

Meet Taiesha Stewart-Francis, IAF Micro Loan Recipient:



From left: Dr. Maria Eriksen C.M., IAF President; Dianne Fehr IAF executive director; Taiesha Stewart-Francis; Sergio Manrique, IAF Loan Facilitator, EMCN

Taiesha Stewart-Francis immigrated from Jamaica in June of 2007. She spoke at a news conference held in November to announce Western Economic Diversification's support of IAF's expansion to Edmonton. Here are Taiesha's remarks:

Ladies & Gentlemen, good morning.

As children, some of you here may have dreamt of becoming journalists, administrators, government bureaucrats, among many other distinguished careers. I, ladies and gentlemen, dreamt of becoming a nurse. As a registered nurse in Jamaica, I was excited about what I did and approached

my job with vigour and enthusiasm because that was what made me feel fulfilled. Having moved to Canada, that joy and sense of fulfillment has not been quick in returning as I am yet to return to my true love—nursing. However, thanks to the Immigrant Access Fund, full fledged nursing is but a semester away.

I was first introduced to the Fund by the nursing department at Mount Royal College in Calgary. I must admit that never in my wildest dream had I imagined that the process could have been so smooth and swift. In fact, within a few days of my application, I was invited to an interview following which the loan was quickly approved. Today I have my cheque in my hand and I've already started making arrangements to pay for my tuition and boarding at Mount Royal College. Once that is done and the courses completed, it will be back to doing what I love most—nursing.

I will be truly honoured when the opportunity comes for me to practice as a registered nurse in Alberta. We moved here because we wanted a new experience and because we had something to offer to Alberta and Alberta had something to offer us in return. Having moved to Alberta we are satisfied that we made the right choice...even when you factor the "superb" winter you have here into the mix.

I should tell you, however, that making the move from Jamaica to our new home in Alberta has not been easy. We have had to endure a cut in our standard of living as we endeavour to lay the foundation for a prosperous life in Alberta. We have had to don hard hats and boots to earn our daily bread on a construction site. I have had to make sandwiches as a deli clerk—all this in the space of five short months. Added to this, the fact that I will have to travel all the way to Calgary to complete my courses has not helped. However, I will take comfort from the fact that it was in that very same city of Calgary that the great Jamaican Cool Runnings Bobsled team overcame the cold harsh challenges to win the hearts of the world. In like manner, I intend to get the better of my challenges and go on to mend the hearts of the many who are sick in the world today. I am elated that the Immigrant Access Fund is helping me towards this end.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you.

—Taiesha Stewart-Francis

IAF provides loans of up to \$5,000 to help Alberta's immigrants obtain the accreditation, upgrading or training they need to work in their profession or trade. Loans may be used for tuition, exam fees, qualification assessments, books and course materials, living allowance during study time, or other related expenses.

Application forms and information on eligibility are available at www.iafcanada.org

HSBC Bank Canada makes a strong commitment to Alberta's internationally trained immigrants.

HSBC Bank Canada has donated \$150,000 for IAF loans. With around 10,000 offices in 83 countries and territories, HSBC is "The world's local bank" and understands the challenges that immigrants from around the world face as they settle into a new country. HSBC Bank Canada's support of IAF is helping immigrants reach their full potential as Canadians and contribute their talents and skills to their local communities.



To make your donation, please call us or visit "To Donate" on our website.

Call for Board Members

If you are concerned about the issues immigrants face in their efforts to be fully employed and would like to play a role in providing very direct and concrete help to them, consider joining the IAF board of directors. The board is expanding from six to nine members at its May 2008 annual general meeting. Email board member Kerry Longpré, at klongpre@thecalgaryfoundation.org or call her at (403) 802 7706 for further information.

We are also looking for committee volunteers. Please call Dianne Fehr, IAF executive director, at (403) 228 9981 X222 or dianne@iafcanada.org.



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