% Administrative costs
- 1% Surplus

Our full audited statements are available at nccpeterborough.ca/publications



WE ARE ...

The New Canadians Centre is a non-profit charitable organisation dedicated to supporting immigrants, refugees and other newcomers in the City of Kawartha Lakes, Haliburton County, City and County of Peterborough, and Northumberland County. 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 that 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

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 OF ONTARIO (MLITSD)

CITY OF PETERBOROUGH

UNITED WAY OF PETERBOROUGH & DISTRICT

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF GREATER PETERBOROUGH

MCKAY FAMILY FOUNDATION

RBC FOUNDATION

TD CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

KAWARTHA CREDIT UNION

CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS OF ST JOSEPH IN CANADA

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