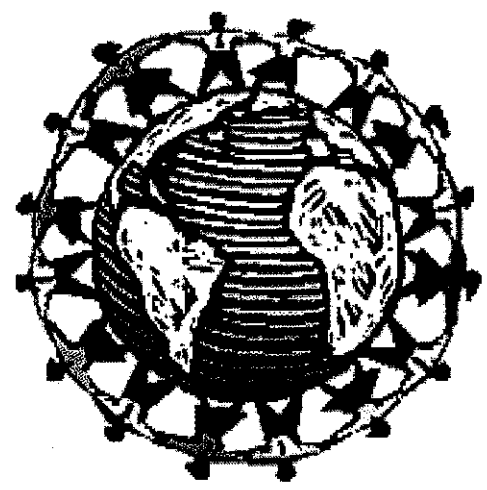


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SR-Ed-BR-2630

YMCA Newcomer Youth Services



Youth Outreach
2003

2630

Introduction

- YMCA Newcomer Youth Services is a department of the YMCA of Greater Halifax Dartmouth. Other departments include: Childcare, Health Fitness & Recreation, Employment & Education and camping. There are also two YMCA community centres, one in Dartmouth and one in Halifax.



We Build Strong Kids, Strong Families, Strong Communities

History

- The YMCA has been supporting Newcomer youth in the school system and in the community since 1992.
- Last year the staff worked with over 700 Newcomer youth/ children and their families in the Halifax Regional Municipality.
- *Citizenship & Immigration Canada* fund the programs.



Barriers Newcomer Youth Face

According to young people involved with YMCA Newcomer Youth programs over the years :

- Different Cultural Values
- Shyness
- Accent
- Family Responsibilities
- Parents' Expectations
- Isolation
- Post Traumatic Stress
- Culture Shock
- Torn between two cultures
- Language
- Loneliness
- Racism

Stereotypes

Young people in Canada need more information and opportunities to discuss cultural & global issues. Newcomer youth are frequently asked inappropriate questions which are based on stereotypes. Many of these misconceptions are spread by the media.

Contemporary Forms of Racism

What have we experienced?

"Someone asked me if we rode to school on elephants
in India"

"Do you have food in Africa?"

"Why did your last name change? Are you a child
bride?"

"My mother's friend was told that she didn't get a
job because her clothes smelled."

Xenophobia

Fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign. ¹

Newcomer youth and children face discrimination by their peers in school and in their neighborhoods.

They can be bullied because of differences. Often they are made fun of because of food, clothes, accents, colour of their skin, cultural values, choice of style and country of origin. This can take the form of name-calling and even start physical confrontations.

1. Merriam – Webster Dictionary : <http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary>

Accents

"My accent is a big issue, I'm kind of shy and I don't want to talk too much in class."

"When I first came here I said something and all the other kids just laughed."

"I am the only person from Africa in my class."

Things that work in the community

Leadership Development: group building, team building, communication skills, presentation skills.

Social Issues: anti-racism, gender issues, cross-cultural communication, substance abuse.

Community Involvement: service learning, camping, canoeing, hiking, visiting historical and local attractions.