Youth Settlement Program Review
April 2012

In March, Newcomer Youth Program ran successfully with the services provided to youth clients through assistance & referrals on settlement issues including the weekly programs on language and tutoring. The highlights of the month were the March break activities; Ryerson trip and Newcomer Youth Film Festival, VOICES.

Language Skills Development for Newcomer Youth - Wednesdays

There were four sessions held in March on Wednesdays. Topics of discussion were anger management, problem solving tips and culture. Youth participated in various games and activities such as anger quiz, blind square and knot (problem solving), problem solving tips, Canadian facts, cultural clothing match. At each session, youth also presented their discussion outcomes; personal problem solving tips, knot game observations and so forth. We also held a Focus group discussion for Spring session on March 21st.
Few excerpts from critical reflection comments from the youth on learning about the above three topics with the goal of improving communication and language skills were:
"Cultural identifiers are the primary source of youth identity and the rest are secondary part of identity"
"It made me appreciate the cultural diversity in Canada where we are free to have such diversities of backgrounds and cultures as part of our identity"
"Learnt that anger is caused by dissatisfaction"
"We had a chance to talk about how to calm down"
"When we started this game I thought this is going to take a long time to finish. Everybody would have to work as a team to accomplish this problem"
"I feel like when you face a problem you should try in every way you can. But sometimes you should not place yourself on something when you cannot handle mess."

HIGHLIGHTS of the Month

During **the March break week** (12 to 16), our youth group had a tour of Ryerson University on Wednesday, March 14th. In their debrief session, they mentioned that the tour was both interesting and informational. They also learnt about how to apply at Ryerson and what kinds of scholarships are offered. On Friday, March 16th youth attended the Newcomer Film Festival which featured 7 short films made by newcomer youth of Toronto. One of the movies was made by Parkdale youth, members of our program who joined the film making program last summer and made a movie titled, "Be comfortable in your own skin". There were about 500 people at the festival held at Bell TIFF Lightbox theatre. Youth had great time learning about other newcomer youth's experiences. A statement from one of our program youth at the debrief session, " It made me think about how I was back home in Nepal and how I am now in Canada as a changed person. I thought about both positive and negative about my situation"

Peer Tutoring Club - Fridays

Four sessions were held in February. The peer tutoring club provided peer support in helping with solving homework and school assignments. Some of the subjects they helped each other were on Math, English, Geography, keyboarding skills, Chemistry. Since March we have started recording a log on the subjects youth are working on in Tutoring Club which helps identify how the peer learning system is effective. One of the youth at our evaluation session said, "It was really fun giving Rigden and Chamath math problems and twist their minds. It was good working on a problem as a team"

Parkdale Newcomer Youth Committee (PNYC) – a youth leadership group initiated by the Youth Program of PIA and PCIC

PNYC monthly meeting was held on March 23rd to review our program activities and project's progress. STOM-R project had several meetings to design monthly contest and hold the contest for youth participants to learn about smoking issues for a chance to win free movie tickets courtesy of the project. The contest was held on Friday 23rd attended by over 15 youth. 5 youth winners walked away with a free movie ticket. One of the contest winner, Dalha remarked, "I didn't know about STOM and also how smoking in movies can actually affect people's life. I also learned about STOM-R and it is a really interesting project.