



KAMLOOPS
IMMIGRANT SERVICES
TOGETHER WE'RE BETTER



2024 ANNUAL REPORT





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Funded by / Financé par:



WelcomeBC



Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada



ABOUT US

As a leader in the settlement sector, we are devoted to welcoming immigrants to Kamloops and the surrounding areas. Our primary goal is to support newcomers through integration services in settlement, language, employment, and community connections. Our secondary goal is to inform and sensitize the region on immigration, settlement, and integration, and to promote the elimination of racism.

VISION

- To deliver a broad range of programs which are sensitive to the needs of a culturally diverse community.
- To inform and sensitize the region on immigration, settlement, integration, multicultural, anti-racism, challenges and opportunities.
- To promote the elimination of racism and to facilitate organizational and institutional change to meet the needs of a culturally diverse society.

MISSION

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.

STRATEGY

- Expand services and programs to improve the ability of Kamloops Immigrant Services to fulfill our mission.
- Place focus on government and foundation grant revenue, specifically related to the creation of new services and programs for newcomers.
- Develop organized actions to address issues faced by newcomers and provide opportunities for community learning to advance social, political, economic and educational equity.
- Commit to positioning Kamloops as a city of choice for immigrants by responding to emerging needs, offering innovative services, and enhancing community collaboration to ensure newcomers feel safe and empowered.

A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT



The year 2024 has presented us with unique challenges, and in the face of adversity, our team has shown unwavering commitment and resilience. I am deeply grateful for the dedication, passion, and hard work of our exceptional staff and volunteers, as well as the resilience demonstrated by our newcomer community.

Our staff and volunteers have been the driving force behind the success of our organization. Their tireless efforts, creativity, and compassion have enabled us to continue delivering vital services and support to our community, even in the most challenging of times. Despite facing significant challenges, including wildfires, a housing shortage and a rising cost of living, our newcomers have shown remarkable resilience.

As an organization, we are committed to providing support and assistance to help our newcomers navigate these challenges and build a brighter future for themselves and their families. We believe that with the right resources and support, newcomers will continue to thrive and make invaluable contributions to our community.

Thank you for your outstanding work, unwavering dedication, and remarkable resilience. Together, we will continue to overcome challenges, foster connections, and make a positive impact in the lives of those we serve.

Sincerely,

DAVID CRUZ
KCRIS PRESIDENT

A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As I reflect on the past year I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the remarkable achievements and heartfelt moments we have witnessed. This annual report highlights the incredible resilience of the newcomers we served, whose stories of perseverance and success serve as a testament to their strength and determination.

Each highlight reminds us of our organization's significant impact on the lives of individuals and families who choose to make Kamloops and the Thompson-Nicola Regional District (TNRD) their new home.



Our dedicated staff and volunteers play a crucial role in this journey. Their unwavering commitment, compassion, and tireless efforts have been instrumental in supporting newcomers as they navigate their new environment, integrate into our community, and achieve their dreams. It is their dedication that fosters a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, making Kamloops a place where everyone can belong and succeed.

In addition, our amazing partnerships with community organizations have been significant in enhancing our efforts. These collaborations enable us to provide comprehensive support and resources, ensuring that newcomers have access to the services they need to succeed. The strength of our community network amplifies our impact and helps us build a stronger, more connected Kamloops.

As we celebrate the accomplishments of the past year, together with the Board of Directors, we also look forward to the future with hope and optimism. We are excited to continue this journey together, and I invite you to join us in celebrating the resilience and success of all newcomers.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'France Lamontagne'.

FRANCE LAMONTAGNE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

THE PEOPLE WE SERVED

3,315
clients

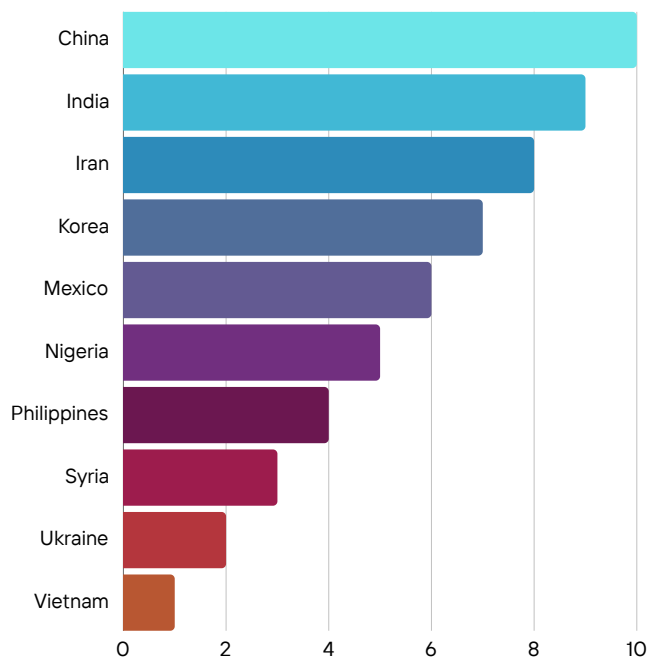
2,120
new
clients

13,106
people

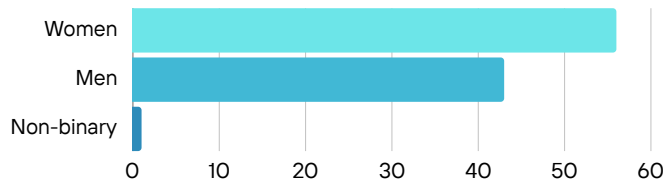
crossed our
door

This includes
Permanent and
Temporary
Residents,
International
Students,
Refugee
Claimants and
Naturalized
Citizens.

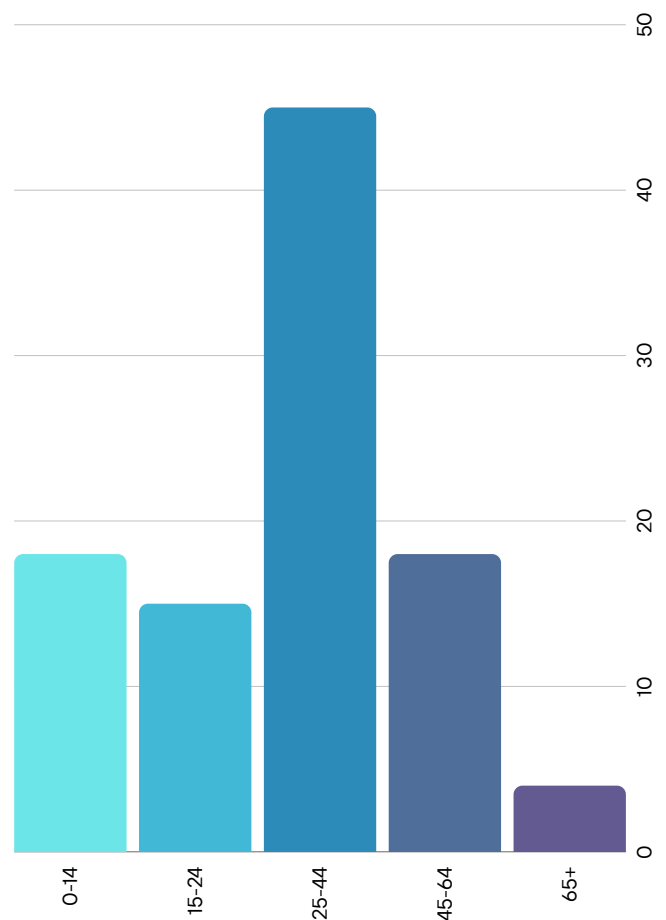
TOP 10 COUNTRY OF ORIGIN



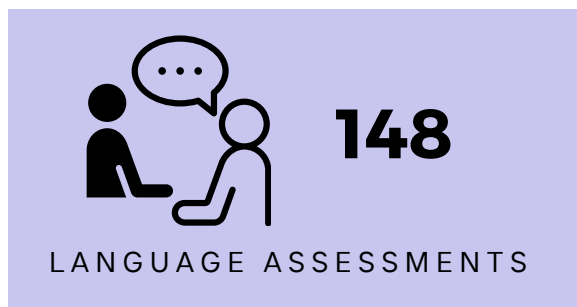
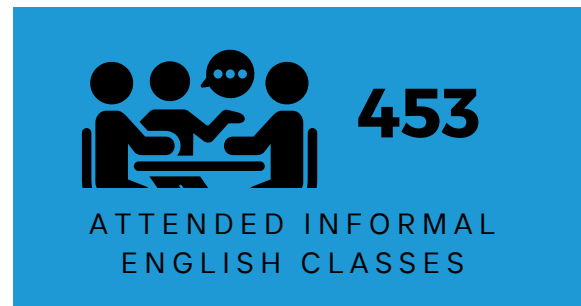
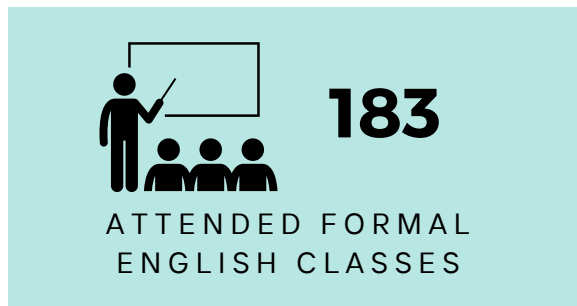
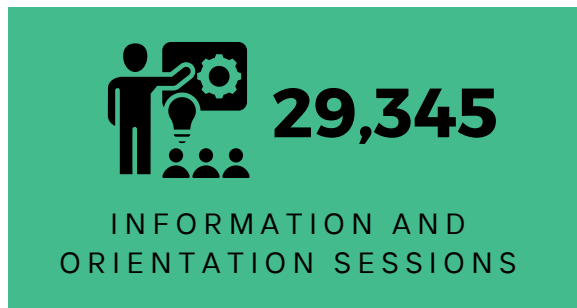
GENDER



AGE GROUPS



CLIENT SERVICES DELIVERED



CLIENT SATISFACTION

4.81 ★★★★★

"A LOT OF THANKS TO KIS FOR THE HELP, SUPPORT
AND ACTIVITIES THEY ARE PROVIDING"

-V. BARYSHNIKOVA

VOLUNTEERS AND TUTORS



We want to extend our heartfelt appreciation to all our dedicated volunteers for the invaluable amount of time they have invested in helping us deliver activities and workshops to newcomers. Without their tireless efforts and unwavering support, we would not be able to offer as much. Our volunteers are the backbone of our organization, and their commitment is truly inspiring.

Thank you for your generosity and dedication!



SETTLEMENT SUPPORT

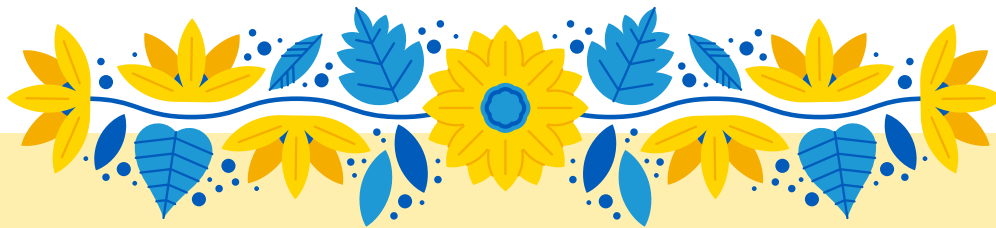


HEARTFELT SUCCESS EXPERIENCE ✨

Despite facing unemployment and unstable housing conditions heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic, **a senior Cantonese-speaking client found hope through our support.** Within just two weeks, we matched him with suitable senior housing equipped with essential amenities, restoring his sense of security and dignity. This success story not only highlights our commitment to addressing the complex needs of vulnerable individuals but also demonstrates the transformative power of collaborative efforts with organizations like the Ask Wellness Health Navigation program.



DISPLACED UKRAINIANS



During 2023-2024 we welcomed 48 new Ukrainians.
In total, since March 2022, 316 displaced Ukrainians arrived in Kamloops.

FACTS

30 Ukrainians who arrived during this period have returned to Ukraine;

126 have migrated to various cities and provinces, predominantly Edmonton, Alberta; Vancouver, Kelowna, British Columbia; and Nova Scotia, with plans to apply for Permanent Residency.

50% of Displaced Ukrainians are settling in Kamloops.

IMPACT

80 adults have secured full-time employment.

42 adults and seniors are enrolled in LINC English classes.

15 families who were initially hosted through the KIS Homestay program have now found long-term housing.



SETTLEMENT WORKERS IN SCHOOL (SWIS)



434

Children and
youth supported



48

School
connections



6

Weeks
Summer Camp

HEARTFELT SUCCESS EXPERIENCE



Through a stronger partnership with School District 73 and community partners, the SWIS program can offer newcomer school-age students more support as they transition into the Canadian school system. For example, to support a middle school student struggling with attendance, the SWIS worker partnered with school staff and the Butler Urban Farm. This partnership allowed the student to pursue his interest in gardening during the school week, providing him with meaningful connections and an opportunity to use urban farming as a tool for wellness.



MENTORSHIP AND TUTORING PROGRAM (MET)



4
Strong
partnerships



2
Funders



10
Summer field
trips



140
Happy kids

HEARTFELT SUCCESS EXPERIENCE ✨

What we did:

Nature journaling and exploration of 5 provincial parks.
Discussions on environmental stewardship and parks protection.
Learning about traditional and cultural indigenous ways with Elder Terry Deneault at Steelhead provincial park.
Visit to local farms.

Our partners:

- Kamloops Naturalist Club
- NatureKIDS B.C.
- Thompson Rivers University
- Butler Urban Farm

A comment made by a Grade 5 newcomer student during our trip to Clearwater:

- "It is my first time seeing a waterfall. I am so excited."

A comment made by a newcomer parent with refugee experiences:

- " My son kept talking about the field trips at home. He comes home excited."

A comment made by a newcomer parent:

- " My son enjoyed the field trip. As a teenager, he appreciates the opportunity to help and volunteer with the younger children on the field trip. He would like to go again."



AGENDA

1. Introduction
2. Gaining & Going
3. Growing Industries & High Opportunity Occupations
4. Potential Industry Automation
5. What do you need for the labor market
6. How we get there

EMPLOYMENT-RELATED SERVICES



412

Clients
supported



756

1:1 sessions
with clients



94

Gained
employment



31

Workshops
and events



216

Referrals



100

Employer
connections

HEARTFELT SUCCES EXPERIENCES

A client with a marketing degree and strong English skills faced job search challenges in Canada. We worked closely with the client to improve their resume and interview skills, advised them to engage in volunteer work, and after months of dedication, they secured meaningful positions in banking and marketing.

A young client participated in our youth leadership program. Through attending the program and the encouragement received from its members, the client found the confidence to pursue their dreams. They have now enrolled in pilot training and are on their way to achieving their career goals.



ENGLISH CLASSES

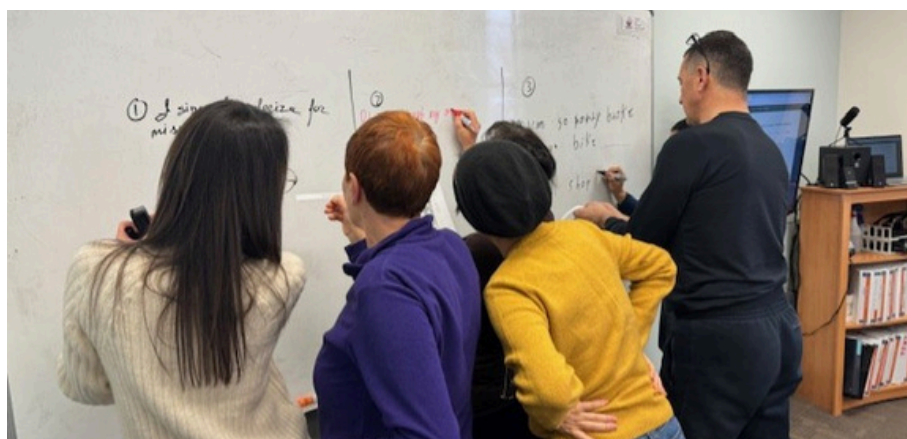
Language Instruction for newcomers to canada (LINC)

Through LINC KIS's partnership with the TNRL, we organized field trips where KIS LINC teachers and TNRL librarians showed English language students how the library can help them settle in the community. Students learned to book meeting rooms, access online newspapers, get online books through the LIBBY app, and more. Before each trip, we shared a breakfast, fostering cooperation and community participation.





Teacher Asma Koli and learners enjoyed a special class featuring what a “typical” Canadian breakfast could look like! Pancakes, real maple syrup from Quebec, bacon, eggs and hashbrowns were served!



Attentive audience during a special presentation in the CLB Level 2-3 LINC classroom, and collaborative learning thrives as students work together!

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM (WE) & PRIDE



68

Clients supported

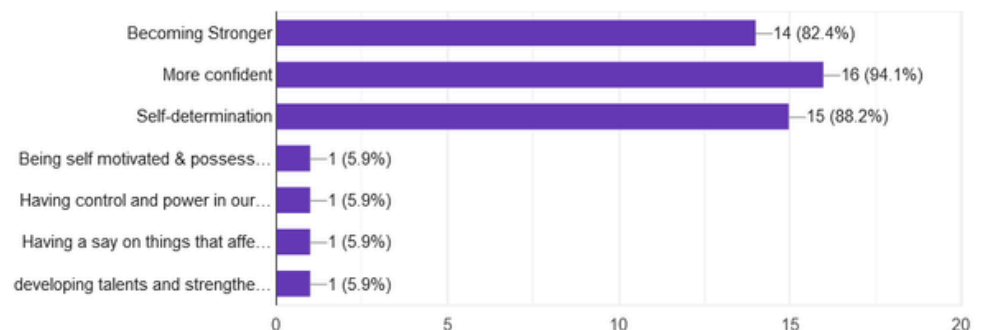


37

Workshops and events

What does the word "Empowerment" mean to you? (You can click everything that applies to you)

17 responses





HEARTFELT SUCCESS EXPERIENCE

A client sought settlement support through the WE program to secure stable housing and enhance career opportunities for herself and her children. She faced the daunting challenge of balancing housing needs, career aspirations, and providing emotional support for her family. Despite these difficulties, with the assistance provided, she successfully secured stable housing for her family, a better-paying job at the local hospital, and initiated a support network with another client for emotional and parental assistance. The services she received included housing and career guidance, and emotional support connections. These empowered her to build a stable and fulfilling life for herself and her children.



HEARTFELT TESTIMONIAL

“I started attending the pride group meetings and immediately felt a sense of support from my peers. Meeting newcomers who identify as non-binary was incredibly empowering, and it made me feel safe in this inclusive environment. The sense of community and understanding I’ve found here has been special. It’s heartening to know that there is a space where I can be myself and connect with others who share similar experiences. This group has truly become a sanctuary for me, offering both emotional support and a sense of belonging.” K.C.

LGBTQ+ NEWCOMER PRIDE GROUP



This group is a casual safe place for any newcomers to meet others in the community and take part in group discussions, activities, resource sharing, peer support, and more!

These meetings are biweekly and in person:
January 9 & 23 from 6:30-7:30pm

For location contact Darcy darcy@kcris.ca (778-694-3884) text or call



KAMLOOPS
IMMIGRANT SERVICES
TOGETHER WE'RE BETTER



BRITISH COLUMBIA
Supporting the Progress of British Columbia



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada



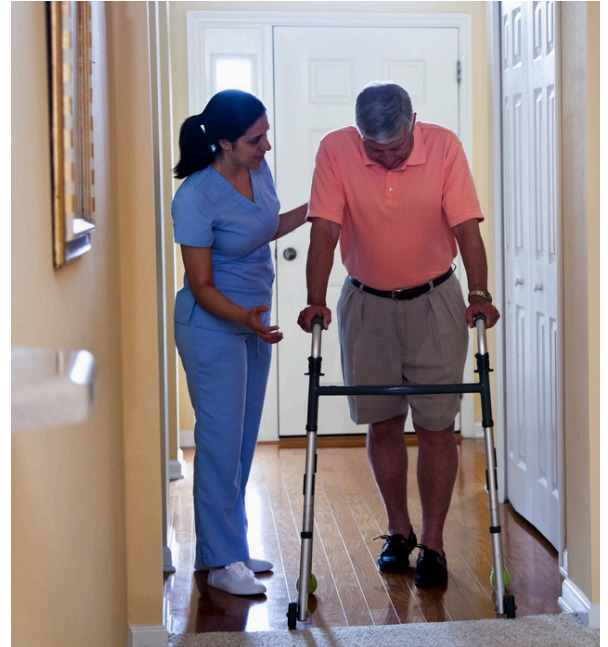
Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada



HEARTFELT SUCCESS EXPERIENCE

Our client sought support through the WE program due to facing intimate partner violence, necessitating a safe environment for herself and her son. She faced the complex challenges of navigating the criminal justice system and family law proceedings while seeking housing assistance.

With support, she successfully transitioned to a shelter and then secured her own place through low-income housing. She received legal aid for her case and progressed toward enrolment in the Home Care Aide Program (HCAP) program. The services provided included legal support, emotional well-being support, housing assistance, and guidance towards future educational and career opportunities, facilitating her journey towards independence and security.



NEW WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT CENTRE



The agency is currently renovating an underutilized space to broaden our services, enhance service accessibility and expand outreach programs to vulnerable newcomer women and 2SLGBTQ+ at risk or victims of intimate partner violence.

This will be achieved by providing a safe haven with meeting and training rooms, a child-friendly area, a resource corner with a library, and a collaborative space for case management with other agencies. An essential addition will be a kitchen offering nutrition and soft skills classes as part of our self-care workshop series.



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



1,359

Activities and
workshops



1,305

Participants

Last year, the Community Connections team partnered with Mount Revelstoke National Park and Glacier National Park to host an overnight "Learn to Camp" event in June at Loop Brook Campground. This was the first time the partnership had resumed since COVID.

HEARTFELT SUCCESS EXPERIENCES



"It was my first camping experience and I really loved it! I liked this event because in the past I thought camping was very difficult, but now I feel very comfortable to repeat it in the future. I learned new skills, made new friends, relaxed and enjoyed nature. It was very helpful, and I want to say thank you to all KIS employees and volunteers for the big effort they put into it, and they were so lovely and friendly. everything was organized and amazing and I really loved every moment I spend it there"- Hsiao



YOGA IN THE PARK

During the summer of 2023 and now in the summer of 2024, with a grant from the City of Kamloops and ParticipACTION, KIS has been hosting Yoga in the Park for the third consecutive year.

This event takes place every Wednesday from June 7 to July 26, from 6:00 to 7:00 pm at McDonald Park. Open to all residents and ages, each session welcomes close to 150 attendees, demonstrating the community's strong interest and engagement in the program.

A noteworthy aspect of our success this year has been the tremendous support from local businesses. More than 10 businesses have generously donated draw prizes with a total value exceeding \$2,000. These prizes have added excitement to our sessions and strengthened our ties with the local business community, contributing significantly to the program's overall success.

One of the most gratifying outcomes of the program has been the overwhelmingly positive feedback we have received from participants. Their testimonials and comments have highlighted the physical and mental well-being benefits they have derived from the sessions.



HEARTFELT SUCCESS EXPERIENCE

"Wonderful experience. The atmosphere was welcoming, the instructor was hilarious and so encouraging. I loved all the adaptations to allow everyone to be able to engage at their comfort level. Every dollar counts right now and to be able to come together as a community to participate in such a positive welcoming activity was so deeply appreciated. Thank you." – from a participant.



SOCIAL CHESS NIGHT

HEARTFELT SUCCESS EXPERIENCE ✨

In November 2023, Community Connection (CC) launched a new monthly program called Social Chess Night. We observed that many of our male clients, particularly fathers, were not participating in activities as much as the mothers. Often, fathers would drop off their kids without engaging in the activities themselves.

Noticing that some of these fathers enjoyed playing chess, we decided to give Chess Night a try. It turned out to be a wonderful idea! Every session, over 30 clients joined, making it a fantastic social activity where fathers and their children could bond. The kids were thrilled to play chess with their parents, and it was heartwarming to see them enjoying their time together.

Social Chess Night also provided newcomer families the opportunity to connect with other newcomers and Canadians. It is a great way for families to meet new people, make friends, and feel more connected to the community. The success of Social Chess Night demonstrates the importance of creating activities that everyone can enjoy.





SENIORS PILOT PROJECT

HEARTFELT SUCCESS EXPERIENCE ✨

We are excited to introduce our Seniors Pilot Project, a heartfelt initiative born from listening to the voices of our newcomer seniors. After conducting a thorough survey we uncovered a deep desire for connection, activity, and engagement within the community. In response, our dedicated coordinator has crafted a vibrant program designed to bring joy and companionship. Each month, our newcomer seniors come together to share in a variety of enriching activities, both indoors and out. From invigorating hikes through the beautiful landscapes of Kamloops to creative arts and crafts sessions that inspire the soul, and visits to community institutions, our gatherings are a blend of fun and fulfillment.

This project is more than just a series of activities; it is a testament to the strength and resilience of our seniors. It is a celebration of their journey and a commitment to ensuring they feel welcomed and valued in their new home.





TAX CLINICS

Our dedicated volunteer, Walter, has been generously offering his expertise to assist newly arrived individuals with filing their taxes for four consecutive years. Walter's unwavering support has proven to be incredibly beneficial, as it provides vital assistance to those who are grappling with the intricacies of the Canadian tax system.

Through his steadfast efforts, Walter has substantially reduced the burdens and anxieties faced by numerous families, ensuring that they are able to access the benefits and refunds that are rightfully theirs.



+220

Families
received free
tax filing
support



+100

Hours
dedicated by
our tax expert
volunteer



MIGRANT WORKERS OUTREACH



260+

Clients
supported
directly



180+

Received
emergency
support



40

Employer
connections &
support



10

Workshops &
Safety Courses



5

Appreciation
Potlucks



36

Applied for an
open work
permit

HEARTFELT SUCCESS EXPERIENCES

Workers were provided with food, hygiene products and medicine during the wildfire evacuations, and their living situation was monitored. Agricultural workers were provided with N95 masks due to the poor air quality. The outreach coordinator worked tirelessly to assist them during this challenging time.

We are working closely with other organizations in the region who align with our efforts to support TFWs. This will lead to long-term community support as other social service groups incorporate TFWs' needs into their planning and structure. We work with the Mexican Consulate, the Consulate of Guatemala, MOSAIC BC, the Migrant Worker Hub, Kelowna Community Resources, Lower Similkameen Community Services Society, Watari, and WALLI.



ACHIEVE

A group comprising four Temporary Foreign Workers fell victim to employment exploitation and fraudulent immigration practices.

These individuals were recruited to assume supervisory roles for an employer based in Kamloops. However, they were coerced by a recruitment agency to pay approximately \$35,000 each for an employment offer, a labor market impact assessment, and work permits. Upon their arrival in Kamloops, the employer deceitfully assigned them to non-supervisory manual labor positions with reduced wages, subjected them to unlawful deductions from their paychecks, exposed them to unsafe working conditions, and stationed them at sites not specified in their work permits. Furthermore, the workers were threatened with deportation if they raised objections.

Through collaborative efforts involving the Achieve program, David Cazares, the Migrant Workers Centre, and the office of the Member of Parliament, the affected individuals received comprehensive support encompassing emotional well-being, legal assistance, and financial relief to alleviate their hardships.

HEARTFELT SUCCESS EXPERIENCE ✨

Father and mother with health issues, low language level, and income challenges. They have five children, 3 of them diagnosed with developmental delay, ADHD and Autism. The Achieve program coordinator assisted family with navigating health system, emotional support, and economic hardship. The parents are now able to contact social services and medical service providers directly and with confidence.



In December 2023, the Achieve program collaborated with Thompson Rivers University to organize a Winter clothes drive. This event aimed to provide winter clothing to our income-challenged newcomer clients and their families. The initiative took place at our 448 Tranquille Road facility, where a designated area was transformed into a vibrant "Pop-up boutique" with the assistance of our dedicated staff and volunteers. Clients were warmly welcomed to select winter garments free of charge and were also provided with guidance on dressing appropriately for cold weather conditions.

A record number of children received Christmas presents, with 70 families participating and a total of 194 children benefiting from gifts wrapped by volunteers and KIS staff.

Additionally, eligible families were supported in registering for other community Christmas programs like Christmas Amalgamated and Salvation Army, enabling them to receive hampers that alleviated financial strain during the holiday season.





CHILD MIND



68

Children
cared for



24

Activities for
parents &
children

In addition to the Childmind support offered while parents attend activities at the agency, our team offers parenting support, referrals and group activities such as Superstart, Mother Goose and Infant Massage.



HEARTFELT SUCCES EXPERIENCES

"I am happy with me taking my class and my child enjoying his time with the caregivers. He is learning new words in English too." Y. S.

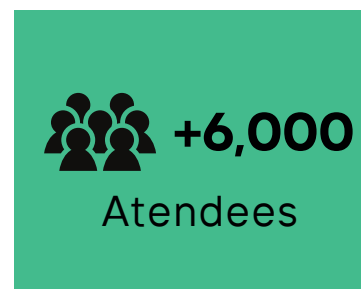




DIVERSITY - YOUTH FOR YOUTH & COMMUNITY OUTREACH



DEARBORN FORD TAPESTRY FESTIVAL



HEARTFELT SUCCES EXPERIENCES ✨

The Diversity Program conducted 28 presentations at various locations, including schools, businesses, and youth leadership initiatives. The presentations aimed to raise awareness and promote inclusivity, educating and inspiring different community segments about diversity and inclusion, contributing to a more understanding and inclusive community.

OUR AMAZING TEAM

Rajinder Lotay
Liza Ferris-Ortiz
Min-Hsien Chang
Vanshika Gupta
Anu Kaur
JY Li
Kate Cheng
Erin White
Darcy Gorrill
Amy Verhey
Sage Chang
Anna Ediger
Anselma Ammerdorffer
Beatrice Taiwo-Jubril
Emily Shuttleworth
Sam Birchall
Talita Pires
Jane Jiang
Connie Xiong
France Lamontagne



Thank
you!

Lucia Mapplebeck
Lian Clark
Asma Koli
Angie Naslund
Yenny Yao
Jenny Tran
Ruben Quast
Sheila Morgan
Shiro Abraham
Paolo Bigit
Sue Northcott
Margaret Dennison
Clara Kong
Petro Kondrashov
Rajneet Chhatwal
Lakshana Ramdhonee
Faith Batemen
Peter Nelson
Becky Wu
Brittanny Kanigan
David Cazares

OUR PARTNERS & COLLABORATORS

Kamloops Community YMCA-YWCA
BGC Kamloops
Open Door Group's Gardengate
Kamloops Naturalist Club
Butler Urban Farm
Mont Paul Community Food Centre
Kamloops Pride Society
Kamloops Chamber of Commerce
Kamloops United Church
Refugee and Friends Together

Venture Kamloops
WorkBC
Kamloops Legal Aid
Kamloops Sexual Assault
Counselling Centre
Ministry of Children and
Family Services
NPower CanadaImmigrant
Employment Council of BC
YMCA Metro Vancouver

Thompson Rivers University
Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society
L'Association Francophone de Kamloops
Interior Community Services
Elizabeth Fry Society
Unique Get Together Society
Kamloops Salvation Army
People in Motion
Kamloops Long Blades
School District 73
North Shore Business Improvement
Association

GRANTORS



FUNDERS



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada