



Guide to

Volunteering
with the
Global Gathering Place



**The Global
Gathering Place**

100 5th Avenue North
Saskatoon, SK S7K 2N7
phone: (306) 665-0268
fax: (306) 665-0440

www.globalgatheringplace.com



Dear Volunteer,

Thank you for your interest in the Global Gathering Place. As a volunteer with our agency, you will have the unique opportunity to interact with people from many different cultures. Your presence here as a Canadian will positively impact the experience of the immigrants and refugees who participate in our programs.

This manual will provide you with information about our organization, newcomers to Canada, and your role as a volunteer.

We hope that your experience will be both rewarding and challenging! Thank you for donating your time for the benefit of the clients and staff at the Global Gathering Place.

Sincerely,

Afton Tolley

Program Manager

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Philosophy and Mission

Global Gathering Place is

- 1) Focused on families as well as individuals;
- 2) Participant driven;
- 3) Peer supported; and
- 4) Community based.

Since its inception in 1998, Global Gathering Place has operated in a manner that assists newcomers with the adaptation process and provides support, dignity, acceptance, safety, and a welcoming environment. Our goal is to build bridges of understanding, enhancing and enriching the lives of newcomers, volunteers, and the community. We all learn and benefit from everyone who comes to GGP.

Global Gathering Place works in partnership with community and immigrant-serving agencies, sponsorship agreement holders, sponsor groups, government departments, and individuals to address the needs of newcomers in our community. Through this partnership, Global Gathering Place strives to enable full participation of immigrants and refugees in all aspects of Canadian society through the equal involvement of both newcomers and Canadians. All participants:

- Learn about other cultures, languages and religions;
- Become educated about the hopes, dreams and needs of their neighbours;
- Build a strong support network in the community;
- Make the connections necessary to assist with employment matters; and
- Learn about and access the services of other agencies.

Vision:

Global Gathering Place's vision is a society where newcomers to Canada are fully engaged and valued.

Mission:

To engage and support immigrants and refugees to integrate and thrive in Canadian society.

Global Gathering Place educates the public about refugee and immigrant issues, addresses misconceptions, and highlights the valuable contributions, which refugees and immigrants make to our community.

Volunteer Job Descriptions

Volunteers at the Global Gathering Place are required to:

- Have a willingness to work with individuals from other cultures;
- Respect cultural differences;
- Be patient;
- Be dependable and prompt; and
- Have good communication and interpersonal skills.

Commitment

Volunteers are typically expected to make at least a 3-month commitment with regular weekly service of at least one hour per week, depending on the program.

Volunteer Opportunities at the Global Gathering Place:

1) BrightStart!

BrightStart! is offered at different times throughout the year for immigrant and refugee mothers and their pre-school aged children. The program is typically offered twice weekly for two hours at a time. Through a variety of activities and lessons, mothers are able to interact with their young children and other mothers.

Duties:

Volunteers assist the facilitator to teach nursery rhymes and songs, practice English with the participants and demonstrate good parenting techniques.

Place of Work:

Changes from year to year.

2) CHEF (Creating Healthy Economic Food)

Once a month, we offer our CHEF Program for Permanent Resident Clients. The program is offered two days in a row alternating between the afternoons and evenings. On the first day, the group plans a balanced meal, discusses nutrition and food safety, and goes to the grocery store together to find the ingredients. On the second day, the food is prepared and cooked. Each participant samples some food, and then takes the meal home to feed their family.



Duties:

Volunteers assist the coordinator by helping the clients choose their ingredients, explaining new vocabulary in the recipe, lead by example on how food is prepared, and visit casually with our clients.

Place of Work:

The program is held at the Global Gathering Place, and at grocery stores in the community.

3) *Children's Program*

The Global Gathering Place offers a children's program concurrently with a variety of our other regular programming. Parents are able to attend our programs and leave their children under the care of the children's program facilitator and volunteers. Children who attend this program must be at least four years of age.

Duties:

Volunteers assist the children's program facilitator with planned activities. These activities may include crafts, games, and videos.

Place of work:

The program is held at the Global Gathering Place. The program facilitator may take the children on outings in the summer months.

4) *Coffee and Conversation*

Coffee and Conversation is held each Thursday afternoon from 1:00 pm until 4:00 pm at the Global Gathering Place in a relaxed and informal setting. Volunteers are available to converse with newcomers to Canada.

Duties:

Volunteers help clients practice their English conversation skills by simply visiting with them. In this setting, volunteers often take on the role of a mentor, answering clients' questions about Canadian culture. Through conversation, volunteers have the opportunity to familiarize newcomers with Canadian culture, orient them to the Saskatoon community, and assist the newcomers in learning new skills that will help them in their daily life. Volunteers may be asked to make coffee or tidy up after the program.

Place of Work:

Global Gathering Place.

5) *English as a Second Language Classes*

Global Gathering Place offers a variety of English as a Second Language Classes at three locations in the city.

Classes Offered at Main Office Location (100 5th Avenue North):

- Literacy - Monday to Friday, 9:30 to 11:30 am
- Literacy - Monday to Friday, 12:30 to 2:30 pm
- CLB 1-2 - Tuesday to Thursday, 9:30 am to 12:30 pm
- Stage 1, CLB 1 & 2 - Tuesday and Thursday, 6:30 to 9:00 pm
- CLB 2-3 - Wednesday and Friday, 7:00 to 9:00 pm
- Stage 1, CLB 3 & 4 - Monday and Wednesday, 6:30 to 9:00 pm
- CLB 3-4 - Tuesday to Thursday, 1:00 to 4:00 pm
- CLB 4 – Mondays and Thursdays, 6:00 to 9:00pm
- CLB 5 - Tuesday and Thursday, 6:00 to 9:00 pm
- Intermediate (CLB 4-5) Drop-In - Wednesday and Friday, 7:00 to 9:00 pm
- Stage 2, CLB 5 & 6 - Tuesday and Friday, 6:30 to 9:00 pm
- Stage 2, CLB 5 & 6 - Saturdays, 9:30 am to 3:00 pm
- Advanced (CLB 6 & 7) Drop-In - Monday and Wednesday*, 7:00 to 9:00 pm
*The Wednesday evening Advanced Drop in Class is also known as the *Drop-In IDEAS (Interactive Diverse English Activities in Saskatoon) Class*.
- CLB 6-8 – Saturdays 9:30 am to 3:00 pm

Classes Offered at Meadowgreen House for All Nations (501 E Avenue W South):

- Stage 1, CLB 1 & 2 - Tuesday and Thursday, 9:00 to 11:30 am
- Stage 1, CLB 3 & 4 - Tuesday and Thursday, 9:00 to 11:30 am

Classes offered at Vincent Massey School (1001 Northumberland Avenue):

- CLB 3 - 5 - Tuesday & Thursday, 6:00 to 8:00 pm

Classes led by Volunteer Instructors

- Seniors – Tuesdays from 1:00 to 3:00 pm, and Thursdays from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm

Duties:

Under the direction and with the guidance of the English as a Second Language teacher, volunteers assist students in a classroom setting with a variety of activities. Activities typically deal with vocabulary and some aspect of Canadian culture.

In the Drop-In IDEAS Class, the English as a Second Language teacher lectures for part of the class then has volunteers work with students in small groups.



6) *Family, Fun, and Fit*

Global Gathering Place's Family, Fun, and Fit program runs on either Saturday or Sunday afternoon at various locations in the Saskatoon area. The goals of this program are to introduce refugees and immigrants who are new to Saskatoon to a variety of cultural and recreational resources in the city. Sunday afternoons are often a lonely time for newcomers, therefore the program is also meant to provide an opportunity for these individuals to 'get out of the house' and meet others who may share a similar experience. Examples of our Sunday program activities include trips to museums, movies, crafts, and sports activities.

The program is organized and facilitated by the program coordinator; however, volunteers may take on a greater leadership role if they would like to, if deemed appropriate by the coordinator. This leadership role could include independently planning and facilitating activities, subject to the approval of the coordinator.

Duties:

Volunteers assist the program coordinator with a variety of duties including:

- Interacting with clients and families, helping them to understand the nature of the activity;
- Listening to clients and providing positive encouragement as they try to learn English; and
- Providing transportation for clients from the Global Gathering Place to the site of the activity if they are willing (volunteers are not expected to provide transportation or use their vehicles)

Place of Work:

The program coordinator and volunteers meet clients at the Global Gathering Place office, transportation is arranged, and then we move to the location of the activity. Activities typically occur in the city of Saskatoon at various recreation and cultural venues.

7) *Homework Help*

We offer Homework Help for elementary school children at a few different locations in the city. Each school's program will run once a week and typically begins directly afterschool. Please ask the coordinator for more details.

Duties:

Volunteers help students with homework. Volunteers should also work at encouraging the students and building friendships in addition to tutoring.

Place of Work:

Directly at elementary schools

8) *Individual Assistance*

Volunteers are matched with newcomers to Canada whose first language is not English. Volunteers help students improve their reading, writing, and conversation skills. Mentors also teach Canadian culture, discuss employment opportunities and show which resources are available in the community. Volunteers may use a variety of resources from the Global Gathering Place library to assist students.

Duties:

Volunteers and students have flexibility in deciding their approach to learning.

For example, as a volunteer you may:

- Allow students to practice their English conversation skills with you
- Review any written material the student has worked on independently
- Read newspaper or magazine articles with the student and discuss content

Place of Work:

Volunteers meet with a student at the Global Gathering Place during office hours when staff is available to assist volunteers if necessary.

Volunteers should be able to make a three-month commitment and be willing to work with the same individual once a week for at least an hour. After the three-month period, the match will be assessed to determine whether it is necessary for the tutoring to continue.

9) *Outreach*

Many newcomers to Canada are often homebound:

- newcomers with small children may lack funds to pay for daycare and must spend a significant amount of time at home;
- clients from warm climates may feel uncomfortable leaving their homes in the winter; and
- many newcomers cannot afford to pay for transportation.

Duties:

Outreach volunteers visit clients or families in their homes. Matches between volunteers and clients are made appropriately based on gender and other sensitive considerations. Volunteers are available to visit with clients and to answer questions about Canadian culture and resources in the community. Volunteers have the option of working in pairs or teams for outreach assignments. The volunteer coordinator will be in contact with the volunteer(s) and clients(s) on a regular basis to assess the match.

Place of Work:

Matches will occur in clients' homes in Saskatoon.



10) *Life Skills*

Life Skills is a program that provides recently-arrived refugees with the tools and skills they need to successfully integrate into life in Saskatoon. All training and instruction is hands-on and clients are met in the clients' homes.

Duties:

Under the direction of the Life Skills Coordinator, volunteers will assist clients with tasks such as taking the bus, grocery shopping, or cooking.

11) *Office Work*

The Global Gathering Place occasionally needs help with various office support tasks.

Duties:

Volunteers can assist by purchasing office supplies, and by organizing/cleaning the storage room, classroom, and main drop-in space. Volunteers can also assist with high-volume mail-outs, computer programming needs, or basic office tasks during staff holidays.

12) *Skills Building*

Throughout the year, the Global Gathering Place offers a variety of multi-week Skills Building Sessions. The sessions draw on the expertise of specialists from the community to teach clients about a wide variety of topics including, for example, Housing, Money Management, Computer Basics, or Swimming.

Duties:

Volunteers assist the program coordinator as needed. In computer basics class, volunteers circulate the lab lending hands-on assistance to the participants. For Swimming without Fear, volunteers are in the pool aiding the instructor with demonstrations, and offering support, tips, and encouragement.

Place of work:

Global Gathering Place and YWCA Pool

Guidelines for Volunteers

GGP is a place where newcomers to Canada can meet people, practice English, obtain and share information and skills, and have fun. Immigrants and refugees come to our country every year to build a new life for themselves and their families.

As a volunteer, you become a guide to life in your community. You don't need any particular skills, although those you have will be put to good use. Most newcomers are looking for friendship, support, and someone with whom they can practice conversational English. Remember that both the newcomer and volunteer will benefit from the friendship and exchange of cultural information. Volunteers should interact with GGP clients with respect and in ways that enhance the best interests of the client.

Come as often as you can. It is helpful for newcomers to see people consistently as you get to know each other.

Be sensitive to the individual's political and religious beliefs and other values which may or may not be the same as yours. Show respect for other points of view whether or not you agree with the ideologies, creeds or customs. You should not use the relationship to promote your own political or religious beliefs. The client's personal, cultural, educational, religious, and other values and beliefs are not to be regarded as something that needs to be altered.

Be empathetic. Try to imagine being in another country where you are a minority, isolated, unfamiliar with the language, with family and friends far away.

Take the lead from your newcomer. Most newcomers know what they want and need. You can ask them how you can help. If they need help beyond your expertise, knowledge, or understanding please consult with the Global Gathering Place staff.

Keep money out of the relationship. Treating newcomers occasionally is fine, but too often or too generously may make them uncomfortable. You may help them find a job, but it isn't a good idea to hire them yourself, or to lend money, or to co-sign for a loan. At the same time, you should not use the relationship for your own financial gain.

Report problems with any language schools to the Global Gathering Place staff. They will follow up if there is a concern with courses of study or teaching methods. Do not contact teachers here or at any other teaching facility yourself.

Understand that newcomers speak their own language at home. You may be tempted to suggest that they speak English with each other at home in order to learn faster. Although this makes some sense, it is very difficult and puts considerable strain on the family. There is a language of identity, emotional expression, familiarity and comfort.

- Remember the relationship is voluntary for both parties.
- Respect the right to privacy of both newcomers and volunteers.

Maintain a professional standard of behavior. Be aware and cautious of situations which may not be appropriate e.g. inappropriate physical contact, being alone with someone of the opposite sex, etc.



Participate in the activities organized within the guidelines of the Global Gathering Place.

There may be some activities that take place which emanate out of relationships begun at the Global Gathering Place. However, unless these activities are approved activities of the centre, the Global Gathering Place does not take responsibility or liability for any situations or incidents that may occur. If you have any questions about any activity, please talk to the coordinator.

Tutoring. Tutoring should occur at the centre unless the coordinator has approved other arrangements.

Give rides only if authorized by the staff of the Global Gathering Place. Volunteers may give rides, when authorized by centre staff, during scheduled outings.

Inform the coordinator if you are unable to volunteer on your scheduled day by telephone, email, or in person, with as much notice as possible. Also, report changes of address, telephone number, or availability to a GGP staff member. Finally, inform the coordinator if you wish to resign from your service at the Global Gathering Place.

Confidentiality

As in any relationship involving trust, it is important to use your best judgment about keeping confidential information private. Because of cultural differences it is not always easy to understand what another may have expected you to keep private. It is better not to repeat information about clients to others. If you feel concern for a client's health, for example, simply ask if you may share that concern with a Global Gathering Place staff member. You are not expected to carry a burden of concern alone.

- GGP volunteers should maintain confidentiality in an appropriate manner that promotes the well-being of the client.
- Volunteers should disclose confidential information to a staff member without the consent of the client when they believe that disclosure is necessary to protect the client or other vulnerable persons.
- Volunteers should continue to treat as confidential sensitive information about clients gained as a result of relationships with these clients after the relationships have ended.

Rights

You have rights as a volunteer

- To have a job that is enjoyable and challenging.
- If you work as a tutor, to expect your newcomer to keep appointments with you (it may be necessary to teach your client the importance we place on punctuality in our culture).
- To call the volunteer coordinator whenever you need to discuss your volunteer work.
- To alter or terminate your commitment to the client or GGP program when you feel it is appropriate to do so. Please speak to the volunteer coordinator for assistance.

Clients have the right

- To be treated with respect, as adults with adult capabilities.
- To be given information necessary to enable them to speak for themselves and to make decisions for themselves.
- In tutoring situations, to have the volunteers keep appointments or be notified that something has come up necessitating a change of plans.
- In tutoring situations, to alter or terminate the relationship with the volunteer when desired. It is important to realize that some people may choose to do this before the volunteer's enthusiasm for helping has diminished. Try not to take this personally.



Tips for Tutors

Introduce yourself, and learn to pronounce clients' names correctly.

Speak naturally and with normal volume; don't exaggerate or distort pronunciation. Remember that this person has a life history and experience you are unfamiliar with. Do not assume that because someone has difficulty with English that they have less worth or intelligence.

Try to determine together where you should begin according to the person's need. Ask the person what they need: letters and sounds, grammar, conversation, written help, resume help or something else.

Start with familiar topics (e.g.: weather, occupations, etc). Do not get too personal; questions about family should be approached carefully and cautiously because of cultural differences. Try to provide information that will encourage them in their struggle with new customs, manners and habits.

Try to acquire some information about the person's country according to your interests. Be willing to listen and learn. e.g.: location, language, meals (size of meals, social value of mealtime, when eaten, table manners, utensils, seating arrangements), and other customs and general attitudes (society, wealth, roles, humor, showing emotions, community participation, gifts, conversation, greetings).

Suggest that the person keep a notebook. Ask the person to note questions or topics during the week that they may want to discuss.

Maximize opportunities – share information about yourself and make comparisons. Talk about things you are both comfortable with (but don't do all of the talking!).

Never cover your mouth. A person may watch your mouth for pronunciation clues.

Reinforce what you say with written words or pictures, whenever possible.

Review new vocabulary. Repetition is essential to learning.

Have the newcomer explain his/her understanding of the material covered. A person may answer your questions without fully understanding.

Allow for internal processing and translation time. People sometimes need a second to digest what you've said.

Don't assume knowledge of English slang, culture, or customs and minimize your use of colloquial language. Avoid unnecessary words, lengthy descriptions, difficult words, etc.

Speak in the present tense whenever possible.

For example: "Bring your book tomorrow." Rather than
"You will need to bring your book tomorrow."

Avoid dead end conversations (try not to use yes/no questions). Brainstorm ideas to talk about.

For example: "What do you like about Saskatoon?" Rather than

“Do you like Saskatoon?”

Listen and focus on understanding each other. If you have difficulty understanding something don't be afraid to ask.

Error correction – repeat what the learner has said, but do it correctly; note the errors and work on them later; focus on points studied; correct immediately when understanding is difficult. Errors, however, are a natural part of the language learning process. People learn best when they are encouraged to speak without worrying about making mistakes. Allow learners, especially beginners, to concentrate on content and not grammatical correctness.

Encourage and praise the individual.

At the end of each lesson or time spent with a student, ask yourself... **“What one new thing have they learned today?”**



ESL Resources for Volunteers

1) *Games*

The following games are available at GGP and are great for learning and practicing English – Scattergories, Pictionary, and Scrabble. You can adapt them for pairs or small groups.

2) *Authentic Materials*

Newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, brochures, recipe books, flyers, etc. are a great source of real language and culture for the newcomer. Use them for discussions, for country comparisons, for questions, and for reading and writing practice.

Newspaper Ideas

- Look at a food ad. Have the students make a list of food needs for a week, then estimate the food bill.
- Read aloud a story of interest. Have students briefly retell it in their own words.
- Discuss letters to the editor. What kinds of things are people concerned about?
- Find an article of national interest on each of the following: a person, place, event, and a discovery.
- Look for 5 new expressions/phrases in the newspaper.
- Read an article from the sports section. Pick out the action words.

Reading/Writing Activities

Writing – practice writing letters and postcards, or recipes.

Reading – Always motivate the students to read the text, article, etc. Ask questions about the topic, or have the student predict the subject from the title or picture. Cut the text into paragraphs and have the students order them correctly. Blank out certain words or sentences, and have the students guess the possible answers. Discuss or debate the issues after reading.

3) *Computers*

There are computers in our office that are available for client use. Some useful websites offering activities and ideas are:

- eslcafe.com
- eslpartyland.com
- puzzlemaker.com
- Check out the ESL Resources tab on the Global Gathering Place website

4) *Classroom Resources*

The ESL library (in the basement) contains several books for students and tutors. Some of the books can be signed out for a week, however, please note that some of these books are not to leave the Global Gathering Place. The Oxford Picture Dictionary is an excellent book for learning vocabulary and pronunciation. The ESL Toolbox is another resource containing a variety of board games. Books must be signed out with the ESL Department (on the second floor).

5) *Saskatoon Public Library*

The Main Branch on 23rd Street has an ESL section on the main floor beside the computers. There are books and cassettes for grammar, reading, writing, and special subjects such as business and tourism. The University of Saskatchewan Education Library has an ESL section as well.



General Information for Volunteers

Screening and Recruitment of Volunteers: Prospective Global Gathering Place volunteers are required to complete an application form, submit a recent Police Security Check, offer two references, and have a face to face interview with the Volunteer Coordinator.

Probationary Period: New volunteers are subject to a three-month probationary period. After three months, volunteers will fill in a self-evaluation form in which they will have the opportunity to formally express concerns or discuss goals related to their work as a volunteer with the centre. The volunteer coordinator will then review the evaluation form and deal with any concerns. Volunteers who successfully complete the probationary period will then obtain official volunteer status.

Supervision of Volunteers: The volunteer coordinator is responsible for maintaining the ongoing supervision of all volunteers. The coordinator is available to give general direction and guidance to volunteers on a day-to-day basis. In cases where the coordinator is not present, a relevant staff member maintains supervision of volunteers.

Volunteer Feedback: Volunteers are encouraged to offer suggestions and input in regard to programming at the Global Gathering Place. Volunteers may speak directly with the coordinator. In addition, we typically conduct a volunteer evaluation once a year to provide volunteers with an opportunity to express their comments or concerns formally.

Volunteer Education: Periodically, the Global Gathering Place will offer its volunteers training opportunities in the form of workshops. These opportunities are designed to enhance the skills and knowledge necessary for volunteers to carry out their assignments effectively.

Volunteer Recognition: Once a year, usually in the summer, the Global Gathering Place hosts a volunteer appreciation event.

Parking: Three designated volunteer stalls are marked with a Global Gathering Place placard and numbered 8, 9, and 10. Please sign in at the reception desk when parking in these stalls during daytime hours.

Organizational Structure: The Global Gathering Place is governed by a Board of Directors which oversees the functions of the organization relating to policy, governance, and oversight.

Cross-Cultural Awareness

1) Categories of immigrants and refugees

- Immigrants are persons who come to settle in Canada as permanent residents.
- Immigrants must qualify under Canada's point system to remain in Canada.
- Immigrants are persons who choose to leave their country of origin and pick a specific destination.
- Convention refugees are persons with a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. They are either:
 - Outside of their country of nationality and are unable, by reason of fear, to return to that country.
 - Without a country of nationality, and are outside of the country where they usually live, and are afraid to return to that country.
- A refugee claimant is a person who has arrived in Canada and seeks convention refugee status. A claim may be made upon arrival at the port of entry or by someone already in Canada, whether as a legal visitor or without legal status, by notifying an immigration officer.
- Study Permit holders are foreign students who come to study or to complete graduate studies. They are temporary residents, allowed into Canada only for the period of time it takes to complete their studies. Study permit holders include: visiting scholars, researchers, and post-doctoral fellows at a university.
- Work authorization- In most cases you need a valid work permit to work in Canada. Work permit holders are allowed into Canada temporarily to help Canadian employers address skill shortages. This includes the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP) which has allowed the Provincial Government to bring in additional Skilled Workers and Hospitality Workers.
- Family class immigration- Canadian citizens and permanent residents may sponsor close relatives or family members who want to become permanent residents of Canada.
- The live-in caregiver program- A live-in caregiver is someone who provides care to children, the elderly or the disabled in a private household. After working two years as a live-in caregiver they can apply to be a permanent resident in Canada.



2) *Critical Issues faced by immigrants and refugees*

If you are entering a new culture, you will probably experience “culture shock”. Culture shock is the feeling experienced when a person is taken out of a familiar environment and put into a completely new and different environment. When you enter a new culture you suddenly meet people with new behaviours and new ways of thinking. Typically, individuals undergo an inner process of adaptation that follows four stages:

1. **Euphoric:** live at an accelerated pace, geared for change and challenge
2. **Critical:** see differences, feel sad and frustrated, experience guilt and anxiety about those left behind in home country, unrealistic view of home country
3. **Understanding:** begin to understand the differences, are more open-minded, gain language proficiency, integration takes place
4. **Fully understand differences and fully accept differences:** mix old and new culture (may only occur in second generation)

Many immigrants and refugees come to Canada without their immediate or extended families. It is difficult to be immersed in a new culture and not have anyone who can relate to your experience. As a volunteer it is important that you provide support by being empathetic and by trying to understand where they are coming from.

The cost of coming to Canada for immigrants and refugees is very high. It may be difficult for many to find employment in Canada. This can create a financial crisis for many individuals and families.

Many immigrants and refugees have left their countries of origin because of war and other serious issues such as torture and risk of persecution. These experiences and the transition of coming to a new country can cause the onset of many mental health issues. If you think a client may be struggling with depression or other mental health issues, take the time to talk to them about what is going on in their lives and direct them to a Global Gathering Place staff member for further referral.

3) *Helping to make Canada feel like home*

A great way for the clients to meet new friends and to make new connections is to encourage them to participate in as many of the programs at Global Gathering Place as possible.

Various activities that are going on in the city can be found in The Star Phoenix Newspaper or the www.whattodoinsaskatoon.com and www.tourismsaskatoon.com web pages. Check for postings in the community for various events and tell clients. Also, talk to clients about what Canadians typically do to stay active.

Public Behaviour

Newcomers need to know the words for and appropriate behaviours accompanying:

- Meeting and greeting (introductions, handshakes, self-identification, honorifics such as Mr., Ms, etc).
- Visiting (conversations about invitations, tardiness, gifts, manners, politeness, and compliments).
- Relations with neighbours (conventions about neighbourliness).

Volunteers need to be aware of the details of public behaviour that Canadians normally take for granted, so that they can inform newcomers of specific words and gestures. For instance, most Canadians shake hands in virtually the same way throughout Canada, without pausing to think about it. Similarly, they automatically respect “social distance” or “personal space” between people.

Newcomers sometimes inadvertently offend Canadian customs, and some Canadian customs can offend some newcomers. Sources of embarrassment when going from one country to another include: problems with language, modesty, and personal hygiene, concepts of time and promptness, and eating customs. Any advice given must be tactful, but also clear. Newcomers come from a variety of cultures and backgrounds. Some need no advice, and even may infer that they are being criticized, or worse, discriminated against. Tact is necessary to discover what people already know. Say, for example, “I know you did not intend to be impolite, but nonetheless most/some Canadians consider...impolite”.

Parenting Issues

It is important to remember that while discussing family issues and parenting struggles with clients, all cultures have their own particular way of parenting. Being culturally sensitive while also teaching the client about parenting methods used in Canada is essential. Clients can be referred to the agencies listed below. These agencies specialize in family support and child-care.

- **Family Support Centre:** offers prevention and intervention programs designed to strengthen families. 315 Ave. M South, 933-7751
- **Food for Thought-Saskatoon Health Region Public Health Services:** information about health education and nutrition, pre and post-natal health and breastfeeding. 101-310 Idylwyld Dr. North, 665-4634
- **The Saskatchewan Child Care Association:** provides information about choosing proper childcare. 1-888-658-4408



Employment

Some new immigrants come to Canada with the assumption that it will be easy to find a job and are frustrated when they realize that the job market is very competitive. There are many places that offer free resume services and provide individual employment counseling. They include:

- The Saskatoon Open Door Society 306-653-4464
- The YWCA Employment and Learning Centre 306-244-7034 ext.131
- Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services 306-933-6281
- Regional Employment Development 306-665-6762

Finances

Finances are a difficult area for newcomers. Because they may be taking English classes full-time, be unemployed, or have a job that is at an entry level, supporting a family or themselves will be difficult.

While you are not required to be a financial counselor, you can help by making the newcomer aware of banking procedures in Canada. For example: making sure the newcomer understands Canadian currency, explaining the banking system (types of accounts, loans, deposits, withdrawal slips, and interest), explaining the concept of credit and debit cards. You can also mention any discount or thrift stores or community services you may know about (be careful not to offend anyone).

Health Care

Clients may not know where the hospitals, dentist offices and optometrists are situated in Saskatoon, and may not know how to access the services. Permanent Residents must apply for a health insurance card once they have arrived. The number for the Saskatoon office is 306-933-6275. If clients do not have a health insurance card, they will need to pay directly for services, or they can apply for other insurance coverage which can be found in the yellow pages in the phone book under "insurance". In some provinces temporary workers and students who are in Canada on a temporary basis are eligible for coverage. To check, call community resources and employment at 1-888-488-6385.

Those claiming refugee statuses can receive emergency or essential health-care services through the Interim Federal Health Program at Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

To find out more about vaccinations contact Saskatoon Public Health at 306-655-4888.

Education

International qualifications assessment service (IQAS) assists individuals in obtaining recognition for education received outside of Canada. There are various costs associated with having the assessment done; please refer to brochures available at the Global Gathering Place. For more information call 1-800-999-3965 or try the website at www.learning.gov.ab.ca/iqas.

Public education is free and available to every child in Canada.

- For Saskatoon Public Schools, parents should register their children at the Newcomer Student Centre located at 310 21st Street E.
http://www.spsd.sk.ca/files/newtocanada/Brochure_Newcomer_Student_Centre.pdf
- For Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools – Parents can go directly to their neighbourhood school. Schools are listed in the blue pages of the telephone book.
<http://www.scs.sk.ca/>

For a child to be registered, they must have with them, their:

- Permanent Resident Card, Record of Landing (IMM1000) or Confirmation of Permanent Residence (IMM 5292)
- birth certificate
- immunization records
- any previous school records

The child's language and mathematical skills might be tested. The child will then be placed in a program the school deems is best for them. If clients believe that their children may have been incorrectly placed, they should talk to their teacher, guidance counselor or school principal.

Documentation

Many issues arise when dealing with immigration and obtaining visas or applying for permanent residency. These factors can create stress and uncertainty for clients.

- The toll free number for Citizenship and Immigration is 1-888-242-2100
- For information on the permanent resident card, call toll-free: 1-800-255-4541



Understanding Refugees

How would you feel...

...if the political climate in Canada changed and it was no longer safe to work in your profession?

...if the people you work with began to disappear?

...if armed men started to ask your family and friends questions about you?

...when you finally make the decision to leave Canada?

...when you said goodbye to your elderly parents, knowing that you will probably never see them again?

...when you have to leave behind your oldest child because he/she is married and has a family?

...when you have been in a refugee camp for three years?

...when your family starts to doubt that this was a wise move?

...when your child becomes ill in the camp and there is no medicine for him/her?

...when your child dies?

...when you are finally selected for an interview with an immigration officer?

...knowing that your answers will determine your acceptance or rejection into the new country?

...when you learn that you and your family have been accepted?

...when you leave the camp and again say goodbye to your new friends?

...when you remember the child who didn't make it?

...when your plane takes off and you look to the future?

...when you set foot on new soil?