



Executive Director's Report

It is always interesting at this time of year to look back over the year and evaluate what has happened, what we have accomplished, the lives we have affected and the impact our Association has had in Northwestern Ontario. Each year I am amazed by what has happened in such a short time span and what we have accomplished. We continue to feel a sense of pride in the programs and services we deliver. Yet, even with a hugely successful year, we never fail to evaluate what we do and how we do it in order to best serve newcomers to Canada and our community.

Overall, 2007-2008 was a very successful and rewarding year. The Thunder Bay Multicultural Association continues to be an active and integral participant in the life of this city and the newcomer population. Our role has grown to include regional development, program planning, youth programs and involvement with several federal and provincial government departments in an advisory and consultative capacity. It encourages us when our input is requested and our experience considered on a national level. We have been recognized federally and provincially for quality service provision and best practices, and we should be very proud of that.

Our expertise is often sought by federal, provincial and municipal departments in areas of diversity/anti-racism, citizenship, rural community settlement, and city development. The Thunder Bay Multicultural Association is committed to reinforcing our reputation for being a "best practice" settlement service, and we aim to continue participating in pilot projects, advisory and evaluation committees.

We value our partnerships with other agencies in the North, which have been developed over many years. These partnerships enable us to respond to issues in a unified manner, often getting results because of our solidarity. We work towards making our association a welcoming, responsive and responsible service provider to newcomers in the region. Our partners, DOORS to New Life and the Multicultural Association of Kenora and District, have worked together to assist newcomers regardless of where they settle in the North.

This past year we have delivered programs on behalf of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (ISAP, Host and LINC), Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (NSP and LIS) as well as projects with the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. We have provided service to more newcomers this year than ever before, our school was full to capacity and our reach extends from Sault Ste. Marie to the Manitoba border. Our federal and provincial funders have been our partners in service delivery and have been supportive of our methods of program implementation for the North. One size does not fit all for Northwestern Ontario, and



having the flexibility to develop programs that suit the needs of newcomers who settle here produces positive outcomes for the region.

We were also the co-hosts of the first Thunder Bay Immigration Summit in partnership with the North Superior Training Board. Over 100 participants spent time discussing immigration issues and planning for the future of our region. This has led to the formation of a committee and a Local Immigration Partnership. We are assisting our city and region in recognizing the benefits of immigration and planning for the future with attraction and retention of newcomers. All of this must be built on the foundation of a welcoming city and in an atmosphere of acceptance. Our partnerships with Diversity Thunder Bay and the Thunder Bay Police have been instrumental in starting us all down the path of enhanced understanding and diversity.

I would like to thank the staff of TBMA for their hard work, support of each other and of me, their willingness to take on any challenge that is put before us, and for committing to the growing work that we do within the city and the region. A positive attitude and team approach by everyone has made the year one of growth and service enhancement. Our building renovations and expanding number of staff has been greeted without reserve by all involved.

I would like to thank the board for their time and commitment over the year, with their most significant achievement being the payout of the building mortgage. This took many years and a lot of hard work through fund-raising and increased programming to come to fruition. Well done, everyone. The board has supported the work of the office, planned and carried out a successful Folklore Festival, and continued to look forward to their role in our community.

Our thanks to everyone who participated in programs, volunteer efforts, service delivery, and inevitably the success of the Thunder Bay Multicultural Association over the past year. We succeed because of everyone that is involved in this Association from Board to staff to volunteers and newcomers. Together we really do make a difference.

Cathy Woodbeck,
Executive Director