



The AMSSA Insider

Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC
March 2006

HOT TOPICS

Multicultural Health Fair 2006



With more than 1,400 participants, a 400% increase from 2005, the Multicultural Health Fair 2006 was a huge success! It was unquestionably the largest fair of its kind in Canada. Open to the public from 11:00am to 5:00pm on February 18, 2006, this year's Fair was held at Collingwood Neighbourhood House. The event featured 52 exhibitor booths and 33 presenters/demonstrators in 28 workshops providing health information on topics such as diabetes, heart and stroke, mental health and cancer prevention, to name a few.

For those who like to experiment with recipes in their own kitchen, the Fair offered several cooking demonstrations that featured healthy cooking alternatives and recipes from Latin America, the Philippines, China and Iran. The kitchen at Collingwood was packed with excited – experienced or self-aspiring – home cooks.

The health screenings offered at the Fair by AMSSA's own *Healthy You* booth and various other exhibitors were among the most popular activities during the day. Participants had the opportunity to partake in screenings such as blood pressure, blood glucose, audiology tests and BMI.

The event was well-covered by media such as Channel M, Fairchild Radio, and Vancouver Co-op Radio. Many other local ethnic media also helped promote the Fair prior to the big day.

We are overwhelmed by all the positive feedback we received from the public and everybody involved in the project. We extend our thanks to all of our key funders and sponsors from the government and the community for their generous support, as well as all the VIPs and guests who graced our Opening Ceremony. Our Steering and Program Committees and AMSSA's Board of Directors are thanked for their leadership. Without our dedicated volunteers and performers, the event would not have been as successful as it was. Last but not least, thanks to all the participants, people and organizations that were involved with the Fair. We look forward to seeing all of you again in 2007!

2006 Multifaith Calendars

AMSSA is pleased to announce that all the 2006 Multifaith Calendars – over 7,000 of them – have been sold! Many thanks to all the AMSSA members and groups that purchased the calendars and incorporated them as a valuable educational tool promoting inclusivity. The new 2007 Multifaith Calendars will become available in September, 2006.



The Safe Harbour Project

Since our last update, the Safe Harbour Project gained publicity through Chilliwack Progress, Chilliwack Times, Richmond Review, and Cowichan Valley Citizen. The five fully supported communities – Terrace, Prince George, Campbell River, Langley and Vancouver – have completed their training with the exception of Vancouver (training session to be held on March 20). Ongoing community support and resources are provided to the six partial-support communities: Quesnel, Duncan, Chilliwack, Kamloops, Richmond and Abbotsford.

An evaluation consultant has begun the evaluation process based on the logic model and framework of the project. Interviews are currently being conducted with Advisory Group members, Nanaimo's Action for Diversity Team and CVIMS representatives, and a representative group of project organizers and participants in the communities that have implemented the Safe Harbour project. A website was launched for easier access to information and resources: www.safeharbour.ca.

Safe Harbour is gaining momentum and support from all the communities involved, and we look forward to including more local businesses in the project.



Promoting Healthy Living in BC: Multicultural Communities Project

All key informant interviews with managers and coordinators from BC health authorities have been conducted. A report was prepared after transcripts of all of these interviews were made. We thank everybody who was involved in these interviews that provided us with valuable information about multicultural health care.

The web-based Multicultural Health Resources is being updated on an ongoing basis with current Canadian and international health publications. These resources can be accessed through www.amssa.org/multiculturalhealthyliving/phase2/resources.cfm.

The Multicultural Health Directory has been launched as a free online service at www.amssa.org/multiculturalhealthyliving/phase3/index.html, and AMSSA has invited health professionals and service providers to register their expertise and programs/services. We welcome health care professionals with expertise and/or providing cross-cultural health services in BC to apply for inclusion in the Directory. The application form is available at the above website.

SUPPORTING OUR MEMBERS

We Did It! – Business Mentoring Research Project

In January, AMSSA partnered with Penny Handford at ChangeWork Consulting and the Immigrant Services Society of BC to prepare a proposal for Citizenship and Immigration Canada regarding research into models of “business mentoring” to inform potential changes to the national Host Program. A number of other very high-quality proposals were submitted by other agencies, but the research team headed by AMSSA was very proud to learn that our proposal was chosen because of its detail.

AMSSA is now organizing the start of this research project, which is planned for two stages. By the end of March AMSSA will complete literature reviews and recommend several best business mentoring models. The second project stage, which is contingent on CIC securing funding, will involve broad national consultation about suggested business mentoring models, and a final report identifying two or three most appropriate models for integration into the existing national Host Program.

RIIM: Immigration and Canada’s Place in a Changing World

The 8th National Metropolis Conference is being held from March 23 to 26, 2006 at our home city Vancouver. AMSSA has been involved with the Conference Planning Committee for six months and administered the process to allocate 25 subsidized seats for NGOs.

Elizabeth Stanger, Angela Sasso, Mamie Hutt-Temoana and Dora Replanski will be doing a presentation on Promoting Healthy Living in BC Multicultural Communities, and various other AMSSA member agencies are presenting at the conference as well. We look forward to seeing you all at the conference!

CISSA-ACSEI – New Location

The Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance (CISSA) has now established a strategically located office in Ottawa with highly competent staff. The entire sector is pleased to have a national voice operating in the capital to influence for positive changes. AMSSA continues to administer a CIC contract to support development of the new national settlement body, and Chris Friesen, Jean McRae and Tim Welsh continue to represent the IICC to CISSA and its various working groups. Tim attended a meeting of CISSA representatives in Ottawa on February 27 and 28 to continue the process of establishing CISSA, including planning for submission of a proposal to CIC for next year’s funding, and planning for the CISSA launch and ongoing communications.

New AMSSA & IICC Member

We are pleased to announce that MOSAIC’s applications as members of both AMSSA and IICC were approved! MOSAIC has carried out some tremendous work with the immigrant settlement sector in the Lower Mainland. AMSSA is very pleased to have them on board and looks forward to their valuable contribution in the coming year.

AMSSA also distributed information about the new IICC membership criteria to a number of AMSSA members and other organizations that may now be eligible for IICC services. The new membership criteria are designed so that AMSSA can serve all BC organizations providing immigrant settlement services, helping AMSSA to secure ongoing contracts to continue IICC services.

WHAT’S UP AT AMSSA?

Canadian Ethnocultural Council – Outreach Plan

A Canadian Ethnocultural Council (CEC) focus group was held at AMSSA on March 6, 2006. The CEC is helping the Correctional Services Canada to develop a plan to look at how to raise awareness amongst ethnic communities in offender populations. It will provide an outline of what is needed to develop a culturally-competent step-by-step process for engagement of ethnocultural communities in Canada which will:

- raise awareness and build a network of support to assist offenders;
- build community’s understanding of gradual and safe reintegration of offenders; and
- build community capacity to assist offenders in their reintegration efforts.

For more information, please visit www.csc-scc.qc.ca.

AMSSA is Celebrating...

- ❖ AMSSA’s Evelyn Silan and husband Roberto Urrutia have become the proud parents of Charlize Urrutia. Charlize was born on February 21, 2006 with a healthy weight of 7lb 8oz. Congratulations to the Urrutia family, and welcome to this world, Charlize!
- ❖ Welcome to Kay Kobayashi (working on Business Mentoring Research Project) and Wincy Li (SFU Co-op student).