

# PROGRAM

## The 19th Annual Immigrants of Distinction Awards “Inspiring New Stories”

### **MASTERS OF CEREMONY**

Jayme Doll, Global News Calgary  
Doug Dirks, CBC Calgary

### **O CANADA**

Jennifer Humphries-Micallef

### **WELCOME**

Josephine Pon, ISC Chair of the Board of Directors  
Krystyna Biel, CEO, Immigrant Services Calgary

### **GREETINGS**

His Worship, Naheed Nenshi  
Mayor of Calgary

The Honourable Gordon Dirks, MLA  
Minister of Education

Mr. Devinder Shory, MP

### **ENTERTAINMENT**

Justine Tyrell

### **AWARD PRESENTATIONS**

### **ENTERTAINMENT**

Yumeng Wang

### **CLOSING REMARKS**

Hala Dehais, Chair of the Immigrants of Distinction Awards, 2015



# About Immigrant Services Calgary

**Vision:** Immigrants and their families participate fully in an integrated and cohesive Canadian society.

**Mission:** Immigrant Services Calgary is committed to being a comprehensive settlement agency working together with immigrants and their families to make Canada home.

**Values:** We are passionate, collaborative, accountable, and ethical leaders in settlement services. We believe that people come first. We are committed to quality services for a diverse Canadian community.

## Board of Directors

Josephine Pon (Chair)  
Nicole Jelley (Vice-Chair)  
Raymond C.T. Cheung (Treasurer)  
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Roland Osske  
Hala Dehais  
Adam Foster  
Hilary Lungu  
Krystyna Biel (Chief Executive Officer)

## Immigrants of Distinction Awards 2015 Steering Committee

Hala Dehais (Chair)	Hilary Lungu
Krystyna Biel	Robert Blain
Cindy DeVouge	Maria Sol Freire
Wendy Auger	Jamie Carrick
Ho-Man Chan	Danuta Krajewska
Shiraz Amiry	Barb McIntosh
Jayashree Bhat	Shao Wen Yang
Michelle Htun-Kay	Juan Torres

# Welcome

Welcome to the 19th annual Immigrants of Distinction Awards (IDA)! We are delighted to take you on a journey this evening. A journey that will introduce you to the complex, talented and inspiring lives of our finalists and recipients. We invite you to take a glimpse at how their lives have unfolded in Canada and how the gifts they bring to this community, as well as those they have gained from this community, warrant their being highlighted in our many esteemed categories presented this evening. These individuals represent professionals, business and community leaders as well as organizations that showcase diversity and youth who demonstrate what this vibrant community can expect for its future.

Our theme is **"Inspiring New Stories"** and we believe that everyone in this room is a part of the Immigrant Services Calgary story, the finalists, recipients and beneficiaries story and the journey that is yet to be created in the connections you make this evening. We would like to encourage you to reach out to the neighbor at your table or in the room at large, the neighbor that may give you a new perspective. We believe the distance between us, that is sometimes apparent, can be bridged through knowledge, understanding, and compassion. This room is filled with opportunities to appreciate the many world views, gifts, and perspectives represented here tonight.

This event is our annual highlight at Immigrant Services Calgary. It is a time when we can bring together our funders, sponsors, community and corporate partners, volunteers and staff to celebrate where our finalists and recipients began, where they are today, and envision where they will be in the future. We can celebrate what they bring to Calgary and the message of hope and inspiration they offer to the newcomer just starting their life in Canada. We want the more than 25,000 beneficiaries that come through our doors each year to know they may one day be awarded in these same ways through their accomplishments and gifts they bring to the Calgary community.

This journey would not be complete without all of you! We do hope that you leave this event inspired by our finalists and recipients, further engaged with the community leaders and new immigrants here this evening, and compelled to make this one of many chapters yet to be discovered in your relationship with Immigrant Services Calgary. The immigrant populations represent our neighbors, co-workers, and our friends of today and tomorrow. You are with us this evening which tells us you believe in the great work we do. We invite you to reach out, share your connection to us and have dialogue on how you can inspire and support the work that we do in assisting the newcomers of today to become the leaders of tomorrow.

Thank you for joining us this evening. **Let's continue to write Inspiring New Stories together!**



Josephine Pon  
Chair of the Board



Hala Dehais  
IDA Chair



Krystyna Biel  
Chief Executive Officer



# Thank you to our hosts

## Jayne Doll, Global News

Jayne Doll is an award-winning journalist and has been a proud member of the Global News team for more than a decade. She grew up in Peace River, Alberta where she hit the airwaves for the first time at the age of 14 hosting a teen radio program on the local AM station, and subsequently studied communications at the University of Calgary and broadcast journalism at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT).



Jayne has received recognition and awards for her work in categories from special-feature reporting to breaking news and has reported on human rights issues in East and West Africa, Central America, Canada and the United States. She lives in Banff where she takes refuge in mountain living with her better half, Tommy, and their two cats.

## Doug Dirks, CBC Calgary

You can't turn on the radio or television in Calgary without hearing from Doug Dirks. A 20-year veteran with CBC Calgary, Doug has hosted the Homestretch on radio, the local TV news, and shows on CBC News Network.



A big sports fan, Doug has also worked as a sports commentator, covering everything from Stanley Cup matches to Olympic showdowns.

Doug is no stranger to the academic world. He's studied at McGill University, Mount Royal University, and Humber College. He is married to a mental health professional, which comes in handy because he's the father of two teenagers and continues to struggle with his golf game.



THE GOVERNOR GENERAL - LE GOUVERNEUR GÉNÉRAL

It gives me great pleasure to send my warmest greetings and congratulations to all those being honoured at the Immigrants of Distinction Awards gala.

When we give—whether in time, talent or money—we grow as individuals and as a community. As governor general, I firmly believe Canada has benefited richly from the contributions of professionals, volunteers and philanthropists who have dedicated themselves to helping others. Today, Immigrant Services Calgary honours those new Canadians who have demonstrated a stalwart commitment to enriching the lives of their fellow Canadians.

I congratulate all of you on this honour and I thank you for making Canada a smarter, more caring place to live.

David Johnston

February 2015





March 6, 2015

Greetings from the Prime Minister

*It is with great pleasure that I extend my warmest greetings to all those attending the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Immigrants of Distinction Awards, 'Inspiring New Stories,' hosted by Immigrant Services Calgary (ISC).*

*For two decades, the ISC has celebrated the remarkable success stories of Calgary's immigrants and refugees. Tonight, you have gathered to honour some truly exceptional individuals who have added a page to that proud story. I am delighted to offer my warmest congratulations to this year's award recipients for their singular contributions to the growth and prosperity of our great city.*

*Canada is a nation of newcomers bonded together by our common quest for freedom, democracy and opportunity. I commend the ISC for its longstanding dedication to helping newcomers realize their full potential in our peaceful, pluralistic society.*

*On behalf of the Government of Canada, please accept my best wishes for a memorable evening and continued success.*

*Sincerely,*

*The Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada*



**Message from the  
Lieutenant Governor of Alberta**



It is my sincere pleasure to join in honouring the extraordinary individuals at the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Immigrants of Distinction Awards and thank them for becoming proud Canadians and making such enriching contributions to Alberta.

I have had the good fortune during my lifetime to travel around the world, encountering and learning from many different cultures and lifestyles. Every culture opens endless possibilities and has its own unique strengths and wonderful qualities. As it happens, this diversity can be found right here in Alberta. You have made that leap of faith that brings you to Canada, and with it, you bring your courage and strength, your hopes and dreams, your inspiration. With true Canadian spirit, you share this with us, enriching the lives of Calgarians through so many different avenues. As an integral and invaluable part of Alberta, your influences on our society are incredible.

As Her Majesty the Queen's representative in Alberta, I thank you for your contributions and wish you every success for the future.

His Honour Col. (Ret'd) The Honourable Donald S. Ethell OC OMM AOE MSC CD LLD  
Lieutenant Governor of Alberta



Premier of Alberta

Office of the Premier, 307 Legislature Building, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5K 2B8

## Message from Honourable Jim Prentice Premier of Alberta

*On behalf of the Government of Alberta, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 19th Annual Immigrants of Distinction Awards.*

*Alberta is truly a cultural mosaic of people from eclectic and diverse backgrounds, and our province is consistently inspired by the rich knowledge and dreams of the thousands of newcomers who choose to make Alberta home. Immigrant families enhance our provincial landscape and enrich our communities by sharing their culture with Albertans.*

*Since 1997, Immigrant Services Calgary has celebrated the successes of newcomers and their innovative and positive impacts within the community. Your commitment to enriching the lives of immigrants and their families continues to make Calgary and Alberta attractive on a global scale.*

*Newcomers can face a wealth of challenges including learning a new language, finding a job, and settling in to a new culture and way of life. Those recognized at this ceremony represent countless accomplished and driven immigrants who inspire communities across Alberta. I congratulate every award recipient for having the courage to realize their vision and contribute to this great province.*

*Congratulations to all award recipients and best wishes for a successful event.*

Jim Prentice

March 6, 2015



NAHEED K. NENSHI



March 2015

### A MESSAGE FROM MAYOR NENSHI

On behalf of my City Council colleagues and the citizens of Calgary, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2015 Immigrants of Distinction Awards Gala.

These awards allow us the opportunity to recognize the newcomers to our city that contribute to making Calgary a vibrant and welcoming place. It is important for us to celebrate the success of those immigrants and refugees who have chosen to make Calgary their home and in doing so, have had a positive impact on our community.

I would like to congratulate those being recognized this evening and encourage the award recipients to keep doing the great work they do every day for this city. Those individuals and organizations that provide support, encouragement and resources must also be commended for their hard work and dedication.

Sincerely,

Naheed K. Nenshi  
MAYOR

Historic City Hall, 700 Macleod Trail South, #8069, Calgary, AB, Canada T2P 2M5  
T 403.268.5622 F 403.268.8130 E themayor@calgary.ca

Proudly serving a great city

# 2015 Award Categories

## Arts and Culture

The Arts and Culture Award is presented to an immigrant who merits recognition in an artistic endeavor, within the visual or performing arts fields.

## Business

The Business Award is presented to an immigrant who has achieved success in the creation or operation of a business in Calgary or surrounding areas.

## Community Service

The Community Service Award is presented to an immigrant who has provided valuable service to the city of Calgary and the immigrant communities, either as a volunteer or as a professional.

## Achievement Under 40 Award

This award is presented to an immigrant under 40 years of age who has had remarkable success and made significant achievements in his or her chosen career path in a relatively short period of time. Overcoming significant obstacles, he or she has demonstrated perseverance and dedication.

## Lifetime Achievement Award

This award is presented to an individual who has achieved outstanding success in his or her chosen career path or professional field. This individual will have made significant contributions to our city in the areas of professional achievement, community building and philanthropic endeavours.

## Organizational Diversity Award

This award is presented to a business, government or non-profit organization or media outlet that is leading the field in implementing diversity initiatives in the workplace. The winning company will be a shining example of true labor market integration and will have made significant contributions in serving ethnically diverse client groups.

## Hadassah Ksienski Distinguished Service Award

This award is presented to an individual who has demonstrated leadership, innovation, dedication and a spirit of compassion in the areas of immigrant services, program development, administration and/or advocacy. This person will have made important contributions to enhancing the lives of immigrants in Canada at the local, provincial and/or national levels through his/her actions in professional, volunteer and/or academic capacities

## Youth Scholarships

Youth Scholarships are awarded to immigrant youth between the ages of 14 and 25 who have made an outstanding contribution or significant achievement in one or more of the following area: arts and culture, sports, community and volunteer activities and/or academics.

# Arts and Culture

Toshi Jackson



**With a pep in her dance step and a drive for the arts, this passionate artist is “doing it all”**

Toshi Jackson is a tireless worker, always attempting to better herself and the community in which she lives. She has performed for numerous charitable organizations, in particular the Children’s Cancer Society and many senior citizen homes in Calgary.

Toshi is a professional performer, having originated Toshi Jackson and the Silhouettes. She performed internationally with the New Supremes and decided to take a permanent residence in Calgary in 1988, after performing at the Calgary Winter Olympic games. She has successfully operated her own vocal and performance business in Calgary for many years and always puts on student performances at Christmas. A noteworthy achievement of her career and community involvement was performing the opening act for The Temptations, at a fund-raising event for the purchase of western Canada’s first trauma RAPTOR operating room. In 2011, Toshi was voted “Top 25 Canadian Immigrant,” receiving an award for her outstanding achievements. She truly enriches the cultural and community life in Calgary by bringing her many varied experiences in the music business from Los Angeles.

Toshi’s perseverance, dedication, love and passion for teaching and singing have made her a successful entrepreneur and talented performer who continuously gives back to Calgary.



## Arts and Culture

Vania Dimitrova



**This lady not only “brings her gifts forward” she is “paying her gifts forward”**

Vania Dimitrova is an internationally recognized artist who has resided in Calgary for the last 16 years. Her artwork has been displayed over the years in many public and private art galleries in Bulgaria, Malta, New York, and Canada. Her inspiration is often drawn from her life experience as an immigrant as well from the books she reads.

Originally from Bulgaria, she began studying art and playing piano from a very young age. At the age of 14, she was selected as a top student in the admission competition at the art school Tcanko Lavernov, in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. She then went on to complete her Master’s degree at the Academy of Fine Arts in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Vania’s gift is her ability to pass down her experience as an artist to the younger generations, thus encouraging them to develop their imaginations and sense of creativity. She has been working as a volunteer at the Earl Grey and Sunalta schools, helping to foster a sense of art among the students there. For the last four years, she has organized private art programs for both schools as well as for Elbow Park Elementary School. Between 2005 and 2010, she was the founder/organizer of the Christmas fund-raising event at St. Peter the Aleut Orthodox Church, the proceeds of which were donated to the church building fund.

## Business

Girish Agrawal



Award category sponsored by



**Humble beginnings to financial freedom—and this young achiever wants it for everyone**

Girish Agrawal first came to Canada with virtually nothing. Since then, he has helped thousands of Canadians better their own financial futures. Described by many as an extremely dedicated individual, he is always willing to lend a helping hand.

Since moving to Canada, Girish has achieved several career goals, including that of Chartered Accountant (CA) and Certified Financial Planner (CFP). It is no surprise that he was nominated for Top 40 under 40 in 2008. Girish has built a successful financial practice from scratch at the Investors Group, employing a team of associates. As one of the top-performing advisors at the Investors Group, Girish devotes his time to teaching the public about saving and investing, and shares his knowledge through speaking engagements with charitable groups. He is always willing to volunteer to help others and make an impact.

Born in Mumbai, later raised in Delhi, Girish began working at age five to help contribute to the family finances, and thus learned the value of perseverance at an early age. He is an inspiration to everyone around him, a beacon who has helped shine a light on and improve the lives of numerous individuals and businesses in Calgary.



# Community Service

Carolina Dalglish



Award category sponsored by



**She brings an abundance of joy and laughter to any room**

Carolina is the type of person who can transform a room with her laughter, abundant joy, and caring personality. She facilitates positive change in others, and her favourite saying is "It's all good." Her empathetic nature has a ripple effect on everything she does.

When the recession hit in the 90's Carolina lost her job, along with many other professionals. She became a volunteer at Calgary Immigrant Women's Association and later at the Women's Centre. Unaware that this involvement would change her life and become her calling, Carolina found her volunteerism slowly turning into a full-time career. At the Women's Centre, Carolina was sought out by many women because she spoke Spanish. In no time, women came from all over to see Carolina at the Women's Centre. Humorously, her colleagues compared her to Britney Spears - "a victim of her own success" - her support so valued in the community that she could barely manage the work load. Carolina is a member of the Immigrant Advisory Table, a group of individuals passionate about building Calgary as a welcoming community. As a dedicated member of this team she helped create their three-year strategic plan.

Carolina and her family left Chile for political reasons when she was a young girl, arriving to Canada in the early 70's when little help was available for newcomers. As the oldest child, Carolina took on a great responsibility by helping her parents navigate their new homeland. It's because of dedicated workers like Carolina that these critical services for new immigrants exist.

# Community Service

Gurmit Kaur Sarpal



Award category sponsored by



**This community leader understands that in helping others we help ourselves**

Gurmit Sarpal has made the world around her a better place to live. She is revered within her community on how anyone can live an exemplary life.

In the late 70's, Gurmit immigrated to Canada. Aside from the cultural shock she experienced upon arrival, she was also battling severe depression. To combat this black cloud, Gurmit took it upon herself to change her life by becoming involved in the community. From teaching traditional Indian music to children to writing health and spirituality articles for South Asian newspapers and radio shows, she completely transformed her outlook and influenced those around her. It wasn't long before she was approached with an offer of her own mental and physical health program on South Asian radio and television. In 2006, Gurmit founded the Royal Women Cultural Association, which has empowered hundreds of immigrant women to come forward to end tolerance for domestic abuse and violence. She has helped increase their self-esteem and nurture their artistic talents. Gurmit also volunteers her time with Alberta Health Services as a community health advocate. Before immigrating to Canada, she completed her nursing degree and uses her background to facilitate workshops such as "Better Choice, Better Health."

Gurmit has dedicated her life to enabling those in need. As a natural role model in the communities she touches, she is the person to remind us to reach out to others in need.





## Community Service

Yasmin Kothari



Award category sponsored by



### **By doing it herself, she is setting the stage for others to as well**

Despite a life that has seen major tragedy and disappointment, Yasmin Kothari has found a noble mission: to “help one soul at a time realize a brighter future.” She responds to challenges with a degree of courage and perseverance that is admired by all.

Born in Mumbai, India, Yasmin moved to East Africa with her family when she was eight. At 16, Yasmin was awarded a full four-year scholarship at a university in Washington DC leading to medical studies. Unfortunately, a few months later her father died and she had to find employment to support those who depended on her. Years later, tragedy struck once more, after Yasmin had immigrated to Canada. Her husband died, leaving her to raise their two children with very little money. Again, Yasmin persevered to provide for her family.

In 1992, the first group of Afghanistan resettlement refugees arrived in Calgary through the Focus Canada program and Yasmin volunteered to provide career counselling. She found the experience very gratifying and decided to make a vocational change from accounting to counselling. She has been with the Calgary Board of Education in that capacity for more than 10 years and also volunteers her time to provide life management and occupational training to unemployed youth at Motive Action.

Yasmin has volunteered countless hours and is heavily involved with the Career Development Association of Alberta. She has provided life-altering inspiration by showing that if, as an immigrant, she can overcome personal difficulties, so can anyone.

## Achievement Under 40

Ariam Wolde-Giorgis



### **A young advocate for greater inclusive community.**

Ariam Wolde-Giorgis, age 26, is an over-achiever, and that’s wonderful, especially as her energies are directed at building a more inclusive Calgary community. As an employee and volunteer of the Federation of Calgary Communities, she has developed solid working relationships with the City of Calgary, the United Way, Ethno Cultural Council of Calgary, Sunrise Community Resource Centre and other local community associations. Ariam connects people in need with those who can help. A case in point is the pilot program called “Engage U,” which engages residents in community life, identifies areas of need within the community, and builds strong relationships to address those needs.

She is also an active member of Calgary’s Eritrean community, directing women to health and financial-support services and building lesson plans for, and acting as mentor to, the Eritrean Language School. In addition, Ariam has also launched a student awards program to motivate, encourage and preserve Eritrean language learning.

Her passion for building an inclusive community stems from her family’s own migration experience. In 1992, when she was three years old, Ariam and her family arrived as refugees from Eritrea. Ariam is a remarkable young woman with a maturity beyond her years. Congratulations and best wishes for continued success in building a more inclusive Calgary community.



## Lifetime Achievement

Carolina Dalglish



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## Lifetime Achievement

Dr. Chan Wirasinghe



### **An internationally recognized civil engineer who is building civil engineering itself**

From a young boy growing up in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Dr. Chan Wirasinghe had a vision for building. This was not just limited to studying engineering, which he did at the University of Ceylon and later on obtaining his MSc and doctoral degree in transportation engineering from the University of California at Berkeley. Dr. Wirasinghe’s vision for building extended to building a first-class engineering school with an international reputation. During his tenure as Dean of the Schulich School of Engineering at the University of Calgary, he most certainly propelled the faculty to the leadership status it enjoys today. Accomplishments while Dean include the 100 per cent increase of both undergraduate and graduate engineering enrolments, the expansion to two additional teaching buildings (with a third being donated), and existing programs enhanced, several of which are nationally and internationally renowned.

His ambitions for building (or rebuilding in this case) continued to founding the International Institute for Infrastructure Renewal and Reconstruction, which was the result of the 2004 Tsunami. The institute is an international consortium of 20 universities that provide leadership in research, education, planning, design and implementation in disaster affected or underdeveloped regions.

For his extensive accomplishments, Dr. Chan is the recipient of numerous awards, including the 2000 Alberta Premier’s Silver Award of Excellence, the City of Calgary’s Citizen of the Year Award in 2006 and APEGA’s 2008 Volunteer Service Award.



# Organizational Diversity

Accenture



Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services, and outsourcing company with approximately 289,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Accenture's clients span the full range of industries around the world and include 91 of the FORTUNE Global 100, and more than three quarters of the FORTUNE Global 500.

Accenture takes the widest possible view of inclusion and diversity, going beyond abilities, age, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression to create an environment that welcomes all. Accenture believes that by embracing an inclusive culture that supports diverse talents, people will collaborate more successfully.

Accenture has its core values at its heart; corporate citizenship is an ongoing journey for Accenture. According to Chairman and CEO Pierre Nanterme, "Our diversity makes Accenture a better company on every dimension. Our unique ability to bring together multiple perspectives, backgrounds, cultures and skills—reflecting the clients we serve around the world—is extremely powerful in driving innovation and being relevant to our clients' needs."

# Organizational Diversity

Rogers



Rogers Communications Inc. is a diversified Canadian communications and media company. It is Canada's largest provider of wireless voice and data communications services and one of Canada's leading providers of cable television, high speed Internet and telephony services. Through Rogers Media, the company is engaged in radio and television broadcasting, televised shopping, magazines and trade publications, sports entertainment, and digital media.

Rogers strives to promote diversity as part of their corporate culture. Rogers boasts a very culturally diverse workforce including 33 per cent visible minorities, and 45 per cent women. In addition, Rogers has implemented many innovative practices, policies and programs to improve workplace diversity, such as Rogers Pride, Rogers Women's Network, and the company's Diversity Leadership Council. In 2013 and 2014, Rogers was named one of Canada's Best Diversity Employers for its leadership in creating a diverse and equitable environment for employees, customers, and the community. Every year, Rogers hires thousands of Canadians to help build diverse, high-performing teams, and the company is committed to establishing a work environment that respects – and celebrates – difference.



# Hadassah Ksienski Distinguished Service

Carolina Dalglish



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# Youth Scholarship

Mahtab Dhaliwal

Award category sponsored by



**If there was a science to integrating as a new immigrant, this youth has discovered it**

Mahtab Dhaliwal has an impressive list of accomplishments, and driven to add to that list via her thirst for learning and passion for the sciences, which she inherited from her parents. Both her mother and father earned their Master’s degrees in India and were teachers prior to immigrating to Canada.

When her family immigrated to Canada, Mahtab was in Grade 6 and with basic understanding of English. Today she maintains honours with distinction across all her high school subjects and is President of the Environment, Math AND Physics Clubs. She is also a member of the Kings’ Own Calgary Regiment Band and Vice-Captain of the field hockey varsity team. But, Mahtab has discovered the secret formula for true integration as a new immigrant. In addition to her academics, social, music and sporting clubs, she volunteers at the TELUS Spark Science Centre and is a valuable member of the centre’s research team.

Part of the science of integration is paying it forward; she co-founded the Ohana Café, which offers new immigrant students counselling and workshops to help them settle into their new city and new school environment. Mahtab provides an authentic welcome, appreciating that her own new immigrant experience and lessons learned could be as effective or even more so, than the typical school orientation programs.

Is that instinct or scientific discovery? Regardless, Mahtab is fuelled to tap into the endless opportunities that she sees are available to her in Canada. She plans to pursue a career in theoretical physics.



# Youth Scholarship

Nilufer Hasanova



Award category sponsored by



**If volunteering could be a lifetime career, this youth would apply... and get the 'job'**

Although Nilufer Hasanova is currently studying to become a paediatric nurse at the University of Calgary, if volunteering could be a job, she may actually be tempted to switch. Nilufer's friends would say she would give her limbs to charity if she could. And, when most young people are choosing skiing, hockey, music as free time pursuits, she is working on the next fundraising initiative. Favourite pastime (and present time): giving back to her community, and the tens of thousands of Canadian dollars she's raised for local charities is testament to this.

Nilufer founded the non-profit organization Hope for Home, whose mandate is to financially support orphanages in developing countries. In addition to Hope for Home, she is actively involved with the Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth, a non-profit organization helping immigrant youth in Calgary to adapt to Canadian life. As a spokesperson for the organization, she readily shares her own migration from Azerbaijan via Turkey story with other immigrant youth and families. If that wasn't impressive enough (or exhaustive of her time), she regularly grows out her own hair and donates it to Angel Hair for Kids, raising money for cancer research.

She has given back tenfold since moving to Canada in 2005, including to her single-parent family. Nilufer has held part-time jobs from a young age to support the family and acted as translator for her mother to help her more easily acclimatize to living in Calgary (Nilufer having mastered English fluency within seven months of arriving in Calgary). Nilufer is known to donate money that she may not even have, saying "well I will just work a little harder this month, they need it more than I do."

# Youth Scholarship

Syeda Kinza Rizvi



Award category sponsored by



**A champion for spreading the word to stop the spread**

Syeda Kinza Rizvi is using her education, research, career and volunteering to spreading the knowledge about medicine to stop the spread of diseases, like cervical cancer and heart diseases.

Kinza is currently enrolled in the Master's of Science Program, with a specialization in Community Health Sciences at the University of Calgary. Her thesis and research is about identifying barriers to cervical cancer screening in South Asian Muslim female immigrants. She has already presented her research at local and national conferences, and recently received a scholarship from the Western Regional Training Centre. She volunteers at Canadian Immigrant Women Association as a Youth Mentor for young girls and as a guest speaker for cervical cancer screening awareness, and at Immigrant Services Calgary, as a translator. She also works part-time as a Research Assistant for influenza surveillance in Alberta in the Family Medicine department at the University of Calgary.

Having migrated from Pakistan when she was 14, Kinza took up this personal campaign very quickly - almost as quickly as starting high school which was day one of arriving in Canada! She has been described as empathetic, humanitarian and compassionate, and no doubt, we add a positive influencer. Kinza's life goal is to specialize in cardiology to help stop the spread of heart disease in our society.



# Youth Scholarship

Vidhya Bavalana



Award category sponsored by



## Inspiring the leaders of tomorrow with her scientific mind

Vidhya Bavalana has made an astounding impact on the community of Calgary in the short three years she has been in Canada, arriving from her native India. As theme director of Calgary World Health Organization and an active member of Model UN, and driven by her first-hand experience with poverty and social justice, Vidhya dedicates her efforts to health advocacy, helping to create solutions that enhance global health by using diplomacy, collaboration and speech to inspire change at a national and international level. As the co-president of Heart and Stroke Foundation Students' Association, she takes an active role by organizing "Coping with Stress" and CPR workshops on campus.

At the young age of 17, Vidhya graduated from SAIT's pharmacy assistant program. She is currently a second year student in the Bachelors of Health Sciences program, majoring in biomedical sciences at Cummings School of Medicine. Her research in psychology at the Mathison Institute for Mental Health and Research aims at identifying predictors of antidepressants in patients suffering from Major Depressive Disorder. She has presented her findings at various symposiums and looks forward to publishing more of her work in the near future.

# Youth Scholarship

Ziad Paracha



Award category sponsored by



## An infectious energy that draws everyone close!

Ziad Paracha is a Swedish-born Pakistani Canadian who arrived to Canada in 2003 with his seven-member family. He speaks numerous languages including Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi, Hindko, and English.

People are drawn to Ziad because of his abundant joy and outgoing personality. He uplifts the spirits of everyone he comes in contact with and is a strong asset to the Newcomers Orientation Week (NOW) program with the Calgary Bridge Foundation For Youth. A five-year active volunteer with NOW, he has led numerous events and activities for new immigrants and given them the sense of belonging and specialness that every newcomer needs to thrive in unfamiliar surroundings.

Ziad is also involved with Ascovime, an international non-profit organization that provides medical aid to third-world countries, mainly Africa. He is a co-founder and current president of Ascovime Canada, a branch of the parent organization founded in 2008 by a Cameroonian doctor. In 2014, he visited Cameroon where he helped doctors provide medical care and treatment to rural villagers in remote areas. Ziad's passion for helping those in medical need doesn't stop here. He also volunteers his time at the Foothills Hospital Long Term Patient Care in their Neurological Rehabilitation Unit, organizing activities for patients suffering from strokes, spinal injuries, and brain injuries but also offering old-fashioned TLC and sympathy. At the University of Calgary he is president of the Orphan Sponsorship Program, which raises awareness for orphans and lobbies to abolish the cycle of poverty and abuse around the world.



## Immigrants of Distinction Awards previous recipients

Since the Immigrants of Distinction were first awarded in 1997, Immigrant Services Calgary is proud to have honoured the following individuals for their achievements and contributions to the City of Calgary and its community:

### Arts and Culture Award

2014	Yogeshwar Navagrah
2013	N/A
2012	Jacek Malec
2011	Shenaaz Nanji
2010	Karin Richter
2009	Lyn Pflueger
2008	Cecilia Gossen
2007	Vahe Tokmajyan
2006	Alexandra Haesecker
2005	Alina Dabrowska
2004	Umran Sumen
2003	Elizabeth Allen
2002	Siegfried Wieser & Mrs. Joan Xauen Wieser
2001	Angelique Gillespie
2000	Neel de Wit-Wibaut
1999	Helen Seka Owen
1998	Antonia C. Wicherts & Mr. David M. Spriggs
1997	Mark Skalinski, PhD

### Business Award

2014	Margaret Adu
2013	Mike Shaikh
2012	Baldev Shergill
2011	Fatima Dhanani
2010	Bea Twumasi
2009	Raymond T. Chan
2008	Saad Ibrahim
2007	Lina Castle
2006	Nashir Samanani
2005	Abed Itani
2004	Wayne Chiu
2003	Gerald Wood
2002	Chan Yang Kim
2001	Mike Ciccaglione
2000	Said Arrata
1999	John Dasilva
1998	Hatim Zaghloul, PhD
1997	Dan Capitanescu

## Previous recipients continued

### Community Service Award

2014	Dolores Dill
2013	Amal Mohamed
2012	Dr. Geetha Ramesh
2011	Dr. Brijendra K. Sood
2010	Idrees A. Khan
2009	Cesar P. Cala
2008	Dr. Kabir Jivraj
2007	Dr. John Wu
2006	Tseden Dhogonpa
2005	Dinesh Dattani
2004	Ashid Bahl
2003	Vinay Dey
2002	Baljinder Mann & Michael Embaie
2001	Vettivelu Nallainayagam, PhD
2000	Chamnan Chap, PhD
1999	Vilma Dawson
1998	Teresa Woo-Paw
1997	Nirmal Dey (Volunteer Service Award)

### Achievement Under 40 Award

2014	Turin Tanvir Chowdhury
2013	Hayato Okamitsu

### Lifetime Achievement Award

2014	Om Malik
2013	Sid and Bronia Cyngiser

### Hadassah Ksienski Distinguished Service Award

2014	N/A
2013	Umashanie Reddy
2012	Bob Khan
2011	Tina Merali
2010	Genevieve Balogun
2009	Peter Wong, Q.C.

### Distinguished Professional Award (offered until 2012)

2012	Dr. Bejoy Thomas
2011	Dr. Chirag Shah
2010	Dr. Wael Badowy
2009	Dr. Tadeusz Dabrowski
2008	Dr. Alykhan M. Nanji



## Previous recipients continued

2007	Dr. Thaddeus Demong
2006	Margaret Styczynska & Sinisa Sonny Tomic
2005	Daniel Lai, PhD
2004	Hetty Roessingh, PhD
2003	Hans Vogel, PhD & Gamil Tadros, PhD
2002	Wilhelmus (Duffie) VanBalkom, PhD
2001	Taj Jadavji, PhD & Max Coppes, PhD
2000	Elaine Chan
1999	Hans van der Sande, PhD
1998	Henk E.D.J. ter Keurs, PhD
1997	Magdalena Amnestica

### Organizational Diversity Award

2014	Cargill Meat Solutions High River
2013	Agrium
2012	N/A
2011	OMNI Television (Alberta)
2009	Bow Valley College
2008	GlobalFest (Government or Non-Profit Category)
2008	Haworth Ltd. (Business Category)
2007	Calgary Public Library
2006	Boys & Girls Club of Calgary
2005	Calgary Health Region
2004	Village Square Leisure Centre
2003	Calgary Public Library
2002	Calgary Police Service
2001	The Westin Calgary
2000	Cyberwave Technologies Inc.
1999	Shell Canada Limited
1998	Standen's Limited

### Youth Scholarships

2014	Sarthak Sinha, Sujay Nagaraj, Simei (Amy) Li, Chuyang (Aaron) Lin, Jiani Deng
2013	Amrita Bhattacharje, Angelica Lai, Hassan Riaz, Henry Siu, Mariam Amwara
2012	Janriu (Peter) Liu, Silvana Echeverri, Michael Deng, Julia Qin, Vasanth Ranganathan
2011	Koray Demirbag, Meng Zhao, Naanak Sodhi, Patti Wang, Sergiu Lucut
2010	Annie Zheng, Shayna Ding, Malithi Fernando, Daria Tilimpea, Jethro Cheung
2009	Ana Angela Lopez Quiroz, Bani Turkmani, Di Mo, Fariha Ahmed, Valez Lumi
2008	Simon Atem, Hin Man (Ivy) Cheung, Zoe Beatrice Cheung, Sana Tariq, Jane Wu

## Previous recipients continued

2007	Alice Chen, Nyail Majock, Eva Ouyang, Joseph Lagasca, Carrol Zhou
2006	Alexsander Dshurkov, Elva Fan, Mahesh Hariharan, John Reuben Lagasca, Lina Roa
2005	Karen Hyo Min Kang, Shuyang Li, Hong Lu, Sherry Qin, Xiao Wang
2004	Abednego Deng, Yao Li, Vinh Luu, Salil Pradham, Celine Zeng
2003	Natalia Beloukhina, Olga Konwisorz, Jan Owoc, Crystal Rego, Jeremy Torio
2002	Genesis Juat, Eisha Alemao, David Lee, Steven Cheng, Pascal Yu
2001	Dominika Boczula, Shirley Ngo Suet Ho, Jung-Mee Hwang, Danijel Margetic, Sheila Muy Lee Ung
2000	Susan Doan, Nilou Davoudi, Samir Pradhan, Stephen Kung, Casy Wang
1999	Newman Yu Ting Lin, Aly Kassam-Remtulla, Alisa Palic, Wei-ting Chen, Omar Tahmistic





# Putting people first

Established in 1977 as the Calgary Immigrant Aid Society, Immigrant Services Calgary is one of Alberta's longest-serving settlement agencies. We are committed to being a comprehensive settlement agency working together with immigrants and their families to make Canada home.

In partnership with other service providers, we work towards a vision where immigrants and their families participate fully in an integrated and cohesive Canadian society. We are passionate, collaborative, accountable, and ethical leaders in settlement services. We believe that people come first. We are committed to quality services for a diverse Canadian community.

Providing assistance in over 70 languages, Immigrant Services Calgary takes an integrated approach to helping individuals and families settle into life and work in the Calgary community by offering:

- Support for newcomers in settling and integrating to life in Canada
- Information about community services and referrals
- Pre-arrival support
- First-language support
- Citizenship education classes
- Interpretation and translation services
- Assessment of English and literacy skills
- Information, guidance and referrals to LINC/ESL classes
- Community-based programs
- Community development
- Pan-Canadian initiatives
- Community consultations
- Volunteer opportunities
- Career, educational, and vocational counselling
- Mentorship opportunities
- Employment workshops and information
- Labour market integration
- Family literacy programs
- Pre- and post-natal programs
- Pre-school programs
- Child and youth programs
- In-home support program
- Parent support groups
- Men's program
- Seniors' program
- Crisis and supportive counseling
- Public education

# Entertainment

This evening's entertainment is brought to you by three outstanding entertainers who have donated their time, energy, and resources to making sure this gala is one of a kind.

## Justine Tyrell

Justine began singing and performing at a very young age and by the age of 17 had an extensive past of performances, competitions and auditions inclusive of hit TV show Canadian Idol (2008). Now, in her early twenties – Justine has continued to make her mark in the music scene, taking the stage for many notable events, galas, benefits, and concerts throughout Canada, including singing for the CFL Calgary Stampeders (as their permanent Anthem Singer) and US Embassy – US Consul General.

In 2013, Justine joined the Every Woman Organization - founded by renowned Violinist and Musician Sophie Serafino, as the Director of the Outreach Program. Through her role within the Organization, Justine has been able to work at bringing Song Writing Workshops (Songpals), Performances and Coaching to a variety of Charities, Schools and Community Organizations.

## Jennifer Humphries-Micallef

Jennifer Humphries-Micallef is a budding second year voice student at the University of Calgary studying with Patricia Hrynkiw. As a recipient of the Jane S. Jamison Bursary for Fine Arts from the University of Calgary, Jennifer has performed in masterclass for Ben Heppner and was featured as a début singer in Calgary's VoiceScapes production of the Messiah in 2011 and 2012.

Jennifer also finds great satisfaction participating in choir: soprano in the 2014 National Youth Choir of Canada and three years in the Alberta Youth Choir (2010-2012). Her career started at an early age, inspired by the music of her church. She continues to use her voice primarily for worship and hopes to continue teaching voice for her remaining years at university.



## Entertainment

### Yumen Wang

Yumeng Wang, Calgary Erhu Teacher, was born in China and began learning erhu at the age of four. She was admitted to the Associated Elementary School of the Central Conservatory of Music in 2000. In 2012, she got a scholarship from the U of C and started her master degree in erhu performance with professor Agopian. She held two successful recitals in 2013 and 2014.

Yumeng has received numerous awards in many competitions. She was one of the winners of the 2014 RBC Concerto Competition and has performed as soloist with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra. She also performed as an erhu soloist all over the world.

## Win an unforgettable Vacation Package

Be sure to enter our raffle for a chance to win an incredible vacation package. You'll receive \$1000 travel dollars and a two night stay at one of Starwoods luxurious accommodations worldwide, pending availability

Purchase your raffle tickets with one of our many volunteers during intermission.

**\$10 for 1 ticket**  
**\$20 for 3 tickets**

The more you buy, the better your chances! All proceeds benefit Immigrant Services Calgary's programs and services for newcomers.

The world awaits you!



Thank you to all our amazing performers!



