

# UMOJA NEWS

UMOJA NEWSLETTER 2019 - Annual | MOVING FROM NEWCOMER TO NEIGHBOUR



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## Message From the Executive Director

Surrey continues to be one of the biggest recipient of immigrants and refugees coming to British Columbia. Umoja is strategically positioned in Surrey which is the fastest growing city in BC. We have continued to receive new comers from areas such as the Middle East, Africa, and Central America. The majority of families accessing services at Umoja have multiple needs and face multiple barriers towards their settlement and integration process. This year, Umoja Operation Compassion has stood up to the challenge and provided programs tailored to the needs of newcomer families. This year with an addition of the Dad's outreach program and the Digital Connect for Visible

Minority Newcomer Women, we have expanded our outreach base as well as our partnership connections. We are grateful to our funders and supporters for making us meet our budget requirements. In October, we had a successful gala, "The Night in the Serengeti" which showcased excellent community support. We raised over \$23,000 which will go to support our youth programs, and literacy and life skills programs, which are usually under funded. Thank you to our community sponsors, funders, supporters and volunteers, without you the work of Umoja is not made possible.

Amos Kambere, Executive Director

## Newcomer Dad's Program: Highlights

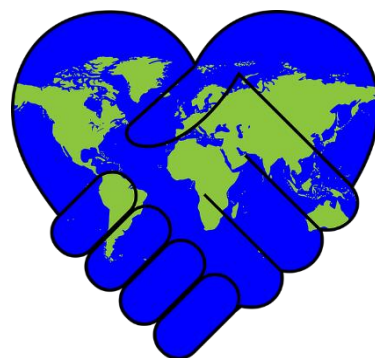


In 2018 Umoja saw a need to better support newcomer dads as they settled in Canada. Dad's often have a strong urgency to attend English language classes and obtaining employment to support their families. This can leave little time for additional programming and understandably so! Through the support of the United Way of the Lower Mainland, Umoja was able to start the Newcomer Dad's Outreach Program. Since the inception of the program there have been many highlights and over 45 dad's have been reached! 2019 has been a very successful year for many of the dad's. Some dad's were totally engaged in their communities in an unprecedented way; doing volunteer work mainly at their children's schools. Others decided to come out of their comfort zone, joining adult schools to improve their English, so that they can support themselves and their kids. The majority of dad's became more aware of their rights and responsibilities as new immigrants to Canada. Dads are more convinced now than ever that change is a positive sign for coping with their new place of living. They have realized that what was culturally considered as taboo in the past, eg. a wife driving a car, is now a regular practice, that would help their family function better. In October the program celebrated the first dad getting his Canadian Citizenship! He was very happy and thankful for all the support he received from Umoja since he's been living in Surrey.



## Summer Camp and Promoting Wellness

Umoja provided another summer camp opportunity for over 50 children in July and August. This year the camp ran a little differently with three, two week sessions being offered and basing the camp out of Umoja, instead of a nearby school as we've done years previously. Our staff provided an opportunity for children to learn, grow and engage in specific activities that focus on building confidence and positive self-expression. We had staff design and create curriculum specifically for kids attending the program to ensure a relevant and supportive outlet for children to build life skills and share experiences. To the core of Umoja's programming, we focus on ensuring children participate in explorative crafts, games and community places via fieldtrips. It was obvious that children were building friendships, learning about new cultures and feeling a sense of belonging during camp time. Outside play is always an important component to the summer camp and there was no shortage of that this year!! Kids were provided park time each day with games, sports and free time to enjoy with several visits to the nearby waterpark! Overall the Umoja summer camp continues to be an opportunity for newcomer children to receive mentorship and guidance while navigating their new social environment. A huge thank you to our staff and volunteers for making the 2019 Summer Camp a huge success!!





## International Projects | Rwentutu Community School

Umoja Continues to engage in international development by supporting initiatives by our members, to improve the quality of life in the developing world. Rwentutu Community School this year ended up with 190 kids in spite of the community being hit with draught. We have supported these Rwentutu projects in Western Ugandan for 13 years, the first students to enroll at this school are now in their first year University. Thank you to a great Ugandan staff and the many volunteers who have gone to support them.

Our International funders, Classrooms for Africa, St. Mark Lutheran church and Broadway church have continued to provide capital funding so that the kids of Rwentutu village have access to education, clean water and healthy meals. A new program at Rwentutu called the MEG outreach program started at the beginning of this year has attracted over 50 women who are yearning to learn reading and writing. Among the many activities provided by this program are gardening, nutrition, health and hygiene as well as parenting.



Thank you to our long standing supporter and Donor:



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