

# PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada

another position. It was

Employment Assistance

## *Bringing People and Communities Together*

with regret that we saw her depart. An extensive interview process ended successfully with the appointment of Laura Lee Howard as the new Executive

Counsellor, Michelle Jay. We welcome the new staff, who will join long-time staff member Aghdas Missaghian, the ISAP coordinator and Trudy MacDonald, our book-keeper.

Director. As the long-time Host coordinator, Laura Lee was no stranger to our organization. However, within a short time of her appointment she took maternity leave and is now a proud parent, along with her husband, David Wright. In Laura Lee's absence, Florence Larkin has proven to be a quick study of the issues that confront our organization. Florence has quickly developed an excellent working relationship with the Board and has assured a seamless transition among staff.

Our funding has been maintained at the same level as last year, but we have been able to obtain new contracts that allow us to deliver the services newcomers require. Throughout a difficult transition year we have maintained our position as Prince Edward Island's only immigrant serving agency responsible for delivering the programs mandated by the policies of the Canadian Government.

We will work to maintain that role in the future.

I am very proud of our tradition of delivering programs of the highest quality with a limited budget, and I have personally enjoyed my experience with the staff and our clients at the Association.

## CONTENTS

President's Report . . . . .	1
Exec. Director's Report . . . . .	1
Changes . . . . .	2
Program Reports:	
Settlement Program . . . . .	3
Host Program. . . . .	4
Employment Assistance . . . . .	4
Community Support . . . . .	4
Others . . . . .	5-6
Regional Conference . . . . .	6
Refugee Claimants . . . . .	6
Thank You's . . . . .	7

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*Gregory J. Howard*

My last term as President has been marked by more change for the Association within an ever-changing sector. Executive Director Heather Irving, who filled that position since the incorporation of the P.E.I. Association for Newcomers to Canada Inc., and an originator of our predecessor organization, left to take

In addition to changes in the Executive Director's position, we have a new HOST Coordinator,

## EXECUTIVE

**My brief stay with the Association has been challenging and most enjoyable. In the process of wading through unfamiliar forms, funding proposals, reporting procedures, and dealing with issues in mid-stream, I learned a lot. I learned how difficult it is for community organizations, dependent on government funding, to maintain any kind of stability and make plans for the future.**

**I learned that much can be accomplished with a dedicated staff and board willing to work many volunteer hours; and with a clientele that is understanding and appreciative of our assistance.**

**I would like to sincerely thank the staff and board for all their support, assistance encouragement and patience. Laura Lee, even though on maternity leave, was there throughout providing advice and support along the way.**

**A debt of gratitude is owed to Aghdas and Trudy for keeping the Association together during all the staff changes and for their patience while we all learned our new roles.**

**The devolution, restructuring**

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT and trimming of key government programs continue to bring uncertainties and concerns over the future security and stability of Associations which provide services to newcomers. The next few years will be crucial ones. How the Association decides to respond to all the changes taking place within government departments will determine its future direction. The challenge is great, but the Association has the talent, the drive and the commitment to make it a strong and viable one, capable of responding to the needs of the newcomers and the community.**

## AND THE CHANGES GO ON ...

**This has definitely been a year of changes for the Association on all fronts.**

***The staff...* we have a new Executive Director, Laura Lee Howard; a new Host Coordinator, Lorraine Beck; a new Employment Assistance Counsellor, Michelle Jay and from January to July,**

*Florence Larkin*

**1998 a new Acting Executive Director, Florence Larkin.**

**We welcome all new staff and wish all those who left, good luck with their future careers.**

***The office....* finally, all our offices are now in one location at 179 Queen St. Michelle moved over from the Council of the Disabled in December, and Lorraine moved in to the new Host office next to Michelle. Both these offices are down the hall from the main office where the Executive Director and the Settlement Coordinator have their offices. We invite everyone to come and visit us!**

***The phone numbers ....* actually the phone numbers haven't really changed, they've just been re-organized. The main number is 628-6009. Laura Lee, Aghdas and Lorraine can be reached at this number. The Employment Assistance Services number has remained the same at 368-3070, and 894-4928 is now a dedicated fax and e-mail number.**

*The funding ...* Under its Settlement Renewal initiatives, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) is continuing its process of withdrawing from the direct administration of settlement services. As a result, the Adjustment Assistance Program (AAP) previously in place to provide orientation, income and temporary accommodation support for newcomers has been replaced with the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). This program will be contracted to the Association for the 1998/99 fiscal year. Under this program, we will be responsible for providing the orientation and counselling services to immigrants when they first arrive, as well as administering the financial costs for temporary accommodation.

The Department of Canadian Heritage (DCH) is also in a process of change. They are changing their funding focus from operational to project-based. Starting in the fiscal year 1999/2000, all funding provided to organizations will be based on specific projects. Administrative costs will no longer be covered.

This change in focus will have an impact on the Association. The funding provided by DCH enables us to employ a full

time Executive Director. With project-based funding, it will be more difficult for the Executive Director to handle the administrative work of the Association in addition to her responsibilities as a project coordinator. In this last year of transition, the Association is working with DCH, the PEI Multicultural Council and the Race Relations Education Association to come up with some viable ways to work within this structure.

Human Resource Development Canada (HRDC) is going through some changes as well. It is in the process of sharing its responsibility for training and support programs to the province. So far, this has not affected our relationship with HRDC. They will continue to be responsible for funding our Employment Assistance Services, and we will be accountable to them for the services we provide under this program.

## PROGRAM REPORTS

*Settlement Program*  
*Aghdas Missaghian*

This year the settlement

program received 77 government-assisted refugees from a variety of countries including Former Yugoslavia, Iraq, El Salvador, Guatemala and Sudan. Thirty-three of the 77 newcomers have left the Province. Most decided to settle in Ontario and a few in British Columbia.

Responsibilities that I undertook for newcomers included:

- Receiving newcomers at the airport.
- Doing paper work for SIN number, child tax credit, hospital card.
- Arranging meetings with immigration officials.
- Finding accommodation.
- Purchasing furniture and house hold items.
- Making appointments and referrals to service providers.
- Providing interpreters.
- Finding childcare providers.

All newcomers go through a difficult and stressful adjustment period during their first year in Canada. Some newcomers cope relatively well, others need more support. The families' priorities when they first arrive are familiarity with their surroundings, language training and their children's welfare and

education.

Our difficulty in finding family doctors has been alleviated for the moment. All I wish to thank the staff and board for their encouragement and support throughout the past year. We have become very good friends over the years and I am very grateful for their friendship.

### *Host Program*

*Lorraine Beck*

In the Spring of 1997, the Host Program partnered with CUSO and ECO PEI, in a major fund raiser "Spring Fling" dance with 300-400 people in attendance. Another highlight was the Cultural Diversity Conference in Fredericton attended by the Association staff. It provided a great opportunity to network with other newcomer service providers.

Summer and fall of 1997 began a time of transition when I replaced Laura Lee Howard as the Host Coordinator.

Winter of 1997/98 included many activities: a Host Newsletter, an Information Session for potential volunteers, a Christmas Party, visits to newcomer families, contacts with new volunteers, and promotion of the Host Program through churches, PSAs, displays and media

newcomers now have family doctors.

This past year, I participated in the coverage of events.

Spring of 1998 highlights included a Volunteer Appreciation Night with live music, international cuisine and 75-100 people in attendance; and a Host Information Session on the war situation in the former Yugoslavia.

14 new host matches were made since the beginning of 1998. Five of these terminated within 4 months due to families moving out of province. This brings the current number of ongoing matches to 15. All newcomer families requiring matches are now participating in the Host Program. Thank you to all Host participants for their continued support and involvement in this great program.

### *Employment*

#### *Assistance Services*

*Michelle Jay*

The Association's Employment Assistance Service (EAS) for newcomers is a year and a half old, an accomplishment itself in these fiscal times! I replaced Cathy Ronahan

settlement conference in Newfoundland, and took part in several workshops in PEI throughout the year.

as the EAS counsellor in October 1997, and have found it to be a rewarding and challenging position. Some of the activities over the year:

- two 12-week *Job Search Skills Workshops* with LINC students at Holland College
- continuing promotion of the service through website development, mailouts, visits to language schools and Chamber of Commerce
- professional development sessions on cooperatives, health and literacy, Halifax Metro Immigrant Services
- networking/advocacy on behalf of newcomers
- most essentially, ongoing support, assistance, and information to newcomers.

Newcomers have proven to be creative and persistent in their search for work. During the slow employment period from October 1997 to March 1998, 14 people secured employment. Since October, I have had contact with more than 30 new clients and 40 returning clients.

Moving the EAS office to

179 Queen St. in December has been positive, and enhanced communication with staff and ANC Board members. Thank you all for

One of the roles of the Association is to maintain its profile in the community and act as an advocate on behalf of newcomers. We help organizations and service-providers increase their ability to understand and assist newcomers. We collaborate with a wide range of immigrant and community organizations, and all levels of government, to provide information, resources and training. This year we worked in a number of areas, including: cross-cultural sensitivity; legislative review; family and mental health; language training; employment; and banking reform. We also collaborated with many organizations including: The Department of Education, Intercultural Health Assembly, Department of Health and Social Services, Women's Network, Voluntary Resource Council, Cooper Institute.

### *CLBA*

In November, 1997, The Association received the contract to administer the Canadian Language Benchmark Assessments (CLBA) to newcomers. The CLBA assesses newcomer's level of English competency

your support and assistance. I look forward to continuing EAS challenges and successes!

and determines their entry point in the LINC program. These assessments require a qualified assessor and in October, Laura Lee was trained in the procedure and has been doing the assessments throughout her maternity leave. All immigrants are eligible to receive this assessment free of charge. This year, 14 assessments were conducted.

### *Here We Are!*

*Here We Are!* is a booklet consisting of the stories of five immigrant children living on PEI. The children were involved in writing the stories and drawing the illustrations. The books were distributed to various schools and community organizations. Thanks to those who contributed to the booklet: Joy Ikede, Bojan Zoric, Vicky Willson, Heather Irving, Nina Sikic, Diedre Kessler, Wanda Whitlock, the children and their parents. Thanks also to those who funded the project: Department of Canadian Heritage, ADL Dairy Products,

### *Community Support Program*

Perfection Foods, Metro Credit Union and Strait Crossing Development Inc.

Copies of the booklet are available at the Association office at 179 Queen St.

### *Understanding Others*

*Understanding Others: An Multicultural Handbook for P.E.I.*, was first printed in 1985. In 1997, the Association collaborated with the Department of Education to update the manual and translate it into French for distribution throughout the schools and the province. Thanks go to: Laura Lee Howard, Heather Irving, Barbara Bernard, Mary Burke, Trudy MacDonald, Wanda Whitlock, Dale McNevin, Judy Bayliss Whitaker and Maude Desjardins-Arsenault. Funding was provided by the Department of Canadian Heritage and the PEI Department of Education.

*Understanding Others* is available at school libraries on PEI and at 179 Queen St.

## *Getting Settled*

*(Revision)*

*Jadranka Rodić*

With assistance from the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Association is

The first phase, interviewing immigrants and researching the different service organizations is now completed. The second phase will involve putting the information together, translation into Serbo-Croatian (and possibly Spanish), production and distribution of the handbook to newcomers.

## *Immigrant Women's Health Study*

In January of 1998, we received funding from the Maritime Centre for Excellence in Women's Health (MCEWH) to conduct research into the health needs of immigrants and refugees on PEI. This is a joint project with Marian McKinnon, Professor at the PEI School of Nursing and President of the Intercultural Health Assembly. The purpose of the research is to increase cultural awareness amongst health care providers about the health beliefs, health maintenance and use patterns of immigrant and refugee women on PEI. The target population for the study will

once again be able to revise the immigrant handbook, *Getting Settled*. As a former newcomer, I found it necessary to update the manual because I know how important it is for newcomers to get the be immigrant and refugee women between the ages of 20-49 and 50+ living on PEI in the last 7 years.

To date, we have conducted one focus group with immigrant women. A focus group with health care professionals is currently being organized. A questionnaire will be developed for individual interviews from the information received at the two focus groups. Final report is due March, 1999.

## *Needs Assessment*

The Department of Canadian Heritage provided funding to conduct an assessment of newcomers needs in order to prepare ourselves for their change in focus from operational to project-based funding. As a result of this study, we should be able to determine the gaps in services and develop strategies for more comprehensive services to newcomers on a

right and comprehensive information on different topics in the first few months of their life in Canada and PEI.

project basis.

The research is guided by a steering committee, and consists of focus groups and individual interviews with newcomers, board and staff, service providers and local businesses. A questionnaire has been developed and interviews will be done over the summer.

## ATLANTIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE 1997

*Laura Lee Howard*

In October two staff from the Association attended the Atlantic Settlement Conference in St. John's, NFLD. The conference theme was "Settlement 2000: Issues and Actions". The conference included information workshops on Best Practices, the Immigrant Entrepreneurial Program, Settlement Renewal Update, Immigrant Loans and AAP Redesign, Maintaining and Enhancing Services during Lean Times, and Social Work in Settlement-Bridging the Gap. The role

of ARAISA and its member agencies in the provision of settlement issues in the future was also discussed.

#### **REFUGEE CLAIMANTS**

*Jackie LeBlanc*

Claimants were assigned Island lawyers willing to help them pro bono. To date, 6 of them were accepted as Convention Refugees. Three of them were refused Refugee status, but went on to file for judicial reviews. Thus far, all three have received deportation orders. The rest of the claimants (6) either gave up their claims before their hearing or were refused and decided to go home.

Refugee Claimants face a terrible ordeal no matter where they enter the country. Given that PEI is likely to receive more Refugee Claimants in the future, Islanders must get together and organize resources to deal with the next wave of Claimants.

#### **THANK YOU FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

- ▶ **Citizenship and Immigration Canada**
- ▶ **Department of Canadian Heritage**
- ▶ **Human Resource Development Canada**
- ▶ **Department of Health and Community Services  
Queens Region**

Since November 1995, at least 15 Refugee claims have been filed in PEI. While this is a relatively small number compared

- ▶ **Maritime Centre for Excellence in Women's Health**

#### **OUR VOLUNTEERS!**

Volunteers are the backbone of our Association. Without their time, energy and commitment, we would not be able to do the work that we do. A sincere thank you to the many volunteers who worked for the Association this year. You contributed 5,200 hours of time, worth \$63,000!

#### **OUR BOARD MEMBERS!**

With all the staff changes this year, the board had to take on additional responsibilities. They did so with enthusiasm and good grace. A big Thank-you.

A number of our board members have either resigned or are resigning their positions on the board this year. We would like to thank the following for their many years of dedicated service to the

to other provinces dealing with all of these Claimants presents a challenge to the Island community as there are few resources available to help them.

**Association:**  
*Thilak Tennekone*  
*Dean Sexton*  
*Dijana Mitrović*  
*Alisa Saciragić*  
*Joy Ikede*  
*Reynaldo Lopez*

The following board members are staying on for another year. We would like to thank them for their services this year, and look forward to working with them in the coming year:

*Joe Byrne*  
*Terry Allen*  
*Jackie LeBlanc*  
*Luna Henderson*  
*Marie Arsenault*  
*Eric Silva*

A special thank you to Juana Polanco who resigned her position on the board last year but continues to be involved with the Association. She is on the Heritage Committee and has provided invaluable assistance with the needs assessment study.

#### **OUR STAFF!**

The Association is fortunate to have so many talented people working for it. Thanks to our hard

working full-time and project staff:

*Laura Lee Howard*

*Aghdas Missaghian Michelle Jay*

*Lorraine Beck*

*Trudy MacDonald Aleksandra Nisić*

*Nina Sikić*

*Jadranka Rodić*

A special thank you to Cathy

Ronahan for all her hard work as the Employment Assistance Counsellor in 1996/97. Cathy reigned her position in October, 1997 to join the Latin American Mission Program in the Dominican Republic. We wish her luck!

## A SPECIAL THANKS TO GREG HOWARD

Greg is resigning from the board this year for sure! He was going to resign as president last year but with all the changes taking place within the Association, he agreed to

stay on for the year. I, for one, am glad he did! I am grateful for all his assistance during my term. He was always available to me and helped me enormously. Greg has served the Association a long time. He was a founding member of the P.E.I. Cross Cultural Information Committee in 1984, served as a board member of the Association since its inauguration in 1993 and as president from 1995-1998. We shall miss him a lot!

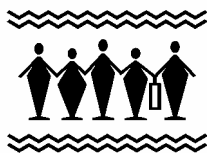
## THANKS TO HEATHER IRVING

Heather Irving resigned her position as Executive Director of the Association in July, 1997. We owe her a lot. Heather was one of the founders of the Cross-Cultural Information Committee which later became the PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada. She was the Association's first Executive Director and ably guided the affairs of the Association for the first five years of its operation. We wish her every success in her new position at the PEI Humane Society.

## FINANCIAL AUDIT

Our financial audit was completed by Palmer, Shea, Chartered Accountants of Charlottetown. Copies are available at our office, 179 Queen or by calling 628-6009

## HOW TO CONTACT US



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