

Celebrating Canada's Diversity



Q&A WITH CANADIAN PROFESSIONAL ICE HOCKEY PLAYER

Sarah Nurse

How has the culture of hockey developed over time?

It has definitely changed over my career. When I started, it was 100 per cent a male-dominated sport, like a white, male-dominated sport. So, growing up, I was changing in the closets and the bathrooms. When I played with the boys, there were only a few girls' organizations around. So now, with a huge surge in women's hockey and it becoming such a popular side of the sport, that's been awesome. I love seeing that. Canada is a multicultural society, so hockey is our national sport, and the hockey world needs to reflect that. Growing up, my family was the only Black family around. So, I always knew where my dad was in an arena because he was the only Black man. And now I definitely see that changing with different families from different places all over the world, playing hockey, getting introduced to youth who have immigrated to the country and want to be a part of what we do here and play hockey. So, I see a shift in hockey culture. I want to see more of that so that everybody feels welcome into our sport and enjoys hockey.

Read the full interview with Sarah Nurse at innovatingcanada.ca



Read the full interview with Susur Lee at innovatingcanada.ca

Q&A WITH CANADIAN CELEBRITY CHEF

Susur Lee

What benefits do diversity and inclusion bring to the culinary industry?

Diversity and inclusion give you a broader reach in bringing people together. Being inclusive is such a strength, allowing you to share experiences and grow a community. Food is such an excellent means of communication and connection.



Q&A WITH SUPERFAN

Nav Bhatia

How important is multiculturalism in Canada to you?

It is what separates Canada from the rest of the world. Nowhere is it as multicultural as it is here in Canada. Our multiculturalism is our biggest strength. It is the strongest reason for my family to stay here in Canada. The people of this country are beautiful.

Q&A with Nav Bhatia continued on page 2

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Canada's Diversity at
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Ascend Canada Fosters a Community for Pan-Asian Leadership in Business



Alexander Peh
President & Chair
of the Board,
Ascend Canada

Ascend Canada inspires pan-Asians to achieve their full potential as business leaders through a variety of programs and initiatives.

Sabrina Seecharan

Ascend Canada envisions a workforce where pan-Asians can achieve their full potential. As a volunteer-led organization, their dedicated and tenacious team poured a strong foundation over the past ten years helping to drive more visibility and leadership of pan-Asians in corporate Canada.

“We recognize how far we have come in diversity and inclusion across corporate Canada, and our desire is to create an environment where pan-Asian’s have truly equal opportunities,” says Alexander Peh, President of the nonprofit, which has chapters in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal.

With more than 30 corporate sponsors and strategic partners, Ascend Canada aims to educate and foster community through programs and events as a way to cultivate leadership and professional growth for its 8,000 members.

Providing the space for networking, talent development, and learning

Pan-Asians currently face two recurring barriers: the perception of being less vocal and less assertive compared to others in their workplaces and the lack of pan-Asian role models for mentorship. Through the Ascend Café, powered by Ten Thousand Coffees, they dismantle these barriers by making it easy for members to meet based on their unique career goals and interests. Regular workshops and topical panel discussions help members develop soft skills, explore career opportunities, and grow connections into an impactful and diverse knowledge network. The annual Ascend Leadership Awards celebrate achievements in the pan-Asian community.

Ascend’s leadership in diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy

The Chief Inclusion Officers (CIO) Forum is one of the spaces Ascend is proud to be a thought leader. This quarterly forum involves various corporations that gather to share diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) insights and best practices. The CIO Forum has supported improved DEI strategies and thought pieces that discuss topics such as emotional tax, covering and empathy in the workplace.

Ascend is dedicated to advancing the success and visibility of pan-Asians across corporate Canada through networking and career development experiences. ✨

Visit ascendleadership.ca to learn more about Ascend Canada programs and initiatives.

This article was sponsored by **Ascend Canada**.



City of Coquitlam Champions Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

EDI is an evolving journey, and the work takes time, commitment and intentional action in order to foster a sense of belonging in the community.

Sabrina Seecharan

EDI informs decision-making across all service areas

At the City of Coquitlam, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) isn’t just a buzz word – it’s a top priority for City Council and all staff throughout the organization. With the evolving understanding taking place in Canada and around the world Coquitlam is proving that municipalities, regardless of their size, can make a commitment to EDI for the betterment of residents who call the community home, as well as staff.

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At the City of Coquitlam, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) isn’t just a buzz word — it’s a top priority for City Council and all staff throughout the organization.

An urban and cultural centre within Metro Vancouver, Coquitlam is one of the fastest-growing municipalities in B.C. When considering that approximately 44 per cent of Coquitlam’s population are newcomers and the projected growth of the City’s diverse and vibrant population, the need for EDI as a business priority becomes even clearer.

To ensure staff can support this need, Coquitlam City Council established EDI as a key theme, and top priority, in the City’s Business Plan. This empowers the whole organization to champion EDI in their day-to-day work and ensure that EDI informs the City’s decision-making across all lines of business and service areas.

A strategic approach to EDI

The first significant milestone in Coquitlam’s EDI journey involved creating a business area focused on identifying and supporting EDI

initiatives, and hiring Manisha Dutta as Coquitlam’s first Manager EDI.

With the support of Council and senior leadership, Dutta is working to set meaningful and measurable objectives to ensure the entire organization is working towards their EDI goals.

These objectives are guided by the Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Benchmarks (GDEIB) from the Centre for Global Inclusion and through a partnership with the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, as well as the important local reality and lived experiences that shape the unique Coquitlam context.

“Regardless of city size, EDI initiatives require commitment and intentional action to produce better living outcomes for those who call Coquitlam home,” said Dutta. “I take great pride in trying to ensure our residents’ needs and realities are applied to and reflected in everything we do to impact their day-to-day lives.”

This includes projects such as the City’s Community Engagement Framework, which guides how the community influences the City’s decision-making process, as well as programs like the Financial Assistance for Recreation (FAR) program, which provides passes and credits to access recreational facilities for residents who can’t afford them.

EDI supports a changing workforce

With workforce demographics changing, and new generations bringing their values and expectations to their roles, the commitment to EDI naturally overlaps the City’s Human Resources policies and priorities as they work to support almost 1,900 employees across the city.

“In HR, EDI initiatives are important to ensure current and future employees are part of a team that is inclusive, safe and values diverse skill sets,” said Del Negro. “The labour market is changing and it’s important that we adapt so that employees are able to work for an organization that aligns with their values.” This is reflected in the City’s ongoing



Q & A WITH SUPERFAN

Nav Bhatia

How has being recognized as the Raptors Superfan impacted your life?

I would never have imagined this “Superfan” thing would be as big as it has become. All across the world, I’m recognized and asked for a picture and autograph. The scale of what the Superfan has become has given me the ability to reach out, help many more people, and inspire our youth.

As an immigrant, what was one major hurdle you had to overcome while adjusting to the Canadian lifestyle?

Like most immigrants, there are many hurdles you have to overcome. I don’t think I can just pick one — from understanding the language better, dealing with huge financial stress and limitations, experiencing racial intolerance, and feeling isolated from family back home. There’s so much we deal with, but nothing outweighs being in a beautiful country and living in peace.

How important is it for you to support newcomers in Canada?

Very important. I mean, I was given a chance, and look where it has taken me. You never know what story has been written for who, so it’s my responsibility to give to and support newcomers as a thank you to those who gave to me when I first arrived.

Is there any advice you would like to give those of diverse backgrounds?

Our differences are our superpowers. What makes you unique is your gift. Embrace it. Educate people. By doing so, we can create a very harmonious society. ✨



commitment to enhance its recruitment and retention process with an EDI lens. Their success resulted in Coquitlam being named one of British Columbia’s Top Employers for the sixth year in a row in 2022.

Other major milestones for the city

The city has also delivered on a number of other key initiatives to meet its commitment to EDI.

For example, the City has launched a permanent Hybrid Work Policy that provides flexibility to staff who aren’t operationally required to be on-site daily and supports a healthy work-life balance.

The City also continuously seeks to offer flexible benefits and services for all its employees. This mindset also applies to its City Council where elected officials have access to maternity and parental leave, as well as compassionate care and caregiver leave. Coquitlam was the first municipality in B.C. to extend these benefits to elected officials in order to help remove barriers to participating in the local office.

Coquitlam is committed to transformation

EDI is an evolving journey, and the work takes time, commitment and intentional action in order to foster a sense of belonging in the community. However, it is a top priority for the City of Coquitlam’s Council and entire organization and will remain a key focus as they continue to evolve in service to their community. ✨

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Visit coquitlam.ca/careers to learn more about Coquitlam’s commitment to building a welcoming and inclusive community and workplace.

This article was sponsored by **The City of Coquitlam**.

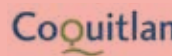




PHOTO CREDIT: GEOFFREY RODRIGUEZ

What Makes Yellowknife the Ultimate Place to Live, Work, and Play

Many Canadians are reflecting on their relationship with their work and personal life. If you're seeking true work-life balance in a welcoming community, then you'll want to consider going North because Yellowknife has it all.

Ken Donohue

Yellowknife, the capital of the Northwest Territories, has a small-town feel with urban amenities. Abundant job opportunities and unique activities to pursue — there aren't many places you can enjoy the midnight sun in summer, the Northern Lights, and strap on skis for a lunch-hour ski in winter.

Quality of life northern style

Yellowknife has long attracted adventure seekers. Sheila Bassi-Kellett, City Manager for the City of Yellowknife, is one of those people. Originally from Toronto, Bassi-Kellett has lived in the city for 33 years. "There's so much to love about Yellowknife," she says. "The close-knit community, access to pristine wilderness, Indigenous culture and heritage woven into the community, great career opportunities, wonderful amenities, and people who really know how to enjoy life."

Forget that long commute stuck in traffic or crammed on a bus or train. In Yellowknife,

you fancy Japanese, Ethiopian, Indian, Vietnamese, traditional Indigenous cuisine, or one of the local pubs? How about a cocktail with friends after work on the shore of Great Slave Lake? It's all here waiting.

Yellowknife is surrounded by breathtaking beauty of the forests, lakes, and the changing light in the sky. Accessible trails throughout the city make getting around easy while being close to nature. And with non-stop flights to Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, and Ottawa and convenient connections from other cities, Yellowknife is closer than you think.

A global community in Canada's North

Looking for a unique post-secondary experience? Yellowknife has that, too. Education for in-demand careers, such as nursing, environment and natural resource management, business administration, and more, is available here. In addition, Aurora College is in the process of transitioning to a polytechnic university, attracting students and faculty from across the North, the rest of Canada, and the world — those who want to study in the Northwest Territories and develop academic relationships with Indigenous partners, governments, industry, and researchers.

What might surprise people is how cosmopolitan and culturally diverse Yellowknife is. "I look forward to celebrating my Indian heritage during Diwali, as well as my Irish heritage at St Patrick's Day festivities, all while honouring the Indigenous history of this area," says Bassi-Kellett. "There are so many great celebrations throughout the

year. Yellowknife is a very social place."

Mario Rogers knows first-hand how welcoming Yellowknife is. He moved to the city five years ago from Madagascar and enjoys the city's small-town vibe and endless opportunities. He's the President of the Multicultural Community of Yellowknife, a non-profit organization that promotes multiculturalism in the city and across the Northwest Territories through art, music, dance, and storytelling. "We have strong participation from the community, which allows us to host successful events," he says. And his advice for those considering a move to the city: "Don't be afraid of the winter weather; the community will make you feel warmer than anywhere else in the world."

The City of Yellowknife acknowledges that we're located in Chief Drygeese territory. From time immemorial, it has been the traditional land of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation. We respect the histories, languages, and cultures of all other Indigenous Peoples, including the North Slave Métis and all First Nations, Métis, and Inuit whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community. 🍁



Sheila Bassi-Kellett
City Manager,
City of Yellowknife



Mario Rogers
President,
Multicultural
Community of
Yellowknife



PHOTO CREDIT: GEOFFREY RODRIGUEZ



Don't be afraid of the winter weather; the community will make you feel warmer than anywhere else in the world.

you can walk or cycle to work. Catch up with neighbours and friends on the way. Meet for lunch at one of the many ethnic eateries. Do



PHOTO CREDIT: GEOFFREY RODRIGUEZ



Yellowknife is a fabulous place to call home! Visit yellowknife.ca to learn more.



This article was sponsored by **The City of Yellowknife**



PHOTO CREDIT: MY BACK YARD TOURS/BILL BRADENPHOTO



Dr. Saina Beitari
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SCWIST Champions Diversity in STEM Throughout Canada

Since 1981, SCWIST has advocated for equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in STEM education, policy, business and Canadian society.

Ashley van der Pouw Kraan

Diversity leads to innovation

The Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology (SCWIST) leads several programs designed to advance EDI, including Make DIVERSITY Possible to advance gender diversity in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) workplaces, and the STEM Diversity Champions Toolkit to create positive change and reach equitable outcomes for all people in STEM.

“A diverse team needs to be a crucial part of any STEM project,” said Dr. Saina Beitari, SCWIST’s Director of Finance. “Studies show that groups of people with different backgrounds, who have different lived experiences and perspectives, develop more innovative solutions to problems and increase the likelihood of success in STEM.”

Advancing diversity and inclusion across Canada

Jasmine Parmar, SCWIST’s Director of Marketing, also keeps EDI in mind when developing programs for the organization.

“We’re committed to making SCWIST inclusive and accessible to all,” she said. “We’re thinking about every aspect of EDI – from the graphics we use in our digital media to our event speakers to our collaboration partners — to ensure that everyone knows they are always welcome.”

The Wonder Women Networking Evening and Career Fair, two of SCWIST’s annual signature events, are widely recognized in the STEM community for creating opportunities and removing barriers. SCWIST has also recently launched STEM Streams, a new program for women from equity-deserving groups who want to build their pre-employment skills and career pathways.

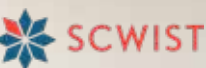
Along with engaging youth, removing barriers in education, and advancing women in leadership, SCWIST continues to move the dial forward for women in STEM. ✨



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Learn more about
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**The Society for
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To learn more about
the City of Stratford’s
DE&I initiatives, visit
[stratford.ca/
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Reflecting the Diversity of Stratford with Reform from Within

The City of Stratford supports diversity, equity, and inclusion with a new division, reformed hiring practices, and new council members.

Sabrina Seecharan

In June 2022, the City of Stratford launched its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) division to improve how it serves the needs of its culturally evolving population.

As a new division, DE&I is laying the foundation for its mission by prioritizing its staff’s cultural education, audits of policies, procedures, and services, improving Indigenous reconciliation efforts, and accessibility. These efforts feed into the division’s strategic plan, which shapes the city’s organizational mission, vision, and values.

Improving the recruitment process at the city

The DE&I division immediately started revamping the city’s employment policies, practices, and programs. With the HR department, it successfully launched a new recruitment platform, which embeds voluntary DE&I questions in the application process. The new platform resulted in a higher number of diverse applicants, and the data collected allows for informed decision-making to continue to improve this process.

Diversifying perspective on city council

Dr. Gezahn Wordorfa furthers the city’s DE&I initiatives as the newest member of the city council. He’s the founder of the Multicultural Association of Perth-Huron, and through his experience, he advocates for newcomers’ needs and allows the city to plan for new services and improve existing ones.

“Diversity makes us more accepting of others and other points of view. It enriches our culture and makes us more accepting,” says Dr. Wordorfa.

The City of Stratford looks forward to the future and will continuously improve diversity outcomes for the community. ✨

New Services Give Newcomer Women the Boost They Need to Succeed

Achêv debuts dedicated services for newcomer women across the continuum of their lives, from first jobs and settlement to charting career paths.

Katherine Cappellacci



Tonie Chaltas
CEO,
Achêv

Navigating Canada’s social, economic, and cultural nuances can be challenging for newcomers. They may face language barriers, housing issues, and trouble finding employment. Yet, during this transitional period, it’s imperative they have access to resources that can help them build the lives they want.

One of the largest community-based non-profits doing this is Achêv. For over 30 years, they’ve provided refugees and immigrants with the necessary supports to reach their potential, which includes newcomer, language, employment, and youth services. Their successful programming is customizable, community-based, and very accessible. It is also funded by the Federal and Ontario Governments so it is free.

The future of Canada’s labour market is top of mind for the team at Achêv. The country’s shrinking workforce may struggle to keep up with the ever-increasing demand, which is complicated by economic slowdowns. Employers have also realized their teams must reflect the communities and customers they serve. To remain competitive and continue to meet 21st-century needs, businesses must diversify their talent pool.

Meeting labour demands

Achêv has introduced a dedicated pillar of

support for women— including newcomer women. As a demographic, they’re an untapped pool of extremely capable workers who can strengthen Canada’s future labour force.

Achêv’s goal is to address the unique barriers facing women. It takes newcomer and racialized women longer to find meaningful, full-time work than men. Also, they often earn less annual median income compared to non-racialized, Canadian-born women.

Achêv wants to change this. “Our dedicated Women’s pillar will allow us to provide more targeted support to the more than 50,000 women and girls who access our employment, language, and newcomer services each year,” says Tonie Chaltas, CEO of Achêv. “We’re tackling the unique barriers women face by empowering them, building community connections, and teaching essential job skills that promote economic security.”

Securing successful pathways

Participants have seen very positive results. New to the country, Venetia Paul Stephen enrolled in Achêv’s Dietary Aide in Senior Care program after realizing it specifically catered to women.

“I found what I was looking for — an organization that offered free training and could help me get employed,” Paul Stephen says. She was impressed by the staff and

service providers, who maintained constant communication throughout. “They gave us unconditional support and were so approachable.”

A trained accountant with an extensive resume, Tayo Badejo didn’t think she’d have trouble finding work when she immigrated to Canada — but the COVID-19 pandemic changed that. “I was craving something that would help me find my voice and become more confident,” explains Badejo.

Luckily, she discovered Achêv’s enhanced job programs, where she found a community of like-minded women. “Going into the program and hearing women say exactly the same thing gave me confidence,” adds Badejo. She improved her job interview skills and obtained updated certificates to pursue her passion in human resources management — a field she now works in.

Keeping Canada’s doors open to the world is advantageous to everyone, which is why organizations like Achêv are vital. “Broadening and extending women’s workforce participation, particularly for newcomer and racialized women, is critical to addressing our current and future labour shortages,” Chaltas explains. ✨



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about women’s
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