



ST. THOMAS · ELGIN  
Local Immigration Partnership

# MOVING FORWARD 2018



Building Welcoming, Caring, and Inclusive Communities

# Building Welcoming, Caring, and Inclusive Communities

## Our Vision

St. Thomas and Elgin County communities will be a culturally diverse, welcoming, caring, and inclusive community that will retain current residents, welcome newcomers, and provide them the opportunity to successfully integrate, contribute to, and benefit from social, cultural, and economic inclusion.

## Our Mission

St. Thomas-Elgin Local Immigration Partnership (STELIP) is a progressive network that promotes and supports inclusion.

## Our Principles

To ensure that the work of those associated with the initiative promotes inclusivity, the following principles have been adopted:

**INCLUSIVITY** – The work of the Council and the members of working committees will be inclusive of all immigrants in the St. Thomas-Elgin community regardless of their immigration status, citizenship, age, gender, health status, sexual orientation, and number of years in the community. The Council shall work towards equal participation while promoting social justice.

**COLLABORATION** – A working relationship will be developed between the host community and the immigrant community to build a welcoming, caring, and inclusive environment.

**EMPOWERMENT** – Our work will strive to promote new immigrants' capacity to live their lives with the ability to be economically stable, live in adequate housing, and provide for themselves and their families through their own means and their own decisions.

**SUSTAINABILITY** – A plan shall be developed to ensure that the work of the STELIP Council will continue to make improvements to immigrants' experiences and the community as a whole.

## Acknowledgments

As a community we find ourselves in a time of great opportunity, poised for economic and demographic growth as people move in search of a better quality of life. This shift will naturally bring more diversity to the region, and we can use this as an opportunity to build welcoming, caring, and inclusive communities that support individuals as they settle and integrate into our workplaces and neighbourhoods. The change and growth we have all witnessed could not happen without the support of the community; we thank you for creating a stronger and more welcoming community for all, and promise to continue to build on established networks and strive to continue to support the integration of immigrants. We are extremely grateful for the support of the community as we work to implement our Settlement Strategy. We are specifically appreciative of our Council members that help inform our work with their expertise, knowledge, and dedication to this region. While our main partners derive from our Council, we cannot diminish the importance of partnerships with other agencies, community members, and the municipal, provincial, and federal government representatives.

The current and future impact STELIP can have on this community is due in large part to the ongoing efforts of many individuals committed to building Welcoming, Caring, and Inclusive Communities.

We recognize the importance of front line work provided by our local Settlement Agencies and English Instructors. The dedication of these workers increase the newcomer sense of belonging throughout the integration process and helps newcomers navigate the foreign Canadian system.

We also thank Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) for making LIPs possible through their funding, support, and commitment to building strong and prosperous communities, as well as the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) for funding projects that support the work of municipalities in meeting the recommendations of STELIP.

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## STELIP Project Team

Tom Sproat | STELIP Project Facilitator

Petrusia Hontar | STELIP Project Coordinator

Shelley Harris | YWCA St. Thomas-Elgin Director of Education and Settlement

# Message from STELIP Chair

Dear St. Thomas and Elgin County community,

The 2017-2018 year for STELIP has been filled with local Canada 150 events and celebrations of local diversity. These community events continue to build welcoming, caring, and inclusive communities across Elgin County and St. Thomas.

As the St. Thomas Elgin Local Immigration Partnership enters its eighth year I am mindful of the tremendous support we have received during this time from newcomers, stakeholders, and agencies across St. Thomas and Elgin County.

The St. Thomas-Elgin Local Immigration Partnership (STELIP) was created to make the communities of Elgin and St. Thomas welcoming, caring, and inclusive. The success of STELIP is largely a factor of successful partnerships in the community; these partnerships extend past the members of the Council and include additional agencies in the community. Additionally STELIP has been active on many local steering committees in support of projects that directly impact immigration and immigrants in the region. As STELIPs network grows, so do opportunities to support community dialogue to improve our capacity to successfully integrate immigrants.

The STELIP Council members bring dynamic perspectives and experience from their sectors and from their neighbourhoods across the region. The Cultural Diversity Committee is an active group of volunteers and staff who to raise the awareness of local diversity and encourage the development of welcoming, caring, and inclusive communities. This group is always open to new opportunities and supporting partnerships to help raise awareness about the impact of diversity in our community.

I encourage you to visit our website at [stelip.ca](http://stelip.ca) and see the many exiting events and activities available in your community. You will also find our “We Are St. Thomas” video series featuring newcomer entrepreneurs and business owners, training opportunities and information on our newcomer awards.

On behalf of the STELIP Council, we must also thank our very skilled and dedicated staff. Their insight into our community and their ability to make connections are the key piece to the great success of the partnerships.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerry Moniz". The signature is fluid and cursive.

***Gerry Moniz, STELIP Chair***



## Connecting Communities

Much of the work of STELIP is driven by our connections. The STELIP Council comprises representation across many sectors including education, settlement, employment, health, and economic development. In many cases, the work of these organizations does not intersect, but when using the lens of immigration and supporting newcomers, natural connections emerge. Establishing new relationships create many opportunities for partnerships. This year in particular, STELIP supported many new projects by leveraging the connections from the community. The fruitful partnerships that have been cultivated over the years have led to effective initiatives that are relevant and reflexive to the needs of the community.

## Ontario Led Initiatives

1. In 2017 the St. Thomas Elgin Community was successful in obtaining funding from the Province of Ontario to enhance and expand the **Welcome to St. Thomas Elgin Immigration Portal** ([www.welcometoste.com](http://www.welcometoste.com)). This portal has proven to be a vital tool to attract newcomers to the area, and the further developments will maximize the potential of the portal to engage with and maintain the attention and interests of visitors to the site. Proposed additions to the site include a live chat function with local Settlement Workers and other relevant service providers, and an “Ask a Local Newcomer” feature where inquiries are connected to a designated newcomer who has successfully settled into St. Thomas or Elgin County. A unified, cross-sector communications protocol will leverage the expertise of knowledgeable staff from seven key social sectors who are willing to respond to relevant newcomer inquiries in a manner that is clear, aligns with St. Thomas and Elgin County branding, and is respectful of the potential diversity of those to whom they are responding.
2. In conjunction with the continued development of the **Welcome to St. Thomas Elgin Immigration Portal**, Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration funding was also used towards the hiring of a Project Coordinator to oversee and direct two project initiatives focusing on labour as well as skilled worker shortages in St. Thomas and Elgin County, and the possibility of leveraging the growing pool of international (skilled) workers to help fill this shortage. Regional roundtable discussions were held throughout the last quarter of 2017 with local employers, and work continues into 2018 with a focus on connecting employers with the information and supports they need to make informed and effective decisions on how and where to find the employees they require.
3. Finally, additional funding from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration through their Multicultural Community Capacity grant was approved for use towards a newcomer youth winter sports and recreation program. Participant registration and activity organization occurred at the end of 2017. In early 2018, the youth enjoyed tubing, skiing, swimming, hiking, skating, a Jr. B hockey game, and programming at the STEAM Centre through the winter months.



# Connecting to Other Local Immigration Partnerships

**South Western Ontario Local Immigration Partnership (SWOLIP)** meet three to four times a year for shared learning opportunities, an exchange of best practices, and collaboration. The SWOLIP initiative is considered a promising practice for LIPs in other Canadian regions and by the Pathways to Prosperity research coalition.

STELIP staff also attended the National Local Immigration Conference and the Pathways to Prosperity 2017 National Conference in Toronto, held across three days from November 15-17. This conference was attended by LIP staff, government officials, and academics from across the country and is a wonderful opportunity to educate and connect.



## In the Community

In celebration of Canada 150, STELIP was presented with a community award from the local MP Karen Vecchio and MPP Jeff Yurek in recognition of our past and ongoing work to build welcoming, caring, and inclusive communities. In its daily work STELIP facilitates and fosters community connections, shares best practices, and participates in local, regional, and national conferences and community planning tables.

This year STELIP took part in:

- Elgin Children's Network
- Expert Advisory Group on Local Labour Market Forecasting
- Community Data Table
- FESPA Celebration
- Low German Networking Conference
- Life as a Refugee Conference
- Pathways to Prosperity National Conference where STELIP Coordinator Petrusia Hontar was invited to MC the first day of discussion
- Day of Learning: United in Diversity
- National LIP Learning Event in Calgary
- National Small Centre 's Settlement & Integration Conference





# STELIP Priority Areas



Every year STELIP continues its work in building Welcoming, Caring, and Inclusive within the framework of priorities that were established in 2011. These priorities are adapted to leverage the available resources of the Council and community partners and meet the changing needs of the community. The priorities that direct the work of STELIP are:

- Improve the Coordination of Information Between Services
- Increase Awareness and Access to Appropriate Employment, Entrepreneurship and Labour Market Supports
- Promote and Enhance Settlement and Integration of Newcomers
- Increase Access to English Language Learning and Literacy
- Promote Public Awareness of Diversity and Inclusion
- Access and Analyze Data to Inform Priorities and Activities

The following sections outline the progress in the six priority areas in 2017-2018. The work of this year was heavily influenced by the Canada 150 celebrations, and a revived interest in celebrating diversity and culture in the community.





# Improving the Coordination of Information Between Services

Local service providers are often the gatekeepers that facilitates community member access to the web of services available. For newcomers to Canada the need for contact with people that are well informed about all available services is more pronounced. This priority area focuses on supporting local service providers to establish and nurture connections between other services available in the region. The ultimate goal is an increase in appropriate referrals between agencies, with positive effects on clients--newcomer or otherwise.

## Priority Strategies

- Provide employers and service providers with information about newcomer services.
- Support the opportunity for service providers to network, inform and educate themselves and each other about the range of services available in St. Thomas and Elgin County.

“Instead of focusing just on what my job provides I will remember how many other things are connected with clients accessing my services. Very helpful exercise.”



“Definitely made connections that will help me better serve my clients.”

# Highlights

## Walk With Me

The **Walk with Me: A Newcomer and Service Provider Networking Event** was coordinated in collaboration with Elgin St. Thomas Public Health, with the theme of **Unconscious Bias**.

- Over 30 local service agencies from sectors including health, employment, education and human services were represented at the event by over 80 agency staff.
- In addition to the networking session, two workshops and a presentation by guest speaker and Director of Diversity & Governance at Pillar Nonprofit Network in London Dharshi Lacey were included as a part of the event.

The newcomers and service providers who attended Walk with Me found the event was a valuable experience and indicated that they now have a better understanding of newcomer supports, regional agencies and service providers, and the manifestations and effects of unconscious bias:

- 89% thought guest speaker Dharshi Lacey and the topic of Unconscious Bias was excellent.
- 78% thought the case studies were excellent
- 83% thought the networking opportunities were excellent.

## Elgin County Ambassadors

The STELIP team are Elgin County Ambassadors, a group which promotes Elgin County and actively participate in its development and growth, particularly through attraction of new residents and businesses. The group comprises business owners and professionals, community members, and municipal leaders from across the County. STELIP's connection to the Welcome to St. Thomas-Elgin immigration portal, provincially funded immigrant projects, and the settlement sector provides a unique opportunity to share ways to attract newcomers.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Stay up-to-date with services offered in the area and make appropriate referrals when possible.
- Maintain active and effective professional networks with relevant service providers in the community, strengthening overall service provision through the use of accurate referrals and inter-agency collaboration.
- Remain adaptable to the changing needs of the community and be prepared to accommodate emerging client needs by establishing new agency connections when required.
- Encourage regular meetings between agency representatives to remain updated on the evolving range of services offered in the community.
- Ask other service providers to present in-service information sessions to your staff.
- Collaborate and communicate with other providers, partnering your services whenever possible and practical.
- Send your staff to Professional Development and Networking opportunities.



# Promote and Enhance Settlement and Integration of Newcomers

While the Coordination of Services strives to have front line service providers connecting and making quality referrals, there is a need for agencies to ensure their services are serving newcomers and immigrants as they are intended. The priority Promote and Enhance Settlement and Integration of Newcomers works to ensure newcomers are supported as they integrate into the community.

Like many other residents of the region, as newcomers settle in the region they access local services for support. However, since newcomers have unique barriers to accessing services there is a need for service providers to address their specialized needs to better serve this client group. With the increase of newcomers selecting St. Thomas and Elgin as their residence, service providers are experiencing a larger demand for these specialized services. There is a greater need to access language interpretation, as costs can be prohibitive with no allocations for such supports. Although all service providers have a role to play in the successful integration of newcomers, the process is best supported by Settlement Agencies; in this region YWCA Settlement Services and Mennonite Community Services (MCS) offer front line support to newcomers as they navigate the complexities of services available to them.

## Priority Strategies

- Support agencies, businesses, organizations providing services that may be accessed or needed by newcomers
- Support newcomers to integrate, orient into Canadian norms
- Work with settlement services to connect newcomers to mentors, volunteers, long term residents



# Highlights

## Walk With Me: Newcomer and Service Provider Networking Event

The Walk with Me event is designed to provide professional development and networking opportunities for local service providers as well as newcomers to the region who are invited to attend part of the day. Newcomers specifically benefit from the service provider tradeshow where they can learn about different services available and make connections with staff.

## Active Elgin Sports and Recreation

Remaining active in the winter is a foreign concept to many newcomers, and social isolation throughout the winter is a real risk, so the YWCA offered a free program for newcomer youth providing winter activity options. With planning and registration beginning in late 2017 and extending through to February 2018, the Active Elgin program took newcomer youth to 6 different winter recreation events and then gave them a \$150.00 recreation voucher to be used explicitly towards the pursuit of further sports or recreation.

## St. Thomas Public Library Multilingual Collection

St. Thomas Public Library was subscribed to the Southwestern Ontario Multilingual Pool, a shared collection which circulated through a number of Southwestern Ontario libraries. Over time, it became clear that this collection was not meeting the needs of library customers, especially the newcomer community of St. Thomas. As a result, the library decided to partner with Settlement Services and STELIP to build their own collection of books based on the language needs of the community, and now offers a selection of books and DVDs in various languages, as well as 'easy readers' that can support newcomers learning English. The library hopes that the collection will continue to grow as library customers and St. Thomas newcomers make requests and recommendations.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Invite newcomers to volunteer with your organization.
- Make connections with newcomers living in your neighbourhood, encouraging their socialization and integration.
- Advise on where to get help, specifically by directing them to a local Settlement agency.
- Invite a newcomer to celebrate a local holiday or to experience something your family likes to do.



# Increase Awareness and Access to Appropriate Employment, Entrepreneurship, and Labour Market Supports

Economic success is a goal that all immigrants strive for, but a transition into a foreign labour market can often be difficult. This priority focuses on ways to better support newcomers as they settle into communities and set goals to gain economic independence. Success for many immigrants includes securing meaningful work, yet often in the early stages they settle for precarious opportunities as they bridge their skills and acclimatize to the Canadian context. Furthermore, there is a need for local employers to understand the role immigrants and foreign trained can play to meet their labour force needs.

## Priority Strategies

- Increase opportunities to appropriately connect employers and newcomers to employment and entrepreneurship
- Increase employer's awareness of the benefits, incentives and other services available to hire newcomers
- Provide immigrants and newcomers information and training about obtaining and retaining employment



# Highlights

## Local Employment Planning Council (LEPC)

The LEPC consists of government, agencies, and employers from the local regions who guide the development of a responsive and skilled workforce. STELIP has representation at the Central Planning Table of the LEPC as well as at the regional Elgin Workforce Networking that creates cross-sectoral sharing and networking opportunities.

## Job Retention Checklist

Employment Services Elgin along with STELIP developed a Job Retention checklist geared to immigrants entering the workforce. The transition into a Canadian workforce can be difficult for individuals who have been a part of a workforce abroad, and this tool will assist new Canadians to retain jobs by providing practical tips before the job starts, the first week on the job, and a few months into the job.

We encourage new Canadians to access this tool to help their integration into the community.

## Skills Connect

To remedy increasing employment shortages and hiring issues faced by local employers, STELIP and the YWCA partnered to introduce Skills Connect. An initiative to inform and support employers throughout St. Thomas and Elgin County in the attraction and retention of internationally educated skilled workers. Skills Connect has been meeting with local employers, attending job fairs and employment committee meetings in order to successfully spread the word about the program, connecting interested parties with relevant recruitment agencies, and continuing to build on relationships of support and education for the improvement of the regional economy and labour force.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- If you are experiencing labour shortages consider hiring foreign trained professionals either through the Rural Employment Initiative, Skills International, or the Express Entry system.
- Consider offering mentorship programs to foreign trained professionals.
- Modify your hiring practices to create a diverse workforce.



# Increase Access to English Language Learning and Literacy

Language acquisition is a key component to economic and social inclusion of immigrants, but the process can be halted by barriers like access to childminding, and transportation. As well, financial constraints can lead to newcomers taking precarious jobs in lieu of building their language skills. Improvements to service provision in this sector are in large part constrained by available funding and inadequate student numbers.

## Priority Strategies

- Increase awareness of available language and literacy training
- Advocate for improved access

## Highlights

### Libraries as an Access Point

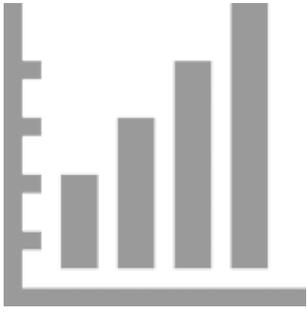
The St. Thomas Public Library has been working to expand their multilingual and ESL collection, and are creating a dedicated space in the library to help support members in this community to access materials to meet their needs. Additionally, there are opportunities to access English language supports online through both the St. Thomas and Elgin County library systems although classroom learning is the preferred method, this option supports people that have barriers to attending classes but have access to internet.

STELIP continue to work with partners to collaborate on spaces and methods of delivering language instruction.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Let newcomers know that they can access English classes in Elgin and St. Thomas at no cost.
- When you speak to newcomers, slow down and try to avoid difficult words or idioms.
- Help newcomers practice their language by striking up a friendly conversation.



# Access and Analyze Data to Inform Priorities and Activities

STELIP is continually striving to update initiatives and strategies to ensure they are meeting the needs of the current and anticipated populations in St. Thomas and Elgin County. To ensure the work is relevant STELIP strives to access up-to-date statistics.

## Priority Strategies

- Maintain relevant information to inform strategies and priority areas

# Highlights

STELIP is a member of the St. Thomas Data Table that is working to increase local access to data. Together this group has joined the London Data Consortium, providing access to regional statistics including tax filer information. Additionally, STELIP are members of the Expert Advisory Group on Local Labour Market Forecasting in support of the Local Employment Planning Council; this group has been meeting to help improve the Worktrends website and ensure it is meeting needs of the community, including agencies that are accessing the website and individuals looking to enter the labour market.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Participate in surveys and research opportunities.
- Maintain current data records in the workplace for the ongoing and future development of accurate and complete local databases supporting effective social research, policy creation and service provision.



# Promote Public Awareness of Diversity and Inclusion

In building Welcoming, Caring, and Inclusive communities, STELIP supports and organizes events and initiatives with a focus on newcomers and established residents connecting and learning about each other. This work celebrates the history of diversity in the region and highlights what a newcomer presence can provide to the community. The Cultural Diversity Committee is a group of volunteers that helps support activities within this mandate.

## Priority Strategies

- Develop public multiculturalism campaign
- Cultural and Diversity Awareness to Youth
- Celebrate immigration in the community



# Highlights

## Newcomer Champion Awards

STELIP annually awards local individuals, groups and organizations for their work and dedication in building a Welcoming, Caring, and Inclusive St. Thomas and Elgin County. The award has two categories:

**Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion:** An individual, group or organization who is working with the community to address the needs of newcomers by recognizing and responding to the needs of the community (one award for an individual and one award for an organization).

### **Individual Winner - San Sok**

San Sok was among the first Cambodian Refugee to arrive in St. Thomas in the 1980's. Once he was able to get established in the community he began his work supporting other Cambodian settlers to reunify with their families. This work included support with sponsorship applications, and support with settling once they arrived. Today San is a leader in the Cambodian community, one of the largest ethnic groups in the region, and is well respected amongst his peers.

### **Organization Winner - Central Community Health Centre**

Mennonite Community Services reached out to CCHC and identified an opportunity for CCHC to provide inter-professional health care to the Mennonite/Amish communities of Elgin County. Although this community was outside of the catchment area, CCHC was able to obtain permission to offer culturally appropriate services to this community that traditionally were not accessing services. A team of nurse practitioners, physicians, registered practical nurses, volunteers and a system navigator work to provide primary care, assistance accessing OHIP, and navigating the provincial health care system.

**Newcomer Community Leader:** A newcomer who is working to strengthen the community and build positive change by giving back in some capacity in a progressive way; demonstrating commitment to making a difference by creating welcoming communities.

### **Winner - Maria Fiallos**

Maria came to St. Thomas from Nicaragua by way of London. Since moving to St. Thomas, Maria has grown her coffee roasting business Las Chicas Del Cafe with her sister and employed St. Thomas Community members. A year ago, she partnered with another community member to open Streamliners Espresso Bar, and this location has quickly become a community gathering place offering free concerts every month. They actively participate in all community events in St. Thomas, including the Santa Clause Parade, Railway City Arts Crawl and Culture Days. Maria is committed to building Welcoming, Caring, and Inclusive communities.

## We Are St Thomas-Elgin Documentary Series

In collaboration with the Fanshawe Film and Media department, STELIP organized a short video series focusing on newcomer business owners. The mini documentary series features nine videos of those immigrant business owners from across the County. The video participants represent people who have immigrated over the decades, highlighting businesses that range from well-established business with succession to the next generation as well as newly opened businesses. They can be found on the STELIP website.

## Canadian Multiculturalism Day Flag Raising

On Canadian Multiculturalism Day (June 27), STELIP staff, City Hall staff, the Mayor Heather Jackson, MPP Jeff Yurek and community members came together to celebrate "both the tremendous value that immigrants bring to Canada as well as the tremendous opportunity Canada, including St. Thomas offers immigrants." Everyone gathered in front of City Hall, where short speeches were delivered by STELIP, Mayor Jackson and MPP Yurek, followed by a community pledge of acceptance and tolerance read aloud by all in attendance. The raising of a "Canada 150" flag closed out the ceremony.

## Culture: Full Steam

In August, STELIP organized a cultural bazaar in conjunction with CASO Station's Canada 150 celebration of the historic railway station. Focusing on the role of the station in facilitating patterns of immigration throughout Southwestern Ontario, the event featured cultural booths from local newcomers, as well as a small speech given by Aylmer resident Eddy Rempel aboard the featured train-ride from St Thomas to Port Stanley.

## Citizenship Reaffirmation Ceremony

STELIP attended and helped lead a portion of the Canada 150 celebration hosted by the MP Karen Vecchio and MPP Jeff Yurek. After leading the citizenship reaffirmation ceremony and recognizing those in the audience who received their citizenship in 2017, STELIP received a community award from the MP and MPP for their work as an organization in building up the community.

## Global Rhythm: A Celebration of Cultural Dance

As a part of national Culture Days events happening across the country, STELIP partnered with Studio Dance Pointe to host Global Rhythm: A Celebration of Cultural Dance. Featuring cultural dancers from five different nationalities, as well as local Studio Dance Pointe dancers, the event encouraged audience engagement and participation by inviting those in attendance to join in and learn some of the more basic elements of each dance.

## Canada Through My Lens

With the professional guidance of local photographer Grayden Laing, STELIP organized a series of photography classes for a group of aspiring newcomer photographers, each class focusing on a different element of essential photography knowledge and technical skill. The participants were asked to take photos that communicated their settlement experience in Canada. The collection of photographs and stories was displayed at the Railway City Arts Crawl, the YWCA's Women's Day, St. Thomas Public Library, and the Elgin County Library system. STELIP will continue to facilitate the display of the collection at future events.

## International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

In acknowledgement of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the St. Thomas-Elgin Local Immigration Partnership held a workshop for forty high school students from St. Joseph's Catholic Secondary School, Parkside Collegiate, Central Elgin Collegiate, and the East and West Elgin Secondary Schools. The workshop featured programming on Identity, Unconscious Bias, Media Literacy and Fake News resulting in overwhelmingly positive student feedback. The youth will take these lessons and messaging back to their schools and networks and work to share among their respective student bodies.

## Belonging Videos

As an additional component of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, STELIP organized a video series featuring citizens of St. Thomas and Elgin County speaking on the topic of Belonging. The footage was edited and compiled into several short videos. The short videos help community members reflect on what belonging means to them in order to foster positive action to help others, including immigrants, feel like they belong in the community.

## Initiatives of the Cultural Diversity Committee

The Cultural Diversity Committee works to promote cultural diversity in the community by planning and implementing unique events. Their work focuses on education and building understanding and acceptance of other cultures. In 2017 they participated in a strategic planning session and re-focused for the upcoming year.

### St. Thomas-Elgin Cultural Diversity Committee Members

Marna Berry  
Patricia Maki

Nancy Lovelock  
Linda McKay

Juliane Hundt  
Tricia Flatley

### Youth Before and After School Diversity Packages

One of the focus areas for the Cultural Diversity Committee is to engage youth in diversity activities. Activity packages for youth have been developed. The YWCA Before and After School program has been implementing the activities for two years, and Milestones has joined the distribution for this year as well.

- The packages currently comprise 23 activities, a mix of crafts, games, and organized activities that emphasize the value of diversity and culture.
- To date over 180 youth have participated in the various activities.

### Social Media Campaign

The Cultural Diversity Committee is very active on social media. The Facebook page, St. Thomas-Elgin Cultural Diversity Committee, is a platform for media campaigns like the Muslim Heritage Month and Black History Month. Through the twitter account, CDC-StThomasElgin, we promote events and engage community members.

- The facebook page has over 400 followers and the twitter account has 266 followers.
- The hashtag #CultureLivesHere is still used in conjunction with #StTOnt and #elgincounty to promote awareness of the work of the CDC in the community.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Join the St. Thomas-Elgin Cultural Diversity Committee.
- Start a Cultural Diversity Club in your school, workplace, or community group.
- Organize a potluck at your place of work and share cultural food with your coworkers.
- Connect with your neighbours by organizing events to build a community where you live.

ST. THOMAS • ELGIN  
Local Immigration Partnership



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St. Thomas-Elgin Cultural Diversity Committee



@CDC-StThomasElgin



#CultureLivesHere

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