

May 2009

ISSofBC one of Canada's Best Workplaces



The Great Place to Work Institute has recognized ISSofBC as one of the top 75 Best Workplaces in Canada. The list of best workplaces, made from over 230 nominations, was announced in a special report in April in the Globe and Mail.

The competitive process is based on both staff input and an in-depth review of each organization's culture. Five key dimensions contribute to a great place to work, according to the Institute: credibility, respect, fairness, pride and camaraderie.

"I believe we have the best of the best in our staff," says Patricia Woroch. "People here want to make a difference and they do. Staff are remarkably creative, innovative, dedicated and committed to providing quality services each and every day and are always willing to go the extra mile."

[Click here to view the 2009 Best Workplaces in Canada list.](#)

Youth Connexion begins this May

A new program for immigrant and refugee youth, aged 16-25 is set to begin! The program will provide a safe, nurturing environment

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Announcements

ISSofBC's New Faces of Vancouver Exhibit Opening May 15th



May 15th from 7:00 to 9:00 pm will mark the opening reception of the New Faces of Vancouver photography exhibit, an ISSofBC initiative that has been in the works for the past few months.

for youth to meet their goals and career plans.

The program targets ESL youth in need of support to access community programs, services and public education, and who are not attending full-time training or employment programs.

Youth Connexion will offer individual and group interventions on seven components: ESL, Life Skills, Career Exploration, Counselling, Workshops, Computer Sessions, and Certificate Courses. Volunteer and work placements will also be offered to help youth gain valuable experience related to their goals.

The program will be based in New Westminster. For more information, please contact 604-522-5902.

Career fairs attract thousands of job seekers



Over 7,000 attendees scouted out potential jobs at Richmond and Vancouver career fairs in April.

The Richmond Career Fair, held on April 15th, was co-hosted by ISSoBC's Richmond Career Centre, Richmond Employment Resource Centre and the Richmond Public Library. There was a good mix of employers, educational institutions and community organizations participating at the event, including BC Ferries, Bell Canada, and Sun Life Canada.

ISSoBC's Lily Lim, Lyn Greenhill of the Richmond Public Library, Shirley Ann Hastings from the Richmond Employment Resource Centre and Richmond Mayor Malcolm Brodie gave speeches and performed the ribbon cutting during opening ceremonies. CGA, Richmond Public Library and the City of Richmond each gave information sessions for the participants.

The Vancouver Career Fair, held on April 23rd, was co-hosted by ISSoBC, MOSAIC, PICS and SUCCESS. Employers came from a wide range of sectors, including the health care, public and service sectors. Employers included VANOC, City of Vancouver and

Over 100 photos, submitted by local photographers, were reviewed by a panel of judges who selected the final 32 photos last month. The photos showcase each photographer's view of Vancouver's diversity.

Judges included Henry Tsang (Assistant Professor, Emily Carr), Michael Filimowicz (Lecturer, SFU's School of Interactive Art and Design), Debra Zhou (Gallery Coordinator, Centre A), and ISSoBC's Adrian Bailon and Patricia Woroch.

The exhibit will be continue at Centre A on 2 West Hastings on May 16th until 5:00pm.

[Details can be found on the website here.](#)

Refugee Children's Party



This year's refugee children's party will take place Saturday, June 6th, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at Edmond's Community School in Burnaby. The theme, "Growing Together", highlights family, community and the environment.

The event, which has been held annually for over 10 years, celebrates the arrival of new families in Canada and gives children of refugee families the chance to play games, have fun, and make new friends.

This year, invitations to the party

WorkSafe BC.

Employers were amazed at the overwhelming interest shown by job-seekers. One employer remarked, "I printed 900 application forms and I had only approximately 50 leftover". Both fairs were very successful. Congratulations to all who helped organize them!

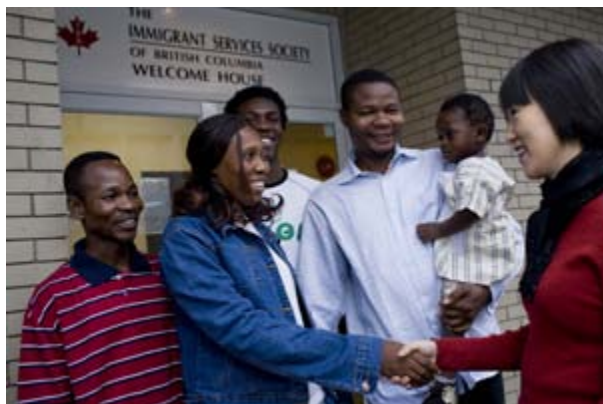
Volunteers dedicate 2,762 hours to ISSoBC's tax clinics

This year's tax clinic was as busy as ever, with close to 2000 immigrants seeking help with their taxes. Clinics are held annually to assist low-income immigrants and refugees complete their taxes at no cost.

ISSoBC tax clinics are run entirely by volunteers, through ISSoBC's Volunteer Program. This year, over 100 volunteers dedicated over 2500 hours! Many volunteers are newcomers themselves, with accounting and finance backgrounds, gaining some practical work experience.

Congratulations to Jackie Dion, Program Coordinator of the Volunteer Program, and her team of volunteers for making this year's tax clinics a success!

Host Program expands to Surrey



Since their arrival to Canada in November 2008, Simon and his family have learned about the community where they live - Surrey, had many of their questions about life in Canada answered, and had the opportunity to practice speaking English with their Host Volunteer Vanessa.

were decorated by students at Pacific Academy. All grade 3,4 and 5 classes participated and drew what they feel represents Growing Together (see image above).

Volunteers are still needed to help on the day of the party. Volunteers will help set up, run activities, and take down the event. If you are interested in helping out at the party, please email either Laura Davies (laura.davies@issbc.org) or Romanda Simpson (romanda.simpson@issbc.org).

New International Studies Website is up!

[Click here to check it out.](#)

ISSoBC in the news

The recession has created challenges in finding employment, and immigrants are suffering the most. Client loads in employment assistance programs, like those at ISSoBC, have increased dramatically.

Ines Montoya, with ISSoBC's Employment Outreach Services, shares her experience during these tough times, with the [Vancouver Sun's](#) Darah Hansen.

[Click here to read the full article online.](#)

Past Events

ISSoBC connects with Brazilian Community Association

Simon and Vanessa are both participants in the ISSofBC Host Program that matches newcomers to volunteers from the community for mutual benefit. Newcomers receive orientation, training, friendship and support as they adjust to life in Canada. Volunteers learn about other cultures, and the issues immigrants and refugees face.

Simon and his family are government assisted refugees (GARs) who stayed at ISSofBC's Welcome House before moving to Surrey. They are representative of the increasing number of GAR clients moving to Surrey each year. Last year, 34% of GAR clients settled in Surrey.

In an effort to better serve families like Simon's and to engage volunteers like Vanessa, the ISSofBC Host Program received increased funding from the Provincial Government to expand the program to Surrey. Alvaro Dussan, a Host Program Outreach staff has been working in Surrey to recruit volunteers and assist newly arrived refugees settling in this community.

To learn more or to get involved, contact the Host Program office at 604-684-7498 or 778-861-7499.

ISSofBC Richmond ELSA to expand after Ministry accepts proposal

The ELSA program in Richmond will start new Literacy to Level 3 ELSA classes this July. Classes will be delivered at the current Richmond location and expanded to a new location in another area of Richmond.

ISSofBC submitted a proposal earlier this year which was reviewed by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development. In late March, the Ministry deemed ISSofBC to be the highest scoring proponent, allowing the organization to deliver the ELSA services. Congratulations to everyone who worked hard to prepare the proposal!

ELSA is part of the BC Settlement and Adaptation Program. [Click here to read the Ministry ELSA info sheet.](#)

Stepping Up program marks end of 13 years of service this summer

"I feel privileged to be a part of this journey", says Maria Nguyen, Project Manager of the Stepping Up for Immigrant Women program, as she looks back on the past 13 years that the program

ISSofBC's career and language services were presented to members of the Brazilian Community Association in Burnaby. Turnout was good and interest for ISSofBC's programs was high.

Ana Carolina Castro, Camilo Cortes, Juliana de Souza, Raymond Hyma and Veronica Heringer were ISSofBC's staff involved at the March 30th event.

[Click here to listen to the online podcast.](#)

Nick Noorani shares secrets of success for immigrants at ISSofBC

Nick Noorani, founder of the Canadian Immigrant Magazine, shared his tips for success to immigrants at ISSofBC on April 17th.

Noorani emphasized seven key components to success:

1. Learn English
2. Stay positive
3. Embrace Canada
4. Have a Plan B
5. Move out of ethnic silos
6. Take risks
7. Volunteer, engage in mentorship and network.

Noorani himself is an immigrant from Dubai.

[Click here to read the Canadian Immigrant magazine online.](#)

has been operating.

The program is winding down and will officially end on August 31, 2009, as a result of a decision not to apply for the latest request for proposals. The decision was made based on the changes in Bridging programming and reduced financial support which was not sustainable over the fundable period.

Piloted in 1996, the pre-employment program has served immigrant and refugee women who are survivors of abuse, speak English as a second language and receive Employment Assistance. The program facilitates a transition and transformation process for these women, from a complex situation of vulnerability and sense of hopelessness to a process of self exploration and participation in the broader Canadian community.

"Stepping Up program means a lot to me as it is metaphorically my 'baby', one that I nurtured from infancy to adolescence over the last 13 years," Maria says. "During this journey, I have evolved in my profession as a social worker. For this I am grateful for the support of Lily Lim, my first supervisor, Clifford Bell, my supervisor for many moons and Chris Friesen since 2007. Stepping Up has been instrumental in my conviction around meaningful work. I hope that we will find a new funder for a Bridging program in order to respond to the emerging needs of the changing demographics."