

# cross cultural CURRENT

fostering a more just community, globally and locally...



London Cross Cultural Learner Centre  
cclc

## Life as a Refugee:

Celebrating the accomplishments and contributions of our most resilient neighbours.



World Refugee Day 2010 was a day full of vibrant activities throughout the city of London. Following that theme, the London Cross Cultural Learner Centre in partnership with the London Public Library hosted an event entitled "Life as a Refugee". The purpose of this event was to showcase the accomplishments of refugees who have made London, Ontario their home.

Held at the Central Library on June 19th, 2010, the event was a great success with over 80 participants from all walks of life. Guests were welcomed by MP Irene Mathyssen and MPP Khalil Ramal. Keynote speaker Hasan Savehilaghi (pictured on the left) spoke about his experience living in London and what it means to him to be the President of Yellow London Taxi Inc. He was followed by Gloria

Nafziger, Refugee Coordinator from Amnesty International who explained the situations from which refugees are arriving in Canada and the impact of the recent Bill C-11. The day was an exciting exploration of refugee issues, with speakers coming from different background and covering all four corners of the world.

Event organizer Monica Abdelkader from the Partners in Caring team at the London Cross Cultural Learner Centre would like to thank the sponsors Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Libro Financial Group, Downtown London, the Library Settlement Program at CCLC, London Muslim Mosque and TD Canada Trust. Furthermore, a very special thank you goes to the following restaurants for the multicultural Lunch: Il Tenore, India Spice Express, Panafric Coffee House, Hot Oven at Covent Garden Market and Goody's Mideastern Cuisine. An even bigger thank you goes to all the refugees who shared their stories at the event!



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CCLC provides you with all your translation requirements using official and certified translators. Documents are translated accurately and in a timely fashion. We have over 60 languages and our services cover all documents, such as Immigration documents, Driver's Licenses and Records, Marriage and Birth Certificates, Education documents, etc., for both professionals and students. Come visit us on the second floor at 505 Dundas Street.

# Getting Ready for Back-to-School!

September can be a super stressful time for newcomer families with the beginning of English classes, children in schools and lots of new activities to take part in. A new education system means there are a variety of new concerns that have an impact on their daily life. We asked clients what are some common struggles they have when going to school for the first time. Below are some of their concerns with suggestions and tips to help your kids survive their first few months in a London, Ontario school. For more information please visit [www.settlement.org](http://www.settlement.org)

## Helping Your Child Make Friends

Making friends and feeling accepted helps your child feel comfortable at school and focus on his/her school work. There are many ways that parents can help.

- Consider how to help your child get to know the neighbourhood and places where he or she can play safely.
- Visit community programs such as libraries, community centres and local faith groups. For younger children you can try to visit a drop-in-centre, parenting centre, parent-child centre. For older children you can try the local recreation centre. School office staff and Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) staff can tell where these community programs are located.
- Accompany your child to the school playground or local park after school so he or she can meet other children and play with friends.
- Get to know your neighbours so your child can see you making friends and maybe even make some of his or her own.
- Participate in weekend and after school activities organized by your child's school, local community groups, local faith groups or the Cross Cultural Learner Centre. Many of these programs are free to participants and offer a variety of fun programs that suit your needs.
- Talk to your child about their new friends and learn their names. When your child wants to invite a friend to your home, contact their parents to make arrangements.
- Join the CCLC's Host Program for a fun-filled calendar of events and volunteer opportunities for your whole family!
- Come visit the Cross Cultural Learner Centre for more tips. Staff at the centre have many ideas of how you can help your child make friends in London.

## 6 Things Parents Should Know About SECONDARY SCHOOL...

**1. Choosing Courses:** Each year, with their parents' help, students must pick courses. There are many types of courses. Some prepare students for community college, others for university, and others for apprenticeship programs or going directly to work. The teachers, guidance counsellor and Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) staff can help you choose wisely.

**2. Homework:** Students usually have homework every night. Teachers may or may not check the homework, but students are still expected to finish it. If you or your child have questions about the homework you should ask the teacher.

**3. School Clubs and Sports:** After-school clubs (like chess or music) and sports (like soccer and badminton) are great ways for students to practice English and make new friends. They are free to participate in and are supervised by staff at your child's school.

**4. Many Students Take an Extra Year:** It is quite common for students to take an extra year or two to finish school. This gives them more time to learn English. It also helps them be better prepared for their plans after high school. The teachers, guidance counsellor and SWIS staff can help you consider this option.

## DEALING WITH ANXIETY

It is quite normal for your child to feel anxious about starting school in a new country and learning a new language.

Anxiety can affect the way your child thinks and feels. It may be hard for your child to know if he or she feels anxious. Some symptoms of anxiety include stomach aches, headaches, tiring easily, aggressiveness, sadness, silence and denial of the changes.

Here are some tips on how to help your child:

- Talk with your child about how he or she is feeling. Share your own feelings about how you are adjusting to your new country.
- Explain that it is normal to be anxious when making big changes in your life.
- Encourage your child to talk about what happens at school. Listening to your child helps you understand what is going well and what might be difficult. Ask your child a question to start the conversation.
- Remind your child of situations that used to be difficult but are easier now.
- Acknowledge small successes in dealing with difficult situations. For example, celebrate the completion of the first two months of school.
- Introduce your child to the Settlement Worker in his or her school. This person can be a strong ally and a comforting support through this transitional time.
- Tell the teacher that your child is feeling a little anxious so that the teacher can help too.

**5. Attendance:** Schools check attendance every day. Missing a day or arriving late is a serious matter and should be avoided. When your child is not at school or is sick, you should call the school and let them know. You may also get an automated telephone message from the school that says your child missed school.

**6. Parent-Teacher Interviews:** Once or twice a year, parents are invited to come to a Parent-Teacher Interview. At this meeting, teachers explain how your child is doing in school, answer questions and suggest how parents can help at home. Many schools can provide interpreters, parents can bring a friend to interpret, and SWIS workers are a great help should you need them.

To find out more please contact  
Cross Cultural Learner Centre at **(519) 432-1133**  
or visit our website at [www.lcclc.org](http://www.lcclc.org)



## Growing Flowers from Seeds: Settlement Workers in School Fosters Change

Since the introduction of the SWIS program earlier this year, the impact on the lives of families is clear. Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) have had the pleasure of introducing new families to London to the Canadian education system which can seem quite daunting regardless where families come from.

This summer SWIS assisted at the Thames Valley District School Board's Reception, Orientation and Assessment Centre (ROAC). Denise, the English Language Assessor and Resource Teacher who works at ROAC commented that "thanks to the Settlement Workers in Schools program, Thames Valley District School Board's ROAC can now fully live up to its name. With the support of SWIS workers, newcomers to London, Ontario have benefited from responsive, client-centered services and a sincere welcome as the newest additions to Thames Valley's school communities. Families are grateful for the overview of the school system that they receive at ROAC and are delighted to be referred to SWIS programs in their children's schools. When you visit ROAC there is a sign that says: 'all the flowers of tomorrow are in the seeds of today.' Settlement Workers at ROAC have planted seeds that will become flowers under the care of SWIS staff throughout London and enrich our whole community."

Similarly, one SWIS worker commented: "as a SWIS worker, working at ROAC has been a great experience for me. It is so rewarding to see many clients who receive SWIS services, leave the centre with the sense of empowerment. I still remember a client with depression who walked out of the centre in tears saying 'no, I am not just staying home anymore because there are so many things I want to do!'"

"This summer, I was able to help twelve refugee kids to attend day camp for the first time. They were so excited to go swimming, play games, do crafts, and go on day-trips. It was an excellent opportunity for them to practice English, learn more about Canada and build friendships with other kids in the area. One family had so much fun that the kids even wanted to come back after camp ended" commented another SWIS worker. The Cross Cultural Learner Centre and its staff have been quite excited since the introduction of this new program. Not only has SWIS staff helped to ease the transition for newly arrived families into schools, the program has helped to foster a greater sense of belonging for these families in their new communities and has been a welcomed and well-received addition to newcomer settlement services in London.



## 4 ways to keep busy after school

### HOST Program Activities

Whether its for yourself, your kids or your entire family, the HOST Program at CCLC offers many different ways to keep busy when you're not in school. For example, HOST offers free Swimming, a Soccer Team, Sewing Classes, Computer Classes and so much more! For more information contact HOST at CCLC, or visit our website at [www.lcclc.org](http://www.lcclc.org)

### City London's SPECTRUM Programming

Throughout London there are many different after-school activities to keep everyone busy. Programs are offered all around the city and cover everything from the arts, sports, recreation and more. There is also programming for different age groups. Financial support is available for those families who may need it. For more information visit your local community centre or online at:

[www.london.ca/playourway](http://www.london.ca/playourway)

### Community-based Programs, Activities and Events

Based in your own community there are many agencies who run programs that you and your family can participate in. Finding these programs can be a little more difficult as each agency may or may not have their own methods of advertising their programs. The best way to figure out what exists is by visiting your child's school, your local community resource centres, asking friends and family or talking to your settlement counsellor.

### London Public Library

There are 16 libraries throughout the city of London, each offering programming that can entertain your family for hours. Activities at the Libraries are always changing so check out their website or you local branch for more information.

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



# What's Going On When

## at the London Cross Cultural Learner Centre

### Ongoing Programming:

#### Discover Canada: Canadian Citizenship Preparation

Citizenship Test Preparation Classes held once a week for 5 weeks, contact Sherwood Library (519-473-9965) or Central Library (519-661-4600) to speak with a Library Settlement Worker.

#### Sewing Group

When: Every Thursday 6-8pm  
Where: CCLC  
Contact: Sadet in the CCLC Host Program

#### Homework Help

When: Every Tuesday 4-6pm and Thursday 4:30-6pm  
Where: Tuesday at Sir George Ross Secondary School and Thursday at CCLC  
Contact: Sadet in the CCLC Host Program

#### Social and Professional Networking Club

When: Every Thursday, 7-8pm  
Where: CCLC, Lower Level  
Contact: Joan in the CCLC Host Program

#### Basic Computer Group

When: Every Thursday, 3:30-4:45pm  
Where: CCLC Resource Centre  
Contact: Sadet in the CCLC Host Program

#### Intermediate Computer Group

When: Every Thursday, 4:45-6pm  
Where: CCLC Resource Centre  
Contact: Sadet in the CCLC Host Program

#### Mother and Daughter Swimming

When: Every Friday, 5-6:30pm  
Where: Beal Secondary School Pool  
Contact: Sadet in the CCLC Host Program

#### Youth Swimming

When: Every Friday, 6:30-8pm  
Where: Beal Secondary School Pool  
Contact: Sadet in the CCLC Host Program

### Conversation Circles for Newcomers:

Dates: September 13 to December 16, 2010 and January 10 to June 23, 2011

#### MONDAYS

Where: Central Library, 251 Dundas Street, 2nd Floor Meeting Room  
When: 7-8:30pm

#### TUESDAYS

Where: Cherryhill Branch Library, 301 Oxford Street West  
When: 6:30-8pm

Where: Crouch Branch Library and Neighbourhood Resource Centre, 550 Hamilton Road  
When: 6:30-8pm

Where: Masonville Branch Library, 30 North Centre Road  
When: 6:30-8pm

#### WEDNESDAYS

Where: Beacock Branch Library, 1280 Huron Street  
When: 6:30-8pm

#### THURSDAYS

Where: Westmount Branch Library, 3200 Wonderland Road South  
When: 6:30-8pm

Where: Sherwood Forest Branch Library, 1225 Wonderland Road North  
When: 6:30-8pm

**PLEASE NOTE: There are several other conversation circles occurring throughout the city. For more information please contact the Host Program at CCLC.**

### For Newcomers:

#### Anti-Racism Training

By: Social Planning Council of Peel  
When: Friday October 15, 9am to 4pm  
Where: CCLC  
Cost: Free. Registration Required.  
Contact: Monica Abdelkader, Partners in Caring at the CCLC

#### Volunteering for Newcomers: How to Get Started

By: Pillar Nonprofit Network  
When: Monday October 18, 2pm to 4pm  
Where: CCLC, Lower Level  
Cost: Free. Registration Required.  
Contact: Joseph Jilitovich, Settlement Counsellor

#### Volunteering for Newcomers: at Leadership Levels

By: Pillar Nonprofit Network  
When: Tuesday November 16, 2pm to 5pm  
Where: CCLC, Lower Level  
Cost: Free. Registration Required.  
Contact: Joseph Jilitovich, Settlement Counsellor

### For Everyone:

#### Refugee Sponsorship Training Program

By: Refugee Sponsorship Training Program  
When: Friday September 24, 9:30-4:30  
Where: CCLC  
Cost: Free. Registration Required.

#### Changes in Immigration and Refugee Law & the Canadian Experience Class

By: FCJ Refugee Centre  
When: Friday October 1, 10am to 3pm  
Where: CCLC  
Cost: Free. Registration Required.

#### The Provincial Nominee Program: Tips for the Refugee Hearing

By: FCJ Refugee Centre  
When: Friday October 22, 10am to 3pm  
Where: CCLC  
Cost: Free. Registration Required.

# Practicing Diversity: CCLC Host Soccer Team



At the Cross Cultural Learner Centre we strive towards building a welcoming community, towards bringing communities together. It has been well documented around the world that there is one thing that unites more than language, culture, race or sexual orientation ever could: Soccer.

Known to many who visit the centre as football, soccer has the power to overcome obstacles that would otherwise act as barriers to community involvement. It doesn't matter how much English language you have, soccer doesn't need words. The CCLC soccer team, named FC London - CCLC, has brought together 25 talented players from many different nationalities. Most of the players are themselves newcomers to Canada, and together the team have worked hard and overcome many barriers. The players are as diverse as the London community; they come from around the world; Afghanistan, Burma (aka Myanmar), Burundi, Canada, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, Iraq, Jamaica, Somalia, Zimbabwe and more.

FC London - CCLC has made excellent progress, proving that diversity wins. "In one season the team has moved from 9<sup>th</sup>

(last) place to placing 5<sup>th</sup> at this year's WAFRIKA 2010 Tournament" explained team coach M. Yousif. "I'm very proud of how far they have come, they truly represent the multicultural nature of Canada, better yet they have come to see their differences as strengths. Many people can talk about diversity, its a different thing to live it," said Yousif. Currently the team is training for the next season, participating in other Host Program activities such as swimming and indoor soccer.

Mr. Kirubel, WAFRIKA tournament organizer loves the integration that these tournaments affords different communities, and is amazed that some players have even been called for professional teams.

Despite what the future holds for the team, what is certain is the respect they have learned for each other. Anteneh, one of the team's best players expressed how happy he is to be part of the team because it helps him feel more integrated to the community. Anteneh and his brother have been on the team since right after they arrived to Canada, only 4 months ago. Coach Yousif has said that he has seen unbelievable growth in the two young men, their English has

improved but more importantly their self-confidence has come a long way. Anteneh also explained that it helped him to feel less isolated and it is always comforting to know that his teammates are his friends.

Soccer games at CCLC are a family-event. Whether staff, team members or family members; whether young, old or in between; everyone is always welcome. The comraderie is certain, there is a glue that holds the team together. Some say it is their common experience as newcomers, others think its the love of the sport. One thing is for sure, soccer certainly does bring people together.

Special thank you to Luis Delgado for his contributions to this article and Camillo Trujillo.

*To find out more about the information and programs included in this newsletter please contact:*

*Cross Cultural Learner Centre at (519) 432-1133 or visit our website at [www.lcclc.org](http://www.lcclc.org)*

# SECOND ANNUAL CCLC-LGBT PICNIC A HUGE SUCCESS!

The London Cross Cultural Learner Centre hosted their 2nd Annual LGBT Newcomers Picnic in Port Burwell Provincial Park on Sunday August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010. It was a huge success!

Yet, three years ago if you had told Joseph Jilitovich, Settlement Counselor and newly appointed LBGT Counselor at the CCLC, that in the summer of 2010 there would be an LGBT picnic with close to 35 attendees, he wouldn't have believed it.

"It took time for the initiative to take hold. There were a number of starts and stops, but as awareness grew, with thanks to CCLC staff, partner agencies, the support of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) and Citizenship & Immigration Canada (CIC), membership is now steadily increasing," said Jilitovich.

As a case in point, last summer the picnic was attended by only seven LGBT newcomers/volunteers. The majority of the attendees were staff and family. This year

the number of LGBT clients outnumbered staff and supporters. The day offered an opportunity for LGBT immigrants, centre staff, supporters and their families to swim, laugh, and mingle together. As a recent LGBT newcomer, and permanent resident, James, who attended the picnic for the first time said, "it was very nice to meet different people, and become friends. It was very wonderful for me. Thank you!"

"We're helping people make social connections," said Jilitovich. "It's important for those in the LGBT newcomer community to meet other people and feel comfortable and secure, not only in London, but also in Canada."

Thomas, a supporter of the CCLC and member of the LGBT community, attending his first CCLC event said that he found everyone to be friendly and the experience to be non-threatening, regardless of differences in culture or sexual orientation.

Social events such as the picnic

also provide an opportunity for LGBT clients to learn about other services in the community - from those offered by other support agencies as well as other services provided by CCLC. For example, CCLC has developed an outreach program in order to reach out to potential LGBT newcomers who may not be aware of the services available.

Many thanks to those who helped make the LGBT picnic a huge success. Starbucks at Cheapside and Highbury, Goodlife Fitness at Adelaide and Oxford, OCASI, CIC and CCLC staff.

Said Jilitovich at the end of the day, with a tired but content look on his face, "it is nice to see our LGBT newcomer community growing. I am positive that as long as we promote

a safe space for newcomers who are identified as LGBT clients the numbers will continue to grow. I would like to encourage all newcomers from the LGBT community to become a part of the CCLC-LGBT social group and to feel free to make use of the services offered by CCLC."

Pictured below: some staff and volunteers at the picnic. Special thank you to Ann from LINC for writing this article.



## Welcoming Picnic in Honor of Iraqi Refugees

With the highest refugees per capita in Canada, and almost half of the more recent arrivals coming from Iraq, it was time to welcome them, the way the city of London does best.

It was a hot summer day when CCLC and the London community came together to support a community that has grown immensely in the last few years. With over half of the government-assisted refugees who arrive in London, Ontario coming from Iraq, organizer Sherin Hussien from CCLC felt it was time to bring everyone together, to overcome differences and better yet to celebrate their new homes.

Over 200 Iraqi refugees, their families and supporters came



London Mayor, Anne-Marie DeCicco-Best with Khawla, Iraqi Playwright who has been instrumental at establishing social supports for Iraqi Refugees.

together on August 7th, 2010 for a community BBQ. Coordinating such an event was no easy feat but it success was all over the faces of the participants who laughed and celebrated side-by-side. The refugees were joined by some prestigious guests, there were appearances made by London Mayor Anne-Marie DeCicco-Best and MPP for London-Fanshawe Khalil Ramal. Cindy White who is running for Councillor of Ward 14 joined in on the fun, and sending his regrets Chris Bentley, MPP for London West. Wrote Bentley "I join with London's Iraqi community in welcoming you to our city. We continue to grow as a rich and culturally diverse place for newcomers and their families to call home. I would like to thank the London Cross Cultural Learner

Centre for the remarkable work that they do every day."

Many different agencies and sponsors came together to make this event possible. We would like to thank: London Muslim Mosque, London Islamic Centre, Al Mehdi Islamic Community Centre, Aladdin's Foods, Birani Homes, Iraqi-Canadian House, Microkool Computers, Muslim Association of Canada, Fadel's Variety, Westmount Halal Meat, Falcon Travel, Aldus Printing Graphic Design Inc, Syrian Forum of London, Sam Meddaoui from Century 21, Canadian-Iraqi Turkmen Culture Association of Canada, and Khalil Ramal MPP. A big thank you goes to all those who attended and the Iraqi refugees who continue to inspire us all.

## Special Congratulations and Thank-yous

Staff at CCLC would like to congratulate Ann from LINC who was presented with her Canadian Language Benchmark Assessment Certification. Congratulations Ann!

Staff would also like to extend a very special thank you to our three summer students who worked very hard all summer in such a wonderfully supportive manner.

Thank you Adrian, Rezan and Mirvais for all your hard work!

## inside next issue:

**Our Cross Cultural Holiday Issue!**  
**The Great Canadian Winter, things you should know.**

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