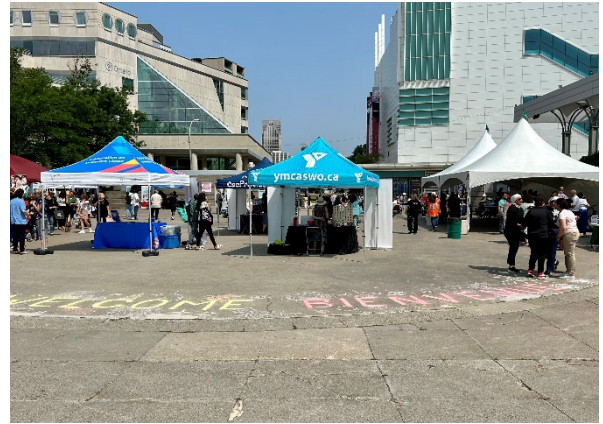


On June 20, 2023, Comité local en immigration francophone, Réseau en immigration francophone du Sud-ouest and the Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership, collaborated to host World Refugee Day at Charles Clark Square with the theme hope away from home.

The event was carousel-styled, giving refugees an opportunity to access information about programs and services and showcase aspects of their culture. Approximately 550 participants attended and received information and resources made available by nearly 30 organizations present.

"Amidst the challenges they have faced, refugees bring with them an unwavering spirit of resilience, strength, and hope. Join us as we come together to celebrate their remarkable journeys, embrace diversity, and build a future where compassion knows no boundaries." Stephen Lynn, Manager of Social Policy & Planning, City of Windsor and Project Manager for the Windsor-Essex Local Immigration Partnership.



" Pour la communauté de Windsor Essex, le 20 juin de chaque année permet de renforcer l'empathie et la compréhension du sort des réfugiés et de reconnaître leur résilience dans la reconstruction de leur vie. Les réfugiés que nous accueillons font vivre la culture, créent des liens et construisent l'économie." Yasmine Joheir, Présidente du Comité local en immigration en francophone WECK.

Stephen Lynn reflected on our region's history of welcoming refugees in his opening remarks:

*"This year certainly differs for our community as we welcomed over 1400 asylum seekers to Windsor in less than 6 months. There has been 59 different nationalities and 29 different languages spoken. However, refugees are not merely statistics or numbers; they are human beings with dreams, aspirations, and stories that deserve to be heard. They have been uprooted from their familiar surroundings, leaving behind everything, and embarking on long journeys in search of safety and a better future."*

*The hardships they endure are unimaginable, but their determination to survive and rebuild their lives is truly inspiring.*

*On this day, we must reflect upon the fundamental principles of compassion, empathy, and justice that define our shared humanity. We must remember that no one chooses to become a refugee.*

*By welcoming and embracing refugees, we honour their resilience and recognize the immeasurable contributions they can make to our communities.*

*I'm pleased to hear about the children safely learning in our local schools or those who have already found jobs.*

*Today, I also want to acknowledge the efforts of the organizations, various levels of government and individuals who work tirelessly to protect and support refugees across Windsor-Essex. Your dedication and compassion serve as a beacon of hope for those who have lost everything. Thank you for your continued efforts. I know the work is not easy.*

*As we stand together on World Refugee Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to upholding the rights and dignity of all individuals, regardless of their nationality or background. Let us strive to create a world where no one is forced to flee their home, and where compassion prevails over indifference.*

*Together, we can continue to build a future where refugees are welcomed, respected, and empowered to rebuild their lives right here in Windsor-Essex."*

Throughout the day, cultural performances were showcased from around the world, there was also an opportunity to participate in a drumming circle and lunch was provided for refugees.

Thank you to all who came out in support of this event!



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