

## International Women's Day

by Hellen Zheng, Stanley Teo, Wilson Yu and Glen Walsh

The International Women's Day Centenary Celebration at Lillian H Smith Library was a big Hit of the Welcoming Community this month. It was a evening marked by fun, inspiration and solidarity among women and their male supporters, companions and friends.

Over 100 women joined us for an evening of celebration, empowerment, inspiring stories and entertainment from members of the community! Even in the days following the event, it still generated a lot of buzz at CultureLink — here are some of the comments we received from women and men colleagues of CultureLink

Congratulation on a great successful International Women's Day Centenary Celebration at Lillian H Smith Library yesterday! Especially to



of joy and warmth...

Dear Ladies,

As I sit here in the comfort of my home recovering from all the excitement from last night, I can't help going through such a great feeling in the company of strong women at the International Women's Day Centenary Celebration at Lillian Smith Library on Tuesday, March 8th.



the LSP team for the great leadership and partnership and a job so well done. The full house of women, from young girls to seniors; the smiles on the faces and flowers in the hands of women; the inspiring speech and thrilling performance.....you name it! It was an evening full  
- **Helen Zheng**

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**"At CultureLink we believe that:**

- **Newcomers are critical to Canada's future;**
- **Our staff and volunteers are our organization's most important resources."**

**International Women's Day .... cont'd**

As one of the partners on board mentioned, "All of the staff and volunteers deserved to be proud of the celebration they put on". Sarah Bradley (Branch Head) filled in the MC' shoes on a very short notice, Ted Belke checked the out the sound system from Long & McQuade and provided much needed calming tech support throughout the event when organizers were panicking away backstage and most importantly, CultureLink's placement students - who did quite a bit of footwork and connections for this event (literally !!) Glen, I am sure you don't get much opportunity to tell your spouse that you are spending the evening with a 100 other women! Elizabeth - I hope that your car doesn't reek of the spilled Starbucks coffee ! ... and so many more .....



**The future needs  
nurturing!**

**- Stanley Teo**

I'm the guy on the bcc list..... I'm a strong believer that: *"It's WOMEN's day, but MEN cannot resist taking part in..."* Surely this was an event for everyone! I know the three partner organizations well. I had been a staff at University Settlement for more than 10 years and frequently visited the Lillian Smith Library when I was working in the neighborhood and had joined CL for the past three years. They are energetic and professional. We're glad to see we're coming together to organize this kind of service collaboration, which has great impact on community development



Way to go, and keep on keeping on!

**- Wilson Yu**

I wanted to thank everyone who work on this event and their strong dedication. The event had a great turnout and had very inspiring words. This is a excellent example of building strong partnership. Thank you Stanley for doing everything you do it was another great event. Very proud to be the LSP manager for all of their innovation, energy and dedication. I'm looking forward to our next LSP event.

**- Glen Walsh**

**Featured Speakers included:**

- ~ Hon. Jean Augustine, Ontario Office of the Fairness Commissioner
- ~ Connie Guberman, Status of Women Officer, University of Toronto

See more about International Women's Day on the Youtube  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Or-41SIRrw&feature=relmfu>

## A letter to all Host Volunteers

by Fei Tang

Dear Host Program Volunteers:

While the warmth of the Host Picture on this page still resonates well with us, we will from now on depart from the program that carries this image. It was with mixed feelings that I am formally informing you of the drastic changes that have taken effect to our program. Host is a word that we all hold dear and near to our heart. For the past 22 years, over 4000 dedicated volunteers like you have put heart and soul into this CultureLink's flagship program and made it a long-lasting success. Through your hard and meaningful work, the program has touched the lives of tens and thousands of newcomers to Toronto.



Your contribution has not only been appreciated by the newcomer communities, but also been recognized by the program's funder, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, as pointed out in a recent CIC communiqué - "the Host program has engaged communities to help newcomers feel at home and to assist them to realize their full potential in Canadian society. Through the interaction of program staff, program participants, program partners and community members, the Host program has helped to build a welcoming and inclusive community".

In the same communiqué, CIC also announced that the Host Program had completed its mission and would be transitioned into a modernized settlement and integration programming structure – Community Connections. "Community Connections is a key component of CIC's Settlement Program and an essential thread that influences all aspects of integration."

Based on the new mandate, we have developed a new program called Community Connections Mentorship Program. This is a program that brings new and established Canadians together to build a stronger, more welcoming and inclusive community by matching newcomers with trained and experienced volunteer mentors in programs such as: New Canadian Experience, Citizenship Mentoring and Career Mentoring. In the coming months, we will update you on the details of the program and its service streams. We call out to you, our former Host Volunteers, for your continuous support and renewed participation as mentors in the new program structure. Please contact us for further engagement.

**A new program, a new vision, with the same old passion.**

We affectionately call our new program CCMP which not only abbreviates the Community Connections Mentorship Program, but also stands for Connection, Commitment, Motivation and Preparation. With these four key words in mind, the CCMP Mentors will keep the newcomers connected, committed, motivated and prepared for a bright future in Canada.

## **A Welcoming Social Media Community....**

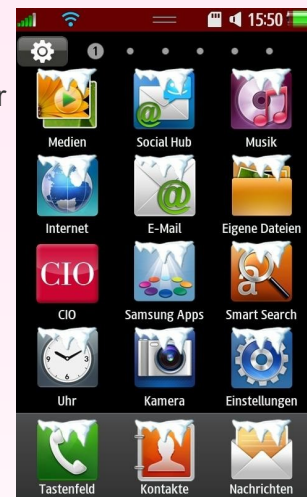
**By Barbora Gomezova**

The goal of an online Welcoming Community was to make it easier for participants in our Welcoming Communities programs to communicate with each other. While Facebook seemed like the answer, many of us were not sure it was right for us. Today, I am happy to say that from those tentative beginnings, we have started to build a better understanding of the amazing possibilities of this social media tool. Now we can post updates on our events or group meetings with ease and in a matter of seconds. And, just as importantly, we can hear from our community and learn what is on their mind, what is important to them.

What is more, we have moved beyond our own initial – and rather humble – idea of improving links within our own community. Today, our Facebook community includes politicians, business people, artists, scientists and other people from across the Greater Toronto Area. We have built up a network of people interested in community work, social justice and newcomer settlement. We have also helped to broaden and deepen our interests in the arts and how the arts help to bring people together, the importance of a healthy lifestyle, cycling, the environment and much, much more.

Everyday, Facebook is helping to bring our community into contact with likeminded people. In March, for instance, we posted information on our page about an event tied to International Women's Day. Nadine Williams, a Toronto-based poet and linguist, noticed it and got in touch with us. And so thanks to Facebook, we got an opportunity to listen to Nadine stage a reading of one her poems during our event. What a great performer she is!

So let me end with a warm thank you to all 454 of our amazing Facebook friends and supporters. And if you have yet to connect with us, look us up on Facebook! We are the Welcoming Communities.





**CultureLink** is a settlement agency located at Bloor and Dundas West in downtown Toronto. For twenty-one years, we have upheld our mission:

**CultureLink** is dedicated to facilitating the independence and full participation of newcomers in Toronto's diverse community. CultureLink works within an anti-discriminatory framework to ensure a respectful, safe and inclusive environment.

We hope you have enjoyed Volume Two, Issue 4 of our Welcoming Community Newsletter, and that you will enjoy future issues.

**VISIT US AT:**

**[WWW.WELCOMINGCOMMUNITY.CA](http://WWW.WELCOMINGCOMMUNITY.CA)  
[WWW.CULTURELINK.NET](http://WWW.CULTURELINK.NET)**

2340 Dundas Street West, Suite 301  
Toronto, ON M6P 4A9  
Phone: 416-588-6288 Fax: 416-588-2435

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Fei Tang**  
Program Manager, Newsletter Supervisor

**Hilda Warren**  
Newsletter Coordinator

**Barbora Gomezova**  
Host Settlement Worker

**Hellen Zheng**  
School Settlement Worker

**Stanley Teo**  
Library Settlement Worker

**Glen Walsh**  
LSP/JSW Program Manager

The Welcoming Community Newsletter invites you, the members of the CultureLink Community, to share your story with us. Please send your story, comments and thoughts to:

[hwarren@CultureLink.net](mailto:hwarren@CultureLink.net)

**Wilson Yu**  
Director, Program & Personnel