



# 2012 Annual Report

*A review of activities from the 2011-2012 fiscal year*



*Empowering immigrants to create their own futures...*

*for more information*  
*[www.workingskillscentre.com](http://www.workingskillscentre.com)*

## President's Report

Congratulations to our graduates of 2011 and 2012! With you, we celebrate 35 years of empowering immigrants by supporting them with education tailored to Canada's current workforce needs. Six notable achievements of the 2011–2012 year include:

1. five diploma programs offered with 96 successful graduates
2. significant corporate contributions received to improve the journeys of recent immigrants
3. WSC received Toronto Community Foundation's Vital Idea Award to explore ways to enhance volunteer opportunities for immigrant women, in partnership with Volunteer Toronto
4. WSC Practice Firm began our SAP Implementation Program to rave reviews
5. We launched pilots courses for Fundraising and Help Desk Administration which were well received
6. We have a partnership with CCI Learning for Microsoft certified curriculum and to help us develop a Microsoft Assessment and Certification Centre.

The 2011–2012 year was both exciting and productive for management and the Board. We focused on improving our core services to students and broadening our course offerings. We ended the year with a small surplus, underscoring the fiscal prudence with which we manage our funds.

The year began with a newly refreshed Board, a committed and capable management team who focused on executing the basics. Together we clarified our Mission, Values, Member facing Value statements, and struck five 2012 – 2013 strategic directions reviewed below.

Our strategic initiatives are well underway. We regret the necessity of closing the Practice Firm, and we conducted that work with professionalism, transparency, and empathy to all concerned. With that difficult work behind us, we are future-focused and excited about our prospects for building WSC's core courses and service offerings for clients.

WSC is lucky to have a dedicated and highly skilled Executive Director, Honey Crossley. Honey has built a strong, client-focused staff team at WSC. My personal thanks to her, the entire staff team, and the highly skilled and professional WSC Board of Directors. Having the Board's support and management's commitment ensures WSC is stable and well positioned for growth. Collectively we will continue to strengthen Canada by increasing the courses and services available to our WSC clients.



*Gail Johnson Morris, President  
September 2012*

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## New Strategic Directions set in 2012

Annually, WSC Directors, working with management and other stakeholders, set strategic directions for the organization at a planning day in January. Prior to the full day session, staff teams prepare a summary of achievements and an outline of new directions, based on client activities and outcomes from the prior year. All 2011 goals have been met and the 2012 actions are on target for completion before March 31, 2013.

A complete analysis of our programs and services was conducted by the Board including a review of settlement services to confirm this was still a primary program for the agency. Strategies to mitigate the loss of funding for the Practice Firm were also dealt with during the planning session.

### Fiscal Year 2012 Strategic Directions:

- ◆ Conduct professional & empathic Practice Firm wind-down
  - **Mark Sturrock, BOD Champion**
  - Establish budget, analyze impact, maintain transparency, foster empathic communication

Necessitated by the January announcement that Employment Ontario was stopping all Ontario Practice Firm funding, our World Service Cargo program was closed in July 2012. We thank the staff and all the clients that participated in this productive and highly successful model providing Canadian work experience for internationally trained individuals.

- ◆ Establish Work Experience Programs
  - **Honey Crossley, BOD Champion**
  - Explore opportunities to serve Practice Firm clientele (internationally trained professionals)
  - Explore other work experience programs for individuals coming for settlement and skills upgrading, including social enterprises to meet work experience requirements
- ◆ Explore new programs that leverage assets & expertise
  - **Carole Piovesan, BOD Champion**
  - Explore SAP training and work experience, On-line Enterprises, other opportunities
- ◆ Build private, public, WSC joint ventures to secure new sources of sustainable funding
  - **Gail Johnson Morris, BOD Champion**
  - Secure new sources of funding
  - Increase total revenue aligned to offering more services and support for clients
- ◆ Invest in succession planning for BOD and Senior Staff
  - **Jody Peck, BOD Champion**
  - Invest in professional development and employee management
  - Maintain diversity and experience on the Board of Directors

# Treasurer's Report

Financial information has been extracted from the Audited Financial Statement as @ March 31, 2012(David Burkes, C.A.)

## Assets & Liabilities

### CURRENT ASSETS

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>
Cash and Short Term Investment	\$ 7,664	\$ 29,551
Accounts Receivable	135,942	90,131
Grant Contributions Receivable	25,392	75,094
GST / HST Receivable	19,057	24,972
Prepaid Expenses and Deposits	<u>11,501</u>	<u>11,953</u>
	199,556	231,701
Equipment/Capital Assets	<u>237,403</u>	<u>282,250</u>
	<u>\$ 436,959</u>	<u>\$ 513,951</u>

### CURRENT LIABILITIES

Bank Indebtedness	\$ 10,000	\$ 70,000
A/P & Accrued Liabilities	105,446	97,138
Source Deductions Payable	6,043	
Deferred Revenue & Contributions	14,904	15,219
Deferred Operating Grants	4,422	24,690
Deferred Contribution for Computers	<u>167,999</u>	<u>201,047</u>
	<u>\$ 308,814</u>	<u>\$ 408,769</u>
Unrestricted Net Assets	<u>128,145</u>	<u>105,182</u>

## Financial Position

	<u>\$ 436,959</u>	<u>\$ 513,951</u>
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## Statement of Operations

### REVENUE

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>
Government/Foundation Contributions	\$ 856,824	\$ 799,909
TESS Skills Training Contract	300,968	304,547
Skills Training Diploma Programs	21,963	37,919
Skills Training Certificate Programs	44,127	28,518
Social Enterprise (WSC staffing Services)	60,586	59,524
Donations-in-Kind – Equipment		8,390
Donations & Other Income	<u>86,350</u>	<u>27,175</u>
	<u>\$ 1,370,818</u>	<u>\$1,265,982</u>

### EXPENSES

Capital Expenditures	8,796	51,173
Salaries	855,632	728,330
Employee Benefits	80,583	69,386
Occupancy Costs	154,568	151,291
Outreach/ Marketing	35,283	30,990
Bad Debts	2,886	4,129
Bank Charges & Interest	6,075	7,387
Computer Software & Supplies	28,719	49,476
Equipment Leasing/Maintenance	23,515	34,183
Donations-in-Kind – Equipment		8,390
Insurance	11,274	11,258
Office Supplies	35,501	27,405
Professional Fees and Fundraising Expenses	35,719	25,354
Program Resource Materials	36,789	32,977
Telephone	11,853	12,415
Travel & Participant TTC	<u>9,538</u>	<u>9,403</u>
	<u>\$1,336,731</u>	<u>\$1,253,547</u>

Revenue over Expenses Operations:

Amortization

## Net Expenses Over Revenue

	34,087	12,435
	(11,124)	(12,126)
	<u>\$ 22,963</u>	<u>\$ 309</u>

A copy of the complete 2011-2012 Audited Financial Statement is available by contacting:

Honey Crossley, Executive Director

Working Skills Centre

55 Eglinton Ave. East, Suite 703

Toronto, ON M4P 1G8

Direct Line: (416) 703-7770 ext. 516 or E-mail: [hcrossley@workingskillscentre.com](mailto:hcrossley@workingskillscentre.com)



## Executive Director's Report

**2011-2012** was a year of growth, innovation, and adaptation ensuring we were meeting both the evolving needs of over 3,000 clients and service excellence standards.

At the end of the last reporting period, in March 2011, we were fully immersed in designing and documenting a new workflow system for all our projects; this work continued in 2011 and while procedures are always a work in progress to ensure continuous improvement, we now have set processes for recruitment, assessment, acceptance, evaluation and providing pre- and post-employment support. This approach ensures that relevant outcomes are systematically analyzed and used in preparing key policies, strategies and programs.

When the closing of 14 Ontario practice firms was announced by Employment Ontario (January 2012), knowing tasks aligned with our different lines of business was helpful, as we all took on extra responsibilities. At this time, 8 months later, remaining staff are to be commended for the diligence and extraordinary efforts delivered.

### Highlights of 2011-2012 Accomplishments:

**Skills Training Directly Linked to Employment (STDLE)** – City of Toronto continued to purchase Diploma level training combined with work placements for 88 social assistance recipients. WSC succeeded in meeting all outcome targets related to jobs for graduates, a first for this target group with multiple barriers to employment

**Newcomer Settlement Program (MCI)** – while demand still far exceeded our capacity based on funding from Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, WSC provided settlement and adjustment services to individuals from over 80 different home countries; a full review of settlement services and a change in funding direction in 2013 will move our focus back to more traditional settlement counselling and group sessions and away from the settlement employment services.

**Career Exploration Packages and the Employment Resource Centre** – late 2010 saw the launch of the ERC but in 2011 the Graduate Services team tripled the use of this new service, built relationships with over 300 new employers, and assisted over 200 clients in their job search. 2012 saw the creation of Career Exploration Packages as a new group of services designed to meet client demands and produce a new revenue stream.

**Employment Ontario (EO)** – World Service Cargo, the WSC Practice Firm exceeded all outcome targets in its final year, assisting internationally trained individuals to obtain work in their sector and maintaining high satisfaction ratings

**Toronto Community Foundation – Vital Idea Grant** – partnering with Volunteer Toronto needs of marginalized immigrant women related to volunteering were documents following several focus groups and surveys. Three PowerPoint presentations were developed to increase awareness and competencies related to volunteering: for newcomers, for employers and for front line settlement workers.

During the reporting period the Skills Training Team underwent several changes in leadership; lately Hana Kova and Susana Parise, have put into place effective troubleshooting and counselling systems to assist clients as they move through the program; further Hana, as the STDLE Coordinator, has established efficient and effective assessment procedures, helping us with recruitment, selection, progress reporting, and monitoring of students.



This Skills Training Team has also benefited recently from work completed by Debra Yeung our first Microsoft Certified instructor as she quickly formed a partnership with CCI Learning to ensure we had Microsoft approved curriculum and set the stage for the opening later this year of a Microsoft Testing Centre. This will bring us a new revenue stream and an opportunity for graduates to challenge the certification exams.

In addition to the training supported by the City of Toronto for social assistance recipients, our Academy of Computer & Employment Skills operates as a social enterprise. A recent addition to our staff, Marina Nikova has done an amazing job of marketing the individual courses and registering numerous clients in introductory and advanced level programs. Individuals who cannot afford the full tuition apply for financial assistance from the WSC Scholarship and Bursary Fund supported by contributions from over 100 individuals and businesses; in 2011, significant donations from RBC and from T-CREW must be recognized. Bursaries allowed 27 individuals to take courses; "*Stories from our Graduates*" is produced annually so donors can know how much their contributions are appreciated.

The Graduate Services Team, acting in response to requests from the graduates, flushed out the basic employability workshops into a three part program. Under the able leadership of Susana Parise, Graduate Services Manager, we enhanced the Employment Resource Centre (ERC), started using *Fresh Transitions* (special job search tracking software), created a 10-session employment preparation series, and established relationships with 300 employers. We also put into place a system for mock interviews, led by staff and guests monthly and on special Mock Interview Days, such as Deloitte Impact Day. Recently we have developed two new partnerships in this regard: one with Toronto Commercial Real Estate Women (T-CREW) and the other with Standard Life of Canada.

Christina Chu and Hale Soyulugil, from the WSC Practice Firm brought in expertise so that SAP implementation became a part of the operation offering participants a real advantage as they hit the job market. This work experience has continued, even after the practice firm project closed, as SAP end-user and implementation experience. We continue to work with One Team Solutions and have developed curriculum which is ready for Ministry approval.

Despite the current economic turmoil and continued funding restraints, WSC's fiscal position continues to improve; revenues from corporate donations are up, new partnerships have been forged, and we are able to invest more into developing new

programs required by clients; moving forward we need to start investing again in staff and computing resources to avoid burn-out and ensure we have the hardware in place to implement new courses. Our two greatest assets – our unique mix of programs and our diverse staff and the clients they serve – will remain our most important strengths as we press forward and, under the Board's governance, make critical decisions.

We know that we only reach a small number of potential clients, and 2012 saw the launch of a modernized web site that will soon be linked to numerous social media sites, including Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. We were so proud of Diana Mazzone, a WSC graduate who is now our Social Media Community Coordinator, and who was at the Olympics recently as a volunteer in the media centre.

Our vision is to empower our clients to feel confident and able to live personally satisfying and economically self-sufficient lives. Elsewhere in this report we acknowledge our many partners including, most notably, Toronto Employment and Social

Services, Toronto Workforce Innovation Group, COSTI, Dixon Hall, Toronto Workers' Health and Safety Legal Clinic, People and Organizations in North Toronto (POINT), and over 300 employers who provide placements and who hire our graduates. It has been a pleasure as well as a privilege to be associated with these individuals and organizations.

Lastly, my work as Executive Director is made possible through the support I receive from an outstanding group of dedicated individuals, the Board of Directors. The Directors create stability, promote innovative thinking, and provide a level of security that allows the staff to take risks and implement exciting new ventures. I would like to especially recognize the executive: Gail Johnson Morris, President, Mark Sturrock, Treasurer, Alix Paalvast, Vice President, and Arlene Smith who lead our annual strategic planning exercises, as well as Jody Peck who has taken a leadership role related to HR.

*Honey Crossley*

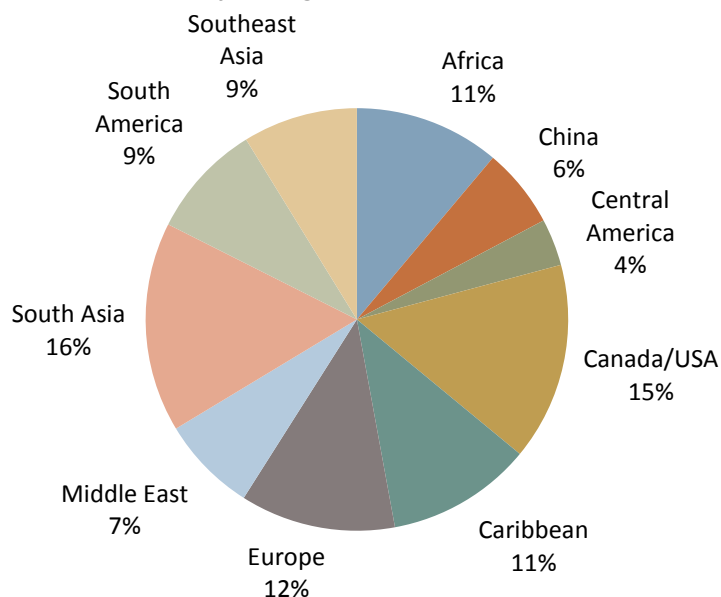
*Honey Crossley, Executive Director  
September 2012*

## About our Clients

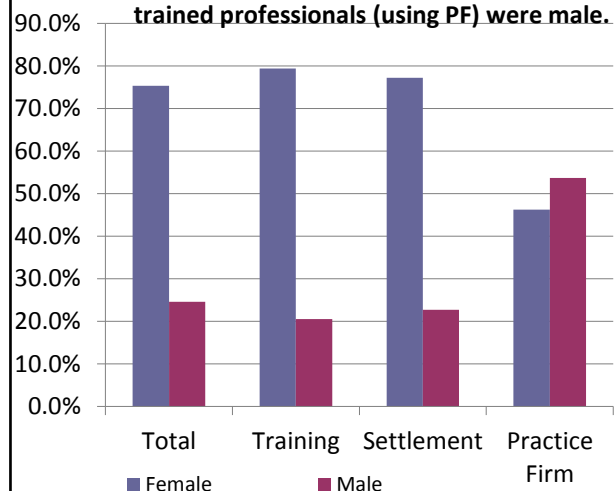
In 2010 we analyzed our database needs and in 2011 we launched our new vision using CTS a custom database. This system provides information about client demographics by Line of Business, client progress reports, service use statistics which help us to plan and also to present information in project reports, and a constructive way to link to our employers, now numbering over 300.

WSC serves clients from the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), while focusing on those living in the City of Toronto, many from the 13 priority neighbourhoods. Our recent work with partner agencies from Regent Park has increased clients from that neighbourhood. Just over 50% of clients came from downtown or central Toronto with an additional 20.6% residing in Scarborough and 13.2 in North York; other clients came from Brampton (7.5%); Etobicoke (6.3%) York Region (1.9%) and Mississauga (1.4%)

**Country of Origin for WSC Clients 2011-12**



**75% of clients are female in WSC programs; exception just over 50% of internationally trained professionals (using PF) were male.**



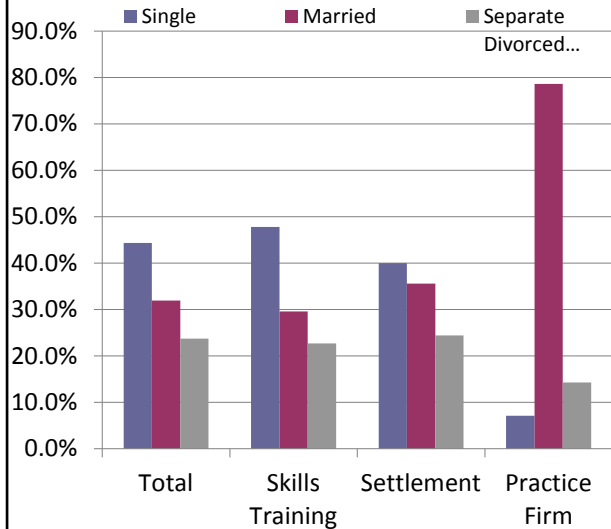
28.2% of WSC clients were refugees; 30.1% were permanent residents and 41.6% were Canadian citizens. However, for internationally trained professional, only 10.3% were refugees, while nearly 80% were permanent residents.

72% of WSC clients spoke a first language other than English. The most frequently spoken languages were:

Spanish	Russian/Ukrainian
Hindi	Arabic
Tagalog	Tamil
Urdu	Farsi
Mandarin/Cantonese	French
Amharic	Bengali

51% reported working in survival jobs; only 23.4% working in job related to their experience or training.

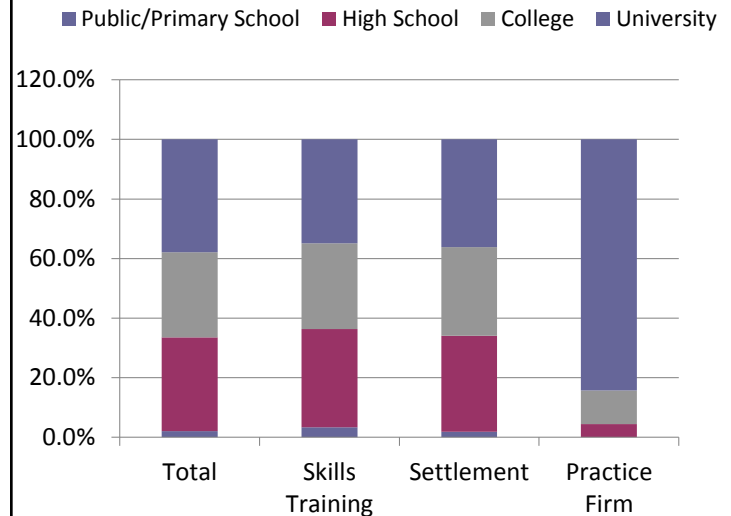
**While 40% of WSC clients are single and 30% married, a striking 80% of internationally trained professionals were married**



The Board placed a high priority in 2012 with developing or increasing related services for the over 900 clients per year who approached WSC for work experience programs to ensure that we still serve the internationally educated individuals who were previously assessed, referred and provided service through World Service Cargo, the WSC practice firm.

Other differences between clients coming for settlement services and skills training, who are primarily marginalized immigrant women, and the internationally trained professionals attending the Practice Firm's work experience program, are reflected in gender (shown above), marital status and level of prior education. A quick analysis of the data shows that WSC is meeting the needs of two fairly distinct client groups.

**Prior Education: WSC Clients 2011-12**



## Skills Training at the Academy of Computer & Employment Skills

### Diploma Programs

In 2008 in response to new legislation and community demand, the skills training programs at WSC were formalized: Academy of Computer & Employment Skills (A.C.E.S.) was registered as a career college under the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005.

This meant a lot of changes to how we did business, new compliance issues, changes in course content and student evaluation methods, new links to employers to ensure training was relevant and increased instructor qualifications. There was considerable debate and discussion to ensure we could remain a charity and meet our social mission while operating a career college; a social enterprise with a dual bottom line was the clear answer.

Registered with two Diploma programs, Computerized Accounting and Computerized Office Administration in 2008, four new Diplomas courses were approved as vocational programs in 2010:

- Supply Chain Clerk/Analyst
- Medical Receptionist
- Office Clerk, and
- Administrative Assistant with Desktop Publishing.

A course catalogue outlining the Diploma Program options and over 50 individual course modules is available upon request.



Efforts to have a relaxed, friendly, atmosphere that promotes skills acquisition while simultaneously improving self-confidence has been achieved; by selecting instructors who meet the Ministry requirements but also understand the special needs of our client group, we have created a unique continuum of service.

While the first few years were a struggle as we built the business, our contract from the City of Toronto combined with individual course purchases, is now allowing A.C.E.S. to move towards becoming a thriving social enterprise which we hope to see grow in the up-coming years.

Our training facility now boasts three labs each with 24 workstations with state-of-the art computer equipment. New computer desks and ergonomically designed chairs have made the sometimes long learning days more comfortable for our students.

Mouse pads with our logo keep the organization in the forefront as student progress through acquisition of technical skills. Maintaining up-to-date equipment is a major investment for the organization and our IT support, which is primarily from volunteers, is much appreciated.



### Skills Training Directly Linked to Employment (STDLE)

WSC has always been a primary source of training for individuals on Ontario Works since the early 1980's. In January, 2010, WSC was named an official provider of skills training by Toronto Employment & Social Services, City of Toronto (a 5-year contract).

In 2011, training was provided to 96 individuals in Medical Receptionist, Administrative Assistant with Desktop Publishing, Administrative Assistant with a special option called Fund Raising Administration, and Accounting Clerk. STDLE clients complete the classes required to obtain a Diploma in the related career area and then continue on to a 6-week unpaid work placement to practice their newly acquired skills. In some cases special options are also appended to the Diploma program to enhance job opportunities, for example the fund raising administration noted above. WSC had an overwhelming response from Ontario Works clients applying to STDLE. Since we could provide only a limited number of training seats, we were not able to accept some clients who were assessed as suitable for the program.

In 2011, 129 clients attended full-time programs with 96 clients earning Diplomas. In addition 140 clients attended part-time programs, taking one or more modules and earning a certificate of achievement. An additional 48 students were enrolled in January 2012 and continue to be part of our student body along with 68 students who enrolled in July, 2012. On any given day all three labs are in use with up to 75 students present.

### Certificate Programs

A review of our skills training social enterprise, Academy of Computer & Employment Skills (A.C.E.S.) suggested that we needed to re-vamp our marketing, look at new course options, offer more evening and weekend training opportunities, and attract a different clientele. To this end we re-structured the Skills Training Team and set new goals, hiring a Skills Training and Marketing Manager. While we did not have the immediate success we hoped for from the new structure, we now have a Social Enterprise Coordinator in place and are starting to see some results.

New directions included Desktop Publishing courses in the Adobe Suite (InDesign, Illustrator, and Publisher) and introduction to web design using Web Blog and Word Press. Also Medical Office Procedures and Medical Billing using new EMR software have been very popular.

With the termination of the funding for the practice firm we found we were still approached by many individuals wanting SAP experience. We have continued to work with our consultants in this area to develop curriculum for end-user and implementation projects. Some would describe this as practical hands-on training and others as work experience. In either case the pilot is successful and the graduates are obtaining employment. We expect to develop a full curriculum that can be submitted to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities in 2013 for new diploma programs.



Graduation Ceremonies give families a chance to celebrate!

The Microsoft Testing Centre is another initiative that will bring revenue into the skills training stream on two fronts as many individuals who are seeking employment want to have a certification to show employers they have competencies using various computer applications:

1. For those achieving certification, introduction to WSC may lead to them using other programs and services, including the Career Exploration packages or more advance course options;
2. For those not achieving the certification, our courses are immediately available to help them upgrade their skills and each purchase of a "test" includes one free "re-test".

Lastly a new marketing strategy has been put in place including the new website, links to social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn), an e-marketing campaign that targets employers, recruiting and temp agencies, and newspaper advertisements will help grow our enterprise.

A.C.E.S. Academy of Computer &amp; Employment Skills promotional graphic. It features a woman in a professional suit on the left. The background is white with a red mouse cursor icon pointing at the A.C.E.S. logo. Text includes: Microsoft Office, Medical Office Terminology, Marketing, Medical Reception, Web Design, Your Track to Employment, Bookkeeping, Communications, Quickbooks, Essential Skills, Office Clerk, ACCPAC Accounting, Administrative Assistant with Desktop Publishing, Placement Services, Affordable Tuition Fees, Multicultural Environment, Business English Practice, Supportive Teachers, Second Career Possibilities, Free Info Sessions, Free Assessments. At the bottom, it says: www.acescareertraining.com, 416.703.7770, 55 Eglinton Ave. E, Suite 703, Toronto, ON M4P 1G8. A QR code is also present.

## Marina Nehorosaya (Vakulo)

When I came to Canada in 2009 from Romania I was 24. So I had not so much life experience, but still I got my Bachelor's and Master's degrees in back home. I had a little bit of work experience — I used to work as a receptionist in Real Estate Company and as an accountant's assistant in a small sales company. My English was on intermediate level as I used to study it in school.



When I came to Canada I had no idea how hard it is to find a job in field that I was studying for. It was hard to get any work. But I didn't want my knowledge & energy to be wasted. I wanted to show to Canada, to my friends, to everyone that I deserve to be in Canada, that my talent and experience are not useless. I was ready to fight for my place here — in my new home. I just didn't know how when one of my friends suggested to me to go to study to Working Skills Centre (WSC).



During my studies at WSC I have updated my accounting, computer skills; I have learned so much new and unbelievably useful things in Communication, Job Search and other courses. I went on few interviews after my studies, and I felt much more comfortable and relaxed. I have believed in myself, in my skills, and my professionalism. I

have improved my listening skills, English and I have found a few friends.

I am working now at a huge recruiting company, in Head Office in Toronto in the accounting payroll department. Also I am participating in internal financial projects, because my manager sees how knowledgeable, responsible and reliable I am. That's why I am almost always the first person who the finance director recommends as a part of team in very interesting and challenging projects. It's so interesting to work with different people, in so many areas, to be ready for something new every day, to be opened and to be happy.

## Maxine Brown

I was employed as a high school Teacher of English for more than 20 years. I emigrated from Jamaica to Canada as a landed immigrant, in the Federal Skilled Worker Class with the desire to experience life in North America. Upon arrival in Canada I realized that I needed 'Canadian Experience', in order to acquire gainful employment. Since I had not yet attained certification by the Ontario College of Teachers, I decided to pursue a course in Medical Reception and seek employment while waiting to be certified.



The Bursary Fund was my path to a career in Canada. The funds meant I could afford to attend a program where I learned about the Canadian workplace. I am currently volunteering at Riverdale Collegiate Institute where I am gaining experience with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). After having had four months experience, I will be submitting my application to the TDSB in Mid-February with the hope of gaining, supply, full time or long-term occasional positions with the board for the next school year.

*I would like to express my strong appreciation to the whole Graduate Services team, who helped me a lot in my job search. You did a great job - professional letter writing, exceptional thank you letters and proper follow-up techniques helped me to get the job I was looking for and was dreaming of. Besides, your services give us motivations in further development (promotions) and job search. I've learnt a lot about networking connections and the professional way of creating them. Thank you very much.*

**Alena Rosenik**, graduate from Admin Assistant with Desktop Publishing, 2011, currently employed at Fairview Inn and Suites as a guest services agent and for MCIS as a translator.

## Stories from Our Graduates

### Jeya Satkuraian

Before I came to Canada from Sri Lanka in October 1999, I was working as a bookkeeper in my country. I was forced to leave my job and my country because of the war. In my country I was working ten years in the same company and I had a very good salary.



After I came to Canada I got married and I had two children. In September 2010 they both started to go to school. My husband doesn't have permanent income. So I tried to get a job. I tried so many ways; unfortunately I couldn't get any job. So I decided to upgrade my knowledge. I came to Working Skills Centre (WSC).

After attending the program I upgraded my knowledge. I have my Diploma, now I have more confidence and hope that I can definitely get a job. Now I am trying to get a good job as it will help me to lead a good & happy life, not only that but it will also help to give a good future to my kids.

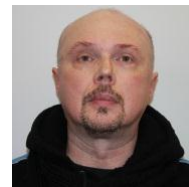
I am planning to study CGA after I get a job so this Diploma gives me chance to continue my studies. I love accounting & I would love to continue to my studies. WSC Scholarship and Bursary fund gave me a good start in my professional path. Thank you very much. And I wish you luck to continue in your service.

*WSC Practice Firm provided me with excellent opportunity to apply my work skills and knowledge in a practical way. I've gained relevant work experience in recruitment, team-building, time management, project coordination and administrative tasks (in a Canadian setting). The program boosted my self-confidence and further developed my professionalism which made a positive impact on my job search.*

**Liubov Lukova**, practice firm participant in HR department, 2010, currently employed as a Diversity Associate in a major bank in Toronto.

### Yuri V. Aleshine

Academy of Computer & Employment Skills was extremely instrumental in my life. I am sure, those who are seeking either to re-enter the Canadian Labour Market or find their vocation in life, will relate to my feelings of gratitude to the Academy that made it possible for me to find my second career. At the end of my program, I had a chance to do my internship with the City of Toronto, after which I was offered a position of an HR Assistant in the Employee and Labour Relations Team.



Although it was reiterated many occasions, that one's success depends entirely on one's efforts, I must add that the strength of the educational program and the support of the Graduate Services Team made the realisation of my hopes and dreams possible.

The strength of education at the Academy was not only in the academics, but also in the values and highly positive atmosphere of this school. All academic subjects of our curriculum were geared toward development of the most essential and practical skills without which no one can survive in the contemporary work environment. Highly-skilled teachers developed in us critical thinking, integrity and commitment to our lives' goals. I have countless memories about those 6 months spent in the Academy. In many respects I think with sadness that this unforgettable time of learning is now over and I must stand on my own, but I also know that the Academy gave me all the necessary skills and support for a successful professional life.

I cannot summarize every benefit I derived from my time in the Academy or from the highly efficient support I received from the Graduate Services Team in this short testimonial, but I hope that my experience will tell to those who read this testimonial that if you have career goals and are seeking to start a new and successful professional life, then Academy of Computer & Employment Skills is the right place for you to be.



## Malini Gnanasundaram

I finished my secondary school and I left my home country Sri Lanka in January 1996, when I was 24 years old. I went to Europe and worked as a housekeeper in a hotel. Then I got married and I now have two lovely daughters. But I am a single mom. All these years I looked after my children. Now I decided to improve myself.



Coming to Working Skills Centre (WSC) really changed my life. I had worked as a cashier for few years, but then I decided to study in the medical field. I am really thankful to WSC sponsors who provided funding for the Scholarship and Bursary Fund; this means that WSC could offer me Bursary of \$1,000. It's really helpful for me when attending this program because otherwise I could not afford this opportunity. I appreciate what they did for me.

I improved a lot from this program. My communications skills are improved and this builds my confidence and gives me a positive attitude. I will get a Diploma soon and also I know I will get work in my field. While I am attending the Medical Admin class, I still take care of my children making my life very full.

*My name is Joanne, and when previously asked the infamous question, "tell me about yourself", I mistakenly answered with my station in life. I am a single mom, and so on.*

*WSC taught me that I am so much more, now when asked the dreaded "tell me about yourself", I am confident in my reply. I am a successful graduate of the Medical Receptionist Program, I list my many learned skills, such as Medical Terminology, and I am confident in not only the skills I have obtained but also the way that I am able to express those skills; thanks to the support and guidance of the mentors at WSC.*

*I obtained my current position directly following my placement with Diane England, office manager to Dr. Laura Tate, and, I am proud to say that I am currently employed as a Medical Receptionist with Dr. Rajiv Singal, Chief of Urology at The Toronto East General Hospital. Thank you all for giving me, myself back.*

**Joanne Jeffers**, Graduate from Medical Receptionist, 2011

## Tatiana Mikhailov

I came to Canada in May 2010 with my family from Russia. We had a dream about living in Canada for a long time. We didn't like political and economic situation in Russia. When my husband got a job offer in Saskatchewan we were happy to move to there. However, when we came to Saskatchewan my husband had only seasonal job because there are only seasonal jobs, and I couldn't find a job either. So we were forced to move to Ontario.



Before coming to Working Skills Centre (WSC), I've known a lot of information about different colleges and programs, but I was confused. People who graduated from WSC advised me to try this college. I appreciate their opinions. My biggest worry was how I could possibly afford to take the programs; the answer came when I was awarded a \$1,000 bursary from the WSC Scholarship and Bursary Fund. Now, I feel that I've made a right choice. WSC prepares a lot of people for real jobs, and gives them opportunity to be competitive in modern job market. Today I am working at **Tax to Go** where I have been employed for 6 months.

*As a newcomer to Canada facing many employment challenges for my professional career, working in WSC's practice firm gave me a great boost in confidence. Because I have studied marketing and I was able to apply my skills, plus the chance to use up-to-date technology to produce marketing materials. All these helped me find my present job in the field that I have passion and experience for.*

**Valerija Labas Karam**, practice firm participant in Marketing Department, 2010 employed as a Marketing Coordinator for an International Travel and Tourism Co.

*The staff in the ERC at the WSC's Academy of Computer & Employment Skills were encouraging and supportive during my period of job searching, even though at times it felt like no one was interested in hiring me; they kept me focused and motivated to continue despite feeling discouraged sometimes.*

*They offered me advice, kept me in practice doing mock interviews, and supplied me with job leads which lightened my work load and allowed me to send out more resumes and job feelers than I would have if I had been working on my own. Most importantly they did not add unnecessary pressure on me but allowed me to work as I felt comfortably in my particular manner which, in my individual case, aided me in my maintaining my job search.*

*Their advice and resources were an integral part of my success in getting a position within my chosen field of work. I would highly recommend their professional skills and services to other job seekers and I am happy and satisfied with the services they provided. Thank you very much to all involved in my success.*

**Francis Pisicak**, Graduate from Admin Assistant with Desktop Publishing, 2011; currently employed as Community Outreach Assistant, Toronto Inter-Generational Partnerships

## Rocio Nino

I have a background in Optometry and a certification in Visual Rehabilitation in my country Columbia, and I worked in that area for many years. In October 2007 I moved to Canada. I felt hopeless because I hadn't found an opportunity to get a certificate or diploma that let me work in a health environment, without getting into a big debt. I needed not only the diploma but also the knowledge of the protocol of work in Canada.



I didn't know where to go, neither what to do, nor I could find an open door. When I knew about Working Skills Centre (WSC), I pray to God to help me to get a place to study here. I got it! During the time of the course I really enjoyed every class and felt grateful for all my teachers that gave me their knowledge. Each one of them gave us the best of them. I worked hard to try to do my best. For me was more challenging than the rest of my classmates because of the language, but at the end I felt happy; all my marks were over 90. I admired the dedication of all of the teachers, job counsellors and administrative employees of WSC. At WSC, I found a home.

Today is the beginning of my new life. I feel stronger in many areas like MS Office, multi-line switchboard etc. I am sure that working in a medical field is going to help me to reach the goal that I have: working as Optometrist Assistant. Recently I was interviewed by the Toronto Star for the Vital Signs report, along with Honey Crossley, the Executive Director. I told them that "finally I found my place to progress" when I came to WSC. "I came here for an opportunity to improve quality of life. It is a way to work in the medical environment. I am really happy."

I will always be grateful and remember how all of you remained until 7:30 p.m. in the office (spending your free time) helping me with my resume and interview, working with passion, love and enthusiasm and how during this process each one of you worked hard with me in order so that I could get my dream job.

I felt a sincere and authentic love and care from each one of you. When I remember all this things my heart is warmed and it brings a smile to my face. I give thanks to God for putting people like you in my way. Now, that I have my job, I start a new way of my life as an immigrant with a lot of hope and dreams.

Rocio is currently employed as a Medical Receptionist and Optometrist's Assistant for Dr. Yih Ling Chang, Optometry Professional Corporation

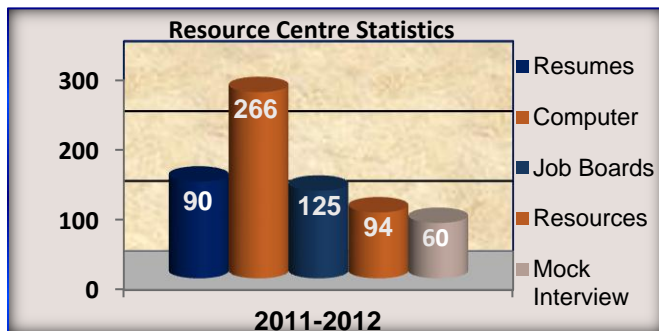
## Graduate Services Strategies

The goal of Graduate Services for the year 2011 was to increase the number of jobs obtained for graduates from the City of Toronto funded Skills Training Directly Linked to Employment (STDLE) programs started the previous year.

In 2010 WSC offered STDLE for 8 different groups of 5 diploma programs and averaged an overall employment rate of only 45% from the 2010 summer graduates. The goal in 2011 was to increase the number of employers to achieve and subsequently improve the number of successful matches and achieve higher employment targets.

We also increased the amount and variety of services provided to assist graduates on their transition from school to gainful employment which will lead to self-sufficiency and independence. Graduate Services took on a few initiatives showcased below. We began by adding staff trained specifically for and with experience in the job developer role allowing us to provide more individual services in the Employment Resource Centre (ERC).

### Resource Centre Statistics Reflecting Popular Services



This graph reflects the amount of times students and/or alumni have accessed these services in the ERC in 2011.

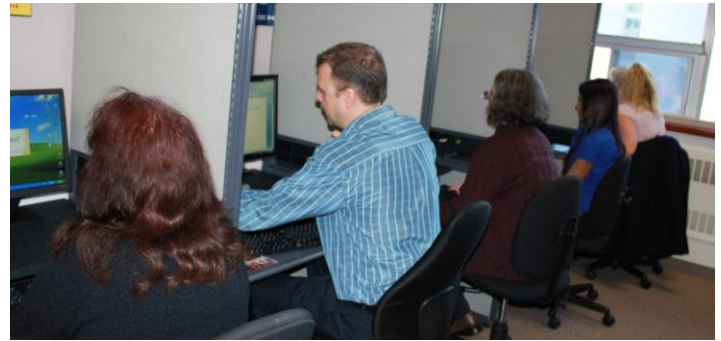
### In-House Full and Mini-Workshops

We added a monthly calendar based on a survey conducted by practicum students from George Brown College's Career and Work Counsellor Program to gauge what workshops we could offer that would be beneficial to current students and alumni. Based on feedback, the team designed and developed workshops on specific topics (i.e. informational interviewing). The goal was to further empower clients in their job search. This endeavour increased the volume of visitors to the ERC as well as enhancing student's awareness of labour market trends, leading to more successful outcome.

### Hosted Placement/Practicum Summer & Fall

In our effort to increase the HR capacity and services available to clients, Graduate Services hosted students and provides a practical learning experience for Davina Kuang, Dianne McLennon, Marta Rondini, Renata Lima and Joyce Yang, from GBC and IPLACE - JVS, Job Developer Program. These individuals provided extra individualized support.

### Building an Employment Resource Centre (ERC) for assisted and self-directed job search:



By building an in-house ERC, clients no longer had to travel to another agency; this strategy builds on the sense of security and trust that clients develop during their studies at WSC and heighten the sense of community that keeps clients coming back during their job search.

In 2011-2012, we continued to provide a warm, friendly and inviting environment for clients during their job search, more rapid turnover of ERC materials in continuous response to client needs and labour market information and trends.

### To work towards success we added:

- Recruiting employers for placements and employment
- Compiled quick reference resource guides with links to specific services and programs
- Increased personalization of résumé assistance service, which led to significant improvement in employment placements and obtaining interviews
- Job search workshops to teach clients how to conduct their own job search
- One-on-one counselling to assist graduates to succeed in their career goals

### Intensive Job Search Week

The Graduate Services Team structured an intensive job search week to include job search related activities to promote motivation, increase confidence and self-esteem.

### Job Retention/Job Maintenance Services

By encouraging students to be proactive and get them actively involved in the process, we increased the quality of placements for students, promoting responsibility and accountability for their career development.

### Value Added Services

- Job Coaching
- Mentoring
- Career Development
- Mini-Job Fairs
- Portfolio Development
- Empowerment (self-esteem, confidence)
- Video-Taped Mock Interviews

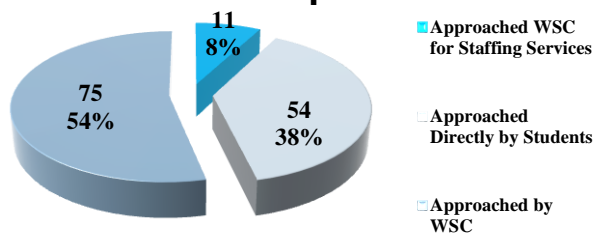
The effectiveness of increased service options for clients was complemented by work done to increase the number of new employers from 121 in the 2010-2011 fiscal year compared to the 310 acquired in the 2011-2012 fiscal year. The number of active partners has also increased this year: 55% of our employers are actively hosting or hiring while 45% are potential partners. Potential partners are employers we are in contact with that are open to hosting a placement or a partnership for future placements, for example: The Toronto Police Department.

## Overall Employers 2011-2012



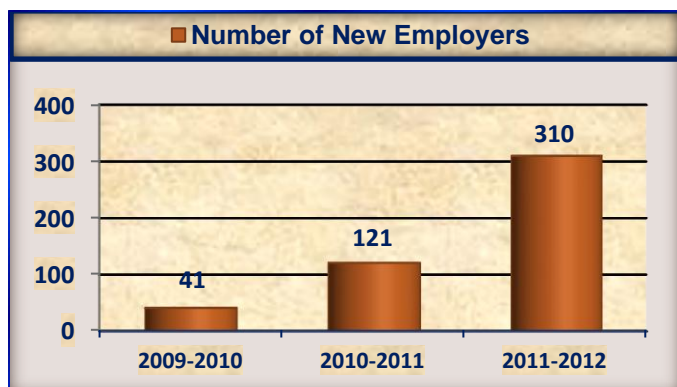
Active Partners represent employers who hosted a placement and/or hired a graduate. 54% of active employers were approached by WSC. 38% were approached directly by students and 8% approached WSC for staffing services.

## Active Partnerships

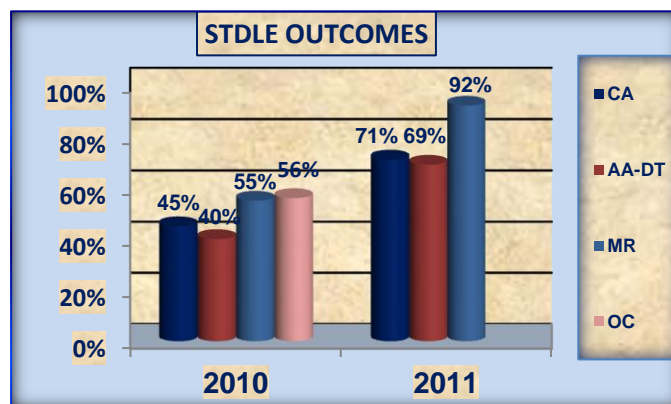


The Graduate Services Team continuously strives to add to our list with employers who are open to giving an immigrant a chance and helping to empower clients with previous barriers to employment.

In addition, developing new employer partnerships has increased the quality and number of placements for our students. This practical experience is crucial in their marketability to employers, and the number of placements that turned into employment based on our students' performance has increased significantly in this fiscal year.



This graph outlines the overall STDLE outcomes and how they have consistently improved; in the later part of 2011 there was a substantial increase and we successfully met or exceeded the 70% employment target.



## Future Graduate Services Endeavours

Graduate Services plans to launch a pilot program through WSC Staffing Services to assist individuals including internationally trained individuals, new immigrants and/or career changers to obtain practical training and experience (Canadian) through a placement or job trial in their area of expertise. There will be three career packages to choose from or clients will be able to combine the programs into one package.

**Career Exploration** – This package is ideal for individuals looking to define their path and explore their career options. This package will provide the assistance and resources to find out who you are, what's out there and the path to get there. Time is set aside to assess skills sets and define labour market trends and career options.

**Job Search and ERC Services** – This package is ideal for individuals who want to assess their skill levels for specific sectors or a profession of choice. Clients will build their own steps to employment while utilizing the ERC services and assistance from Career Specialists.

**Placement or Job Trial** – This package is ideal for individuals needing more current or Canadian work experience. Practicing skills in a professional environment through an unpaid placement and then potentially moving into paid employment from a job trial. These job trials allow the employer to make a final decision about hiring, but are only set up when there is a specific job opening.

### Graduate Services Team 2012

Susana Parise, Graduate Services Manager  
 Claudia Bargellini, Employment Counsellor  
 Lucy Kenzina, Placement Coordinator  
 Liz Edwards, Employment Specialist  
 In June 2012 we welcomed David Ayer, Employer Liaison and Marta Rondini, Career Assessment and Resource Coordinator



## Social Enterprise Development

WSC's first social enterprise was developed from the mail room program, established in the agency's early years to assist immigrant women with limited English language skills to enter the workforce. This business, WSC Direct Marketing, was sold to two former participants in 2009, but WSC has stayed involved with the social enterprise community. Since 2008, our skills training programs have been licensed as a career college, operating as a social enterprise.

### Social Purpose Enterprise Network (SPEN)-Toronto



social purpose  
ENTERPRISE NETWORK

WSC has been a member of the SPEN Steering Committee, actively working to ensure social enterprises in the GTA have the support needed to operate successfully. In 2011, SPEN published a catalogue of services to encourage corporations to choose to spend their dollar with a business that has a social purpose as well as a great product.

### Community University Research Alliance (CURA)



WSC is part of a 5-year CURA coordinated by University of Toronto, utilizing the research capacity of six universities. WSC will benefit as we expect evidence to show that our social enterprise, A.C.E.S., makes a difference in immigrant's lives. In terms of increased civic engagement, enhanced self-esteem, and improved quality of life.



We are partnered with a research team from University of Pennsylvania including a tenured professor and two doctoral candidates. In year one, the team identified self-sufficiency indicators, such as housing, stability of relationships, income, employment, and self-confidence and developed a study using questions that had been well validated in prior research.

In the second year, 120 clients voluntarily completed the survey at intake and initial data analysis has already shown some difference between those who select training and those who chose other paths. This initial data will be compared to results from a parallel survey completed when clients completed the program (6-8 months later) and at follow-up (12-month later). The original plan was to contact a control group of clients who did not enter training, however this has been a challenge as these individual went to other programs.

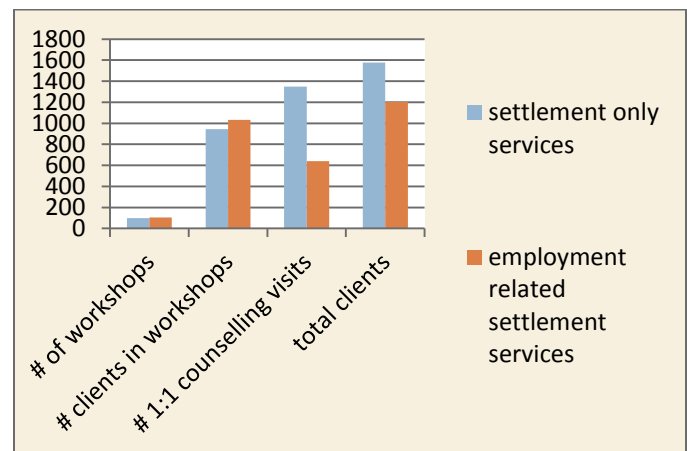


In June 2011, WSC's Executive Director joined the research team to make a well-received presentation at the ANSER Conference in New Brunswick and again in June 2012 in Waterloo. The initial findings were shared with academics from across the country. A book chapter is being prepared and will outline not only the results but also the challenges of community-based research.

## Newcomer Settlement Program

WSC continued to provide settlement and integration services funded by the Newcomer Settlement Program from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. Although very limited resources are available, a Settlement Counsellor delivers Information Sessions weekly, as well as arranging specific Orientation to the Canadian Workplace, Business English, and Workplace Communication modules in all skills training programs. These courses ensure that newcomers and recent immigrants have the skills needed in today's competitive job market. The Settlement Counsellor is also available to students to resolve any issues related to immigration status, housing, health insurance, legal issues, and mental health issues that arise including situations from home countries.

Research shows that newcomers are hardest hit in a recession and extra skills are needed for immigrants to successfully obtain jobs even when they have the same technical skills as Canadian-born job seekers. Our Settlement and Employment Counsellors are available to assist with all aspects of job search, creating workshops that specifically respond to newcomer issues.



### WSC Staffing Services

Using a temporary agency model, WSC operated a pilot project in 2010-12, providing staffing services to companies by interviewing, selecting, monitoring and supporting employees who were WSC graduates or clients. WSC actually hired the individuals; weekly time sheets were sent from the employee's supervisor and WSC handled payroll, remittances, and WSIB coverage, charging the company a small administrative fee.

Currently WSC has a small grant from *enp-Toronto*, to explore the feasibility of both temp agency and recruiting firm models, and to determine if this initiative could become a profitable social enterprise. If the project seems feasible the next step will be to write a concrete business plan and to seek start-up funding for this venture.

## Building HR Capacity

### Investing in Neighbourhoods

WSC has a multi-year contract with Toronto Employment & Social Services to hire four individuals (who are Ontario Works recipients) in positions that provide capacity to the organization and on-the-job training to the employee. Current positions are: Social Media Community Coordinator, Employer Liaison Officer, Social Enterprise Coordinator, and Career Assessment and Resource Coordinator. Financially, the value of this contract is over \$85,000 per year, but the greater significance is the expertise and dedication the individuals in the positions, several of whom are WSC graduates, bring to the organization.

### Summer Students

Each year, WSC receives funding from Human Resources & Skills Development Canada, through the Canadian Summer Job Strategy to hire students who are returning to school in the fall. These young people provide value and refreshing energy completing much needed tasks for the organization. This year we hired two University of Toronto co-op students to coordinate the planning of a special event planned for October 6<sup>th</sup>, the Regent Park Multicultural Harvest Festival.



### Practicums and Co-op Placements

WSC is pleased to provide work placements for students from George Brown College, University of Toronto, Ryerson University, and Seneca College. These individuals provide added HR capacity while learning about the operation of a multi-service community agency and completing specific projects.

### Volunteers

There is no way to put a monetary value on the work done by individuals throughout the year, some students and graduates, some individuals interested in giving back in the community, and most notably our 13 Directors, who give their wisdom and expertise in insightful, supportive and pragmatic ways. Day-to-day volunteers complete data entry tasks, assist with IT upgrades, help with resumes, conduct conversation circles to help clients improve their English, and staff our reception desk.



### Community Partnerships

WSC partners with other agencies and volunteers from corporations to ensure that clients have access to services along the "Track to Employment" especially where we do not have the HR resources to provide required services; for example:

**COSTI** – provides an itinerant facilitator who delivers workshops at our location on "Assertiveness," "Understanding Cultural Differences in the Workplace," and "Personality Dimensions." The facilitator is paid by COSTI and WSC

provides the space and recruits clients to attend the workshops where newcomers enhance their understanding of Canadian culture.

**Deloitte Impact Day** – An annual event where Deloitte Consulting gives back to the community; consultants from Deloitte make presentations to WSC clients on "The Labour Market" and "Communicating in the Workplace" and hold mock interviews with over 70 clients providing feedback on how they can best meet expectations of Canadian employers. This is a great opportunity for clients to interact with people working in a corporate environment.



**Social Capital Partners and TD Bank**: Special sessions offered during the year allowed individuals to meet with TD managers and talk about potential employment. This is a great example of a corporate partner providing a networking experience not otherwise provided to clients. Feedback on resumes and presentations skills was available; to date two WSC graduates have been hired by TD.

**People and Organizations in North Toronto (POINT)** – WSC and POINT have formed a partnership to operate a social group for live-in caregivers evenings and Saturdays. POINT is a community-based agency promoting social and health services in the community. This is an opportunity for isolated women to interact socially; workshops during these sessions provide information on banking, community programs, employment standards, and career planning.

**Toronto Workers' Health and Safety Legal Clinic** – provides a facilitator who delivers workshops annually on "Employees' Rights" as part of the clinic's commitment to community education. A WSC Employment Counsellor is also involved in the presentations where clients can ask questions and gain an understanding of their rights as employees.

**Dixon Hall Employment Services and ACCES Employment Services** – These partnerships enable clients attending programs at WSC to get additional job search support from a full-suite employment service provider. WSC counsellors regularly organize "field trips" to these partner agencies.

### **Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment & Training Services**

Miziwe Biik is committed to assisting all persons of native ancestry in the GTA to attain a better quality of life. In 2011, our Volunteer Coordinator and our Admin Assistant were staff supported jointly by both agencies, an example of commitment to strengthening the community through partnerships promoting equality and self-reliance.



## Practice Firm (and new programs for internationally trained individuals)

2011-12 was World Service Cargo, WSC Practice Firm's 6<sup>th</sup> year in operation; and sadly its last in spite of outstanding achievements; outcome data showed that 83% of graduates from this program were obtaining jobs in their chosen careers within six months of leaving the program. 935 immigrants, who came to Canada within the last 10 years, applied, were assessed, and developed individual Return to Work Action Plans (RWAP). Only 88 were accepted into the 12-week intervention based on available funding. Satisfaction surveys completed as part of exit interviews indicated that 92% felt the program was excellent and would refer others to participate in the future.

While these results are positive, there are still increasing numbers of internationally trained individuals (ITI) who are eager and prepared to work, but who take longer than six months to find employment compatible with their skills and experience. The closing of practice firms leaves a gap in service which will be only partly met by other work placement alternatives such as internships, co-op placements, and work trials. Currently we are referring ITIs who still apply for this program to other Employment Ontario funded employment services at community agencies.

In 2010, noticing that most of our applicants seemed "lost" in this labour market, failing to understand the protocols Canadian businesses follow, we made the following changes to our intake workshop with great success:

1. promoting understanding of values, norms and behaviours expected in Canadian workplaces;
2. explaining common communication gaps between cultures and explaining networking; and,
3. providing sector specific career directions and increased labour market information.

Currently we are incorporating more labour market information into our general newcomer orientation sessions and have doubled our settlement counsellor availability to provide career assessments, planning and RWAPs for ITIs.

WSC attended the Annual General Meeting for the Canadian Practice Firm Network (CPFN) in Quebec City in July 2012 and put forward a plan to create an associate membership structure for the Ontario firms, forced to close based on the government's funding decision. CPFN has agreed to a one year special status to see if alternative funding can be secured for these programs.



WSC's practice firm was unique in providing Canadian work experience using SAP (Systems Applications and Products), or ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) solutions; this software provides customers with the ability to interact with a common corporate database for a comprehensive range of applications. Thousands of mid-size to large companies worldwide use SAP software to run the majority of their day-to-day business transactions and processes. Many participants from the Supply Chain, Accounting and Administration departments are obtaining jobs because of their competency using SAP tools.

WSC will continue working with One Team Solutions to provide SAP end-user and implementation work experience in three areas: Finance and Controller (FICO); Human Resources (HR) and Supply Chain Management (SCM). Three groups have already undertaken this new opportunity and will follow-up with our Graduate Services counsellors to receive assistance related to obtaining employment.

In its last year, WSC-PF renewed focus on reaching out to, and staying connected with, former participants and community agencies, strengthen relationships with local employers, and engaging private and social sector decision-makers who understand the value of workforce integration of highly-skilled professional immigrants. New job opportunities frequently come from recently hired graduates. Even though the program has closed, the alumni are still part of our larger WSC network.

Nearly 100 individuals attended the practice firm closing celebration on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012, a testament to this alumni involvement and support. Christina Chu addressed the gathering and noted that we should not be sad that this program was being closed but feel proud of the numerous achievements and the many graduates who are now gainfully employed. We commend her and her staff for their assistance in an orderly wind down of the business.



## Fundraising Events and Corporate Support

### TEAM WSC! Raised over \$8,300 in March 2012

Once again, Team WSC! participated in a 5km walk called the Achilles St. Patrick's Day Race. A sunny but cold day greeted the 10-person team who ran, walked or cheered. Supported by both staff and Board members who collected funds, we were able to raise \$8,326. This annual event is part of the agency's on-going resource development plan and the funds are used for special needs and/or contributed to the WSC Scholarship and Bursary Fund.

### Business Consulting – Pro Bono

**Andrea Griggs**, President of **Catalyst Communication Inc.** selected WSC as a pro bono client and worked with the Management Team and with the staff on organizational issues. Catalyst Communication recognizes that in non-profit organizations, there is often so much emphasis on helping clients that the organization fails to spend the necessary time on leadership development.

Pro Bono Legal Advice from **McMillan** was arranged through **Maytree Foundation**. The original plan was to allocate up to \$25,000 to assist with policy review, however when faced with the Practice Firm wind down several issues arose and the services were used to assist in negotiations with Employment Ontario and determining severance agreements.

In addition McMillan extended their expertise to complete a review of our HST/GST rebate situation, especially related to a GST audit the agency underwent in 2011 challenging our 2010 rebate claim. An appeal was submitted and while we are waiting for the results, we are at least more confident that we have clarified our situation as both a charity and an educational institution.

### Immigrant Women's Journey 2011

The fundraising gala on June 22, 2011, held at the St. Lawrence Hall, enjoyed corporate and community support without which the event would not have been possible. The City of Toronto donated the use of the Hall and the funds raised that evening were contributed to the WSC Scholarship and Bursary Fund. Significant contributions were made by: ACCES Employment, CIBC, HR Solutions, Miller Thomson LLP, Nesbitt Burns, RBC Foundation, Sears, Starbucks, Toronto Workforce Innovation Group, Towne Catering, Tropicana Orchestra, Vechter Communications, and many individuals.

An afternoon dialogue on Inter-Cultural and Inter-Faith communication was funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and attended by over 200 participants. The Toronto Workforce Innovation Group was a partner in the afternoon program where immigrant women shared their stories.

### Fund Raising Lunches

Periodically, a student committee organizes and implements a Fund Raising Luncheon at WSC. Supervised by Silva Mardirossian, the students learned about event planning as part of their office administration curriculum. Each event nets approximately \$500, providing extra revenue for special needs

### Corporate Sponsors

Once again, this year WSC's work was supported by Toronto's corporate community. We gratefully acknowledge:

### RBC Foundation and

### RBC Commercial Financial Services, GTA



WSC relocated its banking services late in the 2010-2011 fiscal year as part of a strategy to build a relationship with RBC. This move bore fruit in June 2011 with a significant donation to the WSC Scholarship and Bursary Fund. WSC selected RBC because its policies of inclusion and diversity are closely aligned with those of the organization. RBC Foundation is committed to making a lasting social impact through inspired, responsible giving and by building strong partnerships with the charitable sector. RBC empowers organizations to make a difference and inspire others; WSC was honoured to be the recipient of \$24,395 from the 2011 Charity Golf Tournament.

### The Standard Life Assurance Company of Canada



Standard Life has donated \$10,000 to support Skills Upgrading and Career Package Programs and to work with WSC to provide volunteers for a special Standard Life Mock Interview Day in 2013. Through donations, sponsorships, and employee community engagement programs, Standard Life is a significant contributor to the communities in which they conduct business; the Company's *Investing in Tomorrow* community investment program aims to make a meaningful difference in the lives of young Canadians.

### Toronto Commercial Real Estate Women (T-CREW)



Established in 1996, Toronto members are key decision makers from some of the most influential corporations in Canada. With a focus on empowering women, WSC program were seen as fit by this group. Selected as the recipient of \$18,000, part of the funds raised at the 2010 Charity Golf Event, WSC attended the 2011 event linking WSC to 36 new corporate contacts and providing an opportunity to network with women from different disciplines in commercial real estate.

This relationship has grown and in 2012, WSC was once again selected to receive a donation (\$15,000) and perhaps more importantly to become part of a volunteering strategy. On November 20, at least 18 members will volunteer in a first ever T-CREW Mock Interview Day. WSC clients will have interviews at corporate offices in downtown Toronto and receive feedback about their interview skills.

## History and Mandate

Working Skills Centre (WSC) was established in 1978, incorporated on May 1, 1980, and received charitable status in March 2003. Originally mandated to serve immigrant women from Spanish and Portuguese speaking communities, the organization quickly expanded to serve immigrant women from any country of origin. The Letters Patent were revised in 2005 to expand the mandate to serve individuals, primarily immigrants, who are unemployed or underemployed, and to assist them to obtain skills needed to become self-sufficient. While mandated to serve a broader clientele throughout the Greater Toronto Area, the Mission Statement reflects the emphasis on programs for immigrant women:

*Working Skills Centre (WSC) is an innovative, community-based, non-profit, charitable organization that empowers immigrants, primarily women. Our purpose is to prepare our clients to fully participate in Canadian society by providing education, work experience, and settlement services that ultimately lead to employment.*

## Location and Contact Information

Working Skills Centre (WSC), located just one block east of the Yonge-Eglinton subway station, easily accessible by TTC; it is a busy neighbourhood with an international flavour and a multitude of everyday services. The agency has established a business environment which provides employment readiness and upgrading at WSC Skills Training Programs (Suite 703) and Canadian workplace experience at the World Service Cargo – Practice Firm (Suite 208). The Academy of Computer & Employment Skills (Suite 703) provides six diploma programs approved as vocational programs by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities under the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005.

### Location

Address: 55 Eglinton Ave. East, Suite 703,  
Toronto, ON M4P 1G8  
Phone: (416) 703-7770  
Fax: (416) 703-1610  
Website: [www.workingskillscentre.com](http://www.workingskillscentre.com)

### 2011-2012 Directors & Officers

Gail Johnson Morris, President  
Mark Sturrock, Treasurer  
Arlene Smith, Secretary  
Alix Paalvast, Vice-President  
Dianne Canzius Moura  
Hetal Pandey  
Jody Peck

Carole Piovesan  
\*Anastasiia Iasynovska  
\*Megan Sandiford  
Kristen Sam  
\*Moustafa Abdelrahman  
Shamima Adam  
*\*indicates WSC graduates*

**Acknowledgements** Working Skills Centre (WSC) would like to acknowledge our 2010-2011 funders and partners.

### Grants and Contributions were received from:

- City of Toronto
  - Toronto Employment and Social Services
  - Investing in Neighbourhoods
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- Service Canada, Canada Summer Jobs Strategy
- Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
  - Newcomer Settlement Program
  - Ontario Community Builders
- Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
  - Employment Ontario
- Toronto Community Foundation
  - Vital Programs Award

*The umbrella groups who provide valuable information and lobby for systemic change on behalf of our clients:*

- ONESTEP
- Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants
- Social Planning Toronto
- Social Purpose Enterprise Network - Toronto
- Toronto Workforce Innovation Group
- Toronto North & Toronto South LIPs
- Yonge-Eglinton Service Network

### Service Delivery Partners

- ACCES Employment Services
- A-Way Courier Service
- Canadian Supply Chain Sector Council
- COSTI Immigrant Services
- Dixon Hall Employment Services
- Mothercraft College and Child Care Centres
- Institute of Leadership for Women in Ontario
- Job Start
- Learning Enrichment Foundation
- Ontario Council of Alternative Businesses
- Polycultural Immigrant Services
- People & Organizations in North Toronto (POINT)
- Scadding Court Community Centre
- Toronto Community Employment Services
- Toronto Catholic District School Board
- Toronto Workers' Health & Safety Legal Clinic
- Working Women Community Centre
- YMCA
- YWCA

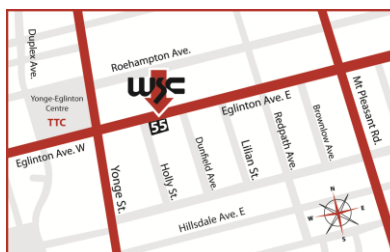
*And the many employers who provided work experience for our graduates, especially those who hired a graduate.*

**All donations are recognized with an official receipt; WSC's charitable # is: 10822-1946-RR0001**



**Suite #703**

**Academy of Computer & Employment Skills (A.C.E.S.)**  
offers Diplomas in Office Administration, Supply Chain, Medical Reception, and Accounting. These community-based learning opportunities are approved as vocational programs under the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. WSC also offers a host of modular certificate training part-time, evenings and weekends.



**Suite #208**

**World Service Cargo** provides internationally trained, skilled immigrants with an opportunity to practice their skills in a simulated work environment and obtain Canadian work experience in Finance, Supply Chain, IT, Sales and Marketing, SAP, HR and Admin.  
Funded in part from August 2005 to July 2012 by the Government of Canada

**EMPLOYMENT  
ONTARIO**