

For immediate release

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The North Island Immigrant Welcome Centre celebrates 30-year milestone

Campbell River, BC - The Immigrant Welcome Centre, AKA the Multicultural & Immigrant Services Association of North Vancouver Island (MISA) is celebrating 30 years of welcoming international newcomers and celebrating diversity.

The organization began in 1992 as the Inter-Cultural Association of Campbell River by offering English language classes and hosting multicultural social gatherings. The purpose was to offer a response to needs expressed by visible minorities, newcomers, parents, and community service providers. Interpreting and settlement services, along with programs and community events were added in the following years, as the organization and the community's needs grew. Today, MISA has a staff of over 20, based in three north island communities, and is a respected and award-winning leader in the settlement sector.

In the last 30 years, we served approximately 14,000 clients that have settled in the North Island area. We provided about 75,000 services, with most of them falling in these categories: helping with government applications and forms, providing resources and referrals about housing, health care and human rights, and free English classes.

MISA's vision is a North Island region that embraces diversity and inclusivity while actively engaging with the vibrant cultures in the region, and where newcomers feel welcome, safe, and respected.

'MISA has the privilege of being part of a vast network of community-minded organizations who truly work together to enhance the cultivation of welcoming communities.' says Jim Brennan, Executive Director of MISA.

During the last two years, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, MISA has been able to keep its doors open in both the Campbell River and Courtenay locations, offering support and help to newcomers and naturalized citizens by adding virtual and hybrid services.

MISA has also been busy with a few projects: in Spring 2021 the office in Campbell River has relocated to downtown, making it easier for clients to access MISA services; in January 2022 a new website was launched, featuring new tools that will make it easier for newcomers to find out about settlement services and connect with staff; and in February 2022 MISA received the Riasat Ali Khan Diversity Award, that recognizes excellence in programming and strengthening diversity in BC.

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“MISA’s services have never been more needed, and our staff and volunteers never more challenged to find creative and effective ways of reaching out to continue to provide services,” says Doug Preston, Board Chair. “As we look forward, I would like to thank all the volunteers, staff, and board members old and new for your willingness to become involved in your community and for choosing to actively support the purposes and goals of MISA.”

About MISA:

We are a registered non-profit charity that offers settlement support services, nationally-recognized Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), and social groups and programs to help newcomers make connections in their new communities.

For more information about services and programs please call 250-830-0171 (Campbell River), 250-338-6359 (Comox Valley), or visit www.immigrantwelcome.ca

Follow us on Facebook at @ImmigrantWelcomeCentreNorthVancouverIsland

Photo Caption: IWC clients during their Canadian Citizenship ceremony.



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Experts in immigrant services since 1992

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