

# ACCELERATING ENGAGEMENT



ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015

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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT



*I am pleased to report that the Board's work in developing a "blueprint" for the future was completed with the expertise of Blueprint Business Architecture in 2014/15.*

**Bruno M. Suppa**

I am pleased to report that the Board's work in developing a "blueprint" for the future was completed with the expertise of Blueprint Business Architecture in 2014/15. The coming year will see Board and staff work diligently to develop a new fundraising strategy and marketing approach that will involve community leaders and partners, employers, former clients, and the business community, in working together to accelerate the engagement of immigrants.

From the onset, COSTI's Mission has been the full integration of immigrants by offering services to help them engage more quickly and advocate on their behalf. Through our programs, initiatives and advocacy in the areas of language acquisition, social, economic and cultural integration, and gender equality, immigrants are able to eliminate barriers and adapt faster.

While their experiences and challenges are unique and they come from different countries around the world, they share two things in common – Canada and COSTI. As a result of our staff's passion and work, immigrants engage more fully and more quickly in all aspects of Canadian society and contribute to their own prosperity and that of all Canadians. They feel a greater sense of belonging in Canada because they feel it is fair and trustworthy and that it is a place that values social justice.

What does Canada receive in return? Canada benefits through the enriched ethnic and cultural diversity and greater social harmony generated by fully engaged immigrants and greater prosperity as a result of their economic contribution.

COSTI is an organization that continues to change, one that continually examines new approaches and ideas. What keeps our organization vital and our work important is our dedicated staff and volunteers and having a strong and genuine commitment to see our clients – immigrants – succeed and fully engaged.

Bruno M. Suppa  
President

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT



*This year has been a remarkable year in the history of refugee resettlement in Canada.*

**Mario J. Calla**

This year has been a remarkable year in the history of refugee resettlement in Canada. Emerging out of the misinformation and myths about refugees and the general inaction to treat the Syrian refugee crisis in the Mediterranean as a true emergency, ordinary Canadians arose and took matters into their own hands. What is remarkable is the spontaneity and range of initiatives across the country that were generated by civil society, all with the same goal of facilitating the sponsorship of Syrian refugees and preparing a welcoming community for them.

In Toronto, a small group of concerned people founded Lifeline Syria to replicate Operation Lifeline of the early 1980's that brought 60,000 Vietnamese "Boat People" to Canada. COSTI provided developmental support and space for their offices. Lifeline Syria has held sponsorship workshops in the Toronto area and over 1,500 people have attended. Close to 300 groups registered to sponsor Syrian refugees - groups from faith communities to book clubs, neighbourhood associations to elementary schools, groups of friends, and so on. It has been totally inspiring to experience first-hand the impact of civil society rising up to reclaim our identity as Canadians who are generous and caring of others.

Some examples of people's generosity:

*Wind Mobile has offered to provide 1,000 cellular phones with free call packages for up to two years.*

*An optician has offered to provide 125 free eye exams and glasses.*

*A Vietnamese couple have committed to sponsor a Syrian refugee family because they had been the recipients of the same generosity 35 years ago.*

*A group of doctors have organized a refugee health clinic*

*that will be available on a rotating basis between four sites on weekends to provide initial health services and connect refugees to family doctors.*

*Kids at Dewson Public School have raised \$30,000 to sponsor a family.*

*Ryerson University has raised \$600,000 and will be sponsoring over 15 families. They put out a challenge to other post-secondary institutions and have been successful in getting U of T, OCAD and Seneca to commit.*

*In Oakville, a United Church, synagogue and mosque have come together to sponsor a family - a truly Canadian approach.*

*And, this is when I realized this issue had crossed into mainstream and gone well beyond, a large Bay St. law firm called me for assistance in sponsoring a refugee family. Additionally, they expect their branches across the country to do the same.*

These are just a few of the many examples of how the community has moved ahead of the politicians and responded with generosity.

As I mentioned at the beginning, this has been a remarkable year where people from all walks of life have independently stepped forward to be part of the solution to a humanitarian crisis on the other side of the Atlantic. COSTI has played a strong leadership role in facilitating this response and will be playing a stronger role in the resettlement of the refugees when they arrive.

**Mario J. Calla**  
Executive Director

# COSTI AND THE COMMUNITY

**COSTI's work in the community continues to be a high priority. Through active participation in local, provincial and national committees, advisory and working groups and ad hoc coalitions, we have represented the voice of immigrants, refugees and the immigrant serving sector in planning and coordination, public policy, research and public education.**

COSTI's over-arching goal is to create conditions that enable immigrants and vulnerable populations to become valuable and contributing members of society. COSTI's leadership team works to promote public policies that facilitate the integration of immigrants and support their communities to build internal leadership and capacity.

In 2014/15, COSTI supported the continued development of local community groups, such as the South Asian Women's Rights Organization, serving Bangladeshi women in Scarborough. COSTI worked with hundreds of partner organizations to coordinate the Job Search Workshops Program, Problem Gambling, Orientation to Ontario project and the Welcome Centre Immigrant Services network in York Region. Collaborative and innovative approaches to service delivery allows COSTI and key partners the opportunity to meet the needs of under-served communities and also develop internal capacity to build, enhance and sustain services.

## 2014/2015 SNAPSHOT

### SERVICE PARTNERS

Partnership and collaboration amongst organizations is key to the successful integration of newcomers. COSTI is represented on many community planning networks, umbrella organizations and advisory committees. We work in partnership with organizations and service providers across Ontario in the planning and delivery of services to the community.

### FOLLOWING IS A BREAKDOWN OF OUR VARIOUS PARTNERS:





Space is provided for seniors to come together every Friday at COSTI's Corvetti Education Centre, where they socialize and enjoy karaoke. Our Settlement Counsellor, Brenda Situ provides information sessions and workshops that are relevant to their age and culture: health-related, finance, safety, etc.

## COSTI AND THE COMMUNITY

COSTI is proud to have been a part of key organizations including the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC), the Consortium of Agencies Serving Internationally-Trained Persons (CASIP), Local Immigration Partnerships in Toronto, Peel and York Region, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), the Service Delivery Advisory Group to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, the National Settlement Council, Canadian Council for Refugees, and the Resettlement Adaptation Program Working Group.



COSTI currently works with over 200 planning groups, community agencies, hospitals and school boards in the delivery of services.

## PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION IS KEY TO THE SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION OF NEWCOMERS

### A PATH TO HOME: SUPPORTING HOUSING NEEDS FOR NEWCOMERS

COSTI is a participant in a national pilot program, A Path to Home: Supporting Housing Needs for Newcomers, funded by the government of Canada and coordinated by the YMCA. The objective of the pilot is to reduce the visible and invisible barriers faced by newcomers by providing a case management and holistic approach to services that not only assists individuals with access to housing, housing stabilization and eviction prevention but also address additional needs or services that individuals new to Canada may face, such as locating English classes and medical care in their community.

### INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CONNECT PILOT PROGRAM

The International Student Connect Program is a pilot initiated by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade to support international students wishing to settle in Ontario. The pilot represents an innovative collaboration between settlement service providers and post secondary institutions. The program offers information sessions and workshops on a variety of settlement topics. The workshops and sessions address issues such as features of life in Ontario, accessing local services, consumer awareness, housing and health-care.

The implementation of the program is being led by COSTI, in partnership with 10 settlement agencies and 14 colleges and universities in 8 Ontario communities: Barrie, Brantford, Hamilton, Ottawa, Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay, Toronto, and Waterloo.

### JOB SEARCH WORKSHOPS (JSW)

JSW programs are provided by community agencies across the province. Delivered in both official languages, JSW programs are offered in 23 cities, at 43 organizations and 63 sites across Ontario. COSTI provides program development, promotion, and staff training support to these agencies in the delivery of the program.

### NEIGHBOURS, FRIENDS AND FAMILIES (NFF)

NFF is a province-wide public education campaign that raises awareness of the signs of woman abuse so that those close to a woman at-risk can recognize the signs of abuse and know what actions to take in response. COSTI participated in the public awareness campaign and delivered culturally and linguistically sensitive training to community workers at participating community agencies working with immigrants and refugees. In 2014/15, COSTI, in partnership with St. Stephen's Community House produced a fotonovela and toolkit, funded by the Province of Ontario, to raise awareness about woman abuse among English language instructors and students studying English as a second language in select centres in Toronto, Hamilton, St. Catharines, Kitchener, London, Windsor, Thunder Bay, Sudbury and Ottawa. The toolkit consists of lesson plans and resources that will be shared with learners.

### ORIENTATION TO ONTARIO (O2O) PROGRAM

A bilingual initiative, O2O was designed to ease the transition of newcomers by providing access to standardized information about settlement in Ontario and connecting newcomers to community services upon arrival. O2O is being delivered by ten community agencies across the province. COSTI, in partnership with College Boreal, OCASI and George Brown College, provided program development, evaluation, promotion and staff training to support the delivery of the program.

### PROBLEM GAMBLING

COSTI provides advice and expertise on newcomer problem gambling issues to service providers who provide mental health and addiction services to ethno-cultural communities in need of culturally and linguistically appropriate treatment and services.

### WELCOME CENTRE IMMIGRANT SERVICES

The Welcome Centre Immigrant Services is a one-stop service in York Region, designed to guide and support immigrants through the maze of information and resources. Core services provided at each of the five Centres by a partnership of agencies include: settlement and integration services; language training and enhanced language training; accreditation and qualifications assistance, and employment supports.

Many immigrants understand that strong English and technical skills are necessary if their goal is to find employment in their field. They also know that it is very important to speak English so that they can effectively go about their daily activities and advocate on behalf of their children, parents and themselves. Many do not feel “settled” and a part of the community if they cannot understand and communicate in English and almost all want to reduce their reliance on friends and family.

Last year, COSTI helped over 5,600 clients integrate faster by focusing on consolidating services and exploring new learning models and program features. Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) levels were adjusted to a higher level to reflect the current needs of students; and a language skills-based delivery model was piloted in York Region at the Welcome Centre in Newmarket.

The integration of online course materials in lesson planning and class instruction continued into 2014/15 in many COSTI English language programs. The Enhanced Language Training (ELT) staff worked with the Online Services team to fine-tune existing online modules in order to complement our programming for Internationally Trained Professionals in the health care, accounting, customer service and administration fields.

## RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Oxsana Crygorenko arrived in Canada a few years ago from the Ukraine. A registered nurse by profession, she knew that since nursing was an accredited profession, she would likely be unable to practise in Ontario. Unsure of her career goals and options and knowing that her English reading and writing skills needed to improve, she wasn't confident that she would be able to find employment, particularly since she did not have any work experience in Canada. Her first step towards employment started with enrolling in LINC classes followed by COSTI's Enhanced Language Training Program for health care professionals.

*“In a short time I was able to better understand the Canadian labour market, practice my interview skills and learn medical terminology used in Canada. Sara Guo, the program's Job Developer found a volunteer placement for me at a medical centre, where I was able to apply different skills. While I learned a lot, the best part personally, was meeting other immigrant professionals, most of whom are now my friends. And professionally? Getting hired by Dr. Micheal Hanna! He appreciates and respects me and values my opinion. I will always be grateful to him for giving me my first job.”*

*An immigrant himself, Dr. Micheal Hanna, understands how challenging it is to find employment in a career you have trained for and love. “When I first arrived from Egypt with my wife who is also a professional, we were determined to continue practicing in our professions. Having achieved our goals and knowing through my own experience, how difficult it is to find employment without Canadian experience, I wanted to give other immigrant professionals an opportunity.*

*My patients at the Dufferin Major Medical Clinic come from all over the world and speak many languages. I want to provide the best treatment possible, so I need to be able to communicate with them and understand the cultural differences, particularly when it comes to medical care. Working with, and hiring immigrant professionals allows me to help my patients and also help new immigrants to Canada – a win-win situation.”*

For Oxsana, completing the ELT program and working at the clinic is only the beginning. She has found a new confidence and wants to further her education and continue improving her English.

**Internationally Trained Professionals. All three are employed. Doctor Hanna operates his own practice.**

From left to right: Anna Morski, Dr. Micheal Hanna and Oxsana Crygorenko



of clients who studied English at COSTI or graduated from the Enhanced Language Training Program in 2014/15 have a college, university, or post-graduate degree.



COSTI clients improved their English language skills by attending English language classes at all levels, including Literacy, Pronunciation and Grammar in Conversation classes, Enhanced Language Training or computer courses.



## LANGUAGE & SKILLS TRAINING SERVICES

### LANGUAGE TRAINING

English language classes available at all levels, language training in the workplace and enhanced English language training in the administration and customer service, health care, information technology, teaching, accounting and finance fields, including language terminology, job search and placement.

### SKILLS TRAINING

Skill and special courses, including computer courses, citizenship acquisition courses.

### CARE FOR NEWCOMER CHILDREN

Child-minding support for LINC students and for clients accessing services at the North York Centre and Welcome Centres.

## LOCATIONS

**CORVETTI EDUCATION CENTRE**  
760 College Street | Tel: 416-534-7400

**ENHANCED LANGUAGE TRAINING SERVICES, BRAMPTON**  
10 Gillingham Drive, Suite 109A | Tel: 905-451-7147

227 Vodden Street East, Suite 3 | Tel: 905-459-6700

**LANGUAGE AND SKILLS TRAINING SERVICES, NORTH YORK**  
1700 Wilson Avenue, Suite 206 | Tel: 416-244-9980

**WELCOME CENTRE IMMIGRANT SERVICES, MARKHAM NORTH**  
8400 Woodbine Avenue, Suites 102-103 | Tel: 289-846-3645

**WELCOME CENTRE IMMIGRANT SERVICES, MARKHAM SOUTH**  
7220 Kennedy Road | Tel: 905-479-7926

**WELCOME CENTRE IMMIGRANT SERVICES, NEWMARKET**  
16655 Yonge Street, Unit 26 | Tel: 289-841-3032

**WELCOME CENTRE IMMIGRANT SERVICES, RICHMOND HILL**  
9325 Yonge Street | Tel: 289-842-3124

**WELCOME CENTRE IMMIGRANT SERVICES, VAUGHAN**  
9100 Jane Street, Building H | Tel: 905-761-1155

# INCREASING INDEPENDENCE AND REDUCING ISOLATION

**Vera Bako,  
COSTI General Counsellor**  
(back, second from left)  
with members of the Albanian  
community at the Symposium  
for Senior Immigrant Women,  
held in November 2014.



Immigrant seniors are one of the most highly disadvantaged and under-served in the greater Toronto area. Many do not speak English and feel uncomfortable in asking for help from others, especially from people outside of their culture who do not speak the same language. They have spent their adult life raising their family and working so their children had food, shelter and most importantly, a post-secondary education. Now in their later years, their children are all grown up and with families of their own, leaving many seniors feeling alone and without a sense of purpose. At COSTI, 9% of the clients we help are seniors, so it is important for us to be accessible and able to offer programming and services that meet their needs, particularly to those that are feeling isolated and alone.

“Promoting Wellbeing: A Symposium for Senior Immigrant Women” is an example of COSTI and the Province working together to help seniors stay active and involved in their community. Last year, we received funding from the new Seniors Community Grant Program, through the Ontario Seniors’ Secretariat, to coordinate a one-day educational event aimed at encouraging holistic well-being and social networking. Ninety senior immigrant women from the Albanian, Bosnian, Chinese, Hispanic, Italian and South Asian communities took part in mini-workshops related to mental health, physical activity and good nutrition. 98% of the participants hoped that the symposium would become an annual event and commented that they had received useful information and made new connections by networking with other seniors.

*“It is important to be open to learning something new and not be limited by our age. The future is ours. We should enjoy it with passion now that we no longer have to work. We need to care for ourselves as we have cared for our families, and look for activities like the programs that COSTI organizes so that our minds and bodies stay active.”*

The quote is an excerpt from planning committee member Liberata Rocco’s speech at the symposium. It captures the enthusiasm of both our clients and staff, as we work together to find solutions for seniors.

## SENIORS' SERVICES

Organizational support provided to the Canadian Italian Family Assistance Association (CIFAA) and to seniors of the Caravelle Club, Bosnian Seniors’ Association and the Association of Spanish-speaking Seniors to assist them in their social, educational, and recreational activities.

Elderly Persons’ Centre allows Italian seniors the opportunity to take part in daily social, cultural, recreational and educational activities; Encuentro Latino, a group for Spanish-speaking seniors is designed to provide socialization, reduction of social isolation and mutual support in the settlement process. In addition, workshops and information sessions are offered to Chinese and South Asian communities.

## LOCATIONS

**CORVETTI EDUCATION CENTRE**  
760 College Street | Tel: 416-534-7400

**NORTH YORK CENTRE**  
1700 Wilson Avenue, Suite 114 | Tel: 416-244-0480



In 2014/15, over 1,600 seniors attended English classes, needed help with accessing government income maintenance programs or community and health services, while others engaged in activities that helped them stay active and independent.



of attendees stated that they implemented the information they received at the Symposium for Senior Immigrant Women in their daily lives by working on puzzles and quizzes to maintain cognitive function and incorporating new forms of exercise for themselves and nutrition-related ideas into their cooking.



Bosnian seniors hosted social gatherings and picnics at the Bosnian New Horizons Community Garden.



of seniors who come to COSTI are women.

## CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUCCESS

Buchi Akunyili arrived from Nigeria in 2014 and knew that it would be a challenge to find employment as a Computer Engineer. In addition to trying to find work in a similar field, he wanted to do whatever he could to integrate quickly into the Canadian way of life. Buchi's first step was to find an organization that would help assess his skills and guide him through the job search, networking and interview process.

*"It's challenging to find your first job in Canada. I knew I had to start somewhere so I googled Career Resource Centres in Canada and COSTI's Vaughan Employment Services came up in the search. There were other organizations, but I wanted to connect with COSTI because of the large number of services and opportunities available to Canadians and new immigrants like me.*

*Brian Thomson, was my Employment Consultant at COSTI. He advised me on what workshops and courses to take so that I could upgrade my skills. He set me on the right path. I enrolled in a Business Analyst Certificate course at U of T in January 2015 and worked in lower-paying jobs while I took the courses. I recently started working as a Business Analyst for the government.*

*What makes Brian and COSTI stand out for me, is the level of guidance and attention I received. Throughout my job search and courses, Brian was in constant contact, wanting to get updated on how I was progressing and always encouraging me. In fact, he still emails me to see how I am doing. It's this type of long-term relationship that helps immigrants like me integrate faster and feel like they are engaging and contributing back to the community."*

Buchi's career goal is to specialize as a Business Analyst in the Telecom Sector. In the meantime, in addition to working during the day he is taking leadership courses at the Rotman School of Management in the evenings, with the goal of getting an MBA. He knows his children will not face the same challenges he has faced, but he is proud that his experiences have made him a strong role model for Canada's future generation.



**Internationally Trained Professional. Employed. Taking leadership courses.**

Buchi Akunyili



unemployed and under-employed individuals accessed our online e-facilitate workshops to help improve job search skills.



people came to COSTI looking for employment, retraining or advancement in education.

### EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Career Assessment and Planning, Job Search and Placement, Job Maintenance Support services for adults (including internationally trained professionals/tradespeople) and youth are provided through a comprehensive and integrated service model intended to address individual needs. Services include: individual assessment, counselling, pre-employment training, group workshops and employment and job maintenance placement. Individuals can also benefit from a range of on-the-job placement and training opportunities relevant to their specific career goals. Exploration of trades apprenticeships, customized job searches and mentoring opportunities are available.

The Canada-Ontario Job Grant (COJG) provides resources to employers to undertake training and professional development in their workforce. COSTI is a designated provider of the COJG.

### LIFE SKILLS TRAINING

Employment preparation workshops to develop life and management skills and career exploration options. Services for residents of York Region or social assistance recipients include career planning, résumé development, interview skills and creation of a personal job search plan.

training on career planning, résumé development, interview skills and creation of a personal job search plan. Services for job-ready social assistance recipients include assessment, four weeks of group instruction, individual job placement and follow-up support.

### ONLINE SERVICES

Using an interactive online platform e-facilitated by Employment Consultants, online services are available to unemployed and under-employed individuals who face multiple barriers and cannot otherwise access on-site services. An Employment Resource room is available for specific job search techniques and tools, and a Virtual Library listing key websites related to employment research and job search.

### RESOURCE AND INFORMATION

Individuals access information on careers and occupations, the local job market, training opportunities, and job search strategies to successfully find and maintain employment. Resources include: computerized job banks, internet access, fax/photocopier, video library, audio tapes and written materials. Workshops and individual assistance available.

### ONTARIO WORKS

The Hospitality Options Program Essentials (HOPE) and Internationally Trained Individuals Program, provide basic

### SPECIALIZED EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING SERVICES

Addresses vocational and training needs of persons with disabilities who face difficulties in accessing and finding employment.

### LOCATIONS

#### BRAMPTON EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

10 Gillingham Drive, Suite 300 | Tel: 905-459-8855

#### CALEDONIA CENTRE

700 Caledonia Road | 416-789-7925

#### JANE STREET HUB

1541 Jane Street | Tel: 416-645-7575

#### MISSISSAUGA EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

6750 Winston Churchill Blvd., Unit 8A | Tel: 905-567-0482

#### VAUGHAN CENTRE

3100 Rutherford Road, Suite 102 | Tel: 905-669-5627

#### WESTON EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

35 King Street, Suite 106 | Tel: 416-588-2240

# FROM HOPE TO OPPORTUNITY

Hamza Najim is a 19 year-old government-assisted refugee from Iraq. He arrived at our Ralph Chiodo Family Immigrant Reception Centre with his mother and sister less than a year ago. They were assisted in locating more permanent accommodations and left the Centre after ten days. COSTI's Client Support Services (CSS) staff helped settle the family in their new home, accompanying them to appointments and referring them to medical, social and settlement services in Mississauga.

Hamza has managed to accomplish quite a lot for a 19 year old. The school year had already started when he arrived, so like many young adults his age, he turned to his iPad, laptop and the internet to pass time. Hamza discovered an eSport game that he soon became quite good at playing, so much so that he channeled his skills at the game into starting his own business that now receives a lot of interest from corporate sponsors around the world.

*"When I first arrived, I stayed at the Ralph Chiodo Family Immigrant Reception Centre and then moved to Mississauga with my family. Not in school and experiencing the cold of winter for the first time, I felt alone and depressed, I needed an escape. I saw an advertisement for Vainglory an eSport game and thought I would try it. I started playing, was pretty good at the game and began winning tournaments and money.*

*My 'virtual' friends and I started a competitive play-business, Gankstars. We've travelled to South Korea and have already won several international competitions. I still can't believe that I can do what I love to do and earn money! Without the encouragement from Monica Abdelkader, COSTI's CSS Manager, I don't think I would have taken the big step of travelling overseas and competing.*

*Our online business profile has increased and corporate sponsors have approached us with interest. I am excited about the future, but also hesitant. With all of our unexpected success, I haven't enrolled in school yet, but I know how important having an education is. I meet with large corporations and have nothing to fall back on when I introduce myself to Harvard-educated businessmen. I've realized that having letters that follow my name are important to me too and intend to further my education.*

*I know that my experience is not typical of a young refugee from Iraq, but the anxious feeling of worrying about the future and not being able to help my family with expenses once the financial assistance from the government ends, is the same.*

*For me, coming to Canada has been my 'virtual' stepping stone to the world... Google the definition: an undertaking or event that helps one to make progress toward a specified goal. Insert emoticon here – happy face."*

**We believe that refugees who receive a holistic and individualized approach to settlement services when they first arrive in Canada have a greater sense of security, well-being and opportunity, and ultimately contribute to a more harmonious and just society. Our priority in 2014/15 was to deliver effective settlement services to our immigrant and refugee clients and fine-tune our support services, so that we would be better prepared to provide intensive case management and counselling services to Syrian and Iraqi refugees arriving to Ontario.**

**The needs of immigrant and refugee women, children and youth, seniors, members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) community, and individuals with disabilities and mental health issues, vary and require different levels of interventions and referrals. Each year, staff work to improve our services to these vulnerable communities. Last year, we opened a pediatric clinic, run by a pediatrician with extensive experience in refugee health, at the Ralph Chiodo Family Immigrant Reception Centre so that we could better respond to the immediate needs of refugee children and youth and ensure that immunizations are up to date. In addition, COSTI's Client Support Services staff worked together with Employment Services staff to facilitate access to employment services by government-assisted refugees who do not qualify under the employment program because their English language skills do not meet standard requirements.**

**Refugee from Iraq. Co-Founder of Gankstar. Award-winning Gamer.**

Hamza Najim (far right)

1062

refugees were welcomed at the Ralph Chiodo Family Immigrant Reception Centre.

8540

immigrants came to COSTI for help in the settlement process in Ontario. They received counselling and help with accessing government services, completing government forms, finding a home, translation and interpretation, and referral services in their local communities.



## SETTLEMENT SERVICES

### ART THERAPY PROGRAM

Directed to the psycho-emotional needs of refugee children and youth and offers traumatized refugee children the opportunity to express themselves through art.

### CLIENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Government-assisted refugees receive life skills, assessment, information and referral, group orientation, interpretation, advocacy, completion of government documents, and supportive counselling through a case management approach.

### SERVICES FOR REFUGEES

Government-assisted refugees receive temporary accommodation and a range of initial settlement services, including orientation, completing applications for essential documents (OHIP, SIN), medical referrals, housing acquisition and life skills support. Refugee Claimants are provided with temporary accommodation, settlement services and housing assistance.

### SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Services include assessment, orientation, referral, information, interpretation, completing of government documents, advocacy, supportive counselling for new immigrants and settled immigrants.

The Canadian Immigrant Integration Project (CIIP) provides information and referral and initial orientation online to overseas clients to help them prepare for settlement and employment processes prior to arrival in Canada.

## LOCATIONS

**CORVETTI EDUCATION CENTRE**  
760 College Street | Tel: 416-534-7400

**NORTH YORK CENTRE**  
1700 Wilson Avenue, Suite 114 | Tel: 416-244-0480

**RALPH CHIODO FAMILY IMMIGRANT RECEPTION CENTRE**  
100 Lippincott Street | Tel: 416-922-6688

**WELCOME CENTRE IMMIGRANT SERVICES, MARKHAM NORTH**  
8400 Woodbine Avenue, Suites 102-103 | Tel: 289-846-3645

**WELCOME CENTRE IMMIGRANT SERVICES, RICHMOND HILL**  
9325 Yonge Street | Tel: 289-842-3124

**WELCOME CENTRE IMMIGRANT SERVICES, VAUGHAN**  
9100 Jane Street, Building H | Tel: 905-761-1155

**VAUGHAN CENTRE**  
3100 Rutherford Road, Suite 102 | Tel: 905-669-5627

# INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

**COSTI's Children and Youth Services have been designed and developed with the understanding that all young people have the right to be provided with support, guidance and opportunities. Through our community connections, mentoring, settlement, employment and recreation programs, COSTI staff work to ensure that all children and youth, regardless of personal barriers, are provided with equal access to the services and supports they need to achieve their goals and dreams, and to grow into caring, competent and healthy adults.**

The BLG Foundation provided the opportunity for over 200 children to express themselves through art. Children from Afghanistan, Bhutan, Iraq, Iran, Liberia, Pakistan, Republic of Congo, Sudan, and Syria were provided with a lifeline and the opportunity to work through their pain and fear through our Art Therapy program at COSTI's Ralph Chiodo Family Immigrant Reception Centre.



2790 young women and men received employment support services, including placement.



Over 860 youth were given a new direction away from street life and away from risky behaviour through our mentoring and youth-at-risk programs.



Painting from 9 year-old boy, a participant in the COSTI Art Therapy Program, turned into a greeting card.

## CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES

### PLAYING FOR KEEPS

Provides micro grants of \$50 to youth to develop and host one-day physically active events and recreation projects in the community. Activities engage youth, develop their leadership qualities and increase their community awareness and connections.

### SUMMER JOBS SERVICE

Provides high school, college and university students with employment preparation skills and summer job placement services. Year-round services are also available through COSTI's Employment Ontario service centres.

### YOUTH MENTORING

Program matches out-of-school unemployed youth with older mentors. Mentors provide advice and coaching on career planning and life skills.

### YOUTH EMPLOYMENT FUND

Provides unemployed youth and young adults between the ages of 15 and 29 interested in long-term employment, with one-on-one job search assistance and the opportunity to learn and build new skills through subsidized placements and on-the-job training.

## LOCATIONS

### BRAMPTON EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

10 Gillingham Drive, Suite 300 | Tel: 905-459-8855

### BIRCHMOUNT STADIUM

(April to July and September to October)  
100 Birchmount Road | Tel: 647-827-1462

### VARIETY VILLAGE

(November to March)  
3701 Danforth Avenue | Tel: 416-367-2828, ext. 270

### CALEDONIA CENTRE

700 Caledonia Road | Tel: 416-789-7925

### JANE STREET HUB

1541 Jane Street | Tel: 416-645-7575

### YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Empowers youth by encouraging and building leadership skills through positive engagement in physical activities and sports, healthy eating, and dialogue on issues such as risky personal behaviours for youth between the ages of 13 and 24.

Youth and seniors come together to grow, cultivate and cook vegetables from a community garden. This exciting initiative engages participants in a dialogue and activity where they will gain a better understanding of their similarities and differences and come to value the importance of both generations.

### YOUTH SETTLEMENT SERVICES

One-on-one help and group workshops provide orientation, referral, information, interpretation, completion of government documents, advocacy and supportive counselling for immigrant youth between the ages of 16 and 24 who need assistance. Youth Community Connections focuses on youths' recreational and social needs as well as promoting respect, addresses issues such as conflict and anger management, racism and sexism through mediation activities, education and community engagement activities. The program builds character and enhances the mentorship skills of the participants.

### MISSISSAUGA EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

6750 Winston Churchill Blvd., Unit 8A | Tel: 905-567-0482

### VAUGHAN CENTRE

3100 Rutherford Road, Suite 102 | Tel: 905-669-5627

### VODDEN CENTRE

227 Vodden Street East, Suite 3 | Tel: 905-459-6700

### WESTON EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

35 King Street, Suite 106 | Tel: 416-588-2240

# TRANSFORMING LIVES

## ONE PERSON AT A TIME

**One of the greatest barriers that immigrant women face in becoming successful in their resettlement is their ability to communicate at a high level of English and to understand and adapt to Canadian culture as it relates to social and workplace settings. While many are well educated and experienced professional women, they are overlooked because they are not able to articulate and clearly explain their past work experiences. The aim of the Women's Lifeskills Workshops is to help develop self-confidence and to act as a bridge to employment.**

When Di Liu first arrived in Ontario from China in early 2015, she was depressed because she did not understand English and what people were saying to her. She could not and did not want to go out. Di knew that learning English had to be a priority. Her English language skills were assessed by the YMCA and three schools were recommended. After interviewing teachers at all three schools, she chose COSTI because of the variety of classes that would be available to her as she began to advance in her English. Di was taking Level 6 English as a Second Language classes at the COSTI Corvetti Education Centre when one of her teachers suggested that she take the Women's Lifeskills Workshops.

*"Taking the Assertiveness & Self-Esteem Workshop made me more confident and not so nervous or afraid about life anymore. I was surrounded by immigrant women just like me who were fortunate to be mentored by someone like Cynthia Pichette, the Lifeskills and Pre-Employment Consultant for the program.*

*My confidence continued to grow with each workshop I attended. After taking the Business English, Canadian Workplace Culture, Interview Preparation and Résumé Writing Workshops, I finally have the courage to think about a career in customer service. I'm working with COSTI's Caledonia Employment Services to help me reach this goal. In the meantime, I am continuing to study English during the day and studying for the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) in the evening.*

*The Women's Lifeskills Workshops have changed me and given me the confidence and courage to change my future."*



**Self-confident.  
Busy taking classes day and evening. Connecting with employment.**

Di Liu (right) with Cynthia Pichette

## SERVICES FOR WOMEN

Operating with the shared objective of developing the full and equal participation of women in all facets of our communities, COSTI staff help women of diverse backgrounds and experiences in overcoming economic, health, legal and cultural barriers.

The goal of COSTI's programs and services for women is to address systemic and personal barriers that impact on immigrant women and provide a supportive environment that move women from a situation of dependency and isolation to a more empowered state. Immigrant women have access to workshops in topics relevant to their wellbeing: health, parenting, domestic violence, etc. COSTI's Trauma Group for Spanish-speaking Women offers individual and group counselling for Spanish-speaking women and their children experiencing trauma. The Lifeskills Counselling Program provides workshops combined with individual counselling for women to improve their self-confidence and increase their employment potential. Located in the Region of Peel, Pathways to Success provides low-income women opportunities to explore self-employment and stabilize their personal and family situation. Women in need of housing support services are provided childminding and travel supports in order to access services.

### WOMEN OF COURAGE PROGRAM

Provides women with a college certificate in office administration. Combined with group counselling, life skills workshops and job search activities, women are prepared for employment. Offered in partnership with Humber College.

## LOCATIONS

**BRAMPTON EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**  
10 Gillingham Drive | Tel: 905-459-8855

**CALEDONIA CENTRE**  
700 Caledonia Road | Tel: 416-789-7925

**CORVETTI EDUCATION CENTRE**  
760 College Street | Tel: 416-534-7400

**FAMILY AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**  
1700 Wilson Avenue, Suite 105 | Tel: 416-244-7714

**MISSISSAUGA EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**  
6750 Winston Churchill Blvd., Unit 8A | Tel: 905-567-0482



women sought help with improving or finding employment.



women registered for English classes and computer training courses at COSTI.



women came to the Newcomer Women's Fairs and received information and materials on health, skills training, employment, mental health and children's services.



women received counselling to cope with domestic abuse, attended support and trauma groups, or participated in the Lifeskills, Pathways to Success, or Women of Courage Programs.

# FAMILY AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

## FAMILY COUNSELLING

Individual, couples, and family counselling; groups for women victims of violence and for men who abuse their partners; psychiatric assessment and follow-up services for individuals of Hispanic and Italian background.

## PROBLEM GAMBLING SERVICE

Culturally and linguistically appropriate counselling for individuals experiencing gambling problems. Services are available to individuals and family members of Hispanic, Italian and Portuguese background.



# HOUSING SERVICES

## HOUSING HELP PROGRAM

Housing search assistance, eviction prevention, housing stabilization, crisis intervention, information, referral, education workshops for tenants and landlords, Rent Bank and Low-Income Energy Assistance Program and an Identification clinic. The Housing Program provides meaningful volunteer work experience, mentoring and workplace training to people who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless in an effort to increase their housing and employment opportunities.

### FAMILY AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES LOCATIONS

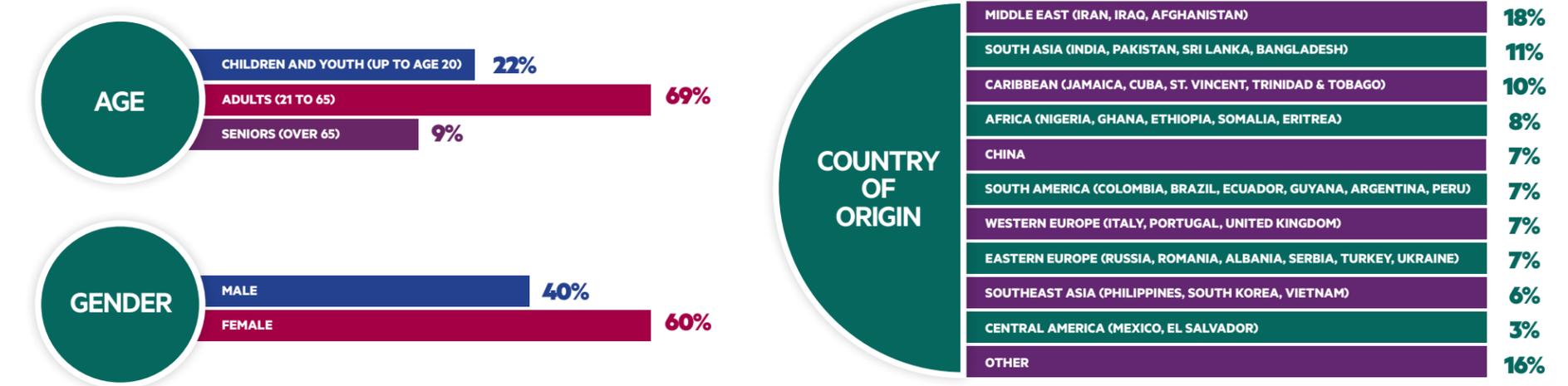
**FAMILY AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**  
1700 Wilson Avenue, Suite 105 | Tel: 416-244-7714

**VAUGHAN CENTRE**  
3100 Rutherford Road, Suite 102 | Tel: 905-669-5627

### HOUSING SERVICES LOCATION

**NORTH YORK CENTRE**  
1700 Wilson Avenue, Suite 114 | Tel: 416-244-0480

# WHO WE HELP 2014/2015



### EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

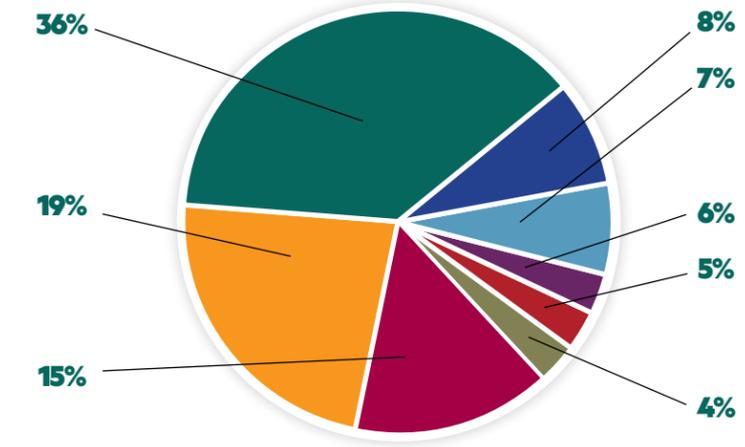
Career Assessment and Planning, Job Search and Placement, Job Maintenance Supports, Resource and Information, Online Services, Specialized Employment Training

### SETTLEMENT COUNSELLING, COMMUNITY PLANNING/ COORDINATION, PUBLIC EDUCATION, POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Canadian Immigrant Integration Project, Community Connections Program, Information and Referral, Interpretation, Documentation and Life Skills

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION AND SKILLS TRAINING

English Language Classes, Enhanced Language Training, Computer Courses



### HOUSING SUPPORTS

**FAMILY AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**  
Domestic Violence, Psychiatric Services, Problem Gambling, Counselling and Support Groups

### REFUGEE SHELTER SERVICES

**YOUTH & RECREATION**  
Crime Prevention & Substance Abuse Workshops, Leadership Development, Track & Field Program, Employment Supports

**Women's and Seniors' Services**  
Counselling, Support Groups, Drop-in Services

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A NOTE OF APPRECIATION AND THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING DONORS AND CONTRIBUTORS FOR THEIR SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT OF COSTI AND ITS SERVICES.

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- A Path to Home - YMCA
- Job Search Workshops Program
- Labour Market Access
- Language Training
- Orientation
- Orientation to Ontario
- Resettlement Assistance Program
- Welcoming Communities

#### Employment and Social Development Canada

- Canada Summer Jobs

### GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO

#### Ministry of the Attorney General

- Ontario Victim Services Secretariat

#### Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade

- Newcomer Settlement Program
- Orientation to Ontario
- Seniors Community Grant

#### Ministry of Community and Social Services

- Domestic Violence, Violence Against Women Program
- Ontario Disability Support Program - Employment Supports

#### Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

- Addictions Programs, Mental Health and Addictions Branch
- Long-Term Care Division – Elderly Persons' Centre
- Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network

#### Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport

- Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund

#### Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

- Canada-Ontario Job Grant
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### CITY OF TORONTO

- Community and Neighbourhood Shelter, Housing & Support Services
- Community Services Partnerships Program
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- Streets to Homes
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- Children's Aid Society Foundation
- RBC New Beginnings: National Diversity Fund for Children
- Community Foundation of Mississauga
- The BLG Foundation
- Toronto Foundation
- Weston - Seeding Stronger Communities

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

COSTI provides educational, social, and employment services to help all immigrants in the greater Toronto area attain self-sufficiency in Canadian society.

COSTI, founded by the Italian community to meet a shortage of services for immigrants in the post war era, is today a multicultural agency that works with all immigrant communities having a shortage of established services.



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