

## Immigrants of Distinction Awards - 2012 Nominations Open Now!

Do you know someone who has made exceptional achievements in the areas of Arts and Culture, Business, Community Service or Professional Services?

What about a youth who has demonstrated leadership?

Or a business or organization that has demonstrated an exceptional respect for diversity?

Nominate them for the Immigrants of Distinction Awards today!

Nomination forms are available online at:

[www.immigrantservicescalgary.ca](http://www.immigrantservicescalgary.ca)

### WHO CAN BE A MENTOR?

In the professional world, the term "mentor" refers to a more experienced person who advises, assists and serves as an example for a newcomer to a role. The mentor themselves can benefit tremendously from this partnership as well, especially when it comes to immigration. Perhaps it is better to think of the mentoring relationship in this case as "co-mentors".

The MAPLE program helps skilled immigrants act as mentors during internships, helping to guide employers in cross-cultural understanding and communications.



## Summer 2011

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## Discussing Diversity - Community Events

**How can an event change the world? You never know when you might inspire even one person to make a difference. Over the summer of 2011, Immigrant Services Calgary has hosted some thought-provoking discussions with the community on how to make actionable change to promote diversity in Canada.**

During the early morning hours of June 16th, 2011, Immigrant Services Calgary hosted an event at the Calgary Chamber of Commerce that brought together Mayor of Calgary, His Worship Naheed Nenshi, with noted author and commentator Denise Chong. The event was made possible thanks to the generous sponsorship of:



The running theme of a seamless transition into Canadian life took root at the core of the discussion between Nenshi and Chong. Naheed Nenshi explains that, "A lot of folks assume that immigrants come to this country seeking a better life. That easy narrative is one that sometimes skips the transition. The myth of the cab-driving doctor is a true myth."

Some of the issues and challenges that newcomers and immigrants face when arriving in Canada are finding community organizations and a sense of belonging. However, another more life altering challenge is finding jobs honoring their previous experience or occupations.

"We should embrace the new challenge of helping immigrants settle in Canada and Calgary... This country would not be here if it weren't for immigrants."

Nenshi then noted, "Neighborhoods in Calgary are becoming increasingly segregated as the city is becoming increasingly diverse. Neighborhoods are segregated themselves by income, age, family status, and, more importantly, by ethnicity. We're also starting to see generational isolation."

"We should embrace the new challenge of helping immigrants settle in Canada and Calgary – culturally, and through policies and programs." Naheed Nenshi finished. "This country would not be here if it weren't for immigrants."

## Cultural Differences in the Workplace

Cultural differences are as many and varied as cultures themselves are. Misunderstandings of cultures at work can lead to decreased productivity and a generally unpleasant work environment for everyone involved.

When employees take the time to understand their co-workers' cultural backgrounds, they can all make a positive difference for their multicultural team. For example, an immigrant employee wants to know the expectations of Canadian office culture while his or her Canadian co-worker wants to understand more about the immigrant employee's cultural background for effective communication.

In view of this, many immigrant serving agencies, human resources practitioners and the government have suggested various ways for employers and employees to work harmoniously together in a diverse workplace.

### Talk

- A few open and honest discussions about the way of life in the employees' countries

### Paraphrasing

- An employee can briefly rephrase in simple and concise language what another team member says to ensure clear communication

### Patience

- Be patient as team members learn each other's ways of communicating.



**How do YOU make a difference in your community? I invite you to visit us on Facebook and share how you get involved with your community.**

At Immigrant Services Calgary, we help support change in our communities.

Our downtown location provides a one stop facility to help newcomers with everything from language assessments to settlement to career counselling and family programs.

We are proud of this comprehensive approach, yet we've learned that it isn't enough. That's why many of our staff and

volunteers are out on the front lines of Calgary's communities and neighborhoods, supporting newcomers through outreach, diversity training, settlement help, childcare and more. By actively reaching out to the far suburbs of our city, we are able to help newcomers who face transportation barriers.

Our volunteers are active, supporting newcomers with interpretations and translations. We have been active in supporting community events and festivals, and in celebrating the many ways of being Canadian.

## Small Actions Make all the Difference

Supporting Canada means supporting all of our communities. We need to **REACH ONE AND EACH ONE!**

We've been working hard and have connected with communities to inspire actionable change. Through community consultations, helping to support municipal immigration policies, we're seeing small changes and more success. We want to reach one and each one!

It is together that we create new beginnings, and together that we create a better Canada.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Din".

Din Ladak  
CEO, Immigrant Services Calgary

## How can corporations in Canada begin to leverage top newcomer talent?

At the June 22 breakfast symposium "INSPIRING WORKFORCE INNOVATION: THE IMMIGRANT ADVANTAGE" hosted by Immigrant Services Calgary, five distinguished speakers from a variety of corporate backgrounds examined how Canadian firms can maximize fully utilize on the talents and innovations newcomers bring to Canada.

According to Diana Mackay, Director of Health, Education and Immigration Programs at the Conference Board of Canada, research has shown that firms that hire immigrants outperform those that do not. New initiatives are focusing on helping companies adapt to hot economies and their pitfalls, particularly in forecasting labour needs and ensuring the availability of a talented pool of eligible workers from across the world.

With many Canadians poised to retire in the

near future, an injection of new workers will be essential to retaining Canada's productivity and employment numbers. Issues such as credentials, accreditation, language and Canadian work experience create barriers to employment for new immigrants, said Elsbeth Mehrer of Calgary Economic Development. Providing targeted workplace language training on top of general ESL classes will help to enhance workplace communication and give foreign workers a sense of belonging, suggested Susan Cassidy of the ERCB.

Successful examples of workforce integration were shared by Bill Campbell of Safeway Canada, who emphasized that diversity is a key ingredient to the success of the corporation. Adam Legge, CEO of the Calgary Chamber of Commerce confirmed the need to diversify to remain competitive,



## Citizenship

Immigrant Services Calgary is proud to provide newcomers with classes to support their journey to become Canadian citizens.

In 2010 we provided:

75 sessions overall

240 hours of class

We helped 292 people learn more about civic engagement and what it means to be Canadian.

## Programs Child Health Initiative Project (CHIP)

The Child Health Initiative Project (CHIP) inspires immigrant parents and kids ages 3-12 to stay healthy and active. CHIP operates out of the Mosaic Family Resource Centre as well as in various locations throughout the Calgary community.

CHIP has hosted lectures from Alberta Health Services, food safety courses and fun, active trips to the zoo and swimming pool. Diverse activities are specifically structured to keep kids engaged about being active such as dance, yoga and hapkido.

Zlatica Ristic, the Child Health Initiative Project Coordinator, emphasizes that these activities are particularly important among the younger generation. Increases in obesity and Type-2 diabetes among kids are both linked with poor diet and inactivity.

There are workshops for parents regarding diabetes, healthy eating, grocery shopping on a budget, fee assistance programs for recreation in the community, and other topics that are geared towards a healthy family life.

## My Experience of Becoming Canadian

Being an immigrant is an experience of learning. Becoming a citizen is the ultimate act of belonging. It is a moment that you will never forget. When you have just arrived to this country, you have not had the time to think about things other than learning and working hard to understand the thousands of new experiences that you will have every day.

To mention few of these experiences I may have to talk about the experience of a new language, working in new and unfamiliar environments, or finding out about other cultures that you have heard about but have never interacted with in real life.

There are different stages that an immigrant has to experience to become a Canadian. From my own experience there were different levels of psychological status before I could become a citizen.

The first level I will call it the “early birds” stage: the moment of discovering your wings to fly and seeing new ways to be yourself without forgetting who you are and where you come from. Just like the great Canadians ducks, who during the winter immigrate to

warmer places only to come back in the spring. The second stage is “learning to live in the chaos” which is the moment when a new order is emerges while you are trying to provide a sense of direction for your life. It happens even if you aren’t conscious of it.

“Being Canadian... means to embrace and live with the diversity of the world in the same country.”

Finally, the “Itsy Bitsy Spider” is the last stage of the journey. If you have passed the first two stages successfully, then you are still living in Canada. Your network is stronger than ever and you always go up the waterspout again even if the rain (or in this case the snow) comes to get you down sometimes. Like the Itsy Bitsy Spider, you know that the sun is there to dry the water and you will get up every time.

Between this last level and the moment of becoming Canadian is a special time of reflection and hope. You are not anxious but are excited to be

recognized and ready to make the switch from permanent resident status to citizen.

Being Canadian is more than getting a passport that is one of the rights that you get as a citizen. It means being a citizen of the world and being ready to embrace and live with the diversity of the world in the same country, learning from each other in peace and collaboration.

When I recently received my citizenship, I did my oath during a ceremony with around 200 people from more than 35 different countries. When we finished it didn’t matter how you were dressed or which religion you were or what you believed because everyone left the room with the feeling of belonging.

Citizenship is the recognition of your effort and the right to be called Canadian. Everyone was the same being different. It is the perfect way to describe the meaning of being Canadian: “to be the same being different”.

I thank God, for keeping our land safe and I thank Canada for opening your doors to me. Thanks my love to offer me your support and love.





## What's New with Immigrant Services Calgary

### • Youth Volunteer Program

The Youth Volunteer Program alone welcomed 15 new youth volunteers, three new mentors, and another member to the Youth Advisory Council. We've racked up a whopping 422 volunteer hours for July, including volunteering with the Mustard Seed, the Children's Cottage, the Crisis Nursery, and the Weekend to End Women's Cancers at the Currie Barracks.

### • After-School Program

The Afterschool Program has also seen a very positive season, including the beginning a new partnership with the Ismaili Council, the six-week program currently at the Franklin Jamatkhanna, and the Marlborough camp with 20 participants. In September, the program will be at St. Peter's Elementary School.

### • Youth Inclusive Neighborhoods

Having run the summer program at Forest Lawn Library, the Youth Inclusive Neighborhoods group has had a blast enjoying the season. Between group-bonding activities such as volunteering at the Drop-In Centre and going swimming as a group, the program is now looking for new locations to reach teens.

### • Healthy Start Calgary

Prenatal and postnatal programs will resume in September, with the first workshop on September 12th. Topics will include Medical Interventions, Labour and Childbirth Oral Care, Healthy Eating for Babies 0-1, Beat the Germs, and Family Planning.

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## A New Beginning - A Better Canada



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## Make a Difference. Become a Member.

Becoming a member of Immigrant Services Calgary is your chance to join a growing, thriving organization and to help the new beginnings that create a better Canada. Learn more about issues impacting immigrants in Calgary through community consultations.

## Give. Make Canada Home.

By donating to Immigrant Services Calgary, you are supporting 34 years of care. You are supporting programs and services that help newcomers and their families make Canada home.

Support a better Canada by visiting us online at  
www.immigrantservicescalgary.ca.

## Our Board:

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## Thank you to our Funders:

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Alberta Learns  
Calgary and Area Child and Family  
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