



40  **ASSIST** Community Services Centre
ANNIVERSARY 1977-2017

To Bridge People and Communities



PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE

October 13, 2017

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to everyone celebrating the 40th anniversary of ASSIST Community Services Centre.



Founded in 1977, ASSIST Community Services Centre provides a wide array of services and programs that help immigrants cope with the challenges of settling in their adopted country. This milestone is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the Centre's history, to celebrate its many achievements and to set goals for the future.

I would like to commend ASSIST Community Services Centre's staff and volunteers for helping newcomers build successful lives for themselves and their families. Your efforts strengthen our country's growth and diversity, and are deeply appreciated.

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I offer my best wishes for a memorable anniversary celebration and for every future success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Justin Trudeau'.

The Rt. Hon. Justin P. J. Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada



Premier of Alberta

Office of the Premier, 307 Legislature Building, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6 Canada



Message from Honourable Rachel Notley Premier of Alberta

On behalf of the Government of Alberta, congratulations to ASSIST Community Services Centre as you celebrate your 40th anniversary.

Alberta is the province it is today because people from all over the world have chosen to make this place their home. I am proud that in our strong communities, newcomers find both the comfort of their own culture and a sense of belonging here in Alberta.

I am grateful for the ASSIST Community Services Centre's work helping new Albertans find easy access to vital services and initiatives. The centre's work is a very real example of how Albertans are working to make our province better together. Your efforts help strengthen our communities as welcoming and inclusive places where people from every corner of the globe can thrive.

Best wishes as you celebrate four decades of accomplishments to enhance social support services in Alberta. I hope you are incredibly proud of both your 40-year history and your contributions to the greater Albertan community.

Congratulations as you mark this milestone. I wish you the very best in the years ahead.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R Notley', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Rachel Notley

October 13, 2017



Message from His Worship Mayor Don Iveson



On behalf of City Council and the people of Edmonton, Alberta's Capital City, I welcome everyone to the 40th anniversary celebration of ASSIST Community Services Centre.

Our city has been deeply enriched by people from many different ethnic backgrounds. Since 1977, ASSIST Community Services Centre's vision to help bridge people and communities has enhanced the lives of individuals and families across our city. Through quality programs and services, the Centre's commitment to providing ongoing support helps build stronger and healthier communities.

Thank you to ASSIST Community Services Centre for your kindness and generosity in helping immigrants, families, youth and seniors fully integrate and actively contribute to society. You have helped enhance Edmonton's reputation as a caring and compassionate city.

Best wishes on many more years of success!

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Don Iveson'.

Don Iveson
Mayor



中华人民共和国驻卡尔加里总领馆

THE CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA IN CALGARY

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贺 信

欣闻埃德蒙顿华人社区服务中心即将迎来成立 40 周年纪念日,我谨代表中国驻卡尔加里总领事馆并以我个人名义向服务中心全体成员表示热烈祝贺!

40 年来,埃城华人社区服务中心为华人新移民提供了全方位的周到细致的服务,鼓励他们融入主流社会,成为加拿大多元文化社会的一部分,是新移民和加拿大政府及主流社会之间联络的桥梁和纽带。中国总领馆对服务中心所做的大量卓有成效工作表示高度赞赏!

抚今追昔,我们更加怀念服务中心的创办人之一洪金福先生,他为整个埃城华人社区做出了巨大的贡献。

祝愿埃城华人社区服务中心越办越好,为华人新移民提供更好更全面的服 务,为加拿大多元文化做出更大贡献。

中华人民共和国驻卡尔加里总领事

二〇一七年九月二十五日

Kim Hung is the founder of ASSIST



Mr. Kim Hung

September 20, 1951 - December 17 1996

Mission Statement:

*To enhance the lives of newcomers families
through quality programs & services*

On June 13, 2006, he was inducted in the City of Edmonton Hall of Fame in recognition for his life's work in community services. The KIM HUNG school in Granville (west Edmonton) was named after him in 2016. The following is a brief biography of Kim Hung.

Mr. Kim Hung spent the prime of his life in Edmonton. Upon his arrival in the late 1960's as a University student from Hong Kong until his death in 1996, Mr. Hung dedicated himself selflessly to improving the quality of life for Edmonton's Chinese community.

While still a student at the University of Alberta, Mr. Hung founded the Chinese Library Society where students socialized and read news from home. After graduation, Mr. Hung, with the assistance of his like-minded friends, founded the Chinese Graduates Association of Alberta with the goal of helping foreign students facing issues.

During his short but productive life, Mr. Hung founded many voluntary agencies. Of note are The Chinese Community Services Centre (now ASSIST Community Services Centre), the Chinese Bilingual Program within the Edmonton Public School System, the Edmonton Chinatown Multi-Cultural Centre, the Edmonton Chinese Elders' Mansion II, the Chinese Benevolent Association Building and the Chinatown Gate as well as the Chinese Seniors Lodge.

Less known, but no less significant, is Mr. Hung's informal ambassadorial role in introducing the City of Edmonton to potential investors in China. Twinning with the City of Harbin in China as a sister city would not have been realized without the untiring effort of Mr. Hung. As such, our city is on the agenda of the Chinese Government.

Edmonton's Chinese community described Mr. Hung as a simple man with a caring heart and holds many fond memories of him.

HISTORY

Early Days 1977-1983

ASSIST Community Services Centre, formerly known as “Chinese Community Services Centre”, has come a long way since its beginnings in 1977. That year, the Chinese Graduates Association of Alberta (CGAA) funded and supported a one year project to determine and meet the needs of Chinese people in Edmonton entitled “Need of Social Services in the Chinese Community”.

The work to help Chinese newcomers carried on after the project ended despite the end of funding. The Centre continued to operate through the effort of volunteers and donations from local businesses. The lack of continuous funding resulted in hard times in the late 1970s but the work continued. The mass influx of Indo-Chinese refugees (Boat People) to Canada in the mid-1970s, following the end of the Vietnam War, brought more newcomers with settlement needs. In January 1980, the Centre received one-time funding of \$15,000 from the City of Edmonton to carry out basic settlement services, information and referrals, interpretation, and translation to Chinese immigrants and refugees. In 1981, the Centre also received funding from the federal government to expand its settlement services. In October 1983, the Centre moved from the CGAA's office at 9656 Jasper Avenue to 9540-102 Avenue, in the same building as the Edmonton Chinatown Multicultural Centre.

Throughout these early years, volunteers played a major role in the work of the Centre. Many members of the Chinese Graduates Association volunteered, along with others, to contribute their



talents and time to serve the needs of the Chinese Community. They are recognized on the Board of Directors Plaque (1977-1982) on the recognition wall. Some of them continued and became Board members for the Centre when it was incorporated in 1983.



Getting Formal 1983-1994

On January 12, 1983, the Centre registered as a non-profit organization, and became a registered charity on June 7, 1990. During this period, the Centre's most popular programs were the English as a Second Language (ESL) courses and the Citizenship class. The Centre's direct services included employment and housing referrals, translation and interpretation services, completion of documents, legal services and other referrals. The Centre also offered workshops on legal issues, family planning, nutrition, and insurance. In addition, other services such as an annual free TAX Clinic were organized with the help of volunteers. Our annual budgets ranged from \$30,000 to \$50,000 and we had two full-time staff. Our funding during this period, came from governments, Edmonton Catholic School Board, tuition fees, and donations from the public.

Growing (1995 to 2005)

In the mid 1990's, the Centre applied for and received funding from the federal government to offer English classes under the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC). As well, we received funding from both the provincial and federal governments to offer Integrated Services Program (ISP) to provide settlement services to new immigrants. Both are now the most important programs we offer. Among the users of our settlement services in the 1990s were investment immigrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan. By offering courses to new immigrants during the week, the LINC program also became an important addition to the language services we provided which previously had consisted only of weekend ESL courses.

In the later 1990s, we were introducing more programs and projects. For example, building on the success of our "Chinese Parenting" and "Roots and Wings" projects in the 1980s, the Family program developed new programs such as "Nobody's Perfect" and "Let's Grow Together" in 1997. In early 2000, the Centre also developed two new programs for children and youth: "Towards a New Generation" and "Smart Choices – Recognizing Problem Gambling". For seniors, the "Golden Senior Wellness Enhanced Program" became a favourite.

Our Volunteer Program was first initiated through a 2 year pilot project (2001-2002) under a partnership including ASSIST, City



of Edmonton-Community, Big Brothers & Big Sister Society, and Chinese Wellness Enhancement Committee. The partnerships goal was to secure funding for a Volunteer Development Program to serve their collective needs. The first Volunteer Fair held on Oct 4th 2003 at City Hall raised awareness of volunteer opportunities across the local Chinese community. There was overwhelming community response.

To reflect the increasing diversity of our clients and services, the Centre changed its name to ASSIST Community Services Centre on July 18, 2001. We also moved to 9649-105 A Avenue into a building we owned. In 2001, our annual budget grew to over \$520,000 and we offered 10 programs and projects, with 20 employees and even more volunteers serving our clients. While we continued to serve people from the Chinese community, including the immigrants and refugees from Indo China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and mainland China, we also piloted services and activities to other ethnic communities. In 2003, ASSIST offered our first multicultural program – The Multicultural Breast Health Education Project (MBH) for Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Arabic and South Asian women, which we then extended to include African, Filipino and Latino people. The MBH used the spoken language of each community to provide information, educate, and promote accessibility to support services, to disseminate breast health education and early detection methods among immigrant women.



Maturation (2005-2017)

ASSIST grew significantly throughout this period, particularly over the last 10 years. With funding from the three levels of government, our overall annual operating budget increased from about \$580,000 in 2005 to over \$3 million in 2017; from 20 staff in 2005 to 72 currently. We started formalizing our fundraising in 2007. With the help of over 50 volunteers, we launched our first Walk & Run fundraising event. Through these now annual events, we have raised more than \$20,000 each year.

Following the Alberta economic boom in 2006/2007, more immigrants moved here. The demand for settlement services increased significantly starting in 2008 and afterwards. We introduced a new family literacy program “Raising Children Through Songs, Stories, & Books” in 2009 with funding from Alberta Advanced Education. In 2008-2009, we provided more than 10,000 services to clients through our various program and activities. In 2009, to enhance our ability to offer services, we made improvements to our downtown building through funding from the federal and provincial governments, we enlarged the front counter reception area and built more offices and classrooms. By then, we had over 50 staff and over 200 volunteers working as a team to provide services and programs to diverse multicultural communities.

In 2012 ASSIST expanded and opened a second office in the south-west sector of the city; becoming the first immigrant serving agency to

serve newcomers living in Edmonton’s southwest communities. Opening our second location was a major milestone for ASSIST in terms of the growth of the organization, staff, funding and programs/services. Programs at south west office are fully funded by ‘Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada’. With increased FCSS funding from City of Edmonton, our TANG youth program also expanded to the Southwest office in 2016, providing programs and activities to immigrant youth and refugees living in those communities and enabling ASSIST to fulfill our objective of including a more diverse group of ethnic youth in this program.

ASSIST is becoming a multicultural and multilingual agency, and has developed a strong multicultural platform of staff, expertise and ethnic networks for helping newcomer families. Included in our team are over 400 volunteers who enable us to provide our services and programs to diverse communities. ASSIST also forms alliances with other community agencies across sectors to better meet community and public needs. Presently, we have 13 on-going programs and one project running in the two offices, settlement services and language learning (LINC) for newcomers, programming for children and youth, parenting, family literacy, adult English learning, weekly drop –in activities for seniors, prevention and education on problem gambling and on children’s safety. On average, we serve a few hundred clients every week through our two offices. In 2016-2017, we provided close to 20,000 services to immigrants, having come from over



100 countries around the world.
 As we look ahead to the next stage of our development, we are excited to be able to improve the look of our downtown building. We are very thankful for the pro-bono services from Jan Kroman and Peter Wong of RPK Architects Ltd which along with matching funds from the city will soon result in a much improved exterior. We look forward to our new look, one that will signal our renewed commitment to move ahead to better serve immigrants and refugees with multiple and complex needs.

Thank you to our Funders:

- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
- Alberta Labour
- Alberta Justice and Solicitor General
- Alberta Child & Community Services
- Alberta Health Services
- Alberta Advanced Education
- Alberta Culture & Tourism
- The City of Edmonton
- New Horizons for Seniors Program
- Canada Summer Jobs Program

**Thank you to all of our amazing
 Volunteers over the years!**

ASSIST President's message

A small group of Chinese newcomers opened the doors of what became ASSIST 40 years ago. They wanted to help settle other Chinese immigrants arriving in Edmonton. Their vision was to build bridges between newcomers and their new communities. Over the years, they and their successors, have done just that; helping settle many newcomers. Much has changed in Edmonton over the years since. For example, our population has roughly doubled to just over 900,000. We also are a much more diverse group of citizens than we were back then. ASSIST has always worked hard to keep up with these changes so could continue to respond to the emerging needs of an increasingly diverse group of newcomers.

I've been around for almost all of our journey as I joined the ASSIST board 2 years after it began. I remember the early days when we often needed to ask local businesses to help us pay our office rent. Over the years we've come a long way in our ability to help newcomers. From our modest beginnings in that small office on Jasper Ave, we've grown to an organisation with two locations, 70 dedicated and knowledgeable staff, all complimented by the many volunteers who serve on our board of directors and support our programs. Our mandate has broadened too, as we serve newcomers from many countries around the world; helping them by offering an increasingly wide range of services including language training, interpretation and translation, employment, parenting and youth and services for seniors.

We hear the positive stories of who and how we've helped and welcomed those we've served in the past return and volunteer at ASSIST and elsewhere once they are well-settled. Looking ahead, we will work to continue to strengthen our programs for youth and seniors. As well, we are taking steps to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings so we can offer a safe, comfortable and energy efficient environment for all and lower our utility costs.

In closing, I would like to thank all our dedicated staff and volunteers, board members, funders and the community agencies with whom we collaborate. Working together, we are helping many newcomers from many lands settle well and feel at more home here in this great city.

Games Choy
President

Happy Anniversary ASSIST, be vibrant and enthusiastic forever.

Mother Theresa had once said "Not all of us can do great things, but we can all do small things with great love". This describes well the founding of ASSIST in the late 70s. It began in 1977 as a volunteer run organization made up of Chinese University students to serve refugees from Vietnam, Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong, China and Malaysia.

Since then, ASSIST has been growing steadily and healthily. Not only do we able to keep the students' dreams alive, to carry on with their virtues and passions; nowadays ASSIST is a registered charity, a growing multicultural and multilingual agency, and has developed a strong multicultural platform of staff, expertise and ethnic networks for assisting immigrant families.

We are honored to work with the Board, staff and volunteers that have the dedication and integrity to achieve many positive outcomes through all the services and programs at ASSIST. 40 years is not a short journey. Indubitably none of this work could have happened without your ongoing support, so thank you for standing with us for the last 40 years! We hope that you'll continue to journey with us through the next 40 years and beyond. We are willing to embrace change, foreseeing and grasping every opportunity for learning and transitioning to better serve immigrants and make Edmonton a great place to live. ASSIST will continue to be the trusted and welcoming "Home Away from Home" for every newcomer to Edmonton in need of support and assistance.

Fion Lee
Executive Director

Current Board Members



Games Choy
President

Allan Kwan
Vice President

Backe Thai
Treasurer

Peter Wong
Secretary



Mary Fung
Public Relations

Wing Choy
Membership

William Lau
Volunteer

Nathan Ip
Human Resources



John Yee
Fundraising

Samuel Tam
Accreditation

Lan Chan-Marples
Consultant

Honorary Advisors

Hugh Mah	1999-2001
Collin Wong	1999-2017
Andreas Ng	2000-2017
Bill Ngan	2000-2001
Bing Ung	2001-2007
Wing Choy	2004-2005
Lan Chan Marples	2007-2013
Michael Phair	2007-2017
Terry Cavanagh	2007-2016
Margaret Osbaldeston	2008-2017

Board Members

Kim Hung	1982-1996
Elmer Eng	1982-1984
Allan Kwan	1982-1986, 1998-2017
Games Choy	1982-2017
Judy Leung	1984-1995
Yee Pak Eng	1984-1998
Hugh Mah	1984-2000
Tonu Mitra	1986-1990, 1998-2000
Simon Lam	1986-1993
Andrew Dawrant	1993-1995
Jerery Tsang	1993-1995
Yvonne Chiu	1995-1998
Kin Cheung	1996-1997
Pui Shan Patson	1996-1997
Micky Szeto	1996-1998
Mike Lam	1997-1998
Colin Wong	1997-1999
Vicky Leung	1998-2001
Kevin Napora	1998-2003
Andreas Ng	1999-2001
Tony Yu	1999-2001
Mary Fung	1999-2017
Bill Ngan	2000-2001
Steve Ramsankar	2000-2006
Ken Baney	2001-2002
Winston Indarsingh	2001-2002
Margaret Osbaldeston	2001-2008
Mei Hung	2001-2014
John Woo	2002-2010
Samuel Tam	2002-2017
Dave Chan	2003-2005
Allan Mah	2003-2017
John Clarke	2004-2005
Wing Choy	2005-2017
John Yee	2008-2017
Peter Wong	2010-2017
Backe Thai	2015-2017
Ivy Kwan	2015-2016
Kevin Drew	2015-2016
Nathan Ip	2017
William Lau	2017

Past Board Members





ASSIST Community Services Centre





ASSIST Unity Quilt
Artwork by ASSIST Staff 2016



ASSIST Community Services Centre

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