

Welcome to Unison eVoice, a monthly bulletin that profiles programs and partners at Unison.

Program Profile **Income Tax Clinic**

Staff Lead: Isaac Guerra, Rent Bank Worker

I have been involved in coordinating the Income Tax Program since 1995. The program is designed to help community residents with preparing their tax returns. The Income Tax Clinic Program is free and targets low-income families, youth, adults, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and newcomers. Since they cannot afford to pay for the completion of their tax return, they often lose their benefits.

The tax clinic runs every year in March and April at our Keele-Rogers location and is open to all residents in our community who meet the program criteria. Income must be \$18,000.00 and under for individuals and \$25,000.00 and under for couples and families.

The success of this program depends on community volunteers who support their neighbours to prepare their tax returns. Unison offers free training and materials for everyone who would like to volunteer with our Income Tax Program. It is a full-day training for new volunteers and a half-day refresher course for those with experience.

Last year we had 19 volunteers participating in the program. Collectively they prepared 609 tax returns. On behalf of Unison Health and Community Services, I am writing to thank all of our Income Tax Clinic 2011 volunteers for their commitment, outstanding performance and support for our community.



VOLUNTEER TRAINING SESSIONS

Full-day training for new volunteers:
Wednesday, February 15, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Half-day refresher course for returning volunteers:
Wednesday, February 22, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

INCOME TAX CLINIC

When: **Thursdays, March 1 – April 19,**
Time: **5 – 8 p.m. by appointments only** (2 – 4 p.m. available to seniors and adults with developmental challenges)
Where: **Keele-Rogers site (1651 Keele St.)**

For more information about the program, to become a volunteer or to make an appointment for the Income Tax Clinic, please call Isaac Guerra at 416-653-5400 ext. 1264.

Community Partner Profile

Community Action Resource Centre

Community Action Resource Centre is a non-profit charitable organization that works to build the capacity of our communities by mobilizing resources and providing social services for the empowerment of individuals and groups. We provide a range of programs and services to help improve the quality of life in our community.

Newcomers are a valuable part of our community and we seek to support their needs through a variety of programs. Our settlement services program provides culturally and linguistically appropriate orientation, interpretation, translation, information and referral services and support. We offer an English Conversation Group, an East African Women's Support Group and a Spanish-speaking Women's Support Group weekly. We also provide relevant information sessions and workshops for newcomers in the area.

We offer a range of services that support families and children in our community. In the Davenport community, our Child Care Registry matches parents and suitable childcare providers. In addition, the Registry provides a bi-monthly newsletter "Kids 'N Care", referrals, support, and resources for care providers and seekers. Also in the Davenport community, we are a satellite site of the Ontario Early Years program, which supports families and caregivers of children 0-6 years of age. In the community of Martha Eaton Way, we provide an after-school program for children aged 7-12 that includes homework support, communication with teachers as needed, and stimulating recreational activities that promote interpersonal skills and healthy social relationships. In the same community we also have a free summer camp in July and August for children aged 7-12.

Programs that are focused on capacity-building and community development are an integral part of CARC. We collaborate with Unison Health and Community Services and George Brown College to operate Community Kitchens in Spanish, Somali and English that promote healthy eating and food security. CARC and the Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood Centre have been operating a Community Dining Program since 1996 that

provides hot, nutritious meals three times weekly for members of our community. We manage the Emmett Avenue Community Gardens, a project initiated by Evergreen in 2006. The garden brings community members together to grow their own food, to learn about food systems, local food, and organic gardening. The Community Safety Project is our safety initiative funded by the City of Toronto. We recruit community residents and train them to become Community Safety Ambassadors who work to educate the population on how to reduce violence in their neighbourhoods.

CARC also offers an affordable voicemail service, which provides persons without a phone a dedicated voice mail number that is a reliable way of receiving their messages, which they can retrieve from any touch tone phone. We have a clothing room that is open to community members from Tuesday to Thursday. Our Community Access Program (CAP) is provided at our Keele, Davenport, and 25 Martha Eaton Way sites, providing internet access on a drop-in basis as well as individual support and group training sessions to increase computer literacy. We provide an Income Tax Clinic during the month of March for low-income individuals and families.



Our core services include general information and referral, letter-writing, advocacy, worker liaison, generic informal counselling, and crisis intervention. We help with filling out forms including immigration, health card, subsidized housing and other government applications.

To learn more about Community Action Resource Centre, please visit us at: www.communityarc.ca
www.facebook.com/CommunityActionResourceCentre
www.facebook.com/EmmettAvenueCommunityGarden