

# Planning for a Canadian Council for Refugees 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event



Congratulations! You've just decided to hold an event to celebrate the Canadian Council for Refugees 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. If you are a first time event planner, this page includes tips that will be helpful in running a successful event. For those who are seasoned event planners, feel free to skip to the next page, which outlines the goals of the CCR 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary event.

## For those who are new to planning events

If this is your first time planning an event, there are some key things that you might want to remember:

1. **Ensure that you have adequate support/volunteers/colleagues to help you divide up tasks and take ownership over the event.** Many hands make light work.
2. **Make a list of to-do items.** Include in this list all of the big things and small things that need to be accomplished, like booking a venue and buying ice. This is the easiest way to verify that you have completed everything. Share this list with others who may be able to come up with things that you might be missing.
3. **Pick a date.** Verify with other organizations that draw the same community that there are no other significant events occurring at the same time. Take this opportunity to invite them to your own event, so that last minute conflicts do not arise.
4. **Book a venue.** Make sure you have a venue that can accommodate the number of people that you wish and expect to attend. You should also think about centrality of the location and if it accessible to public transportation. Make sure that your venue is suitable to the type of event you wish it to be – for example, it may be unwise to host a video screening in a park at 3pm as the sun will make it hard for people to see the images reflected on the screen); a better idea would be to have it either in the evening after the sun has gone down, or at an indoors location.
5. **Advertise your event.** Some media include television, radio, internet, listserves, newspaper, media release, and word of mouth. We can also put a short blurb about your event on the website, if you send the details to Colleen French at [cfrench@ccrweb.ca](mailto:cfrench@ccrweb.ca) . Other ideas include inviting organizations who support refugees and new immigrants to attend, and members of ethnic communities (they can also distribute advertising through their networks). It's a good idea to also invite local politicians from municipal governments, and include MPs or MPPs, or the unelected candidate from the other parties who may be trying to woo local voters.
6. **Plan for the unexpected.** The key to successful event planning is to have a contingency plan in place if the unexpected occurs. For example, if your event is outdoors, make sure you have a plan in place if it starts to rain. It's also a good idea to have a back-up person ready to speak in case your guest speaker (or in this case, the person who is going to ask your guests to donate to the CCR) is unable to attend.
7. **Enjoy yourself.** Many of your volunteers will take their cue from you. If you are stressed out, they will be stressed out, and that will affect the atmosphere of your event. Relax, smile, and act like whatever mishap occurs was supposed to happen – unless it is something big, the likelihood of your guests noticing is minimal.
8. **Remember to say thank you.** A thank-you goes a long way – always remember to thank your guests for attending, donating and volunteering their time.

## **The goal of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary event.**

The Canadian Council for Refugees is celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Since 1978, the CCR has been the national voice on refugee protection and newcomer settlement in Canada, and, in our 30 years, we have made a profound difference in the lives of refugees and newcomers to Canada.

The CCR 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary has three major goals:

- To raise awareness and educate the public on refugee and immigrant rights.
- To promote membership in the CCR.
- To raise funds to continue and increase the work of the CCR.

We aim to achieve our goals through 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary events across Canada throughout 2008.

There is no 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary event template; the event can be anything that you would like it to be. We want our events to have a local flavour – to be relevant to the community that the event will take place in, and to attract the members of the local community. Member organizations often have the best knowledge of the makeup and the needs of their communities, and for this reason, we are asking our member organizations to host events.

As for what an event could look like – a gathering of people is a start. Gathering people to share a meal is one idea; so is hosting a film screening, a poetry evening, a cultural evening of music or dance, an author event, a birthday party ... the list is endless. The whole flavour of the event is up to you; a portion of the message, however, should be about the work that the CCR has done over the past 30 years to ensure rights and to secure the protection of refugees and new immigrants to Canada. Because fundraising is one of the goals of these 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary activities, we want to use 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary events to both educate the public, and encourage those attending to sign up to become of a member of the "Friends of the CCR" (the CCR's monthly donor program).

The CCR has hired someone to work with and support local groups to help organize events, and fundraise. Faith Shamonda can be reached at (514) 578.3437, or at [ccr30@ccrweb.ca](mailto:ccr30@ccrweb.ca).

## **30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary resources**

We can provide you with some of the excellent materials developed by the CCR (including a couple of short DVDs – on family reunification and Lives on Hold). We are also in the process of producing some materials specific to the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, including a poster and a PowerPoint presentation.

Resources available as of May 21, 2008 include:

- CCR pamphlet
- CCR 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary stickers
- CCR presentation board (elements available on the website)
- Facing Facts pamphlet
- 100 years of immigration to Canada
- History of immigrant and discrimination in Canada (PowerPoint)
- Friends of CCR pins/ application forms.

Resources to come at a later date include:

- CCR 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary poster
- CCR 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary video (plans to film during the spring consultation in Winnipeg)
- State of refugees in Canada (revised for the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary)
- CCR key issues pamphlet
- Highlights from the CCR's 30 years
- CCR membership kit

See <http://www.ccrweb.ca/eng/issues/publiceducation.htm> for some of the materials that you can use for public education.

Our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary coordinator can also provide you with ideas, and can connect you to people and resources available on the national level. Faith will be happy to discuss with you any ideas you have for planning an event.

### **Inviting the community**

A CCR 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary event is an excellent way to educate the public about the issues relating to refugees and new immigrants to Canada. Events should be appropriate for both newcomers to the CCR, as well as seasoned volunteers and members of the CCR community. If you can't do both, then it's important to decide who you want to attend the event, and who will be interested in attending (and able to donate to the CCR).

If you want members of a specific ethnic community to attend your event, it might be a good idea to host your event in cooperation with that community, based where they are located, or using a space where they often use. For example, if the Nigerian community holds an annual Independence Day celebration in a park, you could work with the organizers of that event to do a joint event, and celebrate the CCR in conjunction with another celebration. Holding a joint event is an excellent way to reach people that you might not have been otherwise able to reach. It also serves as a way of inviting people to reflect on their own experiences, thereby encouraging them to contribute towards supporting justice for other refugees and new immigrants in the future.

For other ideas surrounding advertising your event, see page one (advertise your event), or contact Faith at [ccr30@ccrweb.ca](mailto:ccr30@ccrweb.ca)

### **Budgeting your event**

Unfortunately, the CCR does not have the means to provide financial support to our member organizations; however, we can provide you with ideas that you can use to approach local grocery stores and restaurants for donations and in-kind support. We strongly encourage you to seek out donations to keep your costs to a minimum, and to avoid overspending.

## During your event

The focus of the event is to meet the goals of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary (raising awareness and educating the public on refugee and immigrant rights; promoting membership in the CCR; and raising funds to continue and increase the work of the CCR).

Make sure you have carefully planned out how you will approach your guests to encourage them to donate to the CCR. A stable, long-term source of funding is monthly donors, which is why we are encouraging event guests to become "Friends of the CCR". We will also gladly accept one-time donations too. Please remember to tell your event guests that the CCR is a registered charitable organization with the Canada Revenue Agency, and that their donations are tax deductible.

Encouraging a donation can be tricky; there is no sure-fire way to get people to donate. People donate to charity because it feels good. They like to see that they are contributing to the well-being of others, and that their donations are making a difference. Every group that you will pitch to will be different, but a similar message should be delivered: donating to the CCR means that you are supporting an organization that is committed to the rights and protection of refugees in Canada and around the world and to the settlement of refugees and immigrants in Canada.

For ideas of how to approach your community, Faith will be happy to discuss and brainstorm ideas you can use to make your "ask".

Lastly, take pictures of your event! We can post your pictures next to your blurb about your event, so that people looking on the website can see what your community's CCR event looked like!

Good Luck!

**Sample letter used to invite ethnic communities to help celebrate the CCR's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It may be particularly useful as a tool to persuade people from refugee communities to support the CCR.**

I am writing to invite the **XX** community to join the celebrations of the Canadian Council for Refugees' 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, being marked throughout 2008. From small beginnings in 1978, the Canadian Council for Refugees has become a leading advocate for refugee rights and for newcomer settlement in Canada.

As a community many of whose members came to Canada as refugees, you know the importance of welcoming and protecting refugees. In seeking safe haven here, you not only found security and a new life for yourselves, but also helped to build Canada's developing traditions of refugee protection. Since their arrival, members of your community have established themselves and contributed in many and important ways to Canadian society.

We therefore hope that you will be interested in joining the CCR in celebrating past achievements and committing to future efforts to maintain and increase Canada's openness to refugees.

We invite you to see this as an opportunity to look back on your community's experiences coming to Canada as refugees. It is also a time when members of your community who are now well settled in Canada can contribute towards supporting justice for other refugees into the future.

Here are some suggestions of ways in which your community could join the celebrations:

- Hold an event to celebrate the CCR's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary and your community's arrival as refugees and successes since.
- Devote some time to marking the CCR's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary at one of your organization's events.
- "Sponsor" one of the CCR's 30 years (\$1,000 for a year, \$500 for half a year). Sponsoring organizations will be recognized in a virtual wall of honour.
- Invite members of your community who are now well-established to become "Friends of the CCR" (monthly donors) in order to support efforts to ensure that future refugees find a welcome in Canada.
- Participate in one or more of the local events being held across Canada to mark the CCR's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- Participate in the CCR fall consultation (Toronto, 27-29 November) which will include a gala 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary event.

The goals of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary activities are:

1. To raise awareness and educate the public on refugee and immigrant rights.
2. To promote membership in the CCR.
3. To raise funds to continue and increase the work of the CCR.
4. To celebrate and highlight the successes of the CCR.