

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**ALL VOLUNTEERS ARE REQUESTED
TO SUBMIT THEIR
POLICE REFERENCE CHECK REPORTS
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!**

CCVT 3 Locations:

Main Office:

194 Jarvis Street
2nd Floor
Toronto, ON
M5B 2B7

Tel: (416) 363-1066
Fax: (416) 363-2122

Email: mabai@ccvt.org

Website: www.ccvt.org

Scarborough Branch:

2401 Eglinton Avenue E.
Suite 310
Scarborough, ON
M1K 2N8

Tel: (416) 750-3045
Fax: (416) 750-4990

CCVT at The HUB:

1527 Victoria Park Ave.
2nd Floor
Scarborough, ON
M1L 2T3

Tel: (647) 847-2334

Tel: (647) 847-2335

Tel: (647) 847-2336

Fax: (416) 750-9200

The Connection

A PUBLICATION BY THE VOLUNTEERS OF
**THE CANADIAN CENTRE FOR
VICTIMS OF TORTURE**
SCARBOROUGH BRANCH

A NEWSLETTER FOR ALL CCVT VOLUNTEERS

DECEMBER 2013

Volume 4

Issue 11



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Editors:

Jason Lawrence
Maxine Bond
Rosemary Namuyomba
Juliette Ntege

Contributors:

Sumeet Farwaha
Barrie Robert Reynolds
Ashley Walcott
Hiwot Adane
Sarah Hassan

Editors' Note:

The information provided in this publication is not controlled by the CCVT, and therefore may not reflect the Centre's views.



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LOCATION

CCVT Scarborough Branch
2401 Eglinton Ave. E.,
3rd Floor, Unit 310
Scarborough, ON, M1K 2N8
Tel.: 416-750-3045
Fax: 416-750-4990

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Volunteers' Activities

The CCVT Scarborough Branch Income Tax Returns Preparation Orientation Session



It is that time of the year again, Income Tax Season! Every year, CCVT Scarborough Branch organizes its In-House Tax Returns Preparation Orientation session to prepare all interested volunteers to be ready to provide a free service to eligible CCVT clients and their families at the CCVT Income Tax Clinic.

This year, the Tax preparation orientation session took place at the new CCVT location (Scarborough) on Saturday December 7th, 2013. This session had many objectives, some of which included: providing instructions on how to complete income tax forms, how to register for CRA's Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP), and how to deal with the clients in a professional manner.

This orientation was organized by CCVT Scarborough Volunteer Coordinator, Juliette Ntege. The two facilitators for this orientation were Ms. Marcelle Johnson and Mr. Nestor Silveira who have been volunteering with the CCVT Scarborough Income Tax Clinic for 3 years. They provided instructions to the group based on their extensive knowledge and vast experience in preparing income tax returns. They were very clear in their instructions and were excellent at responding to any questions the volunteers had. In addition to reviewing instructions for income tax return forms, they also went over specific responsibilities, obligations, and common concerns of volunteers during their inter-

actions with clients during the returns preparations. The instructors truly helped prepare all the volunteers for excellent volunteer-client interaction and the CRA Webinar training starting in the new year.

The income tax software that was introduced was called U-File. This was the software that volunteers would use to fill in important personal and financial information of the clients. The volunteers were instructed to carefully read the instructions for each section and to double check all information with the client before submission. Once completed, the facilitators emphasized the importance of reviewing the application with the client and to confirm that they are happy with their results. Volunteers were told to refer clients to CRA offices if they had complicated questions/concerns regarding their tax returns.

At the end of the session, volunteers were given ample time to ask any pressing questions regarding software use, client communication, and 2013/2014 tax return changes. All answers were very detailed and helpful. From there, the facilitators encourage all interested volunteers to register online with the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) through which the CRA provides training in the form of Webinars. Starting in the new year, the Webinar will be a vessel for all volunteers to keep up to date with any important tax returns changes.

The clinic will be opening on Friday February 21, 2014 and will be running every Friday for 11 weeks until May 2, 2014.

Once the Tax Season starts early 2014, we shall be available at CCVT Scarborough office to offer our services to individuals who need help preparing their 2013 tax returns. It is important to note that the CCVT Income Tax Clinic will not handle complicated Income Tax Returns cases, they will be referred to CRA directly.

By: Sumeet Farwaha, Volunteer, CCVT Scarborough Branch

STUDENT PLACEMENT'S ACHIEVEMENTS

GRADUATION FOR HIWOT ADANE Student Placement at CCVT Scarborough Branch



I have been an intern for CCVT Scarborough through the Youth Initiative Opportunities Unlimited with Youth in Motion, a non-profit organization in Toronto.

This program allows young women to gain valuable work experience and skills training.

On December 19, 2013 I attended the final graduation of the OUL cycle for 2013. The event was held at the Brookfield place in downtown Toronto. Employers, mentors and interns were present along with partners and supporters of Youth In Motion.

The night included certificates being awarded and everyone was able to share a few words of encouragement.

Through my internship with CCVT I gained a first hand look into the new

comer and settlement needs in Toronto. I was able to work directly with refugees performing in-take duties and assisting in case management. The extensive trauma and reality of the refugee experience has been eye opening for me. I was also provided training during my time with CCVT through the settlement program. My knowledge of Toronto's services and networks to meet the needs of refugees has also increased.

I count this hands on experience a great introduction to the world of social services in Toronto. I am extremely happy to have spent my time learning from CCVT's initiatives and being able to contribute my skills while gaining many new ones.

By: Hiwot Adane

CCVT STAFF LUNCHEON On Thursday December 19, 2013



Every December, CCVT staff from all the 3 locations come together to celebrate the end of each year!

To sum up what this Luncheon means to CCVT Staff in one word from one of the world's icons; the Late Nelson Mandela; **'Ubuntu'** - which means; **'I am because We Are!'**. That word explains the interconnectedness that we all have with each other at CCVT, where our success and challenges entirely depend on each other.

Mulugeta Abai, the Executive Director wished everybody
A HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR 2014!

By: Juliette Ntege, Volunteer Coordinator, CCVT Scarborough Branch

Volunteers' Activities

ESL One-on-One Tutoring A Volunteer's Testimonial



ESL One-on-One Tutoring At CCVT

"What it mean, 'you suck'?" Ahmed and I were going over an ESL exercise on Halloween. Suckers were listed as one of the treats. Explaining 'sucker' via 'to suck' got us to the question. It was a tough one.

Ahmed, not his name by the way, is a young man from south Asia who works as a cook. For several months, he and I have been meeting weekly for conversation. It took a little time for us to find our feet but after a couple of weeks we developed an easy pattern. Often Ahmed has words that he wants to understand. Fortunately, most of them are more concrete than the starting question and easier to deal with.

As Ahmed reads English, I thought that reading out loud would complement our conversations. This idea came to me during one of our early conversations when we were trying to find our way.

I asked the staff in the CCVT office if they had any, appropriately pitched, reading material. All that was found was 'Dora the Explora.' Ahmed recognized the book immediately and thought it was quite funny as we were reading it. I guess he must have nieces or nephews who have the book.

Before our next meeting, I was considering alternatives to Dora when it occurred to me that Ernest Hemingway's 'The Old Man and the Sea' might work. Hemingway was a very clean writer. The book turned out to be available in PDF on-line. We've been reading it since. Serendipitously, Ahmed was familiar with fishing boats and nets. I get the sense that the pattern of life in the book, a Mexican fishing village, is similar to his life in his home country.

As a young man, I worked in Italy for nearly a year. Until I learned to speak the language a little bit, I found it very frustrating not to be able to communicate. My task was easier than Ahmed's, however. English and Italian have common roots, concepts and share many sounds. It's a hard task to learn not only a different language but also a different culture. Added to that is the challenge of pronouncing vowels like 'h' and 'p' that don't occur in his language.

I salute Ahmed's determination to confront this steep challenge.

By: Barrie Robert Reynolds
Volunteer, CCVT Scarborough Branch

CCVT GIVES HOPE AFTER THE HORROR!

Clients' Events and Activities



The Homework Club Holiday Party At Don Montgomery Centre On Thursday December 12, 2013



On Thursday December 12, 2013, CCVT Scarborough Homework Club held its end of the Year 2013 Holiday Party at the Don Montgomery Centre. Children and their parents came together celebrating another successful year.

Many different activities were organized and planned out for all participants. The children had the opportunity to play and socialize with their friends on the day filled with nothing but food and fun activities.

Throughout the event younger children were able to gather in small groups to draw pictures and showcase their artistic abilities.

On the other hand, some of the talented children at the Homework Club were able to perform for the parents. Also parents were able to meet and greet other parents, staff and volunteers. Some parents and volunteers joined the dance performance and this was one of the highlights of the event. Other children had the opportunity to speak and express the positive impact that the Homework club had on them throughout the year.

All in all, the event was full of happiness and ending with laughter.

*By : Sarah Hassan, Student Placement
with the Homework Club Program*

CCVT GIVES HOPE AFTER THE HORROR!

THE CCVT AGM & HOLIDAY PARTY 8 DECEMBER, 2013

A Volunteer's Testimonial

As a volunteer with the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT), I have participated in volunteer services at the Scarborough branch since August 2013.

This year's CCVT AGM and Holiday party was my first such a great event I was able to attend since I joined the CCVT Volunteer Team. This is one of the festive parties that CCVT holds in celebration of its achievements towards serving the survivors of torture, and this year's was very special as CCVT celebrated the 35th Anniversary of existence.

Arriving at this Holiday Party was a nerve-racking experience. I did not know what to expect. I was part of the team that escorted clients from the Kennedy Subway station to the Party Hall at Bickford Centre.

On the way to the event, I had seen all of the children dressed up in their best holiday clothes and they looked so excited, I came to discover the secret of all the excitement after arriving at the Party venue.

When we arrived at the Bickford Centre, I was astonished at how much preparation was being put into the event. I saw so many other volunteers who, like me, were helping set up the event and were ready to give the CCVT community a great party.

The set-up was an opportunity to meet other CCVT staff from the other locations and get to know the other volunteers. I witnessed an excellent teamwork spirit among the CCVT Community and this made the set-up so easy and fast!

The CCVT Board, Staff, Volunteers, Clients with their families and friends came together to welcome the Holiday Season.

Soon after everyone had eaten the delicious food, the Executive Director welcomed guests to the Annual General Meeting. The salutations were then translated into six different languages by CCVT counselors. He then invited a CCVT client to share his experiences with the audience. The gentleman spoke of the wonderful services and support CCVT had offered him since arriving in Canada. As a French speaker myself, I enjoyed hearing the gentleman telling his story in his native tongue. His passion and conviction when he spoke about his efforts to help those in his native Burundi was awe inspiring.

The Homework Club students performed in a dance which put a smile on the faces of all who were watching.

All together the event was amazing; the kids' corner was full of crafts handmade by the kids! The food and the music were all a wonderful addition to the holiday season. When time came for the children to receive their gifts, the looks on their faces as they got their toys was precious, just describing the Moto of CCVT "CCVT Gives Hope After The Horror"!

I am thankful for being a part of the CCVT family, and I am looking forward to joining the 2014 AGM and Holiday Party!

*By: Ashley Walcott, Volunteer
CCVT Scarborough Branch*

**THE CCVT AGM & HOLIDAY PARTY
8 DECEMBER, 2013
In Pictures**



CCVT GIVES HOPE AFTER THE HORROR!

**Clients' Events and Activities
The CCVT Youth Holiday Food Drive**



The CCVT Youth Mission Possible Food Drive was open from November 27 until December 13, 2013. We were able to gather different types of food donations from several well-wishers and these included:

Cereals, Mac and Cheese, Pasta Sauce, Sandwich Spreads, Canned Fruits, Vegetables and Fish, Soups, Plain Beans and with Sauce, Rice, Flour, Sugar, Coffee, Tea, Hot Chocolate, Condiments like Ketchup, Mustard, Mayonnaise, Cake Mix, Pancake Mix etc.

All Non-Perishable food was donated to CCVT Clients and to Scarborough Centre for Health Communities.

We THANK YOU ALL for donating generously towards this Food Drive!

We wish you a Happy New Year 2014!!

By : Sarah Hassan, Student Placement with the Homework Club Program

Clients Activities and Events

ESL Class Trip to
The Bata Shoe Museum
On Tuesday December 10, 2013



CCVT GIVES HOPE AFTER THE HORROR!

Clients Activities and Events

ESL Class Trip to
The Bata Shoe Museum...(continued)

This month, the CCVT Scarborough ESL Class visited the Bata Shoe Museum. The Bata Shoe Museum is a unique museum and a great place to visit and learn about shoes not only in terms of personal style and taste, but (as the museum's website explains) the way shoes trace a path through technological development representing both great and subtle shifts a society's attitudes and values.

As visitors of the museum, we had the opportunity to learn about the ways footwear represents entire ways of life. When learning about the origins of footwear across different cultures, we also learn about the relationship between footwear and climate, religions, professions and attitudes to gender and social status of different cultures reflecting different historical periods.

The materials used to make the shoes signify not only the skill and intricacy involved in the art of shoemaking, but they reflect technological advancements and developments through the ages. It also raises questions about how modern technology and shoemaking have impacted more traditional practices and what practices have been lost in contemporary shoemaking practices.

The museum boasts a remarkable collection of over 10,000 shoes and a variety of amazing exhibitions. These exhibitions give visitors an opportunity to learn about shoes and shoe making from different regions of the world.

Perhaps one of the most interesting exhibitions is the "Notable People" exhibition.

Here, we had the opportunity to see and learn about some of the footwear worn by famous people. This exhibition boasts footwear from likes of Marilyn Monroe, John Lennon, Terry Fox, Shaquille O'Neal, and Justin Bieber.

The museum has also given us the opportunity to go out and explore a part of our city that may be either new or unfamiliar to us. Having the chance to go out and connect with the larger community is important because it helps us form deeper connections within our community and our city.

The opportunity to learn, explore events in our community is an important and necessary and an all-around enjoyable learning opportunity. We would like to give a special thanks to the hospitality of the museum's staff.

Finally, this trip would not have been possible without the planning of our wonderful ESL Teacher Yael Padawer (Yaya).

To the learners in the ESL Program, thank you for making the trip a wonderful learning experience.

*By: Jason Lawrence, Volunteer,
CCVT Scarborough Branch*