

International Women’s Day celebrated early with a new novel showcasing the resilience of Immigrant Women

Toronto launch sparks Ontario-wide campaign of one-of-a-kind stories written by immigrant women, to support immigrant women

TORONTO March 2, 2017 – In Celebration of **International Women’s Day** in coming days, The Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (**OCASI**) & Le Mouvement Ontarien des Femmes Immigrantes Francophones (**MOFIF**) are proud to launch "**Telling Our Stories: Immigrant Women’s Resilience**", a graphic novel that is part of a public education campaign to prevent sexual violence in Ontario.

The launch is on Thursday, March 2, 2017 at Women’s College Hospital located at 76 Grenville Street in Toronto. It will begin at 5:30 p.m. Some of the brave and creative women who wrote “Telling Our Stories: Immigrant Women’s Resilience” will read from the novel.

Featuring the stories of four women and discussion questions for educators, the multilingual resource focuses on important themes that:

- Challenge perceptions of victim blaming;
- Enhance knowledge about consent culture;
- Highlight the importance of supporting survivors; and
- Respond to workplace sexual harassment.

“Immigrant women who are new to Canada have unique challenges when understanding sexual violence,” said Debbie Douglas, Executive Director, OCASI. “We are proud to deliver this important resource as part of the Ontario government’s Action Plan to stop Sexual Violence and Harassment. We hope those who use the resource will find support and guidance through the words of the women.”

The graphic novel, which is a multilingual campaign will be free of charge. It will be distributed in newcomer communities through settlement organizations, reception houses, organizations working with newly arrived refugees, as well as universities, places of worship, and other venues in Ontario.

“We are pleased to partner with OCASI and to provide this resource for thousands of French-speaking women in our province,” said Fayza Abdallaoui, President, MOFIF.

“As immigrant women discover their new country, they also need to know where to look for support in times of crisis. This resource will help raise more awareness for our women in need.”

Following the Toronto event, the graphic novel will be launched in March and April 2017 throughout cities across Ontario. The cities and regions are: Hamilton, London, Markham, Kitchener, Oshawa, Ottawa, Peel Region, Sudbury, Welland and Windsor. The graphic novels will be available in 11 languages: English, French, Arabic, Armenian, Chinese, Dari, Punjabi, Somali, Spanish, Tamil and Urdu. The hashtags in English: #4ImmigrantWomen, and in French: #4ImmigrantesResilientes will be a way for women to use social media to share their stories, access the book, and get assistance if needed.

The project was funded by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.

About OCASI:

Formed in 1978, OCASI is a registered charity that acts as a collective voice for immigrant serving agencies and to coordinate responses to shared needs and concerns. Its membership is comprised of more than 200 community-based organizations in Ontario.

For more information about OCASI, please visit www.ocasi.org

About MOFIF:

MOFIF, the Ontarian Movement of the Francophone Immigrant Women, is a provincial non-profit organization created in Ottawa in 2003. Its mission is to carry out research and projects focused on improving the lives of francophone immigrant women in Ontario through integration, advocacy, and public education.

For more information about MOFIF, please visit www.mofif.ca

-30-

To arrange interviews, photo opportunities or for more information please contact:

Dayo Kefentse
Senior Publicist, DAYO Media & Communications
dayo@dayo.ca
416-573-3296