Bridging the Gap
Exploring Canadian Pets and Wildlife with Newcomers
Background

- Canada is a country that celebrates its diversity as one of its strengths.
  - In 2016, Canada welcomed more than 296,000 permanent residents.
  - In 2017, Canada welcomed more than 286,000 permanent residents.

- Also in 2017, the Government of Canada adopted a historic multi-year level plan to responsibly grow annual immigration levels to 340,000 by 2020.

Strategic Planning

• The OHS Outreach team developed a strategic plan to better support:
  – Future pet owners (children/youth)
    • To ensure that they have the knowledge and understanding to make responsible choices regarding animal welfare.
  – Current pet owners
    • To ensure that they make responsible choices for their pets.
  – Non-pet owners
    • To ensure that they have an increased appreciation of the role of animals in the community.

The primary goal is to increase pet-friendly attitudes in the Ottawa community.
Several newcomer presentations are delivered in French, as some newcomers already have pre-existing French language skills.
“Because the countries of origin of immigrants have become more diversified, Canada’s linguistic landscape has altered considerably.

An increasing share of immigrants report a language other than English or French as their mother tongue or language spoken most often at home.

In 2016, nearly three quarters (72.5%) of immigrants had a language other than English or French as their mother tongue, compared with 50.7% in 1971.”

https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-657-x/89-657-x2019001-eng.htm
Getting Started: Research

- What are the diverse cultural and religious beliefs (related to animals) of the newcomer clients you will serve?
  - Are there any cultural taboos related to pet ownership?
- What existing knowledge gaps do newcomers have regarding domestic pets and wildlife in your community?
Lesson #1: Building Partnerships
Building Partnerships

• Establishing a relationship with trusted community leaders and partners is key.
  – This allows you to understand your community’s needs and to reach the right audience with your programming.
  – Partners can also be trusted to help with translation and content development.

• We held a **Partnership Forum** with key community stakeholders to learn from their experience and assess the need for this type of programming.
Who is a “Trusted Community Resource?”

- A reputable organization with a demonstrated commitment to bettering the lives of newcomers to Canada.
  - What is their mission/vision?
  - How many newcomers do they serve annually?
  - What services do they have available for newcomers’ transition/settlement?
Our Primary Partners

- Ottawa Humane Society
- Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization
- Options Bytown
- Clausen Centre for Immigrants Ottawa
- Newcomer Connections

{Refugee} 613
Secondary Partners: Ottawa School Boards

- **SAIL Program**: Summer language instruction program for newcomer students.
- **ESL/LINC Classes**: Specialised in-school program for English as a second language students.
- **Afterschool Programs**: Extracurricular programs for newcomer students to enhance their language skills.
Community Centres

- Community centres located in areas of Ottawa who serve a high volume of newcomer clients.
Lesson #2: Location, Location, Location
Accessibility

• The OHS is not located in downtown Ottawa. It is a 30-minute walk from the two closest bus stops.
Accessibility

• Many newcomers do not yet own vehicles and rely on public transportation to get to/from their destinations.
  – It is important to choose a central and/or easily accessible location for presentations/events (e.g. community centres).

• Our first Newcomer event was held at the OHS and a private school bus was booked to transport clients to/from the shelter.
Lesson #3: Terminology
• When we first started developing this program we referred to it as an educational program for “New Canadians.”
  – Our partners pointed out that the term “New Canadian” implies that someone recently became a citizen of Canada.
  – Most of the clients who benefit from this type of educational program have recently immigrated or are refugees – they are not yet citizens.
Lesson #4: Flexibility
Flexibility

• This program requires flexibility in customizing presentations and events to meet our community’s needs.

• Be prepared to answer questions about topics that are not related to the scope of your organization’s work and know where to appropriately direct them.
  • Bed bugs
  • Lice
  • Wildlife issues
  • Burial of deceased pets
  • Food animals
Program Overview
Stats

• We have facilitated more than 12 presentations to more than 275 newcomers.

• We have also hosted 3 specialty events for more than 150 newcomers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Number of Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 2017</td>
<td>Dogs in Canada</td>
<td>OCISO</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2018</td>
<td>Urban Wildlife</td>
<td>OCISO</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2019</td>
<td>Pets in Canada</td>
<td>Refugee 613</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All newcomer presentations are one-hour in length.

Dogs in Canada: A look at the role of dogs in Canadian society – topics include, safe interaction, reading body language and common ownership practices.

• *This was the first presentation we developed and it continues to be the most popular presentation!*
Presentation Topics

Pets in Canada: A broader look at the role of all domestic pets in Canada – topics include, care requirements, behavioural characteristics and safe interaction.
Urban Wildlife in Canada: An introduction to the wide range of wildlife commonly seen in urban areas of Ottawa with a focus on how to co-exist peacefully.
Events

• All event “themes/topics” are **customizable** and based on community needs.
  – Planning sessions are held with partners months in advance.

• Events are typically two or three hours in length can be hosted at local community centres that are easily accessible for newcomer clients.
Sample Event Timeline

• Introductory presentation (40 minutes)
• Interactive learning stations (15 minutes/station):
  – Hands-on craft/activity (e.g. building a bird nest)
  – Animal interaction
  – Obedience demonstration
  – Dog-bite prevention exercise
• Opportunity for mingling and O&A with snacks and refreshments (20 minutes)

All volunteer dogs used to support newcomer programming are behaviourally assessed by the OHS canine services coordinator prior to participation in the program.
Additional Things to Consider

1. Use of interpreters to address language barriers.
2. Give-away items (brochures, etc.).
4. Translated collateral (promotional posters, feedback surveys and photo release forms).
Reaching the Right People

• We rely on our partners to invite participants and to provide interpreters for event day.
  – Our partner organizations create all promotional posters/invites.
Friends of the Family & Peer Support July Event: Urban Wildlife in Ottawa
برنامج اصدقاء العائلة و برنامج دعم الأصدقاء نشاط شهر تموز - الحياة البرية في اوتاوا

Get informed and educated on animals in the city, build a bird nest, play games and enjoy a snack!

تعرف على الحيوانات حول المدينة - تعلم بناء اعشاب الطيور - الألعاب مسابقة - و استمتع بالوجبات السريعة

**When:** Sunday, July 22, 2018

**Time:** 2-4pm

**Where:** Carleton Heights Community Centre
1665 Apeldoorn Ave, Ottawa, ON K2C 1V6

الزمان: الأحد 22/7/2018
الساعة: 2-4 بعد الظهر
المكان: مركز هايتس كارلتون الاجتماعي
Program Evaluation

• We constantly strive to improve and expand our programming. We rely on feedback to do this.

• We have a simple feedback survey that is used at Newcomer events.
  – This survey is available in English, French and Arabic, and can be translated by interpreters on event day.
Program Feedback Survey

Thank you for participating in this event organized by the Ottawa Humane Society. Please take a few minutes to let us know how we did. Your feedback is very important and will help us improve future events. Please circle your answers below:

1. Please rate this event overall:
   - Very Good
   - Good
   - Neutral
   - Poor
   - Very Poor

2. After attending this event, do you feel more knowledgeable about animals in your community?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Maybe
   - I don’t know

3. Please rate the visuals used during this event:
   - Very Good
   - Good
   - Neutral
   - Poor
   - Very Poor

4. In the future, what are the chances you would participate in another event hosted by the Ottawa Humane Society?
   - Very Good
   - Good
   - Neutral
   - Poor
   - Very Poor

5. What is the likelihood that you would recommend Ottawa Humane Society events to your friends and family?
   - Very Good
   - Good
   - Neutral
   - Poor
   - Very Poor

6. Do you have any further comments or feedback that you would like to share?
Program Feedback
CBC Article

“The OHS presentation on Pets in Canada and Urban Wildlife was done in a professional and welcoming manner.”

“Learning about pets and animals in the Canadian context was invaluable.”

“Many [people] learned how to approach an animal in public spaces and they also learned just why Canadians love their pets so much!”

Stephanie Millar (OHS) and Bonnie Thornington, Friends of the Family & Peer Support Project Coordinator (OCISO)
“Public education to all newcomers and those who are not familiar with animals in Canada is important to ensure that we all live in a more harmonious and welcoming society.”

Bonnie Thornington and OHS President & CEO, Bruce Roney at the OHS 2018 AGM
“It was an honor to attend the OHS workshop about urban wildlife in Ottawa and pets in Canada. It was the first time for my family and I to learn all this information about animals and how we can take care of them.”
“Many newcomers are also teaching Canadians and OHS staff members how they view certain animals and pets from their own perspective and culture. This is important as well, so there is learning and understanding from all points of view.”

"It's very interesting for us to learn about the wildlife here. You know it helps us to blend with it so we don't get scared."

Lama Chami, Digital Community Manager (Refugee 613) and OHS Humane Education Coordinators
“By providing a safe and welcoming space for newcomers to learn and interact with animals, many of their fears and apprehensions disappeared and many of their preconceived ideas were dispelled.”

"I really like animals in general, so when I heard about this event I just had to come. Now I know how to take care of an injured animal or what to do if I see a certain animal in front of me."
October 2017 Event (Video)
Program Growth

• We will continue to evaluate this program yearly.

• Our goal is to continue to build upon the programming that we offer for newcomers to Canada through:
  – New presentation topics
  – New partners
  – Increased reach
  – Recruitment of multi-lingual volunteers
Group Brainstorming Activity
Repackaging Humane Education

**Topic:** Understanding how to read canine body language, how to safely approach/greet a new dog and how to respect a dog’s space (e.g. when not to approach).

- How would you adapt this presentation topic for a newcomer audience?
- A few things to keep in mind…
  - Language barriers
  - Cultural differences
  - Possible pre-existing fear of animals
Dog-Bite Prevention for Newcomers

• Use an interpreter (if needed)
• Ensure the location for the presentation is accessible via public transportation
• Select a volunteer dog to compliment the presentation that is very calm and quiet
  – If a live dog is not appropriate/permitted in the space, use a life-size plush dog
• Shorten and simplify the presentation content to ensure only key messages are brought forward
• Add more pictures/visuals to the presentation
• Teach the group how to decline a dog interaction
Questions?

Thank you for listening!