

Tuesday October 19
10:30 a.m. to Noon

Is Your Centre Welcoming to New Canadians?

In this workshop you will be presented an outline of the model of service delivery at the Rexdale Community Health Centre that promotes and supports the program's mandate of 'A Safe and Friendly Place For Older Adults 55+ from Diverse Cultures To Meet'. Participants will investigate with a checklist of potential barriers to access that many New Canadians encounter and will offer practical suggestions based on her own experiences, challenges and successes about how barriers to access can be 'broken down' in order to support a 'Welcoming Centre For New Canadians'.

Key Learning Objectives:

1. Toolkit of ways to create a welcoming centre for New Canadians
2. Examples of implementing best practices
3. How to transfer this knowledge and apply directly to your own Centre.

Wendy Caceres- Speakman was educated in a small rural town in England and came to Canada at the age of 18 as a qualified Early Childhood Educator. Wendy is able to connect on a personal level to many aspects of the 'New Canadian' experience as she herself began her new life in Toronto as a non-status person, working via a 'work permit' as a nanny (as classified by Canadian Immigration, a 'Domestic'). In 1978 'Domestics' did not have the right to apply for their landed immigrant status. In 1979 Wendy joined Intercede, an advocacy organization working to change the migrant status of 'Domestics'. Working alongside many other hopeful 'New Canadians', and after

several years of active lobbying, success was achieved. Wendy finally became a 'New Canadian' (with landed status) in 1983. Family life for Wendy has also involved the melding of two cultures, and a necessity to learn a second language.

Wendy has resided and worked in the culturally diverse community of the former City of York for 20 years serving many age groups from pre-school to seniors. The past 14 years of her career has been dedicated to working with the seniors community. As the Program Coordinator / Manager of the Syme 55+ Centre for 12 years, she now coordinates the Ethno Cultural Seniors Program at the Rexdale Community Health Centre.