

Shedding light on immigrant volunteers

Edmonton has a growing and vibrant newcomer, immigrant and refugee community.



And recognizing the wealth of skills and knowledge that these community members have to offer can be a real benefit to non-profit organizations.

That's why Volunteer Edmonton is hosting a Welcoming Newcomers to Canada in the Workplace workshop to help organizations understand how to welcome, engage and involve newcomers as volunteers.

The six-session workshop series offers insight into the challenges immigrants face, cultural differences in the workplace, ways to communicate, overcoming stereotypes and more.

'A TOUGH TIME'

The curriculum stemmed from the U of A's Faculty of Extension and Jewish Family Services' 2005 and 2006 research projects that looked at ways to increase and enhance immigrant volunteer involvement and their experiences.

The result of the projects helped build the curriculum for the six sessions, which are designed to provide participants with practical information that will help them create an inclusive, equitable and respectful work environment that recognizes the contributions of all volunteers.

"We know organizations are having a tough time finding volunteers," said Janice Bell, director of Volunteer Edmonton. "We also know that Edmonton has a large immigrant population that wants to become involved in the community."

"That's why it's so important to help people make connections."

Zenobia Jamal and Evelyn Hamdon, experienced adult educators who specialize in diversity, will be facilitating the workshop.

The workshop series begins on Sept. 1 and goes weekly until Oct. 16.

Bell encourages volunteer managers, executive directors, board members, and any non-profit/voluntary organization staff members to register.

'POSITIVE IMPACT'

"Newcomers can have a huge, positive impact on how we operate in the non-profit sector, and taking advantage of the opportunities to involve newcomers who bring skills and new perspectives with them will benefit organizations and newcomers alike," Bell explains.

Participants from last year's workshop agreed the sessions proved to be a valuable lesson on diversity and inclusion.

"The six sessions have been awesome,

powerful and, of course, deliverable," says one former participant.

A maximum of 30 participants will be accepted for the workshop series.

In order to register or to learn more about the Welcoming Newcomers to the Workplace in Canada workshop, visit our website at www.volunteeredmonton.com.

To suggest story ideas, contact Evelyn Pham, communications co-ordinator, at epham@volunteeredmonton.com or call 780-732-6655.

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