

UMOJA NEWS

UMOJA NEWSLETTER FALL 2018 | MOVING FROM NEWCOMER TO NEIGHBOUR



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Message From the Executive Director

The year 2018 has come and gone by with lots of activities happening at Umoja. Coming to work every morning, seeing families of new immigrants stream in the office for programs, seeing new arrivals being helped to fill in forms, to look for accommodations, to access the school system, and to be helped in finding day care facilities for little children, all these have been so fulfilling. Umoja has stood the test of time and has endured despite being under-funded. Our funders and supporters who provide dollars have seen the value of their money as family after family is being settled and integrated in our

communities. Our staff and volunteers who put in countless hours too have found satisfaction in the work they do, to see lives transformed. Some coming with no English language to then speaking and navigating our transit system, to find employment. As we look to the New Year, on behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank everyone who has donated to Umoja either financially or through material giving. You have made our work continue and you have made a huge difference in the lives of our new newcomer families.

Amos Kambere, Executive Director



Making it Happen: Community Building

It is always a privilege at Umoja when the agency is able to host and work with students from the community. In partnership with Envision Financial and Douglas college through the Envision Financial - Douglas College Community Building Program, Umoja hosted three international students for a practicum for three months to focus and support Umoja in marketing and social media development. Murat, Gabriela and Arzo came to Umoja with much enthusiasm, excitement and a big commitment to provide tangible skills to some marketing challenges! One of the reasons Umoja applied for this opportunity was to build awareness, build capacity, and build a community for Umoja. It was truly a great experience being able to work with such knowledgeable students that can take where Umoja is now, and help sustain the organization in the long run.

Local Love

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!!

It was a unique experience for a family and volunteer of Umoja when they were highlighted by the United Way of the Lower Mainland to share their stories and experiences about coming to Canada and attending programs at Umoja. Samantha came to Canada when she was just in grade 7 and began attending the United Way Out of School Umoja Program. When she reached high school Sam knew she wanted to also give back and support other newcomer children as they settled in Canada. It was during her volunteer

experience that Sam met Nuhaa. Nuhaa and her family recently came from Syria and in the beginning, the family felt very isolated. Nuhaa had a hard time making friends because of speaking little English and it was really hard to feel confident at school. Attending the Umoja program meant that Nuhaa was able to practice her English, meet new friends and develop her confidence in who she is! Learn more about Samantha and Nuhaa's story at:

www.uwlm.ca/news/portfolio/nuhaa/



A Night in the Serengeti

At the end of this year, Umoja put on a fundraising gala, which was the highlight of the year. Our very own Member of legislature Hon Bruce Ralston, Minister of Jobs, Trade and technology delivered a key note speech where he highlighted the need to support newcomers who come to form part of our vibrant communities and ultimately become Canadian voters. Umoja has hosted fundraising dinners in the past, however 'A Night in the Serengeti' was by far the most successful to date! With over 120 people attending the evening it was a night to remember. It was incredibly impactful and inspiring to see so many people from across the community show up to support the work of Umoja and in turn be a place of hope for newcomer families in Surrey. A huge thank you to our event sponsors: Civic Hotel, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Surrey Board of Trade, Vancity, Pulse 107.7FM and Simon Fraser University. We'd like to recognize and appreciate all of those who invested their time and resources in supporting this event, it would not have been possible without you! We are incredibly thrilled to announce that over \$10,000 was raised which will go to all of Umoja's family programs. This coming year, 2019 we hope many more business owners and entrepreneurs will participate and provide the much needed funds to support vulnerable members of our communities.



SHARING is CARING

The holiday season can be a time of food, fun and laughter. However, for many of the families at Umoja it is a challenging time for parents who are not able to provide presents or special holiday meals. For several years Umoja has graciously partnered with St. Matthew's Church and other community donors to provide Christmas hampers to families of Umoja. This year we will provide over 35 hampers to newcomer families. These hampers

are more than just gifts for the families, they are a way of feeling and knowing that someone cares about them, that someone is thinking about them and that Canada is truly a place where people give, welcome and show kindness to their neighbors. Thanks to the kindness and generosity of the Surrey community, over 35 newcomer families will know they are welcomed and supported during this holiday season.

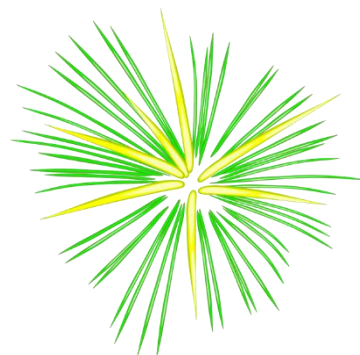




International Projects | Rwentutu Community School

From 2008 to 2012 Rwentutu staff gained professional training from the Teachers of Herbert Spencer elementary school. Principal Tracy Fulton and School councilor Sharleen Briggs led these training workshops each year. Although Rwentutu has lost some of the teachers for better pay, Rwentutu still boast of the best-trained teachers in the community and perhaps in the district. Through the assistance and generous donations of the "Golden Ladies", Sophie, Kaye, and Brenda; the Head teacher King James has just graduated with a bachelor of Education.

Jovia and Vincent are other community members who have been supported and have acquired Certificates in Early childhood and community development. Thank you to the generous donations from Golden Ladies, who through Umoja are dedicated to empowering the Rwentutu community through education and community development. Also we would like to acknowledge and thank Broadway Church and St. Marks Church for providing the necessary funds to complete the staff housing!



Our Generous Donors:



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Surrey Food Bank

Progressive Intercultural Community Services

City of Surrey

Quest Food Exchange

School District 36

A Rocha

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Pacific Immigrant Resources Society

St. Matthew's Church

YMCA - Tong Louie

SFU-TD Community

Engagement Centre

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Surrey Downtown BIA

Community Members

Broadway Church

St. Mark's Church