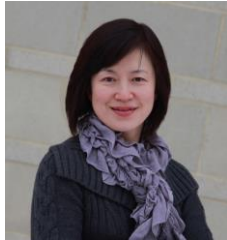


Redleaf Cultural Integration Annual Report 2017 – 2018



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1 Message from the Executive Director



2018 is a milestone of Redleaf Cultural Integration (RCI). It's our 5th years old anniversary. Over past five years, RCI has been supported by many volunteers, donors, community partners, the municipal, provincial and federal governments.

RCI was conceived by some concerned citizens who had gone through immigrant journey, truly understand the needs of newcomers, and wanted to help them have a smooth transition adapt to a new country.

The focus of RCI's work has been on supporting seniors and building community connections. The senior newcomers are most vulnerable population due to language barrier and culture differences. RCI started organizing regular senior activity in 2013, there were only 20 seniors at that time, it has grown rapidly and reached more than 200 senior members now. The senior program provides opportunity for senior to meet and learn together, to reduce social isolation and increase their capability to adapt to the new country. The special events, such as annual RCI Chinese New Year Celebration Event and Love-My-Hood Family Fun Events, always attracts hundreds of attendees from different culture backgrounds. The events not only share Chinese culture, but also invite people from other ethnic groups to show their cultures. The events allow people to learn from one another and increase cross-culture understanding, foster a diverse and inclusive community.

Last year, RCI has organized 30 senior activities, which attracted more than 1800 attendees in total. In order to assist senior's accessibility to our program, we offered school bus pick up service, which provided more than 1000 pick ups. The activities allow the seniors to meet and learn together without language barrier. The information sessions and outings provide seniors opportunity to learn more Canadian culture, increase the knowledge of what services available in the community, and reduce social isolation.

In the year of 2019, we will continually focus on senior program outreach and building community connection. Look forward to working with people of diverse background, expand our program and service to benefit more population in the community, to achieve another successful new year!

Lily Hudson



Executive Director of
Redleaf Cultural Integration

2 Vision, Mission, Mandate and Value

Vision

An integrated community for you to immerse

Mission

Offering tailored programs to new comers especially seniors to have a smooth transition to a new country and help building a more diverse and integrated community

Mandate

- To provide settlement support to new comers especially Chinese seniors with both language and transportation barriers
- To provide customized program to help newcomers build connection with local community
- To build a platform for newcomers to get connected to reduce social isolation
- To organize cultural themed events to promote diversity, inclusiveness and foster social capital

Value

- Mutual respect
- Awareness of cultural diversity
- Building a welcoming and inclusive community
- Strengthen social responsibilities

3 Newcomer Settlement Need

3.1 Information Orientations for Living in Canada

RCI starts to leverage local resources to provide useful and necessary information orientation sessions to seniors. Each session is translated in Chinese. Those sessions include:

- Canadian History
- Canadian Governing System
- Canada Law and Regulations
- How to take public transportation
- How to recycle in Halton
- How to file tax return
- How to apply for government support housing
- Others

The information played an important role in helping seniors making decision wisely and help them gain self-confidence and speed up the adaption to life in Canada.

"RCI is the window for us to understand Canada more deeply."

"Learned about Canada and the culture so we can communicate with other citizens."

"There is a different social system here. This is a good window for us to get to know Canada."

"We are motivated to come. It helps us understand more about Canada, how to adjust to Canada."

"It [RCI] is a bridge to Canada."

"Joining RCI is part of getting involved in Canada life."

- Focus group participant quotes



3.2 English Practicing Circle

Most of the seniors that participated in the focus groups participate in LINC classes, hosted by another local agency to learn English. Although the teacher is very nice and trying hard, she/he does not speak Chinese so that when they have a question, she does not understand them and their progress is very slow. The seniors spoke about the challenge with these classes.

“Most of us go to LINCK classes...so hard to follow and hard to ask questions.”

- Focus group participant quotes

Through the findings from the focus group conducted in 2017, RCI starts to provide bi-weekly 1-hour English Practicing Circle program tailored to the seniors. It has recruited Chinese speaking English teacher to offer tailored English practicing lessons to meet the senior’s needs and to learn at their pace.

In the recently completed focus group discussion, when the participants were asked to rate the activities RCI organized, it was not surprisingly that there were a number of people that appreciated the English class the most

“I like the English class the most.”

- Focus group participant quotes



3.3 Transportation Support

“I felt lonely when I came to Canada. I found it very hard to take public transit.”

- Focus group participant quotes

Due to the language barrier, many of our Chinese seniors are afraid to take public transit, which limited their access of community resources thus creating social isolation problems. Besides, due to the severe weather conditions in Winter in Canada, seniors are also very cautious of going out in winter. In order to

encourage them to join RCI's bi-weekly program, we provide transportation by renting a school bus to pick up participants who would otherwise be unable to attend. Although there is bus service in our area, many of our seniors are not yet confident to navigate the public transportation system. Providing school bus transportation makes our program accessible. Last year, we provided 1,380 school bus trips for seniors to our program.



4 Community Connection

The intersectionality of being a senior and an immigrant, heightens the risk of social isolation, and our seniors indicate they experience significant loneliness. In addition to all other interactive activities provided to assist with settlement in Canada, our program allocates one hour bi-weekly to activities such as tai chi, singing, and chess that foster social connections among peers for mutual support. This promotes social participation and enhances well-being.

"Besides my relatives, RLCI is my second home."

"My world has been enlarged."

"These are new friends with the same background."

"Made a lot of friends. We make phone calls between meetings with friends, frequently."

- Focus group participant quotes

"When I came to RCI, I felt that this is a place where Chinese seniors can get together and use their skills to help each other. So, I really like to come here as I feel wholeheartedly excited when taking part in RCI's activities. At RCI, I can make a lot of new friends, learn new things and entertain myself which make our life completer and more meaningful."

- Shared testimony of seniors

Besides the settlement program to help the seniors to adapt to the daily life in Canada, RCI has also organized several field trips to enhance their understanding of Canadian culture and history.

Past trips have included visiting venues through Doors Open Ontario, the Royal Botanical Gardens, St Jacobs Mennonite Market, Queenstown Heights, and the Halton Waste Management facility.

"RCI is the window for us to understand Canada more deeply."

"Learned about Canada and the culture so we can communicate with other citizens."

"There is a different social system here. This is a good window for us to get to know Canada."

"We are motivated to come. It helps us understand more about Canada, how to adjust to Canada."

"It [RCI] is a bridge to Canada."

"Joining RCI is part of getting involved in Canada life."

- Focus group participant quotes



5 Community Integration

RCI always play an active role in the local community.

Knitting Group

Our knitting group partnership with Burlington Square Lady Afghan group for making and donating Afghans to cancer patients through Wellwood Warm Hope program. Since November, 2017, RCI knitting group has made and assembled about 150 Afghans.



Tree Planting in Local Community

In Spring time, RCI also participated in the Tree Planting event organized by Burlington Green organization on April 21st, 2018. There were about 20 senior volunteers joined in the local community volunteers in Tuck Park and planted trees.



Family Fun Day – Love My Hood

With the support from City of Burlington Love My Hood project, RCI successfully organized the 2nd annual Family Fun Day in Orchard Community Park. We invited local community, neighbourhood and the senior's group from Oakville join us for a fun filled afternoon. There were performances, games and contests. Lots of laughter and this event extended the neighbourhood social connection and brought people together.



Chinese New Year Celebration

On Feb. 2nd, RCI hosted its 5th annual Chinese New Year Celebration. City of Burlington is a diversity community. Helping newcomers settling down and integrating the different cultures together is one of the missions RCI is carrying on. Chinese New Year Celebration Event fully make everyone feel inclusive by showcasing different cultural performing arts (chorus, instruments, dance, etc.) and displaying the Chinese traditional arts (painting, calligraphy, etc.) to the local community. There were about 500 people from different cultural background participated in and enjoyed this event, almost 60% audience are seniors. On top of the Chinese artists, we are also very happy to have Ukrainian, Indian and Persian artists to share their talents on the stage with all of the audiences.

Very positive feedback has been heard from RCI seniors who participated in this event from different aspects, such as performers, volunteers, and audiences.

"We are all willing to volunteer for RCI. We feel honored to volunteer and contribute to the organization."

*"We can get involved in the performance. I could not perform at home. "
"over the five years we notice the difference." There were five hundred people at the celebration
this year! Forty percent are non-Chinese.
"RCI organizers do this so we can celebrate. We are so happy for this event."
- Focus group participant quotes*



6 Financial Report

Income Statement

	2017/18	2016/17
Revenue	\$85,951.51	\$74,887.00
Expenses		
Salaries	\$42,311.00	\$34,904.97
Other Operating Expenses	\$34,623.60	\$41,054.25
Net income/loss for Year	<u>\$9,016.91</u>	<u>-\$1,072.22</u>

Balance Sheet

	2017/18	2016/17
Net Assets		
Current Assets	\$36,483.96	\$27,156.11
Total Assets	<u>\$36,483.96</u>	<u>\$27,156.11</u>
Liabilities & Equity		
Current Liabilities	\$1,048.67	\$737.73
Equity	35,435.29	26,418.38
Total Liabilities & Equity	<u>\$36,483.96</u>	<u>\$27,156.11</u>