



Linda Fegan, Director, Corporate
Communications and Marketing

Tel: (519) 740-4680 Ext. 4623
Cell: (519) 212-3409
Email: feganl@cambridge.ca

For Immediate Release

Cambridge Community Cultural Diversity Survey Results Unveiled Foreign-Born Respondents say Language, Credentials & Religion/Transportation are Barriers

Cambridge, Ontario, December 9, 2011-Taking the pulse of the Cambridge community with a view to better understanding experiences to enhance delivery of cultural programs was the objective of a study unveiled today.

The Cambridge Community Cultural Diversity survey set out to evaluate how Cambridge residents are responding to diverse populations; what the experiences of discrimination are; what is the relationship between volunteering and newcomers; and, what types of programs and training would be of interest to the respondents.

“Cambridge is proud to be home to a very diverse population and we strive to build the networks and supports that are needed,” says Cambridge Mayor Doug Craig. “This survey is a wonderful way to engage our community with a view to enhancing the vital services that our partners at the YMCA deliver to truly reflect the welcoming nature of our citizens.”

The survey was conducted over four months and in addition to English, was available in the most frequently spoken languages of the community: Polish, Punjabi, Urdu, French and Spanish. Some 160 respondents from 27 countries took the time to answer questions; 70 percent were women, 49 percent were visible minorities and the majority of people were between the ages of 31-50.

“We appreciate hearing from so many people in our community. The data collected will help guide the important work of the YMCA’s Cultural Diversity Program to continue to address the needs of our community,” says Lakhdeep Dhaliwal, Cultural Diversity Specialist at the YMCA. More than 1,000 people per annum use the services of the diversity program.

At a special information session today at the YMCA Immigrant Services offices, 258 Hespeler Road, attendees heard some very positive news. The data showed that in areas of discrimination, the incidents were lower in Cambridge as compared to other areas in the country. However, the numbers showed that the respondents who were visible minorities experienced discrimination about 7 percent more than the Caucasian respondents, and these incidents of prejudice were based on religion, ethnicity and skin colour. Comparably, for Caucasian respondents, the reasons most often cited were gender, age and religion.

Cambridge fared better than Canada on a number of fronts: less Caucasians responded they had experienced discrimination in Cambridge when compared to data for all of Canada - the national number is 15 percent higher.

The data also supported the notion that volunteerism is a Western construct. When it comes to volunteering, YMCA Settlement Counsellors report that for many immigrant families, the notion of volunteering is not part of the culture, or that charitable acts are defined in a different way. An overwhelming 78 percent of the respondents wish to become more involved in the community's socio-cultural events.

The study also showed that a higher percentage of visible minorities and foreign born respondents expressed a continued need for training.

The Cambridge Community Cultural Diversity survey was designed in cooperation with the Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries along with input from the Cultural Diversity Program Advisory Committee. It's the second time such a survey has been undertaken. For complete survey results and more information visit the Cambridge YMCA's website: www.ymcacambridgekw.ca

-30-

Acknowledgements:

The YMCA wishes to acknowledge the support of the Cultural Diversity Advisory Committee of Cambridge in the creation and administration of this report. Members include:

- Alison Neighborhood Community Centre
- Cambridge Shelter
- City of Cambridge (advisory and funding support)
- Conestoga College Language Institute (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada)
- Islamic Centre of Cambridge
- Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries
- Waterloo Region District School Board
- Waterloo Region Housing
- Waterloo Regional Police Services

Contact:

Lakhdeep Dhaliwal
Cultural Diversity Specialist
(519) 623 9622 ext 307
ldhaliwal@ckwymca.ca

The City of Cambridge is one of the fastest growing areas in the country. It is strategically located astride highway 401 in southwestern Ontario, part of Canada's Technology Triangle. In 2010, the population reached over 130,000 people. With a multicultural mix and a strong foundation of support services, Cambridge has a diverse economic base with leading industries in advanced manufacturing, automotive, high technology, pharmaceutical, business and financial services and hospitality/retail. The Corporation of the City of Cambridge is an employer with a progressive work environment that offers the opportunity to provide service to the community through creativity and innovation, and with opportunities for career growth and advancement.

The Corporation of the City of Cambridge is an employer with a work environment that offers the opportunity to provide service to the community through creativity and innovation, and with potential for career growth and advancement. For more information on the area or the corporation visit www.cambridge.ca. The City of Cambridge press room is located at <http://www.cambridge.ca/pressroom>. To opt out of the news release distribution, please send an email to Linda Fegan feganl@cambridge.ca.