

KNOW THE SIGNS, LEAD THE CHANGE:

A CELEBRATION OF COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND THE EVOLVING WORK OF HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS PROGRAM

On July 24th, we gathered with community members, partners, advocates, and collaborators to honour the ongoing work of building safe and healthy newcomer families. It was a joyful and powerful afternoon, filled with connection, food, reflection, and a shared sense of responsibility.

We were honoured to be joined by Manitoba's **Minister of Families, Nahanni Fontaine**, whose presence on behalf of the Province affirmed a shared commitment to grassroots, culturally responsive approaches to family safety. We also welcomed **Maria De Guzman, Director of Asylum** for Manitoba, and **City Councillor Vivian Santos**, whose continued advocacy and leadership are instrumental in advancing this work.



Their participation underscored the importance of coordinated, inclusive efforts to support and empower newcomer families across systems and communities.

Together, we launched our renewed Healthy Relationships programming under its new name and visual identity:



KNOW THE SIGNS, LEAD THE CHANGE:
EMPOWERING SAFE & HEALTHY NEWCOMER FAMILIES

This name carries weight. It reflects years of learning, deep listening, and building relationships with newcomer women, families, and youth who have trusted us with their stories and reminded us that prevention and safety must be rooted in dignity.

Our Healthy Relationships programs were not developed as crisis response models. They are proactive, preventative, and grounded in community knowledge. They have been shaped in conversation with survivors, frontline workers, and faith leaders, and informed by the realities of migration, trauma, and structural violence.



“Know the Signs” speaks to the importance of early awareness. Harm in families does not always look like what we have been taught to expect. It is often quiet, complex, and shaped by fear, isolation, or stigma. This work invites all of us to notice the signs of distress and to create spaces where asking for help is safe, met with compassion, and free from judgement.

“Lead the Change” reminds us that this is collective work. We call on all members of the community, including parents, youth, service providers, and leaders, to be active participants in building healthier, safer homes. It repositions community members as leaders in transformation, rather than subjects of intervention.



Equally important to us is the role of systems and institutions in walking alongside families. We continue to build partnerships with schools, healthcare providers, shelters, child welfare, and the justice system, to make sure that newcomer families are met with coordinated, culturally safe, and non-judgmental support.



These relationships matter. They help shift responsibility away from individuals and toward shared systems of care.

The CMWI toolkit, a series of workshops to educate and provide resources to women, was developed by **Sophia Ali**. The toolkit consists of a participant manual and a facilitator manual.

This toolkit was reviewed by **Nina Condo** whose addition amplified our work. **Hani Ataan Al-Ubeady** played a key role in adapting the material bringing a cultural lens to it while facilitating the Healthy Relationships program for men, leading the Mental Health Support Group and delivering the Train-the-Trainer program



Our sincere thanks go to our partner organizations: the **Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM)**, the **Manitoba Islamic Association (MIA)**, the **Bilal Community and Family Centre**, **Resilia**, the **Family Resolution Service**, and the **Elmwood Community Resource Centre (ECRC)** for their support in program delivery and wraparound services.

RECOGNITION AWARDS



Sophia Ali



Ruphine Djuissi



Hani Ataan Al-Ubeady

For legal guidance, we extend our gratitude to **Ruphine Djuissi**, the **Legal Help Centre**, and **Legal Aid Manitoba**.

During the event, we were proud to present recognition awards to honour the contributions of those who continue to lead and sustain this vital work.



As we look ahead, Know the Signs, Lead the Change is not just a program, it is a growing movement rooted in trust, community wisdom, and collective care.

The launch was a reminder that real change happens when we centre those most impacted and walk alongside one another with humility, respect, and courage.



The delicious food enjoyed at the event was prepared by **The Culinary Edge**, our newest social enterprise specializing in meals and catering services. Rooted in community and powered by skill-building, **The Culinary Edge** trains and employs newcomer community members, offering hands-on experience in professional kitchens while creating culturally inspired dishes that nourish and comfort.

The **Appetizer Trio** featured refreshing Watermelon & Whipped Goat Cheese Cups, Shrimp & Mango Salsa Cups, and Roasted Peach Crostini. For the **main course**, we served Moroccan Chicken Skewers, Middle Eastern Spiced Beef Meatballs with Harissa yogurt, Roasted Pearl Couscous, and Sautéed Summer Vegetables.



The evening ended on a sweet note with a **Dessert Trio** of Classic Tiramisu Cups, Mini Key Lime Cheesecakes, and Salted Caramel Bars.

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We are deeply thankful to everyone who contributed to this work and joined us in celebration. Together, we will continue to build safe, healthy, and thriving futures for newcomer families.

