

They came to PEI for education

by Patricia Roy

Mira Lee and her husband came to the Island for the opportunities a Canadian education would provide their two children, who are 15 and 10. The family arrived from South Korea a couple of years ago. Mira and her husband have taken part in the **Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)** program in Summerside since October 2007.

The LINC program, now in its third year in Summerside, helps new immigrants to Canada improve their English language skills. LINC is part of the **Adult & Community Education** program at Holland College in Charlottetown and Summerside.

“My children are doing well in school,” says Mira. “But sometimes I find the teachers are not pushing the children hard enough to succeed later in life. In Korea, competition for education and jobs is very strong.” The parents are hopeful that their children will succeed and have a bright future here in Canada.

Before moving to Canada, Mira and her family did not speak English at all. “Learning a new language is difficult but everyone here is very nice,” says Mira. “The atmosphere at the LINC program in Summerside is great for learning.”

Currently, the program runs half days five days a week in Summerside. “It would be helpful to have more class time and more people to practice this new language with,” says Mira.

Learning to live in a rural setting

Mira says life on PEI is very different from living in the large city of Seoul. “I like Summerside, but many immigrants prefer larger cities that are more like what they are used to.”

Mira owned a small cosmetics manufacturing business and had 10 employees back in Korea. “I plan to get a job later on but I need to have a better understanding of the language first,” she says.



Maria Andrea Gutierrez, left, and Mira Lee are students at the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program in Summerside.

Maria Andrea Gutierrez came to Canada from Bogota, Colombia a little over a year ago to join her sister’s family, who were already living in Summerside. Maria also says that English was not spoken in her work environment or at home. “English is the key to a good life in this country,” says Maria.

“I recognize that the system here offers people the opportunity to have a more stable job, good health care and a pension. This kind of secure future is harder to obtain in Colombia.”

Maria, who worked for seven years as a biologist, hopes to be able to find work in her field on the Island. “Summerside is a good place to get started,” she adds. For now, she helps take care of her niece in the afternoons.

Maria is also an artist (oil painter), and has had some success finding a market for her work in Colombia and on PEI. “Since moving here, I have sold some of my work in the Dunes Gallery, the Vere Studio Gallery, and the Guild. My paintings will be available again this summer,” she says.

Q For more information about **Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)**, call **902-888-6495** or **1-800-446-5265 (press 3)**

12 E The LINC Program is funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.
Feb/Mar 09

Tired of seasonal work? How about getting your GED as a first step?

by Patricia Roy

“**M**y solution for ending a pattern of seasonal work is to return to school and finish my education,” says 18-year old **Amy MacMillan** of O’Leary. “I want to do this while I am young because now is the time to work towards earning a good wage in a job I enjoy,” she says. “But it’s never too late. You can also return to school and make a career change when you are older.”

Amy left school at age 15 when she was in Grade 9. “I was at a time in my life where I did not want to be there.” She is grateful for being employed almost full time in the agricultural sector for the past four years. But she wanted a change, and decided to go back to school.

PEI Career Development Services helped with a plan

Amy needed help with making a plan to go back to school. She turned to **PEI Career Development Services** in Bloomfield. “I found them to be very helpful to get the process underway,” she says. “It can be complicated if you are not used to dealing with all the paper work.”

Back to school and thinking ahead

She is now in her second year GED preparation program at the **Holland College Adult Education** program at Westisle. “I came back to finish my education and work toward finding a career I will enjoy,” she says. “I have thought about applying to the Atlantic Police Academy and have attended their Open House. I am also interested in a career in either Early Childhood Education or as a Youth Worker.”



Amy MacMillan is a student at the Adult Education program in Westisle. She is now preparing to write her GED in the spring.

Advice for those thinking of returning to school

“It may be hard to go back to school but once you get into it, the material learned earlier in life will slowly start to come back to you. I find studying now to be very different than when I was in school because you get to work at your own pace. My class is quite small compared to high school. And the teachers are always here to help.”

“Even though there were subjects I had difficulty with when I was in school, I am getting really good marks now. I plan to finish my GED program this spring. I know it will be another year or two before I can complete the academic subjects I need for the career I decide to go into.”

Q For more information about **Adult & Community Education**, contact the central office at **566-9628** or call toll-free **1-800-446-5265 (press 3)**