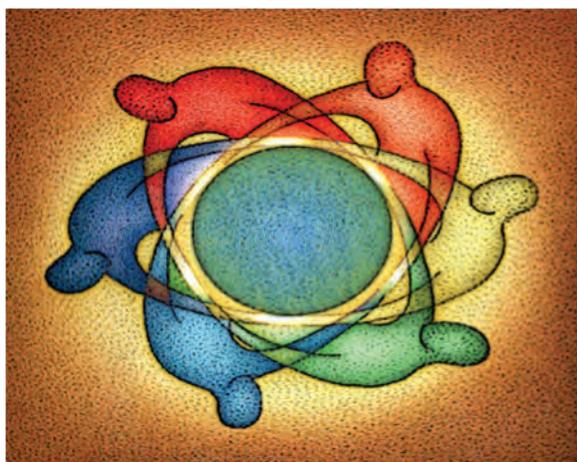


Ethno-Cultural Community Action on Racial Discrimination

(E-CARD) PROJECT



TAKING ACTION AS A COMMUNITY:
Stories by E-CARD Participants

eccc
Ethno-Cultural
Council of Calgary

Bridging Our Communities...
Building Our Collective Voice

Acknowledgments

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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT ECCC:

The Ethno-Cultural Council of Calgary (ECCC) is a community-based organization with a membership of 40 ethno-cultural organizations, communities and individual members. ECCC was founded in 2002. Its mission is to facilitate the collective voice of Calgary's ethno-cultural communities towards full civic participation and integration through collaborative action.

Key areas of work:

- ***Train Leaders and Strengthen Organizations***
ECCC strengthens leadership capacity of ethno-cultural groups and individuals to take responsibility in identifying and addressing community needs.
- ***Conduct Research and Policy Analysis***
ECCC engages ethno-cultural communities in critical understanding of key issues and policies affecting them and facilitates community responses.
- ***Build Public Awareness and Education***
ECCC promotes awareness, respect, and participation of culturally diverse groups towards building a more welcoming society for all.
- ***Promote Full Civic Participation of Members of Ethno-cultural Communities***
ECCC fosters collaborations and partnerships between ethno-cultural communities, broader community, service providers and public institutions through on-going dialogues and community forums.

ABOUT PROJECT E-CARD:

The Ethno-cultural Community Action on Racial Discrimination (E-CARD) Project is a two year (2010-2012) project of ECCC focused on addressing racial discrimination through community-based action.

The project combines action and training for ethno-cultural community members. It uses a community development approach in combining structured and experiential learning approaches, action and reflection, as it raises awareness and builds the capacity of ethno-cultural organizations to address the issue and provide timely support to victims of racial discrimination.

The first year of the E-CARD project engaged a core group of thirty ethno-cultural members from 13 different ethno-cultural groups across Calgary in a process of training and education on the issue of racial discrimination. The second year focused on action, as these same leaders developed community-based action plans and activities according to the needs of their communities. Four multicultural action committees were formed: E-CARD Arts Committee, E-CARD Forum Committee, E-CARD Community Gatherings Committee and E-CARD Support Committee. The past two years of the E-CARD project have been filled with workshops, training sessions, community forums, field trips, arts activities, guest speakers, sharing of stories, cross cultural sharing and collaboration. The stories in this publication are a reflection of the journey the E-CARD participants have been on over the past two years. This publication was created for two reasons:

- 1) For communities across Calgary to better understand the realities faced by ethno-cultural communities on the topic of racial discrimination. The stories shared in this publication are from experiences of ethno-cultural community members living in Calgary.
- 2) For ethno-cultural community members, leaders and communities we hope that this resource will encourage you to speak up against injustices, learn about your human rights and take action against racial discrimination the next time an incident happens to you or occurs in your community.

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

ANTI-RACISM • An active and consistent process of change to eliminate individual, institutional and systemic racism as well as the oppression and injustice racism causes.

DIVERSITY • A term used to encompass all the various differences among people – including race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic status, etc. Diversity is commonly used in the United States and increasingly in Canada to describe workplace programs aimed at reducing discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and outcome for all groups. Concern has been expressed by anti-racism and race relations practitioners that diversity programs may water down efforts to combat racism in all its forms.

HUMAN RIGHTS • Human rights affirm and protect the right of every individual to live and work without discrimination and harassment. Human Rights policies and legislation attempt to create a climate in which the dignity, worth and rights of all people are respected, regardless of age, ancestry, citizenship, colour, creed (faith), disability, ethnic origin, family status, gender, marital status, place of origin, race, sexual orientation or socio-economic status.

MULTICULTURALISM • A federal policy in Canada since 1971, Multiculturalism endorses equal status for all cultures and encourages Canadians to recognize contributions made by the diversity of Canadian residents. However, the concept does not explain racism or its role in preventing equal participation in society by racialized groups.

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION • According to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (to which Canada is a signatory), racial discrimination is any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin, which nullifies or impairs the recognition, enjoyment or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.

RACIAL MINORITY • A term which applies to all people who are not seen as White by the dominant group including Aboriginal, Black, Chinese, South

Asian, South East Asian and other peoples. Sometimes used instead of Visible Minority.

RACIAL PROFILING • Any action undertaken for reasons of safety, security or public protection that relies on stereotypes about race, colour, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, or place of origin rather than on reasonable suspicion, to single out an individual for greater scrutiny or differential treatment. Profiling can occur because of a combination of the above factors, and age and/or gender can influence the experience of profiling.

RACISM • A mix of prejudice and power leading to domination and exploitation of one group (the dominant or majority group) over another (the non-dominant, minority or racialized group). It asserts that the one group is supreme and superior while the other is inferior. Racism is any individual action, or institutional practice backed by institutional power, which subordinates people because of their colour or ethnicity

STEREOTYPING • Stereotyping may be based upon misconceptions, incomplete information and/or false generalizations about race, age, ethnic, linguistic, geographical or natural groups, religions, social, marital or family status, physical, developmental or mental attributes, gender or sexual orientation.

SYSTEMIC DISCRIMINATION • The institutionalization of discrimination through policies and practices which may appear neutral on the surface but which have an exclusionary impact on particular groups, such that various minority groups are discriminated against, intentionally or unintentionally. This occurs in institutions and organizations where the policies, practices and procedures (e.g. employment systems – job requirements, hiring practices, promotion procedures, etc.) exclude and/or act as barriers to racialized groups. Systemic discrimination also is the result of some government laws and regulations.

Glossary of Terms from National Anti-Racism Council of Canada (2008) - http://www.notohate.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10:publications-on-hate-crime&catid=3:resource-centre&Itemid=17



I am so grateful that I was introduced to a First Nations tradition of smudging. It came at a time when I was experiencing a lot of stress. After cleansing myself with sage, I felt more at peace. I walked away remembering the teachings of the medicine wheel, which makes me seek and live my life with balance.

"I am so grateful that I was introduced to a First Nations tradition of Smudging. It came at a time when I was experiencing a lot of stress. After cleansing myself with sage, I felt more at peace. I walked away remembering the teachings of the medicine wheel, which makes me seek and live my life with balance."

Being Filipino and Canadian

I am a member of the Calgary Filipino community. My family moved to Calgary 14 years ago and it has been home for us ever since. I have found my experiences of living in Calgary have been quite different than those of my parents. As my parents both have accents I find that they are treated quite differently. For example in public settings people struggle to understand them or have less patience with them in restaurants. Also, my mother cooks traditional food at home and often takes leftovers to work. Her colleagues will comment and tell her to take away her stinky food. My parents, cousins and aunts have all experienced racial discrimination but struggle to recognize it as discrimination, often brushing it off as people being rude. Even if they did recognize it they wouldn't know how to take action against the situation.

My experience of living in Calgary has taught me that it is tough to balance being both Filipino and Canadian. People make assumptions about me because I look a certain way, they are quick to judge and categorize me. Although I belong to both cultures I don't really feel like I fully identify with either culture, even though my friends and family expect me to choose one. They want me either to be fully Filipino and be loyal to my culture or be fully Canadian and be loyal to my upbringing. I struggle to find acceptance among the Filipino community as I have darker skin. They call me a "bush person" to embarrass me and in the past, those with a lighter skin tone have refused to come to my defence. I also don't speak Tagalog, a Filipino dialect, so people call me a snob for being raised in Canada. I only speak English. People think that I am lazy and that I have no interest in learning my native language. This, however, is not the case. Learning Tagalog was never a priority in my family. The truth is that my parents were worried it would confuse me when I was learning to speak. I feel embarrassed by Filipino acquaintances' comments and their assumptions. On the other hand my Canadian friends make assumptions about me because I am Filipino. They often generalize my ethnicity as "Asian." People are afraid to approach me at clubs as they don't know how to interact with "Asians." It is common for people either to completely ignore me or to focus on me because they feel that interacting with me will be an exotic experience. In the dating world some people feel that they are taking a risk in dating me because I am Asian while others treat me as a novelty, an experience to try.

I enjoyed taking part in the E-CARD project because I saw the power that sharing stories and experiences had among the E-CARD participants. It proved to me that racial discrimination continues to exist and continues to be a problem in communities across Calgary. This was a real eye opener for me. Hearing their stories has strengthened my empathy for those who experience racial discrimination. The part of the project which stands out for me the most was learning about the importance of reporting incidents even when they are just that, incidents. Often times we don't report issues until they are crimes or have escalated into a larger event. If we report small incidents to the police and local authorities then they can be proactive in allocating additional resources to those areas of need and help reduce many of these incidents from becoming crimes.

- Member of the Calgary Filipino Community

Tips to Success:

- To anyone experiencing racial discrimination I say to you don't let anyone treat you unfairly. Reach out to your communities, families and friends for support
- Don't be afraid to talk about it. Often in our ethno-cultural communities people keep quiet on this topic - it is important to share in order to heal
- Fight against injustices when you see them occur
- Stand up for yourself - and stand up for those around you
- Learn about relevant resources in the community (Alberta Human Rights Commission, Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre, Alberta Hate Crime Committee, Alberta Culture and Community Spirit, Calgary Centre for Culture, Equity and Diversity, Calgary Jewish Community Council, Calgary Police Service Diversity Unit, Native Counselling Services of Alberta, Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth)

Viewing Diversity as a Strength

I am part of the Calgary East-Indian Community. When I first arrived in Canada 28 years ago trying to find cultural food, or even simply vegetarian food, was a struggle. I wore traditional henna on my hands but people on the streets would pull their children away from me out of fear that my hands were diseased. I wore traditional bangles on my arms but people judged me and called me a gypsy. Now Canada is recognized as a multicultural, diverse and culturally rich place to live; cultural food is abundant and a culture of understanding and cultural sharing has begun to grow. These changes have shown me that people are becoming more open to learning and understanding new things, new customs and new cultures. Although we are making progress as a city and as a country there is still a great deal of work to do.

It surprises me to hear that some people do not believe that racism and racial discrimination exist in Canada. It does exist whether we want to believe it or not. It exists in our workplaces, on our public transportation systems, in our neighborhood associations, in our religious centres and even in our own ethno-cultural communities. At some point we have been taught to hate or distrust individuals who are different than us. In order to re-educate ourselves we must first challenge our own prejudices about others and secondly strive to overcome these assumptions and prejudices.

I work for a large retail chain in Calgary. I feel grateful to work for a company striving to be more inclusive, encouraging staff to take part in diversity, tolerance and cultural sensitivity training. However, subtle aspects of racial discrimination can still be seen. If a Caucasian customer enters the store they are free to wander around the store at their own convenience without any trouble or additional eyes watching them. However, if an individual of colour, an East Indian, African or especially a First Nations enters the store, staff are instructed to follow them through the store and ensure they are not shoplifting. I hope that being an individual of colour in my work place will eventually change people's prejudice against other cultures and prove that not everyone of colour is untrustworthy. There are bad apples in all cultures but for the most part, people are good.

I have also done years of volunteer work in my neighbourhood in Calgary. For many years I served on my local community association committee but I was surprised to see a similar pattern of racial discrimination in this environment. I began to find that the people of colour on this committee were treated differently from the white individuals who were in superior roles. My work for example was never given the respect other white members received and eventually my work for the committee was completely ignored in publications and newsletters. Even when I advanced into a senior role on the committee my opinions were often disregarded or I was not consulted before a decision was made. I was shocked to find that in such a culturally diverse and rich environment as Calgary, my neighbourhood had yet to embrace diversity as a strength and instead treated me as a second class citizen. I tried to reach out for assistance by writing to the board and even to our local alderman at the time but never received a response. I eventually left the committee but the hurt feelings and frustration I felt from this learning experience are still with me.

It is my hope for Calgary that as we continue to grow as a multicultural society that our communities, neighborhoods, attitudes and policies will also adjust to include new cultures and perspectives. Once we begin to view our diversity as a strength and an asset we can advance as a city and as a country. This starts by seeing value in one another and strength in our differences. Eliminating racism and racial discrimination is possible, and it begins with each of us challenging our own prejudices. I joined the E-CARD project because I wanted to begin the process of re-educating myself about the way I view and understand different cultures. Through this two year learning experience I have listened to stories of racial discrimination experienced by individuals from other cultures, I worked with multicultural groups and I challenged my own prejudices and views. I feel that I now have a more inclusive perspective of what diversity and multiculturalism looks like. Now I see value in my own smile because I see value in the smiles of others.

- Member of the Calgary East- Indian Community



When two people meet in Nature The Healing begins.
 In This Scene one person is Sad lonely and another
 person walks towards him to give hand to listen to be
 with him. 07.12.12

“When two people meet in nature the healing begins. In this scene, one person is sad lonely and another person walks towards him to give hand to listen and be with him.”

Tools to Success:

Educate Yourself:

- Learn about your rights as a Canadian, an Albertan and as a Calgarian
- Challenge yourself, your friends, your community, your neighbourhood associations and your workplace to take a cultural sensitivity or competency training course
- Learn about what anti-racism resources are available in your community and city
- Educate your children to be patient, understanding and tolerant of other cultures

Get involved:

- Volunteer in your community
- Join an anti-racism project or initiative in Calgary - or start one in your community



MY LITTLE HOUSE

"My Little House."

Tips for Success:

- You must file a complaint with the Alberta Human Rights Commission within one year of the incident
- You should get a response in thirty days
- An average case takes three months to a year to settle
- Don't be intimidated by the long form. If language is a barrier for you, find someone from your community who can help you fill it out. Also the officers at the Commission are very helpful. They want you to be successful and they made the form easy to understand and walked me through each step
- Share information about our human rights and protective laws with seniors
- Don't be afraid to speak the truth

If your case is accepted by AHRC, the respondent might have to:

- apologize to you
- change a workplace rule
- learn more about human rights
- pay your lost wages

The Power of Volunteering

I am one of the volunteer members of the Calgary Chinese Elderly Citizens' Association (CCECA). After my husband passed away in early 2011, my life changed dramatically. He told me to do what makes me happy and for me that has always been volunteering. My motto is if you have a good attitude and good intentions, then you can accomplish anything. For the past two years I have been lucky enough to become a full time volunteer, sharing my time between ten different organizations and initiatives in Calgary. I speak both English and Cantonese fluently so I quickly realized there were many ways for me to be of service in my community. When I learned about the E-CARD project through the CCECA, I knew this would be a way for me to learn how to help my Chinese community members learn about their rights and assist them when they faced incidents of racial discrimination. Many elderly Chinese community members feel that they are being racially discriminated against, especially with regard to housing. However, many are afraid or feel unable to speak out because of language barriers. Many do not know their rights nor is this a topic easily discussed openly in the Chinese community.

It was in the E-CARD project that I learned about the Alberta Human Rights Commission (AHRC) and about my rights as an Albertan. I learned that there are many areas in which the government protects you from being discriminated against by individuals, organizations and institutions. I also learned that if you face discrimination in any of these areas you can file a complaint with the Commission. I took part in an E-CARD workshop to learn about how to fill out the AHRC complaint form. Shortly after taking this workshop an individual in the Chinese community needed help filing a complaint. I was volunteering with a Chinese elder organization at the time and they knew I had taken part in this workshop. I was asked to assist this individual in rewriting his complaint form and in translating for him during the case. The individual was being racially discriminated against at work by colleagues and when an incident escalated the individual feared for his safety and instead of following the company's protocol he called 911. The individual was later dismissed from his workplace for breaking company policy.

From my training I knew that he would need as many details as possible to have a strong case: dates, times and places of incidents, names of perpetrators, dialogue with the perpetrators, witnesses, names of managers, etc. We also kept a copy of the individual's employment records, any relevant work documents, emails and contracts. The process was very easy, I met with the individual to gather all of the information and later we met together with an officer at the Alberta Human Rights Commission. We completed the complaint form, filed the case under grounds of racial discrimination and six months later we had won the case! I was happy that I was able to be of service to a member of my community.

I do this type of work because I want to share the truth. Many people are afraid to take action when they face racial discrimination because they feel they have something to lose. Not me, I have no fear telling the truth because I am a volunteer, there is nothing anyone can take away from me. I am eager to see things change in my community. That is why I continue to volunteer. Even talking about racial discrimination in my community is a negative thing, but this experience of helping someone take action against racial discrimination has shown me that positive outcomes are possible. I know now that I am making a difference.

- Member of the Calgary Chinese Community

Taking Action Against Injustice

I am a member of the Calgary Chinese Community. Just over a year ago I joined the Ethno-cultural Community Action on Racial Discrimination (E-CARD) Project. I had already heard about the Alberta Human Rights Commission but it was through this project that I learned about my human rights in detail and I learned about the process of filing a complaint with the Commission.

I have struggled with being treated equally and fairly at work. I felt that I was treated differently because I am a member of an ethnic minority community. In 2011 I was injured at work. I was forced to return to my position before I had fully recovered from my injury and soon after they laid me off. I felt that I had been treated unfairly and was discriminated against. I believed that my employer had used dirty tricks to get rid of me. I contacted the Alberta Employment Standard who informed me that this was not their area of work; they suggested I contact the Alberta Human Rights Commission as they are responsible for human rights and labour laws. The secretary at the Alberta Human Rights Commission took down the details of my situation over the phone and informed me that the information I shared with her would be kept confidential. The very next day an intake officer from the Commission contacted me and suggested I file a complaint. He sent me a complaint form which I completed right away. I decided to file the complaint because I believe in justice and I knew the way I was treated was wrong. I didn't want anyone else to have to experience what I went through so I filed the complaint form as a way to set things right. Two weeks later I received word that my complaint had been rejected. Winning a case on the grounds of discrimination by race/colour is difficult because it is very hard to prove and I did not have enough evidence. The officer suggested that we try again, this time on the grounds of discrimination related to physical disability as it was my work related injury which my employer used as an excuse to get rid of me.

With the help of the Commission I adjusted my complaint form and within a few weeks received a letter indicating that my case had been accepted! The Commission informed me that the next step would be for them to contact the respondent, my previous employer. About six weeks later we heard from the respondent's lawyers. From here negotiations went back and forth approximately three times. I did not care about receiving a financial settlement; I wanted an apology on the principle that I had been treated unfairly. In the end I received a financial settlement but my previous employers still refused to admit any wrongdoing. Although I never received an apology in my mind the fact that they gave me a financial settlement is an admission of guilt and wrongdoing. I am glad that I filed a complaint against my previous employers as I believe they will now think twice before they treat people unfairly again. I hope that my story will help to inspire others to also stand up against injustice!

- Member of the Calgary Chinese Community

Tips for Success:

- You must file a complaint within one year of the incident
- Don't be afraid to take action; the complaint process and the staff at the Alberta Human Rights Commission are there to help you and your information is kept confidential
- Keep track of any emails, correspondence, paperwork, dates and times of incidents, witnesses, witness statements, and other evidence- these will help you to build a strong case
- You do NOT need to hire a lawyer- the Commission will represent you in the case
- Take the initiative to learn about your rights
- The Alberta Human Rights Act protects people from discrimination in Alberta based on the following grounds: race/color, ancestry/place of origin, religious beliefs, gender, age, physical disability, marital status, family status, source of income and sexual orientation
- The Alberta Human Rights Act protects Albertans from discrimination in the following areas: employment practices, employment applications or advertisements, tenancy, equal pay, goods/services/accommodations or facilities, statements/publications/notices/signs/symbols/emblems or other representations, and membership
- You can learn more about the complaint process and the Alberta Human Rights Commission at: www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca



At the playground, there is no difference of race,
religion just fun!

"At the playground, there is no difference of race, religion... just fun!"



Two tourists in the rain

"Two tourists in the rain"

Tips for Success:

- Don't be afraid to speak out
- New immigrants should learn about racism and how to identify it
- Once you are educated you will have to the courage to speak up
- Be a champion in your community- if you cannot be one yourself then help others become anti-racism champions in your community
- If you know your rights you can stand up for yourself and others

My First Job in Canada

Two years ago I moved from China to Calgary. For the most part I found that people treated me well and made me feel welcome here. However, I was surprised to have experienced prejudice against newcomers within my own ethno-cultural community. I was surprised to find that in such a multicultural, diverse and often transient city as Calgary there are some people who aren't more sensitive, understanding and experienced in dealing with people from different cultures and backgrounds.

I recently started working at my first Canadian job. Sometimes I feel that some people are culturally insensitive or discriminate against me without even realizing it. For example, I needed to get a police check in order to register for my employment contract. This process is coordinated through one staff member in my office. I inquired if there was a way to speed up the process. Rather than taking the time to respond to me considerately or explain the process to me she instead responded by saying that, "if we were in China this process would take six months to accomplish!" I was embarrassed that she had singled me out for being Chinese and also made my country seem backward. She herself had been to China twenty years ago as a tourist, but why did she think this trip had qualified her to make assumptions about how Chinese systems work? She didn't even take a moment to consider how this comment would make me feel. I felt singled out and embarrassed.

Talking about racism and racial discrimination in my community is difficult. Sometimes I talk to close friends about it but I have yet to experience talking about this issue as a community. I think this is because some people want to save face. Fear of being blamed for the incident is another reason for this lack of open discussion in the community. Another reason could be the fear of not knowing how to stand up for one's rights, or the fear of making a mistake because they don't know enough about Canadian culture and customs. Some people also blame themselves when incidents occur, thinking that it was a misunderstanding caused by their language barrier. Newcomers without strong English skills and knowledge of their human rights feel defenceless to respond to incidents of racial discrimination. They remain trapped in their own fear.

I am glad I joined the E-CARD project because it opened my eyes to experiences of individuals from different cultures and backgrounds. Since taking part in the E-CARD project I feel more aware of my own actions and the actions of those around me. I enjoyed working in multicultural groups and learning about different perspectives and cultures. Now that I know my human rights, I am braver about standing up against injustices. Education is a valuable tool, it can grow champions of change. The E-CARD project is doing exactly this, growing champions of change in our communities.

- Member of the Calgary Chinese Community

Canada is my New Country

My family and I moved to Calgary 13 years ago, and I feel we have integrated successfully. I am of Asian descent, and had not really experienced any overt discrimination until an unfortunate incident that happened sometime in 2010.

After our church service, my husband and I went to a nearby grocery store to buy a can of milk that I needed for the dish that I would be cooking for dinner. The plan was for my husband to quickly drop me off and he would come back to pick me up in front of the store. So, what he did was to immediately go to a vacant handicapped parking stall to let me off. As he was backing out, a white person started to shout at me, "Can you read the sign", and pointed at the sign, "handicap parking". I said, "Yes I know, but we will not be parking, my husband just dropped me off".

I proceeded into the store and the white person followed me and kept on saying, "Do you know how to read, you shouldn't be parking at the handicap spot". I said, "Yes, I know, and again I said we were not parking." Then he went ahead of me and inside the store, he shouted, "Go back to your country."

I was so astounded that I could not believe what I heard. Everybody was looking at me, and couldn't figure out what was happening. I went out of the store, shaking. It took me some time to return to that grocery store for fear that I would encounter that white person again, and for fear that the store sales associates would recognize me.

While participating in E-CARD's organized Forum Theatre, I was able to reflect in detail on the hurtful events in my life that seemed to be discriminatory in nature. The session provided me with a venue to share with my group without any pretences. I learned to accept that it was okay to get hurt, to accept support from others and to be healed. By participating in the Forum Theatre, I was able to contribute in raising awareness to stop discrimination and inspire the community to take action.

- Member of the Calgary Filipino Community

Tools to Success:

- Become an advocate
- Learn when and how to react appropriately to a hostile aggressor
- Look for the right opportunity to report inappropriate conduct and behaviour of an employee to management as soon as possible
- Step-up when there is a discriminatory act happening around you
- Be a part of a campaign to end racism and discrimination



"Lola Poh Poh"

Lola is Grandma in Filipino and Poh Poh is Grandma in Cantonese.

Looked after Poh Poh who was bedridden for 2 weeks, I washed & changed her, what's amazing is how we couldn't understand each others languages but our body language of love & care was sufficient & profound that we knew we were there for each other.

01.2012

*"Lola is Grandma in Filipino and Poh Poh is Grandma in Cantonese.
Looked after Poh Poh who was bedridden for 2 weeks, I washed and changed her, what's
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Me and friend in 3 Hills.
A friend is someone who believes in you... even when you are
ceased to believe in yourself.... By Unihan



"Me and friend in 3 Hills. A friend is someone who believes in you... even when you are ceased to believe in yourself."

Breaking Down Prejudices

I am a member of the Calgary Nepalese Community. I moved to Canada eight years ago and have lived in Calgary for the past five years. When I first arrived in Canada I found that people made assumptions about me. What surprised me the most was what kinds of assumptions they made. Some individuals thought that I was a refugee, someone once asked me if I knew what ice cream was, assuming that I was coming from a poor underdeveloped country without such amenities. Another individual assumed that I was illiterate coming from a developing country and was shocked to find out that I had a Master's degree from Nepal. There were also many cultural clashes when I began working in Canada that made me feel uncomfortable and unwelcome in my new Canadian work environment. My colleagues blamed any mistake I made at work on the fact that I was from a foreign country. I remember being polite to a client who responded by assuming that I wanted something from them. I realized that the journey to understanding each other's culture will require time and patience on both sides.

I always find that Nepalese community struggles to talk about racial discrimination. Since joining the E-CARD project I have learned how to identify prejudice and discrimination. I realize now that this is an issue that my community experiences through the caste system and its hierarchy. When I was young I could recognize these separations but I could not understand them. My parents forbade me from playing with children from other castes. Even now as an adult I can recognize these separations but I do not necessarily agree with them. As our community modernizes and inter-caste marriages begin to become more common we are beginning to see things change, but we still have a long way to go before we can eliminate discrimination in our community.

I joined the E-CARD project because I wanted to help my community members learn about important services in Calgary and I was eager to learn more about other cultures. This project gave me an opportunity to work in a multicultural setting and meet people from other cultures that I had never had a chance to interact with before. This process of sharing helped me to break down my own fears of other cultures and challenge previous assumptions. I wanted to challenge myself to do something new even if it was scary and outside of my comfort zone. Being part of the E-CARD project has helped me to become more aware of my own actions. I now realize that I have been unknowingly discriminatory against others and have been prejudiced against those who are different from me. Now I strive to be aware of my actions and to treat people equally.

In my culture women do not often get a chance to speak up. I have always been an outspoken, fearless and inquisitive woman. In this regard I find that I am among few in my community. I believe that this is because I am educated. My education empowers me to stand up for myself and others. Now that I have taken part in the E-CARD project I am also educated in identifying racial discrimination and taking action against it. Now I feel confident in speaking up against it.

- Member of the Calgary Nepalese Community

Tips to Success:

- Seek to find strength in our diversity
- Challenge your assumptions about others - you might be surprised by what you learn in the process
- Don't be afraid to speak up for yourself - especially newcomers - you will need to learn to speak up in the Canadian culture

Knowledge is Power

I am a member of the Calgary Bor community, a tribe from South Sudan. I have lived in Calgary for nine years now. It is sad to say but people are prejudiced and make pre-judgments about me because I am a black man. I no longer feel comfortable going into a department store to browse. Over the years I have noticed that the staff follow me and suspect me of stealing. This makes me uncomfortable. I see that a lot of my community members face discrimination and barriers with regard to employment and interactions with the police. It is not uncommon to hear stories in my community of people being promised an increase in pay at work after three months but never receiving the additional wages. Often when these individuals inquire about the initial promise they are the first to be laid off when business is slow. They begin to be perceived as troublemakers simply for being assertive.

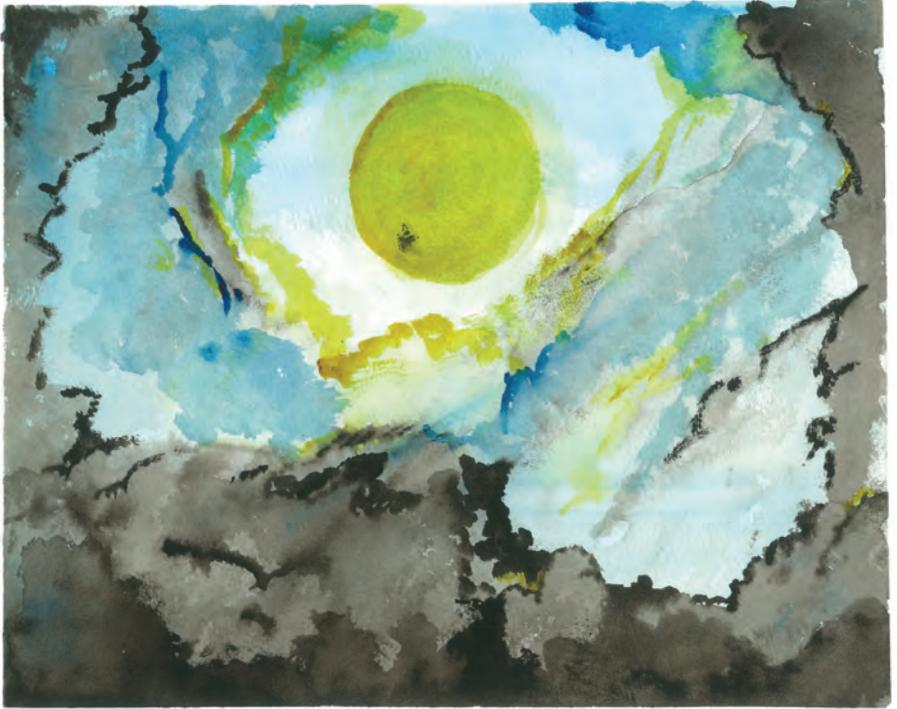
I have also had my fair share of experiences with racial discrimination. Just a few months ago I was walking in downtown Calgary in the evening. I ran into an acquaintance who happens to be a Caucasian woman. We spoke for a few moments and when we went our separate ways. A police vehicle approached me and pulled me over to speak with me. They demanded to see my identification and asked me questions about where I was going and what I was doing. They also demanded to know what my business was with the white woman I had just been speaking with and what my relationship to her was. I was shocked by this. I had done nothing wrong and had bothered no one. I was dressed professionally and did not see any reason to be targeted by the police. I believe that they targeted me because I am a man of colour. When I spoke with other members in my community they also shared stories of the police pulling them over and accusing them of being drug dealers, or being searched unnecessarily, or that the police were particularly physically aggressive with them.

Back home we are taught to be afraid of the police. I was hoping things would be different in Calgary but people in my community are also becoming afraid of the police here. Maybe we were safer back home. In Sudan they cannot shoot you unless you refuse to surrender a weapon. Here they can shoot you if the risk is justified. However, during the E-CARD project I had an opportunity to meet the Diversity Unit of the Calgary Police Services. This experience really showed me that there are many opportunities to work together with the police. They even encouraged us to get our youth involved in anti-bullying programs and volunteer programs run by the police. I believe that as a community we can overcome the barriers with the police, but it is a slow process. From what I have seen, fear of the police, fear of losing jobs and fear that our justice system takes too long contributes to low reporting rates of crime in my community.

I am a man who seeks equality and justice, not just for myself but also for my community members. This is why I joined the E-CARD project. I wanted to know my rights and help others to also know their rights. Knowledge is power. If we do not educate ourselves how do we expect our communities to take the initiative to educate themselves? We need to lead by example. Everything I learned in the E-CARD project I shared with my community members. I helped to connect them with anti-racism resources, showed them how to file a complaint with the Alberta Human Rights Commission, encouraged them to learn about their human rights and hopefully inspired a few people to stand up to injustice when it occurs.

- Member of the Calgary Bor (South Sudanese) Community

Ethno-Cultural Council of Calgary enlightening
our Dark ignorant & cloudy lives!



"Ethno-Cultural Council of Calgary enlightening our Dark ignorant & cloudy lives!"

Tips for Success:

- It is important to learn your rights so that you will always be ready to stand up for yourself
- It is important to volunteer in your community - this way you can learn about the culture in Calgary and Calgarians will have a chance to learn about your culture
- It is important to attend community gatherings and contribute your experiences and ideas to building a better city - we all have the right to do this in Canada
- Orientate your newcomers so that they know their rights, they understand how our systems work and they don't have to fear systems like the police here in Canada - they are here to help us

I Met my Vietnamese friend
at Marlborough in a bus
shelter. On sighting me, he
said, 'But you should go to
walking closet. They are giving out
clothes.' He urged me to come with him



"I met my Vietnamese friend at Marlborough in a bus shelter. On sighting me, he said, 'You should go to walking closet. They are giving out clothes.' He urged me to come with him."

Tips for Success:

- Whatever you learn, share with others! There is no point in keeping that information to yourself - it won't help anyone
- Don't be intimidated by the complaint process
- Go out there and learn about your rights and start helping others to understand theirs too
- Speak up: join a project, committee, or community discussion to find collective ways to address racial discrimination
- Building a case: whether you are filing a complaint with AHRC or WCB, keep track of details, letters, record, witnesses, and other matters
- Don't be afraid to reach out for help - there is no shame in seeking justice

Rising to Meet the Needs of our Community

I am a member of the Calgary Chinese Community. I work with a local not-for-profit organization called the Calgary Chinese Community Service Association (CCCSA) which works to connect members of the Chinese community with mainstream organizations, services, educational opportunities and resources. Two staff from our organization joined the E-CARD project to learn how to assist individuals facing incidents of racial discrimination.

As an organization we see a lot of situations where members of the Calgary Chinese community face discrimination in the workplace and with housing related issues. However, many individuals do not know their basic human rights, nor do they know how to pursue a complaint when an incident occurs. For the most part the Chinese community is not comfortable talking about racism or racial discrimination and culturally we do not like conflict. People will often go to great lengths to avoid conflict in order to save face. As a result, many individuals are often taken advantage of, suffer in silence or choose not to pursue action due to the often lengthy and complicated process and perceived risk of embarrassment.

Through the E-CARD project we learned how to file a complaint with the Alberta Human Rights Commission. We learned how ethno-cultural communities can work together with the Calgary Police to reduce bullying and hate crimes, and we also learned more about our human rights. After taking part in the project we decided it was important to share the information we learned not only with fellow staff, but also with the Calgary Chinese community. We began connecting with local media outlets to hold regular radio broadcasts in Mandarin and Cantonese about human rights and racial discrimination. Victims also shared their stories over the radio to encourage others to come forward, and we gave tips and advice on how to file a complaint with the Alberta Human Rights Commission. We also began taking more of an active role in facilitating discussions on behalf of victims; talking to their building managers, translating negotiations, informing victims of their rights, and in some cases assisting the victim in filing a complaint with the Alberta Human Rights Commission. Often we have filed complaints concerning discrimination related to age, mental disability or source of income. Winning a case on the grounds of racial discrimination is difficult to do as it is very hard to prove.

We see situations where employers or landlords try to trick an individual into pleading guilty by asking them to sign off on a complaint made against them and giving them a narrow time frame to do so. For individuals with a language barrier, legal forms and detailed policies are difficult to navigate and without additional help these individuals are powerless to respond. The result is often the individual's wrongful termination from their workplace or rental property. This situation is beginning to become more common, and community members are beginning to come to CCCSA for help. We try to help by explaining what their rights are, offering translation services and negotiating a longer time frame to ensure proper action is taken. In one case our intervention did result in a residential building manager being fired for racially discriminating against a Chinese tenant with a language barrier.

Over one hundred people a year come to our office to seek advice regarding their rights, issues of discrimination and need for legal guidance. In response to this demand we created two clinics, a worker's clinic and a legal clinic, that community members were able to attend in order to access information. Through these clinics we have been able to share information about the tenancy act to educate both landlords and tenants, share information about basic human rights and connect individuals with relevant resources. We also act as mediators, translators and negotiators for those who have a language barrier and work closely with the victim when a case goes to the Alberta Human Rights Commission or Workmen's Compensation Board.

Before the E-CARD project we saw cases of racial discrimination come through our doors. Since taking part in the E-CARD project, we now see answers and resources for addressing these issues. It is nice to know that we are meeting an important need in our community and that this work is of value to our community members.

- Member of the Calgary Chinese Community

Healing through the Arts

There are three of us on the E-CARD Arts Committee, two individuals from the Calgary Nepalese Community and one individual from the Calgary Chinese Community. We created this committee as a way for individuals to share their stories and experiences of racial discrimination in a non-threatening way. We also wanted to do something positive with the stories being shared and using the arts seemed like the best approach. Art is a connecting force which brings all communities together. It is often difficult for ethno-cultural members to express themselves verbally, especially if someone has a language barrier. Being able to communicate and share through the arts was a wonderful way to engage people in sharing their stories and expressing themselves without fear.

Over the past year we had an opportunity to work together to plan art activities aiming to engage communities across Calgary in discussions around racial discrimination. In March 2012 the E-CARD project organized a community forum on the theme of Taking Action as a Community. We arranged for a picture to be signed by the participants of the forum as an act against racial discrimination. Later we framed the picture and signatures. We also organized a photo display on the theme of diversity at the forum. We were surprised by the enthusiastic response by communities and were pleased to receive 22 photos from 12 different ethno-cultural communities across Calgary for the photo display.

In July 2012 we also organized a painting workshop on the theme of Healing Through the Arts. Fifteen individuals from seven different ethno-cultural groups attended the workshop. Participants painted real life experiences of a situation where they had found unity and peace between themselves and an individual from another culture. Everyone had an opportunity to share their stories and talk about their experiences which had led them to the moment captured in the paintings. Many of those paintings are included in this publication.

Taking part in these activities has helped us grow as individuals, committee members and as community leaders. We had an opportunity to get involved in something creative and artistic, contribute to our community, share our own culture and stories of discrimination and learn from the stories of other participants. This was a very personal journey for each of us. Interacting with others in a non-judgemental way was an important aspect of the process. Connecting in a comfortable environment with individuals from other cultures helped us to learn more about ourselves and about other cultures and communities.

- Members of the Calgary Nepalese Community & Calgary Chinese Community



My first friend in Canada

"My first friend in Canada"

"Since my community is from a third world country, people may already have a generalized feeling about our work, education, health and other practices."

- Member of the Calgary Nepalese Community

*"I am aware of my rights. I defend my right to be treated equally if I see discrimination
- Member of the Calgary East Indian Community)."*



"My home in town"

Peopel in Back Home in The Party -



"People back home in the Party"

"Racial Discrimination is a serious issue which affects my career. When the economy takes a downturn, very often I am the first one to be laid off even though there is no reason for it - I don't understand."

- Member of the Calgary Chinese Community



MEET FRIENDS WITH GOOD FOODS.

以吃会友

2012-07-12

“Meet friends with good foods”

“So many people who have recently immigrated to Canada have been mistreated in places like schools and work environments. In workplaces employees are treated unfairly, paid lower wages and made to work longer hours, simply because their employers take advantage of the fact that they do not speak English very well or they feel intimidated.”

- Member of the Calgary Japanese Community