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Centre A welcomes *New Faces of British Columbia*

ISSofBC's **New Faces of British Columbia** photo exhibit ended its tour at Centre A gallery, with a week's showing beginning April 30th.

An opening event held the evening of April 29th was attended by over 150 guests, including **Maria Rajanayagam** (RBC- Account Manager, Commercial Financial Services & member of ISSofBC board) and **Alden Habacon** (CBC-Manager of Diversity Initiatives & Schema Magazine). Master of Ceremonies for two years in a row was **Ewa Karczewska** (ELSA Tri-Cities Program Manager).

Two ELSA teachers, **Theresa Howell** and **Andrea Solnes**, collaborated in creating curriculum to accompany the exhibit. This curriculum was utilized by over 20 ELSA classes from the Terminal office, bringing approximately 100 additional visitors to Centre A each day of the showing.



Guests gathered at the entrance of Centre A during the opening night of *New Faces of British Columbia* on April 29th.



MAY 2010

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In her opening remarks, ISSo/BC board member Maria said, "With this final event we would like to celebrate all those who make British Columbia not only a naturally beautiful province, but a culturally inclusive and incredibly interesting one as well."

25 ISSo/BC staff recognized for length of service

ISSo/BC had its first 20-year service awardees in **Thea Fiddick** and **Janet Massaro**, who were recognized at the ISSo/BC general staff meeting on May 13th.

Thea Fiddick, the Host Program Coordinator, began her career with ISSo/BC in June 1990 as an Assistant Coordinator with the Host Program. Prior to completing her degree in Asian Area studies from UBC, Thea lived in Thailand for a year as a rotary exchange student.

Janet Massaro, an ELSA Instructional Coordinator, started working with ISSo/BC in September 1989 with the Settlement Language Program. Before beginning her career with ISSo/BC, Janet was completing her TESL Diploma at VCC and enjoying the excitement of being a global nomad.

Held at the Plaza 500 Hotel, the General Staff Meeting featured a teamwork building session with Jazzthink and a group activity that enabled staff to familiarize themselves with fellow colleagues and ISSo/BC's different departments.

Cecilia Ty-McKay, a Career Centre Advisor at the Richmond Career Centre, said the staff meeting was "lots of fun. It's great to see staff relaxing and reflecting on how we can become a stronger ISSo/BC."

LENGTH OF SERVICE AWARDS PRESENTED AT ANNUAL STAFF MEETING

On May 13, ISSo/BC recognized over 20 staff members for their continued service and dedication. This year, awards were presented to:

5 YEARS

Charles Austin
Kathryn Bablitz
Jocelyn Bugden
Andrea Solnes
Wellington Reynoso
Roslyn Hart
Janet Morrison
Jennifer York
Hannah Han
Teresa Wong
Lyudmila Bochkaryova
Abdul Fatah Samim
Miyoung Suh
Dennis Roussel

10 YEARS

Hilda Chan
Ann Bo
Alan MacInroy
Noel Soares
Audrey Suchoplas

15 YEARS

Ewa Karczewska
Clifford Bell
Liza Bautista
Jane Williams

GREEN TIP

In Canada, England, Australia and New Zealand, May 24th is traditionally a holiday in



Thea Fiddick and Janet Massaro proudly display their Certificate of Appreciation alongside ISSofBC CEO Patricia Woroch.

Annual celebration welcomes refugee children

Riding on the tremendous response and success of last year's Refugee Children's Party, on June 5 ISSofBC will host the annual event from 2pm - 4pm at the Cedar Hills Elementary School in Surrey.

Organized by **Romanda Simpson** and supported by **Chelsea Hug, Ana-Marie Caday** and **Trina McKinlay**, over 130 children have been invited to partake in the annual celebration, which hopes to provide a warm welcome for newly arrived refugee children and their families.

Guided by the theme "World in Harmony," this year's party will feature musical entertainment, a drumming circle, face painting and musical instrument arts and crafts activities. In addition to entertainment and activities, the party will also have a kids photo centre, refreshments and cake.

Volunteers are still needed on the day of the event, from 12pm - 5pm. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Chelsea Hug at chelsea.hug@issbc.org, or ext 1191. For more information about the Refugee Children's Party, please contact Romanda Simpson at

honour of the late Queen Victoria's birthday. This year, celebrate Victoria Day by enjoying your natural environment and having an eco-friendly picnic!

- Disposable plates and utensils constitute a major source of waste at most picnics. Green your picnic by using reusable plates, cups and utensils. If doing dishes, or contributing to landfills sounds too taxing, there are biodegradable alternatives.

Vegware and *Go Green In Stages* uses potatoes and cornstarch to form durable, disposable, biodegradable sets of cutlery. At the end of your barbecue or picnic, you can put these in your green bin or compost heap, and it will decompose in 180 days. For more information, check out vegware.com or gogreeninstages.com.

- Get a headstart on discards. Shuck the corn, remove the rinds from melon slices, and discard the paper cupcake liners before heading out to your picnic.

- Be eco-smart about beverages. Pack a 3-gallon jug of cold water instead of 10 individual bottled waters.

To class up your al fresco dining, try one of the new environmentally friendly 'boxed' wines. Premium

romanda.simpson@issbc.org, or ext 1283.

ELSA Richmond celebrates opening of second location

ELSA formally introduced their second location to the Richmond community on May 12 by hosting an Open House at 5751 Cedarbridge Way.

Emceed by
Ihab Tayem
from
Palestine
and
Yvonne Chen
from
Taiwan,
these Level
3 ELSA
students



The ribbon cutting ceremony, lead by CEO Patricia Woroch, formally opens ELSA Cedarbridge.

utilized their new-found English skills to warmly welcome over 60 guests to the Open House. In addition to guided tours and table displays, the Open House featured photographs from the highly successful *New Faces of British Columbia* photography exhibit.

In her opening remarks, ISSofBC Board Member **Maria Rajanayagam** said "The new ELSA office furthers the vision of ISSofBC, which is to be known for its leadership in building a welcoming and inclusive Canada that recognizes the strength of our nation's diversity." Individuals who spoke at the formal ceremony included **Athena Baquizal-Adan** from the Immigration and Welcome BC Branch, *New Faces of British Columbia* Coordinator **Chelsea Hug**, ISSofBC CEO **Patricia Woroch** and Level 1 ELSA student **Guo Yi Wang** from China.

Accommodating over 65 students from 11 countries, the new ELSA Cedarbridge site offers 7 classes, from Literacy to Level. 3.

Former Welcome House client

wines are now available in 3-liter casks made from recycled paper, which won't shatter into dangerous shards on the picnic grounds.



COMPUTER TIP

Travelers should be on alert when arriving home from long weekends, such as Victoria Day, as this is a popular time for computer viruses to spread.

Most computer users have a tendency to turn off their computers when away on trips, which means newly-release anti-virus patches or anti-spyware updates are not getting installed. Before opening your e-mail or going online after an extended absence, update your anti-virus and anti-spyware scans.



ISSofBC NEWS BLOG

comes full circle

In 1995, **Reem Fathalla** and her husband immigrated to Canada from Iraq, a country beset by a devastating war. For Reem and her husband, the transition to a new culture and a new land wasn't a harrowing one, due in large part to the presence of Welcome House.

Reem and her husband stayed at Welcome House for three weeks, where they received the help, resources and services they needed to begin building a new life in Canada.

"Welcome House had everything," Reem says as she reflects on her first moments upon arriving in Canada. "They had furnished rooms, translators, names of doctors. This made the transition easier because we had nothing. No money, no car, no knowledge of English. I'll always remember what Welcome House did for us."



Reem Fathalla (right) and three UBC classmates demonstrate the importance of dental hygiene.

Now a dental hygiene student at UBC, Reem and three other UBC students were recently engaged in community outreach work at

ISSofBC Terminal. Every Wednesday during the month of February, Reem provided lessons on Oral Health for Level 1 ELSA students and gave demonstrations on proper brushing and flossing techniques. Through presentations and group activities, Reem delighted in educating fellow immigrants on ways to keep their smiles as bright as their future.

International Studies offers online orientation

For up to date news and information on migration issues, both nationally and internationally, visit the [ISSofBC News Blog!](#)



ISSofBC IS ON TWITTER!

What's happening at ISSofBC? Get in the know by following us on [Twitter!](#)



NEW STAFF?

Do you have new or current staff who are not receiving the e-newsletter?

If you would like to add them to the distribution list, please send an email to Debra Pangestu, LCCS Departmental Coordinator, at debra.pangestu@issbc.org.

Overseas students applying for courses in the International Studies program can now access the pre-study package and orientation online.

Since last March, interested students registering online can take an online assessment of their English grammar, reading and listening skills, have their results evaluated by IS and Vital English (ISSoBC's partner in this initiative) who then provide the students with online access to a free 30-day course that serves as preparation for their studies when they arrive in Vancouver. Students receive a certificate for successfully completing this course.

"The whole idea is to give our future students an edge before coming to take classes," explains IS Instructional Coordinator **Orsolina Rabasco**, adding, "they can use their online course to brush up or further improve their skills."

Also included in the package is an online orientation which visually takes the students through the Vancouver International Airport, Customs and Immigration and also shows pictures of ISSoBC in preparation for their first day at the Language College. The orientation component also includes a small, fun quiz to reinforce the information provided.

"We are hoping that the online course plus the orientation will make students feel more at ease prior to coming to Canada," adds **Orsolina**.

The best tax clinic yet

Spring can be a taxing time for many immigrants as they navigate their way through the income tax return process, and ISSoBC was again on hand to help this year.

Under the direction of **Dorcas Mendez**, Tax Clinic Coordinator, **Marguerite Egan**, long time ISSoBC volunteer, and practicum student **Ahlam Kassem**, ISSoBC organized six tax clinics from March 1 to April 30 in five locations throughout Greater Vancouver.



The free-of-charge tax clinics were held at the Eastburn Community Centre in Burnaby, Collingwood Neighbourhood House in East Vancouver, the Guildford Library in Surrey, and at the ISSoBC Westwood and Terminal locations.

Over 130 volunteers, speaking 20 languages, helped more than 2,500 low income clients prepare and file personal tax returns. In addition to servicing a record number of clients, this year ISSoBC established a partnership with the Guildford Library that enabled clients to file their tax returns electronically through U-File, an authorized Canada Revenue Agency software.

Dorcas Mendez was thrilled with the outcome of the tax clinic and said "It is not just about filing tax returns, it is about volunteers having a rewarding experience, and our low income clients being helped with a service they could not otherwise afford."



A group of volunteers help clients file their tax returns electronically at the Guildford Library in Surrey.

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Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia
501-333 Terminal Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6A 2L7

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