



## Virden and District Settlement Services

# SEPTEMBER 2012

The office of Virden District and Settlement Services, though seemingly still new to the area, are grateful to the Virden Employment and Skills Center, A.P.P.L.E., local employers, and the newcomers who have already made Manitoba their home, for the many referrals sent our way from day to day. September has seen more activity through these media.

➤ **Meetings/Work-shops:**

- **September 10: *Virden*** - The Virden & District Settlement Services Advisory Board held its board meeting, the first of which I was attending, with seven (7) members present. At this meeting, I gave a brief introduction of myself – who I am, my likes - so each one present would, at least, get to know me better.

The group was informed of my progress thus far in the office, and with clients, both new and old.

There were further discussions on the availability/nonavailability of housing in the Virden area, and plans for our upcoming Cultural Display scheduled for November.

A new phase for the Virden & District Settlement Services would be to go to Hamiota for Settlement Services, once per month. This new development has already gotten approval of the Virden Chamber of Commerce Board, as well as, the Regional Coordinator, Sarah Graham-Leon at Manitoba Immigration & Multiculturalism.

- **September 19: *Brandon* – A Welcoming Newcomers Workshop** was organized by Prairie West Recreation. This brought together Settlement facilitators, Recreation Directors, and other Organization representatives. The overall theme was focused on **creating a service environment that would not just welcome newcomers, but also an atmosphere of safety and confidentiality as they share their needs and concerns.** Newcomers, as defined, include new immigrants from countries other than Canada, as well as Canadians from another province.

**Application from this meeting:** A desire to create a welcoming sign for my office in the various languages represented, as well as a display of countries' flags.

- **September 20: *Kola*** – Along with EAL Coordinator, Lara Scott, and EAL Instructor, Bertha Penner, I met with two of our German newcomers. This was in an effort to meet some of the clients, and encourage them to continue utilizing the Settlement Services. These ladies are willing to make a contribution with the Cultural Display event so all Manitobans can become aware of the rich cultural diversity of Manitoba. They are quite excited to continue to learn/speak English, and to even share some of their language with us.
- **September 28: Winnipeg – Professional Development-Day** was held at Manitoba Start. This workshop was titled “Intercultural Communication for Settlement Providers”. Settlement Providers were sensitized on the levels of culture, culture shock and its various phases, and most of all, strategies to help providers work with individual clients, who at some point in their transition, will be affected by the change in culture, and culture shock.

**Application:** Improve on the communication strategies with clients through Facebook, and orientation sessions.

➤ **Clients:**

- Numerous visits and phone calls for Sponsorship and Labour Market Opinion (LMO) applications, English referrals, e-mail inquiry about employment opportunities in Virden, were among the client services this month. It is quite

noticeable that newcomers come into Virden without knowledge of the Settlement Services, but at some point, they are pointed in that direction.

***Beatrice Norton***

***Facilitator***

***Virden and District Settlement Services***