

# Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society



## Autumn Beginnings

With the passing of the heat of summer come all the great things in the fall. ELSA classes are starting, our halls will once again ring with the sounds of many languages and small children. Women's Group will reconvene and the Tuesday night games will begin. September is also a good

time to refocus on the job search.

This newsletter is mainly composed of submissions from our members. The idea of a more member friendly newsletter may blossom and become a regular or perhaps a special edition. If you have any stories, news or interest-

ing ideas you would like to submit for the next newsletter please send by email, snail mail or drop it off in person to Wendy. We are looking for volunteers with editing experience to help us create our newsletter. Please let us know if you are interested in this opportunity.

## Say NO to Racism & Hate



By saying **NO**, we let it be known that this behaviour is unacceptable in our community

By saying **NO**, we commit to respond when we witness incidents of racism and hate.

By saying **NO**, those who experience acts of racism or hate know that they will be treated with dignity and respect and will receive support

By saying **NO**, we envision a community where all members feel safe and secure, and differences are respected.

In partnership with First Stitch Embroidery, the Society and the Team have created t-shirts (\$20) and hats (\$15) with the "I say No to racism and hate" embroidered logo. \$5.00 from every t-shirt and hat sold will go to support the diversity work of the Action for Diversity Team. To buy a t-shirt or hat, come to the Multicultural Society or contact the Society at 753-6911 for other locations.

At the request of the Multicultural Society and the Action for Diversity Team, Nanaimo's Mayor and Council proclaim July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2005 as the Day to Say NO to Racism and Hate. While we are hoping that this will become an annual event, we also invite everyone to take a stand for inclusion every day of the year by committing to work towards making Nanaimo a place where diversity is celebrated and everyone is included.

Racism and hate deny certain members of our community access to its benefits and responsibilities because of their race, sexual orientation, colour, gender, national or ethnic origin, language, religion, age, or mental or physical disability. Therefore, racism and hate are harmful and counterproductive forces that undermine all community members.

## AMSSA Service Recognition Award



Cecilia Chong

The annual AMSSA (Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC) Service Recognition Award was established to recognize a staff member of a member agency who has made significant contributions to the vision and goals of the organization. In recognition of her tireless service to the CVIMS and to her community Cecilia Chong is honoured with the inaugural AMSSA Service Recognition Award. The award ceremony will be held in Vancouver on September 16<sup>th</sup>.

## Dates to Remember

Aug 27<sup>th</sup>  
Garage Sale

Sept 7<sup>th</sup>  
ELSA Classes Begin

Sept 9<sup>th</sup>  
Women's Group Begins

Sept 13<sup>th</sup>  
Moon Festival Celebration  
at Sports & Games Evening

Sept 18<sup>th</sup>  
Family Workshop  
Punjabi language

Oct 15<sup>th</sup>  
Family Workshop  
Chinese Language

Nov 5<sup>nd</sup>  
Family Workshop  
English Language

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## My Path to Working in Canada *by Sabrina Wu*

In January 2002, my husband and I immigrated to Canada. In China both of us had decent jobs. We had computer science degrees with 9 years computer related working experience. However, we prepared to start from zero, which means we have to give up what we had – good jobs, comfortable life style, families and friends. We regarded the immigration as an adventure. Even though we had prepared psychologically very well, we didn't realized what starting from zero really meant until we landed on the land of Canada. I felt I was like a new-born baby – didn't know what The Bay is, what ICBC is, and didn't know when crossing the street, we needed to push the pedestrian button, and didn't even know how to pay bills and tips in restaurants. Of course we had the most common problem with English - couldn't understand people's talking and couldn't express ourselves well – if I can say we could express. Furthermore, we didn't have any network in Canada – even new babies have parents and relatives to care and help them.

The first and most important lesson I learned from the experience is to be patient. I understood a new baby is not ready to get a decent job. The first half a year, we tried to learn this new environment and understand the culture, so we went to ESL to learn English. In September – nine months later we decided to go to university to get some degrees and more important – to get more experience of living Canada. Therefore we moved to Nanaimo and started our MBA degree. One year later, I graduated from the MBA program, and I tried to look for related jobs about marketing positions in software industry. Although I knew it would be very few opportunities to get such kind of jobs, it still surprised me that there were almost none of this kind of advertisements.

Very soon, I decided to find an entry job to re-start my career here in Canada. During this period I got help from Joy and Nanette of the Multicultural Society. They always gave me proper suggestions, modified my resumes very patiently. They encourage me all the time and collected the proper employment information for me. Cecilia Chong always supports us in many kinds of ways. She concerns about our daily life difficulties and tries to help us to build broader network. Here I thank them sincerely. I heard about RMH from chatting with Cecilia. I was very joyful when I got the Technical Services Representative position in RMH for several reasons: it was my start in the job market, I could get working experience, I could improve my English further, and I could earn some money to compensate the living expense. On the other hand, I had to remind myself: I won't focus on how hard the job was, how low the salary was, how limited knowledge I used. I knew it was not the end of the job searching - it was just the beginning. I have one thing to share – if you have earned enough income to support your simple living, don't work overtime too often – it isn't worth your energy and your feeling – keeping a good mood and healthy condition is more important than money at this moment, because you have further to go.

I worked at RMH for 10 months, during this period I tried to search jobs outside the company or inside the company with different positions several times. After 10 months, I got hired by Shaw Cablesystem, which is the entertainment system provider including TV and Internet services. I still work as a Technical Services Representative taking calls to help people with technical troubles. Even though this is a similar job as before, it is quite more comfortable working

in a bright office with big wide windows, which makes me feel this is more like a real job. Two months ago, my husband got a job with Shaw. This is the milestone of our immigration adventure. So far we like the jobs at Shaw. Even these are not the desired positions, but they are related to computer area and both of us enjoy helping people with technical troubles. As mentioned before, we have to have patience, we know we started as a new-born baby and it takes time to grow up to take more important responsibility in the work place.

In general, to be positive, enjoy what you have had, to be supportive to family members, and try to expand the network, are very important and will make the hard time much easier. This is our immigration story. After three and half a year since we landed Canada, we have begun to start a normal life as local normal people. We are experiencing/enjoying our life whatever hard or ease, bitter or sweet. The purpose of immigration is to get challenges, get a better environment, and get a better life. We are on the track.

### Employment Services Centre Drop in Hours:

Monday to Friday  
8:30 - 12:00 and 1:00 - 4:30

or call Nanette at 753-5503 to book an appointment to find out more



Canada

The Government of Canada  
has contributed funding to this initiative

## Hypnotherapist *by Mamy Sikitu*

Have you ever been to a magic show or had someone performed a magic trick on you? Did you believe it when it happened or stay puzzled and asked yourself, "how did they do it?"

When I was about eight years old, I went to visit my Aunt Cecilia who lived far away from the city. She lived in a village called Ruberizi; there it was very different from the city. There was no electricity, running water or even an open market in the village. The house she lived in was dissimilar from the others I saw in the village, most of them had triangle shaped roofs and they were round in form. My aunt's house, on the other hand, was just like the ones in the city. I felt disappointed. I was sorry for the choice I had made in deciding to go there. My siblings and I had to decide where we wanted to go for summer vacation. I chose to visit my Aunt since she was my favorite. I had never seen where she lived, so that summer I decided to go and visit her. I didn't know what kind of life she was living because most of the time she came to visit us. Whenever my sisters and I asked her where she lived, she would tell us amazing stories about an abandoned village where she now lived, called the Garden of Eden. "Many people are not aware of this place," she would say. "Only the ones who are lucky and brave enough to know where it is get to live here." I recall her saying it was a place where the trees grow so tall they almost reach heaven and a jungle so big you can walk for days and days. She described how in this place you could find monkeys, lions, elephants, and many more animals that you could safely play with.

"Can you get to take the monkey home?" I asked excitedly.

"Yes," she answered, and said, "You can even get to pet the lion's back or ride on an elephant. Outside the jungle just where I live, you can see many kinds of fruit trees, and the fruits are so bright that they look like lights on a Christmas tree." She also spoke of a magic river. "When people get to swim in it, their skin turns brownish gold."

I would sit there quietly listening to her amazing story and wish I could go to the garden as soon as possible to see and witness the beauty of this mysterious village. I didn't know that I had already

been mesmerized by her story and had no choice but to believe everything she said.

The day came when I was to go to the Garden of Eden as she called it. When I arrived there, nothing was similar to what she had described in the story. The trees were short; there was a couple of fruit trees but not with the many fruits she mentioned. She came running down the little hill when she saw my dad and me coming. She was excited to see us, but I was confused. I stood there frozen forgetting I was the one who chose to come and visit my aunt. Maybe she used the story to get me there, since it wasn't easy for me to go anywhere far from home. She knew how weak I would become for a beautiful story like that. She got me! She got me good!

My thoughts were interrupted with a warm drop of sweat that landed on my little brown cheeks. I then realized I had been getting hugged for about two minutes. I put my arms around her small waist, and took a moment to listen to the musical heartbeat of my aunt's chest. I hung there for a little while appreciating every rhythm of the sound that her heart was delivering, just the way I used to do when she came to visit me back home. I removed my face gently from her chest and stared at her Chinese shaped eyes; she stared back straight into my soul. She read my mind; she knew what all the confusion was about. She led me in to the house and surprised me with a table full of my favorite food, dried fish and lemon sauce, fried rice and peas, steamed plantains, just to name a few. Almost everybody in the village seemed to know about my arrival. My aunt explained that she had told them about me and that they were excited to come and see me. I thought it was ok but all I wanted to see were the jungle and the magic river. Everybody left about eleven o'clock at night and I was having a hard time sleeping, all I could think of was the jungle and the magic river. My aunt walked in and joined me on the mat. She knew something was wrong. I told her that I loved her very much but I was expected to see the Garden of Eden and the magic river. She looked at me with no sur-

prise or laughter. "You are at the Garden of Eden," she said.

She asked me to lie down, close my eyes, relax and asked me if I was ready to go to the Garden of Eden. Before I asked how, I heard an echoing sound; one, two, three. Then I found myself in a welcoming forest filled with all kinds of trees. There were some so tall they almost reached the heavens and the fruit on some of the trees sparkled like Christmas lights just as she told us in the story. It was stunning. The first thing I saw was the lion walking toward me, slowly, gently to say hello. Surpris-

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*Mamy Sikitu came to Nanaimo from the Congo with her husband and daughter in 1997. Her interest in story telling really blossomed when she started telling stories to her children. She also began to realize her story telling abilities from the feedback she would get from her family and friends when she wrote them letters. "I knew there was something strange when I wrote letters to my family, different poetic letters. It made me think that maybe I had something here and I could keep this going," she says.*

*Ideas come to Mamy out of nowhere in the middle of the night. She finds it hard to write on demand, "I have to take time," she says, "the amazing thing is I don't get inspired in French or the other languages I speak, always in English."*

*She started learning how to write by taking a correspondence course; "Writing for Children." Last year she put the creative courses on hold to go back to school to learn good English grammar. She will return to finish her Grade 12 English in September at Malaspina, then we can all look forward to more of her imaginative colourful story telling.*

*Mamy says. "There are so many stories for the world to know and to share. I have so much to offer." She hopes to continue writing as a career.*

## Life in Canada *by Kyung Rim Shin*



*Kyung Rim Shin and Family*

An ordinary day in June in 2001 turned into a very significant day for my family. At the dinner table, my husband, James, suggested moving to Canada. Our two children and I were so surprised by his idea. James said that he wanted to study his M.B.A. (Master of Business Administration) in Canada to further his career, and he wanted to pursue his goal before it was too late. So we applied for immigration to Canada, and my family and I landed in Victoria in March 2003.

Unlike my expectation of living in a beautiful city, Victoria, I felt something was missing and was uncomfortable because of the high living cost, especially rent. I admitted my mistake not moving to Nanaimo where I had been four years in a row prior to immigrating to Canada spending my summer holidays. While I was living in Victoria, I visited my friends in Nanaimo. Whenever I came to Nanaimo, I felt I was in my hometown and did not feel like an outsider. So we moved to Nanaimo after living in Victoria six months, and this decision was one of the wisest ones in my life.

Since we had some friends here in Nanaimo, we felt we belonged to Canada and became more active. As soon as we finished unpacking James and I joined ELSA class at the Multicultural Society. During the course, I met immigrants from many other countries and was impressed by their hard work. This gave me a positive impact. In addition, the staff in CVIMS provides us with lots of useful information through various workshops, such as tax filing, health care and parenting. Recently, I partici-

pated in a parenting workshop for a month, and this provided me an opportunity to think about what to do as a Korean mother to raise children in Canada. I also took an employment course last year and I learned about communication skills, writing a good resume, interview skills and some laws in Canada. This knowledge was essential for me to be successful here in Canada. Also CVIMS does mean a lot to my daughter, Julia. She got the first job in her life working at CVIMS last summer. She learned many things from the work and became more involved in many youth activities. I have seen the staff in CVIMS trying to improve their services despite limited government subsidies and all their hard work has made a deep impression on many immigrants.

Now we have been living in Nanaimo for two years and my husband just finished his master's degree, which means he has achieved his goal. I am going to take a Social Service program in September. I am so excited about the course because it will be quite different from my previous occupation.

Living in a foreign country is not easy, but I realized the simple rule again; that if we think in a positive way and work hard we can achieve our goals

Keep up the good work; all immigrants and CVIMS!!

## Hypnotherapist

*(Continued from page 3)*

ingly I wasn't scared at all. Then an elephant, giraffe and a monkey followed after the lion. They seemed to know me and I think they knew who sent me there. I heard them telling each other how brave and lucky I was to be there. Then I thought I heard some people singing and some splashing noises coming from the magical river. I followed the little path with the sounds of chirping birds accompanying me. There were two little children waiting at the end of the path holding a perfumed

## CVIMS Garage Sale

437 Foster Street

Friday 26<sup>th</sup> 2 - 4 pm

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> 9 - 12 noon.

If you have good quality items you would like to donate call 753-8963.



*Eighty or more people attended this years Sports & Games Potluck at Fairview School on July 19<sup>th</sup>. Once again the food was fantastic, the entertainment was inspiring and the company was great.*



*A CVIMS member shares Canadian, Korean and Mexican culture in three languages over a game of UNO in her home. Opening our doors and truly hosting visitors, international students and immigrants is so enriching for all and a great deal of fun. All of these people connected originally through the Women's Group held every Friday morning during the school year. This is another wonderful chance to make friendships and learn new things.*

rose. They handed the rose to me and asked me to join them in the magical river where, when you swim, everybody's skin turns to gold. The water was cold and when I touched it with my hands I woke up on my cousin's wet blanket.

Amazingly it was morning and my aunt was sitting by my side exactly where she sat the night before. She was looking into my soul through my eyes and she asked me "Now do you believe in the Garden of Eden?"