

UNITED CULTURES OF CANADA ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

President's Message

I am very pleased to present this report on the activities of United Cultures of Canada Association in the past year. In this year, the organization received high commendations for its initiatives. We published five new educational resources.



On July 11, the Honourable Dr. Kellie Leitch, Federal Minister for Labour and Minister for Status of Women, launched our book ***It Is Not In My Culture: Perspective On Woman Abuse***



The Honourable Rona Ambrose
Federal Minister of Health & Regional
Minister for Northern Alberta

The great strength of our country is our community. And when it comes to ending family violence, the whole community has a role to play. United Cultures of Canada demonstrates how community based organizations can lead the charge. That is why it gives me great pleasure to recognize and celebrate your 2014 Peace in Families award recipients who are such strong and courageous advocates in the community. See next page.

President's Message (Contd...)

We also published a series of four educational booklets on human rights in the areas of employment, use of goods, services, accommodation or facilities, residential and commercial tenancy and rights of children and youth. For the third consecutive year, we received support from Justice Canada to raise awareness about needs of victims and impact of victimization. We received a matching grant from Alberta Community Initiative Project to extend our interpreting services to law enforcement and shelters and other domestic violence prevention agencies. Since January 2014, we have been providing interpreting services at court and non-court legal events under our Multicultural Family Law Facilitators Project. Our project, Community Education for Prevention of Nicotine Addiction in Immigrant Youth and Young Adults has far exceeded all its goals and is in its second year of delivery. Due to increasing enrollment in our Citizenship Education and English as another Language Programs, the hours of instruction time has been increased by the funding agency. We have also received subsidies from the Alberta Human Rights Education Fund to start a new project on gender equality in multicultural context and from Alberta Human Services to increase the safety of children with new immigrant families. I take this opportunity to thank all our funding agencies for supporting us in meeting the needs of Edmonton communities and for their confidence in our ability to do so.

Book Launch

Our book "It Is Not In My Culture: Perspectives on Women Abuse" was launched by the Federal Minister for Labour and Minister for Status of Women, the Honourable Dr. Kellie Leitch on July 11, 2015. The event was attended by Richard Feehan, MLA, Councillor Amarjeet Sohi and 50 others. This book presents a collection of chapters that educate about legal remedies and criminal sanctions, challenge cultural assumptions about woman abuse, caution against the impact of exposure to woman abuse on children, share research findings on the effects of abuse on women's health, discuss safety, housing and basic needs of the life after violence, and analyze the proverbial dilemma of abused women - to leave or not to leave an abusive partner. Most authors are leading voices in the field. This project was funded by the Status of Women Canada.

Presentations

UCCA team was invited to participate in the Alberta Victims Services Program Managers Training 2015 on March 11. About 80 participants registered for this event. Most of these work with Police-based Victim Service Units. The team is also presenting at the Diverse Voices Family Violence Conference on our Multicultural Family Law Facilitators Project.

Congratulations!

Peace in Families 2014 Award Recipients!



Jan Reimer

On the occasion of the United Cultures of Canada Peace in Families Award, I would like to take a moment to thank all of you who work to build a society where children can be raised in safe, loving homes. Everyone in Canada deserves to be free from family violence and to experience the healthy relationships that are the foundation of vibrant lives. As minister of health, one of my priorities has been eradicating violence and supporting peace for all families across Canada.

Physical, psychological and emotional abuse can damage the health of victims. Some effects can be treated medically but many are not visible and can be ignored or overlooked. Health and wellbeing can suffer as a result of all types of abuse.

There are no simple solution to this complex and pervasive issue. The great strength of our country is our community. And when it comes to ending family violence, the whole community has a role to play. United Cultures of Canada demonstrates how community based organizations can lead the charge. That is why it gives me great pleasure to recognize and celebrate your 2014 Peace in Families award recipients who are such strong and courageous advocates in the community.

I would like to acknowledge Deborah Miller for her over 30 years of advocacy on behalf of the victims of domestic violence both in her official role as senior counsel at the family law office and in her personal life with her charitable work on behalf of those in need. And Jan Reimer of the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters who, through her tireless dedication, represents the voices of the shelters and has been active in ensuring first nations' awareness in Alberta shelters.

As your organization states, "assisting victims of violence to rebuild their lives or assisting abusers to choose dignity over violence is not an easy mandate." It requires courage, commitment and an unflinching hope. To United Cultures of Canada volunteers and award recipients, you act as strong, determined voices pushing for safer homes and communities for all families. On behalf of the government of Canada, I would like to sincerely thank you for your work and dedication. Working together we can support peace and wellness for all Canadians.

Completed Projects: One Strategy, Diverse Voices

We have developed a series of four educational booklets on human rights in employment, residential and commercial tenancy, use of goods, services, accommodation and facilities and rights of children and youth. This project explored a new style of public education resource as the authors attempted to achieve a combination of education and entertainment. These four booklets together provide nearly 175 pages of information on human rights, which is substantiated by nearly 120 cases/judgements and the same number of illustrations. 20 members of different ethnic communities received training on these topics, and with the help of these booklets, each trained 15 members of their ethnic communities. Thus, a total of 300 community members received information on these topics. This project was funded by the Alberta Human Rights Education Fund.

Sharing Our Future Together: Not Victims Any Longer

Funded by Justice Canada, this project aimed to raise awareness about the impact of victimization, needs of victims of crime, available services, and Canadian laws. 197 individuals participated in 8 workshops that were held on these topics. 7 members from the following linguistic groups attended a train-the-trainer session: Urdu/Punjabi, Arabic, Spanish, Tigrinia/ Dinka/Ahramic, Romanian/Hungarian, and Italian. They conducted 6 information sessions and educated 60 members of their cultural communities. Articles on these topics were also published in popular ethnic newspapers including The Edmonton Chinese News, The Chinese Journal, and The North American Chinese Weekly and Desh Videsh and radio talks were delivered on ethnic channels such as The North American Chinese Weekly and Sur Sangam. A total number of 22,400 individuals are estimated to have benefited from these events.

Continuing Projects: Multicultural Family Law Facilitators

We have trained 45 interpreters so far to offer services in over 30 different languages. Under this project, we have provided over 250 interpreting services to different legal service providers in matters related to family law. Funding for this project has been received from the City of Edmonton Community Services.

Supporting Edmonton Service Providers

With the funding support of Community Initiatives Program, we have started this project to provide interpreting services to service providers such as law enforcement, family violence prevention and other agencies. This project complements our Family Law Facilitator Project by extending interpreting services to other service providers also such as Edmonton Police Service, Shelters and other domestic violence prevention agencies.

Community Education for Prevention of Nicotine Addiction in Immigrant Youth and Young Adults

The goal of this multi-year project is to prevent tobacco use by educating communities, especially at-risk youth and young adults from immigrant/refugee communities to create tobacco-free Alberta. In the first year of the project, a total of 35 workshops took place that were attended by 748 participants. 11 community leaders from India, Afghanistan, Mexico, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan and Iran were trained to provide information to different community groups. Public education material was developed in English, French, Arabic, Spanish, and Urdu. 550 surveys were collected to accumulate and analyse data about smoking patterns of youth and young adults. This project has far exceeded its proposed goals for its first year.

Citizenship Education

A total number of 63 students attended this program. 57 passed the citizenship exam and received Canadian citizenship.

English as Another Language

Two sections of this program were attended by 30 students in the current reporting year.

New Project: Gender Equality in a Multicultural Context

Funded by Alberta Human Rights Education Fund, this project aims to prevent/end discrimination based on gender inequality and promote human rights in cultural communities. It will result in development of a resource using decisions of human rights and other courts to illustrate how gender equality is protected by Canadian institutions. Approximately, 136 community members will directly participate in its activities that include 16 community consultations and public information sessions and 4,000 others will benefit from 8 media outreach events.

Strengthening Child Safety with New Immigrant Families

This three-year project aims to increase the safety of children from immigrant families by strengthening the capacity of their parents and caregivers to protect them from, and support them in the event of, bullying, child abuse and exposure to family violence. The project plans to reach 10 ethnic communities, particularly those less established, newly emerging such as Somali and Afghani. Activities of the project will include resource development; translation; delivery of linguistically and culturally appropriate information workshops; one-on-one support services to access resources; and support groups for the parents and caregivers.

Acknowledgements

Department of Justice Canada

Shaping the Future Together: Not Victims Any Longer

In Support of Victims: Call for Taking Action

Collective Response to Support Victims: Sharing Responsibilities with New Canadians

Alberta Justice Human Rights Education and Multiculturalism Fund

Gender Equality in a Multicultural Context

Enhancing Social Capital: One Strategy, Diverse Voices

Enhancing Civic Participation among Ethno-cultural Communities

World on a Maple Leaf: A Treasury of Canadian Multicultural Folktales

Alberta Human Services – Family and Community Safety Program

Strengthening Child Safety with New Immigrant Families in Edmonton

Alberta Community Initiative Program

Supporting Edmonton Service Providers

Status of Women Canada

It Is Not In My Culture: Perspectives on Woman Abuse

Strengthening Victims' Response:
A Self-Help Guide for Victim of Domestic Violence

Enhancing Community Response to End Violence –
Crimes, Not Cultures

Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Settlement Legal Support Workers Program

Alberta Health Service

Community Education to Prevent Nicotine Addiction in Immigrant Youth

Edmonton Community Adult Learning Association

Citizenship Education Program

English as Another Language

City of Edmonton – Community Services

Multicultural Family Law Facilitators Project

Community Investment Operating Grant

Cultural Liaison Specialists – A Needs Assessment

World on a Maple Leaf: A Treasury of Canadian Multicultural Folktales

Creating Collaborative Framework for Legal Response to Fraudulent International Marriages

Organizational Development

Space Rental Subsidy

Enhancing Civic Participation

Creating Inclusive Communities

Alberta Children and Youth Services

A Self-help Guide for Victims of Domestic Violence and Crimes, Not Cultures

Alberta Culture and Community Spirit Program

Peace in Families Award

Health Impact of Domestic Violence

Children in Distress Support Project

Our partners and supporters

Community Initiative against Family Violence

Peace in Families Award

Legal Aid Alberta (Family Law Office)

Multicultural Family Law Facilitators Project

ASSIST Community Services Centre

Strengthening Child Safety with New Immigrant Families in Edmonton

Supporting Edmonton Service Providers

Shaping the Future Together: Not Victims Any Longer

Multicultural Family Law Facilitators Project

In Support of Victims: Call for Taking Action

Sharing Responsibilities with New Canadians

Edmonton Public Library – Stanley A Milner Branch

Office space

University of Alberta – Community Service Learning

Community Education for Preventing Nicotine Addiction

Publication of “World on a Maple Leaf”



Congratulations on Becoming Canadian Citizens!

I am an engineering student at the University of Alberta. Unlike science and Math, History is very challenging for me...I passed the test and scored 19 out of 20. I am very thankful to Mrs. Wassef and thankful that such services exist for whoever needs it.

Somalia is my home country, I didn't go to school there, but I finished LINC... Ms. Wassef, thank you for taking a chance on me and my friends as well for your never ending support and encouragement... I deeply from my heart thank you so much for helping me passing the citizenship exam.

- Citizenship Education Program Students' Feedback

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