

---

---

**Come join us!**



*Students practice English and share experiences in the advanced class at the New Life Centre.*

*This school has a good environment and kind people. The most important thing is we have good teachers. They help us with many challenges. They help us develop our skills so we can connect to professional jobs. This school is especially good for newcomers who have some problems because they can discuss them here.*

Mi Mi Kim

*I like this school because the teachers and all the workers are very good and nice. I learn a lot of things about English and Canadian culture.*

Jinan Al-Awartani

*I like this school because the teachers are very nice. They can teach us more English. They help us understand Canadian culture. The childcare is also very good. There are more toys and it is very clean. The childcare teachers are nice, too. I feel good about the school.*

Pei Hua Lin

*I like this school because this school helps me how to study English and learn about Canadian culture. The school helps to build my confidence. I think more people should know about this school.*

Rong Fang Zhan

*Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto helped me to improve my English by motivating me throughout my work as a volunteer. Everybody who works in the school is so kind and patient and in every moment, they are ready to help and give support. First of all, they are excellent people and also experts in their professions. The excellent English program introduces Canada to newcomers, and gives them knowledge about life in Canada and life in many different cultures, which now all live together. The teachers are great people who know how to introduce us to everyday life in Canada.*

Natasa Laka

---

---

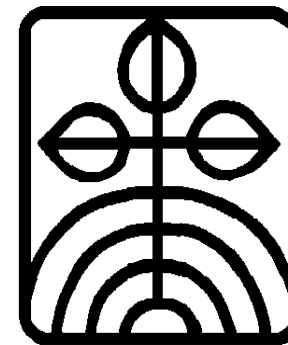
**Thank you for supporting us!**

**Donations received from individuals, churches, and other organizations are key to the day to day operations of the Mennonite New Life Centre. All contributions are gratefully acknowledged with a receipt for income tax purposes. Please send donations to:**

**The New Life Centre/Centro Nueva Vida  
1774 Queen Street East, Toronto, ON, M4L 1G7  
Tel: (416) 699-4527 Fax: (416) 699-2207**

---

---



---

---

**Mennonite NEW LIFE CENTRE of Toronto**  
**NEWSLETTER**

Issue No. 31, Fall 2006

---

---

## **Embracing Change**

*By Tanya Chute Molina*

At the Mennonite New Life Centre, our work is all about helping others to embrace change. Newcomers to Canada must deal with change on many levels – from learning a new language and looking for work to making friends and building a sense of home in a strange land. Change can be exciting when it opens up new opportunities. Change can also be difficult, even painful, when it means letting go, saying goodbye. The New Life Centre is here to guide and to walk with newcomers on their journey of change.

But what happens when the guide becomes a traveller on the journey of change? This fall has been a time of great change for the New Life Centre. Change has brought new opportunities – increased government funding has allowed us to hire two new staff members and to begin to explore possibilities for a second site. Change has also meant saying goodbye. After twenty-three years of dedicated service to newcomers, Adolfo and Betty Puricelli are retiring as the Directors of the New Life Centre.

As the new Director of the Mennonite New Life Centre, I have the privilege and the challenge of journeying with our staff and clients through this time of change. I hope to remain faithful to the strong tradition of caring service that characterizes the New Life Centre. I also look forward to bringing my own background and experience to the work of the Centre. This experience includes community development work with resettled refugees in El Salvador through the Mennonite Central Committee, as well as two years of work educating and advocating for the rights of refugees and migrants in Canada through KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives.



*Tanya Chute Molina is the new Executive Director of the Mennonite New Life Centre. She started work in September.*

Change brings us closer to the experience of the refugees and immigrants that we journey with here at the Mennonite New Life Centre. It challenges us to understand in new ways the hopes and dreams, as well as the struggles and fears that mark their experience of change. Newcomers become our guides on the journey of change as they teach us the qualities of courage and determination, solidarity and mutual support that will direct our footsteps into the future. We invite you to walk with us on that journey....

---

---

## New Staff and Programs

### *Newcomer Seniors find support at the New Life Centre:*

Thanksgiving has come and gone and I feel thankful to Life for many reasons. One of them is because of a new program at New Life Centre that I will be leading. The name of the program? Settlement for Seniors. I will tell you about the program a little later, but first I would like to talk about my relationship with the New Life Centre.

Who am I? My name is **Nora Stalker** and I am not new to the Centre. I have fantastic memories of the time when I first met Don Adolfo, Betty, Mario, Marina, Jorge, Tim, Vilma, Laura, and Jackie years ago when the offices were at the corner of Woodbine and Danforth. At the time, I was a Community Worker student. Many inspirational activities occurred at that small place: orientation for newcomers, information nights for women, a bereavement program for those who had lost a loved one. There were always many volunteers coming and going, escorting clients to appointments with the doctor, immigration lawyer or welfare worker. I was in charge of the seniors group, where we did many kinds of activities: knitting, floral arrangements, parties for Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas!! Betty Puricelli would often play the accordion while the seniors sang. And, certainly, I was assisting them in many of their needs.

Therefore, because of all these good memories from my work at the Centre, both as a student and later as an employee, because of my contact with the needs that newcomers have and the affection that they give in

---

### *Reception: Giving and receiving welcome*

My name is **Camilo Torres** and I am the receptionist at the Mennonite New Life Centre. I started to work as a volunteer in this position and now I have the pleasure to serve under a full-time contract. I am from Bogotá – Colombia, where I worked as an Administrative Assistant for the government and finished my studies in Economics.

I am another immigrant who escaped from the violence that is destroying our beautiful country. I arrived in Dallas, Texas in 1999, where I had the pleasant



*Nora Stalker and Camilo Torres joined the New Life Centre staff in October, 2006.*

return for our information and support, I have this need to say thank you to Life for this opportunity and gift of coming back to attend and befriend newcomer seniors.

The goal of the program? For newcomer seniors to have a more independent life. How? By learning how to use public transportation, speak English, understand their rights and responsibilities, and so much more. The Seniors Settlement Program also involves talking with seniors about their memories and needs, helping them with making choices and plans for a better life, and creating a group for recreation time and to share our love for each other. For love is at the heart of the work of the New Life Centre.

experience of communicating and interacting in English and Spanish while I worked for manufacturing companies. Then in June of 2005, with my wife Patricia and our two children Kenneth and Geraldine, we decided to leave the USA and arrived in Canada as refugee claimants. In the search to establish our new life, we initiated English studies and volunteer activities in Toronto.

On behalf of my family and myself, I want to thank to all Mennonite New Life Centre staff members. It's a pleasure to work with them. Special thanks to Adriana Pulgarin, who has been supporting me since the first time that I came to the Centre. I really appreciate it.

---

---

## Learning English: a door to the future

*The settlement process is about liberating the rich potential of newcomers, allowing them to give expression to the many professional skills and cultural gifts that they bring to Canada. For many, learning English is key to opening the door to the future. Caring teachers and a stimulating curriculum build communication skills and self confidence. Culturally sensitive childminding facilities help provide a supportive environment for the whole family. In this newsletter, past and present students share their experiences of learning English at the New Life Centre.*



*Mary Gazdik teaches the beginner's class in the LINC Program at the New Life Centre*

### **Fahira speaks:**

When I arrived in Canada more than a decade ago, after escaping with my husband and a three year old from a war-torn country, I spoke almost no English. As soon as we settled we started looking for an ESL programme.

Our settlement worker helped us find a place that was relatively close to our home and had childminding facilities - the New Life Centre.

Even today, I still remember our first day at the New Life Centre. I left my daughter crying with the child minders next door so that I could join an ESL class. It was hard for her to be with strange people who spoke a language she did not understand. It took some time, but little by little she adjusted.

The New Life Center staff gave us that first boost we needed to succeed. It was a right fit for us. The programme was fast-paced and I remember we studied a lot. We probably studied at home the same amount of time as we did at school. And it paid off. After a few months we moved on to different ventures that we found out about through information sessions that were offered by the New Life Centre.

Today, both my husband and I hold solid full-time jobs. We are happy and adjusted to this country. So, when a friend of mine asked me to write this article, I had to say yes. The New Life Centre is part of who I have become. It is part of my history. And I don't know what to say but -Thank you New Life Centre, and keep up the good work! As for students – you are in the right place with the right people and the future is 'yours to discover'.

### **Mireya speaks:**

Mireya Perez came to Toronto from Cuba in June of this year. Her husband, Enrique, a volunteer at the Mennonite New Life Centre, told her about the Centre's English classes. Mireya enjoys her class very much: "The teacher is good, and the people here are very nice," she says. "The students are of many different nationalities. I like learning about new cultures and languages."

In the future, Mireya plans to study cosmetology at college, or perhaps even psychology at the university level. In Cuba, Mireya enjoyed working at a college helping children with behavioral problems. Mireya now lives with her husband and their twelve-year-old daughter, Jessica, in Toronto.