**Terms of Reference**

**Purpose**

The purpose of the Welcoming Communities Ambassador (WCA) program is to engage volunteers in welcoming and supporting newcomers and immigrants as they settle into our community. The program aims to create a welcoming and inclusive environment that fosters a sense of belonging and facilitates the successful integration of newcomers.

**WCA Volunteer Responsibilities**

The WCA program will provide newcomers with up to six months of social and integration support. Volunteers are matched with a newcomer based on interest, the volunteers’ skill and experience and the newcomers needs. Tasks could include the following supports:

**Welcome and Orientation**

* Greet newcomers and provide a warm welcome to the community.
* Provide information about local resources, services, and opportunities.
* Orient newcomers to the community's culture, customs, and norms.

**Peer Support**

* Serve as a friendly and supportive point of contact for newcomers.
* Help newcomers navigate various aspects of community life, such as education, healthcare, transportation, and employment.
* Offer guidance and advice on local amenities, recreational activities, and social networks.
* Support the newcomers in integrating their family into the community, socializing, and learning about the community, region and Canada.

**Cultural Exchange**

* Share information about the local culture, traditions, and events.
* Encourage participation in community activities and celebrations.
* Facilitate opportunities for newcomers to share their own culture and traditions with the community.

**Language Support**

* Assist newcomers in improving their language skills (if needed/wanted) through conversation practice or connecting them with options for language classes.
* Help newcomers understand and communicate in English or the local language, if applicable.

**Community Integration**

* Connect newcomers with relevant community organizations, clubs, and volunteer opportunities.
* Support the involvement of newcomers in community events and initiatives.
* Advocate for the inclusion and representation of newcomers in decision-making processes.

**WCA Volunteer Requirements**

WCA will match 3-5 people with recently arrived newcomers. The program coordinators will provide training and resources for the volunteers. Volunteers can partner together as part of the WCA group to support each other.

The WCA program is open to volunteers who are passionate about welcoming newcomers and promoting community integration.

* Volunteers should possess good communication and interpersonal skills, cultural sensitivity, and a genuine interest in helping others.
* Volunteers are required to attend a group interview and if selected review and sign a ‘Letter of Understanding’ that outlines WCA program expectations, the Code of Conduct, and confidentiality. At this stage a criminal background check and personal reference check is required.
* Volunteers are matched with a newcomer based on interest, family size or composition, the newcomers and/or their family’s needs, the volunteers’ skill and experience.
* Volunteers may be required to use translation apps such as WhatsApp or Google to support linguistic gaps.
* Volunteers may need to ‘shuttle’ the newcomer around the community if transportation is required.

**Training and Support**

* Volunteers will receive initial online training on cultural competency, effective communication, and the resources available for newcomers.
* Ongoing training and professional development opportunities will be provided to enhance volunteers' knowledge and skills.
* Volunteers will have access to a WCA program coordinator or mentor who can provide guidance, support, and answer any questions or concerns.

**Time Commitment**

* Volunteers are expected to commit to a five to ten hours per month or on a flexible basis, depending on availability and the needs of newcomers. Generally, the first month is a five to ten hours and the following months three to five hours.
* The duration of the volunteer commitment may vary, but a minimum commitment of six months is encouraged for continuity and relationship building.

**Recognition and Evaluation**

* Volunteers will receive recognition and appreciation for their contributions to the program and the community.
* Feedback and suggestions from volunteers will be actively sought and considered to improve the program's effectiveness.
* Regular evaluations will be conducted to assess the program's impact, identify areas for improvement, and recognize outstanding volunteers.

**Confidentiality and Boundaries**

* Volunteers must maintain strict confidentiality regarding any personal or sensitive information shared by newcomers.
* Volunteers should be aware of their boundaries and refer newcomers to appropriate professionals or services when necessary.

**Code of Conduct**

* Volunteers are expected to adhere to the organization's code of conduct, treating all individuals with respect, dignity, and fairness.
* Volunteers should uphold ethical standards, promote inclusivity, and refrain from discriminatory or prejudiced behavior.

**Amendment and Review**

These terms of reference may be amended as needed, with input from volunteers and relevant stakeholders, to ensure the program's continued effectiveness and relevance.

**Approval**

These terms of reference have been approved by the CAO, Debbie Ross, Town of Oyen.

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