



# SWIS Ontario Newsletter

Issue 69—October 2010—Brampton

**This is the newsletter of the Ontario Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program, a partnership of the Settlement Sector, School Boards and Citizenship and Immigration Canada**

**There are ten SWIS programs in Ontario: Durham (SWIS Durham), Hamilton (SWISH), London (SWIS-London), Niagara (SWIS Niagara), Ottawa (MLO), Peel Region (MSEP), Toronto (SEPT), Waterloo Region (SEPWR), Windsor-Essex (SWISEW), York Region (SEPYR)**

**There are also four francophone programs: London Region (PIDEF), Ottawa (ALM), Toronto (PIDEF), Windsor-Essex (SWISEW)**

**Email us at: [info@cicswis.ca](mailto:info@cicswis.ca)**



## NOW ... and then?

NOW is far more than a 4-day program. Its impact lasts throughout the school year and even longer. So in this issue NOW participants and peer leaders tell us their story of NOW. We will also discuss tips and promising practices to ensure your school and students are able to maximize their NOW experience.

As there were over 80 schools connected to NOW this year, regional versions of this newsletter will also be produced. These newsletters will be posted on each region's news page at [www.swisontario.ca](http://www.swisontario.ca).



**NOW 2010 - Bramalea Secondary School**

### Nabila ...

When I first joined Bramalea Secondary School, I had two of my sisters with me and had no worries. I used to hang out with them at lunch and they helped me find my classes and being new wasn't a problem because I had two helping hands with me. A semester later my older sister graduated and I was left with only one sister. By this time I was still hanging out with only my sisters. I wasn't socializing or joining any clubs. I used to straight from home to school and vice versa. I thought

I didn't need anyone else since my sister was always going to be there for me. I didn't have any

friends until the next year when my sister's and my lunch period got separated. I suddenly realized that I had no friends and no one to spend my lunch with or just talk. I started going back home during the lunch. That's when my parents sat me down and told me that I had to make some friends and I can't run away from my problems. I took their advice and I started to talk to other students in my classes. Later, I joined some clubs and found people who have same interests as me. When I was a peer leader in the NOW program, I realized that If I knew about NOW when I was new there wouldn't have been any of these problems and I'd straight away meet my kind of people. I also realized that NOW is a great way to help newcomers and make them feel welcomed. NOW is definitely a great resource for newcomers and I only wish I knew about it when I was new. My advice to newcomers would be that shying away won't help them. They should always talk and mingle with other people because that's the only way they'll make friends and it'll be easier for them.

### Deepika ...

Hi, My name is Deepika. I am from India. I moved to Canada in August 2009. Since I came in August I had very less time to prepare myself for school. For me English was not an issue, my main issue was dress code and the regulations of school. When I first went to school, it seemed twice the size of my Indian school and

everyone was really free. In India I was taught not to sit and talk to teacher and be quiet most of the times in class but when I came here I saw how everyone was free and very chatty and unfortunately I felt like I didn't fit in. In 2009 I was in grade 9 and so far at that time I didn't have any friends and at that time I didn't like the concept of high school. But this year around April I heard a program called the “NOW” program where i heard they helped new comers. So, I told my father to sign me up. Later in August I attended the program and had tons of fun. I played tons of new and exciting games, I made tons of friends and it made more free. School has just started so once I am a bit tensed but this time I feel more free, more independent and I got a brand new group of friends to hang out with at lunch and all of this was possible because of the NOW program.



### **TIPS for NOW all year round ...**

- With the support of a teacher, establish a club to welcome students who arrive after NOW
- Empower the club members to identify subjects for meetings and possible group or school-wide activities ... be sure to keep the peer-led emphasis of NOW throughout the year!
- Use NOW curriculum pieces for lunch-hour or after school activities
- Partner with a Youth HOST program to enhance your follow up activities
- Encourage peer leaders to consider other leadership opportunities (e.g. student council)
- Run a one-day or half-day orientation event for students (and parents) who missed NOW ... consider running an orientation event during the semester break
- Invite NOW students and peer leaders to share their stories at the parent council

*Send us your ideas at [info@cicswis.ca](mailto:info@cicswis.ca).*

## **Welcome to Farida Kassum**

### **The new SWIS Assistant Provincial Coordinator**

Farida decided to retire from teaching full time two years ago, opting instead to teach part-time and explore other interests. These included writing ESL and ELD curriculum for the TDSB, working on ESL resources for the Ontario Ministry of Education and being one of the authors of the Coming to Canada Teacher's Guide for SWIS. She joins the provincial coordinator, Darcy MacCallum, providing consultative support to all programs and will focus on the development and updating of SWIS resources.

Farida recalls her experience as an ESL teacher: “The Settlement Worker and I met all the newcomer families that registered at our school. I can still see the look of relief on the faces of many of these newcomers when the Settlement Worker explained the many ways in which she could support them transition to their new home. I am extremely fortunate to have this opportunity to work with SWIS and be part of a group that really makes a difference.”

Welcome aboard, Farida!

**Previous SWIS Newsletters in English and French can be accessed through the link at: [www.swisontario.ca](http://www.swisontario.ca)**

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