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May 21, 2014

Attn: Community Development and Recreation Committee

CD29.10 Toronto Newcomer Strategy, 2014 - 2016 Implementation

St. Stephen's Community House has been serving immigrants to Toronto for over 50 years. Recently, St. Stephen's has been involved with the City of Toronto in developing the **Toronto Newcomer Strategy** and the implementation plan through sitting on the **Newcomer Leadership Table** that is referenced in the report. I applaud this plan, especially elements like the adoption of the Integrating Cities Charter by Council (item #1) and the promotion of Business Start-up programs to newcomers (item #12). I appreciate very much being consulted in the development of the Strategy and the implementation plan and future opportunities to continue the discussion at the Newcomer Leadership Table. I also want to recognize the Council again for their progressive position on advocating for permanent residents to have the right to vote in municipal elections, and the follow-up that has been done by the Toronto Newcomer Initiative in this area.

In my work I connect with many charitable organizations that help new immigrants. One way is through the **Toronto South Local Immigration Partnership**. At a recent meeting of the partnership I had the chance to give input to the document "**Creating Immigrant Friendly Cities**" produced by Public Interest and CUPE Local 79. I am very happy with the international research that was done in finding best practices in other cities and countries to recommend for Toronto. I think "Creating Immigrant Friendly Cities" is an important document that supplements the Toronto Newcomer Strategy. It also calls for the City to adopt the Integrating Cities Charter and to set measureable outcomes to monitor our progress as a city. I also especially want to mention recommendation #18 – leveraging municipal purchasing power to help newcomers in employment directly with the city and indirectly with companies that do business with the city. Most newcomers will tell you how vital for their families it is to find good jobs in Toronto that make the most of their international training and education. This is an excellent recommendation that could have a big impact. Congratulations for this committee and Council for taking action on a robust Newcomer Strategy.

Sincerely,
Bill Sinclair
Associate Executive Director

St. Stephen's Community House

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