

On May 12, 2017, WE LIP member, Workforce WindsorEssex, held a Workforce Summit. The objective of the one day event was to tackle the issue of people without jobs and jobs without people by providing insight on innovative training initiatives from other communities and by discussing the existing and missing training pathways for in-demand occupations in Windsor-Essex community. Approximately 180 representatives from industry, government, employment services, and education and training organizations were in attendance. One theme which was explored was the benefits of hiring immigrants to create a diverse workforce.

Keynote speaker, Jim Estill, CEO of Danby Appliances, spoke about how his Guelph company has sponsored 58 Syrian Refugee families. Each family is matched with an Arabic speaking mentor family and 4 or 5 English speaking families. The mentors offer support with everyday tasks such banking, riding the bus, acquiring library cards and medical appointments.

For those newcomers who are interested, Danby offers 90 days of employment at its facility; the ultimate goal being full time employment with either Danby or another local employer. The company has created the Ease into Canada Program, providing its newcomer employees with valuable Canadian work experience, as well as opportunities to learn English through a “Word of the Day”, lunch buddies and one on one tutoring. Jim credits much of the success of the program to his employee/community volunteers. He encourages other employers to offer similar opportunities for newcomers, stating that the unintended consequences include a more engaged workforce, employee and customer attraction, infusion of new and different ways of thinking and new connections with global markets.

Michelle Suchiu, WE LIP Community Connector, addressed the Workforce Summit participants to reinforce the message of hiring newcomers and the benefits of a diverse workforce.



Photo credit: Mike Kovaliv



The Ontario Municipal Social Service Association (OMSSA) celebrated the progress made by investing in people during their annual conference on May 29th and 30th 2017. The OMSSA Awards celebrate individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions to both OMSSA and their communities, recognizing their commitment to plan, manage and deliver quality human services in Ontario. The City of Windsor and the Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership (WE LIP) were the recipients of the Municipal Champion Award for their efforts over the past year to help resettle over 1300 Syrian refugees into the Windsor community. From the outset, the City of Windsor's Community Development and Health Services worked in concert with the WE LIP to enhance the management of the service system. Through constant communication and collaboration, the system became better equipped to better meet the needs of our newcomers.

