



**CCS**  
Catholic Crosscultural Services

# ANNUAL REPORT

REIMAGINING POSSIBILITIES



**2021**



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# Our Vision

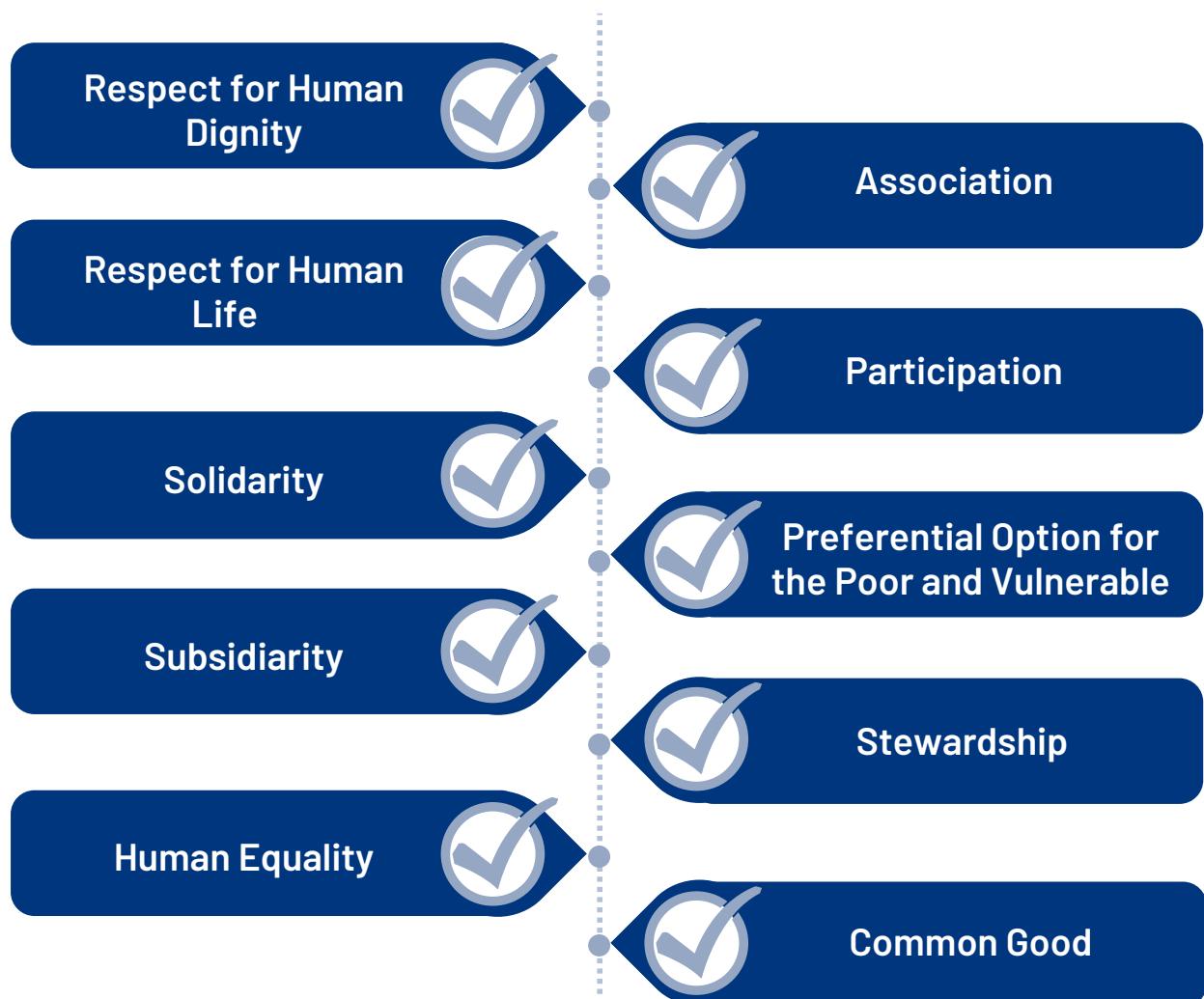
Create a Canada where newcomers thrive and feel at home

# Our Mission

CCS provides services that assist in the settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees

# Our Guiding Principles

CCS programs and services are guided by the teachings of Catholic Social Justice



# REIMAGINING POSSIBILITIES

Catholic Crosscultural Services (CCS) has been welcoming and assisting newcomers from many corners of the world to settle and thrive for 68 years. At the beginning of the pandemic, like many others, we were faced with unprecedented challenges that resulted in innovation, process changes, and a bounty of generosity from staff to funders and everyone in between. Drawing from the lessons of the prior year, in 2021-2022 fiscal year, we continued to re-imagine possibilities in all areas of our operation. The constant adaptations that we required to stay afloat last year also allowed us the opportunity to step back and focus on the bigger picture resulting in many new initiatives internally and externally.

The past year also pointed at many social issues that disproportionately impact newcomer populations including mental health concerns, gender-based violence, job insecurity, housing, and many more. Recent research data has shown that refugees face significant barriers to accessing services and supports that foster settlement and integration outcomes, and that the pandemic magnified these existing inequalities. These realities kept us focused, informed, and allowed us to be intentional in how we redesign thinking to solve issues and make sustainable community initiatives for newcomer success. This year, we are proud to say that CCS provided nearly 45,000 services to newcomers from all walks of life. Among these were women, seniors, and youth in precarious life situations needing support quickly and confidentially.

The well-being of newcomers has a powerful impact on our current and future success as a nation. CCS played a vital role in building healthy communities by providing critical services that contributed to newcomers settling and thriving in Canada. For example, we have supported youth throughout our communities through projects, workshops, and initiatives aimed at promoting mental health and wellness, resilience, community, and skill-building. Additionally, CCS has been privileged to partner with many local organizations this year to meet the changing needs of newcomers. We were able to help newcomers find jobs through the new CCS Job Connect pilot project, get vaccinated via numerous community pop-up vaccine clinics, obtain access to internet and devices at a low to no cost, access settlement resources online with ease, advocate for affordable housing through the "Gathering Place" initiative, and much more. Through our many collaborations and community connections, we have helped people in ways that our services could not have done alone. We are also proud and grateful to attest to the rest of the world that partnership and collaboration is at the heart of reimagining new possibilities for newcomer populations.

Knowledge sharing is an inherent part of CCS, and we have aspired to be a leading voice in newcomer settlement conversations. Through collaboration, partnership, and being part of networking tables, conferences and more, CCS shared knowledge from the perspective of experienced leaders in order to convey best practices, communicate practical knowledge, and the sharing of hard-earned experiences, success stories and social responsibility.

Common topics of discussion included anti-oppressive practices and digital service delivery/digital literacy. We worked very closely with our funders at both local and national tables representing the communities we serve in addressing some of the newly emerged challenges and opportunities. For example, we are grateful to run a pilot on community-based governance with the Service Delivery Improvement (SDI) project fund from IRCC at our Scarborough neighborhoods. We are grateful to be selected for these opportunities and to contribute to the future possibilities for newcomer service delivery.



# REIMAGINING POSSIBILITIES

Every year comes with unique challenges in parts of the world where people are disproportionately impacted; this year was no exception. After learning about the tumultuous political situation in Afghanistan, CCS jumped into action to support Afghan newcomers and refugees during these difficult times. CCS ensured that staff were adequately trained to assist Afghan newcomers and hired five Dar/Farsi/Pashto speaking settlement workers to support the Polycultural Centre in their Resettlement Assistance Program. As well, we were one of the initial supporting organizations for Lifeline Afghanistan, an Afghan refugee support initiative organized by Toronto Metropolitan University and the Afghan task force organized by the city of Toronto. Our Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP) responded to hundreds of inquiries weekly to aid Afghan refugees, and to provide the information wanted by the public about how to help with the Afghan humanitarian and refugees' crisis. Special training sessions were also conducted to inform organizations on the Afghan Family Unification Immigration Program.

To truly be able to reimagine possibilities for newcomer populations, change must start from within. CCS has taken steps to increase organizational efficiency and provide professional development opportunities for employees. We aim to better support our employees and systems to in turn benefit our clients. We have placed an emphasis on digital transformation by hiring a consultant to conduct an organizational assessment. Recommendations were provided to help CCS adapt to the changing needs of the newcomer population in this digital era. This was done to reevaluate our organizational capacity to grow and support our clientele, and adjustments were made to our onboarding and HR system to increase functionality for staff. We have invested in training and other initiatives in advancing the goal of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) internally and for our communities.

CCS held all-staff meetings once a month for the professional development of all staff, using both in-house programs and external facilitators for the training. Examples of past external facilitators were Indigenous Leader Bear Standing Tall on how to ally with Indigenous people, and a facilitated training created by Ontario Human Rights Commission on racism, racial discrimination, and human rights. Additionally, Toronto East Quadrant Local Immigration Partnership (TEQ LIP) co-hosted workshop series for frontline workers and managers on various topics, such as creating a welcoming workplace for LGBTQ2+ staff and clients, and building agency capacity related to supporting newcomers with disabilities. We intend to demonstrate anti-oppressive practices from within to ensure our staff and clients are treated with respect and dignity.

Newcomers have made many contributions to the Canadian economy and culture. The successful settlement and integration of newcomers would not be possible without the support, dedication, and

partnerships from all levels of government, community, CCS employees, our Board, dedicated volunteers, and private and public sponsorships. We thank each of our staff, board members, partners, funders, and volunteers for contributing to an incredible year of innovation and success in serving the newcomer community. It is a wonderful privilege to lead with you in 'reimagining possibilities' for successful settlement outcomes for newcomers and vibrant workplaces for our teams. Our greatness depends on our ability to learn from one another and collaboratively build stronger, more diverse, and vibrant communities for newcomers. Thank you and congratulations!



Agnes Thomas  
Executive Director

Angela Gauthier  
Board Chair

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND FUNDERS

## Executive

Angela Gauthier.....	President
Sean M. Kennedy.....	Vice President
Stephen Pereira .....	Treasurer
Antony Vadakkanchery.....	Secretary

## Members at Large

Richard C. Fernandes	Marc G. Doucet
Darren Dias	Leah Barrett
Carmen Diston	Jesus Bravo
Bob Hall	Agnes Thomas (Executive Director)
Prevain Devendran	

## Funders

CCS would like to thank our funders for their ongoing and generous support:

- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)
- Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS)
- Catholic Charities
- City of Toronto
- Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)
- United Way Greater Toronto (Federal Call/ Allocation)
- Canadian Women's Foundation
- Catherine Donnelly Foundation
- Toronto Art Council

# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

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In 2020, the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted how resilient, adaptable, and innovative our staff and clientele are. As 2021-2022 went by, CCS was given the opportunity to be less reactionary and more focused on exploring possibilities for growth and innovation to improve our services. Despite the tough times, CCS was dedicated to connecting and engaging with newcomers. CCS collected quality data and feedback from all stakeholders and determined that accessing our services in-person was still challenging for many newcomers.

We focused on improving the services through online platforms, which further minimized barriers. Though online service delivery for newcomer populations can minimize barriers, without digital literacy skills access to technology and online services can be difficult. To combat this, we hired Virtual Service and Access Navigator who provided one-on-one coaching sessions for clients to increase their ability to build and improve their digital literacy skills needed to access online services and the capacity to participate in daily life activities. The Toronto Public Library's support enabled us to equip many clients with laptops and internet connectivity kits. Renewed Computer Technology also offered free and/or low-cost computers to the clients. CCS' collaborations with these services based in our community made the impossible possible for newcomer populations.

Improving the quality of our support for clients is an important ongoing task. Through 2021-2022, CCS has built new community connections to expand our service capabilities. With the help of Mennonite Newlife Centres' LIGHTS program, we were able to provide better support for clients facing learning-related challenges due to health/mental health, trauma, and learning disabilities. Strides Toronto and Autism collaborated with us to host special events aimed to support and educate newcomer families about social-emotional development and family unification. With Polycultural Immigration & Community Services, we engaged newcomer Afghan women in a safe online environment where they could access wellness-related support and information.

CCS has a responsibility to help newcomers broaden their understanding of diversity, recognize and value differences and learn to interact with those from different backgrounds in a safe and meaningful manner. We consider this to be an essential component of settlement and integration into the multicultural society of Canada. Our Diversity and Inclusion Worker offered cross-cultural learning sessions and engaged newcomers in the topics of diversity and inclusion. These sessions enabled our clients to interact with people from different cultures with respect, building social cohesion and social participation.

Within the Refuge Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP), we continued to innovate and implement new activities and enhance existing ones by envisioning the needs and opportunities that arose during COVID-19 pandemic. We assisted IRCC to develop a digital intake system where refugee sponsorship applications can be submitted through. This is expected to change the way sponsorship applications are submitted to IRCC and make the process more efficient. With new funding, we were also able to implement three projects which are aimed at revising and creating new training curriculum; enhancing the organizational capacity of our clients, and improving the connection between the sponsorship community and settlement service providing agencies.

Moving forward, we will continue to refine all the new initiatives that started this year. The needs of newcomers are constantly changing. As a result, we aim to research these needs, get educated and enlightened by newly discovered needs, challenges and opportunities, and ultimately reimagine the possible impacts CCS can make for newcomers and other clients.

Lisa Loong  
Director of Programs and Services

Yosief Araya  
Director of Refugee Sponsorship Training Program

# SETTLEMENT SUPPORT

## Key Facts



**33,136**  
Clients  
Served



**44,527**  
Services  
Provided



**2,257**  
Group  
Sessions



**212**

**Volunteers &  
Student  
Placements**



**8,674.4**  
Volunteer &  
Student  
Placement  
Hours

CCS delivers programs and services for newcomers, immigrants, and refugees in several strategic focus areas: settlement, literacy, employment, targeted services for youth, women, refugees, and community development.

Let's review the year's programming highlights through this lens.



NEWCOMER SETTLEMENT SERVICES



LEARN ENGLISH



SUPPORT FOR WOMEN & YOUTH



REFUGEE & OTHER SERVICES

# CCS IMPACT - CLIENT, COMMUNITY

In another year of virtual delivery, the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program continued to provide language training and skills development workshops to its clients. Many newcomers faced barriers to accessing equipment, and technology. Thanks to IRCC and United Way funding, CCS was able to acquire 30 Chromebooks for a device lending library. The devices were instrumental in enabling students to access classes, allowing them the use of essential tools and resources such as Zoom, Google Classroom, teaching software, and more.

Below is a testimonial from Mohammad, who came to Canada in 2016 with limited English abilities. He enjoyed attending our LINC program for a few years until he became a Canadian citizen.

"Hello dear friends.

I have been in Canada for five years now. The wonderful experiences that I have had here in Canada are the best experiences ever. I have never lived in such a country that respects humanity as Canada does. When it comes to school, I couldn't believe, as a 74-year-old man that I would be able to memorize new vocabularies and made good friends just like a 10-year-old young boy.



The experience that I had in school was an amazing experience. I enjoyed learning and I benefitted a lot. In fact, all the credit goes to the management and teachers of CCS. Those teachers were caring, passionate and patient. These are some of the things that made me love everything about CCS. Through my studying journey I have realized the true value of humanity as our teachers taught us. I really appreciate their efforts. I can't say enough good words about the school and the studying which I loved so much.

I hope all of my teachers and friends are doing well and staying safe. I hope one day that I can come and visit."

-Mohamad Jabr, Client

## CCS Recognizes Mystery Donor's Contribution

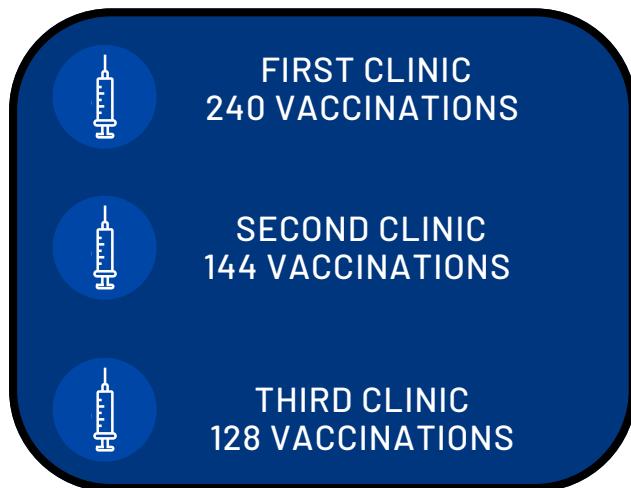
What appeared to be an ordinary day in March 2022 for CCS staff was anything but! CCS staff were impacted in an endearing way when LINC Program Manager Klara Frasher and Administrative Assistant Ewa Stankiewicz were approached by a woman who seemed to be in a hurry.

The woman exclaimed, "I am looking for a place to make a donation. A wish has come true, and you were the first people I saw". Handing a fifty dollar bill, the woman left as quickly as she arrived! The donor's contribution allowed 300 eggs to support the growing needs of a nearby food bank.

CCS honours the donation, generosity, and humility of the mystery donor.

# CCS IMPACT - CLIENT, COMMUNITY CONT.

## CCS Hosts Three Vaccination Clinics



Through partnering with the Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities (SCHC) and the Region of Peel, CCS hosted three vaccination clinics for members of the community. These clinics benefitted newcomers as well as vulnerable and marginalized residents.

Thanks to our CCS staff and student volunteers, we were even able to administer first time vaccinations. In addition, two newly-arrived Afghan families were provided vaccinations!

"A large number of people from our community benefitted from it. In this unprecedented time, when more and more individuals need to get vaccinated, this nice effort of CCS turned out to be very successful and, as always, I found the staff very cooperative and helpful."

-Client



"Everyone was fantastic and contributed to a great environment. Many clients were grateful for the safe space. It made a difference to those who decided to get vaccinated."

-Region of Peel Representative

## QE Home Donates Twenty-Five Quilts

Thanks to QE Homes for not only donating 25 quilts, but supporting temporary workers from El Salvador!

In December 2021, CCS received a request from the Salvadorian Consulate in Toronto to provide incoming temporary workers with sufficient winter clothing, including coats and boots. We are proud to say forty-five workers were supported through donations from CCS staff and community partners!



## **NEWCOMER SETTLEMENT SERVICES**

**We are proud of our work in welcoming newcomers and refugees to Canada and helping them settle, integrate and thrive in their new home. Here are highlights from our programs and initiatives.**

### **ONSITE**

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The Onsite Program is part of a welcoming community at CCS. The program is based at one of our Scarborough locations and offers settlement support programs based on client needs and research findings, initiating unique support groups for the most vulnerable community members.

In 2021-2022, we instituted the Arab LGBTQ+ group to offer a safe, virtual space for members to support each other and connect using community resources. Another new group for Tamil women was established. This group focused on supporting and educating women on topics such as dealing with challenges in their lives and effectively advocating for themselves. Clients were also taught self-care techniques and discussed social issues around equity, access, and representation.

### **SETTLEMENT INTEGRATION PLACE (SIP)**

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Settlement Integration Place (SIP) aims to facilitate the successful integration of newcomers by aiding clients in becoming self-sufficient. The program is a unique hybrid model combining individual case-based settlement counselling with a self-serve, self-directed resource center in Scarborough Village. Information on cultural, social, community, and government policies and processes is provided and group information sessions facilitate opportunities for newcomers to connect with other newcomers.

# SETTLEMENT INTEGRATION PLACE (SIP) CONT.

## Over the past year, SIP:

Received donations of masks and sanitizers, diapers, baby formula, tampons, and facial cleansers from the Collective Action and Response for Everyone in Scarborough (CARES).

Facilitated the delivery of furniture from seniors' homes to clients at no cost.

Facilitated two pop-up vaccine clinics in June & July 2021 with 384 vaccinations administered!



School supply donation for families.

## Library Settlement Program

The Library Settlement Program (LSP) is a three way partnership between IRCC, the settlement sector and libraries, featuring a unique service delivery model that aims to encourage newcomer families, and individuals of all ages to engage with their local library and benefit from the programs and services. Individual case-based settlement counselling and group information sessions, including referrals, are also provided.

In partnership with the Toronto Public Library, 75 hotspots were assigned to newcomers who did not have home internet access. Through this initiative, newcomers gained access to internet at home and connected to online programs and services.

## FAMILIES IN SETTLEMENT TOGETHER

Families in Settlement Together works in partnership with East Scarborough Boys and Girls Club to, in a holistic approach, provide settlement support to families as a unit by providing specialized needs assessment for families and families with special needs children. We offer one-on-one support and group activities, such as an interactive web page for families to connect with the community virtually, Meet and Greets, Parenting Skills Building, Circle of Friends and interest classes for children based on their age group.

 <p><b>180+ Clients</b> Served by CCS Families in Settlement Together program</p>	 <p><b>159 Group Sessions</b> Delivered for <b>1800 Newcomer Participants</b></p>
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Topics were relevant to assisting families to become familiar with the different programs and services available for children and children with special needs, enhancing social connection, building and fostering learning and developmental needs at different stages. Furthermore, we have extended our group sessions to provide children with the opportunity to practice their speech through support from a speech therapist and behavior management from professional consultants.

# ORIENTATION PEEL

Our Settlement Services continued to support newcomers to integrate into life in Canada through client-centered and strength-based settlement approaches. Launching our Virtual Services and Access program in October 2021 connected newcomers to virtual services platforms, supported digital literacy access, and linked clients to appropriate resources. Through these service initiatives, newcomer clients were able to access various online settlement supports. For example, 110 newcomer clients participated in five online citizenship preparation sessions. Additionally, a Citizenship Oath ceremony was hosted at our Mississauga location, attended by both clients and settlement workers.



"I really enjoyed the online citizenship test preparation classes. It was well planned and easy to understand. Thank you Maria & Daljeet. It was fun but a lot of attention needed to be paid. I enjoyed the quizzes because they were lot of fun and this really made me search for the answer and in return, I retained more information. Thanks to your mentorship I am now more confident about my preparations for the citizenship test. I learned quite a bit in this course, I also enjoyed myself."

- Client

Thanks to our partner Peel Regional Police for delivering Christmas gifts for 58 children at our Brampton location. Clients and children were very excited to receive these gifts. For some these were the only gifts they received. We sincerely thank donors, Peel Regional Police, and the Toys For Tots team for helping us to bring good cheer and fun to newcomer families. Enormous thanks to Constable Jana Marchese for her support!



## Peel Diversity and Inclusion

Newcomer clients engaged in cross-cultural sessions with interactive activities to hone their knowledge of diversity and inclusion. Sessions taught about how to reduce biases and stereotypes while envisioning a just world free of barriers and discrimination. Clients were acquainted with ways to address differences in values, attitudes, and behaviors of individuals from different backgrounds. They also learned how to support diversity, cultivate an inclusive environment, and promote equality for all. They became familiar with avenues available for them to pursue in case of a rights violation.

# NEWCOMER SETTLEMENT PROGRAM (NSP)

The Newcomer Settlement Program (NSP) helps newcomers fully engage in all aspects of Canadian social, economic, and cultural life. Under the NSP program, we ran a campaign to collect winter clothing and boots for a new group of temporal workers from El Salvador. They all received jackets and new boots donated from a mystery donor.



Newcomers trying on jackets donated by a mystery donor.

## LGBTQ+

Newcomers to Canada experience many settlement issues, and being part of the LGBTQ+ community can add an additional layer of challenges in the settlement process. CCS provides newcomer individuals in the LGBTQ+ community a safe place for discussions where they may share concerns, ask questions, and be connected to settlement resources and services. Settlement workers assist clients to develop plans for the next steps in their transition to life in Canada and what they would need to be aware of to make their settlement process easier.

In June 2021, in recognition of Pride Month in Canada, the program created and shared short informative videos on CCS's social media platforms. The videos aimed to share information and increase awareness relating to LGBTQ+ communities and the challenges that they face. On Pride Day, CCS held a virtual information event to connect and educate about the LGBTQ+ newcomer community. At this event, there were opportunities to discuss how we can work together to support each other.

## FINANCIAL LITERACY

Through the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program, CCS hosted free tax clinics where volunteers filed tax returns for those eligible. In 2021, the program was delivered either by videoconference or by phone. Despite challenges that arose from using these new methods, volunteers were able to help more than 350 clients file their income taxes!

In November, CCS celebrated Financial Literacy Month and organized an online Financial Literacy Fair for clients and community members. Individuals and newcomers were educated on how to make more sound financial decisions, with speakers from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), Service Canada, Credit Canada, and The Ombudsman for Banking Services and Investments. This two-day virtual event had over 75 participants.

# NEWCOMER MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM



No matter the reason for one's migration, transition to a new country can be extremely overwhelming. Pre-migration and post-migration stress can result in a myriad of mental health challenges which, if not addressed, can deeply impact settlement and integration outcomes for individuals and families. The CCS Newcomer Mental Health and Wellness program applies a strength-based, trauma-informed, and client-centered approach to assist clients with mental health concerns. By using an anti-oppressive, culturally competent, linguistically accessible, and anti-racism framework, CCS curates mental

health services directly to the needs of the newcomer population. Clients receive supportive counselling and strategies to deal with stress, depression and anxiety to cope with adversity. In addition, clients requiring more specialized mental health support are connected to community Mental Health and Wellness programs. The CCS Mental Health and Wellness team has been hard at work in building and expanding services.

Our new Women Wellness program was established, providing an opportunity for newcomer women to participate in wellness activities in a women-only social setting. Through this program, newcomer women were able to build a social support network and became more aware of resources to integrate themselves within Canadian society.

CCS has truly reimagined possibilities this year with our collaboration with the OCASI Mental Health Promotion Project. The project encompasses goals to enhance agency/staff mental health, client mental health, organizational capacity, and service coordination with other community based agencies. We aim to reduce stigma around mental health by implementing activities and practices to foster mental health within our agency and our clientele.

CCS held a 'Mental Health Fair' for clients and staff in February 2022. This fair was a success! Many clients and staff received information and knowledge on various topics on mental health and wellness.





We are proud of our work in welcoming newcomers and refugees to Canada and helping them settle, integrate, and thrive in their new home. Here are highlights from our programs and initiatives.

## LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION FOR NEWCOMERS TO CANADA (LINC)

The LINC program helps newcomers learn English, assisting them in the settlement process by reducing the language barrier. Part-time and full-time classes are available at both the CCS Toronto and Peel locations free of charge for language levels from beginner to advanced for permanent residents, convention refugees, and live-in caregivers.

"The teacher usually gives us a lot of encouragement when we make a little progress every time. The teacher tries her best to improve new teaching skills and knowledge in order to teach us better so I can do the homework the teacher left so as to review the lessons she has taught. Except regular classes, the LINC School also provides some effective and practical English programs for us to practice and improve our English speaking and listening skills. Now I can make small talk with others in English. I can also express my feelings and ideas to people. I really feel happy and lucky to study in such a good LINC school and meet such a dedicated teacher."

- Client

## LINC Peel

LINC Peel held daily programming to improve and develop newcomers' language skills as part of their full integration in their community and in Canadian society. There were 54+ sessions and events LINC Peel facilitated to students through our community partners, such as: Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), Credit Valley Conservation Authority, Region of Peel, ACHEV, Peel CMHA, Trillium Toastmasters, and The Opening Door Project.

We hired four Service Canada Summer students who played a significant part in enhancing software pertaining to technology, educational digital software, and tools for delivery of webinars, and virtual events for classes. They created promotional videos and materials for the Care for Newcomer Children program. A repository of digital presentations and resources aimed for the Family Literacy Program and LINC program were created for LINC teachers to use in their class delivery. These were incorporated and enhanced into 4 Projects, with delivery of 8 presentations for all Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) levels (Literacy – CLB 8) to classrooms on a variety of topics.



Learning Activity Resources Kits  
Pick-up Day, August 2021

## CCS Device Lending Library



Limited or no access to devices or to reliable internet posed a significant barrier to participation in our LINC program. At CCS, we believe everyone should be able to access the resources we provide. With funding from IRCC and United Way, CCS was able to acquire Chromebooks for a device lending library. This initiative helped reduce the barriers faced by students who wanted

to access LINC classes. All 30 Chromebooks are constantly in use. In addition, the team worked with Renewed Computer Technology (RCT) and through referrals to Ontario Works to help students obtain low-cost and free computers for students where possible. We are grateful to all staff and funders who made this initiative possible, for reimagining possibilities for our clients.

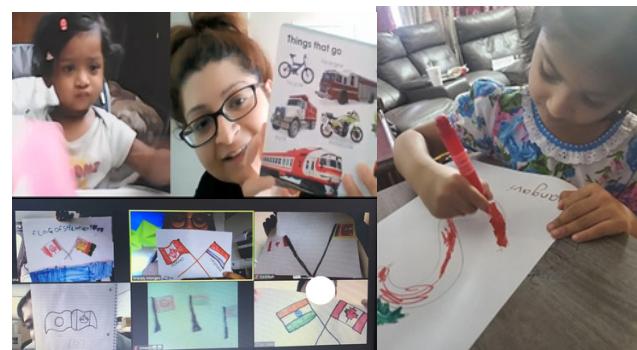
We offered lower level "Canadian Workplace" employment focused conversation classes during the winter, summer and March breaks. There were 14 sessions with 88 participants.

The childcare staff became better acquainted with the parents this past year and were able to offer support to their needs. They prepared materials to be delivered to their homes, so that they could help with their children's learning.

# LINC Toronto

The pandemic created some changes in our LINC Care for Newcomer Children (CNC) Toronto program. We reimagined possibilities and staff worked with families as a unit, rather than just with the children as was customary with in person services. In total, 356 children were served by the CNC program.

The Family Literacy Program workers provided one-on-one support services to students, on accessing and using the learning management system "Avenue". Workers also held reading sessions in LINC and CNC. We facilitated 600 group sessions including the LINC reading classes with 1647 participants and 171 one-on-one sessions with 454 participants. The 2021 online summer activities/sessions for children of ages 5 to 12 ran from July to August. The programming focused on distinct themes which included socialization, multiculturalism, mental health & wellbeing, digital technology, careers, and nature/wildlife week. There were 39 children who participated in the program.



Learning through play



Summer Enrichment  
Staff 2021

As the 2021-2022 fiscal year was the second year of pandemic-related virtual delivery, language training and skills development staff have become more comfortable providing services and teaching English online. A new IRCC funded Pilot project "Computer & Online Technology Skills Enhancement" was started, with sessions for students with little to no technology skills. The pilot classes were tailored to target learner individual needs, delivering topics at different levels of difficulty. It also ensures a number of online tools have built-in features to support differentiated instruction for a variety of learners.



Playing ball at Thompson Park, Summer Enrichment



LINC Instructors Karen and Mohammad virtual teaching

# EMPLOYMENT ACCESS PROGRAM (EAP)

Employment Access Program (EAP) provides employable skills and career training for newcomers in the Peel and Toronto regions. In response to the emerging needs of clients two new services offerings were implemented this year:

- Employment Access Newcomers Women's Project (Brampton)
- Employment Support for Newcomers (Toronto)



## Employment Resources Day

The annual Employment Resource Day was hosted on March 10, 2022. The event provided a forum for 80+ newcomers to connect with industry leaders on emerging trends such as employment, education and skills upgrading, networking, and volunteering to support career progression.



"CCS has made my life easy and helped in handling the initial stressful days easier in Canada. My first experience with CCS was nice and comfortable. The professionals in CCS are friendly, approachable, and knowledgeable. I am absolutely satisfied with all the service received from CCS.

I am expressing my sincere thanks and gratefulness for helping me, empowering me, and equipping me to achieve and be successful in these interviews. Ms. Anita, you have motivated me, trained me, and made it possible with your sincere and dedicated professional qualities. Please convey my sincere thanks to the Catholic Cross-cultural Service team members, especially Ms. Nirupa Rasiah for all her support and quality work. BIG THANK YOU AGAIN!"

-Tono Fernandez, Client



## **SUPPORT FOR WOMEN & YOUTH**

We are proud of our work in welcoming newcomers and refugees to Canada and helping them settle, integrate and thrive in their new home. Here are highlights from our programs and initiatives.

# **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (VAW) and TRANSITIONAL HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAM (THSP)**

CCS' Women's Support Services and Transitional Housing Support Program assists newcomer women experiencing domestic violence with in person crisis/support counselling, immediate shelter, affordable housing, legal support, and emotional support. Clients are provided with short-term and long-term goal focused-counselling assisting women to meet their needs and gain more in-depth understanding of woman abuse and cope with the effect of violence. This pandemic had severe socioeconomic impact, significant uncertainty and social restrictions that led to increased levels of stress for many immigrant women and refugees.

The VAW and THSP helped 865 women and children experiencing domestic violence and assisted 106 Families in applying for subsidized housing. In addition, 43 support group sessions were held on Zoom for 347 participants. We assisted 135 clients to apply for Legal Aid assistance. The VAW and THSP team work in collaboration with our internal Mental Health Worker, women received immediate intervention with their stresses and mental heal issues, 83 women were referred to this beneficial program.

# A CLIENT'S STORY

"This email is nothing but let you know that is unbelievable the amount of hope that you all are giving to me. I feel a different woman...I feel heard and is a feeling I didn't have in such a long time.

I was able to connect with Cheryl (housing) and she was so so sweet and nice to me, you as well.

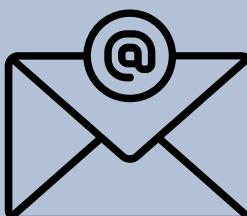
So this is what happened: I was sitting talking to my son about all this, and he broke down to cry and hugged me so hard. These are his words:

"Mom, I'm so glad you finally realized this is NOT ok. Sometimes I cry to my friends telling them how impotent I feel because I see you suffering and nothing I could do ...because I know he is your husband but the amount of stress we all have with him is out of this world. I hate that he won't allow you to watch certain things on TV, or let you do things you like, or making you serve him food every single day (my husband love to be served) or making you make him tea (this is everyday at certain time) and if you don't he get upset. Mom, I had been with this stress for so long, watching you suffer so much...he hugged me and cried and he say he feels there's hope for us to be a happy normal family again, before we moved in here."

So...yes. The fact that I could reach for help and I was heard makes so much difference.

This is an appreciation email. For that, for giving me hope and for making me see I'm worthy and deserve to be happy and not mistreat like this. I promise you all when I'm back on my feet, I will use my paralegal knowledge to help some other woman, I will help so much. Because you guys are giving me my life back. I started working out again today, eating healthier again, I feel less depressed... because I know I'm gonna be ok. I wakeup with hope. Very different from past weeks when I was so suicidal. Now I see everything different.

Thank you!"



- F, Client

# SETTLEMENT AND EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP OF TORONTO (SEPT)



Team Building Event, 2021

Starting a new school can be very daunting experience for a student, let alone a new school in a new country. Newcomer students and their families experience challenges in adapting due to differences in education systems, low language competency, lack of information, gaps in formal education, pre-migration trauma, cultural barriers, and much more. In partnership with Toronto school boards, SWIS program is accessible (in-person and through virtual platforms) to students, families, and school staff in 143 Toronto District School Board (TDSB) schools and 50 Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) schools in Scarborough. In summer, while schools are closed, SWIS provides settlement support to families in partnership with Toronto Public Library (TPL) at select library locations and summer schools.

In October 2021, CCS SWIS presented on mental health and settlement topics at the TDSB Parents and Caregivers as Partners Conference. With Toronto Public Health restrictions relaxed in summer 2022 and groups of children and youth eager for outdoor activities, SWIS Program responded with offering some hybrid activities.



Youth Volunteer Fair, 2021

Our NOW Program held one collective in-person training event, bringing 40 youth leaders from all 4 hub schools to Thomson Park, for a workshops dedicated to inclusion and diversity as well as team building. Holiday Helpers sourced gifts from donors based on a personalized family wish list while SWIS contacted and registered 39 families to receive the gifts and make the holidays extra special.



TCDSB Newcomer Day 2021



Youth In-Person Camp Day, 2021

# SETTLEMENT AND EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP OF TORONTO (SEPT) CONT.

Recognizing the need for increased mental health support in students, SWIS has collaborated with CCS Mental Health and Wellness Program to provide ongoing psychoeducation sessions tailored to the unique needs of children, youth and parents. We offered a session on "Building Blocks for Fostering Mental Health & Wellbeing in Young People" at the Annual TDSB Parents and Caregivers as Partners Conference. In partnership with Toronto Arts and Canada Arts Councils, CCS SWIS supported a Digital Resilience project designed to bring together Indigenous youth and newcomer youth to share experiences and find commonalities with each other, create media, arts and amplify their voices through social media expression. The project ended in November 2021 with a virtual screening event to showcase the youth's learning and artistic expressions.

## NEWCOMER WOMENS PROJECT

Launched in July 2021, the Newcomer Women Project supported 62 newcomer women, with little to no Canadian work experience, navigate the Canadian labour market. A series of accelerated soft skills training in a virtual environment, augmented by assignments, practical learning through job shadowing, hands-on work placement, and individualized coaching provided newcomer women clients with the necessary skills to enter the labour market and build thriving careers. Thus providing new opportunities and possibilities for newcomers women to thrive in Canada.



"As I complete my soft skills training workshop at CCS, I feel confident in my abilities to perform in interviews or even talk about it in general to my friends. My workshop instructor was Ms. Bukola Otolana who is a wonderful trainer. She brought to the workshop her own experience of soft skills and had lots of experiences in term of what is required in the Canadian work place. I loved the fact that she involved us in the workshop by doing role plays with us and asking our experience which was unique to us.

I was able to meet lots of women from different countries and backgrounds who came with different experiences which helped me open my mind to looking at the bigger picture... It was challenging and new to me and pushed me out of my comfort zone... I thank Ms. Otolana for giving me the opportunity to do my virtual placement at CCS which has opened new avenues for me.

-Sofia Naik, Client



## REFUGEE & OTHER SERVICES

We are proud of our work in welcoming newcomers and refugees to Canada and helping them settle, integrate and thrive in their new home. Here are highlights from our programs and initiatives.

# REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM (RSTP)

CCS' Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP) continued to play a leadership role in training and information-sharing on policies, practices, and processes related to Canada's refugee sponsorship and resettlement programs. RSTP organized numerous online training sessions and resumed in-person training. RSTP supported the refugee sponsorship community by responding to their inquiries and assisting them to navigate the refugee sponsorship process. RSTP also provided information to refugee sponsors across the country through its website, social media platform, and various publications, including the RSTP Bulletin and the BVOR News.

The RSTP began a new pilot project that matches private sponsors of refugees with trained settlement workers who will provide settlement services to resettled refugees.



RSTP BC-based staff Christina Hamer and Michelle Ndizeye attending the Newcomer Expo

# REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM (RSTP) CONT.

RSTP delivered training sessions for international organizations that were referring vulnerable refugees that were evacuated from Afghanistan for resettlement to Canada. The sessions were delivered at the request of IRCC and reflected RSTP's role as a key implementing partner for Canada's refugee sponsorship and resettlement programs.



**RSTP Trainer for BC, Michelle Ndizeye, facilitating a workshop on Post-Arrival Settlement Support for sponsors in Victoria, BC on March 12, 2022.**



**Anoush Newman, the RSTP Trainer for Calgary, delivers a workshop to Constituent Groups and co-sponsors of a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) in Calgary.**



**Tareq and Paula at the Ottawa Screening of Peace by Chocolate, a film based on the real life story of Tareq and his family.**

# TORONTO EAST QUADRANT LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP (TEQ LIP)

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CCS leads the Toronto East Quadrant Local Immigration Partnership (TEQ LIP), a community-based initiative that supports the development and implementation of local newcomer settlement strategies and partnerships that use resources efficiently. This strengthens the ability of the Scarborough community in helping newcomers adapt to and integrate into their new surroundings. TEQ LIP provides a place for organizations, institutions and community members with diverse expertise to work together to make our community more welcoming, open and responsive to the needs of newcomers.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect the landscape of work and had a noticeable impact on participation in the TEQ LIP partnership/membership. Meetings and events were still conducted virtually. Over the course of the reporting period, the TEQ LIP has proceeded with the implementation of activities set out in the strategy and action plan.

On Feb 24, 2022, TEQ LIP, in collaboration with all Toronto Quadrant LIP's, Peel Newcomer Strategy Group, York and Durham Region LIPs and the City of Toronto Newcomer Office, hosted the 10th annual BRIDGES Collaboration Forum, with almost 200 participants in attendance throughout the day. BRIDGES was held virtually, but still succeeded at hosting a partnership-building forum for organizations and service providers from across the Greater Toronto Area. This year, BRIDGES focused on community response to complex emerging needs and sharing collaborative and sustainable solutions. Different topics were discussed such as Francophone and Anglophone collaboration, hybrid service delivery, unconscious biases, racism, and their influence on newcomer employment accessibility, and more. The forum provided a great opportunity for open discussion, networking, and future collaborations.

The Inclusion and Equity Action Group developed and implemented an anti-racism and capacity building workshop series between March and July 2021 in collaboration with Future Ancestors Services. The series engaged more than 180 participants and community partners, including members of our Scarborough Newcomer Council. A variety of pressing topics were presented, including allyship, anti-Black, anti-Indigenous, and systemic racism, the history of colonization, cultivating empathy, and battling misinformation.

Following a successful workshop series, many requests from action group members and partners were made to the TEQ LIP to open a space to continue the conversation and build on the learnings of the series. In response, the Inclusion and Equity Action Group organized an event to build on the Anti-Racism and Capacity Building Workshop Series, and to discuss next steps to integrate learnings in daily work. With more than 84 registrants, the virtual event brought past participants and new attendees together to create a meaningful exchange of ideas/reflections with a focus on the future. Attendees were extremely engaged in the discussion and requested to have more similar conversations in the future. An open space for conversation and exchange of ideas was provided after the event for participants to share any thoughts about the topics. This event confirmed that there is significant need and opportunity for TEQ LIP to continue opening new spaces for meaningful conversations around anti-racism, equity and inclusion in the new year.

# SCARBOROUGH NEWCOMER SETTLEMENT COLLECTIVE (SNSC)

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The Scarborough Newcomer Settlement Collective (SNSC) is a 2 year project that works with partners in Scarborough, and in close conjunction with the TEQ LIP, to build a community-based, participatory governance model for newcomer service delivery planning and funding. The project brings together representatives from multiple stakeholder group, including local residents and newcomers, organizations, funders, service providers, and institutions within Scarborough to participate in the model development process.

## SERVICE DELIVERY DATA HUB

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The Service Delivery Data Hub project was implemented in October 2021 to facilitate the pooled collection and analysis of organizations' service delivery data to better support evidence-based service delivery and planning for newcomers within the Scarborough region. The Data Hub project builds on the learnings from its predecessor, the Service Delivery Improvement – Scarborough Newcomer Needs and Trends project. The work done by this project has already opened new possibilities for CCS to address the needs of its clients beyond its past capacity.

The Service Delivery Data Hub project embarked on a Data Discovery Phase to identify new data points and analyses to enable on the project to further support evidence-based newcomer service delivery and planning in Scarborough. Newly identified data points and types of analyses – such as an expanded list of analyzed countries of origin, service usage predictive analyses, and analyses on the demographics of frequent and infrequent service users – were featured in the project's seventh, and most recent, Scarborough Newcomer Needs & Trends report. The Data Hub project also facilitated a capacity-building workshop for service providers on basic survey design and analysis in March 2022.

## VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

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This is the second year of the volunteer program at CCS. Our volunteer program has flourished two years in a row during a pandemic! Our loyal and committed volunteers and students have once again helped us continue to serve the newcomer, immigrant, and refugee communities in the GTA and across the country. We acknowledge and salute the 213 volunteers for contributing over 8700 hours to CCS programs. This year could have not been possible without our super awesome volunteers and students who helped support an array of programs and services! Here are just a few of the ways our volunteers have helped us this year:

- Helping seniors learn to use Zoom
- Outreaching to newcomers and immigrants for CCS services
- Creating flyers and outreach materials for programs and events
- Creating content for social media,
- Translating presentations and documents from English to different languages

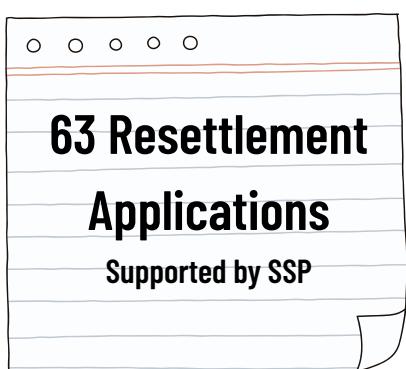
# VOLUNTEER PROGRAM CONT.



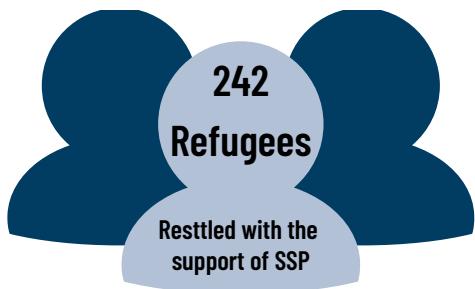
## The Refugee Sponsorship Support Program (SSP)



The Refugee Sponsorship Support Program (SSP) was placed under the Volunteer Program at CCS in April 2020, an Ontario-based program that provides pro bono legal support to assist individuals and groups seeking to privately sponsor refugees with the application process. The program also matches various sponsoring groups, including Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) and their constituent groups, Groups of Five, and community sponsors with sponsorship experts and pro bono lawyers.



In this fiscal year, 62 of our trained SSP lawyers from 4 different law firms, and 14 law students have supported 63 resettlement applications, including Special Measures applications for refugees of Afghan nationality who worked with the Canadian government and those who belong to the Afghan LGBTQ+ community. Through this support, the Refugee SSP has assisted with applications supporting the resettlement of 242 refugees this year.



The Refugee SSP continues to recruit, train, and prepare volunteer lawyers and law students and match them with sponsoring groups and organizations that require legal assistance in completing and submitting accurate refugee sponsorship applications. Our Volunteers have been crucial in ensuring CCS keeps its doors open to those who need us the most. We are beyond grateful for the volunteers, students, and pro-bono lawyers who continually dedicate their time and talent to CCS to help support newcomers, immigrants, and refugees across Canada!

# STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

	Year Ended:	March 31, 2022	March 31, 2021
<b>INCOME</b>		\$	\$
IRCC - Welcoming Communities	3,865,522	3,623,816	
IRCC - Language and Skills Development	3,753,159	3,410,730	
IRCC - Orientation	1,938,710	1,773,584	
IRCC - Refugee Sponsorship Training Program	1,949,578	1,678,609	
IRCC - Labour Market Access	584,581	543,527	
IRCC - Service Delivery Improvement Projects	320,354	363,383	
IRCC - Local Immigration Partnership	373,617	362,735	
IRCC- Families in Settlement	237,531	52,270	
IRCC - Data Hub	153,932	-	
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services	484,908	476,789	
Pay Equity Revenue	201,682	201,682	
Catholic Charities	301,555	296,924	
Earned income	102,274	134,672	
Miscellaneous Funding	92,800	90,059	
ESDC	146,412	60,886	
United Way Greater Toronto	13,393	58,425	
City of Toronto	80,515	28,775	
Donations	19,971	18,820	
	<b>14,620,494</b>	<b>13,175,686</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>		\$	\$
Wages	9,482,143	8,491,995	
Employee benefits	1,796,051	1,752,807	
Building occupancy	1,765,891	1,700,023	
Program expenses	724,116	437,385	
Equipment lease and purchase	328,128	373,355	
Office and general	349,973	265,481	
Purchased services	47,061	41,755	
Amortization	27,553	27,553	
Training and conferences	35,554	17,659	
Promotion and publicity	16,932	4,689	
Staff travel	5,485	3,412	
	<b>14,578,887</b>	<b>13,116,114</b>	
<b>EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURES</b>		\$	\$
Excess of Revenue Over Expenditures	41,607	59,572	
Allocation from Internally Restricted Reserve Funds	-	-	
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>41,607</b>	<b>59,572</b>	

Financial statements prepared by Akler, Browning, Frimet and Landzberg LLP Chartered Accountants are available in full upon request.





All Staff Meeting

## CCS Locations

### Head Office

55 Town Centre Court, Suite 401  
Scarborough, Ontario  
M1P 4X4  
Tel: 416.757.7010 (call for appointment)

### Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP) National Office

55 Town Centre Court, Suite 401  
Scarborough, Ontario  
M1P 4X4  
Tel: 416.757.7010 (call for appointment)

### Brampton Office

164 Queen Street East, Suite 306  
Brampton, Ontario L6V 1B4  
Tel: 905.457.7740

### Mississauga Locations

3660 Hurontario Street, 7th Floor  
Mississauga, Ontario L5B 3C4  
Tel: 905.273.4140

4557 Hurontario Street, Unit B11  
Mississauga, Ontario L4Z 3M2  
Tel: 905.272.1703

1477 Mississauga Valley Boulevard  
Mississauga, Ontario L5A 3Y4  
Tel: 905.232.7010

### Scarborough Locations

1200 Markham Road, Suite 503  
Scarborough, Ontario M1H 3C3  
Tel: 416.289.6766

2206 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 124  
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Tel: 416.759.8800

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Scarborough, Ontario M1J 3M5  
Tel: 416.266.7200



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