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Ambassadors will improve connections to community programs and services

Provincial funding announced for new project to help immigrants and refugees

Cambridge, ON –The province today announced \$20,000 in funding for a new project designed to improve connections between newcomers to Canada and the many community programs and services that are available to them. The Ambassador Project, run by the YMCA of Cambridge, is a community-driven initiative that engages immigrants and refugees to connect with isolated or vulnerable members of our diverse community through outreach and referral, in an effort to link people to existing service providers who can help.

Demographic research that was done by the Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries showed that, immigrants and refugees experience difficulties in accessing programs and services available to them. That led to ‘Social Inclusion’ as one of the focal areas that needed immediate attention in Cambridge’s Cultural Diversity Program (2009-2011). The Ambassadors’ Project brings us one step closer to ensuring that cultural groups in Cambridge have the supports, resources and services to fully participate in, and contribute to, community life.

“The Ambassador Project will enable newcomers to fully contribute to the economy and to their communities by helping them connect with community programs and services,” said Citizenship and Immigration Minister Michael Chan. “Our government is very pleased to support this important initiative.”

“We have 35 volunteers who are finishing their Ambassador training today,” said Debra Brown, Director of Community Relations with the YMCA of Cambridge. “This tremendous response is an indicator of just how much this program is needed and the excitement in the community that this need is being met. We are grateful for the opportunity to initiate this project.”

The grant is coming from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration **Ontario Community Builders fund**. OCB supports initiatives which build organizational and community capacity to deliver culturally appropriate and sensitive services and reach out to diverse communities.

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