



SOCIALSERVICESNETWORK
serving diverse communities

ANNUAL REPORT 2009

SERVICE DELIVERY REPORT

Currently SSN provides educational, social, settlement, health and employment related services to new immigrants in York Region. SSN is managed by a volunteer Board of 15 Directors who ensure that the agency meets all legal requirements for the conduct of its business and other affairs. It adopts policies which determine the purposes, governing principles, functions and activities, and strategic director for the agency.

To further promote the affairs of the agency, Board directors with the assistance of the standing committees periodically evaluate the progress of all activities. The committee chair, in partnership with other committee members (which comprise of staff, other board members and volunteers from the community) is responsible to the board for the satisfactory governance of the programs.

The Executive Director and staff are responsible for the planning, administration and implementation of all programs, including developing proposals for funding.

The following are the progress reports on the activities, various programs and services offered by SSN.

Settlement Services

SSN provides settlement services for newcomers to Canada to enable smooth integration into the Canadian society. SSN assists newcomers with information on education, employment, evaluation of educational documents, counseling, translation and interpretation. There is a high demand for network meetings for South Asian engineers, teachers, computer and other professionals for group support and job leads.

Information and referral is provided regarding health and social insurance numbers, housing, banking, schools, and daycares. Seniors are also provided guidance regarding old age security, Canada pension plan, housing and guaranteed income supplements. There is a demand for assistance with filling out forms for permanent resident cards, child tax benefits, passports, visas, citizenship and name changes within the newcomer community. Settlement presentations are held for newcomers in partnership with agencies in York Region.

Seniors programs

The primary objectives of the SSN seniors program are to reduce isolation and loneliness and to provide mental stimulation. The programs are held at the local place of worship or community center and provide social and recreational activities for men and women over the age of 60. Seniors meet once a week in each of the community centres to enjoy

activities that include up-to-date informative presentations on nutrition and health related issues, proper use of medication, fire safety, fall prevention, importance of physical activity and old age security. Cultural activities help to make the group more cohesive. There is a demand to reach out to those who are isolated and cannot attend community centers and/or who do not have adequate transportation to get to these centers. Field trips are planned for 2009/10 to attract more participation of seniors in the program. The biggest challenge that still remains is a lack of a central location of a permanent facility for all seniors to collectively assemble and share their thoughts.

Seniors Drop-In Centres provide culturally and linguistically sensitive services and information through community presentations with various York Region and Government agencies in the area of seniors issues with an emphasis on elder abuse. This will address a service gap in York Region and GTA for the growing South Asian senior population. SSN currently serves seniors through 14 drop in centres.

Women's programs

SSN in partnership with Family Services of York Region provides culturally and linguistically sensitive services to approximately 200 women and their families. These women have self-identified as victims of one or more of: physical, economical, emotional and psychological abuse. SSN services include support groups, crisis intervention, safety plan advocacy, legal assistance, social assistance, and transitional support plans. Community outreach was coordinated with media, networking agencies and schools. Three women's wellness group has successfully been providing support network to women and children. The group meets weekly and women attend not only socially but to learn new skills, gain access to information, improve and enhance their lives and develop strategies to constructively cope with their individual situations.

Youth programs

Our youth worker has conducted workshops on the duality of cultures, team relationships, self-esteem and outreach strategies. The York Region District School Board, along with other service providers fully supports our youth program.

Women

The South Asian Outreach Project is a joint initiative of Social Services Network and Family Services of York Region. The project reaches out to the diverse South Asian women in a culturally and linguistically sensitive manner by providing information and support groups. Support groups are held on a weekly basis and are facilitated in Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, Tamil and English (delete and are located in Markham and Vaughan.)

Family

SSN provides the 'Information and Referral' service to the South Asian community by taking appropriate programs and services to the community centres, places of worship and housing estates. This enables newcomers and immobile community members access

to the various programs and services of mainstream service providers. An increasing number of community members are engaging and assimilating into Canadian systems.

Anti-Youth Violence Conference

This is a one day education forum on how youth can stop violence in their daily lives. SSN in partnership with other Agencies, has organized this conference to create an open dialogue with over 100 youth from local schools. The focus is to assist new immigrant youths and to address the many problems they face and finding solutions. The event is to take place May 23, 2007 at the Markham Civic Centre as part of International Youth Week.

Sports Day and Youth Fair (Milliken Mills High School)

Building upon our current Soccer program, the sports day and youth fair aims to showcase SSN youth programs and provides a platform to connect social service providers to isolated youth communities.

Youth EKTAA

The Annual South Asian Multicultural Talent Event – “Ektaa” is being held Bur Oak Secondary School in Markham. Various local South Asian youth will be showcasing their talent through various musical acts, dances, plays, skits and through a combination of traditional South Asian cultural elements fused with modern styles of performances. We will be seeking funds via fundraising efforts for the operations and development of youth programs

Focus on Family Literacy

An eight week program for fathers and grandfathers was held at the Sikh temple Gursikh Sabha Canada in June and July. The majority of the participants were grandfathers who reported that they found the sessions on Stress Management, Time Management and Financial Management particularly helpful.