

2014 Annual Report

A review of activities from the 2013-2014 fiscal year



Looking Forward, Looking Back

*Graduates celebrate their achievements
and share their dreams for the future
and*

WSC celebrates 35 years of community service.



President's Report

As in the past, WSC's most important accomplishment over the past year was the direct impact we had on the lives of hundreds of immigrants, most of whom are women, as well as the indirect impact we had on their families and communities.

WSC is well known for training programs that lead directly to employment opportunities for most of our graduates as well as settlement services that support a successful transition into life in Canada. But there's another contribution, one which doesn't make it into the spreadsheets and financials that really inspires me: the hundreds of smaller interactions, words of advice, and direct personal contributions from instructors and staff that support the development of the skills, courage, and self-confidence our clients need to succeed. The simple delivery of programs does not explain the joyous smiles and tears at our graduations: it's the direct personal investment made by the team at WSC that makes all the difference.

Toronto needs WSC and it is our responsibility to ensure that the organization grows to serve even more members of our community. Changes in government-funded programs in recent years have required changes to how WSC remains financially viable. This sort of transition necessarily takes a few years to navigate. Our near-term viability depends on growing our financial base through more fundraising and more successful marketing of our training programs. To achieve this we will need to rely more heavily on volunteer efforts from our board members as well as dozens of others who contribute their time out of compassion for our clients. Over the coming months we will pursue opportunities to lighten the workload of our staff and transition some of that work to our many volunteers.

Over the longer term, it is our skills training programs that will ensure WSC's financial viability and have the greatest impact on our community. As long as we keep a close eye on the needs of local employers, we will be able to provide our clients with the in-demand skills they need to build their futures.

I would like to thank those board members who are leaving WSC this fall after many years of volunteer service, Gail Johnson Morris, Jody Peck, Alix Paalvast, and Liz Oke, as well as our two graduate board members, Sarah Cordner and Libby Graham-Rowe. Their support and guidance has been invaluable and we hope that they will remain engaged with WSC in the future.

Honey Crossley, WSC's Executive Director for the past eight years, will be transitioning out of her role over the coming months. Her contribution to WSC is as limitless as her passion for the success of the organization and our clients. She has worked tirelessly on every aspect of WSC, through remarkable challenges and transitions, and with shoestring resources. Although she will officially leave the Executive Director's chair in January 2015, we know that we can count on her to support our search for, and transition to, a new Executive Director throughout the year ahead.

With six new members joining our board, we look forward to a successful year in 2014-2015. As I have said, we will rely heavily on those members of our community who are fortunate enough to have time and resources to share. If you'd like to be a part of an organization that makes a huge impact on the lives of others, please let me know.

*Graham Donald President
September 2014*

New Strategic Directions for consideration in 2015

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 potential services, based on client activities and outcomes from the prior year. All 2013 goals were met and, as expected, the 2014 discussions focused almost entirely on deficit reduction planning.

A complete analysis of our programs and services was conducted by the Board including a review of current skills training options and partnership opportunities with other community agencies. Immediate and longer term strategies to mitigate the loss of funding from the Practice Firm program was the main focus of this planning session.

Fiscal Year 2014-15 Strategic Directions:

- Develop a better understanding of the true costs and potential revenue for the skills training business;
- Implement a strategic marketing strategy;
- Explore a business partnership with an employment services agency; share job search resources and become the preferred training option for their clients;
- Develop courses that meet employer needs;
- Implement an equipment renewal and IT update plan;
- Engage in fundraising including events, development of 3-P partnerships, and build on the 35th Anniversary event and contacts.

Treasurer's Report

Financial information has been extracted from the Audited Financial Statement as @ March 31, 2014(David Burkes, C.A.)

Assets & Liabilities

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>
<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>		
Cash	\$ 3,919	\$ 2,878
Accounts Receivable	77,638	91,166
Grant Contributions Receivable	14,186	25,389
HST Recoverable	3,234	15,628
Prepaid Expenses and Deposits	9,279	11,260
	<u>108,256</u>	<u>146,321</u>
Equipment/Capital Assets	155,738	190,224
	<u>\$ 263,994</u>	<u>\$ 336,545</u>
<u>CURRENT LIABILITIES</u>		
Bank Indebtedness	\$ 60,000	\$ 10,000
A/P & Accrued Liabilities	21,785	53,275
Source Deductions Payable	6,569	4,228
Deferred Revenue	5,378	14,044
Deferred Operating Grants	5,250	0
Deferred Contributions (computers)	97,759	119,131
Unrestricted Net Assets	67,253	135,867
	<u>\$ 263,994</u>	<u>\$ 336,545</u>

Financial Position

Statement of Operations

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>
<u>REVENUE</u>		
Government/Foundation Contributions	\$ 258,026	\$ 451,203
TESS Skills Training Contract	336,188	295,898
Skills Training Diploma Programs	11,943	21,723
Skills Training Certificate Programs	74,735	62,385
Social Enterprise (WSC Staffing Services)		32,727
Donations-in-Kind	38,425	27,150
Donations & Other Income	96,141	74,579
	<u>\$ 815,458</u>	<u>\$ 965,674</u>
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
Salaries	528,153	585,417
Employee Benefits	39,950	50,452
Occupancy Costs	120,318	145,072
Outreach/ Marketing	7,816	10,563
Bad Debts	9,061	1,755
Bank Charges & Interest	7,667	5,338
Computer Software & Supplies	4,706	10,565
Equipment Leasing/Maintenance	8,498	9,298
Donations-in-Kind	38,425	27,150
Insurance	15,877	13,956
Office Supplies	15,104	12,191
Professional Fees	13,315	23,491
Fundraising Expenses	12,020	5,087
Program Resource Materials	39,798	31,353
Telephone	5,595	10,346
Travel & Participant TTC	4,655	3,880
	<u>\$ 870,958</u>	<u>\$ 945,914</u>
Revenue over Expenses Operations:	(55,500)	19,960
Amortization	(13,114)	(12,038)
Net Expenses over Revenue	<u>\$ (68,614)</u>	<u>\$ 7,722</u>

A copy of the complete 2013-2014 Audited Financial Statement is available by contacting:

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



Executive Director's Report

In spite of significant financial challenges and a less than favourable yearend, this year has been one of substantive progress for Working Skills Centre. While still feeling the effects of the closing in July 2012 of 14 practice firms throughout the province, including our own World Service

Cargo, we tried valiantly to make up for the loss of \$75,000 that program contributed annually to infrastructure costs and the services it provided to internationally trained individuals.

During the past fiscal year (2013-2014), we continued to provide career training to over 100 individuals as part of Skills Training Directly Linked to Employment (year 5 of a 5-year contract with the City of Toronto) and solidified our current skills training options, especially Medical Receptionist, Office Administration, and Computerized Accounting. We exceeded the outcome demanded by City of Toronto and ensured 50% of graduates obtained employment within 3-6 months of graduation.

Profitability of our Social Enterprise, Academy of Computer & Employment Skills, increased as we continued to provide introductory and advanced computer application courses, accounting programs, and added Medical Office Procedures and Medical Terminology to our offerings, as well as building on the SAP end-user and implementation program developed previously as part of the Practice Firm. We became more involved in the social enterprise community, and, as a member of the Steering Committee for Social Enterprise Toronto, have helped to set a poverty reduction strategy that is both meaningful and achievable.

We launched a program called COYOTE (Career Opportunities for Youth, Training and Work Experience) in partnership with Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre. This new funding, from Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, will help create financial stability for WSC for the next two years while providing a crucial service to an identified target group, youth with barriers to employment. Four groups of 15 Aboriginal and newcomer youth will undertake instruction in Electronic Medical Records, Medical Office Procedures and Traditional Medicine and have an opportunity to become Microsoft Certified in Word and Excel.

WSC continued to work with a significant number of newcomers and immigrants through the Newcomer Settlement Program. Funded by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, WSC provided information and referral services at free weekly information sessions, hours of individual solution-focused counselling and assisted with finding needed supports to help with integration into Canadian society. An addition this year was the Citizenship Test Preparation classes, supported by Standard Life.

Combining our role as a Playing for Keeps Ambassador, a strategy from the Toronto Community Foundation, and a grant from RBC Foundation,

WSC launched the Social Café, a Saturday program that assisted 80 immigrant women, mainly caregivers and nannies, to become less isolated.

In October, we hosted our 35th Anniversary event, *Pathways to Success*, in combination with an afternoon workshop called *Transitions, Immigrant Women's Journeys*; we raised over \$26,000 net. More importantly, the event was an opportunity to celebrate our history and our future. This event would not have been possible without the work completed by an amazing team supported by a Job Creation Partnership Program, funded by Employment Ontario. Over 200 corporate and community sponsors came forward validating WSC's importance as an essential community service.

None of our programs would be possible without the dedicated staff and volunteers who carry out the routine tasks and face the daily challenges. My sincere appreciation for the professionalism, competence and stamina shown by everyone day-to-day. We are especially grateful to our many volunteers who take on roles that are critical to our operation but for which we do not have the financial resources.

Special thanks to Graham Donald who came on board last year as a new Director and agreed to act as President; his wisdom and sense of purpose have guided us and will continue to guide the organization in coming years. He was himself an Executive Director in the past and his understanding of the role assisted in creating a productive working relationship between Management and the Board.

Special mention also goes to Gail Johnson Morris who has served on the Board as President and Past-President. Her steadfastness during the closing of the Practice Firm and her guidance as we expanded our 3-P partnerships kept WSC afloat and personally kept me motivated; with an eye on what was truly important, our clients and the services they require.

While the organization is at a crossroads concerning the path it wishes to take, its greatest assets – a unique mix of programs and services and the staff and the clients they serve --will remain our most important strengths as we move forward and make critical decisions. Both Board and staff will continue to work tirelessly to keep us focused on the mission of building inclusive communities by attending to the interests and needs of unemployed individuals, especially immigrant women, empowering them to create sustainable futures for themselves and their families.

Respectfully Submitted,

Honey Crossley, Executive Director
September 2014



Logo Design: Craig White from Motive

Working Skills Centre celebrated its 35th Anniversary at the St. Lawrence Centre on October 23, 2013

Over the past 35 years, WSC has touched the lives of over 60,000 immigrants, mostly women; they have been empowered to become self-sufficient through settlement, educational and work experience programs. Launched in 2013, our tag line, **Developing Talent, Embracing Diversity** emphasizes our respect for the diversity and talent of our clients and our goal to create an inclusive and welcoming Toronto for all. Congratulatory letters were received from Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne, Mayor Rob Ford, our City Councillor Josh Matlow, our MP Dr. Carolyn Bennett, and our MPP Dr. Eric Hoskins.

Over 200 guests listened to stories of immigrant women's journeys told by Master of Ceremony Geetika Bhardwaj, and three WSC graduates, Ana Garcia, Vathana Senthilrajh, and Chezelle Titterton. Keynote speaker, Asiya Hirji focused on the importance of the work agencies, such as WSC, do to help newcomers to find their way as they settle in Toronto. Guests were treated to entertainment provided by the Nandita Dias Quartet, Anahit Koutsouzian, an international musician, and Diva Diverse International Dance Troupe.

The food also reflected the international flavour of the evening with three food stations: Italian, Afghani, and Jamaican, as well as an international sweet table. A very successful silent auction added to the fun and also to the revenue from the ticket sales.

WSC would like to acknowledge the corporate sponsors who made this evening possible:

Continental Sponsors (\$1,500.00):

- CIBC
- LeaderLink
- PPG

Metropolis Sponsors (\$750.00):

- ACCES Employment Services
- Brainstorm
- Big Apple Management
- Desjardins

- Miller Thomson
- RBC Royal Bank
- Salus Capital Partners
- SimplyHired



Skills Training Directly Linked to Employment (STDLE) and related Graduate Services



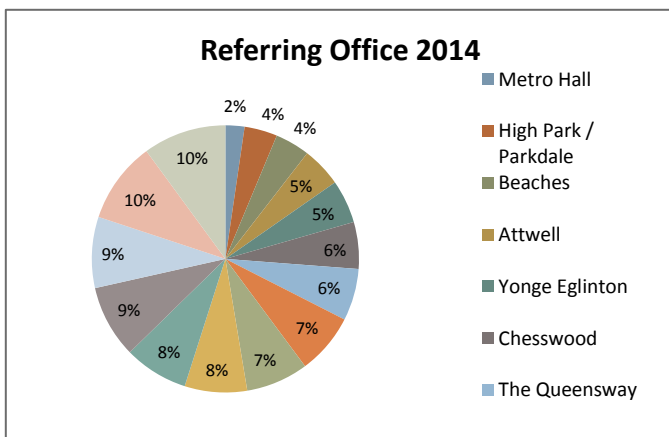
In 2010, WSC was successful in its bid to become a preferred trainer for the City of Toronto. Skills Training Directly Linked to Employment (STDLE) provides Diploma programs combined with a 6-week unpaid work placement for individuals who are Ontario Works (OW) recipients. During this 5-year contract WSC offered Medical Receptionist, Office Administration, Administrative Assistant with Desktop Publishing, Administrative Assistant with Fundraising, Supply Chain Clerk, and Accounting Clerk programs to over 100 clients each year.

In 2013, 22% of applicants referred were registered in a WSC STDLE program. However in 2014, 29% of applicants were registered in one of the following programs: Medical Receptionist, Office Administration, and Accounting Clerk. Partly, this change reflects more accurate referrals from OW counsellors as candidates must challenge a series of academic screening assessments before being accepted into a Diploma level program.

Clients are referred to STDLE from Toronto Employment and Social Service offices across the city.

Top 3 referring offices in 2013 were Lesmill (12%), Consilium Place (12%), and Kennedy (10%).

In 2014 the most referrals came from Lawrence Square (10%), Consilium Place (10%), and Lesmill (9%).



Although annually we have seen a reduction in the number of referrals from OW counsellors requesting this program for their clients, overall there is still significant demand, especially for the Medical Receptionist program with about 80 referrals for every 24 available seats. Designing appropriate and desirable course options in the future may become a challenge.

Another issue is the increasing number of individuals who withdraw from the program before completion. 26% of clients were withdrawn from the Diploma Programs in 2013, but a larger withdrawal is expected in 2014 due to low self-esteem and personal issues that cause extreme stress and depression. There is already evidence that, even with careful assessment of academic skills and motivation levels, clients feel unable to cope with a college level curriculum and full-time schedule. This may result in having fewer graduates thus fewer diplomas issued to STDLE program participants this year as compared to 77% of those enrolled in 2013 who received Diplomas.

In 2013, the reasons for withdrawals related to readiness for employment, inconsistent attendance, as well as withdrawals for personal reasons. The reason of withdrawals in 2014 has changed dramatically: 57% participant initiated early withdrawal due to funds not available for subsidized childcare and 14% were health related including pregnancy and mental health issues.

Clients require and are receiving significantly more one-on-one counselling sessions, guidance, references, and letters requesting support in order to maintain more successful program completion and more viable employability. We are also scheduling more tutoring sessions and make-up exams to assist clients to complete their training.

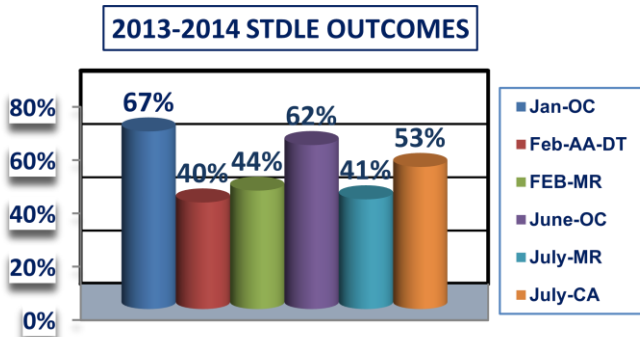
Strategies for program completion are being developed and include make-up plans that are signed by the student and the Coordinator, including required study sessions, alternative exam dates and extensions to assist with ensuring course completion.

Proposed 5-year plan (2015-2020)

Moving forward, WSC has presented a new, integrated model to the City of Toronto for consideration. It includes WSC taking on the Essential Skills Training that precedes the Occupation-Specific program. Prior to receiving the 5-year contact for occupation specific training only, WSC provided a program called PREP, that ensured clients had confidence, basic computer skills, numeracy and language skills, and were accustomed to attending a full-time program before committing to a skills training course. This helped prevent drop-outs and increased successful program completions. We are also looking at introducing an SAP implementation course as another option for Accounting and HR as the employment outcomes related to our part-time courses in this area are very encouraging.

Employment Outcomes

In 2013-14, the primary goal of Graduate Services was to continue increasing the number of jobs obtained by graduates from STDLE. The chart below shows employment outcomes for each course with an overall average of 52.7% for 2013 clients. In 2014, WSC offered STDLE to five classes of 20-24 clients. The



two groups that started in January are just finishing placement. So far eight graduates have been hired from placements; this represents 20% achievement of our internal goal.

Initiatives started in 2012-2013 and continued in 2013-2014:

- Defined, developed and implemented more job search workshops to expand students' understanding and build their confidence and employability.
- Compiled a job search manual that each student receives at the start of the program; this manual includes all materials, handouts and PowerPoint presentations ensuring that student had the materials even if they miss class.
- Increased the number of employers in the WSC database by 25% to provide more job opportunities.
- Averaged a 15% employment rate from work placements based on more contact with employers and clients during work trials.
- Adapted the EOS system profiles into our job search workshop curricula to promote job postings being advertised by the City resulting in more accessibility to Investing in Neighbourhoods jobs.
- Expanded the ERC in 2014, creating a bigger space with more computers and phones available for job search.
- Continued posting employment opportunities by careers.
- Created a more diligent and efficient tracking system for ERC statistics and outcomes, allowing a glimpse of which services are most in demand.
- Optimized the use of Mock Interview Days through contact with corporate sponsors including Deloitte Consulting, Standard Life, T-CREW, Jarden, and RBC.

2013-2014 Challenges

- Lack of subsidized daycare places, transportation costs, and housing continued to be barriers for participants throughout the program. WSC saw a significant increase in letters of support written on behalf of participants.
- Keeping participants motivated to continue coming after placement, staff shortages, especially lack of full-time counsellors.

- Controversy about unpaid placements necessitating a change in strategy to provide work trials or use wage subsidy programs.

2014-2015 Strategies

Integrate more essential /life skills workshops into the curricula

Life skills workshops promote extensive team work in the activities which will benefit the students. Essential skills will help students to build or further enhance communication and interpersonal skills.

Investigate alternative job search modules and methodology

- Partner with EO Agencies to increase graduates employment opportunities and explore the use of incentives.
- Consider the trend toward non-permanent job, short contracts, and using temp agencies or staffing services. Some graduates start out by making contact with temporary employment; our goal is to respond to this trend ensuring we are not creating precarious employment but rather are creating new and positive partnerships with staffing agencies suited to our grads by going to meet them and learn about their business.

New strategies to promote job maintenance/job retention:

- Include the cost for a police check and vaccinations as a necessary expense in order to obtain and retain employment with companies that work with finances or vulnerable populations.
- Consider changing placement to a 8-week, job trial with a stipend as opposed to the unpaid 6-week period as many employers suggested that six weeks wasn't long enough for the students to understand and learn enough about their specific businesses.
- More employer visits to ensure that the workplace is in line with the students' studies and meets the participants' learning goals and workplace safety guidelines.
- Design and implement a pre-placement learning contract that will outline clear on-the-job learning goals and expectations for both graduate and employer.
- Develop an emergency fund for daycare primarily in the summer months as many single moms don't have child minding for school-age children.



Social Enterprise: Academy of Computer & Employment Skills (A.C.E.S.)

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 Canadian workforce. That 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, Academy of Computer & Employment Skills (A.C.E.S.), which now operates as a social enterprise. A.C.E.S. offers six Diploma options, approved as vocational programs under the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005:

- Computerized Accounting
- Computerized Office Administration
- Office Clerk
- Medical Receptionist
- Administrative Assistant with Desktop Publishing
- Supply Chain Clerk

In 2011, the Charitable Career Colleges Network (CCCN) was established to clearly set us apart from other for-profit private career colleges. In 2013 the CCCN made a presentation to the Superintendent of Career Colleges as the legislation was being reviewed. One major issue was the need to waive the security bond required of for-profit colleges.

The City of Toronto purchases Diploma courses for OW Clients as a 3rd party funder, however seats in the Diploma programs are available to fee paying clients who are not eligible for City funding. From time to time other 3rd party funding is available to assist individuals including Second Career for those on EI, Aboriginal Assets Funds, and a purchase by an employer. Financial assistance is also available from WSC through the Scholarship and Bursary Fund. WSC has never applied to be OSAP eligible as we do not believe that marginalized individuals should go into debt to obtain educational programs.

Recent Significant Milestones:

2012

- Launched a new format SAP end-user program based on the very successful Practice Firm model; 4 weeks of instructor-led training are combined with 4 weeks of hands-on practical

experience. Clients complete an actual project at either the end-user or implementation level. This mentorship style of training is a win-win on every occasion with positive employment outcomes for many skilled newcomers (83% employed within 3-months).

- With the forecast of specific billing programs being approved by the Ministry of Health in 2014, WSC created a partnership with Nightingale and designed a new Medical Office Procedures and Billing course to ensure clients would be certified in the use of an approved Electronic Medical Records program.

2013

- Launched a MS Office Certification Centre so that individuals could challenge the Certification tests for various applications. The fee for the Certification exam includes GMEX, a series of 5 practice tests to help the client prepare.
- WSC becomes a member of the Social Enterprise Toronto Steering Committee.

2014

- Successful project launch with LinkUp Employment Service for Persons with Disabilities including a group purchase project and sponsorship of several individual students; WSC is able to make appropriate accommodations to ensure clients can achieve goals.
- Joint project with Working Women Community Centre to provide reception training for nannies and caregivers (18 participants from the Social Café program).
- New part-time program "Medical Terminology" launched.
- 244 clients registered and completed part-time programs; with attrition less than 1%.
- Feasibility study for recruitment/admissions program is completed.
- WSC participated in first Social Enterprise Toronto Conference
- WSC presents a paper at ANSER, the Annual international conference for non-profit, social enterprises held in Niagara.

Social Enterprise Toronto actively pursuing procurement opportunities within government funded projects. A Community Benefit Framework has been signed with Metrolinx for the construction and maintenance of the Metrolinx LRT transit network that will create many opportunities for social procurement. Training for Administrative and Financial jobs could benefit us at WSC.

Fiscal year- revenue earned			
	FY-2012	FY-2013	FY-2014
PART-TIME	\$44,126.89	\$62,384.89	\$76,835.52
BURSARY	included in totals	included in totals	\$18,500.00
DIPLOMA	\$21,902.51	\$21,707.17	\$13,514.42
TOTAL	\$66,029.40	\$84,092.06	\$108,849.94

Note: The strategy of focusing on part-time programs that reflect the changing demands of the labour market has increased revenue (64.8% in 2 years).

WHAT OUR A.C.E.S. CLIENTS SAY ABOUT US

"Thank you very much your great teaching!

During the course your enthusiastic teaching taught to us, "Always to do proudly, professionally"

Wherever I am, I will never forget it with beautiful classmates. Thank you Silva !"

Kim Gap Jim; graduate Reception

"The Instructor perfectly simulated the role of Project Manager where we would be meeting once a week to review the deliverables and get directions for issues faced.

My participation at WSC program played crucial role in my success."

Mahboob Rahman; graduate SAP (HR)

"The Instructors are very knowledgeable. Their method of teaching is professional yet they really do care for their students. They are always willing to go extra mile to reach out to their students. Their classes are very interesting mainly due to their manner of teaching. The staff of WSC is very helpful, respectful, professional and friendly. They always try to find the best solution to meet the needs of clients.

It is very important to have such organizations especially for newcomers. WSC gives us opportunity to learn new employment skills in accordance with today's labour market. The courses are practical, valuable and affordable. I personally loved my programs and learned a great deal. The knowledge I gained will last a lifetime and it will help me in finding an employment. I am very grateful to my instructors for and the staff at WSC for all their support."

Marta Banach; graduate Medical Terminology

"Just to give some news at my end as I started a permanent job as Bilingual Accounting Clerk, Share Services at ChartWell Corporate Office in Mississauga. In the same time we started the Strategic and Leadership program which is the final part of the CMA Program. You are one of the first to encourage me to move ahead here in Toronto, and SAP (F&A) became a stepping stone for my success. Thank you."

Charly Tatchum; graduate SAP (F&A)

"Thank you for organizing and coordinating such an excellent Medical Administrative Assistant Program. It is a successful and memorable program. You have helped make this career very exciting. It is truly a very satisfactory position with much transferable skills and opportunities for growth. The classes are quite relevant and on-the job related which are indeed directly linked to gainful employment.

[the instructor] is very interesting and knowledgeable. She makes the class fun. She is a remarkable instructor. I like the fact that she refers to her personal work-related situation as examples when teaching a lesson along with regular course outline.

Also the school is conveniently located making the commute easy and adventurous. I certainly look forward to attending class each week. ... Once again, congratulations on a job well-done! I wish you the very best. "

Most Sincerely;

Georgina John; graduate Medical Office Procedures

Social Enterprise Research: Community University Research Alliance (CURA)



WSC is one of 14 Social Enterprises matched with the research capacity of six universities as part of a 5-year CURA coordinated by University of Toronto. Initial evidence shows that our social enterprise, A.C.E.S., makes a difference in immigrant's lives not only in academic achievement but in 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, and in year 2, 120 clients voluntarily completed a survey at intake and at the end of the program. Attempts to reach sufficient clients 6-months and 12-months later were unsuccessful but a case study / focus group approach provided some long-term results for analysis.

Some results surprised us such as the fact that clients who had strong religious or cultural beliefs were more likely to enrol and more likely to complete the Diploma program. In some other areas where we expected to see a significant change in confidence, the end program results seemed to reflect some fear of the unknown (will I get a job?) and the expected variance did not happen. Progress and outcomes have been reported at ANSER, a national conference held in New Brunswick in 2011, Waterloo in 2012, and Niagara in 2014. Our results will be published as a chapter in a book expected in 2015.

Settlement Programs

Newcomer Settlement Program

WSC continued to provide settlement services funded by the Newcomer Settlement Program (NSP) from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. 2013-2014 represented the first year of a new two-year funding agreement which will end in March 2015.

A team of five, part-time settlement counsellors provide one-on-one services to newcomers, primarily information and referrals to other community and government services but also including: needs assessment; goal setting; service planning; and assistance with form filling. 525 immigrants attended 1,416 sessions (an average of three sessions per clients).

696 clients attended 92 workshops and group sessions covering four broad categories: information on community resources; orientation to living in Ontario and Canada; life skills and healthy lifestyles for newcomers; and effective communication.

The Profile of NSP clients receiving settlement services indicates that:

- 78% were female and 22% male.
- 60% were 25-44 years of age and 32% were 45-64 years of age with no clients over 65 and 8% under 24.
- 62% of the immigrants coming to WSC had been in Canada for 5 years or more; of the newcomers 7% were here for less than a year; 13% less than 3 years.

Immigrant Status

Immigrant Status	% of Clients
Permanent Residents	46%
Refugee Claimants	7%
Canadian Citizens	44%
Other/not declared	3%

Top Ten Countries of Origin

Ranking	Country of Origin
1	Philippines
2	Jamaica
3	Iran
4	India
5	Trinidad & Tobago
6	Colombia
7	Pakistan
8	Russia
9	Sri Lanka
10	Afghanistan, Mexico, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and St. Vincent

This profile is consistent with WSC's traditional client group consisting largely of marginalized immigrant women. As in previous

From a former graduate

Before I came to Canada from Ukraine, I didn't know that I could get access to high quality education without any income or savings to pay for it. I'm glad that Working Skills Centre (WSC) gives an opportunity for newcomers get an education for careers that are in demand in the Canadian labour market.

When I came to WSC, I was surprised by how friendly and helpful the WSC team was. Every single day, I was happy to come to school and gain new knowledge. I met many friends, people who were similar to me, and who spoke English as a second language.

I learned about life and work management skills, how to prepare for work, and how to write a cover letter for a resume. The assignments and presentation offered me skills which are enabling me to handle very difficult daily situations, and the knowledge I gained is helping my day-to-day performance at my job. In my opinion, the credo of WSC is very much like a famous quote that says "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." WSC was a place of family and community for me for 6 months.

With the help of the WSC team, I got the opportunity to apply for a CSR role at TD Canada Trust. I was a candidate in a special program conducted by Social Capital Partners one of WSC's many community partnership initiatives. With the help of the professional coaching and hard work of the WSC staff, I've been offered this position!

Now I am working at TD Canada Trust as a Customer Service Representative and using all the knowledge I've gained while studying Accounting at WSC. Thank you, WSC team for your help in achieving my goals.

Now it is my turn to give back. I applied and have been accepted as a member of the Board of Directors. This will be another learning experience for me and I am very excited. The Board President met with me and told me I would have a lot to contribute as the Board values the input from past clients as they make strategic decisions.

Anastasiia I, graduate of Accounting Clerk, 2012

years, the large proportion of clients are those who have been in Canada for 5 years or more but have not been able to fully participate in society and therefore continue to need settlement services. Compared with last year there has been an increase from 43% to 46% for the proportion of clients in the permanent resident category.

The following were the main **achievements** in 2013-14:

- We met all the service targets in our NSP contract with an over 80% satisfaction rating on the survey completed by clients at the end of each information and workshop session.

- We provided a broader range of workshops and group sessions compared with previous years and introduced several new sessions including:
 - Mental Health and Wellness;
 - Anti-Racism Awareness;
 - Tenants' Rights and Responsibilities;
 - Self-Care in Stressful Times; and
 - Understanding Credit.
- New partnerships with the Opening Doors Project, Credit Canada Debt Solutions and Flemingdon Neighbourhood Services supplied speakers for the new sessions.
- We continued to maintain relationships with COSTI Immigrant Services, Toronto Workers' Health and Safety Legal Clinic, and Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services, all of whom contribute to our workshops and group sessions annually.
- There was more active participation in settlement networks compared with previous years. Our managers and settlement counsellors participated in several networks including the Toronto North Local Immigration Partnership (LIP), the Toronto South LIP, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), and the Yonge Eglinton Services Network.
- Participation in the LIPs, in particular, has greatly enhanced the work of our settlement counsellors who have been able to

develop professionally through the information sharing that takes place at workgroup meetings as well educational workshops sponsored by the LIPs on topics such as mental health, community resources and working with LGBTQ newcomers.

A major **challenge** continues to be the inability to fully address the needs of low-income immigrant women experiencing multiple and complex problems including debt, poor health, lack of access to affordable housing, lack of funds for dental services and lack of money for transportation to attend workshops and programs. These problems are sometimes further compounded by uncertainty over immigration status. Referrals are regularly made to community health centres, housing help centres, food banks, counselling services, employment services and community legal clinics but unfortunately the barriers for some clients are so extensive, that these resources are insufficient.

Many clients have been unemployed for extended periods and have exhausted their savings and family resources. Difficulty meeting basic needs is a barrier to participation in government-sponsored programs that could enhance employability and possibly lead to employment and self-sufficiency in Canada.

Citizenship Test Preparation Program

In late 2012, WSC heard from our community partners that there was need for classes to help newcomers prepare for their Citizenship exams. The increased need for classes was related to the introduction by Citizenship and Immigration Canada of a new study guide aimed at a higher reading level and with more detailed information to remember. WSC proposed provision of a Citizenship Test Preparation Program based on a documented community need. Previously the failure rate for newcomers challenging the Citizenship Test was 7%, but with the new requirement in 2013 this number of failures rose to 22%. The Citizenship Test Preparation Program is part of a Toronto North LIP pilot project that has two main goals: to increase the rate of participants passing the Citizenship knowledge test and to increase newcomer civic and community engagement.

Over the course of the year we ran three programs, the first from February to May 2013; the second from August to October 2013 and the third from February to April 2014. A total of 35 participants attended the citizenship test preparation program and to date 10 have appeared for their test and passed.



The classes and notes you provided were very helpful in building an understanding of what is in the study guide. You cannot simply memorize facts. You have to understand the information in order to pass the test!"

Carol Sun, March, 2014
Candidate who recently became a Canadian Citizen

Volunteers from Standard Life, Alice Tsang and Avril Alleyne (pictured above with class from Spring 2014) played an important role in the delivery of this program. They have helped us enrich the learning content through their extensive knowledge of Canadian culture, history and geography, and in so doing are helping expand the horizons of clients beyond the Citizenship and Immigration Canada study guide. The discussion also served to improve spoken English language skills.

Social Café

Social Café is a FREE weekly networking and learning opportunity geared towards marginalized immigrant women, especially nannies and caregivers. These Saturday sessions were an opportunity to gain practical knowledge, make lifelong friends, build communication skills and learn more about Canada.

This program is funded in part by a grant from the RBC Foundation. 85 participants attended representing 30 countries of origin.

Between November 2013 and July 2014, there were a total of 28 Social Café sessions, including seminars on communication skills, essential skills, Personality Profiles, Diabetes Prevention, TB Prevention and RBC sessions on banking, mortgages and investments. The program also offered activities including: yoga, games and talent competition, memoir writing, arts and crafts, a hiking trip, several movie days, and a Scavenger Hunt to learn more about useful and famous locations in Toronto.

Sponge Printing *Sample by Marta Alfaro*

Participants used sponges to paint instead of paint brushes. The sponges create a unique texture on the paper.



Egg Box Painting *Sample by Edith Nassozi*

Participants recycled egg boxes and cut the boxes into a design and painted it, in order to create a design. This recycling method created many beautiful art pieces!



Scratching Technique

Sample called "Home and Work" by Christine Jane Borillo

Participants first coloured the piece of paper with different colours of oil pastel; then they painted on top of the oil pastel with black acrylic paint. After the paint dried they used something sharp and scratched the surface to make their design.



Mixed Technique *Sample by Anie Moreno*

The participants mixed two mediums together, oil pastel and water colour. Water colour and oil pastel are two very different textured mediums, when mixed together create an interesting combination.

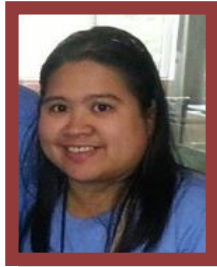


Scavenger Hunt 2014! The focus of this event was for the participants to get more familiar with popular locations in downtown and socialize with a group of people from different cultures. The children and adults alike had lots of fun and took many pictures at all the destinations.



Memoir Writing

My Journey in Canada



It's hard to struggle in another country you are not familiar with and what you need to do is work all day. When I came here in Canada in 2007 I thought I was dreaming. I became a nanny and took care of children for two years.

Using new high tech electronics to clean the house like vacuum, dishwasher, microwave oven, electric stove etc. gave me real shock. I needed to do this to support my family back home in the Philippines. I worked with a nice family for two years on a live-in caregiver work permit in Mississauga on weekdays and stayed weekends in Toronto with my aunt and friends.

After two years I filed my application for an open permit and Permanent Resident status. I needed to renew my work permit that would expire before receiving my open permit. The government kept on changing their rules and standards every year. I had to make sure all my papers were updated. Finally after 3 years I got my open permit. I decided to leave my employer and work in different job to earn more money but I also encountered no work at all and had only Employment Insurance to support myself. After 6 months of waiting I got my Permanent Resident (PR) Card. This is one form of identification that will give you more benefits. Later I worked as a cashier at night and after school during my free time as a part-time job.

After 6 months, I finished my Administrative Assistant course and thought I can get a job that I am aiming for in an office but still you need to go with the flow in the job market. There is a lot of competitions here and there. I decided to go again for a different job not related to my chosen career to survive. I worked in a retail store as a survival job and volunteered to gain Canadian experience.

Finally in December 2013, I got my citizen letter and did the citizenship test. It's tough that they gave me a notice of only a week to study and pass the exam. I got help from where I am doing volunteering every Saturday at WSC. They gave me some useful materials. Luckily, I passed my citizenship test and now I am waiting for my oath taking to become a full Canadian Citizen. In life we need to have more patience and have faith in the Lord. Life is not as easy as we think. Hope you like my journey in Canada.

By: Christine Jane Borillo

Memoir writing was an important part of the program as it provided an outlet for expression of emotions but also worked on the English communication skills, both verbal and written. The sessions were coordinated by a community partner: Institute of Leadership for Women in Ontario.

Financial Seminars

RBC not only provided a grant to help defray the expenses for program coordination, supplies and refreshments, the Managers from our local branch donated their time and expertise.

Three seminars were provided to participants. **#1 Investments**



John Franco and Bill Forest, Account Managers from RBC at Yonge-Eglinton presented information on **Investments** to 33 participants. We learned about TFSA, RESP, RRSP and RDSP—different kinds of savings accounts!

RBC session #2—Everyday Banking and Credit

From this RBC presentation, the participants learned about how to maintain a good credit score, about the account options available for children, adults, students, and businesses, and about how to track their finances online with *myFinanceTracker*. The presenters were Angie French and Surbhi Pinto, who are both Senior Account Managers at RBC, Yonge-Eglinton Branch.

RBC Session #3: Mortgages

The presentation was very helpful to the participants and they asked many questions about down payments and RRSP! We learned about saving for a down payment using a Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) or a Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA), protecting our assets, different kinds of mortgages and related rates (open mortgages are really expensive!), and how to use a mortgage payment calculator. The facilitators were John Franco and Jackie Pennycook, both Account Managers at the Yonge-Eglinton Branch.



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 for positions that provide both capacity to the organization and on-the-job training to the employee. Current positions are: Traditional Counsellor/Teacher (at the COYOTE project), Employer Liaison Officer, Social Enterprise Assistant, and Career Assessment and Resource Centre Coordinator. Financially, the value of this contract is over \$85,000 per year, but the far greater significance is the expertise and dedication the individuals in these positions bring to the organization.

Summer Interns

Each year, WSC receives funding from Service Canada, through the Canadian Job Strategy, to hire students who are returning to school in the fall. These young people provide value and refreshing energy while completing much needed tasks for the organization. In 2013, we hired three University of Toronto co-op students to assist with the planning of the special exhibits and workshops for Transitions, Immigrant Women's Journeys. This event added value and excitement to our 35th Anniversary year and the exhibits became part of the 35th Anniversary celebration as well as the Transitions event.

In 2014, WSC once again hired three University of Toronto co-op students under the Canada Job Strategy and another under the provincial Summer Experience Program. The four students worked together to extend the Social Café program started earlier in the year with funds from RBC Foundation and to enhance our social media presence. One of the students also developed a series of employer workshops to help them understand the Indigenous culture and challenges and advantages of hiring from this community; we hope to encourage these employers to hire Aboriginal youth who are graduates of our COYOTE program.

Practicum 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 WSC students and graduates, others 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, work with us on various HR projects, share information on industry standards, and staff our reception desk.

Community Partnerships

WSC partners with other agencies 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; some of these partnerships are highlighted below:

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.

People and Organizations in North Toronto (POINT) is a community-based agency promoting social and health services in the community. POINT and WSC formed a partnership in 2011 to operate a social group for live-in caregivers on Saturdays. This was an opportunity for isolated women to interact socially; workshops during these sessions provided information on banking, community programs, employment standards, and career planning. Using the grant from RBC Foundation, this program was re-activated and greatly expanded in 2014 with new workshops but still focused on the same clientele. POINT linked the project to Public Health to provide seminars on diabetes, a key health concern among newcomers.

Also in 2013, POINT was our partner in establishing the Yonge Eglinton Services Network, a group of agencies all within walking distance from the Yonge Eglinton intersection, each of which provide unique and equally important programs to assist individuals to settle in Toronto and move toward self-sufficiency.

Institute of Leadership for Women of Ontario (ILFO) is a non-profit, charitable organization dedicated to providing various programs and services to immigrant women and community members. Services include educational programs, a resource centre which has a library, computers and office equipment available to members, and activities to promote and support other community-based organizations. In 2014, ILFO was an active partner in the Social Café leading the art and memoir writing classes and providing a licensed hike leader for our community ventures.

Working Women Community Centre (WWCC) is a non-profit, settlement focused agency with which WSC has partnered for many years. In 2013-14, WWCC promoted the Social Café program to their Nannies and Caregivers program, greatly enhancing the reach of this initiative. A WWCC employee also provided workshops on Saturdays. Some of these same WWCC clients who are engaged in survival jobs also registered for the Reception training program on Friday evenings.

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.

Subsidized Wage Options from Employment Ontario Agencies: Dixon Hall, Thorncliffe Neighborhood Office, and Labour Education Centre

Employment Ontario offices are committed to assisting unemployed individuals in the GTA to attain a better quality of life. In 2013, our Volunteer Coordinator, the 35th Anniversary Event Coordinator, our



Career Opportunities for Youth, Training and Work Experience (COYOTE)

Career Opportunities for Youth, Training and Work Experience (COYOTE) is a program for Indigenous or Marginalized/Racialized youth (age 18-29), approached from two perspectives: traditional and mainstream education. Delivered off-site from WSC at Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre (Dundas and Parliament), we work in partnership with participants to build a 'holistic' or 'wrap around' approach. Throughout the program, everyone is encouraged to use Council Fire's free lunch program and activities at the Gathering Place.

Council Fire delivers curriculum to cover traditional learning, heritage issues, and develop self-awareness and confidence for Aboriginal youth. WSC provides certificate training based on modules from the Medical Receptionist Diploma program, as part of its licensed career college, Academy of Computer & Employment Skills. Specifically this 32-week training enhances employability in mainstream medical facilities, at the same time developing competencies integrating traditional and mainstream healing practices. Components include:

- Traditional explorations to enhance spirit and develop confidence and security;
- Microsoft Office (certifications in Word and/or Excel);
- Medical Terminology, Medical Office Procedures, and an introduction to Medical Transcription;
- Certificate in Electronic Medical Records; and
- Knowledge of Traditional Healing.

The program includes computer training, traditional learning, special ceremonies, practical work experience, a work placement with an employer, job search assistance and job retention support. Every Monday a counsellor conducts a sharing circle and daily smudging ceremonies are the norm through the building. A completion award, a notebook computer, will be given to each graduate.

Marketing Assistant and two Receptionists were supported jointly by WSC and EO agencies, an example of commitment to strengthening the community through partnerships promoting equality and self-reliance. In almost every situation, WSC was able to hire the individual on a contract following the 3-months of subsidized wages.

Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre provides counselling, material assistance and other direct services to First Nations people to encourage and enhance spiritual and personal growth. In December 2013 Council Fire joined WSC in submitting a proposal to provide training for Aboriginal clients and the successful bid resulted in WSC establishing the COYOTE program.



A logo contest was held at Council Fire in May and June and a student from the computer program was awarded special recognition for her design. The logo represents traditional medicine, mainstream medicine, and the two partner organizations that have made this program possible within the four directions' framework.

The first group of 15 participants started their training on June 24th and the second group is scheduled to start on October 27th. Assessments are on-going until that time with Information Sessions every Tuesday and Thursday at Toronto Council Fire from 1:30-3:30 and on alternate Wednesdays at Miziwe Biik Employment Services.

The project is funded, in part, by a two-year grant from the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. To date we have been successful in securing additional funding, as required, from various sources to assist the clients to cover the cost of books and materials, not included in the grant.

Support from Toronto Employment and Social Services for the client on Ontario Works

Six of the seven eligible COYOTE students who are receiving OW living allowances obtained funding for the material fee. All students on OW have been granted a monthly amount for transportation and are purchasing their Metropasses, using their student cards. The students on OW are also eligible for a clothing allowance to purchase work clothes for when the six week work trial begins near the end of the program.

Band Funding

One student has realized band funding from Naadmaadwiuk for living allowance, material fee, transportation and other expenses. Three other students are in the process of applying for band funding from Sagamok Anishnawbek.

Miziwe Biik Funding

One student was granted for funding for transportation, material fee and clothing allowance. We have connected with Sarah Belisle who was a former field placement student from George Brown College (GBC) at WSC several years ago.

Katherine Blinkhorn Scholarship

Two of the Aboriginal students have applied for the Katherine Blinkhorn Scholarship.

Contribution by Practicum Placement Student-

A practicum student from GBC who is taking the Career Counselling program, has been pleased to work with Toronto Council Fire to begin to learn more about the Aboriginal heritage and special skills and needs of this group. Her contribution was outstanding; she provided administrative support with student files and necessary telephone calls to students. She also assisted the traditional teacher with program and facility set up and with support providing food and refreshments.



The COYOTE team and first Advisory Committee soon to be joined by representatives from the community including employers, youth mentors, Elders, individuals who are associated with the Aboriginal community and counsellors or managers from various agencies working with Aboriginal and/or newcomer youth.

Review of what has been covered in the Traditional Learning

In traditional learning, the Grandfather teachings have been covered. Westwind Evening, the traditional counsellor and instructor, has also touched on subjects such as residential schools and assimilation policy. She has explained cultural background such as the four sisters; truth, spirit, humour, and nurturing.

Pauline Shirt, the Elder who is working with the project, has talked of the thirteen moons, four directions and spirit bundle. In August, a special session was conducted to provide students with background about the current media coverage of Grassy Narrows. Westwind conducts the sharing circles on each Monday to prepare students for the week ahead.

Review of what has been covered in the Medical Program

Diane England, who teaches regularly for WSC in both the STDLE Medical Receptionist Diploma program and the part-time courses for Medical Billing and Medical Office Procedures, has developed curriculum specifically for this program. She will ensure that graduates are prepared for employment in a hospital or clinic using an approved Electronic Medical Records system, as required by the Ministry of Health after January 2014. Diane works at Toronto East General Hospital as a Medical Administrator and brings her own special knowledge and understanding of the role to the classroom.

Pratima Ghai, a physician from another country who is not able to practice in Canada, is teaching Medical Terminology.

Westwind is arranging various speakers and healers to come to the program and field trips for the students to ensure a good understanding of traditional medicine.

When they graduate, these youth will be uniquely versed in both what we consider mainstream medical office administration and traditional healing. We hope they will bring this mix to physicians' offices and the medical treatment offered to individuals from an Aboriginal heritage will be improved.

Job Search and Placement Preparation

The Employment Counsellor from WSC is also facilitating the WSC 10-session Job Search Program at COYOTE.

We have formed a working relationship with Dixon Hall Employment Services, a local agency with great career and job search resources and with the Regent Park Social Services office. Both have staff ready to assist the graduates as they locate placements and find employment.

Our target is to have at least eight individuals graduate from each group and at least six become employed within 6-months.

Small Fundraising Events and Corporate Support

TEAM WSC! Raised over \$5,300 in March 2014

Once again, Team WSC! participated in a 5km walk called the Achilles St. Patrick's Day Race. A sunny but cold day greeted members of the 10-person team who ran, walked or cheered. Supported by both staff and Board members who collected funds, we were able to raise \$5,326. 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

Pro Bono Legal Advice from **McMillan** was arranged through **Maytree Foundation** starting in 2011. Annually, the law firm has been providing up to \$25,000 to assist with issues ranging from employment issues to a GST/HST appeal. This year we hope to complete a by-law review to ensure compliance with new non-profit corporation legislation expected for Ontario.

Student Fundraising Initiatives

Periodically, a student committee organizes and implements a fundraising luncheon, bake sale and garage sales at WSC. Supervised by Silva Mardirossian, the students learn about event planning as part of their office administration curriculum. Each event nets approximately \$500.00, providing extra revenue for special needs.



In 2014, a new course was launched: Business and Life Skills. Under the guidance of a community volunteer the target group of isolated, marginalized immigrant women, learned basic business principles. They put the new learning into practice and planned their own graduation dinner as a fundraising event, netting over \$800.00 which they contributed back to the organization.

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 in 2011 as part of a strategy to build a relationship with RBC. This move first 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. In 2014 WSC continued to receive support with a \$15,000 grant from the RBC Foundation to help us kick start the Social Café program. This initiative as noted elsewhere in the report provided Saturday workshops and networking for over 80 immigrant women, mainly nannies and caregivers.

As well, in 2013, our local branch, Yonge and Eglinton coordinated managers from different branches and departments to act as mentors for our students. Working with WSC's graduate services staff, a Mock Interview Day was held for graduates from the Accounting Program. One graduate even landed a job with RBC as a result.



The Standard Life Assurance Company of Canada

Since 2012, Standard Life has donated \$10,000 annually to support skills upgrading and career programs. In addition to the donation, annually employees volunteer for a Standard Life Mock Interview Day. 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.

As a result of this partnership, employees from Standard Life have also volunteered for two very important roles:

- Two employees worked with the Citizenship Test Preparation classes
- The HR Consultant assisted with the planning for a workload mapping project which will be completed in 2015.



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 was seen as fit by this group. Selected in 2011 as the recipient of \$18,000, part of the funds raised at the 2010 Charity Golf Event, WSC has received grants in 2012 (\$15,000) and 2013 (\$7,500) from this organization as well. While this was the last season for a financial contribution, T-CREW will continue to work with WSC to provide a Mock Interview Day in the coming year. Annually Oxford Properties has donated space for the event and a volunteer coordinator from T-CREW works with the WSC graduate services staff. T-CREW volunteers from corporations such as Cadillac Fairview, Oxford Properties, Kingsett Capital Fund, One Solution Designs, Matrix Search Group, Brookfield Properties, McCarthy Tetrault, Bennett Jones, and KPMG, act as interviewers for 40 newcomers who received assistance in their job search process. The feedback from the volunteer interviewers was invaluable in ensuring that these clients are ready for the job market. The experience of going to a corporate office in downtown Toronto is a little frightening at first, but this mock interview day ensures the clients are prepared when they get that real job opportunity.



Soroptimist International is a global volunteer organization working to improve the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment. With more than 1,300 clubs

- in 19 countries and territories Soroptimist is committed to:
- Gender Equality: Women and girls live free from discrimination.
 - Empowerment: Women and girls are free to act in their own best interest.
 - Education: Women and girls deserve to lead full and productive lives through access to education.
 - Diversity & Fellowship: Women from varied backgrounds and perspectives work together to improve the lives of women and girls.

These values are perfectly aligned with WSC's mission and periodic contributions from the Toronto chapter have helped us to purchase much needed TTC tokens to provide transportation support to the marginalized women attending our programs.



The Toronto Foundation connects philanthropy with community needs and opportunities in order to make

Toronto the best place to live, work, learn, and grow. It is one of the largest of Canada's more than 191 community foundations, holding over \$300 million in assets as it works with hundreds of Torontonians who care about their city as well as many high-impact community organizations. The Foundations' mission is to connect philanthropy to community needs and opportunities. WSC has been the recipient of Toronto Community Foundation Vidal Ideas Awards in 2009 and 2011 and has benefited in 2013 from a \$5,000 donation from the Shum Vourkoutiotis Family Fund.



Playing for Keeps (P4K) is a special Toronto Foundation initiative designed to leverage the 2012 Ontario Summer Games and the 2015 Pan/ Parapan

American Games to create a legacy of healthier, more active and stronger communities and a deepened sense of belonging. WSC was honoured to be invited as one of 15 Community Hubs and we now support over 25 volunteer Ambassadors, each planning and implementing neighbourhood games as part of this larger strategy.



Corporate Social Responsibility is embodied in every aspect of **Jarden Consumer**

Solution's business operations. It is reflected in how the company utilizes natural resources and creates a safe and secure work environment for its employees. Jarden's Corporate Social Responsibility vision is focused on continuing to find innovative ways to enhance its brand value, consumer experience and operating results through environmentally sustainable and socially sensitive business practices.



The Jarden Consumer Solutions (JCS) Community Fund, an employee-funded charitable organization, provides grants to qualified charitable organizations engaged in community development programs, which

focus efforts on at-risk women, families, youth and food programs.

In 2014, WSC received a grant for \$5,000 as a contribution to the Mock Interview Day programs. These scheduled days offer an opportunity for our clients to be interviewed by corporate representatives from the community. Each event takes extensive coordination as over 70 candidates are given a chance to try out new skills learned in the recent job search workshops as part of their skills training. These funds allowed us to organize multiple days in conjunction with other corporate support and provide feedback to more than 200 immigrant women to empower them to move forward with their career search with confidence.



One of WSC's 2013-14 Directors, Liz Oke, is a marketing guru and on behalf of WSC she applied for, received and implemented a campaign on **Google AdWords** which raised our visibility and drove clients to our web site to find out more about our services. Google AdWords donates up to \$10,000 per month in free advertising to WSC as a result of her efforts. While we have not made optimal use of this marketing strategy, it is high on the list of new directions for 2015.



PepsiCo pursues six strategic imperatives that help local communities build and secure strong futures two of which are

aligned with WSC's mission: Enable Job Readiness and Empower Women and Girls. WSC's Board Secretary Jody Peck connected WSC to PepsiCo through the matching grants program using **CAF**



America, an organization that offers global grantmaking & philanthropic advisory services to corporations,

foundations, and individuals. As a U.S. public charity, CAF America is able to accept funds from American donors and issue applicable tax receipts, allowing a multi-national company such as PepsiCo to match donations made by Canadian employees. Over the past two years, WSC has received \$7,780 in donations towards the WSC Scholarship and Bursary Fund.

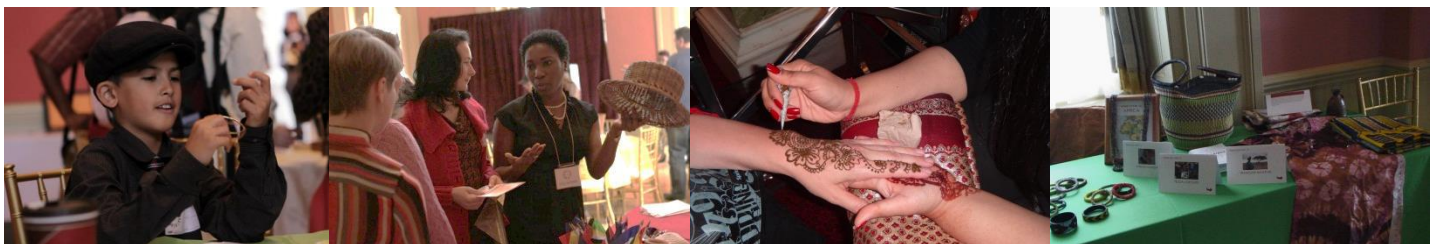


WSC works in partnership with Nightingale to create a mock physician's office to properly train our Medical Receptionist candidates in the use of an approved Electronic Medical Records system.



"Deloitte" is the brand under which tens of thousands of dedicated professionals in independent firms throughout the world collaborate to provide audit, consulting, financial advisory, risk management, tax, and related services to select clients. As a leading professional services firm, Deloitte contributes to public policy, business and society respecting human dignity and expanding its capabilities through inclusion and cultural diversity.

Deloitte Impact Day is an annual event where professionals give back to the community; since 2010, WSC has been one of the Impact Day projects. 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. Annually Deloitte contributes \$1,000 towards the food, supplies and coordination of this event, in addition to the time of 20 volunteers.



Transitions, Immigrant Women's Journeys, 2013

Transitions - Immigrant Women's Journeys 2013 was an afternoon event funded by a grant from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Multicultural Events Stream. Corporate sponsors provided food, participated as speakers, and donated funding to assist with the delivery of the event. The program was designed to open dialogue and through various activities promote inter-action between different cultures and faiths.

Using a festival like format, over 200 participants circulated on their own time through a multi-panel display depicting major patterns of immigration and settlement in Toronto over the past 35 years. Volunteers, representing different cultures and faiths, led discussions with small groups exploring some fun facts, and asking if they would like to try a cultural game that is popular in their country (e.g. Turkish games: tongue twisters).

The primary information was exhibited on presentation boards augmented by personal artifacts arranged on the tables. Each presentation board featured facts about the culture in terms of food, clothing, entertainment, and history of immigrants in Toronto (where they settle, types of jobs they take, languages spoken, religious faith

relationships, political activities). International performers helped to build connections between different cultures and for some, even produce a better understanding of their own cultural roots. Special activities included creating Dream Catchers, henna painting, "Fabergé" egg painting, and tying a Sari.

This event built bridges with mainstream employers who often do not have a good understanding of different cultural backgrounds. Improving each employer's ability to relate to existing and potential employees from different cultures in a non-threatening, festival atmosphere was designed to help create an integrated, more socially cohesive society.

Examining immigration patterns over the past 35 years, participants gained an understanding of how cultural differences are woven into the Canadian fabric creating a sense of civic pride. A video montage of interviews with people on the street in various Toronto communities was shown at the event and then put onto the WSC web site to further share the information gathered as part of this project. The displays were also available at our 35th Anniversary event, reaching even more employers.

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 east of the Yonge-Eglinton intersection, is 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. 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. In addition WSC partners with Toronto Council Fire at Dundas and Parliament to provide a program called COYOTE for Indigenous youth.

Location

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

2013-2014 Directors & Officers

Graham Donald, President	*Sarah Cordner
Jody Peck, Secretary	*Elizabeth Graham-Rowe
Alexandra Paalvast, Treasurer	Liz Oke
Gail Johnson Morris, Past President	Hetal Pandya
Shamima Adam	Vidula Shetye
Nafisah Chowdhury	<i>*indicates WSC graduates</i>

Acknowledgements Working Skills Centre (WSC) would like to acknowledge our 2013-2014 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
 - Summer Experience Program
- Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
 - Employment Ontario, Job Creation Partnership
- Toronto Community Foundation
 - Playing for Keeps Program

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 Enterprise Toronto
- Toronto Workforce Innovation Group
- Toronto North & Toronto South LIPs
- Yonge-Eglinton Service Network

Service Delivery Partners

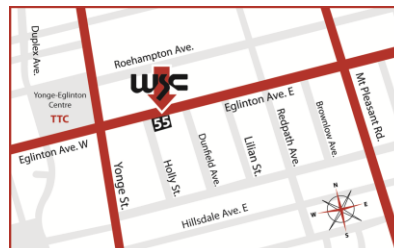
- ACCES Employment Services
- A-Way Courier Service
- Canadian Supply Chain Sector Council
- COSTI Immigrant Services
- Dixon Hall Employment Services
- Mothercraft College and Child Care Centres
- Institute of Leadership for Women in Ontario
- JobStart
- Learning Enrichment Foundation
- Ontario Council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



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.



COYOTE Suite #206
Career Opportunities for Youth,
Training and Work Experience

Proposed in 2013, COYOTE serves Aboriginal and Newcomer youth in partnership with Toronto Council Fire Cultural Centre. Over a 2-year period, 60 youth will undertake training in Medical Office Procedures, Electronic Medical Records and Traditional Medicine. Ready.Set.Work.Ontario