



AFRICAN COMMUNITY SERVICES OF PEEL



2015/2016 ANNUAL REPORT

AFRICAN COMMUNITY SERVICES

ABOUT US

Who We Are

African Community Services of Peel (ACS) is a not-for-profit community based charitable Organization that provides settlement and integration services and programs that facilitate the early settlement of newcomers to Peel and the surrounding areas.

Our Mission

The ACS mission is to improve the quality of life of the members of the newcomer community by providing them the support, information and services necessary for healthy integration into Canadian society

ACS Mandate

- Identify and address challenges associated with duality of cultures among newcomers
- Provide programs and services that promote cross cultural understanding and address barriers to communication, access and integration.
- Facilitate opportunities for self development within immigrant community Network with other service providers with similar goals and objectives

Organizational Philosophy to:

- Facilitate objectively
- Counsel sensitively
- Lead courageously
- Care passionately
- Network widely

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- Counsel sensitively
- Lead courageously
- Care passionately

ACS STAFF 2015/2016

Wambui Karanja – Executive Director
Eunice Mbugua – Program Manager
Naleli Makhurane - Receptionist
Kwaku Saka – Newcomer Settlement Coordinator
Loyd Kibaara – Youth Program Coordinator
Geoffrey Msangi – Mental Health Worker
Megan Franklyna – Youth Program Worker
David Nikolaidis – Marketing Assistant
Babara Acheampong – Program Assistant (Seniors)
Janae Tish - Summer employment student
Breanna Lowe - Summer employment student
Ashley Yeboah - Summer employment student

SUMMER COOP STUDENTS

Kojo Asare
Evelyn Gyansah
Sarah Baschuss

Board of Directors

Kamano Gashoka, President,
Agnes Mochama, Secretary,
Evalyne Kibaara, Treasurer.

Members:

David Ahipatela
Alfred Ampofo,
Rosemary Noble

Contracted Services

Tri- Account Business
Services



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to our 23rd Annual General Meeting. It looks like it was just yesterday when a group of us sat at a kitchen table and hatched the idea of forming ACS and here we are, 23 years later. None of the founding members would have thought that our small idea would birth an organization that would grow into what ACS has become. We have survived for 23 years and through your support, intend to stay for as long as it takes to ensure the needs of our community are met. In this journey, we acknowledge with huge thanks, the support of our funding partners who make it possible for us to continue working towards our mission, the overwhelming support and endorsement of our constituent target black community in Peel that has engaged with us as clients, volunteers and donors; the wider community including other service providers. All of you, our partners have provided us valuable opportunities for strategic partnerships, networking opportunities, joint service planning and delivery, inter-agency referrals, encouragement, knowledge exchange and transfer as well as mutual support. Finally, we would like to thank our board of directors for their commitment to and stewardship of ACS.

Last, and by no means least, we would like to thank the staff of ACS for their insurmountable dedication and hard work and even more so, for their belief in the value of ACS services to our community. To all of you, we say a big 'Thank You' for your support and your belief in ACS. We look forward to another 23 years of your continued endorsement and support as we work towards ensuring that those who seek services at ACS get nothing but the best services available and that ACS continues to grow as strong, resilient and sustainable organization.

In the year under review, ACS provided services of youth, women, families, children and seniors from various immigration categories including refugees, landed immigrants, Canadian citizens, asylum seekers as well as visitors and international students primarily from our immigrant newcomer black community. This Report highlights in detail, the programs we provided in the year, assisting 1023 clients through 2165 units of service. Our services were and continue to be provided in a professional and culturally appropriate manner that respects the many diverse information and programming needs of our constituent community. This is in tune with our organizational philosophy as highlighted in this Annual Report.

In the year, we also worked hard to strengthen and expand our networking relationships and collaborative partnerships to ensure collaborative and integrated response to community issues.

ACS not only continued its lead agency relationship with the Black Community Action Network (BCAN) which relationship is now in its 7th year but also mentored other youth groups. In addition, ACS continued to be an active participant in local service planning and conversation tables such as BCAC, African Canadian Leaders Network (ACLN), OCASI and the Legal AID's Ontario York Peel District Advisory Committee where our Executive Director participates as a committee member and provides input on strategies for enhancing access to Legal Aid services in Peel. In addition,

ACS staff attended many networking and service planning meetings and workshops and took advantage of professional development training opportunities in Peel and the GTA including providing input in local service planning, social research and advocacy initiatives affecting the Black community in Peel. We remain dedicated to helping new and emerging groups grow their organizational and programming capacity as part of our community building initiative.

These successes were tempered with a few challenges along the way. Adequate space for our youth and other programs has remained a challenge for ACS for some time. As well, ACS needs to enhance its resource development initiatives including funding resources to ensure its continued organizational growth. While this initiative has benefitted from the Region of Peel Organizational sustainability funding, as a community, we need to engage in fund-raising Initiatives to bring in resources to complement our funding. As well, the previous strategic plan has expired and a new one for 2017-2021 is urgently needed. These initiatives will inform priorities for next year. As we strive to address these challenges, we remain optimistic about the future of ACS and its place as the agency of choice for the black community in Peel. Personal testimonials from our clients and the strategic collaborative partnerships and networking relationships we have with our funders and other service providers tell us that we are on the right path.

We will continue to re-dedicate ourselves to the fulfillment of our Agency's mission guided by our organizational philosophy to ensure that ACS continues to remain an open and safe place where our target community can access free, confidential and professional services in the culturally appropriate manner they have come to expect. We call on your continued support in this, knowing that together, we can lift each other up and help build better futures for our constituent community members and for the community at large. Thank you again for all your support. We could not have done it without you.

Kamano Gashoka, President, Board of Directors

Wambui Karanja, Executive Director.

2015/2016 Service Data Summary at a Glance

Newcomer Settlement: 960 Clients
 Youth Leadership Development 389
 Community Wellness and Development: 643
 Seniors' Support Services: 62
 Children/Summer Camp: 38
 Women and Families Program (Two Initiatives) 48 Families
 Group sponsorships/Mentorships 4
 Units of service: 2165
 # of Volunteers: 62
 Volunteer hours: 1650
 Persons with Mental Health Issues: 23
 VAW clients/families: 18
 People with Disabilities: 6
 Public Speaking Engagements 4 (Oakridge Public School, Our Place Peel)
 Itinerant Services (Genesis Lodge 16)
 Tax Clinics: (94 Clients served)
 Race Against Racism (22 Participants from ACS)
 Symposia attended by staff 2
 Conferences 2 (Its Never OK, OCASI Conference)
 Networking meetings attended by staff 27

Services by Immigration status

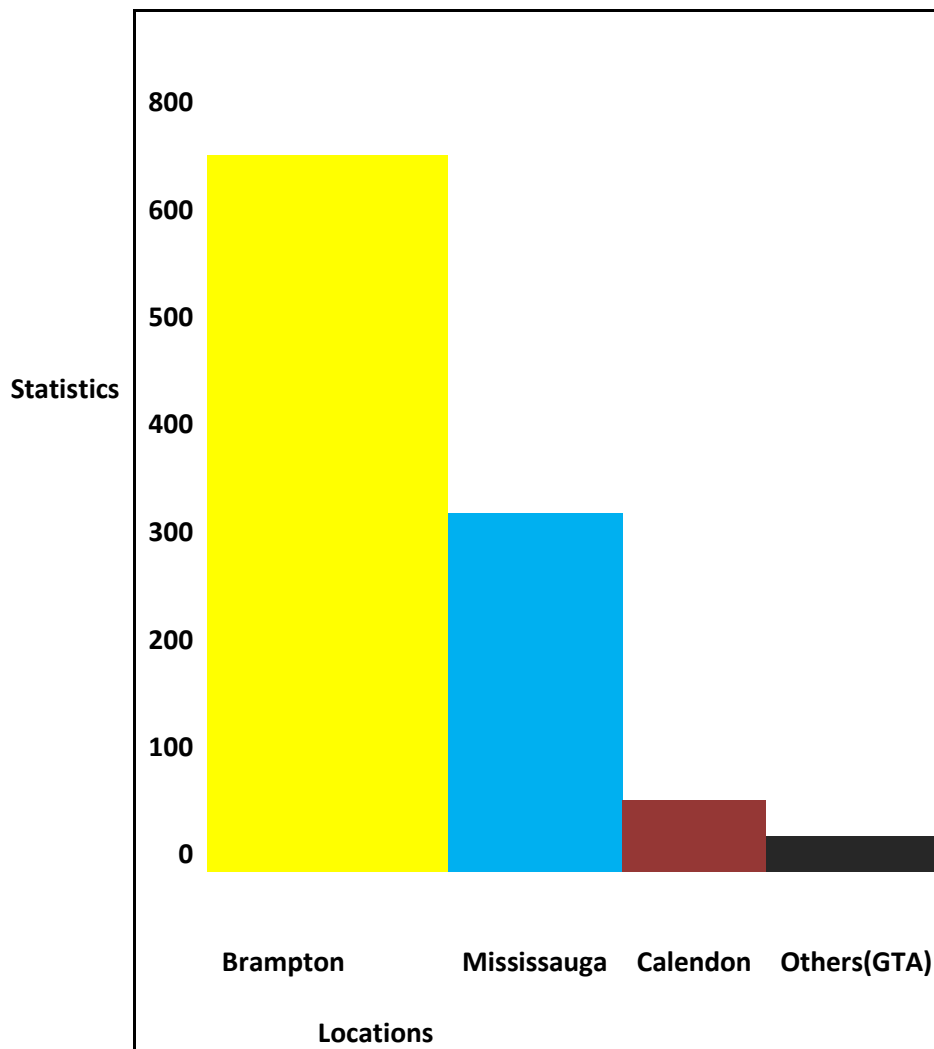
Landed Immigrants	478
Refugees	154
Refugees	163
GARS	89
GARS	117
Visitors/students/Others	22

Languages served

Twi	
Yoruba	
Ga	
Swahili	
Fanti	
Nuer	
Ibo	
French (Interpreter provided)	

2015/2016 Service Data Summary at a Glance

Brampton	694
Mississauga	297
Caledon	21
Others (GTA)	11



ACS PROGRAMS AND SERVICES





AFRICAN COMMUNITY SERVICES

Newcomer Settlement Program

Our Newcomer Settlement Program (NSP) helps to facilitate the early settlement of newcomers to Peel by enhancing access to settlement related information, referrals and public education on relevant issues. It also provides practical support to newcomers in completing government forms and applications to access community resources. Supportive counselling is provided in a culturally and language appropriate environment that respects and values newcomers. Services include client needs assessment, orientation, information and referral, interpretation and translation, housing assistance, and employment support. In the year under review, the program served over 900 newcomers including landed immigrants, refugee claimants, convention refugees, GARS, Canadian citizens, international students, domestic and foreign workers. Services were provided through workshops, group sessions, on-on-one sessions on site and through itinerant locations and were also provided by phone and through web based platforms.

Community Wellness and Development Program

The program provides a suite of services aimed at promoting the general wellbeing of members of the black community in Peel. Services are designed to enhance the community's resilience and capacity for growth in their personal lives and those of their families. The program engages the community in activities that promote the health and wellness of members the African/Black community, enhance access to community resources and information, promotes mental health awareness and access to mental health resources, reduces incidences of domestic violence and abuse, enhance labor market participation and promotes civic engagement and participation in community development activities. This year, 643 community members participated in our CWDP program activities

Violence and Abuse Prevention Program (VAW)

The program provides crisis intervention and supportive counseling to families experiencing abuse with a focus on women and children to help them make the transition to a violence free living. Clients are provided supportive counseling and information on abuse awareness and prevention and are encouraged to prepare individualized safety plans to decrease the risk of further abuse, or intimate partner homicide. In addition, clients participate in group sessions to support their informed decision making ability around abuse prevention and safety. Social and personal development skills enhancement activities are also provided to enhance self confidence and self-reliance skills. Eighteen families received counseling, information, support and referrals to legal, housing, health, skills upgrading and law enforcement services.

Mental Health Support Services

This is a mental health awareness and prevention program that is geared to clients who are experiencing anxiety and stress in their lives. The focus is to educate the community on how to recognize mental health issues, reduce stigma associated with mental health and to seek appropriate health and community resources. Mental health issues are prevalent due to the challenges of the immigration experience, dislocation and alienation that comes with re-settlement and the daily hardships of living including precarious employment, conflicts with families, schools and in the community, financial challenges as well as challenges in meeting individual personal and family goals. Information and supportive counseling one-on-one and group sessions on issues of interest are organized as well as personal development recreational activities that improve feelings of self worth. In addition, clients are encouraged and supported in accessing mental health services in the community. In the year, 23 clients received mental health support services.

Senior's Support Services

The main objective of this program is to educate, engage and empower black/ African Canadian seniors with information and services that enhance their physical, mental, emotional, financial and psychological health. The Program focuses on seniors who are lonely or isolated and who would you like to meet other seniors for friendship and mutual support. The services are meant to optimize the health and wellbeing of seniors and to enhance the capacity of seniors to adopt healthy and active lifestyles. Services also aim to reduce the incidences of physical, emotional, psychological and financial abuse for at-risk seniors, and to encourage them to access community supports available to them. and socially stimulating activities. Activities include supportive counseling and referrals, field trips, picnics, in-door and outdoor recreational activities. In the year 62 Seniors participated in weekly drop- ins, informational cultural sharing, basic computer tutoring, crafts and cultural dancing, board games, friendly visiting and one-on-one supportive counseling and referrals.

Employment Support Services

ACS works with local community partners to assist clients with their employment needs. Although we do not provide full spectrum employment services, ACS supports clients by providing limited employment Support services to our clients with the goal of facilitating our clients' participation in the labor market. Services provided include referrals to job search workshops in the community and to prospective employers, labor market information, credentials assessment services, limited resume preparation support as well as access to Internet for job-search, researching employers and submitting online applications. Clients also have access to a computer, printer and Fax for job search facilitation. These services are provided within our Newcomer Settlement Program.

Organizational Sustainability Program

The goal of this program is to support the growth and sustainability of ACS's administrative and organizational capacity. By securing administrative positions, the program ensures that program and organizational outcomes are achieved as per the Agency's mission and strategic plan. By strengthening our administrative capacity, ACS can focus on sustainability initiatives and in providing effective, accountable programming outcomes to our clients.

Christmas Gift Box Program

Every year, ACS partners with CHUM City Christmas Wish Foundation to identify and register deserving families for their toy donation program. ACS assists in identifying and registering needy families and children in the community who get toy donations from Chum at Christmas time. The program also solicits vouchers for food, clothing and other family items from local businesses for distribution to needy community Members. In December 2015 ACS facilitated the donation of toys to 22 families and 63 kids.



Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CCITP)

For the last 4 years, ACS has partnered with CRA to provide a volunteer Tax Program to the target community and the wider community. Volunteer tax preparation experts vetted by CRA are referred to ACS and work at ACS to prepare and file taxes for low income clients for free. The has proved very popular as a community service to not only the target community but also to the wider community. It runs from February to May each year and this year, 94 clients had their taxes prepared and filed through ACS. ACS wishes to thank the two CRA Volunteers who have provided their services through this program



Women and Families Program

The Women and Families Program anchors has a goal, to support and empower black/African Canadian families in Peel with the information and services they need to support their families, become engaged in their communities and ensure the health and wellbeing of their families. Workshops and group services are held on issues such as post-secondary education, health, access to justice and child protection systems, healthy parenting, conflict resolution, healthy eating, school/parent/child relationships, inter-generational conflict resolution, self care and personal development including system navigation support to ensure access to community resources. All services are provided in a culturally responsive environment. This year, the program served 48 families and children.



AFRICAN COMMUNITY SERVICES

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

The goal of our youth development programs is to build leadership skills in youth to enhance their personal and professional development and to promote community engagement and participation among black/African Canadian youth in Peel. The programs and services provide youth with information and services that promote positive growth, development and decision making. These services are provided within a framework of programs and services that include:

- Youth leadership development activities
- Summer Youth Employment Services
- Youth Arts and Heritage Program
- Youth and Community Engagement activities
- Youth/Student Placement Program
- One for One Peer Youth Mentoring Program
- Youth and Community Safety Education Program
- Summer/March Break Youth Camps
- Mentoring programs
- Recreational youth activities

VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

This program provides the following activities:

- In-house volunteer training and development.
- Capacity building workshops and activities.
- Social and work-skills development activities.
- Community gardening activities
- Community placement opportunities
- Volunteer placement opportunities



AFRICAN COMMUNITY SERVICES OF PEEL IN PICTURES



ACS Summer Camp collage.



ACS summer camp participants and ACS Summer placement students at Silver City



ACS summer camp participants and ACS Summer placement students at Silver City



ACS summer camp participants and ACS team at Laser quest

ACS summer camp pictures



ACS Summer Camp activities



STAFF PICTURES



ACS staff and Summer placement students

Grocery Foundation 2016 Gift Cards to our volunteers



African Community Services donate food to Knights Table



AGM Meeting 2015

IN THEIR OWN WORDS



John Ahenkora in his own words

I cannot express enough how impressed I was with the professional and diligent efforts displayed when I sought for advice and assistance to overcome the many problems that were beyond my control last year. Being mindful that I am a native of Ghana, a citizen of Canada and a slow speaker, the encouraging manner I was listened to with patience was very confident boosting. Secondly the courteous manner the advice and assistance were given to me was unsurpassed. Finally I am most thankful that you were very generous with your time even in organizing the end of year party.

I have overcome most of the problems in my path and I am confidently starting this year with my Ontario Drivers License restored, a new Ontario Security Gourd License and a professional looking resume.



Kelvin in his own words

My name is Kelvin. I am an 18 year old student from Cameroon. I want to thank Mr.Kwaku Saka very much for how he took several days to walk me through the refugee process and helped me to write my narrative.

I am so happy that through his patient guidance, I have been successfully declared a protected person by the Canada Refugee Board. His services did not end there. At this moment I am in the process of applying for a resident permit, work permit, OHIP and others.

I also want to thank all the lady staff members at African Community Services who helped with my official documentation application, by helping me to fill out forms, photo-copying, searching the internet, making phone calls and printing my papers. May God bless all of you.

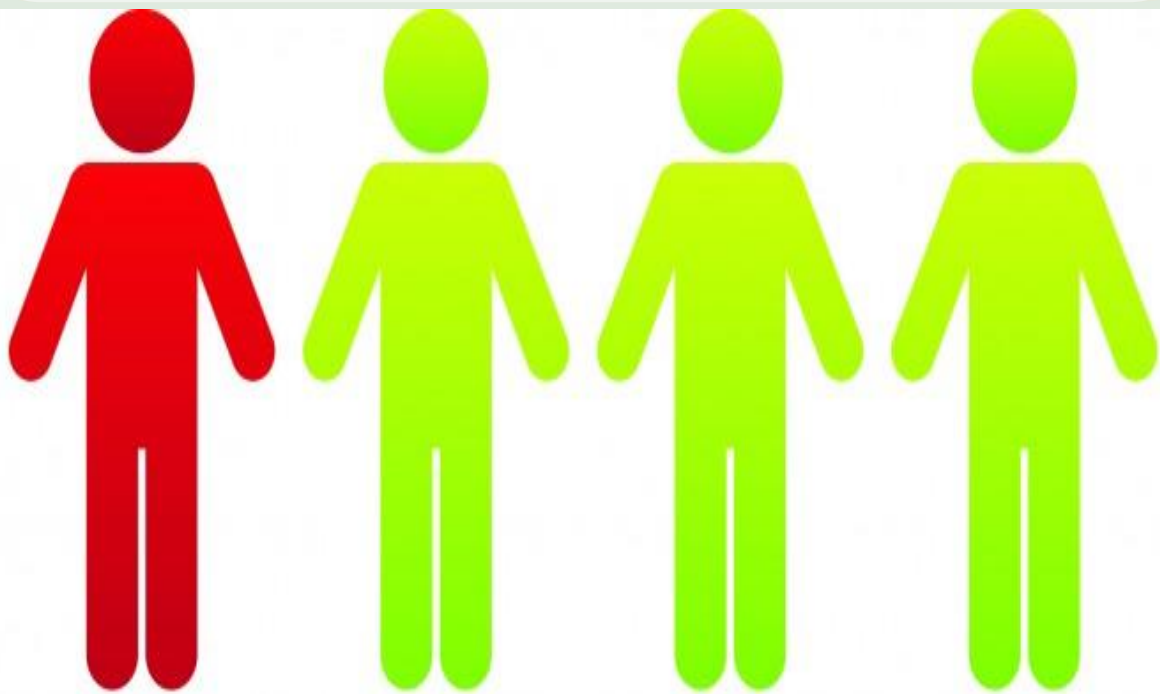
Thank you once again,

My name is Ishraga, my connection with ACS is unique and personal as it touches across my entire family. When I thought my world was falling apart, I found strength, courage, hope and reassurance through ACS with no fear of judgement.

Thank you, Eunice, Naleli, Kwaku and Ms Wambui for your love and support. I now volunteer my time at ACS to give back for what I received from as I can never repay your kindness.

I call ACS my home away from home and my family here in Canada.

DID YOU KNOW THAT...



One in four people has a **mental illness**.
You can be the **one** that helps.

AFRICAN COMMUNITY SERVICES

ACS, YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

SOCIAL MEDIA

ACS is on Facebook and Twitter. Please follow us on Facebook and Twitter and open the following Links to see what youth capacity building and leadership development

Initiatives ACS has initiated and is supporting. Visit our main website and the social media pages of Black Diamonds, Sesa Media, AYA etc.

<http://www.africancommunityservices.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/African-Community-Services-of-Peel-Youth/1438602519703881>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/African-Young-Achievers-Peel/417747661701600>

<https://www.facebook.com/events/295305760650715/>

Twitter: username is @ACSPeel93.

Facebook:<https://www.facebook.com/pages/African-Community-Services-of-Peel/1501238186785906>

Free, confidential and culturally appropriate services provided in a friendly, yet professional manner.

African Languages available

FUNDING PARTNERS AND DONORS 2014/2015

African Community Services gratefully acknowledges the financial and in-kind support from all levels of government, charitable foundations, individuals and community organizations whose support enabled us to provide high quality services to newcomers, youth, families, seniors, un/underemployed and family victims of violence and abuse. The following list represents those that supported us through grants, donations and in-kind donations in 2013/2014

Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
United Way of Peel Region
Ministry of Health Promotion
Region of Peel
The Ontario Trillium Foundation
Human Resources Skills Development Canada
HRSDC New Horizons for Seniors Program
Wal-Mart
Costco

Food Basics
Longo's
Salvation Army
McDonalds Brampton
Metro Supermarket
Maple Lodge Farms
Various local businesses and individuals



*We appreciate the financial and in-kind support from all our
Funding Partners, Donors and Volunteers*

OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

<p>Black Community Action Network Brampton and Mississauga Public Libraries Brampton Guardian Brampton Multicultural Center Brampton Neighbourhood Resource Center Access Employment Services African Canadian Coalition on Racial Profiling African Canadian Council Assaulted Women's Helpline Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Peel C.A.S.T. Canada Canadian Centre for Abuse Awareness Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture Canadian Federation of Students Catholic Cross-Cultural Services Centennial College Center for Education and Training Center for Information and Community Services Chinese Canadian National Council (Toronto Chapter) Citizens for the Advancement of Community Development CNIB Ontario Division Coalition of Agencies Serving Immigrant Seniors in Peel Community Information Toronto Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO) COSTI Dufferin-Peel Adult Learning Network. Elder Help-Peel Family Services of Peel Halton Multicultural Council Harold M. Braithwaite Secondary School</p>	<p>HJA Brown Education Center Information and Referral Centre Learning Disabilities Association of North Peel Malton Neighbourhood Services Multicultural Inter-Agency Group of Peel Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse Ontario Civilian Commission of Police Services Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) Ontario Immigrant Settlement Workers Association Organization of Black Tradesmen and Tradeswomen of Ontario Our Place Peel Peel Board of Education Peel Committee against Woman Abuse Peel District Health Council Peel Harm Reduction Network Peel Health Department Peel Heart Health Network Peel Newcomer Strategy Group Peel Nutrition Network Peel Regional Police Peel Youth Violence Prevention Network Region of Peel Social Services Rexdale Micro skills SAVIS of Halton Sheridan College Sheridan neighbourhood Team Skills for Change Small Biz Trade Community Agency Spectra Community Services St. Gabriel Adult Learning Center The Arthritis Society Tru Potential Turner Fenton Secondary School United Way Black Community Advisory Council United Way of Peel Region University of Guelph Humber Volunteer Canada York University</p>
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