



WELCOMING COMMUNITY NEWS

CultureLink HOST

Volume 1, Issue 6

April 2010

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

Marie Margis



On behalf of Culture-Link, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank all of our volunteers who have played an invaluable role for CultureLink. You have empowered and helped shape the experience of the newcomer community by simply being a friend. You have benefitted and provided another dimension to their experience of life in Canada by facilitating communication, by encouraging them and by permitting CultureLink to match you based on your skills, needs and desires.

Thank you also for coming to us with an open mind. Not only has your work contributed to the goals of our organization, but it is **you** who represent and promote the high

standards of the Host Program. It is **you** who create an opportunity to expand your own cultural horizons, which is a remarkable experience in itself.



I can honestly say that the Host Program was a life-changing experience for me 19 years ago when I was matched with a family, and I continue this amazing friendship with them today. So I know first-hand how long-term friendships provide momentous experiences to our participants and we appreciate your commitment to community service in dealing with cultural differences.

We truly appreciate our fantastic volunteers because you are essential to the work of CultureLink. You lend expertise and credibility to the advancement of the mission of our organization, and the results are immeasurable.

CultureLink would not exist without the support, advice and help from our volunteers, and so, from the bottom of our hearts, we all thank you: Thank you for the generous gift of your time and talent; thank you for your efforts, and thank you for your ongoing support of our work. You **have** made a difference!

Marie Margis has been working for CultureLink for 18 years .

Inside this issue:

<i>Thank you Volunteers</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Volunteer Community Spirit</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Messages from Volunteers</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Welcoming Community Champions</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Host volunteers</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Volunteer Appreciation Invitation</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Contact us</i>	<i>7</i>

“At CultureLink we believe that:

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





Volunteer Community Spirit

By Elisa Ionadi

Each week, Tandem profiles a volunteer in the community whose work inspires readers to reach out and lend a hand. This week, Tandem spoke with Diana James, who volunteers with CultureLink. CultureLink's Community Volunteer Program provides opportunities for individuals, particularly newcomers to Canada, to learn, practice and utilize their skills and knowledge in a variety of areas.

What is your volunteer position?

"I actually do a few things for CultureLink. I help with the conversation circle, where we meet out of Toronto libraries from 6 p.m.-8 p.m. to welcome new Canadians and encourage them to come and join us. We sit around in a big circle and everyone introduces themselves then we break into little groups so we can get to know one another on a more personal level. Each group is usually given a topic to speak about. You don't have to focus on that topic, you can just have an open conversation. That is one of the functions for CultureLink and the one I actually like the best. Another thing is, they like the volunteer to be a host. That means you meet with a new Canadian once a week for two hours and you do that for six months. This is a good experience because we get to talk to them about our experiences in Canada and just have basic conversations with them. We

don't teach them English, however we do correct them if they say something wrong or are searching for a word. What I like to do is bring the Metro newspaper and just go through it with them because it shows everything that's going on in Toronto and around the world and at the same time gives them something to read in order to strengthen their English."

Why did you decide to volunteer with CultureLink?

"It just seemed very interesting to me because I am very interested in the world and people of different background and cultures. I actually saw an ad on the subway and it just appealed to me. When I was a kid I found Toronto rather boring until all these new cultures came in and it started to interest me. I think that the fact of helping people was secondary for me, I don't do it to feel good but I am glad to be helping them. As a volunteer I feel like it is an amazing learning to be working with these people." [...]

What do you find inspiring about your volunteer position?

"Just helping people is inspiring. Knowing that they really do appreciate what you do for them. Also, it's very rewarding just to see them grow. I've seen a lot of the people I have



Diana James, Host Volunteer

worked with get a job, get married, buy a house and a car and have a baby. That's very exciting for me because I try to stay in touch with as many people as I can and to see how far they have come is very inspiring."

How has volunteering helped in other aspects of your life?

"I've always been a shy person, even though I was in business all my life and I had to interact with other people on a daily basis. I used to have a lot of anxiety before going into a room full of people, but because of volunteering I have gotten rid of that. When you have to work with new Canadians you are the one who has to approach them, so by doing this it has definitely made me feel more comfortable when talking to people."

This article originally appeared in Tandem Newsletter, April 4, 2010.



Messages from Volunteers

Hello Eman!

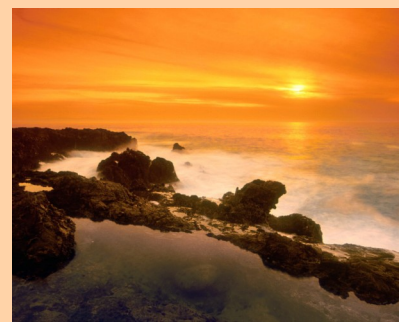
By Amalia Koutakos

I would be honoured to accept your invitation. I have enjoyed volunteering and attending CultureLink's workshops. I have learned so much from your Settlement Organization and have had such pleasure in helping "my family" - wish I could do more!

However, I must inform you, I'm really shy and humble about things like this - I do what I do from the heart, it feels so natural.

Oh gosh! Thank you for deciding to recognize me as a special volunteer, from a special organization to a special family. I don't think I could be a special volunteer if I wasn't placed with the right people and contributing to an organization that takes these issues seriously.

Take Care. With my utmost respect to you and your efforts as an organization.



"Eman, thanking you for giving me my first opportunity returning to Canada as a volunteer, something I missed while I was abroad."

My CultureLink

By Nicole McKenzie



"I truly value this opportunity to welcome newcomers to my community."

My CultureLink volunteer experience has been extraordinary and I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to participate actively in the English Conversation Circle, and in addition, I've been fortunate to be successfully matched with two wonderful newcomers, via the Host Program.

I've enjoyed every moment learning about diverse cultures, sharing Canadian customs and resources and making new friends from all over the world. I truly value this opportunity to welcome newcomers to my community.

Thanks to CultureLink for facilitating this positive experience for both Newcomers and Volunteers.



Welcoming Community Champions..... Your Support Counts

By Rakesh Bhardwaj

Some Community leaders have extended their hands to help the newcomer cause and have said “YES” to become a Welcoming Community Champion. CultureLink envisions a welcoming community for newcomers where all the stakeholders are united in supporting the successful settlement and empowerment of newcomers in Canada. This is done through pertinent information, employment in the area of training, education and choice, further education, and training and friendship. We want newcomers to settle in Toronto with ease and succeed in their life.

Our Welcoming Community Champions are already involved or going to be involved in advocacy for the newcomer cause by sensitizing the general population about needs and challenges of the newcomer population. As well, they will help them with their needs on the wider public platform, impacting on public opinion and policies with a general understanding of their needs.

Bringing social change by extending a helping hand to the newcomer cause is very essential for people living in Toronto, whether a newcomer to Canada or born here. Embracing diversity and giving an opportunity to

newcomers to build their life in a new environment is crucial. We need to build a momentum so that newcomers don't need to look forward to their ethnic community groups, their place of worship or old friends as the only support system. We need to create an environment where newcomers feel welcome at the place where they choose to live, work, study and go for recreation. We need to care that newcomers are able to find jobs related to their education, experience, skills and expertise. We need to open our hearts and find out how to support a newcomer who recently came to live in our neighbourhood.

Our community leaders who recently became “Welcoming Community Champions”:

Sandeep Kumar Agrawal Associate Professor, Int. Assoc. School Director & Grad. Pros. Director, School of Urban and Regional Planning, Ryerson University

Laurel Broten Minister of Children and Youth Services and Minister Responsible for Women's Issues in Government of Ontario, Member Provincial Parliament (Etobicoke-Lakeshore)

Sandeep Dhiman Senior Manager, Credit Portfolio Management CIBC

Usha George Dean, Faculty of Community Services, Ryerson University

Asha Luthra President, Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce

Senator Vivienne Poy Entrepreneur, fashion designer, community activist and a Senator

Kris Reyes Reporter, CityNews, City TV

Parag Tandon Director, Annual Giving, Humber River Regional Hospital Foundation

Your support counts in building a Welcoming Community for newcomers to Toronto!



Our volunteers 2009-2010

Thank you!



Abdul Majeed	Douglas Harrison	Julia Farnar	Mary Angeli Ponteras	Robert Kolosowski
Ala Tempska	Edie Saunders	Julia Ptaszyk	Mary Ibrahim	Roberto Ulep
Alan Webb	Edwin Go	Julia Vlad	Mary Nemis	Robyn Cauchy
Alberto Rodill	Edwin Pavey	Julie Harlet	Maryam Nazemi	Rosemary de Simas
Alex Bikhazi	Ele Gasteiger	Julie Prior	Maryline Badalian	Rukiya Jaffer
Alison Joan Gray	Elinora Gerchak	Juliette Philips	Matt Snyder	Rushein Banga
Alma Roussy	Elizabeth Greig	Kalin Stacey	Maureen Macleod	Ruth Millard
Alper Sungur	Elizabeth Vincze	Kanchan Sthankija	Maureen Millard	Ryan Dancey
Amalia Koutakos	Elna Burgess	Kanista McAfee	Maymuna Koshen	Ryan Sequeira
Amy Richards	Elvis Ibrahimovic	Karey Kosatschenko	Mehran Abrahamyan	Sameh Kullab
Amy Ouellette	Enrique Mero	Kate Corcoran	Melanie Hardie	Sandeep Dhiman
Ana Mitzi Pisis	Enrique Peralta	Kaye Makawi	Melanie Warnock	Sandra Poczobut
Andrea Meeson	Erika Arrulo	Kelly Ball	Melissa Leong	Sara Lane
Andreea Vasiliu	Francesca Millescamps	Khaled Elmaghaby	Mellisa Leong	Sara Rodrigues
Andrew Hunt	Francine Felices	Kit Wong	Michael Alvarado	Sarah Curry
Andrew Kwon	Frank O'Rourke	Kristen Burns	Michael Ayoub	Sarah Tran
Andrew Sunstrum	Frederick Jarema	Kristie O'Neill	Michael Bobbie	Sean Kelly
Andy Cragg	George D Lima	Kristina Dzudovich-	Michael John Wheeler	Sharon Cape
Anirban Shinghaw	Gisela Buckler	Ramirez	Michael Pooley	Shira Babins
Ann Cameron	Hasan Al-Batran	Kwai Li	Michael Ursi	Siegfried Rinas
Ann Hustis	Heather Sheehan	Laura Katz	Michael Wang	Siobhan Montague
Anne Marie Oxley	Hua Cai	Laura Keresztesi	Michelle Kelly	Slava Toth
Arnaud Trussart	Ihor Duda	Laure Ampilhac	Michelle Li	Sneh (Nicki) Verma
Aviva West	Indika Kottogoda	Lauren St.Louis	Morgan Gibson	Stacey Roderick
Bahareh Yaraghi	Ioulia (Julia) Savitch	Leidy Johana Castaneda	Murray Henderson	Stan Nikipierowicz
Barbara Ernst	Ivan Cavlina	Leon Damonze	Murray Lightman	Stephanie Carter
Barbara Mendelson	Izabela Waglay	Leonie Soltay	Murray Minuk	Stephen Briones
Barbara Moran	Jackson Rock	Leslie Fauvelle	Myrna Dales	Steve Rouben
Beatriz Juarez	Jacqueline Jesionczak	Lewis Farrell	Nathan Wynes	Steven Richards
Bonita Leung	Jake Chiappetta	Li Yu	Nicole Goss	Sue Fernandes
Brenda Barron	James Pang	Liane Gillies	Nicole McKenzie	Suk Yin Ng
Brian Prodan	Janet Barnard	Lidia Jarmasz	Nicolina Basil	Sunny Lee
Bruce Forsey	Jarrett Hasson	Lief Strong	Nilam Bedi	Susan Armstrong
Bushra Butt	Jean Zajac	Linda Adutumwaah	Nina Andru	Suzanne Campbell
Caitlin Parsons	Jeannette Patoine	Linda Bailey	Nina Boric	Tanya Bruce
Carly Erickson	Jeff Gough	Linda Robinson	Noha Yahia	Tara Badal-
Carmelina (Mel) Barwick	Jeni De Carlo	Ling Chow	Olga Nowakowski	Mohammed
Carol McCann	Jennifer Fabella	Lisa Ann Pfau	Olga Rybachok	Teressa Nakamatsu
Catherine Ransom	Jennifer Tan	Lisa Karen Christie	Orla Zhu	Thomas Janzen
Catherine Riddell	Jenny Reich	Lisa Koltowski	Oz Ziv	Thomas Morrison
Chris Pollock	Jesse Farb	Lisa Simms	Pam Brodie	Thomas Penabad-
Christa Wypkema	Jessica Appiach	Lisa Wong	Patricia Ritacca	Casas
Christopher De Rosa	Jessica Beck	Lister Chang	Patrick Tobin	Tom Pettie
Christopher Royle	Jessica Deutsch	Liza Bangawan	Paul Burd	Tracey Leonardo
Ciara Byrne	Jessica Foster	Lorraine Hudson	Paul Jenkins	Tracy Smith-Carrier
Cicely Arthur	Jessica Mende	Lucil Lukban	Paula James	Trevor Brown
Claire Cormier	Joanna Reading	Luis Medina	Pedro Ortiz	Vedran Tintor
Claudia Burt	Joel Mukwede	Luis Ricardo Vargas	Penny Andru	Vicki McCudden
Dan Wong	Johanne McCreath	Luke Heemsbergen	Penny McDougall	Victor Palomo-
Daniela Rapacci de Paz	John Anderson	Mairi Omand	Perriane Lam	Conlledo
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CultureLink

HOST PROGRAM

**IS CORDIALLY INVITING YOU TO
VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION EVENING**

Thursday, April 22

From 6 to 8 P.M.

CultureLink

**2340 Dundas Street West, Suite 301
(East entrance on Bloor Street West, inside
Crossways Mall, next to Public Health)**

**Honoring the contribution of our volunteers
to the lives of newcomers**



Celebrating National Volunteer Week

RSVP. 416-588-6288 ext. 210

Or bgomezova@culturelink.net

Host Program is funded by:



**Citizenship and
Immigration Canada**

**Citoyenneté et
Immigration Canada**



CultureLink HOST



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Fax: 416-588-2435

**VOLUNTEERS, NEWCOMERS
FILL OUT OUR ONLINE REGIS-
TRATION FORM, AT:**

<http://www.culturelink.net>

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 our CultureLink Host Newsletter!

**KNOW SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO JOIN
CULTURELINK'S HOST COMMUNITY?
HAVE THEM SIGN UP!**

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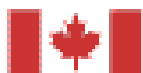
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Tandem Newsweekly

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