

BRITISH COLUMBIA MULTICULTURAL AWARDS

2008-2015 AWARD RECIPIENTS

Note: The descriptions below reflect the activities of the award recipients at the time they received their award.

2015

Organization Category

Individual Award

Henry Yu, Vancouver: Henry Yu has devoted thousands of hours to ensuring that the legacies of early Chinese Canadians and their relationship to First Nations are better known by all British Columbians. As a history professor, he teaches students about the cultural and historical ties between First Nations and Asia Pacific migrants in B.C. Through his work, he challenges assumptions derived from B.C.'s colonial past and the subsequent ethnic discrimination. His approach to this work is notably through collaborative projects such as Chinese Canadian Stories: Uncommon Histories from a Common Past and the Vancouver Dialogues Project, both of which engaged young and old from diverse communities. He is also a co-chair of the B.C. government's Legacy Initiatives Advisory Council formed in 2014 to oversee implementation of the Chinese Legacy Projects.

Organization Award

Vancouver Co-operative Radio, Vancouver: Founded in 1975, Vancouver Co-operative Radio (CFRO, 100.5 FM) is a multi-lingual, non-profit community radio station that provides the Greater Vancouver area with independent public affairs, music and arts programming. Located in Vancouver's Eastside, Co-op Radio's mission is to produce creative and engaging programming for communities whose voices are underrepresented in the mainstream media. Co-op Radio has 80 locally-produced programs that air on the station each week.

Co-op Radio's on-air programming is produced by more than 300 volunteers who speak the languages and know the stories, experiences, and music of their own diverse communities. The volunteers are first trained in production skills, and are then able to provide access to news and events for non-English speaking people in their communities. This in turn encourages more community members to engage within their cultural community and build ties with the broader community.

Business Award:

Nana's Kitchen & Hot Sauces Ltd.: Nana's Kitchen was founded in 2001 by Shelina Mawani and Nasim Dhanji, immigrant women from East Africa who started selling food to small cafeterias. Now, the company's products are found in grocery chains across North America. Nana's Kitchen employs 35 production workers made up of mostly immigrant women who lacked work experience and English-language skills when they were first hired. Employees are given the opportunity to learn English and develop computer skills, with some also learning how to operate a forklift. Five of the company's workers are supervisors who have been with Nana's Kitchen for more than 11 years, and according to the owners, they have excelled far beyond expectations. Mawani notes that it is a proud moment to see that "all our women supervisors are fully trained forklift operators and can load up to 10 skids in large trucks from our loading docks and fill out all the required documents in English using a computer." All workers complete first aid and FoodSafe certificates, and today, Nana's Kitchen is the only federally-approved Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) plant in British Columbia.

Youth Award

Crecien Bencio, Vancouver: Crecien Bencio is a community development worker in the Renfrew-Collingwood neighbourhood of Vancouver, which brings him face-to-face with issues of isolation and inclusion among recent immigrants. As a cultural connections liaison at Collingwood Neighbourhood House, Bencio focuses on community capacity-building through projects that celebrate diversity through literacy, visual, and performing arts. In this context, neighbours explore and challenge their own identity, and learn more about their own and other people's history. Currently, he is also collaborating with the Renfrew-Collingwood Food Security Institute to publish a book that showcases the resilience and cultural resources among youth in the neighbourhood through sharing histories in the context of food.

Multicultural Excellence in Government Award

Royal BC Museum, Victoria: The Royal BC Museum (RBCM) is a world-class venue for showcasing B.C.'s history through its exhibitions, programming and public outreach that promote multiculturalism, diversity and cultural sensitivity. For example, in May 2014, on the 100th anniversary of the Komagata Maru incident, RBCM, in partnership with the University of Victoria, hosted a series of events to discuss and reflect upon lessons learned. And in August 2014, RBCM joined 13 other Canadian institutions in the Landscapes of Injustice project to conduct research and develop a travelling exhibition about the forced dispossession of homes and properties owned by Japanese Canadian citizens during the Second World War. Through these exhibitions and its online tools, RBCM enables visitors to discover cultures, past and present, which have been integral to the makeup of British Columbian communities.

2013-14

Organization Category

Community Justice Centre (CJC), Courtenay, Comox Valley: Beginning in 2007, the CJC has successfully conducted 22 community-based events focused on countering racism, homophobia and hate, and promoting diversity, multiculturalism and intercultural understanding. The CJC has taken a particularly diverse and collaborative approach to its work in partnership development. More than 50 partner groups and organizations have been engaged in CJC projects.

Individual Category

Ed Eduljee, West Vancouver: Ed Eduljee has demonstrated long-term commitment to promoting multiculturalism at all levels – organizations, institutions, community groups or government – with a multi-faceted approach to furthering cross-cultural understanding. As director of Multiculturalism BC (1991-1997), he assisted in drafting B.C.'s Multiculturalism Act. Currently, Ed chairs the (Pacific) Regional Ethnocultural Advisory Committee (REAC) to the Correctional Service of Canada.

Business Category:

CIBC – Diversity Matters Initiatives: CIBC was one of the first corporations in Canada to dedicate an entire month to the celebration of diversity. This dedicated month to diversity education is only the start, kicking off a continuing series of celebrations of cultures and backgrounds that its employees carry out through the year. CIBC is proud to support eight employee-led Affinity Networks that link more than 3,000 employees from a variety of backgrounds.

Youth Category

Karen Dhaliwal, Vancouver: Originally from Fort Nelson, B.C., Karen Dhaliwal grew up in a homogenous environment unable to manifest many cross-cultural relationships. Karen is a fourth-year political science student at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver and the founding president of the UBC Intercultural Alliance (UBCIA). The UBC Intercultural Alliance is a student run not-for-profit organization.

Multicultural Excellence in Government Category

Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation and BC Public Service: Building Capacity in Aboriginal Relations Initiative: Working with an Aboriginal Consultative Council outside of government, the BC Public Service Agency (PSA) and the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation developed Building Capacity in Aboriginal Relations: We're All Here to Stay, which is a free, online training course available to all BC Public Service employees through the PSA Learning Centre.

2012

Organization Category

Collingwood Neighbourhood House: Collingwood Neighbourhood House (CNH) serves the most culturally diverse neighbourhood in Vancouver. With more than 100 programs and services, in addition to facilitating dozens of community development initiatives, this community organization embeds intercultural ways of living, playing, learning and working together.

Individual Category

Winnie Cheung: Winnie Cheung has been instrumental in establishing several signature programs to foster interactions between international and local students, engage the community with UBC, and promote learning through the appreciation of cultural diversity.

Business Category

John Donnelly Events Management: John Donnelly and Associates conceived and produced the Surrey Fusion Festival, B.C.'s largest multicultural festival. Its 5th year produced a record attendance reaching over 75,000 and representing 35 cultural groups that showcased their countries of origin through music, dance, art and food.

Youth Category

Jorge Salazar: Currently working at the Vancouver Foundation, Jorge Salazar focuses on immigrant and refugee youth in his work coordinating and communicating between partner organizations and the youth advisory team. He promotes strong community connections, including First Nations, urban Aboriginal, and immigrant and refugee communities in B.C.

2011

Organization Category

AMSSA (Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies): Provincial Safe Harbour, Respect for All!: This program is an effective community-based response to discrimination and a proactive way to support diversity. AMSSA has a network of more than 850 Safe Harbour-certified locations throughout B.C. such as credit unions, businesses, libraries, municipal centres, and police stations.

Individual Category

Farid Rohani: As the former chair of the Laurier Institute, Farid was a driving force behind Dialogue Project, an innovative project focused on fostering stronger relations between the First Nations and immigrant communities. He is also a successful businessman who uses his business skills to help bridge communities and help various groups in their fundraising efforts.

Business Category

The Afro News-Tan Networks Company: The Afro News is a 24-page tabloid-sized newspaper, based in Vancouver B.C., published by Privileged Group Holdings and distributed across Canada since 1984. The Afro News reports on events in African communities throughout B.C., Canada and across the world. Archives of the newspaper are held by national institutions in Vancouver, Ottawa and Wisconsin, U.S.

2009-2010

Organization Category

Karen Initiative: For more than 30 years, the Karen people have been forced to flee their homes in Myanmar (formerly Burma). Between 2006 and 2008, 350 Karen refugees settled in Langley, B.C., and struggled to adapt to life in a modern city and a new country. The greatest achievement of the work of the Karen Initiative has been the opportunities afforded to the community of Langley to celebrate its diversity and recognize the wealth that comes from welcoming newcomers like the Karen people.

Individual Category

Paul Mulangu: Paul Mulangu arrived in Canada in 1996 as a Government Assisted Refugee after spending six years in a refugee camp in Zambia. Paul formed the Centre of Integration for African Immigrants in 2001. Since then, he has been a leading advocate for African, visible minority, francophone and immigrant communities in British Columbia.

2008

Organization Category

Campbell River Multicultural and Immigrant Services Society, Youth 4 Diversity Program:

Youth 4 was formed as a result of students, parents, teachers and community workers identifying unaddressed racism and other forms of discrimination in local schools. The program strives to foster empathy, pro-diversity and inclusive attitudes and behaviours among students in school district 72.

Individual Category

Elsa Fogale, Coquitlam: We Are All Related is a multicultural awareness day organized by Hampton Park Elementary School ESL teacher, Elsa Fogale. The event brings together the entire school and community volunteers, and has been a huge success with growing community involvement. As a result of Elsa's efforts, a group of parents now meet weekly, calling themselves Culture through Cuisine.