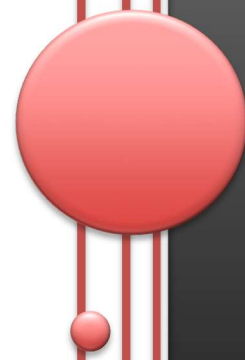


# 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

*A review of activities from the 2017-2018 fiscal year*





PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE

November 16, 2018

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to everyone attending the Annual General Meeting and 40th Anniversary Celebration of the Working Skills Centre.



Since first opening its doors, the Working Skills Centre has helped new Canadians and the disadvantaged overcome barriers to employment and move towards economic self-sufficiency. This milestone provides a wonderful opportunity to reflect upon the history of your organization and to celebrate its many achievements.

I would like to commend the staff, volunteers and supporters who make it possible for the Working Skills Centre to accomplish its mission. Your commitment to improving the quality of life of your fellow citizens provides an inspiring example for all Canadians.

Please accept my best wishes for a memorable anniversary and continued success.

Sincerely,

The Rt. Hon. Justin P. J. Trudeau, P.C., M.P. Prime Minister of Canada



**Premier of Ontario - Premier ministre de l'Ontario**

November 16, 2018

### **A MESSAGE FROM PREMIER DOUG FORD**

I'm pleased to extend greetings to everyone celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Working Skills Centre.

I want to congratulate the team at the Working Skills Centre on the organization's four decades of service. You can be proud of your dedication to supporting newcomers as they build new lives in Ontario.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize the many contributions that newcomers have made to our province's strength and prosperity. No matter where any of us come from, or how long we have lived here, Ontario is a place where opportunity exists for everyone.

Congratulations again on this special anniversary. I hope you enjoy a terrific celebration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Doug Ford'.

**Doug Ford**  
**Premier**



### Message from the Mayor

It is my pleasure to extend greetings and congratulations to Working Skills Centre on the occasion of its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

I commend Working Skills Centre's volunteers and professional services staff for helping people to receive the skills, motivation and workplace experience to overcome barriers to employment and find work.

This anniversary is a cause for celebration, a time to reflect on Working Skills Centre's many accomplishments and an opportunity to look with hope to a future of new possibilities.

On behalf of Toronto City Council, please accept my best wishes for a memorable celebration and continued success.

Yours truly,



John Tory  
Mayor of Toronto



**Hon. Carolyn Bennett, M.D.**  
*Member of Parliament / Députée*  
*Toronto-St. Paul's*

November 16, 2018



Dear Friends:

I am delighted to extend my warm greetings to everyone attending the Annual General Meeting of the Working Skills Centre.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of Working Skills Centre. For four decades you have assisted newcomers in creating a sustainable livelihood through skills training, professional experience, and settlement support.

Though I cannot be there in person this evening, please accept my heartfelt thanks for your invaluable contributions to our community and best wishes for continued success and an enjoyable evening.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn".

Hon. Carolyn Bennett  
Member of Parliament, Toronto-St. Paul's

---

**Parliamentary Office / Bureau parlementaire**  
Room/Pièce 106, Justice Building / Édifice de la Justice  
House of Commons / Chambre des Communes  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6  
Tel/Tél: (613) 995-9666  
Fax/Télé: (613) 947-4622

---

**Constituency Office / Bureau de circonscription**  
Suite 103  
40 rue Holly Street  
Toronto, Ontario, M4S 3C3  
Tel/Tél: (416) 952-3990  
Fax/Télé: (416) 952-3995

[carolyn.bennett@parl.gc.ca](mailto:carolyn.bennett@parl.gc.ca) | [www.carolynbennett.ca](http://www.carolynbennett.ca)



*Shaun Chen*

Member of Parliament / Député  
Scarborough North / Scarborough–Nord



November 16, 2018

## A Personal Message from MP Shaun Chen

As the Member of Parliament for Scarborough North, I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to the organizers and attendees of Working Skills Centre's Annual General Meeting and 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Today's event is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate Working Skills Centre and its success over the past 40 years. The organization continues to make a remarkable contribution in promoting the wellbeing of Canadian immigrants through their services and programs.

I congratulate WSC on this amazing accomplishment. As Canadians, we are truly blessed to live in a nation that welcomes people for all corners of the world. Gatherings such as this are a reminder of how much stronger we are as a country because of our diversity.

Please accept my best wishes for a most successful event.

Sincerely,

Shaun Chen

Member of Parliament

Scarborough North





*As the  
Member of Provincial Parliament  
for York South-Weston, it is my pleasure to present*

## *Working Skills Center*

*With this certificate of recognition as you,  
celebrate the occasion of your*

### *40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

*Congratulations of your 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary!  
Thank you for your continued service in the community.  
This is a wonderful milestone and  
I wish you all the best!*



*Faisal Hassan MPP  
York South-Weston  
November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018*



## Management Report

### Highlights for 2017-2018

The past year was among the most challenging year faced by the management team and staff of Working Skills Centre (WSC). With the capable assistance of a new Board of Directors, our dedicated volunteers, our funding partners and an extremely professional and hardworking core staff team, we were able to emerge stronger, more focused and prepared to meet the challenges of the future. I want to express my deepest gratitude to each one of them for their invaluable help and support.

Three years ago WSC had accumulated a financial deficit of over \$60,000. Through the hard work and dedication of WSC staff and our many volunteers, this deficit was eliminated in 2017 and we finished the fiscal year with a surplus of over \$55,000.

WSC's activities during the 2017-18 year have renewed dedication to serving the community and helping people in need. WSC's focus on enabling disadvantaged Canadians and newcomers to achieve financial self-sufficiency through meaningful employment formed the bulk of our development programs. The City of Toronto funded programs (POES) were extended and continued to produce superior results.

In 2018, a new program aimed at refugees and vulnerable newcomers started with financial support from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. The innovative format of this program was designed and developed by Working Skills Centre based on our extensive experience in experiential learning and skills training leading to longer-term employment. The program is unique in Canada and to date successful employment outcomes have surpassed expectations.

Details of the success rates for all of WSC's Training and Employment Programs are provided in the body of this Annual Report. WSC management continues to actively solicit feedback and input from both employers and past graduates to improve our programs and ensure that graduates have the skills that are needed in today's competitive job market.

In January 2018, WSC launched a new program: Seniors Empowering Seniors for Community Engagement. The program, funded by the federal New Horizons for Seniors Program (Service Canada), focuses on enabling seniors to volunteer and share their depth of knowledge and skills with organizations that are in need of assistance.

A higher degree of financial stability and vigour in our core program delivery has allowed WSC Management to focus more on WSC's strategic initiatives for 2018-19:

- ★ Analyzing current curricula and outcomes with the objective of creating more innovative programs targeting different groups of vulnerable people in the community
- ★ Securing additional funding for our programs. Currently the demand exceeds WSC's means to accommodate all in need of help
- ★ Obtaining a new WSC office location, as our current office is slated for redevelopment
- ★ Celebrating WSC's 40th anniversary of serving the community with a number of events
- ★ Providing more robust data collection on WSC's success outcomes, to be shared with our funding partners and other Not-for-Profit organizations for broader community outreach.

In conclusion, once again I would like to thank all WSC Volunteers & Members, our Board of Directors and the extremely dedicated team of staff professionals at WSC. Strength, resilience and persistence in the face of adversity is a hallmark of WSC as an organization. It is also something we pass on to all our graduates. We are united and unwavering in our desire to help others to ultimately help themselves, their families and their community.

*Marina Nikova, Executive Director  
August 2018*



## 2. Treasurer's Report

Financial information has been extracted from the Audited Financial Statement as @ March 31, 2018 (David Burkes, CA)

### Assets & Liabilities

#### CURRENT ASSET

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>
Cash	54,701	0
Accounts Receivable	94,731	34,717
Grant Contributions Receivable	12,672	13,657
HST Recoverable	6,854	10,566
Prepaid Expenses and Deposits	10,570	9,282
	<u>179,528</u>	<u>68,222</u>
Equipment/ Capital Assets	106,536	139,894
	<u><u>\$ 286,064</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 208,116</u></u>

#### CURRENT LIABILITIES

Bank Advances	0	34,364.00
A/P & Accrued Liabilities	21,484.00	43,486.00
Differed Revenue	400.00	3,335.00
Differed Operating Grants	111,782.00	21,551.00
Differed Contributions related to Capital Assets	96,422.00	122,181.00
Unrestricted Net Assets	55,976.00	(16,801)
	<u><u>\$ 286,064</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 208,116</u></u>

### Financial Position

#### Statement of Operations

#### REVENUE

Government/ Foundation Contributions	250,039	257,606
TESS Skills Training & Employment Services	305,098	315,491
TESS Skills Training Diploma & Certificate Programs	86,024	65,632
Fundraising, Donations and other Income	24,024	46,913
Donation-in-Kind	12,572	7,170
	<u><u>\$ 677,757</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 692,812</u></u>

#### EXPENSES

Salaries	361,766	410,015
Employee Benefits	28,590	32,420
Occupancy Costs	108,975	106,886
Outreach/ Marketing	81	1,350
Bank Charges & Internet	6,479	5,816
Computer Software, Supplies & Technical Services	6,473	32,516
Equipment Leasing & Maintenance	18,329	13,742
Insurance	17,479	17,479
Office Supplies	4,985	5,003
Professional Fees	7,349	8,040
Program Resource Materials	18,370	24,787
Telephone	4,577	4,802
Travel & Participant Expenses	1,356	1,103
Donation-in-Kind	12,572	7,170
	<u><u>\$ 597,381</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 671,129</u></u>

#### Revenue over Expenses Operations

80,376	21,683
--------	--------

#### Amortization

(7,599)	(7,779)
---------	---------

#### Net Expenses over Revenue

<u><u>\$ 72,777</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 13,904</u></u>
-------------------------	-------------------------

# 3. Skills Training

## Purchase of Employment Services (POES)

In 2015 WSC secured a new contract with the City of Toronto to deliver employment related programs for clients on social assistance. WSC has provided the following programs since 2015:

- ★ Essential Skills for Office Professionals
- ★ Sector-Specific Career Development (SAP for Financial Professionals)
- ★ Occupation-Specific Skills Training in Office Administration (Administrative Assistant with Desktop Publishing Diploma)
- ★ Occupation-Specific Skills Training in Medical Reception (Medical Receptionist Diploma)

As in the previous year, all of the programs have been filled and had waiting lists with 15 registered in Medical Reception; 41 in Office Administration, 35 in Essential Skills and 15 in SAP.

### Essential Skills for Office Professionals

This eight-week program prepares participants for entry-level employment in office administration, customer service or retail and/or further training in relation to their career goals. Training includes Introduction to MS Word and Excel, office procedures, customer service and event planning.

### Careers in the Financial Services Sector using SAP Finance

This 16-week program prepares participants for employment or more advanced training in the accounting field, using SAP-FI as End Users, Super Users or Consultants.

### Office Administration

This 26-week program prepares participants for employment in an office setting as an Administrative Assistant, Receptionist, Office Administrator, Office Clerk, or Data Entry Clerk. Training covers all aspects of office work including MS Office Suite, introduction to

Adobe Suite Desktop Publishing, office procedures, customer service, and business communication

### Medical Receptionist

This 26-week program prepares participants for employment as a Medical Receptionist/Secretary, Patient Clerk, Ward Clerk or Office Administrator. Training includes MS Office (Word, Excel and Outlook), office procedures, medical terminology, electronic medical record system (Abelmed), medical billing,



*Students from the Essential Skills for Office Professional program are pictured here with their instructor Silva Mardirossian on March 28, 2018, the day of their community project event. The community project, part of the Essential Skills curriculum is a vehicle for developing team work, event planning and communication skills.*

medical transcription, customer service and business communication.

### Part time Courses

In 2017-18 WSC continued to offer part time courses in skills that are in demand in the labour market including: Medical Billing, Medical Terminology 1, Medical Terminology 2, Reception, Bookkeeping, Quickbooks, SAP (Finance and Accounting), SAP (Supply Chain), Word, Excel Core & Expert, Outlook.

Enrolment has grown from 82 in 2016-17 to 110 in 2017-2018. Courses are now offered year round with new schedules published on our website every spring, summer, fall and winter. Some courses are offered in the evenings and on Saturdays.

## Academy of Computer & Employment Skills (A.C.E.S.)

Since 2008, our community based 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.

### Diploma Programs – How Seats are Funded

The City of Toronto purchases Diploma courses for Ontario Works Clients as a 3<sup>rd</sup> party funder, however seats in the Diploma programs are available to fee paying clients who are not eligible for City funding. Other 3<sup>rd</sup> 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. In 2017-2018, three fee payers successfully completed Diploma programs.

## 4. Employment Services

Employment services provided by WSC include

- ✦ Career planning
- ✦ Job search workshops
- ✦ Individual assistance with preparation of resumes, cover letters and job applications
- ✦ Assistance with arranging work placements and job trials
- ✦ Job development

Please note that WSC continues to provide a very high quality of one-on-one services and strong employment

outcomes even though we do not have any dedicated funding for this critical service as we are not an Employment Ontario Service Provider. In this regard, we acknowledge the support of our community partners: the Career Foundation and other Employment Ontario funded agencies across Toronto who assist clients in their job search.

### Diploma Program Outcomes

During 2017, the primary goal of Employment Services was to continue increasing the number of jobs obtained by graduates from the Academy and keep attrition under control to ensure a good graduation rate.



*Special graduation ceremonies are held each year for graduates of our diploma programs. Pictured here are some of the graduates from our 2017 Office Administration and Medical Receptionist programs.*

Overall percentages in employment, for 2017-2018 graduates (POES and Fee Payers), stand at 74% for Office Administration graduates (based on two intakes) and 69 % for Medical Receptionist graduates. These groups have just completed the post program support phase.

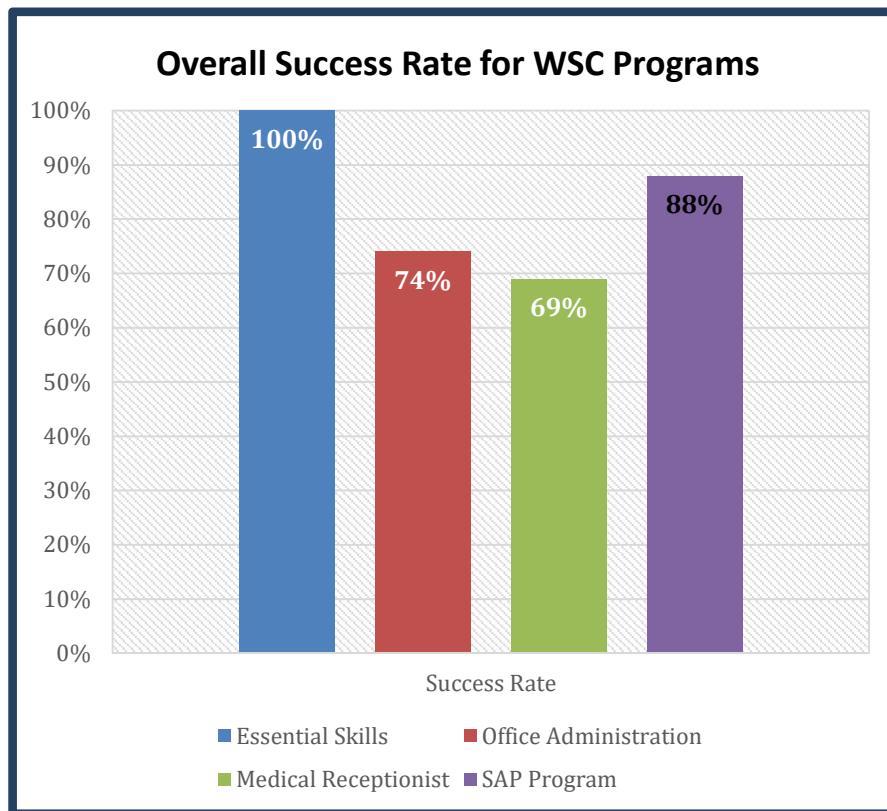
### Essential Skills for Office Professionals Program Outcomes

For Essential Skills for Office Professionals, success is measured not only by employment, but also by achievements such as enrolling in further studies and /or participating in a volunteer position. The Employment Services department was able to reach an overall success rate of 100% for the 2017-2018 year.

## SAP Program

The SAP Program continued to achieve excellent outcomes. A total of 19 participants (POES and fee payers) were enrolled, and 18 completed the program. Of the 18 who completed the program, 14 were employed and 2 proceeded to post-secondary training related to the accounting profession, amounting to a success rate of 88% for the 2017-2018 fiscal year. The success rate is a combination of employment and enrolment in post-secondary education.

## Summary of Employment Outcomes (POES and Fee-Payers)



## 2017-2018 Employment Services 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. Increased number of clients with multiple barriers to employment, such as mental health issues and emotional distress.
- Changes in the POES database system that created several mistakes in reporting and consequently influenced the overall success statistics for 2016.

## 2017-2018 Employment Services Strategies

### Investigate alternative job search modules and methodology

- ★ Partner with EO Agencies to increase graduates' employment opportunities and explore the use of incentives. So far we started to use POES financial incentives for only one client and it was very successful. The partnership with Career Foundation has been revitalized for 2018.
- ★ Build new employer partnerships to increase employment leads and job trial opportunities instead of placements.

### New strategies to promote increased success rates:

- ★ Work towards growing the Employment Services department to provide timely and cost efficient services to both students and alumni.
- ★ Work on updating and maintaining the existing employer database to streamline partnership and processes. One of the best solutions would be to have a Job Developer on staff to concentrate only on liaising with employers and partnership agencies and follow up on employment outcomes.
- ★ Structured follow up in the post-program section of the POES programs, to ensure accurate inputting in the database and better documentation of the outcomes for final statistics.

### New strategies in place to promote job maintenance/job retention:

- ★ Due to difficulties in the post program with the MR 2017, we decided to put the placement as part of the classes/CORE time table. In addition we created a Friday placement sharing circle class at WSC, where the graduates can come and discuss their placement and start job applications before the ending of their placement.
- ★ 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.



## 5. CLICKS Program

The Career Launch in Canada Knowledge and Skills (CLICKS)

Program is funded by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to explore innovative strategies to promote the economic integration of refugees and vulnerable newcomers. As part of the project clients will participate in customized training programs that enable each client to add to and leverage his/ her knowledge base to best fit today's job criteria.

### Recruitment and Intake

The recruitment process started in December, ahead of the formal implementation of the program. We started to compile a waiting list of eligible participants needing skills training and employment support to reach their goals. This enabled us to start the first 12-week program as early as January 15, 2018.

### Vocational Assessment and Service Planning

Participants went through a comprehensive assessment process on the basis of which it was possible to develop a realistic service planning. The assessment process included an intake interview, skills assessment and Common Assessment Process interview.

### Job-Specific Language Instruction, Skills Training and Work Placement.

The first cohort of 13 participants started their 12-week skills training program on January 15 and completed the program on April 15. The training plan was customized

for each participant on the basis of the intake assessment process.

The 12-week skills training component was divided into four streams with overlapping core modules in Word, Excel, Business Communication and Reception and sector specific modules in SAP, Bookkeeping, Quickbooks, and Medical Terminology.

Experiential learning was an important part of the program and involved engaging clients in team projects on health and safety. A project /mentor coach works with clients during the conversation circles and also provides individual assistance in reception and presentation skills.

### Employment Support

Upon completion of the 12 week program our Manager of Employment Services and Employment Counsellor works with clients for a period of 8 months.

Thus far five clients have found employment in line with their career goals and interviews have been arranged for a further 4 clients.

### Key Project Achievements and Deliverables

- ★ Our ability to get the first cohort started by January 15, 2018 within a short time of the start of our funding period.
- ★ The use of experiential learning methodology in which participants worked on projects to enhance their career portfolio. Participants researched, designed and delivered workshops on occupational health and safety. This had many benefits:
  - Improvement in communication and presentation skills
  - Enhanced knowledge on the subject of occupational health and safety
  - Enhanced knowledge of workplace culture
  - Enhanced career portfolio
- ★ The most significant achievement was an early indication of the success of this unique project. We targeted to have employed 60% of graduates within 8 months of core program completion however the first group of 12 finished the skills training part of the program on April 12, 2018. Within just a month of completion, more than half of the participants were already employed.



# CLICKS (Career Launch In Canada Knowledge & Skills) Program Testimonial 1



*Adebisi Oluwatosin, CLICKS program participant and success story.*

My name is Adebisi Oluwatosin, a native of Yoruba in Nigeria, West Africa. I came with family to Canada in January 2018. We had fled from our home due to security reasons and sought asylum in Canada.

In my home country I graduated from University with a B.Sc Accounting degree. I worked as a teacher, teaching mathematics to high school students. I enjoyed my job because I was producing good results - my students were passing their exams. Unfortunately we had to leave because our lives were in danger.

Once we arrived here, we set about trying to find work. The government was helping us with social assistance but we wanted to become independent as quickly as possible. I was determined to take whatever work I could get. I found a part-time job as a dishwasher. This is very hard work: but it helps me to make a little money to supplement my social assistance.

While working part-time as a dishwasher I was also attending a program at Working Skills Centre to upgrade my skills so that I could find a better job. It is called the CLICKS program and is a special program for refugees and newcomers. I was so happy to find this program because it has given me more confidence and helped me learn some important skills for the Canadian workplace. *This week I went for a job interview and I have been offered the job! I will be starting the training next week!*

Ever since coming here I have been overwhelmed by the kindness of Canadians. I had a very helpful case worker at Ontario Works. My colleagues in the restaurant where I worked part-time were very kind to me also. Even where I live, the landlord's wife has been so kind. She gave me some clothing and household items. And here at WSC, the staff helped me grow and blossom. I received excellent coaching and have the confidence to share a good story today.

WSC you touched my life and made a significant difference. It's my prayer that God will bestow good fortune on WSC so that even more people can be helped in the future. I long for the opportunity to give back to WSC and to Canadian society at large. Thank you WSC! Thank you Canada!

## Testimonial 2



*Akinsola Oyetunde, CLICKS program participant and success story.*

My journey in Canada began in June 2017 when I arrived in Toronto from Nigeria. My wife of 3 years came a month later and we had a baby in April 2018. Since I had an MBA - Finance from a university in Nigeria and some experience as a Chartered Accountant there, my City of Toronto Case Worker thought that the SAP Project and Accounting Programs at Working Skills Centre would be a good fit.

I was interviewed, tested and began my SAP Project and other workshops in June 2018. WSC Staff and Instructors were very positive, welcoming and accommodating to everyone without judgement. They provide practical workplace knowledge, access to Canadian work experience and references.

Before the completion of my SAP Project, I had already been hired with Caribbean Social Services as an Accounting Clerk. I am also working to be certified as a Certified Financial Crimes Specialist. My long term goal is to become a Certified Professional Accountant.

The experience at Working Skills Centre has been a very good start for me and my family. They were open about what to expect in the Canadian workplace and staff were very helpful in assisting us in meeting those challenges. Staff and Instructors are all wonderful and I recommend their programs to anyone who needs assistance in getting into the Canadian workforce.

Thanks.

## Testimonial 3



*Adedeji Isaac Adebayo, CLICKS program participant and success story.*

I arrived in Canada as a refugee from Nigeria in February 2018 with hope and a desire to succeed, but no idea of where to start. The City of Toronto case worker reviewed my education and work background and recommended going to Working Skills Centre.

The initial information session described the programs that WSC offered. After completing the application and test, I was interviewed and admitted by Marina for the SAP and Accounting programs. The staff and instructors were very knowledgeable, always positive and encouraged us to believe in ourselves.

Less than six months after arriving in Canada, I got job as an Intermediate Security Analyst with a major Canadian bank. I will always be grateful to the Working Skills Centre for

providing the knowledge, skills and attitude to get my first job in Canada.

## Diploma Programs



## Testimonial 1

My name is **Carolina Montealegre**. I recently started work as Client Support Administrator at the Toronto Business Development Centre. It has

been a blast! Everyone has been really nice and supportive. I am very excited about learning about incubation and entrepreneurship programs. It's a field I don't know anything about and I am learning about.

The first day I stayed most of the time with Barbora (yes, with an O), the lady who interviewed me and has been going with me through this whole week, teaching me all about this position, answering all my questions. She actually wrote an email for the staff and the clients that have offices in this floor, welcoming me and inviting them to come to the front desk and introduced themselves... and they did!! Everybody is really nice.

I have my Office Procedures booklet with me and it has been EXTREMELY useful all this week. It's like my Bible!! That's why I copy this email to you, **Silva**, to thank you for all your lessons, your passion and your deep belief about the importance of excellence in the reception duties. You really know what you are talking about!!!

I also copy you, **Mark**, because (of course) all Office programs are key in this position and I remember you every time I have to build a database, an Excel table, a mail merge in Word... Thank you very much!!!!

**Matilda:** tomorrow I'll start using Quickbooks. I will remember you FOR SURE, haha!!! Good thing I learned but since it was from scratch, I will need a little practice.

As you can read, I am very happy not only for FINALLY getting a job, but also because I am in a nice place, with really nice people, in a field that has an impact in people's lives.

Thank you very much to all of you. You are in my heart. You CHANGED my story in Canada.

*Carolina Montealegre Cooper  
Client Support Administrator  
OA Diploma Student-Class of 2017*



## Testimonial 2

**Qamar** is one of seven children. Her family fled the war in Somalia and settled in Canada 25 years ago. While at school, she worked in a call centre and did numerous summer jobs

to contribute towards the family's financial needs.

After high school, she completed a broad-casting programme with the hope of doing voice-over work and audio-books reading from home.

This required a lap-top, recording material and a sound-proof room. Due to financial constraints she could not pursue this. Her second job was operating an information desk and reception as well as clinical administration at the University of Toronto. This lasted 3.5 years and she enjoyed her work. A result of a recognition that "I am efficient and organized and proud of my work", she wanted to apply to George Brown College to do the business and administration program. However, challenges related to family financial needs deterred her from doing so.

A friend at the University of Toronto told her about the Working Skills Centre and told her: "You have to do the Office Administration programme at the Working Skills Centre. It is going to change your life".

She did the full-time Office Administration program from March until September 2017 and has been applying for work since then. In order to increase her hiring prospects she is doing the medical terminology certificate at the WSC.

Qamar reflected that: "Coming to the working skills centre was the best decision I have ever made. I am recommending it to my siblings and friends."

She has been for an interview at the East End Community Health Centre and is confident that she will

get a job as Assistant to the administrative secretary at a community health centre.

*Qamar Bana  
Administrative secretary at a community Health Centre  
OA Diploma Student-Class of 2017*

## Testimonial 3



My name is Nicole. I want you to know that my road to the Working Skills Centre was a bumpy one.

My first round of college was way back in 1989 when I studied Graphic Design. I didn't complete the program but I landed a job in my field with a printing company. In 1995 I met the love of my life. Together, we had a daughter, Trianna, and I became a stepmother to 11 children. In 2004 we welcomed our second daughter, Trimarra, to our family. On April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009 tragedy struck. In 2 very short hours my healthy, happy, beautiful 43-year-old husband was taken from us. Quietly and without any warning, an aortic dissection took my husband's life. We didn't even get to say goodbye. Watching my 4 & 12 year old daughters say goodbye to their Daddy was one of the hardest thing I have ever seen. I didn't have time to curl up in bed and cry because I had children who needed me to be strong for them. In 2010, I lost my job managing 3 fitness clubs due to downsizing. Finding fulltime work as a single mother was next to impossible. On June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010, minutes after dropping my girls off at school, I was in an accident that demolished my van and left me with permanent damage. After months of doctors' appointments and physiotherapy, my Employment Insurance ran out and I started babysitting neighbourhood children to help make ends meet. The never ending cycle of poverty breaks dreams and aspirations and I was beginning to lose hope. My father's death in January 2016 only made things worse.

Two days before my 46<sup>th</sup> birthday, I met with my worker who once again offered me the option of going back to school. This time I accepted. I called the WSC as soon as I got home and booked my assessment test. I had been out for so long, I was worried I no longer had any relevant work skills. After passing the test, I had my assessment interview and when the call came from the

WSC letting me know that I had been accepted into the program, I cried. Finally, something was going my way!

The 6 month program flew by. I made friends that I will cherish for a lifetime. I proved to myself that I can, in fact, do this; that I am smart enough. I pushed myself every day to do my best and I graduated with a 98% average as well as a job placement that was a 12 minute walk from my house. After completing my placement, the employer offered a fulltime job. My first paycheque brings tears to my eyes: in two weeks I earned more than I did in a month only a short year before. After 6 months on the job I was promoted to Office Supervisor. All of this within a year of making the decision to return to school.

I will be forever grateful to the instructors and administration of the Working Skills Centre for being a part of the new and improved me. The new me who can treat her daughter to dinner and a movie; the new me who actually has money in a savings account; the new me who can afford to buy Christmas presents and not only from sale racks or warehouse sales. It's been such a long road, but without all the twists and turns and a lot of detours and redirects, I don't think I would appreciate where I am today nearly as much. And without the Working Skills Centre I wouldn't be where I am now.

*Nicole Biggart  
Medical Office Supervisor  
MR Diploma Student-Class of 2016*

## Testimonial 4

My name is **Dianne**. After taking the Essential Skills for Office Professionals Certificate Program at the Working Skills Centre I did a work placement as an Office Administrator at the Malvern Youth Community Employment Program. This placement allowed me to showcase my newly acquired skills which eventually led to my being hired on as a full-time basis as a Program Assistant within the organization. I use, on a daily basis, all the knowledge I acquired at the WSC which enables me to perform the duties of a skilled and reliable Receptionist. I know of several women, my daughter and myself included, who have taken out student loans in the tens of thousands in order to study Office Administration at other institutions. Unfortunately, these other institutions can't compare to the WSC as far as the vast amount of knowledge and hands-on experience it has to offer. The MS Word and Excel courses proved to be invaluable in the workforce as did Essential Skills for Office Professionals. This in-depth course is an absolute asset.

I have and will continue to highly recommend this program to anyone who is looking to upgrade their skills and start a new career.

In closing, I'd like to thank the staff and the administration at the WSC for their commitment to the organization and their dedication to the students. In particular, I'd like to thank Marina Nikova, Executive Director of the Working Skills Centre, for her vision and dedication in helping individuals to succeed in their new careers as well as in life.

I think it's worth mentioning that I'm not the only WSC graduate to be hired on by employer so the training we receive at the Working Skills Centre works for us!

*Dianne Jones  
Office Administrator  
Essential Skills for Office Professionals Class 2016*



# 6. Settlement Services 2017-2018

## Newcomer Settlement Program

The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) through the Newcomer Settlement Program (NSP) funded the following settlement activities:

- ★ One-on-one settlement assistance to newcomers including: client needs assessment, goal setting and service planning; assistance with applying for government services; and information and referral to other community and government services.
- ★ Weekly information sessions on WSC's services and community resources.
- ★ Settlement-related group sessions on topics such as communication in the workplace, coping with stress, tenants' rights, employee rights, healthy eating on a budget, continuous learning resources, life skills and caring for the environment.

Services are delivered by a team of four part-time settlement counsellors. Eligible clients include permanent residents, convention refugees, refugee claimants, naturalized Canadian citizens and foreign

domestic workers admitted under the Live-in Caregiver Program.

For the fiscal year 2017-2018 we achieved the following:

- Served 473 unique clients
- Conducted 1173 individual meetings with
- Held 90 settlement related workshops and group sessions with a combined attendance of 699 clients

There has been a huge increase in the number of clients with refugee status. The profile of NSP clients accessing settlement services is provided below with a comparison to last year:

### Gender – NSP Clients

Gender	% of Clients 2016-2017	% of Clients 2017-2018
Male	23%	24%
Female	77%	74%
Other		2%

### Top Ten Countries of Origin – NSP Clients

Ranking	Country of Origin 2016-2017	Country of Origin 2017-2018
1	India	Nigeria
2	Nigeria	Phillipines
3	Iran	India
4	Jamaica	Jamaica
5	Phillipines	Bangladesh
6	Ethiopia	Ethiopia
7	Syria	Somalia
8	China	Pakistan
9	Bangladesh	Iraq
10	Pakistan	Iran

### Immigrant Status – NSP Clients

Immigrant Status	% of Clients 2016-2017	% of Clients 2017-2018
Permanent Residents	32%	34%
Convention Refugees	7%	9%
Refugee Claimants	7%	19%
Canadian Citizens	52%	46%
Other	2%	2%

### Length of time in Canada

Age Category	% of Clients 2016-2017	% of clients 2017-2018
Less than 1 year	5%	16%
1 to 3 years	14%	18%
4 to 5 years	9%	7%
Over 5 years	72%	59%

Notable changes in the client profile from last year include an increase in the proportion of permanent residents, convention refugees and refugee claimants. There is also a substantial increase in the number of clients who have been in Canada for less than a year.



## 7. New Horizons for Seniors Program

WSC is pleased, for the first time in our history, to be offering a project dedicated to seniors. The WSC project Seniors Empowering

Seniors for Community Engagement was launched on January 22, 2018. The project is funded via the federal New Horizons for Seniors Program (Service Canada). The project ends January 28, 2019.



The goals of the project are:

- to promote volunteerism among seniors and other generations
- engage seniors in the community through the mentoring of others
- promote the social participation of seniors through organizing social café type events

The project is divided into the following phases:

- a) Needs assessment
- b) Development and planning
- c) Outreach campaign to recruit new volunteers
- d) Implementation
- e) Interim evaluation
- f) Final evaluation

As of March 2018, we had recruited a core team of senior volunteers who conducted a needs assessment including consultations in the community and surveys. Based on the results of the needs assessment a schedule of activities was planned, including conversation circles, memoir writing, nature hikes, and

conversational circles, workshops on managing stress, QiGong and art classes.

Senior volunteers have always played an important role at WSC in mentoring our clients and providing support in marketing and fundraising, HR and serving on the WSC Board of Directors.



*WSC's senior volunteer coordinating committee at pictured here on a nature hike in the Kay Gardner Bellline Park.*

Thank you to our volunteers





# Celebrating our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

**Making a difference & changing lives...**



Our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary banner was designed by Board Members Tom Hatcher and Shideh Dianatnejad. It is so rich in significance that we would like to share the thinking that went into the design

- ★ Central to the design is the image of the starfish in keeping with the Starfish Story theme for WSC's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- ★ The slogan "Making a difference & changing lives ... one star at a time" captures WSC's role of trying to make a difference in the context of overwhelming need.
- ★ Note that each tentacle of the starfish has 8 dots. There are five tentacles, making a product of 40 for WSC's 40 years of service.
- ★ The rays of hope and energy extend from WSC beyond the starfish to represent the dream, future destination or goal of the individual community member.

From November 2018 to November 2019 we will be celebrating our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of serving the community with a series of events:

November 16, 2018 – 40th Annual General Meeting and Business and Community Partner Recognition, Toronto Botanical Gardens, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

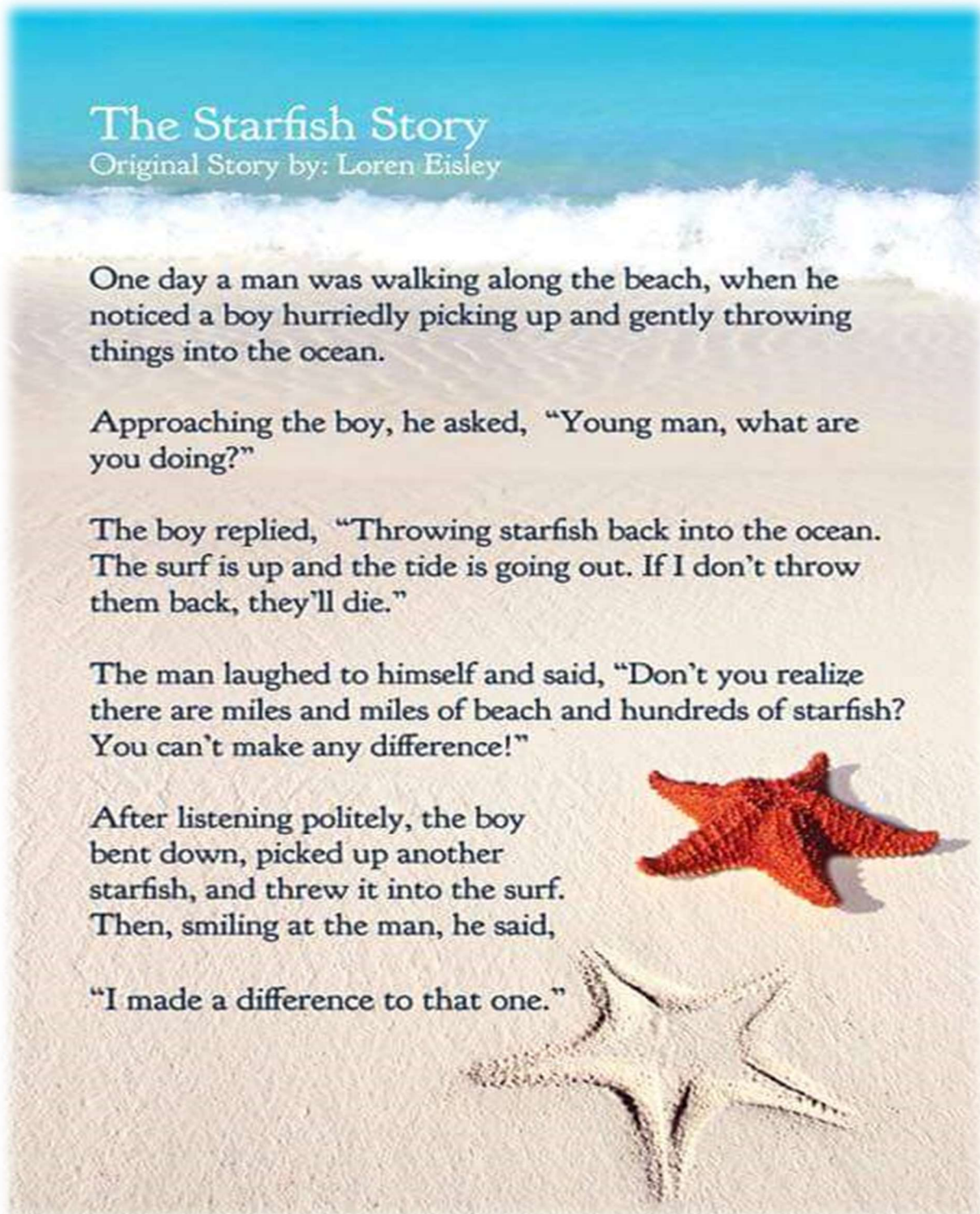
**Train the Trainer Event – Orientation for Case Workers and Employment Counsellors on different levels of training and planning an effective career path offered at WSC**

**Spring 2019 – Dedication of a tree in a City of Toronto park to WSC**

**Open House and Orientation to WSC's services– September 2019 –**

# Celebrating 40 Years of Achievements, Change, and Sustainability

We would like to begin our narrative with the Starfish Story which encapsulates what we are trying to do as a small agency in a context of overwhelming need.



## 40 Years of Achievements, Change, and Sustainability – Important Milestones in WSC’s History

### 1978:

- Established on July 3, 1978 under the sponsorship of Working Women Community Centre.
- Mailroom on-the-job training program was implemented for Spanish and Portuguese women.

**1980:** Incorporated as a not-for-profit organization under the Ontario Corporation Act on May 1, 1980 (No. 443231).

### 1982:

- Published ESL/Life Skills Job Related Manual, the first of its kind because of its focus on labour market issues.
- Sponsored New Experience for Refugee Women.
- WSC begins a tradition of helping other communities establish agencies, such as Skills for Change and Rexdale Microskills.

**1984:** Hosted the Labour Delegation from the United Kingdom and International Research on Community Economic Development team from Australia.

**1986:** Developed English as a Second Language (ESL) software.

**1987:** Established the Language Bridging Program for Immigrant Women on Social Assistance.

**1989:** Published 1st Edition of “Working Skills for Immigrant Women Manual,” a practical handbook addressing labour market, workplace, women’s health, and settlement issues.

**1990:** Established First Steps to Employment Program.

**1992:** Opened Language Instructions for Newcomers to Canada (LINC).

**1996:** Established ESL Career Exploration Classes.

**2000:** Japanese delegation visits WSC: Mayor of Takéfu, Manager of Gender Equality Bureau and other officials learn about the Centre’s programs and services.

**2001:** Launched WSC Logistics, an international freight forwarding business.

### 2002:

- Released a study examining the struggles and strategies of marginalized immigrant women entitled, “From Canadian Work Experience Dilemma to Participation in the Canadian Labour Market.”
- Palestinian delegation from the Gaza visits WSC as

part of a three-city tour to gather information on Canadian community-based solutions to addressing women’s employment issues.

### 2003:

- Presented at Canada’s first Social Investment Forum.
- Launched the downtown Job Track Centre to assist displaced workers affected by SARS.

### 2005:

- New Letters Patent were approved by the Membership at the AGM, expanding the agency mandate to serve all unemployed individuals.
- Launched World Service Cargo, a practice firm, providing Canadian work experience to immigrant women in seven career options: HR, Administration, Sales and Marketing, Finance, IT, Logistics, and Warehousing.

**2006:** Developed Enhanced Language Training (ELT) curriculum for Accounting and Logistics.

### 2007:

- Completed a research project entitled “Training for the Future” and produced two brochures to assist immigrant women.
- Hosted interns under the Multicultural Youth Initiative from Heritage Canada.

### 2008:

• Academy of Computer & Employment Skills (A.C.E.S.) received its business license after WSC was registered as a private career college under the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005. Two Diploma programs, Computerized Office Administration and Computerized Accounting received Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities’ approval.

• WSC refurbished the facility and purchases state of the art equipment after receiving a capital grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

• WSC launched a Job Creation Partnership Project to assist individuals receiving EI to find work in their professions.

• WSC hosted “A Celebration of Immigrant Women’s Journey,” a gala to recognize its 30th anniversary and raised over \$25,000. As a result, the WSC Scholarship and Bursary Fund was established.

### 2009:

• WSC partnered with Toronto Training Board and Working Women to present “Diversity, A Two Way Accommodation” attended by over 125 representatives of business partners, labour agencies, immigrant job seekers, and government representatives.

• Four new Diploma programs were approved by Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities: Office



Clerk, Medical Receptionist, Administrative Assistant with Desktop Publishing, and Supply Chain Clerk.

- WSC's Executive Director represented smaller agencies on External Reference Group for Employment Ontario's transformation planning process.
- WSC received Toronto Community Foundation's Vital Idea Award and launched the Charitable Career Colleges Network.

**2010:** Awarded a 5-year contract by the City of Toronto to provide Skills Training Directly Linked to Employment (STDLE) to up to 100 Ontario Works recipients annually.

**2011:**

- WSC hosts dialogues on issues facing individuals with barriers to employment for Deputy Minister delegates in partnership with Skills for Change, ACCES Employment, and Learning Enrichment Foundation.
- WSC partnered with the Toronto Workforce Innovation Group to host "Immigrant Women's Journeys 2011," an event geared towards promoting intercultural, interfaith dialogue in Canada
- WSC received Toronto Community Foundation's Vital Idea Award to explore ways to enhance volunteer opportunities for immigrant women, in partnership with Volunteer Toronto. Three workshops were developed for clients, employers and front-line settlement workers.

**2012:**

- Closure of WSC's practice firm initiative due to the decision by Employment Ontario to close all practice firm initiatives in Ontario. The Practice had been a major success story for WSC. A summary of outcome data showed that 83% of graduates from this program were obtaining jobs in their chosen careers within six months of leaving the program.
- WSC begins SAP Implementation and End-User Programs.
- Microsoft Certification Centre launched.
- WSC hosted "Regent Park Multicultural Harvest Festival" in partnership with Dixon Hall, Christian Resource Centre, and Daniels Corporation.

**2013:**

- WSC launched a second Job Creation Partnership Project to assist individuals receiving EI.
- WSC hosts Transitions: Immigrant Narratives, a free Intercultural Interaction Event funded in part by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.
- WSC hosts Pathways to Success: Immigrant

Narratives to celebrate its 35th Anniversary and raise funds for the WSC Scholarship and Bursary Fund.

**2014:**

- WSC partners with Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre to launch Career Opportunities for Youth: Training and Work Experience (COYOTE), a program for newcomer and Aboriginal youth
- WSC partners with RBC to launch the Social Cafe, a Saturday program for isolated immigrant women offering workshops and networking

**2015:**

- Contract with City of Toronto is renewed for another 5 years, WSC will provide occupation specific skills training, sector specific career development and employment essentials for up to 100 Ontario Work recipients annual
- WSC is chosen by the Biz Shot Project to be their title charity partner for 2015. The Biz Shot Project engages in activities to promote the confidence and empowerment with women. They collaborated with WSC in arranging a one-day professional development event.

**2016**

- WSC begins in earnest a debt reduction strategy to address WSC's growing deficit following the closure of our practice firm initiative in 2012.

**2017**

- WSC continues work on the debt reduction strategy. A near miraculous turnaround of finances is achieved and by the end of 2017 and we enter the year in a surplus

**2018**

- WSC begins implementation of the Career Launch in Canada Knowledge and Skills (CLICKS) Program is funded by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to to promote the economic integration of refugees and vulnerable newcomers. The CLICKS program uses an innovative format in which skills training is integrated with experiential learning projects and is already producing results only 3 months into implementation.
- WSC launches the Seniors Empowering Seniors for Community Engagement project funded by Service Canada. For the first time in WSC's history we have a program dedicated to seniors. The goal of the project is to promote volunteerism among seniors and engage seniors in the mentoring of newcomers and job seekers.

## List of Staff 2017-2018

**Marina Nikova**  
Executive Director

**Matilda Thevasagayam**  
Financial Manager

**Claudia Bargellini**  
Employment Service Manager

**Mark Trumble**  
Microsoft-Lead Instructor

**Silva Mardrossian**  
Office Procedures/Reception Instructor

**Ansuya Chetty**  
Settlement Counsellor/Coordinator

**Tracy Lopes**  
Program Coordinator

**Zumrud Guluzade**  
Administrative Assistant

**Sofia Hall**  
Microsoft Instructor

**Mary Hillie**  
Program Admin Assistant

**Isabel Laparra**  
Coordinator of Student & Alumni Support

**Nawal Chowdhury**  
Medical Office Procedures Instructor

**Mobaswar Hossain**  
Medical Terminology/Transcript Instructor

**Shodan Nadkarni**  
SAP End User Project Manager

**Carol Weiss**  
Fundraiser & Event Coordinator

## Volunteers

In the 2017-18 year WSC's programs services and administrative functions were supported by 11 volunteers contributing over 1136.5 volunteer hours. WSC recognizes the many volunteers who so generously and willingly give of their time. You are an important part of this organization - we couldn't do it without you. On behalf of the staff of Working Skills Centre, thank you. Your contribution is greatly appreciated and we wish you all the best in your future endeavors!

*Mary Hillie*  
*Zumrud Guluzade*  
*Tunzala Mammadoo*  
*Eliana Luz*  
*Rubina Abib*  
*Rose Alca*  
*Janice Velasco-Layugan*

*Sunita Gohary*  
*Ruchi Jha*  
*Madhavi Peddiraju*  
*Sendil Janathanan*  
*Shakkar Hussien*  
*Sofia Hall*  
*Mharco Quemado*

# 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.

Location	2017 -2018 Directors & Officers			
<b>Address:</b> 55 Eglinton Ave. East, Suite # 703 Toronto, ON M4P 1G8 <b>Phone:</b> (416) 703-7770 <b>Fax:</b> (416) 703-1610 <b>Website:</b> www.workingskillscentre.com	<b>Jo Anne Rabanillo</b> <b>Charles Dune</b> <b>Taiwo Omigade</b> <b>Tom Hatcher</b> <b>Mobina Rahman</b> <b>Shideh Dianetnejad</b>	President Vice-President Secretary Treasurer Member at Large Member at Large	<b>Alice Bonavia</b> <b>Sumera Hameed</b> <b>Marilyn Buentipo</b> <b>Dany Shehab</b>	Member at Large Member at Large Member at Large Member at Large

## Acknowledgements Working Skills Centre would like to acknowledge our 2017-2018 funders and partners.

### Grants and Contributions were received from:

- City of Toronto
  - Toronto Employment and Social Services
  - Investing in Neighbourhoods
- Service Canada, New Horizons for Seniors Program
- Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
  - Newcomer Settlement Program
  - Economic Integration for Refugees and Vulnerable Newcomers
- Shum Vourkoutiotis Fund

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

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

- Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants
- Social Enterprise Toronto
- Toronto Workforce Innovation Group
- Toronto North & South LIPs

### Service Delivery Partners

- Anne Johnston Health Station
- Credit Canada Debt Solutions
- Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Services at Flemingdon Park
- Institute of Leadership for Women in Ontario
- People & Organizations in North Toronto (POINT)
- The Career Foundations
- Toronto Community Employment Services
- Toronto Public Library, North Toronto Branch
- Toronto Workers' Health & Safety Legal Clinic
- Woodgreen Community Services
- Canadian Mental Health Association (Opening Doors Project)
- West Scarborough Neighbourhood Community Centre
- St. Stephen's Community House
- Habitat for Humanity
- Canada Human Rights International Organization
- Canadian Cancer Society
- Comprehensive Health Care Network
- Elspeth Heyworth Centre for Women
- Lumacare
- Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre
- Skills for Change
- JVS
- YMCA
- MCIS Language Solutions
- UNICEF

## Businesses who provided cash & in kind donations

- Yummy Market Inc.
- Casa Manila
- Mandarin Restaurant, Yonge & Eglinton
- Metro Supermarket, Yonge & Eglinton
- Indigo Bookstore, Yonge & Eglinton
- McDonalds, Yonge & Eglinton
- Shopper's Drug Mart, Yonge & Eglinton
- Starbucks, Yonge & Eglinton
- Sobey's Yonge & St Clair
- TYC Restaurant
- Star King Restaurant
- Loblaws Supermarket
- Dufflet
- Citizen Eco Drive
- Levi's
- Umbra
- Shaw Festival
- Art Gallery of Ontario
- Toronto Raptors
- Toronto Blue Jays
- Karlo Estates
- Cake
- Line
- Fresh Restaurant
- Lush
- Mastermind Toys
- Del-Gatto Estates
- Winners
- Gemmies Jewelry
- Grange of Prince Edward
- Black Prince Winery
- The Keg
- Lif
- Sip Wine Bar
- Chateau Des Charmes
- Frigidaire
- La Vecchia
- Grazie Ristorante
- Five doors north
- Tabule
- Lindt Chocolate
- Wellington Brewery
- Paramount
- Buca
- Cibo Wine Bar

## On Behalf Of WSC, Thank You



KARLO ESTATES



Del-Gatto  
ESTATES







DUFFLET®

MANDARIN®



Lindt  
MAÎTRE CHOCOLATIER SUISSE  
DEPUIS 1845



FRIGIDAIRE



GRAZIE  
RISTORANTE

## To Our Delivery Partners, Thank You

