

VICTORIA IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE CENTRE SOCIETY

2018/19 Annual Report



1004 North Park Street
Victoria Social Innovation Centre, Victoria, BC

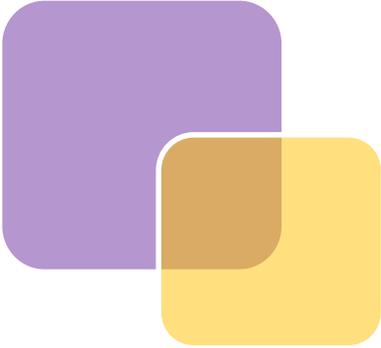
Tel: (250) 361-9433 | Fax: (250) 361-1914

Email: info@vircs.bc.ca

VIRCS's Mission Statement

To assist in the settlement and adjustment of immigrants and refugees in Canada, and to provide services designed to increase the newcomer's participation in Canadian society, by assisting the newcomer to overcome barriers.





VIRCS's 2018/2019 Board of Directors

Aaron Hall– President/

Osaro Ezomo– Vice President

Ayodeji Kuponiy- Secretary

James Wallace- Treasurer

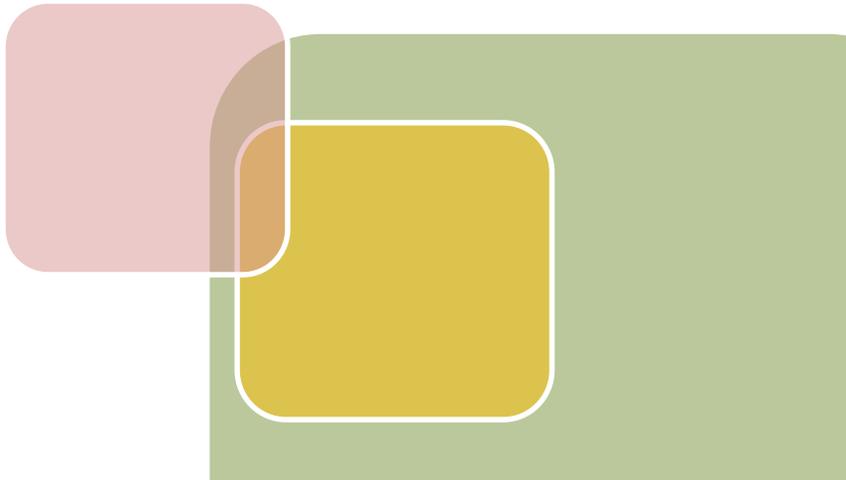
Nancy Hum- External Relations

Miguel Espinosa – Director-at-large

Geanine Robey- Director-at-large

Neil Osborne - Director-at-large

Bruce McGuigan – Director-at-large





Special Thanks to Our Supporters and Donors

*BC Provincial Employees Community Fund
VanCity Savings
United Way of Greater Victoria
Victoria Foundation
Beacon Community Services
Royal Bank uptown branch
Pepper's Foods
Municipality of Oak Bay
Community Association of Oak Bay
Her Worship Mayor Lisa Helps
Blanshard Community Centre
Canadian Cancer Society
Immigration, Refugees, Citizenship Canada
Community Microlending Society
Country Grocer
District of Saanich
Island Savings
Ministry of Social Development and Minister
Responsible for Multiculturalism*

*Board of Family Services of Greater Victoria
Costal Capital Savings
Alan Lowe, Architect
Bell Media
India Canada Cultural Association
Home Lumber
Western Interior Design
La Societe Francophone de Victoria
Murray Rankin, MP for Victoria
Sprott Shaw College
Slegg Building Materials
Telus
University of Victoria
Victoria Native Friendship Centre
Together Against Poverty Society
Vancouver Island Health Authority
Victoria Chinese Seniors Association
Viva Mexico Dance Society*

**Thanks also to the many individuals and
Volunteers who made significant personal
contributions to our society**

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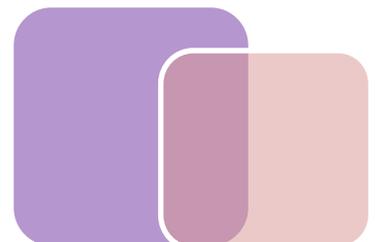
President's Report

Aaron Hall

This was another exciting year for growth and new ideas at VIRCS, and the Agency has a great number of wonderful people to thank for this. Every year I see a wide range of participation from Clients, Volunteers, and Staff creating amazing programs and helping a tremendous number of interesting people. I am regularly reminded in my day to day life how important this Agency is and about the impact it has in our community. In my personal life, my work life, and in other charity work I do, I am in contact with a wide range of people and regularly

have the pleasure of meeting Community Partners, Past Clients, Program Funders as the President of the Board. This is a tremendous joy in my life and I have the Staff's dedication, skill, and hard work to thank for this positive experience. I am certain that this same positive experience happens for everyone involved in helping our clients reach their goals. On behalf of all of us who are positively impacted by VIRCS, I want to say thank you to everyone who makes that happen. Moving forward I am excited to see what the next year is going to bring and am looking forward to sharing that experience with you all. I encourage everyone to stay in touch with VIRCS and see what new opportunities come up.

Aaron Hall – Board Chair





Executive Director's Report

David Lau

2018/2019 has seen some changes to our services, both additions and subtractions. We have launched the BC Settlement Services thanks to lots of very hard work first proposing, advocating and then negotiating. We owe a real thanks to MLA Lana Popham who worked with constituency MLAs Rob Fleming and Carol James to defend our ability to best supply BC SIS services. The program was staffed and then more work began as the program expanded VIRCS' reach into some of the further communities of southern Vancouver Island. We received three Heritage Canada funding awards to help us launch three new iterations on the services provided by our Healthy Women, Healthy Communities, Welcome Gardens and Volunteer programs

Due to a changed EPBC subcontracting structure and choices of the prime contractors to stay profitable, EPBC was closed. We have written to negotiate for a much expanded P2PT program which is a VIRCS' developed program with far better client-outcomes than BC-funded programs.

Our Oak Bay Refugee Housing project continues to supply housing for one refugee family and after a period of Spring/Summer dormancy, we are re-launching to complete the larger house which is close to being completed. We need staffing funding to make this project come to life, so more to come with that.

Social Innovation Centre Society welcomed a new partner, Mosqoy whose staff and volunteers work on youth projects in Peru and we are about to welcome Ximena Londono of La Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique to live with us at VSICS. Much of my time this year has been spent trying to get our daycare project's budget in a place where we can begin construction and clear away process issues required for a commercial development in that area. We anticipate construction to start this week.

Another very large project was preparing proposal content valued at over 8 million IRCC for five years of services. As predicted in last year's AGM report, this was an emotional and somewhat gut-wrenching time as we undertook proposing five years of our future in uncertain times. We were scheduled for negotiation last month but the federal election postponed that for now - more to come.

Eight years ago I took the Executive Director position at VIRCS to redirect its programs and move it towards a more stable positioning. VIRCS' future is now more established and in the next six months, providing a smooth launch to the daycare and negotiation with IRCC, we should be entering a period of financial stability for program funding as well as solidarity for a very long-term future at the Victoria Social Innovation Centre. I look forward to the continued expansion of VIRCS' program, staffing and its long-term administrative/financial stability.



A highlight of 2018/19 for me was being asked to represent VIRCS in a hearing for the Senate Special Committee for the Charitable Sector. Past Governor-General the Right Honourable David Johnston found time to join us presenting to the Canadian Senate.

Volunteer Programs Amarjit Bhalla

The volunteer program is a vital, dynamic part of the larger VIRCS portfolio of activities designed to meet the specific needs of individual immigrants and refugees, their families and the wider community with targeted, client-driven services.

2018- 19 has been a very successful year for the volunteer program, as the number and variety of services and activities expanded, opening new avenues for the host community and immigrants and new arrivals to get involved. Volunteer participation has grown significantly in the last few years, with more individuals interested in learning about and assisting newcomers with the challenges they face settling into Victoria's communities. The Volunteer Coordinator receives a steady stream of enquiries from the general public, asking for more information on how they can help, and most of these enquiries translate into dedicated involvement in one or other of VIRCS programs.

This year 242 volunteers donated 13,504 hours of their time and expertise to VIRCS programs, delivering over 35 types of services across 6 program areas and within 4 volunteer service clinics.



VIRCS volunteers work in a variety of programs such as Youth Services; Legal Advice; Immigration Advice; Income Tax Clinics; Administration; the Welcome Gardens; Daycare Services and the Women's Group. They also assist running workshops on Resume writing and Form-Filling, and one-on-one language tutoring. Some of these activities are run and supported entirely by volunteers, and would not be available if volunteers were not willing to devote their time and energy to them.

Volunteers continue to support the main VIRCS programs, including ESL classroom assistance and language tutoring; academic tutoring; skills development; children and youth activities; workshop assistance and facilitation; administrative and communications support and implementation of special projects and community events. Volunteers have also donated expertise services for the Oak Bay Welcome houses, a project recently initiated by the VIRCS Board of Directors.



We thanked our volunteers this year by organizing an appreciation dinner, cooked by the VIRCS staff, in recognition of the inestimable contribution and support the volunteers give to the organisation, making VIRCS a wonderfully inclusive, diverse and responsive community of people.

NEW VOLUNTEER INITIATIVE!

The Volunteer program is very excited to launch a new initiative funded by Canadian Heritage. The goal is to offer 50 immigrant participants (newcomers, immigrants and visible minorities) an opportunity to volunteer for 3 months in mainstream not-for-profit organizations. This specialized program will encourage our clients to integrate into Canadian Society and will enable the selected organizations to connect with talented individuals and their communities. Participating organizations now include the Royal BC Museum, the Maritime Museum, BC Cancer Society and the Canadian Red Cross. Various other organizations have shown an interest and are formally becoming partners in this initiative.

Welcome Gardens! - Liz Todd

Over the past 5 years, the Welcome Gardens! program has connected local residents and newcomers to Victoria to grow food together in shared household and community gardens. Welcome Gardens gleefully continues to provide opportunities for participants and volunteers to gain, share, and preserve diverse horticultural skills and knowledge, to cultivate food literacy and local growing skills, to share multicultural food practices, and to gain access to educational opportunities and community resources that can help folks grow and preserve food for their household and the



community. Throughout this past year, our community of 170 Welcome Gardens participants & volunteers continued to grow! This year's garden and kitchen workshops, educational garden tours, and community work parties allowed our participants to learn while creating deeper connections by sharing seeds, harvests, stories, and laughs.



Our food preservation parties allowed us to can and distribute over 600 jars of local produce that would have otherwise gone to waste. Over the winter months, VIRCS' kitchen hosted some popular participant-led multicultural cooking workshops, providing delicious and nutritious food for VIRCS' clients and our volunteer appreciation dinner.

This year we also welcomed a new Welcome Gardens Project Coordinator. Liz Todd joined Welcome Gardens! as a volunteer in 2018, after moving to Victoria from Nicaragua where she ran an English language school for the local community, co-founded an educational organic farm, and helped to develop, organize and interpret for a community-based agro-tourism project. Liz plans on further cultivating the Welcome Gardens! program to grow intercultural understanding, and nutritious foods that will nourish our growing communities.

In addition to our continued support from the Victoria Foundation and New Horizons for Seniors Project, Welcome Gardens received grant funding from the Ministry of Canadian Heritage. With the support of these grants, Welcome Gardens! is able to foster greater youth engagement in our program as land stewards, storytellers and advocates of our newest endeavor. In addition to the shared garden spaces that current Welcome Gardeners cultivate, this year we are helping to create a network of Welcome Gardens

spaces throughout the CRD. With generous community members offering their underutilized front and back yards to provide garden spaces to more than 40 newcomers to Victoria, those who are otherwise unable to access garden space are being welcomed and supported to grow their own affordable, organic, and culturally preferred foods. Welcome Gardens' Shared Garden Network aims to provide fertile ground for growing both food and community, not only addressing the growing challenges of food security, but also providing education, garden resources, social connection, and adaptive resilience that will allow our communities to flourish together.

Settlement Programs, Asuka Hirai, Settlement Director

Newcomer Wraparound Support Program (federal)

2018 was another successful and meaningful year for the Newcomer Wraparound Support Program (NWSP) team. This federally funded program has been specially designed to serve the newcomers with overwhelming and/ or complex barriers by utilizing a wraparound approach originally developed at UBC. The NWSP Intake Coordinator initiates needs assessments to identify the needs of clients, and then a Case Manager analyzes their needs and makes a plan with the client, based on the client's wishes and dreams for the future. The approach is well-loved by the NWSP clients, since clients feel their voices are heard, and their strengths are utilized and enhanced to overcome barriers to meaningful integration into Canadian society.

In 2018, the NWSP team provided services to almost 400 clients through one-on-one consultation, group orientation, and community connection opportunities. The NWSP organized almost 100 activities and workshops which clients enjoyed participating in, such as: Parenting, Food Skills for Newcomers, Women's groups, Men's groups and seniors' group workshops, which helped newcomers to cope with a Canadian lifestyle. Through the workshops, the clients learned about many topics including basic life skills, laws and regulations in Canada, cultural differences and similarities, environmental sustainability to basic employment skills. The clients often mentioned that the enjoyment of learning new skills, meeting with other newcomers and discovering services available around the local community area was something that has helped them in their daily lives.



The NWSP is grateful to the federal government and its contribution. It also greatly appreciates community members and various community organizations through partnerships and joint activities. The effective collaboration with various experts and community agencies has allowed the NWSP to be able to address the needs of the newcomer population with complex barriers and vulnerabilities.

Moreover, the NWSP was able to provide timely and client-centered services in 2018 with the support of

volunteers and practicum students. The NWSP staff are grateful for their contributions, specialized skills, and knowledge. The NWSP staff are eager to make a difference and contribute to creating a safe and inclusive community for everyone and looks forward to serving newcomers who are coming to Canada.

Settlement - BC Settlement and Integration Services (Provincial)

In 2018, VIRCS started new settlement program for Temporary foreign workers, International students, Refugee claimants & Naturalized Canadian Citizens.

The program is called the BC Settlement and Integration Services (BCSIS) which is funded by the Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology - Welcome BC. The program started at VIRCS on July 2018 and has been successfully established, serving over 2000 Temporary foreign workers, International students, Refugee claimants & Naturalized Canadian Citizens through outreach programs, English Language trainings and one-on-one consultations and supports. Since beginning of the program BCSIS program provided many services such as:.

- One-on-one Information Local Job Market and Settling in BC
- Immigration Navigation and Work Permit Application Support
- Workshops on Job Search, Workplace Culture and Workplace Rights
- Short-term Training on Job Search Skills
- Group Orientation Sessions for Settling in BC.
- English Conversation Groups has been very successful and popular. We have a free ESL (formal and informal English classes)
- Project management – Business Development for newcomers 8-week sessions twice a year)

Services are provided in many different locations including Victoria, Saanich, Sydney, Oak Bay, Sooke, West Shore and Esquimalt/View Royal. Sooke, Sidney and Langford.



English As a Second Language – Jennifer Rawlinson

For more than 27 years, VIRCS has offered a comprehensive English Language Training program. Our program's doors have opened opportunities for thousands of newcomers and citizens, who are seeking to improve their English language skills and increase their chances of gaining meaningful employment or continuing their studies in their chosen fields. Language training is crucial to the success of many of our clients here at VIRCS. Integration and a sense of community belonging are possible with improved English skills

During 2019, our ELT classes have steadily grown; comprised equally of domestic and international students. Since January 2019, we have registered 63 students. However, as our program is a flexible, continuous enrolment program, we have averaged approximately 10 students on most class days. Our first class, Beginners, is offered 9 am to 11 am on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. In this class, students are introduced to basic grammar structure and literacy skills. The focus of our beginners' class is communication, which is facilitated through comprehensive, communicative activities as well as one to one conversation with one of our wonderful ESL classroom volunteers. Our intermediate/advanced class is offered 11:15 am to 1:15 pm Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. This class is typically focuses on academic as well as communicative skills. Students in this class also benefit from the help of volunteers and guest speakers to give them a more authentic English experience.



Permanent residents and Canadian citizens are given priority seating as well as a subsidized tuition fee. We also welcome international visitors and students, and while their fees are reasonable by industry standards, they more accurately reflect the true cost of delivery of the program. This two -In addition to our ELT classes, VIRCS also offers short-term programs for youth, workshops for professionals and a successful weekly conversation club. In collaboration with our Volunteer Coordinator, we have also established a program for conversation partners, which primarily assists students who are registered in one of our ESL classes.

We also offer a joint program with the Greater Victoria Public Library. We are offering a free beginner ESL conversation class at the Central Branch which includes a library orientation as well as an introduction to Mango Languages, a computer-based language training program. Students may use the program at the library or anywhere from their own laptops and devices. The program is unique in that it gives instructions in the students' first languages while teaching English. This program is possible due to our dedicated volunteers who assist the students in small conversation groups.



In 2019, we became an official Canadian Language Benchmarks Placement Test site. This means we can administer the CLBPT both in house and to other organizations whose students require this entry test. For example, we have established a strong partnership with both Sprott Shaw and Cambria College as their Health Care Assistant students require this entrance test for acceptance into their programs.

Our classes are partially funded by the BC Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch, while tuition fees cover the remainder of the costs. Our program is currently investigating the possibility of partnerships with other organizations as well as other funding opportunities, so that we may deliver more ELT programs, which will reflect the diverse, and complex needs of newcomers in our community.

The ELT program at VIRCS is as exciting and diverse as its students. Our program welcomes students from all countries and we embrace our diversity with compassion and understanding. Our success as a program has been possible due to many factors; funding through BC Gaming, a positive, welcoming environment at VIRCS, our dynamic and well-trained volunteers and our incredible students, each who comes to our class with their own experiences to share and dreams to fulfill

We anticipate another successful year in 2020 and hope to expand our program so that we may offer English language training to our changing community.



Entrepreneurism Project for Immigrants - Amarjit Bhalla

VIRCS offered two Intakes of the Entrepreneur Program from September to December 2018 and another one from January to March 2019. Both these initiatives were funded by City of Victoria and Coast Capital Community Fund. We offered a combined program where each session had 10 youth and 10 adult participants. Through running this program five times over 3 years, we have developed stronger curriculum, and established effective networks to engage the community and carry out recruitment and outreach to get Immigrants involved in entrepreneurship training. Through these efforts, we have brought awareness into the newcomer community about entrepreneurship generally and for youth specifically; which has increased interest and demand for this program to continue. Both sessions were very successful where participants were from varied educational, gender and cultural backgrounds. We provided participants with the knowledge required to start a business, individual business coaching and mentorship. Participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive, expressing feelings of empowerment and positivity about their futures as entrepreneurs. The overall business ideas included: downtown international handicrafts store, daycares, multi-cultural youth education program run at recreation centre, restaurant, tutoring center and world cuisine cooking classes and yoga centre among others. Although they are in the development stage; these businesses when open will engage local communities and recreation associations as well as retail spaces downtown. These business owners will increase diversity and their businesses all contain a multicultural aspect.



The impact extended beyond the participants. Members of the immigrant and refugee communities expressed more interest in entrepreneurship, and that seeing their peers completing our program was encouraging and motivating. We also see better connections to the Victoria business community, and greater recognition of the economic contribution by newcomers and the importance of multiculturalism. We want to take this opportunity to acknowledge Community Micro Lending Society for being our invaluable partners in developing curriculum and outstanding instruction by Suzanne Dane. This program's success is the result of the combined dedication and support of both organizations.

Organizing Against Racism and Hate, Alix Hotsenpiller and Jane Hurtig, OARH Coordinator

Organizing Against Racism and Hate (OARH) is a network of Committees that exist in rural and now urban regions across British Columbia. VIRCS, with support from VIRCS' E.D., is the lead agency for OARH work. Communities are mobilized to implement racism & hate response protocols, and develop best practices in addressing racism, hatred and discrimination. OARH Committee's are funded through the BC Government's Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Multiculturalism Branch, and are composed of community organizations and public institutions acting in coordination to respond to and counter racism and hate activity in BC. The Greater Victoria OARH Committee project builds from the systems change work initiated through educational campaigns, outreach, and training initiatives over the past year.

contd

Organizing Against Racism and Hate CONTINUED...

Major Activities:

1. Hate Incident Reporting Procedures with Police and Victims Services =

Our project is a collaboration between a Police Representative on the Police DAC and OARH focused on supporting police and civilian call centre staff to respond effectively to calls related to hate and discrimination through a shift in police station admin practices and training. For example, call centre staff will have greater capacity to refer individuals to the Hate Crimes Team/ Investigator, capturing information about hate-based incidents, making appropriate referrals (for example, to Victims Services, the Vancouver Island Human Rights Association, social agencies).

2. Media Roundtable FOLLOW UP - Through the coordination initiative and effort of Jane Hurtig, on Wednesday, Oct,31st, 2018 we organized a Media Roundtable Event on Racism, Hate and Discrimination, facilitated by BC Newspaper Award Winning Journalist Jody Paterson. Guest community presenters include Ismail Mohamed Nur, | Imam of Masjid al-Iman Mosque, and Reverend Al Tysick the Dandelion Society. Local media attending will include print, radio and television (Times Colonist, CBC, Chek, HERE Magazine). The OARH Committee and community partners will move forward on the set of recommendations made at the Media Round Table one year ago and broaden the network of media contacts through circulating a report to an expanded list of media and editorial staff.

3. Public Transportation—We plan to include hate crime and incident protocols related to public transportation ridership in our region in the Protocol. We will solicit input from Victoria Transit Health and Safety Representative, who has recently participated in an Racism and its Intersections Training Session organized by OARH on September 23rd, 2019. Settlement agencies and cultural associations report that racist, xenophobic comments and taking place on buses, and are having negative experiences with some bus drivers. Evidence shows that women in Hijab and Niqab face Islamophobic racism in public with high frequency. OARH will develop and circulate a survey to affected communities coordinate a follow up Dialogue Event for the community and BC Transit. This will provide Victoria Transit with an opportunity to speak about health and safety protocols and hate crime response and community members with an opportunity to share their experiences of ridership.

4.Private Rental Market Housing— Private Landlord (Landlord BC) Outreach, Education and Proposed Landlord Recognition, Newcomers were not only facing a .5 vacancy rate, they are frequently refused opportunities because of discrimination from landlords/ property managers. This project goal is twofold, aiming to facilitate the uptake and active use of the hate crime and incident protocol among housing providers (previously involved in RRT work), and to provide educational tools/ facilitate training to Landlord BC and Property Management Companies.

Engagement Activities and Communications:

In September 2018 OARH engaged Jane Hurtig as a Coordinator with significant expertise in civil engagement. The Victoria OARH very quickly developed leaflets, posters, presentation templates, questionnaires, surveys, and reports for effectively organizing panels and dialogue sessions that will continue to draw organizational and community leaders to this work.

Training in the Community- OARH was selected to provide panel representation and hate crimes workshops at the Professional Development Day for Greater Victoria Public Libraries.

On September 25th Moussa Magassa, Human Rights Expert and Equity Advisory for UVIC provided police, victims services, school district, media and community agencies with training: Courageous Conversations: Addressing Racism and its Intersections.

Enable Program, Brooke Shaughnessy

The Enable Program team is happy to report on another exceptional year providing services for young newcomers as they settle into their new homes here in Victoria. The Enable Program consists of five main programs including Homework Club, Youth Activity Night, Arts Therapies for children, Sparks children's program, and our ever-cherished Youth Strides Summer Camp. All of our activities and programs are designed to address the academic, social, and emotional settlement needs of young newcomers while also providing opportunities to increase their sense of identity, belonging, and connection to community.

Along with our core programs, we were pleased to offer additional projects over the 2018/2019 school year for both children and youth. In collaboration with the Pacific Institute for Sports Excellence we piloted the Soccer & Sportsmanship Program, designed to encourage appropriate and safe etiquette on the sports field for young newcomer boys. We worked with the Pacific Animal Therapy Society to offer Paw's & Tales, an innovative and exciting literacy program for children who experience difficulties with reading. Paws & Tales brings registered therapy dogs in to provide a fun opportunity for children to practice reading in a friendly, stress-free environment. Students from Glenlyon Norfolk Senior School lead hands-on STEM activities at our Homework Club, providing engaging and interactive lessons in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. These unique programs brought valuable learning opportunities in an exciting, fun way and were greatly appreciated by children and parents alike!

In February we launched the Youth Advisory Committee, a new program that fosters meaningful collaboration between the Enable team and our youth clients. Eight youth are selected for a three-month term, during which youth share their perspectives, thoughts, ideas, and take leadership in the development and facilitation of our youth programs. This gives newcomer youth an opportunity to have their voices heard and to have a real influence in shaping the services that they participate in. This spring our Youth Advisory Committee partnered with the City of Victoria Youth Council in hosting the Culture Day event at Centennial Square complete with 9 different cultural performances including music, dance, poetry, and speeches. This was a public event to spread awareness about multiculturalism and the many beautiful cultures represented by Victoria Residents.

In February we welcomed Ruth Nakalyowa to the Enable Team as the Youth Ambassador and Program Assistant, a paid position made possible by support from Vancouver Foundation. She has been a great asset taking the lead with our youth programs. Brooke and Brittany were invited to speak at UVIC about strategies for working with newcomer children and youth, both for the School of Child and Youth Care and for students in the Faculty of Education. The Enable Program continues to be supported by a team of wonderful staff, volunteers, practicum students, and community partners!



The P2PT program at VIRCS has successfully completed its second year and we are now serving cohorts 5, 6 and 7 concurrently. P2PT is a youth employment program aimed at overcoming barriers to employment in Canada. This program consists of eight weeks of a classroom learning followed by up to 20 weeks of supported employment.

Our team consists of two employment coordinators, Samira Wanas and Alix Hotsenpiller, one intake and outreach worker, Shazia Rashid, our curriculum developer and instructor, Dallas Posovad, and myself, **Jennifer Rawlinson** as program manager.

Participant Outcomes:

Total Participants Served: 78

Total Participants Employed: 55

Total Participants Returned to School: 6

Total neither employed nor in school: 7

Total Participants currently in progress:

Cohort 5 – 13 participants

Cohort 6 - 9 participants

Cohort 7 (tba)

Cohort 5 participants have completed their work experience. Of the 13 participants, 9 have completed their work experience and have been hired by their employers. One participant quit her work experience and is currently seeking a new employer, 3 participants were pregnant during the GBES portion of the program and are unable to



complete their work experience at this time. There are many heartwarming success stories from this group. Two participants have been hired at Island Kids Academy as Early Childhood Education Assistants, as we were able to offer a wage subsidy to the employer for both participants as well as provide the necessary certification training for the clients.

One participant from Saudi Arabia was having a difficult time finding a work placement as she wears a niqab. For many employers this can be a barrier to offering employment. However, our dedicated employment counsellors were able to secure a position for her at 'The Makehouse', a high-end sewing shop. She worked as a retail assistant and also trained new employees. This position has allowed her to fund her post-secondary education in the field of engineering. Another participant has secured employment as an esthetician, specializing in hair esthetics. The program was able to assist her to purchase needed equipment and supplies, so that she can work as an independent stylist at a hair salon. This flexibility allows her to work and care for her young family.

Cohort #6 GBES began on August 19, 2019 with 9 participants. Our numbers were lower for this cohort because we had three eligible participants leave the program on orientation day. This leaves us with lower numbers, we expect to make up this difference with Cohort 7 which begins on October 15, 2019. Our intake and outreach worker, Shazia, has been diligently working towards increasing these numbers for our next cohort. We have connected with the Anglican Diocese Refugee Sponsorship Mission. They will assist us by promoting our program to their sponsorship groups who have close connections to immigrant youth in the community.

We are achieving a high level of success in obtaining sustainable employment for our participants. While we have experienced some retention issues for intakes, we anticipate that we will meet the required level of participation.

Immigrant Women's Projects: Healthy Women, Healthy Communities

Nadia Sangster, Program Coordinator

It has been a big year for the Immigrant Women's Projects: Healthy Women, Healthy Communities program, with the successful conclusion of one project and the launching of three new and exciting ones. Our chief task for 2018 was to complete the Allies in Action project, generously funded by grants from BC Community Gaming, BC Civil Forfeiture, and Justice Canada. A total of 18 workshops, designed and delivered and were completed by liaising with other VIRCS staff and programs, and by partnering with local service providers and community organizations that contributed guest speakers and/or tours of their facilities (Island Sexual Health Society, the Victoria Police Department, the Department of Psychology at University of Victoria, Solefeh Organization, the Provincial Court of British Columbia, the Victoria Justice Access Centre, and TD Bank's "Money Matters" program). The project also involved disseminating information about our work to the community at large via updates to VIRCS' website about the Immigrant Women's Projects program, including access to the Allies in Action workshop curriculum in the form of printable information sheets.

We have a big year ahead of us for 2019 as we have been fortunate to receive funding for three major projects:

WORKPLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT. The Department of Justice Canada has generously funded this five-year project designed to: (1) create workshops to inform newcomers about sexual harassment in the workplace, their rights as employees, and available resources; (2) offer training sessions for those who wish to become resources for information about and prevention of workplace sexual harassment in their respective cultural communities; and (3) educate employers about the unique needs and potential vulnerabilities of newcomers in the workplace.

"THE TOGETHER PROJECT". Sponsored by Canadian Heritage, this project celebrates the diversity and multiculturalism of Greater Victoria through three event streams: (1) a community speakers series; (2) Commemorative Days Appreciation Events; and (3) a Multicultural Youth Leaders Network. Our newest staff member, Ariel Reyes Anutan, has joined the VIRCS family to lead this initiative as Multicultural Events Project Coordinator.

"STRENGTH IN NUMBERS". This project focuses on educating and raising awareness among newcomer men, women, and youth about intimate partner and family violence through: (1) culturally-sensitive workshops to educate newcomers about Canadian cultural practices, positive parenting, and community resources; (2) training sessions to prepare those who wish be resources for domestic violence information and prevention in their respective cultural communities; and (3) Outreach and engagement: multi-media resources disseminated to diverse cultural and professional communities to promote education and information.

We thank our funders for these wonderful opportunities to serve our clients in new exciting and innovative ways.



A highlight of 2019 was the invitation of Project staff member Nadia Sangster to a small information update event with federal Minister of Justice and Attorney General, the Honourable David Lametti

VIRCS's 2018 Financial Report

VICTORIA IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CENTRE SOCIETY

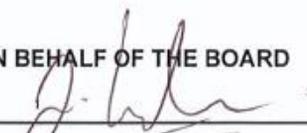
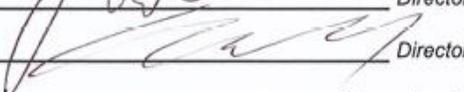
Statement of Financial Position

December 31, 2018

(Unaudited - See Notice To Reader)

| | 2018 | 2017 |
|--------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| ASSETS | | |
| CURRENT | | |
| Cash | \$ - | \$ 266,965 |
| Accounts receivable | 168,696 | 98,539 |
| Prepaid expenses | - | 4,758 |
| GST receivable | 1,277 | 1,925 |
| | 169,973 | 372,187 |
| EQUIPMENT <i>(Note 3)</i> | 1,770 | 2,529 |
| DUE FROM VSICS | 6,043 | 157,921 |
| | \$ 177,786 | \$ 532,637 |
| LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS | | |
| CURRENT | | |
| Bank indebtedness | \$ 3,764 | \$ - |
| Accounts payable | 23,807 | 41,793 |
| Employee deductions payable | 17,367 | 14,479 |
| Dawod Family Trust Fund | - | 20,000 |
| | 44,938 | 76,272 |
| DEFERRED REVENUE | 60,774 | 313,691 |
| DEFERRED CAPITAL ASSET CONTRIBUTIONS | 437 | 625 |
| | 106,149 | 390,588 |
| NET ASSETS | | |
| General fund | 1,321 | 1,892 |
| Restricted fund | 70,316 | 140,157 |
| | 71,637 | 142,049 |
| | \$ 177,786 | \$ 532,637 |

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD


 _____ Director

 _____ Director

See notes to financial statements

LEE & COMPANY
CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS

VICTORIA IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CENTRE SOCIETY

Statement of Revenues and Expenditures

Year Ended December 31, 2018

(Unaudited - See Notice To Reader)

| | 2018 | 2017 |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|
| REVENUE | | |
| Operating Grants | \$ 1,162,981 | \$ 1,019,729 |
| Gaming | 97,500 | 82,341 |
| Capital Project Gaming Grant | 82,469 | - |
| Donations | 43,212 | 81,749 |
| Training | 38,035 | 47,616 |
| Rental | 7,448 | - |
| Social Events | 3,003 | 8,218 |
| Interest Income | 1,395 | 151 |
| Interest | 187 | 268 |
| | <u>1,436,230</u> | <u>1,240,072</u> |
| EXPENSES | | |
| Amortization | 759 | 4,532 |
| Building Occupancy | 136,024 | 104,530 |
| Capital Project Gaming Grant | 82,469 | - |
| Direct Program Costs | 70,891 | 121,262 |
| Office and Supplies | 39,971 | 43,584 |
| Professional Fees | 5,670 | 6,288 |
| Recognition, Training and Recruiting | 1,546 | 1,399 |
| Travel and Transportation | 3,049 | 2,751 |
| Wages and Contracted Services | 1,166,263 | 1,061,856 |
| | <u>1,506,642</u> | <u>1,346,202</u> |
| DEFICIENCY OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES | <u>\$ (70,412)</u> | <u>\$ (106,130)</u> |

See notes to financial statements

LEE & COMPANY
CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS