



ANNUAL REPORT

2015-2016

The Centre
for Skills Development & Training



Other sites on the inside back cover.



OUR HISTORY

The Centre for Skills Development & Training (The Centre) evolved from day and night school classes offered by the Adult and Continuing Education department of the Halton District School Board in the late 1980s. Throughout the 1990s, demand for services grew and several new, innovative programs were established.

In 1998, The Centre was officially incorporated as a not-for-profit organization under the legal name “Fast Track - Community Centre for Skills, Development and Training”. The Centre was then formally established as an independent entity under new operating guidelines, a Board of Directors and the appointment of a Chief Administrative Officer.

In 2015, The Centre underwent a review of its Board governance model and a new By-Law was

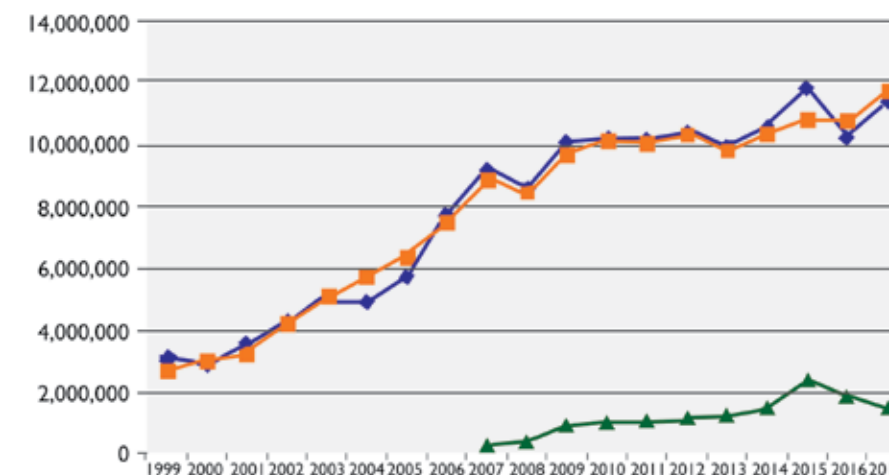
established to align with current needs and future direction. In 2016, a new Chief Administrative Officer was hired and The Centre opened a new head office. In 2017, The Centre will open a new Skilled Trades training facility: both new sites are located in Burlington.

As the next step in The Centre’s evolution, the organization was granted charitable status in 2016, opening up new possibilities for future growth and innovation.

In the 18 years from incorporation in 1998 to 2016, The Centre has grown from serving a few thousand people a year and annual revenues of approximately 2.5 million to over 19,000 people served with annual revenues in excess of 10 million dollars.

REVENUE/EXPENSES 1999 - 2017

- ◆— TOTAL REVENUE
- TOTAL EXPENSES
- ▲— RESERVE



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



This past year has been a remarkable and busy one at The Centre, marked by some significant changes.

The role of Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) was taken over by Lisa Rizzato, a long-time Manager at The Centre, who I am confident is more than up for the challenge of leading The Centre into the future. The Centre's Board of Directors was also pleased to welcome two new community members, Natalie Greer-McIlwaine and Gulzar Ladhani.

On the facility side, The Centre committed a lot of time and energy to move its headquarters and Skilled Trades training to two new locations in Burlington. Client programs and Centre administration are now located at a new head office on South Service Road. Pre-apprenticeship skilled trades programs will move to The Centre for Skilled Trades, to open at a new dedicated facility on North Service Road in 2017.

The Centre's many programs continue to extend the reach of the Halton District School Board (HDSB) into the Halton community and support a diversity of clients and their varying needs. The Centre's efforts to more closely align with HDSB's Gary Allan High School provides seamless transition for Adult and Continuing Education students between academic upgrading and career development services. Both the HDSB and The Centre have adopted new programming this year to help welcome Syrian refugees as a part of our community. In November, The Centre held a successful Take Our Kids to Work Day event, offering a full day of relevant programming to 27 Grade 9 students who would not have otherwise had the opportunity to participate in this national initiative.

The Centre's Board of Directors and I are honoured to be part of The Centre's success in 2015-16, and look forward to Lisa and her team leading The Centre towards an exciting future.

Stuart Miller

Director of Education, HDSB
President, The Centre Board of Directors

MESSAGE FROM THE CAO



After 11 years on The Centre's leadership team, I was honoured to take on the role of Chief Administrative Officer this past May. I wish to take this opportunity to extend sincere thanks to my Centre colleagues, Centre Board Members, Halton District School Board (HDSB) Trustees, partners, government funders and other community leaders for welcoming me and providing support throughout this transition.

I am pleased to share highlights of The Centre's many accomplishments this past year, which included some exciting changes related to Centre facilities in Burlington. In June, The Centre opened its new headquarters at 3350 South Service Road, which houses our leadership and administrative teams, and a range of programs and services for clients: Employment Services, English as a Second

Language, Settlement Services, literacy upgrading and services for employers. In addition, The Centre's new Skilled Trades training facility will open in early 2017 at 3335 North Service Road, from which full-time, fee-based and government-funded pre-apprenticeship training programs will be offered.

The Centre continues to prioritize service integration for clients. Internally, our various service areas have been better aligned to ensure clients experience seamless transitions between programs. Externally, The Centre continued to participate in many working groups to support newcomers to Canada, women, youth and unemployed adults. The Centre's partnership with the HDSB was further strengthened as we continued our work with Gary Allan High School, The Centre's credit-granting counterpart, to create a more integrated and coordinated employment, education and training service model.

A defining moment for The Centre this year was being granted charitable status from the Canada Revenue Agency. This will open up brand new possibilities to further extend our reach into the community through access to new funding grant opportunities, as well as corporate and private donations.

There were also significant staffing changes on our leadership team in 2016. I am confident The Centre's newly formed team has the experience, talent, vision and commitment to lead us strategically into the future.

Lisa Rizzato

Chief Administrative Officer, The Centre

WHO WE ARE

The Centre is a not-for-profit, charitable organization with an 18-year history serving the Halton community. The Centre is independently operated as an arms-length affiliate of the Halton District School Board. We offer a wide range of services to help people get on a path to career success. Headquartered in Burlington, The Centre operates six other satellite sites in Milton, Burlington, Oakville and Mississauga. At The Centre, we pride ourselves in taking a holistic approach to serving clients, as reflected in our wide range of programming and our integrated approach to service delivery.

OUR MISSION

To provide people with opportunities to build a better future.

OUR VISION

To be the recognized leader in career and workforce development, in support of strong communities.

SERVICES AT A GLANCE



Employment Services:

Individuals receive help with job search and/or career planning.



Employer Services:

Employers receive assistance to recruit, retain, develop and transition their workforce.



Pre-Apprenticeship Skilled Trades Training:

Training is offered in construction, electrical and millwright/machinist trades where students get job-ready in less than six months.

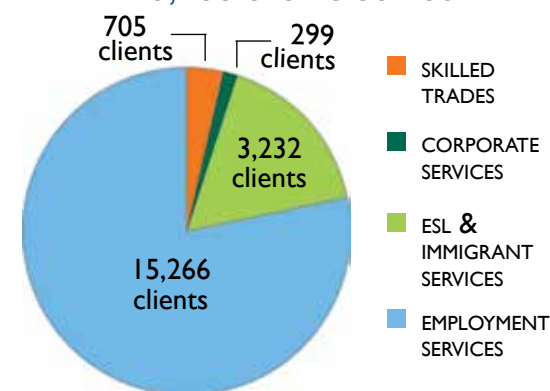


ESL & Immigrant Services:

Clients new to Canada get support in settling into the community, finding work in their field and improving their English language skills.

IMPACT 2015-2016

19,268 clients served



"That one discussion I had with an employment advisor at The Centre changed my life and experience in Canada."

Employment Services client

CENTRE LEADERSHIP & OVERSIGHT

The Centre's new leadership team is a diverse group of experienced professionals, dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of Centre clients. The team works collaboratively to ensure high-quality, integrated service for clients; operating with transparency, integrity and fiscal prudence. The team is also committed to fostering a positive workplace culture through various initiatives to position The Centre as an employer of choice.



Lisa Rizzato
Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)



Jane Ball
Executive Assistant to the CAO



Scott Campbell
Accounting Manager



Lorna Hart
Business Development Manager



Raluca Lazar
Service Delivery Manager



Iqbal Merchant
Controller



Vanessa Poulton
Human Resources Advisor

2015 - 2016 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Centre is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors that includes three ex-officio representatives of the Halton District School Board and elected representatives of the Halton Community. The contributions, skills and expertise that they bring to The Centre on an ongoing basis are invaluable. The Centre's Annual General Meeting is held each year in January.



Stuart Miller
President
Director of Education, HDSB



Anne-Marie Harte
Vice President
National Research Council of Canada



Lisa Schoenberger
Treasurer



Lisa Rizzato
Secretary/Ex-officio CAO



David Boag
Ex-officio director
Associate Director, HDSB



Leah Reynolds
Ex-Officio Director
HDSB Trustee



Natalie Greer-McIlwaine
Director
HR Manager, Conservation Halton



Ron Harper
Director
President, Cogent Power Inc.



Kelly Hoey
Director
Executive Director, HIEC



Gulzar Ladhani
Director

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Program Description

The Centre delivers a wide range of employment services on behalf of Employment Ontario, a program of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development with a goal of helping Ontarians find sustainable employment. Using a holistic service model that brings individuals, community partners and employers together, The Centre provides the following services free-of-charge at three locations in Halton Region and one in Peel Region (Mississauga):

- Job search assistance, résumé writing and career planning
- Services for employers
- Access to free training workshops
- Information and assistance with Second Career funding

CLIENT EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SUPPORTS

The Centre's Employment Services administers supports for clients to provide temporary assistance to address financial barriers to participation. Among the four sites, a total of \$47,214 was provided to clients in 2015-2016.

In 2015-2016, The Centre's Employment Services:

- Helped 2,115 clients find employment
- Received 25,351 visits to sites in Burlington, Milton, Oakville and Mississauga



CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

"Excellent resources, at my fingertips - always."

"(Employment Advisor) ... provided detailed information to point me in the direction to choosing a career path. She was genuine and kind."

"Excellent job and good information. I felt empowered and confident."

CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

AHMAD MEFLEH ALSHAHMA

Ahmad Alshahma is a devoted husband and father of three. He's originally from the city of Daraa in Syria, where he was an electrical instructor.

The Alshahma family left Syria in 2013 for a refugee camp in Jordan where they stayed for three years. In July 2016, they landed in Canada through Canada's sponsored program for Syrian refugees.

Upon arrival in Canada, Ahmad enrolled in The Centre's English as a Second Language (ESL) program to strengthen his English language skills. At the same time, The Centre worked with Ahmad to secure him a job at Paramount Fine Foods in Milton.

Ahmad is grateful for the new home and opportunities he and his family have found in Canada, "...it is a safe country for me and my family. I'm so grateful for all the help, guidance and support that I have received since I landed in this beautiful country."

Life in Canada has not been without its challenges, however, with the support of The Centre's services, he and his family are thriving.



CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

FRASER BROWN



Fraser Brown worked at a warehouse job where he operated a forklift day-in and day-out. When news hit that the warehouse was closing, Fraser found himself at a cross-roads, recognizing that without a high school education his job options were significantly limited.

Fraser made an appointment at The Centre and met with an Employment Advisor who introduced him to the Second Career program. Fraser was a successful applicant and enrolled in The Centre's Pre-apprenticeship Electrical program. Here his commitment and work ethic were recognized when he was chosen to receive The Centre's Ethel Gardiner Scholarship award. In six months Fraser was job-ready and today he is proud to be working at Avvia Renewable Energy.

Now on a path towards success, Fraser is working in partnership with The Centre and Gary Allan High School as a mature student to obtain his Ontario Secondary School Diploma. Fraser received the support needed to pursue and achieve the career of his dreams. "Together The Centre and Gary Allan have played an integral role in helping me achieve both goals of an apprenticeship and obtaining my Grade 12 diploma."

CLIENT SUCCESS STORIES

ANA SOFIA ESTRADA

On New Year's Eve 2015, Ana Sofia Estrada (Sofia) and her family travelled from Peru to Canada. Eager to pursue her dream, she enrolled in the Enhanced Language Training (ELT) program at The Centre. Learning English was only the beginning; the ELT program provided Sofia with boundless opportunities to build her skills and expand her knowledge. The Centre's ELT staff worked with Sofia on her résumé, helped prepare her for job interviews and taught her about Canadian work culture.

Shortly after beginning ELT, Sofia learned of the Women in Skilled Trades (WIST) program. An interior designer by trade, she was eager to pursue training that would complement her previous work experience and passion.

After attending an interview for WIST, Sofia recognized she needed to improve her math skills and enrolled in The Centre's Doorways Program.

The WIST program received over 200 applicants and Sofia was among the 20 women that were accepted. Enthusiastic to learn something new, Sofia brought excitement and passion to the program. She was recognized for her effort and received a scholarship, sponsored by the Halton Learning Foundation.

"I was impacted by the expertise of The Centre's capable staff to manage, guide, embrace and create a better version of ourselves. Thank you for the life-changing opportunity."





EMPLOYER SERVICES

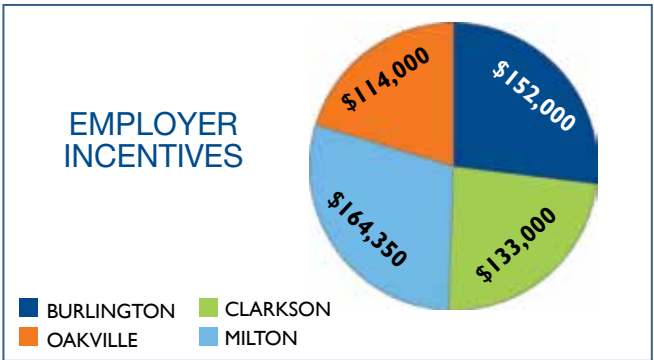
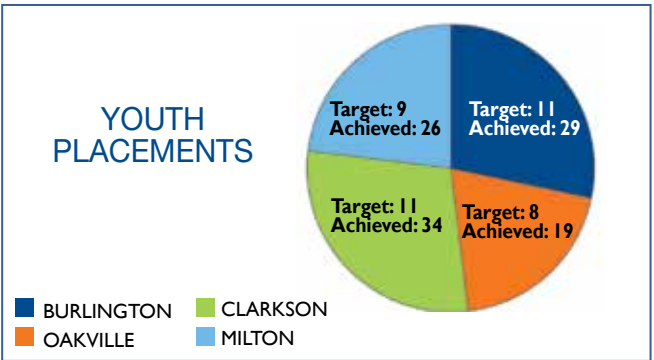
The Centre provides employers with professional, no-free assistance to recruit, hire and train candidates. Services include:

- Support to develop targeted job postings
- Pre-screening and recommendation of motivated and ready-to-work candidates
- Access to internationally trained professionals and skilled trades program graduates
- On-the-job coaching support for new hires to support job retention
- Customized technical training in the construction, electrical, millwright and machinist trades
- Job fairs

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

A key area of The Centre’s employer services is the administration of government-sponsored financial incentives to align Centre clients with businesses that are hiring and training in the local and surrounding communities. Eligible employers receive subsidies to offset wages, provide apprenticeship signing bonuses, support work experience opportunities and skill/employability assessments for participants in work trial placements.

In the 2015-2016 fiscal year, The Centre received additional funding for Youth Placements that supported the hiring of young people under the age of 29. This funding came with a combined target of 39 youth to be placed into employment. The four Employment Services sites achieved a total of 108 placements – exceeding the targeted placement goal by 69 people.



EMPLOYER SERVICES



The Centre administers the Canada-Ontario Job Grant (COJG), a joint initiative of the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario. COJG supports employer training needs by providing grants to businesses that cover up to two-thirds of the cost of third party training for their staff, up to a maximum of \$10,000 per employee.

Last year, The Centre approved 117 grants under the COJG program, administering over one million dollars in employer training subsidies.

81 COMPANIES RECEIVED COJG GRANTS IN 2015 - 2016

This sample of companies represent 15 different industries:

- 26 Manufacturing
- 15 Professional & Technical Services
- 5 Construction
- 5 Wholesale Trade
- 3 Retail Trade
- 3 Educational Services
- 2 Healthcare & Social Assistance
- 1 each from 7 other sectors

“We recently partnered with The Centre and our experience has been extremely positive... It was a true win-win experience as our staff benefited from a great training program and our organization was able to receive a significant training grant!”

Blanco Canada

“The Centre was tremendously helpful in our company’s application for the Canada-Ontario Job Grant. The service provided was exceptionally professional and very efficient. We look forward to the opportunity to work together again.”

Gordon Food Service

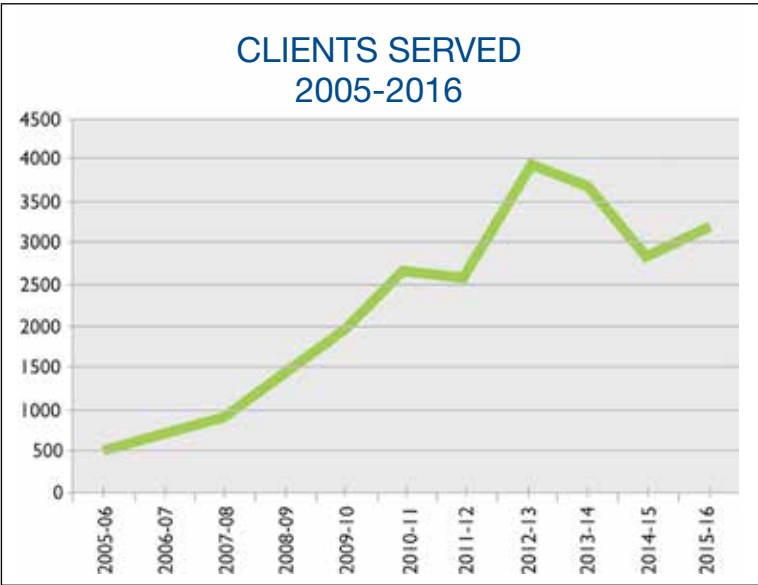
ESL & IMMIGRANT SERVICES

The Centre's English as a Second Language (ESL) and Immigrant Services department delivers a number of free programs and services to help the growing number of immigrants settling in Halton. Services include:

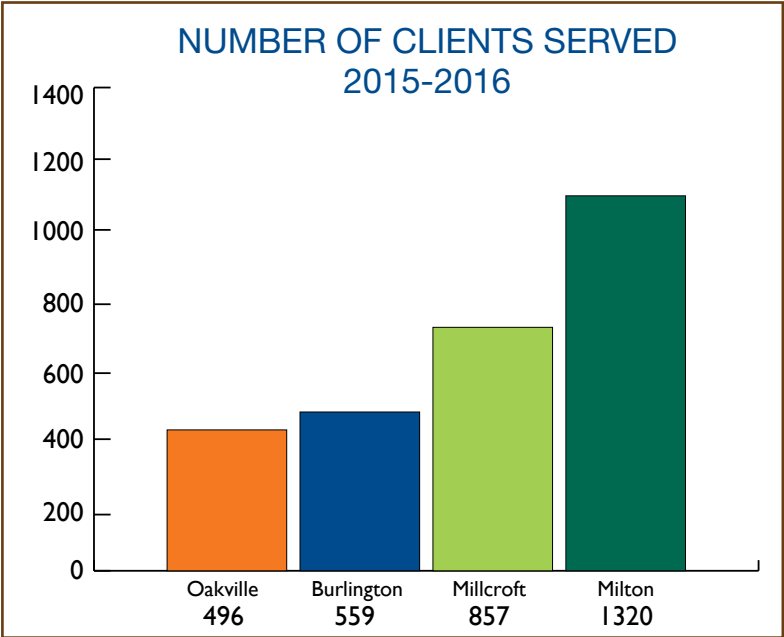
- English language instruction
- Settlement information
- Pre-employment training
- Networking opportunities with other immigrants
- Specialized Language Training in the workplace

In 2015-2016, The Centre's ESL & Immigrant Services:

- Served 3,232 clients
- Provided 175,087 hours of language training to 1,690 immigrants to Canada
- Exceeded their targets for clients served by almost 100 per cent



ESL & IMMIGRANT SERVICES



"I am so happy about my English class. When I speak to someone I am more confident in my English. Now I know more new words and I learn more English. I learn about different cultures, rules and regulations. I don't need to have a supervisor explain so much because now I can understand a lot more myself."

Mary

"I have more confidence to speak small talk with other employees. Before this ESL in the Workplace class I would use English only 20-30% of the time and usually just say 'yes' or 'no' answers. Now I use full sentences 90-100% of the time."

Jovelyn

"Being taught in ELT how to effectively write customized cover letters and résumés according to the different jobs in the market, as well as being trained for interviews and learning about the mentality of the Canadian employer were essential issues for me."

P.V.

CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

BLAKE BROOKS



Growing up Blake Brooks was passionate about sports and an avid athlete. He hoped for a career playing professional baseball and was even offered scholarships. When these aspirations weren't realized, Blake eventually turned to The Centre.

Having held many different jobs by the age of 26, Blake enrolled in the Get In Gear (GIG) program, which sent him on the path of pursuing a career in skilled trades. Blake's commitment to success and strong work ethic was evident and during the 18-week career and trades exploration program he was a class leader.

During the GIG program Blake naturally gravitated towards the fields of home renovation and electrical. "A year ago my life had no real goal. After being a part of the GIG program, I have a clear direction. Thanks to The Centre, its instructors and the Get In Gear program for helping me create my own path."

Blake is now a Lead Foreman at Redline Renovations and works on projects he is passionate about.

CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

VICTOR SANTACRUZ

Victor Santacruz and his family can relate to the experience of newcomers to Canada. The idea of starting over in a new country, looking for work and finding ways to support a growing family is both understood and championed by Victor.

As Executive Director at The Canadian Nursery Landscape Association (CNLA), Victor is committed to providing a sustainable, positive work environment.

The CNLA began working with The Centre for recruitment and hiring support in 2004 and eight of the 15 employees the CNLA has on staff today were originally Centre clients.

The CNLA is "honoured and grateful to work with The Centre," Victor expressed. To be a successful organization the CNLA "looks for individuals that are inspired, willing to take initiative and have what it takes to see a project through."

Past hires from The Centre have successfully moved on to fulfil roles such as CEO of the CNLA Alberta office, graphic designers and public service employees.



SKILLED TRADES – FEE-BASED PROGRAMS:

The Centre is recognized in the Halton community and beyond as a provider of high-quality, industry-standard skilled training programs. Both fee-based and funded skilled trades programs support individuals to obtain the training they need to work in the field of their choice. Dedicated supports help successful graduates get their first training-related job and assist students wishing to pursue apprenticeships. Programs offered in 2015-2016 prepared students for work in the construction, manufacturing and electrical sectors.

■ Pre-apprenticeship Electrical (Offered since 2000)

Training includes:

Electrical installations, circuits wiring, safety codes, network cabling and more.

■ Pre-apprenticeship Industrial Millwright Mechanic/ Machinist Program (Offered since 2000)

Training provided for:

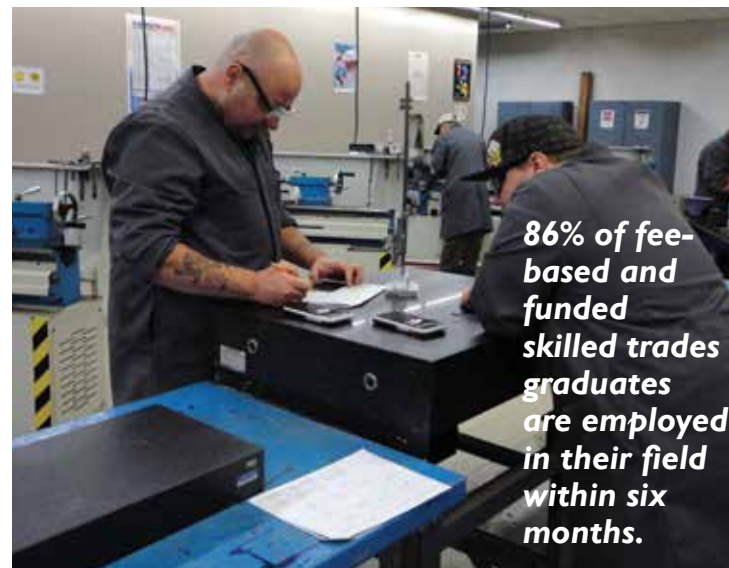
Electrician and electrical apprentices, industrial electrician and industrial millwright trades.

■ Home Renovation (Offered since 2008)

Training provided for:

New home construction and general home renovation skills.

SKILLED TRADES 2015 - 2016



“The amount of knowledge (from Electrical Pre-apprenticeship program) offered and attained is impressive. I feel prepared.”

2016 Electrical Graduate

SKILLED TRADES – FUNDED PROGRAMS:

In 2015-2016, The Centre delivered a number of programs free of charge, through federal and provincial funding, to provide participants with practical training and paid work placements.

■ Get in Gear (GIG) (Offered since 2007)

This career and trades exploration program, funded by Service Canada, focuses on the construction, manufacturing and electrical trades.

■ Industrial Millwright & Electrical Pre-apprenticeship for Youth (Offered since 2012)

In November 2015, The Centre received funding again from the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development for 15 students.

■ Women in Skilled Trades (WIST) – Enhanced General Carpentry (Offered since 1999)

In the 2015-2016 fiscal year, the WIST program, funded by the Ontario Women's Directorate, provided training to 20 students.

“Get In Gear allowed me to see if I had any interest in one of the three trades, it bettered my résumé and made my goals for the next couple years much clearer.”

2016 GIG Graduate



95% of Trades students were satisfied with The Centre's services in 2015 - 2016

CENTRE STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION

On September 21, 2016 The Centre held a grand opening event at its new headquarters. Centre staff welcomed local dignitaries, government funders, community partners and members of the business community. One of the highlights of the event was a flash mob dance performance by over 20 of The Centre's staff.



STAFF RECOGNITION



The Centre is proud of its 108 staff members, many of whom have been with the organization for many years. The Service Recognition Awards acknowledge 5+ year employment milestones for staff. Fifteen employees were recognized at a special luncheon held in their honour in September 2016.

Over the course of the year, 11 staff were recognized with STAR (Special Thanks and Recognition) Awards for their above-and-beyond commitment to client service.

CENTRE STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

STAFF GIVING BACK TO OUR COMMUNITY



Throughout each year, Centre staff give back to the community.

In June 2016, over 20 Centre staff participated in the Heart and Stroke Foundation's Big Bike event, raising over \$1,000.

In December 2016, hundreds of pounds of non-perishable food was donated by staff from our seven locations to local food banks in Burlington, Milton, Oakville and Mississauga.

TAKE OUR KIDS TO WORK DAY AT THE CENTRE

On November 2, 2016 The Centre held a Take Our Kids to Work Day event. This is a national initiative where Grade 9 students spend the day at a parents', friends' or relatives' workplace to explore their interests in different career options. Knowing that not all Grade 9 students would have an opportunity to participate in the traditional model, Centre staff wanted to offer an alternative program. The Centre hosted 27 students in a day-long program featuring workshops on résumé writing, job search, health and safety in the workplace and hands-on skilled trades exploration.



THANK YOU FUNDERS & PARTNERS

The Centre is dedicated to providing people opportunities to build a better future and assisting employers to recruit, hire, train and support their employees. We could not achieve such success without the support of our many funders and partners. The Centre recognizes and thanks the following organizations for collaborating with us towards building stronger communities.

FUNDERS



PARTNERS



WHERE WE ARE





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