



## 2015 WE LIP Annual Forum

The Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership (WE LIP) Annual Forum was hosted on Tuesday March 3, 2015 in the Collavino Hall at the WFCU Centre in Windsor. The event was well attended by 150 + community members from a variety of organizations. This attendance was a true reflection of the successful partnership efforts that the WE LIP has made to increase collaboration and council engagement.

The keynote speaker for the morning was Teresa Piruzza, the Director of External Affairs and Public Policy for Chrysler Canada. Following the keynote address Charlotte Le Frank, the Master of Ceremonies for the forum and the WE LIP Communications Committee Chair, provided further insight to the communication strategy for the LIP. This information provided a solid foundation for anyone who may have been unfamiliar with the WE LIP and served as an excellent refresher for those who have been long time council members.

WE LIP Council member Tanya Antoniow from Workforce WindsorEssex spoke on the Business Case for a Diverse Workforce. Tanya currently chairs this working group and was able to share relevant stats and valuable information with those in attendance. This working group is currently finalizing a survey that will provide event further insight into the importance of a business case for a diverse workforce.

Next, Sarah May Garcia from the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network spoke about the Listening to You: Care, Share, Aware - Newcomer Health and Patient Engagement. The information she shared was useful in providing our audience with insight on the recommendations that newcomers have made to improve the health care system and the experience that they have had with it. She invited Zain Ismail from Leamington District Memorial Hospital to join her as he shared the collaborative efforts that the Leamington District Hospital is taking. The health care portion of our annual forum concluded with a video premiere. This video highlighted the perspective of Rita Selo-ojeme. This video allowed our audience to hear the experiences that Rita had with health care in our region. It was an honor to have this video premiered at our event, and to be able to share Rita's story with so many key players in our region.

Following this Michelle Beemer from Workforce WindsorEssex provided the group with a tutorial for the immigration website. [www.welcometowindsorsex.ca](http://www.welcometowindsorsex.ca) launched in December 2014. Michelle provided our audience with the history of the website, shared highlights of the website, demonstrated how to use the website and asked community members to provide any additional necessary information to include on the website.

Mike Clement from the City of Windsor Parks and Recreation share the results of and his experience with the Newcomer Parks Consultation held in partnership with WE LIP in December 2014. Mike shared the value of the partnership and his interest in working together again in the future.

Our final community partner to speak was Christelle Desforges from Réseau de soutien à l'Immigration Francophone du Centre-Sud-Ouest de l'Ontario. Christelle represents the Francophone community and shared the work that has been done recently as well as upcoming initiatives. Double screens were set up to allow for the presentation to be viewed in both French and English.

A deeply meaningful part of the WE LIP Annual Forum was the presentation of the 2015 Jean Foster Welcoming Community Award. This award was introduced by Hugo Vega from the YMCA and three awards were presented to community members following his introduction. The WE LIP was present this award to Brian Gregg, the CAO of the County of Essex, New Beginnings Children and Youth Services, and Cassandra Richardson from Windsor Women Working with Immigrant Women. These community members exemplify what Jean was passionate about and have all demonstrated their desire to make Windsor-Essex a welcoming community. Newcomer youth shared of their experiences with New Beginnings and Cassandra Richardson, highlighting the impact that these organizations and individuals had on their lives as they transitioned to life in Windsor-Essex.

