

# The Newcomer

A Newsletter on Immigration in Newfoundland and Labrador



## Message from the Minister

It has been just over a year since the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador launched its immigration strategy, Diversity ~ Opportunity and Growth, and provided \$6 million over three years for its implementation.

Considerable progress has been made since that time. An Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism has been established and 13 individuals have been recruited to implement the Strategy. Also, the Provincial Nominee Program has been enhanced with two new categories (Family Connections and International Graduate), and a policy on multiculturalism has been launched. Already the results of Government's investment are being experienced. The number of immigrants to our province in 2007 reached 541, which is a 5.8 percent increase over the 2006 number of 511.

Let us continue to welcome newcomers to our communities, appreciate the contribution that newcomers make, and celebrate the growing cultural diversity of our province.

## Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism Staff

Over the past few months, the Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism (OIM) has been gradually expanding. The OIM team now consists of 15 individuals and according to Nellie Burke, OIM Executive Director, "We have recruited a diverse group of individuals who have considerable international experience and bring a global perspective to the important issue of immigration to our province."



Front (left to right): Maria Yablon, Carmel Wyse, Kamrul Islam, Corina Simmonds, Debbie Sheppard, Nellie Burke, Smita Joshi, Allison Catmur, Julia Greenwood; Back (left to right): Angela Bhuiyan, Sandra Wells, Sheldon O'Neill, MaryAnn Scanlon, Donna Spurvey, Tanya Hawco

The individuals who make up the new team have experience living in 16 different countries and speak 9 different languages. They all have one thing in common: a passion for multiculturalism and a strong belief in Newfoundland and Labrador as a destination of choice for newcomers. The most recent addition to the team was a new settlement and integration consultant who will be based in Corner Brook at the regional office of the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, Corner Brook, for more information call (709) 637-2668.

## Minister Skinner launches Policy on Multiculturalism

The province of Newfoundland and Labrador, is growing in diversity, making this province more dynamic and vibrant. On June 3, 2008, while celebrating importance of all culture, the Provincial Government launched a Policy on Multiculturalism, recognizing that diversity leads to creativity, innovation and economic growth.

The primary objective of the Policy on Multiculturalism is to foster cross-cultural collaboration while working to build a vibrant and dynamic province. The policy is designed to promote respect, equality, collaboration, and inclusive citizenship for all people living in Newfoundland and Labrador. This policy is a result of collaboration and input received from national and provincial partners working in the area of Multiculturalism. "Our aim is to create a mosaic of different cultures where different beliefs, yearnings, and hopes are nurtured toward a common dream of harmonious relationships as we work toward a prosperous future." said Minister Skinner.



The Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism will conduct focus groups in communities throughout the province in support of the implementation of this policy. An interdepartmental committee is being established to ensure that government policies and programs support the policy on multiculturalism and will oversee specific activities/initiatives at the provincial, regional and community level. The Policy on Multiculturalism can be found at [www.gov.nl.ca/hrle/immigration/english/new.htm](http://www.gov.nl.ca/hrle/immigration/english/new.htm). For a hard copy call 709-729-7140 or e-mail [smitajoshi@gov.nl.ca](mailto:smitajoshi@gov.nl.ca)



"Godfrey Gatonya at the April 7th, 2008 Citizenship Ceremony held at City Hall in St. John's. A total of 28 individuals from 17 different countries became Canadian citizens on that day."

## New Canadian Citizen

Good things in life happen in very few places on earth. Newfoundland and Labrador is one of those few remaining places. When I landed at the St. John's International Airport four years ago, having left my home in Tanzania, it was a new beginning for me. I did not know anyone. At the St. John's airport, I exchanged a few words with one man, at that time a stranger to me. Little did I know that this encounter would blossom into a friendship that has lasted to this day.

The hospitality shown to me by the people I have met here in Newfoundland and Labrador has contributed to the rich quality of life that I now enjoy. It has been over four years since I arrived here, and although the weather is cold, the warmth and generosity of the people of this province is extraordinary. I have also had some great opportunities since I moved here. I have completed a three-year business program at the College of the North Atlantic, gained work experience through a summer job with the Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism, and recently secured a job with the Fairmount Newfoundland hotel.

On April 7th, 2008, I became a Canadian citizen. My good friends and colleagues were at the ceremony to welcome me into the Canadian community. I was even surprised with a party to celebrate my new Canadian citizenship, a celebration that was also organized to coincide with my birthday. It was the most emotional moment of my life. I shed tears of joy. These are the reasons that I am proud to call Newfoundland and Labrador my home and the people I have met here my extended family. Just like in the African community where I was brought up, here in Newfoundland, everyone belongs to and identifies with the larger community. If you want to come to a place where you can meet a stranger at the bus stop, grocery store, shopping mall or, as in my case, at the airport, and next thing you know you have a friend for life, then Newfoundland and Labrador is the place for you.

## The Provincial Nominee Program: Family Connections Category Launched!

On April 24th, 2008, the new Family Connections category of the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) was officially launched. This new category is for immigrants who have established themselves in Newfoundland and Labrador and would like to sponsor a family member who also wishes to come, live and work in the province. By recognizing the importance that proximity to family plays in helping immigrants settle into their new home, the new category will contribute to ensuring people are comfortable and also assist with retention rates.



The Family Connections category of the PNP differs from the federal family sponsorship program. Common-law partners, spouses and dependant children are not eligible for sponsorship under the new PNP category. Furthermore, it is critical that the family member demonstrates employability. He or she must possess a set of skills normally acquired through post-secondary education (university degree or college diploma or certificate) combined with at least one year's work experience. The relative must intend to work full-time in the province. Adequate knowledge of the English language is also a crucial component that will be assessed in determining eligibility. For more information about the new family connections category, or to obtain application forms, please call (709) 729-0129 or visit the PNP website at: [www.nlppn.ca](http://www.nlppn.ca).

Provincial Nominee Program Statistics January 1, 2008 to August 31, 2008	
Skilled Workers	67
Entrepreneurs	4
Total Nominations	71
Dependents	71
Total Person Count	142

## Multicultural Women's Food and Craft Fair

On March 30th, 2008, an International Food and Craft Fair was held at the Holiday Inn in St. John's. With delicious foods, unique crafts and fabulous entertainment from around the world, it was easy to see why a large number of people participated in the celebration. After all, how often can you enjoy Afghani beef kebab, with a side of Mexican picadillos, Filipino pancit and Turkish dolmas, while taking in a spectacular Chinese dance performance by the talented Tzu-Hao Zhu of Taiwan?

Children were entertained with a variety of activities including origami and lantern making, story telling and art workshops. Prior to the Fair, the Immigrant women attended workshops to learn how to start a business in Newfoundland and Labrador. The fair was co-funded by ACOA and the Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism.

