



# The AMSSA Insider

Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC

**June 2006**

## **HOT TOPICS**

### **The Safe Harbour Project**

While AMSSA's funding contract for the Safe Harbour project is now completed, the Safe Harbour initiative still has great momentum. Many of the community organizers continue to build their local Safe Harbour projects, enlisting more participants, providing more training sessions, and bringing Safe Harbour into schools and neighbouring communities. AMSSA staff is in the process of developing funding proposals and soliciting corporate donations to support our central role in bringing Safe Harbour to more BC communities. In May, the project advisory committee met to map out future Safe Harbour opportunities and directions.



### **Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance (CISSA-ACSEI)**

BC representatives to CISSA-ACSEI, the new national umbrella for immigrant settlement, have been extensively involved in ongoing contract negotiations with CIC and ongoing CISSA-ACSEI development. Tim Welsh, chair of the CISSA-ACSEI communications committee, led a process working with the Institute of Media, Policy and Civil Society (IMPACS) to distribute a press release and fact sheet to mainstream and ethnic media across Canada. The message focussed on immigrant settlement announcements in the new federal budget to bring media attention to the existence of the new national settlement body.

Other CISSA-ACSEI activities include presenting recommendations to CIC regarding the national Settlement Allocation Model that determines settlement funding to each province, developing of the website at [www.cissa-acsei.ca](http://www.cissa-acsei.ca), and developing of funding proposals to a range of potential sources.

### **AMSSA: The "Only Qualified Respondent"**

The BC Settlement and Multiculturalism Division is revising the framework for the provision of BC Settlement and Adaptation Program "Stream 4 – Sectoral Support" services. The goal is to have two main service providers, one for ELSA and one for all other service streams. ELSA Net was informed that it would be direct awarded for ELSA (ESL) service provider networking, and for to identify a service provider for all other streams an RFQ process was posted on BC Bid.

AMSSA staff has already had one initial meeting with the Director of SaM Division Director to begin the process of negotiating a service contract. While much is yet to be determined, this will mean a shift and expansion in AMSSA's provision of IICC services to directly benefit all staff within BCSAP funded services. AMSSA has received many spontaneous congratulations from our IICC members about our success in the RFQ process.

### **Promoting Healthy Living in BC: Multicultural Communities Project**

AMSSA has developed the BC Directory of Multicultural Health Expertise as a free online service for health organizations, community agencies, institutions, communities and individuals to connect with public health care professionals with multicultural health expertise and cross-cultural health care services.

The Directory:

- Allows BC communities to find multicultural health expertise "close to home" and assess whether there is a need to develop additional health services capacity to meet local needs.
- Provides an open forum for health professionals and networking opportunities for cross-cultural health providers throughout British Columbia.

Currently, the directory has a list of 84 health care and social service providers with a range of expertise providing services for families in communities across BC  
<http://amssa.org/multiculturalhealthyliving/phase3/directoryForm.cfm>.

You're invited to add your expertise and search the Directory at:  
<http://amssa.org/multiculturalhealthyliving/phase3/searchDirectory.cfm>

### **Multicultural Health Resources**

[www.amssa.org/multiculturalhealthyliving/phase2/resources.cfm](http://www.amssa.org/multiculturalhealthyliving/phase2/resources.cfm)

The online database of Multicultural Health publications has been developed as a service for AMSSA members and the general public. Currently it contains 380 publications covering a large range of multicultural health topics including studies on access to health services for health care consumers with limited English proficiency, best practices in service delivery, cultural competence, health conditions, language services and patterns of service utilization among multi-ethnic populations. Each publication is introduced with a summary and can be downloaded directly from the website.

This database can be searchable by key words, which are included in the title, author's name and / or summary of the multicultural health publications or by dates.

## SUPPORTING OUR MEMBERS

### We Did It! – Business Mentoring Research Project

In March AMSSA, in partnership with Penny Handford of ChangeWorks Consulting and the Immigrant Services Society of BC, completed the Stage One report to Citizenship and Immigration Canada regarding models for adding *Business Mentoring* as a service component for the federal Host Program.

The Stage One report was developed through extensive literature review and guidance from a national Advisory Group. The report provided detailed analysis of the history and nature of mentoring programs for business and other settings, and identified potential strategies and elements for inclusion in an immigrant business mentoring program model. AMSSA has been notified by CIC that we may proceed with Stage Two of the research in early June, which will include nation-wide focus groups and interviews with private sector representatives, mentoring program service providers and immigrants.

The Stage Two report, to be submitted in September, will provide concrete recommendations for two or three preferred models for Host Program Business Mentoring. The report is available at: [www.amssa.org/publications/Research\\_Business\\_Mentoring\\_FIN\\_AL.pdf](http://www.amssa.org/publications/Research_Business_Mentoring_FIN_AL.pdf)

### IICC Meeting with Minister Oppal

The IICC Steering Committee's meeting with Minister Oppal is now confirmed for June 19. In preparation for the meeting, AMSSA-IICC staff has been working with a Steering Committee task group to develop an effective meeting framework and messaging.

### Employment Access Strategy for Immigrants (EASI) Autumn Forum

AMSSA-IICC staff is working with other EASI partners (SaM Division, MOSAIC, ISSBC, YWCA, SUCCESS, Service Canada) to develop a proposal for an Autumn forum on immigrants and the labour market "after 2010".

The proposal is focussed on asking some tough questions about the direction of our immigration and economic integration system, with the goal of having BC private sector and government bodies move beyond some current assumptions about the role of immigrants in our economic future. The proposal will be taken forward to various financial institutions, private sector umbrella organizations, and other relevant opinion leaders to engage their involvement and financial support for the forum.

### New AMSSA Members

We are pleased to welcome both Burnaby Family Life Institute and Multicultural Family Centre as new members of AMSSA! AMSSA is very pleased to have them on board and looks forward to their valuable contribution in the coming year.

## Northern Regional Health Fair

On June 9, 2006 the Immigrant & Multicultural Services Society of Prince George hosted its first Northern Regional Health Fair. The event held at the College of New Caledonia was well attended and had approximately 150 participants from throughout Northern BC, representing 12 communities. The host agency was honoured to welcome the Attorney General and Minister of Multiculturalism Mr. Wally Oppal as the keynote speaker for the event.

Mr. Oppal talked about the importance of multiculturalism in BC and how the province values diversity. He also made reference to his years in law school and talked about how things have changed in terms of diversity in our communities.



Mayor Colin Kinsley and Honourable Shirley Bond, Minister of Education also attended the event and assisted with the ribbon cutting for the official opening. The Health Fair provided a range of booths from local and regional organizations. The booths featured information such as heart health, tobacco reduction and diabetes awareness. Many delegates had the chance to follow interactive Yoga, Nia and Tai Chi demonstrations.

## WHAT'S UP AT AMSSA?

### Study Tour Side Event - *Communities in Action: Sustainability and Social Cohesion*

The Multiculturalism and Immigration Branch of the BC Ministry of Attorney General and the Multicultural Advisory Council will host a day-long study tour as an extension of the World Urban Forum. AMSSA and the Association of Neighbourhood Houses are organizing the event. The study tour titled **Communities in Action: Sustainability and Social Cohesion** will be on **Saturday, June 24th**.

200 delegates will experience the work of multicultural/immigrant-serving groups, ethno-cultural agencies, and neighbourhood organizations through hands-on demonstrations and direct interaction with community representatives at four different sites. The destination sites are ISS Welcome House, MOSAIC, Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House and Britannia Community.

The day opens at the central Vancouver Public Library with a First Nations Blessing. Tom Jensen, ADM at the Ministry of the Attorney General and the Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism will give a welcome speech followed by a presentation about Vancouver's diverse community by Hayne Wai, Sessional Instructor at UBC. Nathan Edelson, Senior Planner at the City of Vancouver will speak about Vancouver's Downtown Eastside during lunch at Floata Chinese Restaurant in Chinatown.