

Redleaf Cultural Integration Annual Report 2018 – 2019



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Better Together Because We All Belong

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1 Vision, Mission, Mandate and Value

Vision

An integrated community for you to immerse

Mission

Offering tailored programs to newcomers 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 newcomers 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

2 RCI Seniors Program

RCI provides bi-weekly activities to seniors mainly from Mainland China at community centres in Burlington on a yearly basis. During each activity session, fitness exercise and singing practice will be carried out as a kind of warm up. An average of 65 seniors attended each session based on the record. As its ritual, RCI held its key activities, e.g. “Talent Show”; “Potluck to Welcome the New Year” and “Senior Volunteers Recognition & Appreciation Dinner” in 2019.

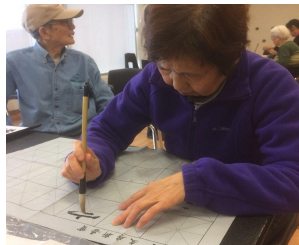
2.1 Never Too Old to Learn

According to scientific research, one of the effective ways to prevent aging is to keep learning new things. At RCI, we tried our best to provide the opportunities for our seniors to learn new knowledge in different areas which include:

- English Lessons tailored to the pace and requirement of the senior groups. Our volunteer English teacher offered lessons on useful phrases including taking buses, chatting with neighbors and asking directions etc. for the seniors to practice and help them better immerse themselves into the local community.



- Classes on Chinese culture such as “Tea Culture” and “Chinese Calligraphy” are also provided to our seniors during their bi-weekly gathering sessions. The professional teachers presented the cultural background of Chinese tea and its type, the way to prepare the tea etc. For the Calligraphy class, RCI provided practice kits to seniors who are interested to practice in class.



- Becoming a professional photographer: since more and more seniors are using smartphones or iPad devices, in order to help them to use the gadgets efficiently, RCI invited professionals to share their expertise in “How to Take Good Pictures” and “How to Make the Pictures You Took Better”. The teacher shared the useful tools to use to modify the pictures and also carried out a practice session with the seniors to take pictures outdoors and instructed the seniors on one to one base.



2.2 Enjoy the Nature

After the LONG winter, everyone is looking forward to enjoying the sunshine and beautiful nature of Canada. Spring and summer are the most precious seasons for the seniors to enjoy outdoor activities. RCI has arranged 3 field trips for the seniors including:

- Pier 4 Park
- Confederation Park
- Coronation Park

During each of the field trips, RCI provided transportation support and the seniors had a potluck lunch together. Besides visiting the scenery spots, they also organized activities, such as sing along, line dance practice and fitness exercise etc. The seniors really enjoyed their time in nature as well as with their friends.



2.3 East Meets West

When our seniors move from China to Canada, the obstacles they are facing are not only language but also different cultures. One of the mandates RCI adopts is to organize cultural themed events to promote diversity, inclusiveness and foster social capital. In order to do so, we have contacted a local square dance team from Waterdown Village Squares to offer “Square Dance” lessons for our seniors.

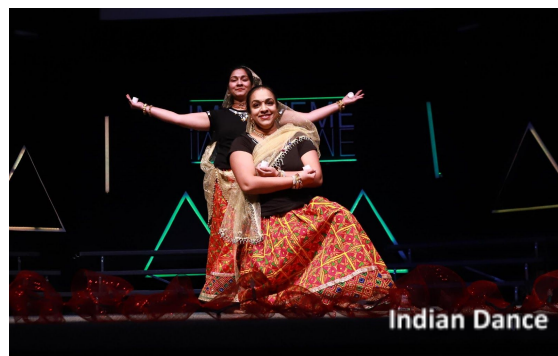
Initially we had a little bit of concern on if our seniors would accept this totally different kind of art culture as well as understanding the “call” (instructions on the moving directions of the group dance). However, after the trial lesson, contrary to our expectations, our seniors REALLY enjoyed the lesson and cherished the time spent together with other western seniors and some of them even made friends with each other.



3 Community Involvement

3.1 Chinese New Year Celebration

On Feb. 2nd, 2019, 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 makes 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 backgrounds participating in and enjoyed this event, almost 60% of the 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.



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3.2 Redleaf Choir Concert

To promote the performing arts in the local community, RCI hosted the 1st Redleaf Choir Concert on May 4th, 2019 at Glad Tidings Church Burlington.

There were 6 choirs groups that attended this concert and around 100 choir members performed on the stage. The concert covered different varieties of the music and cultures, and brought the highlight of the vocal arts to the audience.



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3.3 Ontario Culture Days

“Culture Days is a national celebration of arts and culture. At the end of each September, millions of people attend thousands of participatory arts and culture events across the country.”

Redleaf Cultural Integration attended Ontario Culture Days on September 28th and 29th. During the two days program, RCI didn't not participate in the event as an organizer, but also planned a day trip for RCI seniors to know more about the local diversity cultures.

RCI organized the following activities to support Culture Days Performances at the Art Gallery of Burlington and Burlington Performing Arts Center,

- Chinese Calligraphy Demonstration and Display
- Chinese Painting Demonstration and Display
- Chinese traditional edible art – Sugar Painting
- Cultural dances
- Redleaf Choir



3.4 Toronto Dragon Festival

On September 8th, 2019, RCI Seniors Group participated in the Toronto Dragon Festival Line Dance Demonstration. This is the first year RCI seniors attend this event and there were 18 seniors performed on the Phillipe Square Stage.

This dance team was organized and led by RCI seniors, they chose the music, worked together on the choreography and planned the practice time individually or as a group. On the same day, RCI also rented a school bus for all of the supporting families and friends and made this trip memorably.



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4 Community Program

4.1 Redleaf Choir

Redleaf Choir was founded in June 2018 and have been running almost 2 years now. It was managed by a volunteered core group which is responsible for the activities planning, status reviewing and financial controlling. The current leader of the Redleaf Choir is Qian, Zhiguang since June 2019, Han, Xinagguang was leading the group before that time.

In 2019, Redleaf Choir had 22 registered members. They practiced on a weekly base and had one professional coaching session every two weeks.

Redleaf Choir's mission is enriching local residents' lives and promoting the vocal arts. They performed a few times through the year 2019 in the local community and gained very good reputations. They also gave back to the local community and managed three one-hour performances for the Halton Senior Housing residences, which received very positive feedback.

For the outreaching and collaborations, they have performed in the following events either on their own or working with other choir groups:

- Redleaf Lunar New Year Celebration in February, 2019
- Redleaf Choir Concert in May, 2019
- An open-to-public class with Mrs. Zhou, Jianfen, a professional vocalist teacher
- Ontario Cultural Days event in Burlington Art Gallery on September, 2019

In the future, Redleaf Choir will continuously work on providing the local community with more vocal learning opportunities and social connections.



Redleaf Choir Group

4.2 RCI Dance Fitness Class

RCI Dance Fitness Class started in March, 2019 when we noticed that there is a need about how to correct posture in a fun way.

We invited retired professional dancer, Yu Lu, as the fitness class teacher. She coached the class from the following three perspectives:

- Muscle and spine stretching
- Chinese traditional Qipao fashion show walking
- Basic dance moves

This class received good feedback and soon Mrs. Lu opened another three similar classes in Oakville and Mississauga which were not run by RCI.

In 2019, RCI has organized 6 sessions of the Dance Fitness Class, each session ran 8 – 10 classes. There were 112 attendees totally involved in the class.

From September, 2019, RCI Dance Fitness Class started practicing a Cultural Fashion Show for RCI Lunar New Year Celebration 2020. This fashion show was collaborated with Shreya Indian Dance Studio. This performance got very good feedback from the audiences and the participants. The dance team didn't only enjoy the performance but also strengthened the friendship.

In the future, RCI fitness dance class will continue to focus on helping people to improve their physical health and communicate the Chinese fashion culture to the local community.

