

The Newcomer

A Newsletter on Immigration in Newfoundland and Labrador



Message from the Minister

In March 2007, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador launched its first ever provincial immigration strategy, with an investment of \$6 million over three years. The first step in the process was the establishment of an Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism (OIM) and the appointment of an Executive Director, Ms. Nellie Burke effective July 30, 2007.

Since that time, steps have been taken to staff the Office, and I am pleased to say that by the end of December 2007, that process should be completed.

Effective April, 2007, the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment has assumed responsibility for the Provincial Nominee Program which was originally with the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development. The Provincial Nominee Program is an agreement with the federal department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada which allows Newfoundland and Labrador to 'select' individuals for immigration

to the province. Being a provincial 'nominee' means that the application to the federal government to become a permanent resident will be expedited. Instead of taking years for processing, the average time is down to 9 to 24 months depending on the country of origin.

An enhanced Provincial Nominee Program is key to the success of our immigration strategy. That is the reason that the newly established Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism will enhance the program by employing five individuals dedicated to the PNP. With five staff, promotion of the program to employers will be a priority, and applications will be processed in a timely manner.

In this edition of the newsletter, we are pleased that a number of our nominees have agreed to share their stories. I hope you will enjoy reading them and join with me in welcoming these newcomers to our wonderful province.

For more information about the Provincial Nominee Program, visit www.nlppn.ca.

Provincial Nominees Making a Difference

Nicola Hawkins, Pagoda Projects
(in her own words)

Originally from Pershore, England, I first came to Newfoundland and Labrador in the summer of 1992 with my husband Andy. We arrived at Port aux Basques to camp for the summer on the West Coast and were amazed by the beauty of the landscape and the charm of its people. A busy working city life delayed our return visit until 1999, ready to explore Newfoundland's east coast. Walking the East Coast Trail we stumbled across an old small tumbled down church for sale in the small community of Admiral's Cove. It was crying out to be saved. We purchased it and consequently, summers thereafter were committed to its repair and transformation into a house. Our summer visits became prolonged, as we grew increasingly attached to the cove and its people. The point came when we regarded Newfoundland "Home" although we still worked and lived in Boston.

We started thinking about a new simpler life in rural Newfoundland. Andy was retiring after 35 years as a builder and I was ready to scale down my all-encompassing life in the theatre as a dance choreographer/ director. The unadulterated landscape, the pioneering strength of the elders in our community, the possibility of growing our own food and following our own path cemented the decision to simplify our hectic city life and make real the dream of living here.

In 2006, in association with some inspiring and generous people in the greater St. John's arts community, Pagoda Projects was created, a not for profit company dedicated to teaching and expanding the arts on the Southern Shore. Later that year, I received a work permit to direct the company and be its primary instructor and we put in our application for Provincial Nomination. Last December we became permanent residents.

Our neighbors have welcomed us with great warmth and generosity. My husband and I now are very settled in our new home and committed to expanding Pagoda Projects to better serve our community.

The Provincial Nominee process was smooth; the staff of the PNP were very helpful in explaining its requirements and procedures for PN, and I thank them for encouraging us to pursue our dream of becoming full time residents.



Nicola Hawkins enjoying a boat ride

Did you know that Newfoundland and Labrador has received 426 new Permanent Residents during the period January to October 2007?

Making a Difference...

Dr. Muhammad Zulfiqar, originally from Pakistan, and his wife Rahat came to Newfoundland and Labrador in June 2003 after completion of his post-graduate training of Hematology/Medical Oncology in the United States. Dr. Zulfiqar says "My wife Rahat Iram immediately fell in love with this place." Before moving to the province, they reviewed several options. Their basic reason for choosing Newfoundland and Labrador was its reputation of friendly people, peaceful environment and natural beauty.



*Dr. Muhammad Zulfiqar, Medical Oncologist
at H. Bliss Murphy Cancer Centre
and wife Rahat Iram*

"When I visited the Newfoundland Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation for my job interview, I found that it contained all the necessary elements for my professional growth. The province's natural beauty and people impressed us the most, and the work environment is one of the best," said Dr. Zulfiqar.

Since he has worked at the Cancer Centre, Dr. Zulfiqar has been able to serve the people in a professional capacity and he is actively involved in teaching medical residents and students at the undergraduate and post graduate levels. He has also worked with colleagues in the early process of developing the Tele-oncology program, serving cancer patients throughout the province using distance delivery. Dr. Zulfiqar is also an active participant in clinical research of the National Cancer Institute of Canada which promotes excellence in patient care. Rahat Zulifqar is doing her post-graduate training in the Department of Pathology at Memorial University.

"Since moving to Newfoundland and Labrador, it is our dear home. We have a sense of belonging to this place. We would love to serve the people here to the best of our capacity." Dr. Zulfiqar thanks the Provincial Nominee Program and its staff for helping to facilitate the process of immigration to Newfoundland and Labrador.

Did you know that the Fall 2007 International Student Enrollment for Newfoundland and Labrador is 1232 students, a five percent increase from Fall 2006?

Simon Kerr, Goldsmith
(in his own words)

"As a recently successful immigrant to Newfoundland and Labrador (I received my "right of permanent residency card" just a few weeks ago), I felt that I should express my thanks to everyone at the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) who helped expedite my application.

If you are a prospective immigrant and haven't yet made your mind up about where in Canada you want to settle, then here are a few good reasons why Newfoundland and Labrador may be just the place. The people here are the friendliest bunch I have ever met, and unlike some places I have traveled, they really are what they seem - the most welcoming and genuine crowd you are likely to find anywhere. Then of course there's the quality of life -- the air is clean, the sea and lakes are unpolluted and clear and most importantly the crowds are elsewhere.

If city life is for you, then St John's offers all the important advantages of any large city but on a smaller and friendlier scale, without the big commutes and traffic jams. Finally, if all the above doesn't win you over, then the beauty of the province with its forests, outport communities and fantastic coastline should seal the deal. I came because I fell in love; firstly, with my wife to be, and secondly, with the place itself.

I am a classically trained British goldsmith now living and working in St John's. I have traveled widely, lived in Australia, flown hang gliders and paragliders and climbed in the Himalayas. Since arriving here in Newfoundland, I have taken up sea kayaking and along with my fiancé am enjoying exploring the fabulous coastline and clear water that the island has to offer. I feel very lucky to be here and reckon I'll be staying put for some time to come."

Note: Simon first came to Newfoundland and Labrador to live in 2004 but had been visiting regularly since 1979. His brother had moved here in the 1970s to do his Masters and Ph.D. at Memorial University. He is still residing in the province.



Simon Kerr (right) and fiancé kayaking in Avondale