

UMOJA

Operation Compassion
Society of British Columbia



UMOJA ANNUAL REPORT 2017

About Umoja Operation Compassion Society

Umoja Operation Compassion Society of British Columbia is a nonprofit society (88642 5909 RR 0001) formed in 2002 to work with low income immigrants living in the greater Vancouver region, predominately Surrey, BC.

Our society seeks and strives to help promote unity, respect, and dignity among minority immigrants and refugees. New immigrants and refugees can find it difficult to integrate due to obstacles such as poverty, extremely low levels of literacy, unemployment, language barrier, isolation, feelings of hopelessness, mental health issues and depression.

Through Umoja Family Services Center, we provide a variety of culturally sensitive programs to help families, children, and youth integrate successfully into their new social environment. Umoja uniquely exists to serve those that are in need and transitions them into main stream community services while fulfilling its Vision and Mission.

Our overseas projects focus on Africa, especially the great lakes region of East and Central Africa through Christian education, health and micro financing for deprived women.



OUR VISION

*“Building strong communities;
moving from newcomers to neighbors.”*

Chairperson Board of Director's Report

Oh behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank everyone who supported Umoja in 2017 as our Umoja team continued to empower immigrants and refugees to successfully integrate into an inclusive Canadian society. Umoja's programs are providing a vital service to the community and daily touch the lives of people in a very tangible way.

A FEW HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2017:

It was exciting to start the year with the move into our new facilities in Guildford and later in the year expand that facility by leasing an additional room. The location has proven to be a good move for our clients, easing access to our programs and ensuring we are based in the community we are serving.

Umoja also continued to support the overseas program in Rwentutu, Uganda, which provides a school/village community hub facility for education, medical services and micro-financing. Umoja's Operation Manager was able to travel to Rwentutu this year to support a project to enable technology for the school, including solar power, internet service and laptops.

As well, with Amos Kambere, our Executive Director, retiring in September, 2017, Umoja is now benefiting from the additional time he can commit to supporting the organization. Amos has been specifically focused on building relationships with our partner organizations along with current and future donors – an important task that will help Umoja continue to grow.

In closing, for each of our staff, volunteers, funders and donors, please accept the sincere gratitude of the Board of Directors for

ensuring the continued success of Umoja in fulfilling its mission. The resourcefulness and dedication of each of you have been key to the success of what Umoja is accomplishing.

- Annette Simbabure, Board Chairperson

Executive Director's Report

Umoja Operation Compassion moved from Whalley into Guildford in February 2017 and after one year in our new location, we have seen an increase in attendance to all of our programs. Our relevance has been tested by the number of partnerships we have formed including working with PIRS that has added value to our program deliveries.

Umoja has continued to engage with relevant stakeholders in serving our wider community. Our dedicated Staff and volunteers continue to serve with Excellency notwithstanding the challenges in the non-profit world. We extend our thanks to our esteemed funders and donors without whom our work and service to the newcomer community would be futile.

Our international program continues to grow in the community of Rwentutu where this year with the supervision of our program manager, a solar power system and a rain water harvesting system were installed at the school. Thanks to the Luke4 Foundation for funding these two projects. The women's project continues to grow with over 60 women enrolled in the microfinance project.

Below is a brief summary report of our work this year.

- Amos Kambere, Executive Director

2017 Annual Statistics



of Children/Youth

285

of Parents/Caregivers

163



of Families

169

of Attendees

5,328



of Volunteers

16

of Program Sessions

404



of Times
Clients Received
Transportation

2,614



OUR MISSION

“To empower immigrants and refugees to successfully integrate into an inclusive Canadian society.

Internationally, we support initiatives to improve the quality of life in global communities.”



Program Report

FIRST STEPS: HAND IN HAND

First Steps: Hand in Hand program continues to remain a strong and present program within the Surrey community for refugee families with children 0-6 years. The program continued to serve a large proportion of families from Syria and other surrounding countries with an increase in families coming from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The program provided two weekly drop-in sessions at Umoja, with one evening drop in consistently having to turn families away as capacity was reached. The program continues to support families through an Early Childhood Development focus that provides skill building around parenting in the Canadian context while providing outreach/first language support, community connection, integration and mental health and wellness support.

UNITED WAY'S OUT OF SCHOOL UMOJA PROGRAM

The *Unite Way Out of School Umoja Program* supported 65 children this year with a large proportion being children who's country of origin is Syria. Children attending the program face multiple barriers and challenges when settling into Canada and entering the school system such as English language proficiency, confidence, dealing with experiences of trauma and family dynamics.

Children are supported through homework club, Saturday program and the summer day camp that focuses on social and emotional development, engagement in learning and community connection.

SUCCESS BY 6 – UMOJA OUTREACH

Through funding from the *United Way of the Lowermainland* Umoja continued to work with and provide outreach support to newcomer families with children 0-6 years old. The focus remains to provide service to families who do not qualify for the First Steps: Hand in Hand program to ensure that families who have entered Canada through other immigration pathways are not left behind and are able to find parenting support in the Canadian context, integration

support and community connection. Navigating the system in Canada is very overwhelming for newcomer families and Umoja's outreach staff continued to come alongside newcomer families and ensure positive experiences and necessary support when moving through the system.

LITERACY AND LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM

The *Literacy and Life Skills* program provided weekly classes for level 1 and level 2 English learners to focus on reading, writing and comprehension of the English Language. Students learn about life in Canada through various interactive lessons and program curriculum.

Both classes went on several field trips into the community to increase learning and participation. In June a graduation ceremony was held to celebrate students completing their level two class and moving on to higher level English programming.

The program was predominately attended by moms with young children who required childcare in order to attend classes, in which Umoja ensures to reduce barriers and increase access to participation through offering childminding and parenting support.

YOUTH

Newcomer youth participated in the digital media program that provided opportunity to learn and develop skills in photography, videography and editing. Youth completed their own video projects which were presented at a final celebration evening attended by family and friends of the youth.

The videos created expressed the journeys of change and transition that youth have experienced in leaving countries of origin and settling in a new environment.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FUNDERS



PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS:

Options Community Services
Diversecity Community
Resources Society
Surrey Food Bank
Surrey Libraries
City of Surrey
School District 36
A Rocha
British Columbia Institute
of Technology

Trinity Western University
Surrey Fire Services
Simon Fraser University
Kwantlen Polytechnic
University
Fraser Region Aboriginal
Friendship Centre
Surrey RCMP
Mosaic

Pacific Immigrant
Resources Society
Costco – Newton Location
Fraser Health
Quest Food Exchange
Progressive Intercultural
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Surrey-White Rock
Children's Partnership
YMCA Tong Louie

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