IMMIGRANT MIGRANT WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF HALIFAX (IMWAH)

ANNUAL REPORT

2013-2014

September 27, 2014

The Immigrant /Migrant Women's association of Halifax (IMWAH) is a non-profit and culturally diverse organization. Its goal and mission is to celebrate the contributions, and respond to the unique concerns of immigrant and migrant women and girls. Our gender related mandate is to provide support tailored to female focused initiatives.

Objectives:

1. to showcase women's projects, initiatives and contributions to the community.

2. to research and assess situations affecting immigrant/migrant women and girls.

3. to bring awareness into the larger community of immigrant and migrant women and girls concerns and to do advocacy work.

4. to bring the voice of immigrant and migrant women into larger movements aiming to improve the wellbeing and progress of Haligonian women.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair: Maria Jose Yax-Fraser
Co-Chair: Nanok Cha
Secretary: Carmen Celina Moncayo
Treasurer: Doaa Salman Al Dahdoo
Public Relations Officer: Sylvia Calatayud
Mariela Ceron-Quintero
Mahnaz Sobhani

During June 2013-June 2014, IMWAH's Board of directors benefitted from the experiences of ten immigrant women who worked hard to carry out two projects and one community event that reflected the four objectives of the association. For personal reasons three members of the board step down before they completed a year term. The association thanks Maha Amin, Lili Ospino and Evie Tastasglou for the time they volunteered as members of the Board.

Logo and Website Project:

At our first Annual General Meeting last year, the attendees decided on a number of actions to be taken in the course of the year 2013-2014. The first action was to build the capacity of our organization and to do outreach. As a result it was recommended that we should promote the association within the larger community and raise awareness of immigrant and migrant women and girls concerns. The Board of Directors felt that one way of doing this was to develop a website and a logo with the participation of every immigrant women and girl who wished to give their input.

A committee of five Board members was formed in November 2014 to oversee the fulfillment of this project. The committee approached different funding organizations and received financial support from the Community, Culture and Heritage; from the Status of Women; and in kind support from the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic.

The funds were used to hire two graphic designers and to hold a community event to create the logo. The event, which took place on May 10th, 2014 at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, served three purposes: 1) to celebrate the one-year anniversary registration of the association with im/migrant women, their families and the larger community. 2) to create a mural where every woman expressed their ideas about the meaning and contributions that im/migrant women make to the Halifax community. This mural was the basis for developing the logo of the association. 3) to spotlight the diverse social and cultural contributions of im/migrant women through the work of im/migrant women poets, second-generation dancers and African-Nova Scotia drummers. We had a very positive response by our members and an attendance of approximately 200 participants.

This project was made possible by the work of the following members of the Board: Sylvia Calatayud, Doaa Salman, Mariela Ceron-Quintero, Mahnaz Sobhani and Maria Jose Yax-Fraser.

The logo was designed by Nuri Guerra (Visual-Voice). The Website is being developed in consultation with Ewn Jung Kwak.

Photography and Art Therapy Workshop

The Art Therapy Workshop was an eight-week project funded by the grant the association received from Nova Scotia Communities, Culture and Heritage. It was conducted from May 13 to July 3, 2014. This project aimed to support women, between 18 to 65 years old, gain a new skill, to help recent im/migrant women network with other im/migrant women, and to support them break the isolation by creating a space to share food and meet new friends.

The workshop was designed to explore personal narratives through photography and art therapy techniques. The first objective was to learn basic photography techniques, such as composition, lighting and editing. The second objective was to explore personal stories through art making and photos taken by the participants. The participants had the opportunity to discover personal symbols and metaphors, and to share their experiences with other immigrant women.

This project was supported by the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic and Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU). The eight art sessions were held at the Museum. The use of cameras by participants who did not have their own was made possible by the loan of cameras by the MSVU Faculty of Education. We had a very positive response from our members. Seven out of ten participants completed the eight week Art therapy sessions.

This project was made possible by the volunteer work of three members of the association: Sylvia Calatayud, Facilitator; Hairong Liu, assistant to the facilitator; María José Yax-Fraser, oversaw logistics of the sessions. Lian Lessard was hired to provide childcare.

Open Café

The Open Café initiative reflects the mission of the association to celebrate the contributions of im/migrant women and respond to their needs. The purpose of holding these cultural evenings is to facilitate networking and the socialization of im/migrant women among themselves and between Canadian born women. This year we held two Open Café evenings February 20th, and June 26th. This project has been made possible by the support of Humani T Café and the volunteer work of five members of the association: Carmen Celina Moncayo, Nanok Cha, Mahnaz Shobhani, Sylvia Calatayud and Maria Jose Yax-Fraser.

Future Projects and Events

The vision for 2014-2015 is to continue developing projects that will support the integration of im/migrant women to Canada. Three projects are scheduled for the Fall of 2014: 1) four-week free swimming lessons program scheduled for the month of September with 21 participants. 2) Open Café on October 23th celebrating the International Day of the Girl Child. 3) A committee will be formed to develop a wellbeing project and fill out the applications for funding to the Community Health Board in Dartmouth and Southeastern.

Membership

Our membership has increased by 30% as a result of our programing. The association has **70** registered members