



WELCOMING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

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North Bay Joins the WCI

North Bay is the latest member of the Welcoming Communities Initiative. It is represented on the Governing Council by Don Curry, Executive Director of the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre, and John Nadeau, a professor at Nipissing University.

The city will be finishing the first year of its Local Immigration Partnership project in August and will move into the implementation phase starting in September. Laura-Jane Coté will continue as the LIP officer. The LIP project is a result of work underway since 2005 by the North Bay Newcomer Network (NNN), a partnership of 28 agencies and three levels of government.

NNN began in the Mayor's Office of Economic Development. It soon expanded to six people from the community and then

to 28 members. It is co-chaired by Economic Development Officer Marla Tremblay and by Don Curry. NNN has three committees: a welcoming community committee, a settlement committee, and an employers' council. In addition, NNN inputs into immigrant attraction initiatives, but the mandate for attraction lies with the city.

NNN organized an immigration symposium in 2006 that attracted more than 80 people, most of them immigrants, to Canadore College. The overwhelming consensus from that day-long event was that the city needed a full-service settlement agency.

Responding to this – and with the aid of a FedNor (Industry Canada) grant - NNN hired an intern in 2007 to conduct a study of the experiences of immigrants in North Bay. This, in turn, led to discussions with Citizenship and Immigration Canada that resulted in ISAP and Host funding for the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre as well as support for Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Bay & District under the Youth Host program. Both agencies continue to play lead roles in NNN and the LIP project. NNN has also been responsible for getting an immigration portal up

and running, bringing it online in January at www.northbayimmigration.ca. A March story in the Toronto Sun about North Bay's newcomer attraction initiatives and a subsequent advertising campaign relying on ethnic media in the Greater Toronto Area has resulted in an exceptional number of portal visitors.

NNN has made extensive use of the media with many articles about immigrant issues in the local media, a multicultural radio program and email newsletters to its credit. This spring, NNN received a Newcomer Champion Award from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration for its efforts in attracting and retaining newcomers to North Bay by promoting inclusion and the hiring of immigrants.

Spotlight on Student Research

This month's spotlight on student research within the WCI is on Leah K. Hamilton. Leah is a PhD Candidate in Industrial/Organizational Psychology at the University of Western Ontario. She can be contacted at lhamil2@uwo.ca.

In the past ten years, over 50% of the individuals who immigrated to Canada were economic immigrants, selected for their skills and ability to contribute to Canada's economy (Citizenship & Immigration Canada, 2008). Yet despite their advanced university degrees and extensive work experience, many of these individuals are underemployed – working in jobs where their education, skills, and previous work experience are not fully utilized (Li, Gervais, & Duval, 2006). While research shows that underemployment is a pervasive problem among immigrants in Canada, the predictors and consequences of this underemployment have received little empirical attention. Through a series of three studies being conducted for her doctoral dissertation, Leah is addressing this research gap by developing and testing a comprehensive model of the experience of underemployment among immigrants in Canada.

Perceptions of Discrimination in Health Service Experienced by Immigrant Minorities in Ontario

Bruce Newbold (McMaster University) and Ginette Lafreniere (Wilfrid Laurier University) are conducting a WCI study to examine perceptions of racism and discrimination in the access and use of Ontario health care. The research will also look at the effects that perceived discrimination has on immigrant health, paying particular attention to the health

outcomes of vulnerable, racialized groups. The study, funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Ontario Region, consists of an initial literature review, followed by a survey of health care providers and newcomers in several Ontario cities. The literature review is largely complete.

Despite widespread recognition that discrimination has an important effect on health, scientific examination of experiences and effects remains surprisingly limited. Largely, it focuses on race or the experiences of visible minorities, including African Americans in the U.S, Maori in New Zealand, and Caribbean and South Asian populations in the UK. What work has been completed in Canada suggests that visible minorities and immigrants who experienced discrimination or unfair treatment are more likely to experience a decline in self-assessed health and a worsening self-reported mental health (i.e., increased sadness, depression, and loneliness).

The lack of Canadian literature constitutes a significant omission, especially given Canada's mandate of equal and universal access to adequate health care and services. For a country in which newcomers have accounted for two thirds of total population growth over the past ten years, and where the foreign-born and visible minorities are expected to represent approximately 28% and 32%, respectively, of the population by 2031, such knowledge gaps are particularly significant. With the project now moving into the survey phase, the researchers are expecting to

obtain important insights into both policy and practice. Results will be shared through the WCI community and other dissemination venues.

Temporary Employment Opportunity

A temporary research position in migrant farm worker health at the International Migration Research Centre based at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario is currently available. This position may be of interest to students or graduates in social sciences, medicine or health-related fields. The main task will be to conduct interviews with Jamaican and other English-speaking Caribbean migrant farmworkers on health-related issues over the course of the summer, with the potential for some additional work in the fall. Background or familiarity with Jamaican/Caribbean language and culture is an important asset.

Interested applicants should contact Dr. Janet McLaughlin at jmclaughlin@wlu.ca and Dr. Jenna Hennebry at jhennebry@wlu.ca for more information.

Thank you

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