



**NEW CANADIAN
SUCCESS STORIES**
(page N3)

**CULTURE
LINK**
(page N7)



**TORONTO'S
DIVERSITY**
**A CITY OF
NEIGHBOURHOODS**
(page N6)



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News worth sharing.

Where do you come from?

► In Toronto, you probably have ties to somewhere else

If you live in Toronto, chances are you have ties of some kind to another country. Statistics Canada figures show that about half of the city's population is made up of immigrants while almost one-quarter is made up of 2nd generation newcomers with at least one parent born outside of Canada.

"What makes Toronto really remarkable is that we have traditionally been built by immigrants," says Rahul Bhardwaj, president and CEO, Toronto Community Foundation, a charitable foundation that targets community needs. While immigration was once dominated by European nations, in recent years Canada has welcomed an influx of Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Korean, Arab and Japanese immigrants.

Today Toronto is home to almost 2.7 million people (5.5 million when you count the surrounding areas). There are 200 ethnic origins speaking more than 140 languages and dialects. The most common languages spoken after English and French, include Italian, Chinese languages, Portuguese, Punjabi and Urdu (languages spoken in Pakistan), German, Spanish, Polish, Tagalog (spoken in the Philippines) and Tamil!

What's nice for newcomers to Toronto – and the 2006 census shows that annually, almost half of all immigrants to Canada settle in the Greater Toronto Area – is that many different immigrant communities already have roots here. "The Canadian culture is one of openness" says Bhardwaj. "You can come here and be Canadian, and you can also retain part of



your own personal connection with your own heritage and history."

With an eye on increasing recognition and opportunities for newcomers, and

continuing to solidify Toronto's reputation as a vibrant, successful and liveable city, the next decade is sure to be an exciting one for everyone.

**Toronto is defined
by a rich and
vibrant community
from all around
the globe.**

We are truly one of the most diverse cities in the world - Torontonians speak more than 100 languages and dialects and the latest Statistics Canada figures show that 50% of the city's population is made up of newcomers. So we're delighted to partner with TD Canada Trust to bring you this special celebration of multicultural Toronto, a city we are proud to call home.

CultureLink: Stories of Friendship

When Heba Elshamy came to Canada from Egypt in 2006, she found the adjustment difficult. Home all day with a baby while her husband worked, the former teacher had no friends and knew nothing about resources like daycare.

In 2008, she enrolled in English language classes at CultureLink, a community-based organization serving immigrants and refugees in southwestern Toronto. Encouraged by her teacher, Elshamy applied to the Host program, which matches newcomers to established Canadians for six months.

She was paired with Amy Richards, also in her early 30s. Through Richards, she learned about Canadian culture and community services, as well as Mothercraft College, where she studied early childhood education on a scholarship. With coaching from Richards and support from Richards's family, Elshamy landed a full-time teaching assistant job with the Toronto school board.

"It was so helpful to meet Amy," says Elshamy. "She was an inspiration. She's my best friend now."

This is only one of Culture-



▶ CultureLink executive director Ibrahim Absiyi

Link's many success stories since the Host program started 22 years ago. "It is the fastest program for integrating newcomers into Canadian society," says executive director Ibrahim Absiyi. "They're getting information straight from the host. It also gives a lot of joy to the people who volunteer."

The Host program also matches families, and recently paired MP Gerard Kennedy and his family with Ukrainian newcomers as part of CultureLink's new community leaders campaign.

And there's more. There

are also walking and biking groups, seniors aerobics classes, a seniors and youth garden program in partnership with The Stop Community Food Centre and an award-winning green initiative that encourages newcomers to maintain their bike-riding habits in Canada.

Says Absiyi, who worked in business in his native Somalia and has been with CultureLink for three years: "I spent enough of my life looking for profit. I came to Canada wanting to do something different, something to help people. I sleep better at night now."

—Denise Barnard

Resources & Support

This past summer, 65 people boarded school buses for a day of sightseeing in Niagara Falls, Ont. This might not sound unusual, except that many of the women had never travelled outside of Scarborough before, says Dr. Kazi Sadrul Hoque, executive director at Settlement Assistance and Family Support Services (SAFSS), the organization that planned the trip. By all accounts, the women, who attend SAFSS support groups for domestic abuse survivors and isolated older Afghans, had a great time.

With four locations in Scarborough and one in Markham, Ont., SAFSS offers a range of services for newcomers and refugees – English language education (with childcare), one-on-one counselling,

cultural orientation, translation, employment and more.

Thanks to referrals from other agencies and an outreach program that targets malls, places of worship, libraries, community centres and apartment buildings, SAFSS had 15,000 clients last year. Almost half of them (from South Asian, Chinese, Afghani, Iranian, East African and European backgrounds) visited in person; the rest got help over the phone or via e-mail. Sixty per cent were women.

Says Dr. Hoque: "Programs like ours offer an opportunity to help people integrate into the Canadian mainstream and get acquainted with what they can do in a new country."



▶ Dr. Hoque receives Canada's Citizenship Award

KAZI ADMAN HOQUE

Dr. Hoque Honoured

On October 22, 2010, with his family looking on, Dr. Kazi Sadrul Hoque received Canada's Citizenship Award, which recognizes outstanding Canadians who have promoted citizenship and helped newcomers in their work and volunteering.

"I found satisfaction in helping others," says Dr. Hoque.

—Denise Barnard

Recipe for Community in Action

There's a lot going on in St. James Town this fall – and it's all good. Residents are planting bulbs together, renovating an outdoor basketball court, supporting a youth basketball leagues, and taking courses to build skills in carpentry, bicycle repair, first aid and CPR, and food handling. There's also a program for adults on how to start your own small business.

It's all part of Recipe for Community, a Toronto Community Foundation-led initiative that helps residents improve their professional and personal skills while helping to create a stronger sense of community overall.

St. James Town is a culturally-diverse community of more than 17,000 people in downtown Toronto. More than two-thirds of residents

are newcomers to Canada; the neighbourhood is home to people representing over 25 different backgrounds.

The Recipe for Community initiative is a partnership with the City of Toronto's Office of Partnerships and Tower Renewal program, and has been supported by Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment's Team Up Foundation and many others.

Here are some of the government and other organizations that help new Canadians to settle into their new lives in Toronto:

- **Settlement.org**
www.settlement.org – provides information and resources for immigrants to Ontario (its First Days Guide is available in over 20 languages).

- **Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC)**
www.Thementoringpartnership.com – brings together recent skilled immigrants and established professionals in occupation-specific mentoring relationships.
- **Ontario Ministry of Citizen and Immigration**
http://www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/english/newcomers/agencies.shtml – provides a comprehensive list of agencies that help newcomers to Toronto and region.
- **COSTI Immigrant Services** www.costi.org – provides employment, educational, settlement and social services.
- **Toronto Immigration and Settlement Web**

Portal http://www.ontarioimmigration.ca/en/living/OI_HOW_LIVE_TORONTO.html – Provides information about living, working, studying and doing business in Toronto.

- **Skills for Change**
www.skillsforchange.org – provides learning and training opportunities for immigrants and refugees.

- **CultureLink**
www.culturelink.net – facilitates the settlement of newcomers to Toronto.
- **WoodGreen**
www.woodgreen.com – helps immigrants and their families settle into their new lives in Canada.
- **The YMCA of Greater Toronto**
<http://ymcatoronto.org/en/newcomers/index.html>

- provides programs and services to help newcomers settle into their new lives in Canada.
- **Acces Employment**
www.accestrain.com – helps job seekers from diverse backgrounds to find employment in Canada and integrate into the job market.