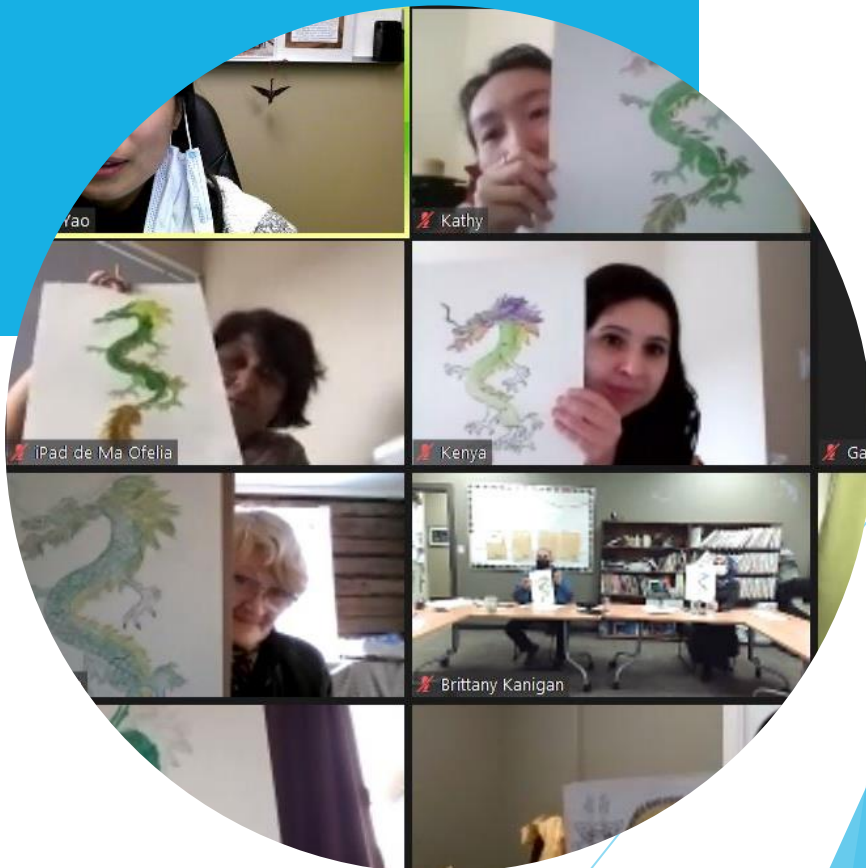


Together We're better

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2020-2021



KAMLOOPS
IMMIGRANT SERVICES



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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Fellow Members,

It has been a laborious year for the agency and its staff.

First adapting to the new normal due to pandemic restrictions and required technology upgrades, to meeting deliverables in our community with a successful approach.

The agency and staff have performed admirably during this unusual period and have displayed the strength of character that immigrants and visible minorities are known for.

We at immigrant services have managed these difficult times and have come out stronger than ever.

With our continued approach for excellence in service and expansion of the same, we are poised for a bright and strong future in our community. The best is yet to come!

The board of directors would like to thank membership and staff for their continued support, it allows our mandate for sustainable and best practices governance to be met, and to make Kamloops-Cariboo Regional Immigrants Society become the foundation our community requires.

Yours truly,

David Cruz
President
Chairman

REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Members,

Since we met through zoom last September, KIS staff continued the journey navigating through COVID-19 safety measures and developing new skills to serve clients efficiently in a virtual model. Our team members are brilliant and kind and helpful. Their ongoing determination to guide and advocate, no matter how, pays off. Beautiful testimonials, heartfelt stories and thank you letters are there to confirm it.

Lately I reflected on our clients courage and resiliency and how it is a privilege for us to connect in any way we can with them each day. Whether it is through phones, Zoom, WeChat, WhatsApp, Snapchat or in-person, what matters is that our services create lasting impacts.

Meanwhile everyone is doing their part to encourage COVID-19 vaccine uptake, dispel myths, and reduce vaccine hesitancy. We feel so much hope as vaccinations roll out and we look forward to a new normal in a few months.

I hope you'll enjoy reading some of the agency's success stories and recent highlights shared in the report.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact me directly.

France Lamontagne

OUR MISSION

We must always go back to our mission so that our decisions are client-centered.

To deliver programs and services designed to advance immigrants, migrants, refugees, visible minorities, first-generation Canadians and their families in becoming full and equal members of Canadian society.

Advocate for settlement, integration and multicultural issues on a local, regional and national scale. Take actions to eliminate racism against immigrants and visible minorities.

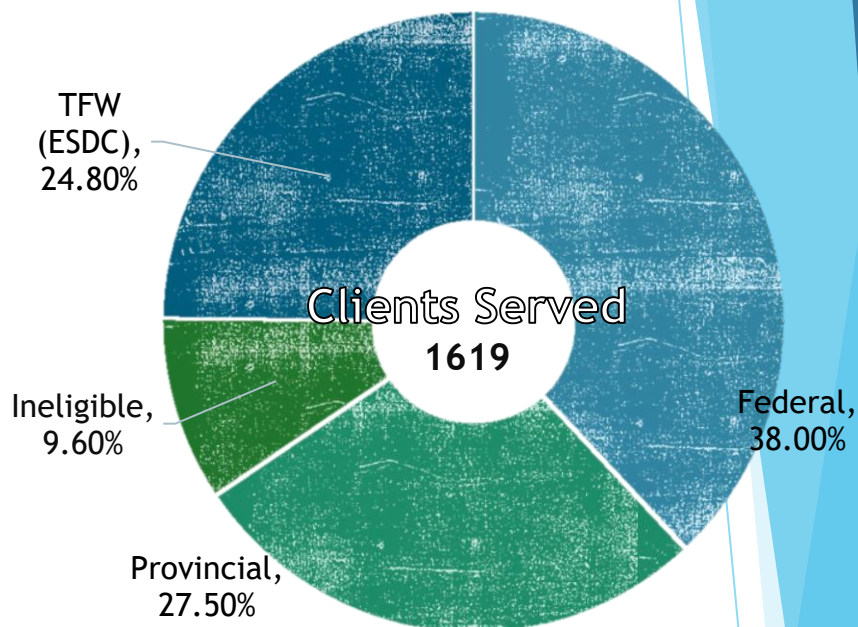
Raise awareness on the importance of immigration, multiculturalism and diversity in Canadian society. Promote respect and understanding in the elimination of barriers and challenges faced by immigrants, migrants, refugees and minorities.



2020-2021 at a Glance

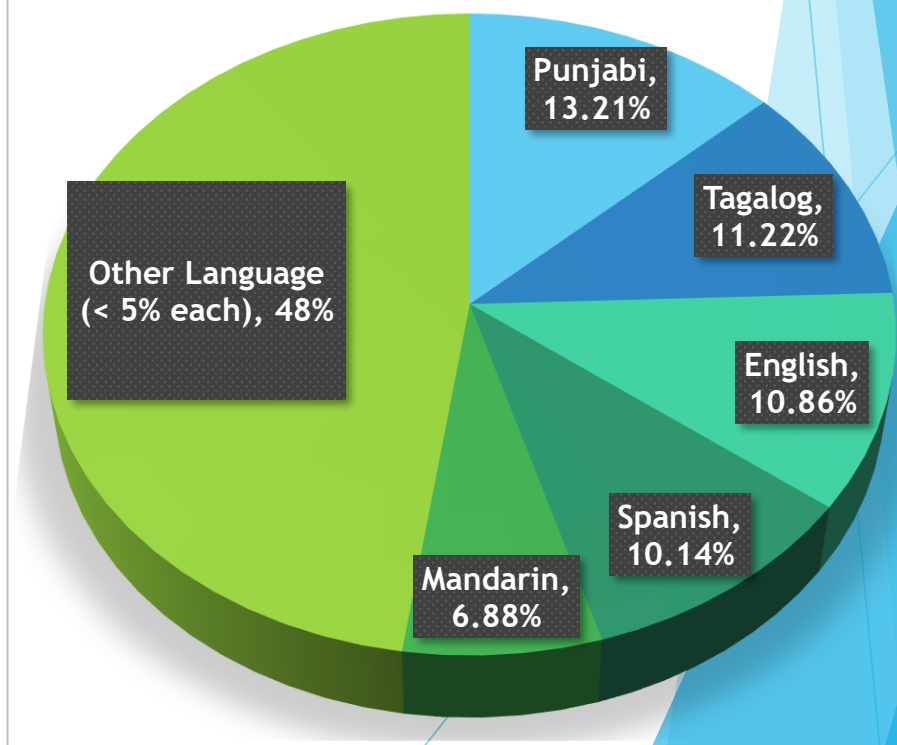
Service Delivery

Top 10 Countries of Origin



Top 5 Mother Tongues*

**52% of total clients identify with top 5 mother tongues*



Highlights and Best Practices

Canada Emergency Community Support KIS Youth Tutoring Program

COVID-19 has forced many of us to change our behaviours – for children and youth in crucial developmental stages, the pandemic has also had a devastating impact on their social development. It has undoubtedly impacted the emotional well-being of children, youth, teens, and adults. Through the COVID-19 Canada Emergency Community support, the SWIS program provided 40 students with additional academic support and mentoring. The provision of individualized academic support and mentoring helped increase their confidence to transition into their new community.



Giving back! Volunteering at the Pitstop.
Rousim, Mohammed and Clara

Digital Literacy



Through a Technology Internship program with BC Technology for Learning Society, and sponsored by the Federal Government, we were able to provide clients and staff with IT and Digital Support for 5 months from December to March.. The Intern provided one on one and group support and taught 25 clients about cyber security, digital security training, navigating the web, using email, submitting homework, using a keyboard, basic use of Microsoft software, and helped staff develop their confidence using new technology for service delivery.

BC Technology for Learning Society donated 15 refurbished laptops that we gave to clients attending LINC classes and who did not have access to a computer at home.

The value in partnerships and collaboration

Our team continued to build new relationships and strengthened existing ones through various type of partnerships contributing to the delivery of Settlement programs.

- Working with the City of Kamloops we provided 4-weeks of free Family Soccer and Sports nights program for newcomers to Canada. The city provides us with the use of a local field, as well as the soccer equipment.
- The Kamloops Arts Council provided art supplies and an instructor for our monthly Family Art Workshop through their Crossing Bridges Arts Outreach program. This year, the art workshops were held on zoom. It has benefited many families.
- TRU Pro Bono Students Canada provided an Employment Law project and conducted a virtual workshop for our clients covering employee's rights.
- TRU computer science students delivered a workshop to teach young learners about computer programming. They provided facilitators who are skilled with both computer programming platforms as well as working with children in group settings. They also provided all the necessary equipment.
- Gardengate, a horticulture program in Kamloops promoting sustainable growth and healthy lifestyles included Kamloops Immigrant Services in their Produce on Wheels program, and delivered fresh organic produce to a number of our low income families.
- During a first year in partnership with Kamloops Sexual Assault Counselling Centre, we presented 4-sessions on Understanding Community and Legal Resources for Women via zoom, created a virtual support group at TRU, and offered 1 session specifically to Arabic speaking women. KIS staff received 4 training sessions on Disclosure
- Volunteer Kamloops supported KIS by advertising our volunteer openings and our programs.
- Work BC Open Door Group and Kamloops Immigrant Services continued to work closely to provide services to clients looking for employment including employment readiness workshops and one-one coaching.
- The Big Little Science Centre offered two virtual science workshops to youth, a highlight during KIS Kids Spring Break Program. The science center is home to a variety of science projects and displays. It was very impressive and well delivered and kids had a lot of fun even though it was through zoom.
- The United Way (Thompson-Nicola-Cariboo) has continued to provide bus passes for clients who require additional transportation support and provided free menstrual products for our clients.
- BC Hydro, Community Futures and Centre for Seniors Information hosted various workshops; financial literacy, Senior care, etc.
- Professionals from our community shared knowledge with Newcomers during KIS Citizenship, Arts and Wellness series: Bill W. Sundhu, David Hoar, Cameron Matthee-Johnson, Kelly P. Melnyk, Dr. McBain, Dr. Janie Unruh and Adriana Arzeta Soldevilla.

KIS Educational Bursary

In Memory of Paul Lagacé

As most of you know, Paul was the agency's Executive Director from 2011 to 2018. He brought stability, expansion of services and growth to KIS, consolidating a strong foundation to continue providing essential services to New Canadians.

Paul's guidance to afford as much Respect, Wisdom, Generosity, Honesty, Humility, Courage and Fortitude as possible in all dealings with others, left an enduring legacy in our community.

To honor Paul's passion for education, the agency created a fund from Donations received, that will help Newcomer, Naturalized Citizen and First Generation Canadian Students residing in the Thompson-Nicola Region during their first and second year of a first degree, be it a bachelor or diploma, in any discipline, at any Canadian registered Colleges or Universities.

Thanks to the generous monetary donations from our supporters, two bursaries of \$1,000.00 for a one year award will be granted in 2021. It is our hope to continue receiving donations for the Education Bursary and continue to provide bursaries each year.

NEED HELP PAY FOR YOUR
TUITION FEES?

Kamloops Immigrant Services Educational Bursary

Simple application process
TWO BURSARIES of **\$1000.00**

<https://immigrantservices.ca/kis-educational-bursary/>

Deadline to apply
June 15th, 2021.



Support to Migrant Workers during Canada's Migrant Worker Support Network Pilot Project.

In response to significant demand for information and support in the region, we were able to support approx. 162 workers 1-on-1 and 240 workers at their place of work through outreach. Uptake of our services was more than triple what we expected and grew throughout the project as we were able to connect/build trust with more workers.

Connection with migrant farm workers seemed particularly important this season as many were not able to travel off-farm as a result of employer restrictions related to Covid-19. Through outreach, we were able to provide accurate public health info, legal info related to their rights as workers and help navigate severe restrictions on their mobility through our support with banking, grocery and mental health supports. We also helped several workers flee abusive employers, find safe places to live and begin a formal complaints process. In most cases of abuse, our outreach worker was the only Canadian contact they had that could help facilitate this process.

There were several important connections made with employers (mostly farm owners) through this project. We were able to introduce our support services and step in during some important moments throughout their season. Our outreach worker supported with translation, interpretation, COVID response and crisis management. We feel that this helped employers to feel they were better able to meet the needs of their workers and to improve the efficiency at their respective operations.

During this project, we were able to work collaboratively with several agencies. With Shuswap Immigrant Services Society, we shared information, strategies and worked together on outreach in the region. We partnered with Watari to support workers on a couple different farms that are known for abuse, and we worked jointly with Migrant Workers Center to ensure formal complaints were followed by legal advocates. We also worked closely with RAMA who was able to provide insight/experiential knowledge into the experience of workers on farm as well as refer some workers to our services.



Success Stories

Helping the most vulnerable

Through the Migrant Workers Pilot Project, we were able to connect workers with the resources that they needed, support individual efforts to find safety in situations of abuse and stand alongside migrant workers in their struggles for dignity in our region. Of note we supported 3 workers in their efforts to flee an employer who was physically/verbally abusive. Some of these workers have received OWPs for vulnerable workers and are continuing their fight for justice here in Canada. We also helped one worker receive parental benefits he was eligible for but had been denied by Service Canada. Though a number of appeals, work with our local MP and countless phone calls, this worker eventually received the full 35 weeks and was able to spend time with his growing family over the winter. We learned that there is a need for the type of services we are offering, and that adaptation/flexibility is key to efficacy when doing this work.



Determination

Our client, a single mother of two school age boys came to KIS asking for help on how to start a business.

With a lower English level and unsure of Canadian policies and procedures, not quite comfortable using a computer and accessing internet documents in English, she felt overwhelmed.



KIS Employment Counsellor worked with the client for three 2-hour sessions walking her through the process of starting a business in Canada and included an interpreter during the meetings to ensure that if anything was unclear, she could ask for clarifications. She was also introduced to various community resources such as bookkeeping/ accounting and other organizations in Kamloops that help with small businesses. The client now has a successful janitorial business in the Kamloops Community. It allows her the flexibility to be there for her young sons after school. The three of them enjoy participating in KIS Community Connections and volunteering during events such as KIS Farmers Market Booth. The boys oversee the donations bin!

KIS

En Route Program

KIS En Route program assisted and supported newcomers and their families who experienced life difficulties and faced multiple barriers to access services and ultimately settling successfully in their local community.



Access to critical services: At the one year mark since the COVID pandemic started the En Route Navigator has been working with various service providers in Kamloops and Area to ensure that our clients were able to access and receive critical services during this difficult time. The navigator collaborated with an Interior Health Multicultural counsellor, various medical clinics, the Ministry of Income Assistance Outreach workers, Salvation Army, Food Bank, Interior Community Services, Ask Wellness, and the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

Persons with Disabilities: In addition, the program successfully assisted six of our clients whose physical and mental condition deteriorated considerably during the pandemic, in applying for person with disabilities designation and receiving disability assistance.

Information sessions: KIS En Route Navigator provided virtual information sessions and workshops on accessing health services, community and legal services for women, and benefit options during COVID-19.

Liza Ferris Ortiz, KIS En Route Program Navigator currently sits on the following Community Agencies committees in Kamloops:

- Early Childhood Mental Health – Monthly meetings with children and family service agencies to discuss and plan initiatives to improve Social Services for children under 6, and programs supporting families in Kamloops.

- Violence Against Women in Relationships (VAWR): Bi-weekly meetings between community service agencies to discuss effective practices and strategies to respond to violence in relationships, minimize the risk of violence, enhance victim safety, and ensure appropriate offender management

Other Promotional Activities:

- November 2020 CBC Radio Interview- Daybreak with Shelley Joyce to discuss the En Route Program and how our clients use the Food Bank services.

- February 2021 Interview at Western Canada Theatre regarding International Women's Day and the services we offer to female clients

Is my relationship good for me?

Healthy relationship	Unhealthy relationship
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mutual respect and trust• Problem solving and active listening• Respecting boundaries• Self-confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suspicious or jealous• Pressuring you into doing things you don't want to do• Self-doubt and gaslighting• Dishonesty and disrespect





Anti-Racism - Embracing diversity

KIS was invited to participate in an anti-racism initiative spearhead by Penticton-based "South Okanagan Immigrant and Community Services" (SOICS) as we are continuing to work to create a more inclusive community and call attention to the ongoing issue of racism and discrimination in our respective regions.

SOICS' new video titled What Do You See?, released May 6 was created in collaboration with the Okanagan Chambers COVID Response Coalition (#OKWeGotThis) and communities from the Thompson-Okanagan including Oliver, Penticton, Peachland, Kelowna, Vernon, Salmon Arm and Kamloops, to raise awareness around the ongoing problem of racism towards ethnic minorities and the Indigenous community.

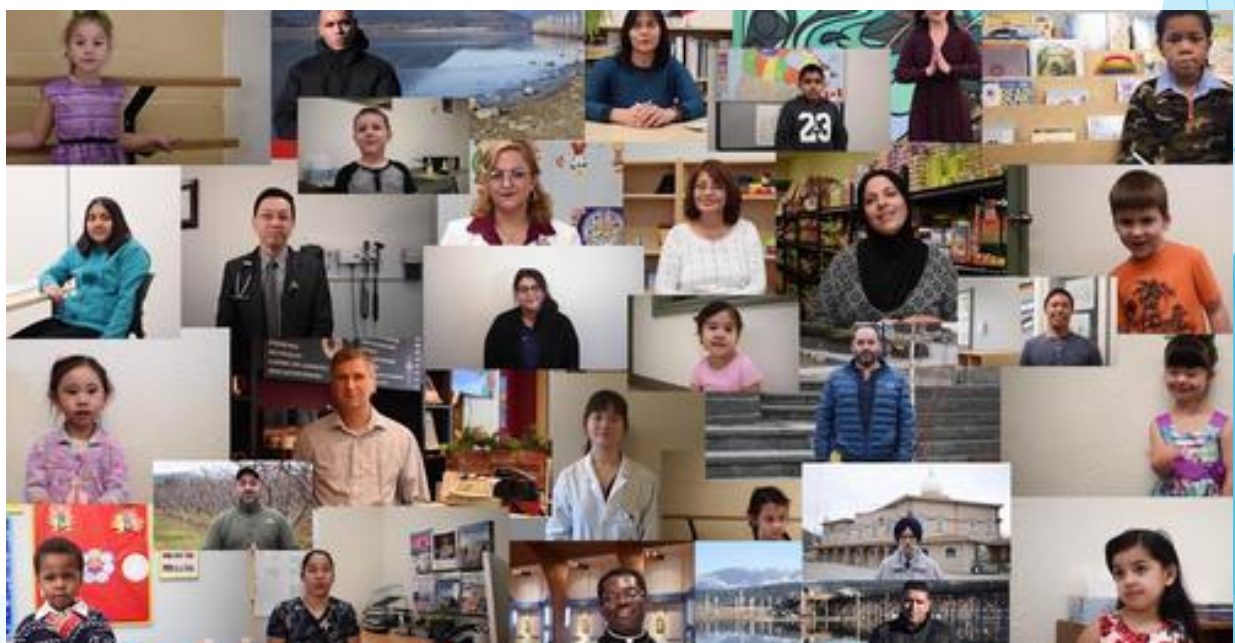
The video begins by using real audio from racist incidents in the Okanagan.

We invite you to view the video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GORCKBhZP9Y>

We hope to continue the creation of resources enabling us to engage with the community and receiving media's attention. Racism, discrimination, and intolerance continues to exist in our communities. It is part our mission to promote respect and understanding in the elimination of barriers and challenges faced by immigrants, migrants, refugees and minorities.

What Do You See?



Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI)

KIS Diversity Outreach Coordinator Graham Specht facilitated EDI trainings to several local organizations:

- Western Canada Theatre Company
- BC Association of Social Workers – Kamloops Chapter
- Kamloops Symphony Orchestra
- Kamloops Downtown Business Association Customer Care and Patrol Team (CAP)

Progress was made with working with School System —SD73

Developed internal district Anti-Racism policy as well as a racism/hate response protocol that aligns with the external ResilienceBC Local network community protocol.

Consultation were held with teacher contacts at schools we had delivered training to in the past, about creating new ways to deliver EDI/anti-racism content/activities. Teachers, burdened by adapting to COVID conditions, were not eager to add additional external variables to their lesson delivery. We will relaunch school-age training post pandemic.

Motion of Colour Kamloops

Mary Falade (left) and Joy Kwak are co-founders of Motion of Colour. This Youth-led group facilitates discussions on racial equity and social justice in partnership with Kamloops Immigrant Services

Graham mentored them and the agency offered Support with technology and resources throughout the year.



Recent Online Events include:

- Book Club - Discuss 'Dominoes at the Crossroads' by Kaie Kellough
- 'Cooking With A Chef' – An interview and cultural cuisine demonstration with a local entrepreneur, a recent TRU MBA graduate, who has opened a West-African restaurant. The content blends a cooking demonstration with Q&A about her experience as a young black woman in Kam-loops, and as a business owner.
- Poetry Reading: (via zoom) Poems that focus on the theme of 'Environment and Identity'
- Documentary Screening: 'Slaying the Dragon – Reloaded' Through this film we looked at media stereotypes of Asians and Asian Americans in the films of the west.

Looking ahead

As you may have heard the agency decided not to pursue a joint venture with Habitat for Humanity and the BC Housing Community Fund. There were several considerations leading to the decision such as:

- A partnership with BC Housing Community Fund is for 60 years. We started questioning if this model aligns with our mandate as it is geared towards non-for-profit agencies to manage shared assets, for 60 years. 60 years is a long time!
- Costly and lengthy process to legally secure access to the rear of the property through the current 3m right-of-way. It would have required paying for subdividing the adjacent property and buying out the requested access. The access is currently "permitted, but not on paper".

We have learned so much during this last year, we talked about our mission and revisited what it is that we want for the agency. Maybe the timing wasn't right, stepping back was what we believe the right thing to do.

Meanwhile, the Board held a Strategic Planning Retreat on May 15th. During this session, the Board of Directors created a shared vision of the future with a focus on achieving growth through expansion of programming and in collaboration with stakeholders and the business community. That day the Board also expressed the desire to leverage its current assets to further solidify the organization's long-term fiscal sustainability by acquiring additional property assets.

On June 9th, the Board made an offer on mixed commercial and residential property at 395 Tranquille Rd. We have an accepted offer with subject removal planned by July 8th and possession by August 16th.

This property will offer many possibilities for KIS, aligned with the new strategy, aligned with its mission. We can't wait to see what's ahead, ensuring we continue to provide additional support and resources for Newcomers, Permanent and Temporary residents.



Thank You!

We couldn't have done it without you!

Employees



Rajinder Lotay



Liza Ferris Ortiz



Zoher Elbietar



Sage Chang



Darcy Gorrill



Amy Paran



Harsha Boodhun



Shiro Abraham



Lucia Mapplebeck



Brittany Kanigan



Elizabeth Leston



Diane Clark



Graham Specht



Leanne Coombes



Debbie Marshall



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Wally Kloubek

Satwinder Paul

Eva Bechtel

Ambo Dhaliwal

Angus Duff

Hisako Takahashi

Dilip Maurya

Tesh Dagne

Contractors

Monica Johnson

Kim Turgeon-

Hardman

Sara Arias Palacio

Mitch Ward

Intern

Daniel Jewison

And our dedicated
volunteers, tutors
and mentors