



County of Simcoe
Social Services
Children & Community
Services Department
1110 Highway 26,
Midhurst, Ontario L0L 1X0

Main Line (705) 722-3132
Toll Free 1-866-893-9300
Fax (705) 725-9539
simcoe.ca



MINUTES

MEETING DATE: June 6, 2012

MEETING TIME: 10:00 a.m., Barrie Public Library - Painswick Branch

ATTENDANCE: Brown, D. (Social Enterprise of Canada); Desbians, M. (College Boreal); Douglas, L. (recording secretary); Gouldson, C. (Nottawasaga Futures); Konrad, Y (Gibson Centre); Kouassi, C. (Conseil de la cooperation de l'Ontario); Lee, S. (LIP); Milne, R. (Town of New Tecumseh); Persaud, C. (Turning Points); Skybin, Y. (YMCA Newcomer Services); Vanderkruys, C. (Barrie Public Library); Zeng, M. (Barrie & Area Chinese Association)
REGRETS: Brislin, S. (Town of Innisfil); Crown, W. (Town of Midland); Fisher, M. (Community Connection)

SUBJECT: Welcoming Communities Sub-council Meeting

1) Welcome & Introductions

S. Lee welcomed members and thanked C. Vanderkruys for hosting today's meeting, and members introduced themselves. Members were encouraged to take a tour of this brand new facility.

2) Community Updates

M. Zeng, Barrie & Area Chinese Association

4 major events planned for this year:

- Camping trip - 100 participants
- Dragon boat race → partnered with Library
- BBQ on July 14th at Springwater Park;
- Chinese New Year's in February 2013. Funding assistance required for the New Year's event → professional entertainers hired.

S. Lee, LIP

- Robyn Wisken will replace Rosemary Holt during her parental leave, effective June 11.
- Update on the Education, Employment, Human Services sub-councils
- 2 guest speakers from the SCDSB spoke on their Equity/Inclusive Education Strategy and programs at the recent Education Sub-council meeting
- Question on hiring immigrants in Employer Focus Survey → many responses listed "unknown" as there was no experience doing so
- First meeting of the Business Development Sub-council will be held on June 27.
- Members were acknowledged for their energy on the sub-council.

3) Portal

An application for an electronic portal was submitted by LIP to OntarioImmigration.ca on May 25, 2012. A response will be expected in the next couple of weeks. The portal will be available in both official languages; however, the welcoming page will be available in multiple languages. Google Translate will not be used for the multiple languages translation.

S. Lee provided a sampling of the Brantford-Brant and Durham region online portals, with links through the Ontario Canada Guiding Newcomers to Ontario website. A short PowerPoint presentation was given on the background of the County's application for a portal.

Readiness was identified as one of the pillars shown in the PowerPoint presentation. A question arose whether this was indicative of the community's willingness to accept newcomers, the LIP initiative and its sustainability. S. Lee noted that in the portal application, the number of community stakeholders involved in the LIP initiative was well over 60. More direct involvement with the ethno-cultural groups is an identified objective as well. Groups will also be provided with information in capacity building, i.e. apply for funding, and LIP would be willing to provide direction in applying for funding.

4) Advertorial

LIP has contributed articles for the next issue of a 4-page Advertorial that will appear throughout Simcoe County's free local newspapers. Features will include a newcomer story of a Kenyan family now living in Collingwood; a food piece on the Explorers Café in Midland; a statistical profile of the County; a look at one of Barrie's cultural associations, The Bayanihan Club; a cultural competency piece on the Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care; and an interview with LIP.

5) Immigrant Directory Update

An update on the working group for the development of the Immigrant Directory was provided. The working group has met three times so far, and a draft of the *living* section is near completion. The next section to be developed will be the *working* section, and the Employment Sub-council will assist in this area.

The Simcoe County Youth Directory was distributed as an example of a directory previously produced by the Simcoe Muskoka Workforce Development Board.

A draft of the directory is expected by November. No decision has yet been made on the 5 languages that the directory will be translated, and consultation within the community will be necessary.

6) Priority Areas

a. Community Hub Model

A presentation by S. Lee on libraries as community hub models was made to the libraries, including Barrie and Orillia, at their last quarterly meeting. No official response has been received to date but C. Vanderkruys indicated there appeared to be support from the libraries on this concept; and funding would need to be explored. Prior to CIC cuts, S. Lee noted that CIC appeared supportive of hubs in libraries as this was discussed at the Provincial meeting. Other funding sources should be explored as well. Presentations will be made to municipalities in the fall, and there may be interest at the municipal-level in supporting libraries as a hub or in other areas such as cultural events.

It was suggested that volunteers, including students, could be used to help deliver some of these programs, and collaboration between groups would be beneficial.

b. Public Education Strategy / Framework

Members agreed that this identified area of priority be undertaken by the whole group as opposed to a working group. Discussion ensued as follows:

- A presentation to the Sub-council on SCDSB Equity/Inclusive Education Strategy by the Superintendent Paula Murphy, as school boards present as one facet of public education strategy.
- Cultural competency training
- Volunteerism
 - Recruitment of volunteers, i.e. hospital has well-established system of volunteers – build buddy system → Clients have fears of filling out forms, accessing services on own, medical appointments – language barriers
 - Educate organizations on benefits of placing newcomer in volunteer positions
 - Libraries house many local volunteer positions – could employment work with libraries on this?
 - Volunteerism helps build English communication skills
- Get out “good news” stories on immigrants in the community
- Changing attitudes → i.e. seniors dependent on services that may be staffed by immigrants – acceptance on individual level but not on group level.
- Newcomers must take responsibility as well to educate the community and themselves → two way street
- Break down barriers → through cross-cultural events, activities, sports, food
- Share each other’s cultural experiences
- Confidence piece
 - confident in own country but feel insecure here
 - involvement in social community activities is a confidence builder
- Sports
 - Recruit newcomers into sports programs or events, i.e. Toronto hockey program – need bodies to keep teams going
 - YMCA has basketball program– provides subsidies – offers free classes to groups
 - Encouraging sports for mental health
- Arts and cultural events
 - more cost-effective than sports
 - Funding may be available through Arts Council
 - Ethno-cultural expression, i.e. art show - may be good for large event.
- Educate the community on the contributions of newcomers in the community or employment
 - Economically beneficial to community – business; recreational activities – ski, golf, cottage rentals, camps
- Community Champions
 - Approach Service Clubs – for public awareness
 - Service clubs good champions – have well-established reputations in community.
 - different Community Champions from different disciplines
 - need a champion that people want to mirror.

- Identify less accessible areas within the community – approach them slowly on a base level – help them understand the LIP initiative – use specific examples instead of broad base for immediate impact.

S. Lee will put these ideas into a framework and prepare a draft for discussion at the next meeting.

7) Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on July 5, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m., at the County of Simcoe Administration Centre.