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l am excited about the future

n Halifax this summer, there is an abundance of activities and experiences awaiting us, and we are delighted to showcase them in this edition of the magazine. From the picturesque waterfront to the vibrant festivals that extend well into the fall, there is something for everyone to enjoy.

As the warm weather graces us, patio season beckons us to downtown Halifax, where we have the opportunity to support and uplift local businesses. Indulge in the delightful atmosphere and savor the unique offerings that these establishments have to offer.

Let us embrace the spirit of community and celebration as we explore the vibrant and captivating experiences that await us this summer in Halifax.

I am filled with excitement as we embark on this summer and the exciting times that lie ahead. This particular edition of our magazine holds a special place in my heart as it marks a significant transition within our organization. I am thrilled to announce that nomnations are now open for the "Celebrating the Most Inspiring Immigrants in Atlantic Canada" initiative, proudly presented by RBC. We wholeheartedly encourage you to nominate immigrant leaders who are making a remarkable and positive impact within our community.

Our dedication to working closely with immigrant entrepreneurs remains unwavering as we provide them with the necessary resources to flourish through our Creative Hub programming.

It is disheartening to observe that immigrants who aspire to start businesses in Canada often encounter significant barriers. Many struggle to secure funding, grants, and the essential resources needed to kickstart their entrepreneurial journey.

At the Creative Hub, we strive to be the bridge that connects immigrants with these invaluable resources. While the Creative Hub traditionally focused on physical locations, we have evolved our approach to create a digital village where immigrants from diverse areas can access our programming.

This magazine edition continues to celebrate Halifax and the remarkable contributions

of immigrants within our community. We witness the continual arrival of new immigrants who choose Halifax as their home, where they flourish and make substantial contributions to our local economy.

However, we recognize that there is still much work to be done in supporting immigrant entrepreneurs within our region. Therefore, we are committed to providing them with the necessary resources to start and scale their businesses. Immigrants bring immense value to the local economy, and by empowering immigrant business owners, we, in turn, empower the growth of our local economy.

I am profoundly grateful for the ongoing support and partnership we receive as we continue on this journey of celebrating immigrants who are making a positive and lasting impact within our community.

Ifeanyi Emesih - CEO and Founder of MECE Media



K-POP DANCERS FLOURISH IN HALIFAX



LY is a Korean Pop (K-Pop) dance group based in Halifax, exploring different cultural identities and ideas of femininity and masculinity through music.

The group originally met in House of Eights, a dance studio located in the heart of downtown Halifax. ILY members consist of Kim Cooke, Shaomin Chen, Shelby Kennedy, Sicily Zhou and Ebony Abe. "We initially were strangers and grew to become very close friends," said Abe, who explained that the group began doing dance covers for fun.

During the pandemic, they would film themselves dancing from home and then join those videos together. ILY formally began performing once COVID-19 restrictions were loosened and all members were in Halifax.

"I feel like we are very collaborative and open to everyone's ideas. We love to share our individual knowledge just to make the team's morale stronger," said Abe.

Each member of ILY brings something different to the table, with members having Asian, Indigenous and Haligonian heritages. While Abe focuses more on visuals and formations, Chen focuses on timing and small details of a performance. "Sometimes we are figuring out our piece and of course there is clashing of ideas, but overall, over time, we were able to understand where our views were coming from," said Abe.

Through teamwork, ILY is working to make performances stronger. One of the groups biggest challenges has been finding consistent times where everyone is available with workplace and student-life

commitments making it difficult to find recurring dates for practicing. "We are all busy as individuals." Abe said that in the music scene, an all-female group will often be expected to perform very girly and feminine music. "But I feel like that allows us to show what else we are capable of."

After their debut in House of Eights, Abe said ILY could have followed the road of having a very feminine presence on stage.



However, the group wanted to be more versatile and tackle masculine songs. "We wanted to have that shift." ILY dance performances alternate between masculine and feminine dance moves. "People who watch our group don't know what's coming next and we have them on their toes," said Abe.

Doing different dance moves has allowed ILY to expand their abilities as dancers as the masculine moves are not always easy to do. "It can challenge us, but it's part of the process." Abe said that her favourite part

about performing with ILY is seeing the end result. "Trust the process is one of the things I always think about." One of the things she's learned has been that with the right amount of work, the results will always be what one hopes to accomplish.

Besides seeing the final results, hearing honest feedback has made a big difference for Abe. ✓

"Even if I was to do my part as an individual. I still need to hear feedback so I am able to see how I can improve."







BETTER TOGETHER

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FRANYZ KITCHEN BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER

Franyz Kitchen's unique flavor helps immigrant students connect to their roots



lara Franyz Dadin-Alli launched Franyz Kitchen in 2019 as an African food service for close friends at Dalhousie University. But after having the opportunity to cook for Nigerian musicians and during Nigerian Independence week, she decided to make Franyz Kitchen her fulltime job. "I cook with passion," said Dadin-Alli.

When COVID-19 began in 2020, Dadin-Alli's first thought were, how can I help? She realized that through her cooking, she could help international students feel less far away from home. "I love to make people feel comfortable, I love making people feel at home with my food," said Dadin-Alli. While African immigrants were her initial target audience, as time went on Dadin-Alli extended her services to other immigrant students as food brings people together. "So, I made the prices affordable for other international students as well."

She said one of the main reasons why her food is recognized in Halifax is that most of her ingredients come directly from Africa. "I have an authentic seasoning," said Dadin-Alli, who does not substitute ingredients in

traditional dishes as the authentic ingredients are what brings the flavours together.

After Franyz Kitchen received some local media attention, she got a call from food inspectors, which led to a business closure. Due to health and sanitation regulations, Dadin-Alli was not allowed to cook from home. "It took me a year to find a location," she said. But after a long search, she found a spot on Sackville Drive in Lower Sackville. "It's not a restaurant, it's more of a takeout business and I use the kitchen. People order through Uber Eats, DoorDash or through my website."



When asked about her biggest challenges, Dadin-Alli said finding financial help for her small, immigrant-run business isn't always easy.

"Financial assistance is easily the number one challenge of my small business," noting that she feels that banks are more likely to quickly provide loans to white Canadians.

Dadin-Alli said tracking costs, as well was careful fund management, are some of the most important things that new small businesses must consider.

Another significant challenge Franyz Kitchen has encountered is the distance between Halifax and the Sackville Drive kitchen.
"I am grateful to all of those
who come to eat my food," said
Dadin-Alli, as she knows that some
customers take long bus rides to
pick up her food. "Location is key."

As her business grows and expands, Dadin-Alli is working on a number of projects, including opening her own restaurant, offering discounts on different days and thinking of new ways for international students to access her food.

Despite adversity, Dadin-Alli said cooking remains one of her greatest joys in life. "Me in the kitchen is like a child in Disney; that is my happy place." ✓





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IS THERE SOMETHING BETTER OUT THERE?

Yemi Olaniyi and his family began their journey to Nova Scotia because they wanted more than the status quo



odern Nigeria has been described as a country with no middle class. Yet the life of Yemi Olaniyi and his family would seem extremely familiar to any middleclass family in Canada.

He was a successful banker who had transitioned into management consulting. His wife, Dew, was a teacher in a top school in Lagos and their two children were all in school. Everything seemed ideal on the surface, but there was something nagging at Olaniyi just out of sight.

"There comes a time in life when you want to change the status quo," Olaniyi says. "You set new priorities and you want to do more with your life. So, we started to look at opportunities outside our own country."

Olaniyi and his family looked at many different places in the world, but he says Canada kept coming out on top because of its support for family life. Being able to offer something for everyone in the family is what sharpened the family's focus on this country.

At first, that focus was on the bigger provinces and cities with bigger economies. That focus changed, though, as they considered other factors.

"When we started looking at Canada, we didn't consider Nova Scotia," Olaniyi says. "But, once we started the process, we began to look at other factors, such as weather, the four seasons, and we started to give Nova Scotia a second look. We checked its growth rate, the crime rate, family support, and the economy. We eventually put it to a vote at home and 3-out-of-4 in the family said Nova Scotia."

That vote was more than five years ago. Although the family began the process almost right away, it still didn't happen overnight.
"Canada is a big country with a strong economy, is one of the best immigration-friendly first world countries, offers good support and is a country of opportunities. That makes it popular and it can be difficult to get in."

Olaniyi says they found the immigration process straight-forward, but "no one can guarantee the timeline. It took us three years from application process to the final travel document approval. While waiting for O'Canada to manifest, we lived our normal lives during that waiting period. Then, the good news happened, at the peak of COVID-19 pandemic and we had to recalibrate, did cost-benefit analysis and moved on."

Olaniyi believes the reason why they were eventually successful is because they spent the time up-front to make sure they were doing the right thing and going about it the right way, exploring all available information sources.

"My philosophy is: opportunity meets preparation. Planning, planning, planning. Plan and think ahead in everything you do."

He says the path they followed is easy for anyone to replicate. "Define what you want in your life first. Then try to find alignment with the province. Be authentic and be thorough, because Canadian immigration is thorough. You need to feel it in your gut."

The planning and preparation didn't stop even after the family's arrival in Nova Scotia. Olaniyi says they sought out organizations that supported immigrants and registered with the Immigrant Settlement Association of Nova Scotia and the Halifax Partnership to get access to local information and start building out their network. "Networking and leveraging your contacts are crucial to success in any new situation," he says.

All that preparation appears to have paid off. "Everybody is happy here," Olaniyi says. "The kids are in school, uncovering their creativity and making new friends. My wife was a teacher back home and now she is a junior high teacher here, and I've been able to continue my career as a banker."

Olaniyi says his family is grateful for the opportunities they've received and believes their choice to come to Nova Scotia will continue to pay dividends into the future.

"We believe the province is only going to grow and get bigger and more attractive to people," he says. "Number one, it supports a strong family life; number two, it has a growing economy with an active tech space and creative industries. There's something in Nova Scotia for everyone."

Olaniyi shares his experience with others looking to relocate and he says he offers them all the same advice. "You need to do a SWOC (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, Challenges) analysis of yourself at every point of your life. Who am I as a person? What are my weaknesses and how do I prepare for life challenges? What do I want? Amplify your strengths and use them to address any weaknesses. Believe in yourself and leverage your relationships."



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of supporting our clients and our communities in

engaging foreign talent. **stewartmckelvey.com**







Halifax Rotary Ribfest

From June 30-July 03 the Rotary Ribfest is on. At the Alderny Landing on the Dartmouth Waterfront, there will be food venders, local bands and other individual artists throughout the festival. It's the biggest volunteer run festival in the province, with the best recycling program of any festival, too.

More information can be found at www.harboursideribfest.ca









TD Halifax Jazz Festival

Concerts hit different in the summer. Luckily for Haligonians, some big names are coming to the city at this summer's TD Halifax Jazz Festival. From July 11-16, artists like Feist, Fleet Foxes, Jenn Grant and Fortunate Ones will perform at one of the city's most well-known festivals.

Check out the full lineup, buy tickets or stay up-to-date with the latest festival announcements at www.halifaxjazzfestival.ca

North American Indigenous Games

The North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) are coming to Kjipuktuk (Halifax) this summer from July 15 to July 23. According to NAIG's website, events will take place in Kjipuktuk (Halifax), Dartmouth and Millbrook First Nation. This year's NAIG will be the 10th North American Indigenous Games, and will bring together 756 Indigenous Nations to celebrate, share and reconnect through sport and culture.

Some of the sports will include archery, badminton, baseball, basketball, beach volleyball, lacrosse and others. A full list and schedule can be found at www.naig2023.com



Nova Multifest 2023

Check out an energetic festival of culture and diversity at this year's Nova Multifest from July 21-July 23 at Alderney Landing Dartmouth Waterfront. There will be live music, culinary delights, cold beer, diverse gifts and dance and culture events.

More information can be found on their website at **www.multifest.com**





Broadway in Halifax: The Book of Mormon

The Broadway hit the Book of Mormon is coming to Halifax this July at the Scotiabank Centre. With the theatrical hit touring the USA, it's surely a performance you won't want to miss.

Buy tickets or learn more at: www.halifaxbroadway.com





Halifax Busker Festival

The Halifax Busker Festival brings dozens of street performers to the city in a week-long festival on the Halifax waterfront and throughout Dartmouth. This year, the festival will happen from August 2-7 and include hourly shows, the Glow Party Family Zone and food trucks.

More information can be found at www.buskers.ca



Halifax Seaport Cider and Beerfest

From August 10-12 'fizzfest' is back, delivering a range of pre-mixed cocktails, sodas and seltzers to the Halifax Seaport. The three days will include four sessions and over 300 craft beers, ciders and fizzy drinks for event goers. Like last year, DJ Loukas Stilldrunk will be spinning tunes at the festival, and there will be a variety of food vendors onsite as well.





More information can be found at **www.seaportbeerfest.com**

The Great Outdoors Comedy Festival

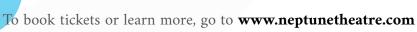
The 'Wildly Hilarious' Great Outdoors Comedy Festival will be at the Garrison Grounds in Halifax on August 11, 12 and 13. The event will include performances by comedians Jerry Seinfield, Anthony Jeselnik (bones and all, with Zanna Gang and Michael Longfellow) and Bill Burr.



Find out more at:
www.greatoutdoorscomedyfestival.com

The Argyle Street Kitchen Party

Full of singing, dancing and laughter, the Argyle Street Kitchen Party is worth adding to your summer bucket list, especially if you're looking for a Nova Scotia tradition. Hosted by Neptune Theatre, visitors can expect to be enamoured in a Ceilidh, a traditional Irish or Scottish social gathering, typically including folk music, dancing and storytelling.





FIN Atlantic International Film Festival

Film and movie go-ers are likely already familiar (and counting down the days until) FIN Atlantic International Film Festival. This year's festival will be in its 43rd year and has turned into one of Canada's premier celebrations of film and filmmaking after humble beginnings as a grassroots festival in St. John's, NL all those years ago.

Keep up to date with announcements, including scheduling and dates through their website at www.finfestival.ca



















































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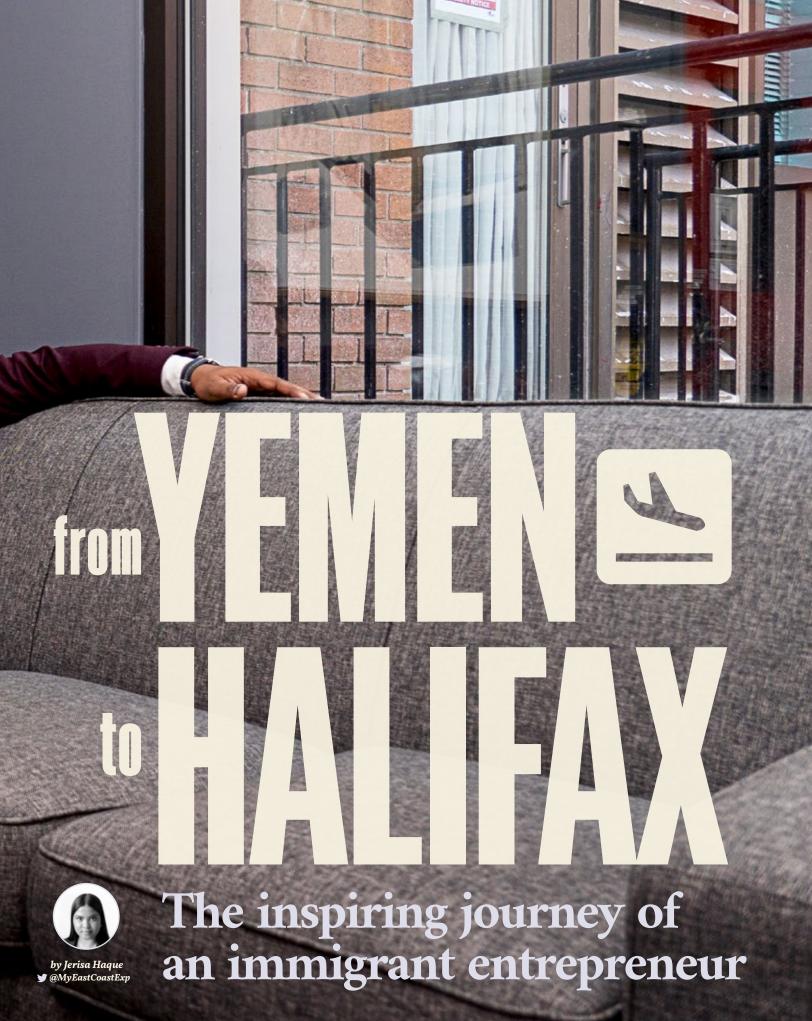


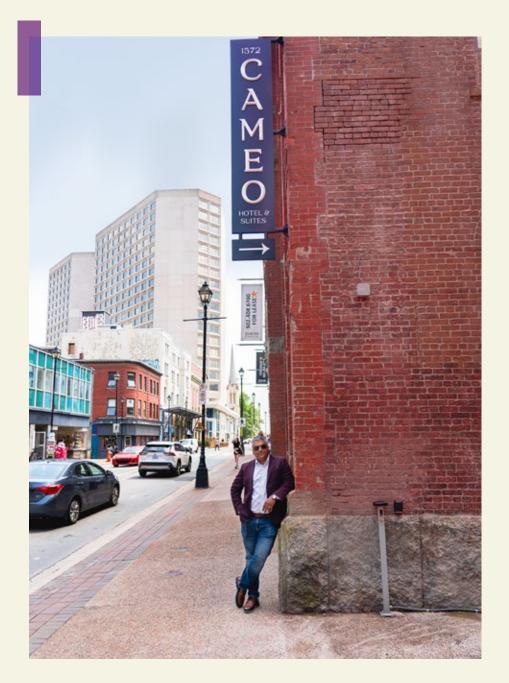












ooking at Issmat Al-Akhali today, you can feel the aura of a self-assured and confident gentleman, someone who is rooted to the value he brings to the business community of Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada overall.

But his journey, like many immigrants, wasn't always smooth sailing.

"It was not common for Yemenis to send their kids to school abroad. Most families were poor and there were only a handful who could afford it. No one in my family, except myself, has gone to university abroad. After graduating high school, I took permission from the government to skip mandatory military service and applied to several universities abroad. Saint Mary's in Halifax gave me the best scholarship; therefore, I arrived here in 1999 to start my degree in Computer Science and Business Administration. The rest is history."

For Al-Akhali, it took some adjustment to go from living in a conservative Muslim country to a co-ed university dorm, as did keeping up with the rigorous academic standard of his degree. He managed to persevere and ended up finishing his degree, in addition to being heavily engaged with many extracurricular and



volunteer activities during his time at university.

"Ultimately," he chuckles, "it doesn't always matter what degree you graduated in because you may end up working in a field that had nothing to do with what you studied."

He managed to establish a baseline of work experience that allowed him to gain his Permanent Residency as a Provincial Nominee of Nova Scotia. He talks about the "viscous cycle" of not being able to get a job without experience but employers not wanting to hire anyone without prior experience, a roadblock many international graduates and newcomers to Canada face even today.

"Somebody has to take a chance on you, and the network and connections you build while in school are crucial to this."

Al-Akhali says being an entrepreneur is in his blood. He comes from a business background on both sides of his family, yet he never wanted to join the family business as he knew at least one of his three younger brothers would fulfil that role. He said this was one of his main motivations to remain in Halifax and establish a different track for himself in the city.

"At that time my prospects were low. There weren't a lot of opportunities. In fact, I was packing my bags and nearly ready to move to either Toronto or Calgary where most of my peers were before I got my job offer. Halifax is one of those places where there's a lot of potential, a lot of space for new ideas to be brought in, but unfortunately a lot of people like me who have had that exposure to bring in new ideas, eventually leave for bigger markets."

As soon as he was established in a stable job, he started looking for ways to nurture his entrepreneurial spirit. One of his first "little" companies, as he calls it, was Kick Media.

He and a friend from university installed digital screens in airport taxis, an idea he had seen in Asia and the U.S. The screens brought in revenue from advertising, and he says while he found good traction, this first business was a way to get his feet wet and understand how to do business in Canada.

"I would advise anyone who's starting a business for the first time, especially immigrants, start with something small to cut your teeth on, so you cannot lose a lot of money if it doesn't work out." Al-Akhali, familiar with the practical realities, never left his fulltime job but he also started doing international consulting projects on the side.

After his term ended as acting CEO of EduNova, a co-operative of education and training providers in Nova Scotia, he decided to start





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his own business and Blacksheep Projects was born.

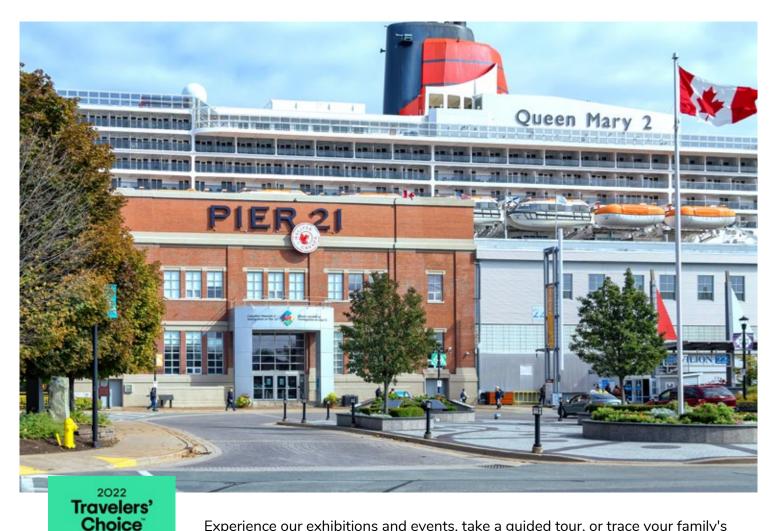
I started working with companies on how to expand internationally into the Middle East specifically because that's my area of expertise. "While I was doing that, some investors approached me saying they wanted to get into student housing in Canada. Being a former international student, and being aware of the challenges, I was able to set up a study for them to determine whether they should invest their money in this venture or not. And after a few months they were still unsure but at this time I had done the feasibility study and I knew I wanted to do this," he remembered.

"So, I said to them if you're not going to do it, I will do it on my own with my own partners. If it fails, you'll know you're right and if it's successful then you can join me as partners and we can expand this business and start building other student residences," he said.



Discover Canada's Immigration Story Découvrez l'histoire de l'immigration au Canada

at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 au Musée canadien de l'immigration du Quai 21



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At that time, university housing was being managed by universities and there were no private companies providing that service.

"So, I was the first to do that. And that's why there were some questions whether this will be something successful, whether parents will trust it, whether students will be attracted to it, but it's definitely very, very popular, very successful."

Al-Akhali says that while purpose-built student housing was a new concept in Canada back in 2015, it was very popular in Europe and the U.S. where a lot of student housing is privately managed.

In the last five years, he's seen his Granville Hall student residence explode, although the pandemic has delayed a lot of their expansion plans, including into Charlottetown. "We have long wait lists every year that we can't fill."

The 30-room residence on Granville Street houses students during the school year and is available to tourists

in the summer.

He says the owner of the building was developing another site downtown, but the apartments were going to be out of the price range for students. Al-Akhali, not wanting to miss out on this business opportunity, took this moment to create Halifax's first fully automated hotel right in the heart of downtown.

"Tourism nearly died in the pandemic and now that it's back hotel rates have nearly doubled, creating a lot of barriers to access for people. So, I'm always looking for ways to give people a great experience within their budget. Focusing on building the IT infrastructure and having an automated check-in process has allowed us to offer a competitive pricing structure compared to other hotels in the area."

An accomplished entrepreneur in his own right, Al-Akhali admits he still faces immigrant guilt from time to time, carrying the weight of his decision to settle in Canada as opposed to many of his friends who eventually went back to their home country to support

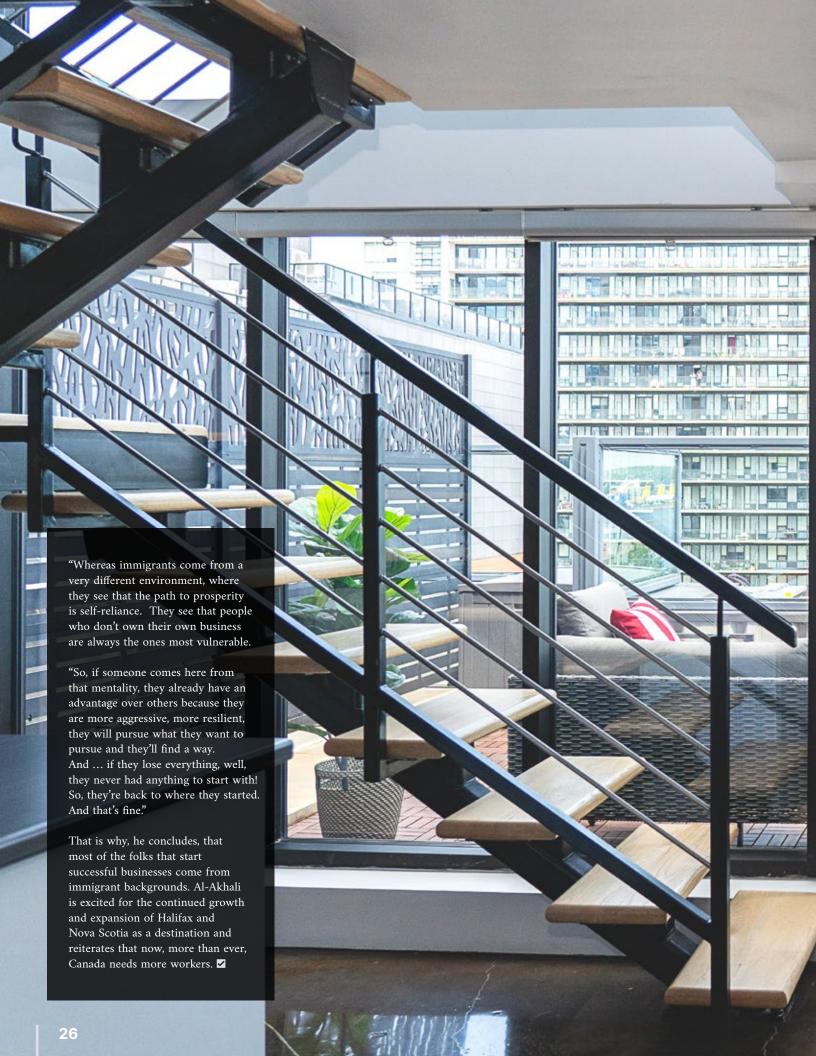
the causes in Yemen.

"Were my friends braver than me? Yes, absolutely in some regard because they went back to contribute to a cause I deeply believe in and some of them lost their lives in the process. For me, I believe I can help my family and my country by being a role model for what discipline is and how success can be found by having the right mentality."

His advice to current and future aspiring immigrant entrepreneurs is to leverage your unique advantages.

"If you're hungry for having your own business, then bring that hunger and don't be shy. Be aggressive, pursue what you want to pursue. I think a competitive advantage that immigrants have compared to many locals is that locals don't always have that drive.

"They know they have an extensive network of support and family to lean back on. Many of them see the path to prosperity in working a regular job, because that's what they see their peers do," he said.











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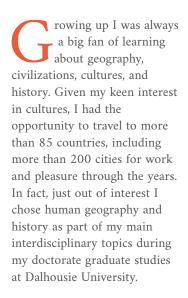
I would like to extend a very warm welcome to everyone visiting our beautiful province this summer!



VENTURE OFF THE BEATEN PATH FOR TRUE CULTURAL ENRICHMENT



by Rany Ibrahim 딸 @RanyIbrahim



I learned firsthand that the best way for an ultimate local experience is to immerse myself in any country's culture, and that the best way to do that is to venture beyond the typical business or tourist attractions to genuinely learn about the true portrait of a country. This can be through learning about local customs, traditions, food, music and art. Music and food are two of the most popular and easily accessible ways to learn about a different culture.

Learning about another culture helped me to understand different perspectives within the world while expanding and better informing mine. It also helped me to recognize and respect different ways of life, and to dismiss any negative stereotypes or personal biases that may have existed before.

Cultural values are usually

passed on from one generation to another, to safeguard the continuousness of traditions. As immigrants, we often use food as one of the ways we can preserve our homeland's cultural identity. Usually, our traditions are tied to cultural events, celebrations, or key ceremonies that our ancestors created to reflect some beliefs, customs, and values. This allows traditions to be remembered through the years, regardless of where we are.

Another way for traditions to be remembered is by sharing our folk stories and music as it gives people an insight into another culture, history and different ways of life.





This can be directly connected to our history, a specific religious or spiritual practice or just general artistic expression that is reflective of nature and our home identity. You may have heard the expression, "Mom's food always takes me home." I am fortunate that our multi-cultural and multigeneration household has quite the mixture of cultures - Egyptian, Russian, and Canadian with four languages spoken daily in our family. We often have several celebrations in any given month that all of us commemorate. These celebrations could be

related to a holiday, a religion or a tradition of one of our household's multi-cultures and diverse heritage.

Cultures are influenced by food in numerous ways. This is also reflected in our food and musical tastes and choices. We get to enjoy traditional recipes that have been passed down through generations and are a source of pride to bring us together to express our cultural identities. I regularly get to enjoy some amazing cuisine and a wide variety of dishes that are full of exotic flavours and have several stories behind each

one. These stories are often shared around our dinner table. Dishes come from the Middle East, Northeast Europe, the Baltic region, Russia and the Mediterranean and include koshari, borscht, dumplings, dressed herring, mulukhia, beef stroganov and mahshy, just to name a few.

We are very lucky that we have here in Halifax an annual event – the Mosaic International Film Festival – that allows us to enjoy the world's exotic flavours and stories. This international festival is our own unique homegrown international forum for storytelling, and a splendid celebration of di-

versity in Halifax – one of the fastest-growing cities in the country – and within Nova Scotia.

The fourth edition of the festival was under the theme Flavours of the World. It brought together filmmakers from 20 countries around the world who shared their stories, experiences and cultural identities through the art of film. Film screenings and celebrations took place at the ideal and very relevant location of the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 in late March of this year. Don't forget to mark your calendar for the next one.

WORKING, GROWING AND LEARNING FROM IMMIGRANTS

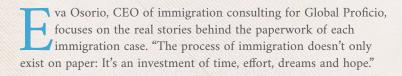


EVA OSORIO'S CAREER WITH IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE LAW ALLOWS HER TO WITNESS RESILIENCE AND FORM CONNECTIONS FOR THE **HALIFAX REFUGEE CLINIC**

Visas







Osorio began her own immigration journey when she arrived in Halifax from Cuba where she acted as a translator between a Canadian company and Cuba's Ministry of Hydromechanical Industries. Afterwards, she became involved with the Halifax Refugee Clinic. It was at the clinic that she discovered her passion for refugee and immigrant law. She first acted as a coordinator and later became the executive director.

Her own experience as a newcomer to the country inspired this journey. "When I arrived in Halifax 23 years ago, there was only minor-scale help for these communities," she said.

Working in the refugee clinic allowed her to form connections across the city, including forming a partnership with Dalhousie Law and Dalhousie's School of Social Work. These relationships allowed Osorio to bring in reliable volunteers to help to build the refugee clinic from the ground up.

Over the years, the clinic has grown to have 32 volunteers and more than 600 individuals have who sought immigration help at the clinic. This was a journey that developed "pasito a pasito" (step-by-step work). "Many law and social work students who began there became successful immigration professionals."





Osorio enjoyed doing local work and becoming involved in the complex world of these immigrants. "The journey can be hard, there is no guarantee it will be easy," said Osorio. Oftentimes, her journey to recruit individuals and raise money through fundraisers would involve working from 10 a.m. to midnight.

There have been individuals who have been rejected in their immigration processes. "One learns to work with Canadian immigration, for there are consistently new policies and new regulations to be up to date with," said Osorio.

Helping individuals navigate these currents of change takes time and effort. There are instances of death and times when family reunification isn't achieved can often be painful.

"I remember each and every case."

Despite the difficult days, Osorio keeps the happy stories from her work close to heart. "I see so many kids who I worked with in the past around Halifax, they approach me and ask if I remember them," said Osorio. Seeing successful immigrant children grow into adults is something that fills Osorio's heart with satisfaction, recalling how young they looked in their first passport pictures. Similarly, when Osorio drives around Halifax she notices many businesses and houses of old clients who have now become Canadian citizens.

The resilience of refugees and immigrants never ceases to amaze her. Osorio has met individuals who have learned English in their mid-50s in the hope of forming a new life in Canada.

Osorio's career has branched out since her time at the Halifax Refugee Clinic. Osorio became a Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant and founded her own company, Global Proficio Inc., where she works with fellow immigrant specialists who can help her to navigate the ups and downs of the business.

Likewise, her background in law has grown and Osorio is a Commissioner of Oaths for the province of Nova Scotia. Nationally, she is an active member of the Canadian Association of Professional Immigration Consultants (CAPIC), as well as a member of an advisory committee in Queens University for immigration law programs.



PIONEERING REMOTE IT SUPPORT WITH A SECURITY FOCUS



n today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, businesses across Canada are increasingly reliant on secure and efficient remote IT support. While the concept of remote IT services has gained significant traction during the pandemic, there is one company that had been embracing this model long before it became a necessity.

PCWizrd, a pioneering IT support firm, has been providing security-focused remote IT solutions since its official launch in 2014. Join us as we delve into the origins of PCWizrd, its unique approach, and its journey as a visionary business.

PCWizrd traces its roots back to the early 2000s when founder Scott Pettie embarked on his journey as an entrepreneur. While still in high school, Pettie found his passion for repairing computers, initially focusing on Windows 98 and Windows 2000 systems. What began as a side job to support his education gradually evolved into something more significant.

The name PCWizrd itself originated from a gift given to Pettie by a client—a small pewter statue depicting a wizard staring at a computer screen with a bomb symbol. Impressed by Pettie's seemingly magical ability to fix any issue, the client dubbed him the "PC wizard." Inspired by this, Pettie adopted the name, and PCWizrd was born.

Even before the proliferation of remote work due to the pandemic, PCWizrd had recognized the potential of remote IT support. Pettie's foresight stemmed from his exposure to laptops and early mobile devices, such as cell phones, during his work as an Apple specialist for BlackBerry.

Sensing that the future would be dominated by

mobility and remote work, Pettie envisioned a world where everyone could access their work from anywhere. Little did he know that his vision would soon become a reality. When the pandemic hit and businesses scrambled to adapt to remote operations, PCWizrd had already been operating as a remote support company for years.

One of PCWizrd's distinguishing features is its specialization in providing IT support to businesses that prioritize security and compliance. The company focuses on verticals such as veterinary clinics, accounting firms, legal services, and organizations dealing with sensitive client data. These businesses often lack the necessary knowledge or resources to protect their confidential information adequately. PCWizrd steps in as a trusted partner, leveraging its security-first approach to ensure data protection, compliance with regulations, and the overall

integrity of the IT infrastructure.

Its growth has been organic, fueled by its established reputation and word-of-mouth referrals. With Pettie at the helm, the company cultivated strong relationships within the local business community, participating in various networking groups and associations like the Chamber of Commerce.

However, as the demands of the business grew, Pettie realized the need for additional support. He began hiring junior technicians, providing them with the necessary training to handle routine tasks while he focused on more complex projects. Currently, PCWizrd is comprised of three core team members, including Pettie, a junior technician and a sales technician. In addition, the company collaborates with contract workers across Canada, each contributing unique skills to the team's capabilities.

PCWizrd has ambitious goals for the future. It strive to become a household name in remote IT security,



earning the trust of small businesses across Canada. With a commitment to continuous growth and staying at the forefront of technological advancements, PCWizrd aims to become the go-to team for businesses seeking secure and reliable remote IT solutions. By consistently delivering exceptional services and focusing on building long-term relationships with clients, PCWizrd aims to make a lasting impact in the industry. ✓



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on Latino is not only an established Latin band in Halifax, it's also a group of friends whose style is influenced by multiple cross-cultural identities. As their Instagram pages says, "A few Cubans, a Chinese Colombian, and a couple of Canucks. All of us in Halifax Son Latino!"

Son Latino puts a creative spin on Latin American music by featuring dynamic artists from different nations. Rhythms from Colombia, Cuba and Mexico come together to form a live ensemble for bars, restaurants and other events. They play rhythms such as merengue, reggaeton, salsa, cha-cha and more, varying between traditional and contemporary Latin musical styles.

Yonnelis Legranoa, a lead singer for Son Latino, said the band has always been growing and creatively developing. "We have been together for eight years and we play in different venues," she said.

They began as a Latin group of friends who enjoyed playing different types of music. "That is one thing that is great in our band, we are all friends," she said, adding that the playful closeness among band members is something that always shows during their performances.

In their early beginnings, Son Latino played under different names. Coming up with a band name was difficult as everyone was hoping to find a name that encapsulated the multicultural diversity within the group. Son Latino was selected because it represented the togetherness in the work that the band does. Different genres such as cumbia, bachata and salsa coming together to represent colourful Latin culture as a whole.



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ANDY FILLMORE Member of Parliament Halifax

808-1888 Brunswick Street 902.426.8691 andy.fillmore@parl.gc.ca www.andyfillmoremp.ca @andyfillmorehfx Son Latino members consistently think about balancing a broader understanding of Latin music as well as individual's perception of it. Often, band members will request a song they would like to play and during performances audience members will request songs. "Sometimes, we even have Venezuelan music in our mix," said Legranoa. Ultimately, the goal is to find different ways to bring Latin culture to Halifax.

Currently, Son Latino rehearses every week or every couple of weeks, especially if a show is coming up. Legranoa often focuses on arranging the band's bookings. However, scheduling isn't always easy.

"People can have different priorities to attend to," she said.

Their most active period tends to be summer festivals, a popular time for salsa and dance. "We have become well known in the salsa community," said Legranoa, adding they perform a show for all those interested in listening or dancing to Latin music.

She said the passion in the band stems from playing songs that band members have grown up with, "Which is why we really work hard and prepare to offer a great show."

"Since I was a little girl, I loved singing in my neighbourhood," she said. Performing often brings back memories of singing at schools and festivals in her sunny hometown.

✓





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