

September 2009

ISSofBC's AGM promotes a positive outlook on the future



"Can immigrants succeed in Canada?" asks Nick Noorani, founder of the Canadian Immigrant Magazine and this year's AGM guest speaker.

Noorani cited the Vancouver winners of his magazine's Top 25 Canadian Immigrants award program as examples that "yes", newcomers can —with perseverance and the right attitude— be successful in Canada. It was this message of optimism that was carried throughout the AGM, held on September 24 at the Holiday Inn Express Metrotown, with over 75 guests attending.

Soo-Jin Lee, this year's Shawqi Rashed bursary winner, definitely demonstrates the qualities of one determined to succeed. Originally a copywriter in Korea, Soo-Jin is making a career switch by signing up for the Early Childhood Education program at Langara.

"To get into the ECE program, I have been studying very hard to improve my English level in order to achieve the program requirement," says Soo-Jin. "I want to play an important role in helping and supporting children." Soo-Jin first came to Canada to study English. She felt that Vancouver would be the right place to

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Mentoring Connections hits the Vancouver film festival circuit

In October, Mentoring Connections will be sponsoring Amreeka, a heart-warming comedy about a Palestinian woman and her teenage son who immigrate to the United States.

The film is part of the Vancouver International Film Festival, and will be playing at the Empire Granville on Friday, October 9th at 7pm and Friday, October 16th at 11:00am. [Read more about the film here.](#)

The Mentoring Connections team is becoming a regular at Vancouver's international film festivals, looking to attract skilled

raise her daughter, so she moved permanently. She received her award from Suzanne Rashed, daughter of the late board member in whose memory the bursary is named.

ISSofBC board member Maria Rajanayagam introduced the new RBC Royal Bank Community Bursary. The bursary helps newcomer children in their involvement in sports or the arts. Twenty-one children were awarded the bursary, which will give them a chance to take part in paid athletic or artistic activities such as soccer, piano and swimming. Four of the recipients personally received their bursary at the AGM.

View this year's Annual Report on ISSofBC's [website](#).

Skills Connect for Immigrants program assists first clients this month

Helen is from China. A drafts person, she moved to Canada in November 2008 hoping to find the road to success. Instead of the flood of interviews she was counting on however, Helen felt that she had hit a wall. She wasn't able to get a job that matched her skills and experience. Now Helen is getting assistance on how to succeed in the Canadian labour market from ISSofBC's new Skills Connect for Immigrants program, which opened its doors on September 1st.

"The Skills Connect for Immigrants program will help individuals like Helen identify and address the barriers that keep them from realizing employment that fully utilizes the education and skills that they bring with them when they come to Canada," says Lois Armerding, Manager of the program.

One way to address barriers is to explore further training options. Working with a counselor, clients will develop a work plan and may be referred to an ISSofBC/BCIT program advisor for information on what courses to take to achieve their goals.

Skills Connect for Immigrants is located at ISSofBC's Terminal Avenue location in room 618. Although the primary service location is in Vancouver, appointments can be scheduled in Coquitlam, Richmond and New Westminster.

ISSofBC's website gets a new look

professionals to volunteer as mentors.

Since August, the program has advertised and sponsored films at both the Vancouver Queer Festival and the Vancouver Latin American Film Festival.



Win tickets to the Vancouver International Film Festival October 1st to 16th!

Mentoring Connections has free memberships and tickets to the upcoming Vancouver International Film Festival. To win a membership, all you have to do is refer a mentor!

The first 24 people who send a mentor referral will get a free VIFF membership. The first two employees to have their referral register as a mentor will get a free pair of tickets to a VIFF screening of your choice!

For more information on who qualifies as a mentor, or to refer a mentor, contact Catherine Rana at catherine.rana@issbc.org or extension 1285.

The festival starts October 1st so send referrals quickly!

**How to Green
your Commute**

ISSofBC has a re-designed website! Along with a new look and feel, the site comes with changes aimed at creating a more user-friendly experience.

The general navigation throughout the website has been improved and the menu items are clearer. The homepage is now divided into four client-centred categories: Immigrants, Employers, International Students and Volunteers and Supporters. The categories allow visitors to find information quickly that is relevant to their needs.

Daily news articles will be displayed on the homepage of the site, keeping visitors up-to-date on immigration and labour market news. There will also be an ISSofBC News Blog housing past articles as well as ISSofBC newsletters.

The site uses the Drupal content management system (CMS) which allows for easy editing, addition and deletion of website content.

The website was designed and created by Adrian Bailon, ISSofBC's Web and Graphic Design Coordinator. Visit the new site at www.issbc.org.

Join Translink's Ride-Share Week this October 5-9!

Sharing a ride just one day a week reduces your carbon emissions by 26 lbs.

Sign up at ride-share.com to choose either ISSofBC co-workers or the public to share your commute with for as many days a week as you want.

Try out ride-sharing from October 5-9. It's a great practice run for the Olympics, when employees will need to find alternative options to get to work and reduce traffic.

Summer camp helps immigrant and refugee children prepare for the school year

The first day of school in a new city can be daunting for anyone. An unfamiliar language, country and culture can make it even more challenging. To make transitioning easier for newly arrived children, ISSofBC held an eight week pilot summer camp this year.

"The first summer in Canada can be very traumatic for children whose parents are busy learning English and/or working full-time", says Chris Friesen, Director of ISSofBC's Settlement Services. "The vision of this pilot was to give newcomer children and youth a heads-up to the myriad of issues they face as newcomers and provide peer support."

The first of its kind, the camp's agenda included fieldtrips, sports, and assistance with English and math. The camp's participants, aged 10-17, socialized and had fun experiencing Canada before the start of school.

The camp was run in partnership with the Coquitlam School Board at Miller Park Community School in Coquitlam, where the greatest number of government assisted refugees will be arriving over the next few years. Twenty-one children from countries including Afghanistan, Colombia, Mexico and Korea participated. The camp

is currently being evaluated and there is hope to continue the project next year.

[Click here to read the Tri-City News article on the summer camp.](#)