

As the summer season approaches, CultureLink staff have been very busy planning for the future of programs to support newcomers and our community. With the success of the Syrian Refugee Donation Distribution Centre, CultureLink is motivated to expand our impact on the service users through new and innovative programs.

## GEMS Summit - Leaders of Tomorrow

In April, young women students of St. Joseph's College Catholic Secondary Schools had the wonderful opportunity of participating in the Girls E-Mentorship Innovation (GEM) summit entitled "Leaders of Tomorrow". GEM is a charitable organization that offers an innovative mentorship program designed by girls for girls and a mission to mitigate the adverse effects of poverty through electronic and in-person mentorship. GEM's vision is to bridge a social divide between at-risk girls and professional women and to motivate girls to reach their full potential no matter where they started. [Learn More](#)

## Newcomer's Adventures with CultureLink

### Soulpepper's Cabaret - New Canadian Welcome

Now in year two of CultureLink's partnership with Soulpepper to welcome new Canadians into Soulpepper's rich cultural performances and space, the partnership is growing in new and exciting ways.



April 30th, Soulpepper's artists teamed up to create a cabaret for our newcomer families. Songs of welcome, friendship and encouragement were the themes of the day.

[Learn More.](#)

### St. Mary's Visit to the Zoo



Students from St. Mary's Secondary TCDSB visited the pandas at Toronto Zoo. Most of the students are newcomers and international students. They enjoyed a stroll by the lions and polar bears and also visited the Pandas.

[Learn More.](#)

## Celebrate Bike Month with CultureLink

Bike Month kicks off on May 30 and continues until the end of June with hundreds of interesting and fun things to do, including rides, guided bike tours, festivals, art shows, film screenings, and so much more. CultureLink encourages newcomers to try out cycling this month with three launch events for Bike Host, our award-winning mentorship program, on June 4, June 7 and June 28. Registered newcomers can borrow a bike and be matched with a mentor for a summer full of healthy and fun activities. [Learn More.](#)

## Upcoming Events - Get Involved!

How you can get involved with CultureLink's **Neat Walk** and **Bike Host** programs. [Learn More.](#)

## Recap of Recent Events



January this year, when Monique De Margerie, a neighborhood musician first approached our Community Connection Program Manager, Fei Tang for volunteers opportunity with Syrian refugee kids, our Donation Centre had just began receiving large number of Syrian refugees. A choir seemed to be the most actionable idea. Since then, Fei and Monique started their quest to look for resources for the Choir. [Learn More.](#)



**Youth Recreation Club**  
The boys from Runnymede Collegiate Institute enjoyed boxing with MJKO.

### A Celebratory Close to CultureLink's Refugee Donation Distribution Centre

This past six months have been an extraordinary period for the nation, as well as for us as a small settlement agency. The unprecedented humanitarian crisis in Syria put all Canadians to the test - how much can we help and how soon can we react? We at CultureLink came up with a solution in November 2015 - we were going to establish a Donation Distribution Centre. But we had neither donation nor a centre. And, we hardly had any staff who could man such a large scale, makeshift clothing & household store. Yet, we did it, with the help of our dedicated volunteers, placement students and staff. [Learn More.](#)

### CultureLink's Involvement with the LGBTQ+ Settlement Network



Support and services for LGBTQ+ newcomers are very important. This is all the more so for newcomer youth. Amongst the many challenges of being adolescent, the fear of not fitting in is one that is highlighted double-fold for a newcomer LGBTQ+ youth. The need for a positive peer support group and social circle is crucial for the emotional, mental and physical well-being of a young person. Providing a positive space for newcomer LGBTQ+ youth to get that positive peer support and social circle is why CultureLink's Sankofa Youth Program was created. [Learn More.](#)

### Major Story - New Canadian Life - A Radio Workshop for Newcomers



How did your family come to Canada? Is a common question in Toronto, but for most newly arrived immigrants and refugees the main questions around language, housing, employment, immigration and homesickness are foremost. Now their stories and questions will be broadcast on CJRU1280AM. New Canadian Life is a fresh, culture-oriented radio initiative offered through a partnership between CultureLink and CJRU 1280AM. This program is focused on providing newcomers with an introduction to community radio through a series of radio workshops, where they will be able to learn new radio skills, and share their unique stories and perspectives in Canada. Culturelink's own Abdi and Glen going live-to-air on CJRU 1280 AM with their own show recorded at CultureLink, one of Toronto's largest settlement agencies. The workshops, hosted at CultureLink, will begin in June and are expected to bring newcomers of all backgrounds to participate hands-on in audio production. [Learn More.](#)



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