

# A DECADE OF SERVICE, A DECADE OF SUCCESS

Annual Report 2011-2012



**CARE** CENTRE FOR  
INTERNATIONALLY  
EDUCATED NURSES

Supporting Nurses Back into Practice

# CARE Centre for IENs

A Decade of Service, A Decade of Success

## Annual Report 2011-2012

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*Members Sussy Alvarez and Iris Divinagracia*

**Cover photos (L-R):** Board of Directors Chair Amy Go; Case Managers Ruth Wojtiuk and Anaar Shariff; Members Jason Suasin, Ablah Al-Blaushi and Hiroko Morrison; Member Naomie Cesar and Instructor Sadie Sattan; Member Hiral Pandya

CARE Centre for Internationally Educated Nurses is a not-for-profit professional organization founded in 2001, with funding provided by the Ontario Government. Ontario receives support for some skills training programs from the Government of Canada. CARE Centre supports internationally educated nurses in updating their qualifications to meet Ontario standards for Registered Nurses and Registered Practical Nurses, obtain employment, advance in their careers, and contribute to health care excellence in Ontario.

CARE Centre achieves these goals through case management support, nursing-specific language training, exam preparation, mentoring and networking, and recognizing the unique skills, education and experience of internationally educated nurses. To learn more about CARE Centre and its work, or to make a donation (registered charity #84420 5948 RR0001), please visit [www.care4nurses.org](http://www.care4nurses.org)



*Hamilton Graduating Members and Staff, March 2012*

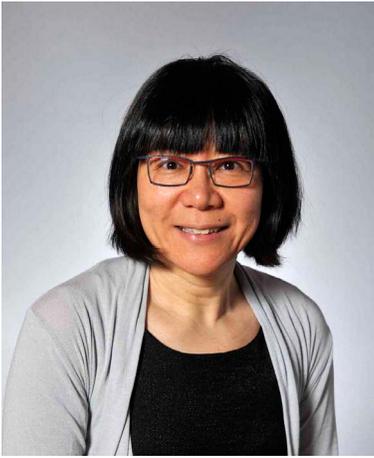


*Toronto Graduating Members, May 2011*

# CELEBRATING

Our Members' Achievement

## Message from the Chair



**Amy Go**

*Chair, CARE Centre  
Board of Directors*

When CARE Centre opened its doors in 2001 on Danforth Avenue in Toronto, no one could have envisioned the tremendous journey that lay ahead. The original project steering committee could only dream that by the time of its tenth anniversary, CARE Centre would have supported more than 1,000 internationally educated nurses from over 140 different countries back into practicing the profession they love. And couldn't have envisioned that CARE Centre would have dedicated staff in offices across southern Ontario including, Toronto, Brampton, Hamilton, London and Windsor, and be expanding eastward to Kingston. With the partnership of organizations in the health care, settlement and academic sectors, CARE Centre was the first, and became one of the most successful ever, bridge training programs for internationally educated professionals in Ontario.

As CARE Centre guides IENs on their way towards Canadian licensing, the organization travels a path similar to the one experienced by each IEN. Just like an IEN new to Ontario, CARE Centre has had to navigate the funding, licensing, academic and health care systems that are very complex. Just like a new IEN, CARE Centre has encountered challenges and barriers along the way. While CARE Centre helps IENs achieve their goal, CARE Centre itself has been, and continues to be, supported by many individuals and organizations that help it realize its mission and vision.

The IEN story is a success story. Similarly, CARE Centre is a success story.

The preamble to CARE Centre was drafted by the founding members from Kababayan Community Centre, St. Michael's Hospital, WoodGreen Community Services and Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care. Its first chapter was written with the support of the College of Nurses Ontario and especially from Brenda Lewis and the foresight of Ratna Omidvar and Maytree Foundation. Partners in health care, academic and community sectors have been contributing their own chapters in the CARE Centre story.

CARE Centre is unequivocally a labour of love by all the committed staff under the leadership of Dawn Sheppard,

Gail Yardy and presently, Zubeida Ramji. Without funding support from the Ontario and federal governments, especially the Provincial Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, the CARE Centre story would not have been known to the world. It's the IENs that have allowed CARE Centre to accompany them on their road to nursing in Ontario that have made CARE Centre an international bestseller!

CARE Centre celebrated its ten years of success by recognizing the late Dr. Joan Lesmond for her life-long commitment to health equity, in particular to advocating for IENs' access to nursing. We were so honoured when Dr. Lesmond bestowed her name on the CARE Centre IEN of the Year Award, a new initiative of the organization to celebrate the successes of our member IENs with an annual recipient nominated by their nursing colleagues. We thank Ella Ferris, Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer at St. Michael's Hospital for her work chairing the award committee. The first volume of CARE Centre is so aptly captured by the picture of Loy Asheri, holding the first CARE Centre Joan Lesmond IEN of the Year Award with a bright smile and tears of pride and joy (see page 11). We all look forward to following the inspiring women and men who are our CARE Centre members, as the story of success continues.



*CARE Centre founding committee members Gail Yardy, Amy Go and Flor Dandel receive commemorative gifts at the 10th anniversary celebration. Absent: Julia Tao.*



21.2% of CARE Centre member IENs come from The Philippines. Pictured are members Anna Katrina Sicangco, Michel Barbara Mauleon, Ma Helen Boteja and Ma May Lacadin with board member Flordeliz Dandel of the Kababayan Community Centre and Education Supports Coordinator Cezarita Delos Reyes. That's Alumni Coordinator Akiko Kobayashi taking the picture!



Executive Director Zubeida Ramji, Mohawk College's Program Manager, Part Time & Graduate Studies Nancy Brown-Fellows and CARE Centre Regional Manager West Joanne Roth congratulate member Ernesto Calubayan at the Hamilton Celebration in March.

## Message from the Executive Director



**Zubeida Ramji**

*Executive Director,  
CARE Centre*

CARE Centre's 10th anniversary year in 2011 was a time of reunions, renewal and new pinnacles for the organization. The record numbers of IENs joining CARE Centre and those achieving their registered nurse and registered practical nurse credentials have all continued to grow, with 421 new members joining the CARE Centre family, and 266 of our members passing their exams and embarking on their nursing careers.

In May of 2011 we hired the first staff person/Case Manager charged with the responsibility of starting our office in Windsor! We were most fortunate to have the opportunity to co-locate with Women's Enterprise Skills Training (WEST) of Windsor; they have been a great partner and support to CARE Centre in its first year in Windsor.

The expansion to Windsor was the second in our strategic plan to improve access to our services for IENs in southern Ontario. Building on the experience of expanding to, Peel Region in Fall 2012, the Windsor opening laid the ground work for our planning for a new office in Kingston, where as of January 2012, we have co-located with KEYS Job Centre and started seeing clients/IENs. In July 2011, our London office was re-located to be able to work closely with Access to Community Employment Services

CARE Centre is very lucky to have excellent, easy to work with community partners in all of the areas where we have a presence. We are most grateful to all of them!

As we fully embrace the notion of CARE Centre as a multi-site organization spread out over large distances, it has been important to pay attention to effectiveness and efficiency of our program in all locations. Delivering our courses and workshops via video conferencing through the Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN) has been a key element of our expansion strategy. Like all technological endeavors, we have had bumps along the way and we continue to improve the use of video-conferencing as a delivery method.

The biggest event for the year was our 10th anniversary celebration on November 17th, which was proclaimed Internationally Educated Nurses Day by Toronto Mayor Rob Ford. Earlier in the fall, CARE Centre invited the

members of the original steering committee to come together, and as a consultant to that original group, I found their energy and enthusiasm for the cause of IENs unabated from those early days. In fact, two of those steering committee members still serve on CARE Centre's board of directors: Chair Amy Go from the Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care and the Kabbabayan Community Centre's Flordeliz Dandel. The establishment of the CARE Centre Joan Lesmond IEN Award of the Year is a 10th anniversary legacy project that will be celebrated for years to come!

We also advanced with our other key priorities for the year, by hosting a Think Tank session attended by a broad representation of our employer partners and other stakeholders, to examine the issues of integration of IENs in workplaces. This initiative was also paralleled with two other related ones: a project with Revera Home Health to pilot a community nursing readiness assessment tool for new hires, as well as partnering with Dr. Pat Bradley of York University in a visual ethnography project involving our alumni members, gathering research on their integration experiences.

The year 2011-12 was also one where we focused on a number of initiatives to strengthen our services and provide leadership in the field. In addition to revising our Exam Preparation course, e marketing our Language and Communication for Nurses, developing new employment strategies workshop modules and planning to revamp our client database/information system, we placed a value on professional development for all CARE Centre staff, including Cultural Competency training. Another development opportunity was also realized when CARE Centre co-hosted the 5th annual national conference of the Partners in Education & Integration of IENs. Aside from three workshop presentations by CARE Centre staff, others were able to capitalize on this opportunity as conference attendees.

The first months of 2012 continued to be busy ones for CARE Centre, as we celebrated our Hamilton-area nurses with a special luncheon, with 73 IENs having achieved registration. We had the pleasure of our long-time partners from Hamilton, Kitchener-Waterloo, Niagara and Halton Regions joining the festivities.

Now that we are six offices strong across Southern Ontario we're excited to be working on the frontlines with IENs, supporting them in their first steps to their future in Ontario health care, a system that is one of the best in the world and continues to improve with their central roles.

# About CARE Centre for IENs

## Our Vision

CARE Centre will be recognized as a provincial & national leader in supporting IENs pursuing registration and integration into the nursing profession.

## Our Mission

CARE Centre for Internationally Educated Nurses, a non-profit organization, provides immigrant nurses with the one-on-one support, language and communication skills and exam preparation to be successful in the nursing profession. CARE Centre recognizes the value of nurses with diverse education and experience and is committed to advocating for their full contribution to Ontario's healthcare system.

## Our Values

**Respect, Honesty, Accountability, Professionalism, Confidentiality, Teamwork, Compassion.**

Using these values as a framework we are committed to providing exemplary service in all program areas to assist internationally educated nurses to enter the nursing profession in Ontario. CARE Centre provides programs and services centred on a case management model.



**CARE Centre Program Model**

## CARE Centre's 10th Anniversary Celebration, November 17, 2011

Internationally Educated Nurses' Day in Toronto

**Highlights video: [click here](#)**



*L: Executive Director Zubeida Ramji with founding steering committee member Brenda Lewis*



*C: London Case Manager Anna Wilson with members Raymonde Degbey and Selva Beyatil*



*R: MC Uzma Shakir, Director of Equity, Diversity and Human Rights, City of Toronto, and Entertainer Luba Goy*

# CARE Centre Key Results April 2011 - March 2012

**NEW MEMBERS ENROLLED** A total of **421** new members were enrolled - **181%** of the year's target of 233

## SUCCESSFULLY PASSED EXAMS

**79%** of CARE members passed their exams in 2011-2012  
**266** members passed the Canadian Registered Nurse Exam or the Canadian Practical Registered Nurses Exam - **159%** of this year's target of **167**

## NURSES REGISTERED

**178** members registered with the College of Nurses of Ontario - **127%** of this year's target of **167**

## NURSES EMPLOYED

**76%** of members who obtained registration were employed after three months  
A total of **136** gained employment - **107%** of this year's target of **127**

## CARE Centre Locations



## Headquartered in Toronto since 2001, CARE Centre expanded services to:

- Hamilton in 2005
- Kitchener-Waterloo in 2006
- London in 2007
- Halton Region in 2008
- Niagara Region in 2009
- Peel Region in 2010
- Windsor in 2011
- Kingston in 2012

*CARE Centre acknowledges our partners, supporters, board members and staff throughout Southern Ontario who are listed by name at the end of this report. Our success is their success and would not be possible without them.*

# Participant Profiles 2011-2012

## Immigration Classification 2011-2012



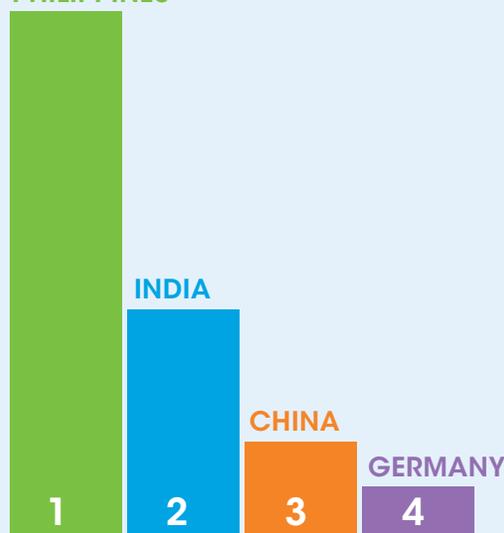
## Countries of Origin 2011-2012

36% of CARE Centre members came from the top four countries of origin

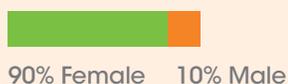
The remaining top countries of origin include:

- |           |             |
|-----------|-------------|
| 5 IRAN    | 9 JAMAICA   |
| 6 KOREA   | 10 NIGERIA  |
| 7 ROMANIA | 11 PAKISTAN |
| 8 U.S.    | 12 UKRAINE  |

### PHILIPPINES



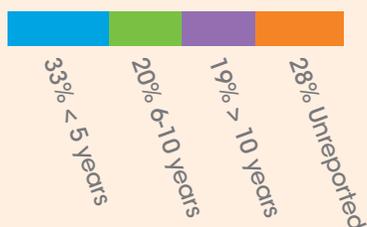
### GENDER



### YEARS OF NOT PRACTICING NURSING



### YEARS OF NURSING EXPERIENCE IN COUNTRY OF ORIGIN



### LEVEL OF EDUCATION



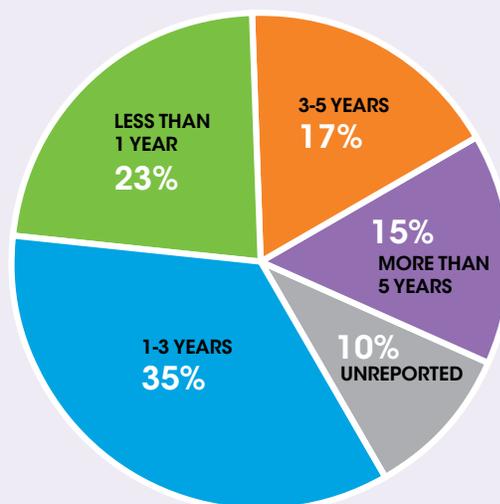
### EMPLOYMENT AT ENTRY

49% Employed

### EMPLOYMENT AT 3 MONTHS POST-PROGRAM

76% Employed

## Members' Length of Time in Canada



# CARE Highlights 2011-2012



Karen Ellis-Scharfenberg, Associate Director of the RNAO's Centre for Professional Nursing Excellence. To read Karen's full speech, [click here](#).

## MAY TORONTO NURSING WEEK CELEBRATION

On May 11th, 2011, CARE Centre for Internationally Educated Nurses honoured members from a group of newly-registered nurses in a special National Nursing Week luncheon at The Gallery, Ontario Heritage Centre. The event included a congratulatory message from Karen Ellis-Scharfenberg, Associate Director of the RNAO's Centre for Professional Nursing Excellence.

Ellis-Scharfenberg told the gathering, "As you know, nurses work tirelessly — but RNAO hopes not thanklessly. RNAO thanks you for your commitment to nursing in Ontario. Every single day, you as a nurse apply your extensive knowledge, experience and skills to assure the well-being of individuals, clients, patients, residents, families, and communities across the city of Toronto and potentially across this country. This CARE Centre celebration and National Nursing Week is a time for us all to reflect on the tremendous positive impact of nursing on our lives."

## JULY PEEL OFFICE LAUNCH

CARE Centre's Peel Region Office launch at the Centre for Education and Training on July 26th included guests from Sheridan and Mohawk Colleges, along with several local agencies. CARE Centre members taking a Language and Communication for Nurses class joined in, as did

IENs attending an information session conducted by Case Manager Norma Tomlin. There was an afternoon Wound Care Workshop, and alumni members offered free blood pressure checks to all the guests. CARE Centre service in Peel Region includes clients in Brampton and Mississauga, and the wider catchment area. Information on registering for information sessions at any of CARE Centre's locations is available on the CARE Centre website home page at [www.care4nurses.org](http://www.care4nurses.org).



CARE Centre member nurses (and blood pressure check volunteers!), Thushara Joy, Chander Randhawa, Marilyn Ygonia and Smitha Gopalan.

## NOVEMBER 10TH ANNIVERSARY & CARE CENTRE JOAN LESMOND IEN OF THE YEAR AWARD

CARE Centre's 10th anniversary celebration on November 17th was a wonderful gathering of friends old and new, honouring the organization's founders and partners, and most of all, the achievements of more than 1,000 internationally educated nurses from over 140 countries who, over the decade, achieved their registration with the support of CARE Centre and went on to rewarding careers contributing to the Ontario health care system. To watch a video of The CARE Centre Story, [click here](#).

The day began with an official proclamation from Toronto Mayor Rob Ford marking the date as Internationally Educated Nurses Day. The fundraising dinner, which began with a silent auction of generously donated items, was emceed by City of Toronto Director of Equity, Diversity and Human Rights Uzma Shakir, with a keynote address by Friend of Inclusive Nursing, Michele Landsberg, and entertainment by Luba Goy. CARE Centre supporters bought tables and purchased tickets for member IENs to attend, a gesture that was greatly appreciated, as was event sponsorship by KPMG, Rogers NurseNewline and Canadian Immigrant Magazine.



The late Dr. Joan Lesmond

The evening's highlight was the inaugural presentation of the CARE Centre Joan Lesmond IEN of the Year Award with a tribute by Camille Orridge, CEO of the Toronto Central LHIN, and presentation by Ella Ferris, Executive Vice President, Programs and Chief Nursing Executive of St. Michael's Hospital, CARE Centre board member and chair of the award committee. To watch a video about Dr. Joan Lesmond's impact on the

nursing and greater community, [click here](#). Loy Asheri, a CARE Centre alumni member originally from Tanzania and an RN at Sunnybrook Hospital was the first recipient of the award honouring the late nursing leader.

and Joe Comartin, MP Windsor Tecumseh, provided a letter of congratulations presented by his Constituency Assistant, Christine King. Following the event, there was a professional development session presented by Dr. Jim Gall of the Windsor-Essex County Palliative Medicine Program.



CARE Centre Windsor Case Manager Domine Rutayisire and MPP Teresa Piruzza — Photo courtesy of: Sanja Frkovic/ OurWindsor.ca



Writer/activist and Women's College Hospital board member Michele Landsberg with Angela Robertson, Director of Equity and Community Engagement at Women's College Hospital. To listen to Michele's CARE Centre 10th anniversary speech, [click here](#).

### MARCH HAMILTON GRADUATION



CARE Centre member and co-valedictorian Yemewedish Daemo, RN, Hamilton Case Manager Maria Bugar and member and co-valedictorian Gaynor Quieros, RPN. To read Yemewedish's Valedictorian speech, please [click here](#).

### JANUARY WINDSOR OFFICE LAUNCH

The office launch in Windsor in January was a big event at partner organization WEST of Windsor, with the highlight of an address by MPP Teresa Piruzza, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues. To read her speech, [click here](#). MP Brian Masse (Windsor West) was also in attendance

The Hamilton celebration allowed CARE Centre to have a personal presence at our second-largest office to congratulate 73 newly registered RNs and RPNs. CARE Centre members read greetings from Mayor Robert Bratina, MPP Andrea Horwath and MP David Christopherson, and the event featured speakers from Hamilton Health Sciences, Dr. Ruth Lee, Chief of Nursing Practice, and Daniela Dijmarescu, Project Manager for the IEN/ESL Nurse Integration Project, a 2012 HR Summit Award-winner for Employer Champion of IEPs.

# Program Updates 2011-2012

## INFORMATION SESSIONS

The first personal contact most IENs have with CARE Centre is by attending an Information Session for an overview of the organization's work. Information Sessions are held throughout CARE Centre's six locations (beginning in Kingston in the spring of 2012), and are consistently "sold out" in pre-registration. A total of 60 sessions were presented in 2011-2012, attended by 823 internationally educated nurses. CARE Centre also holds information sessions weekday evenings and weekends to welcome as many members as possible.

## LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION FOR NURSES

CARE Centre's Language and Communication for Nurses (LCN) program is now available to members served out of satellite offices throughout Southern Ontario, with some local in-classroom sections available and additional courses delivered via videoconferencing. This model uses the multi-point Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN) videoconferencing service with an instructor teaching the course from one site and students simultaneously participating in other regions.

CARE Centre's expansion to Peel Region and Windsor in 2011-2012 saw an increase in demand for offsite language courses including those offered at partner organizations such as Hamilton Health Sciences Centre. A total of 358 CARE Centre members participated in 39 individual CARE Centre language courses delivered over the last year. CARE Centre has also started customizing the LCN program for new partner organizations such as The Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care, where employees working in long-term

care can undertake courses more specific to their needs. In the spring of 2012 CARE Centre conducted an e-marketing campaign for LCN, reaching out to additional stakeholders who could benefit from the program.

## EXAM PREPARATION PROGRAM

CARE Centre's exam preparation program underwent significant review in 2011-2012, with practice curriculum reflecting updates to both the Canadian registered nurse exam and the registered practical nurse exam. Over the last fiscal year 176 members enrolled in 12 individual exam "prep" courses, which were delivered beginning in May of 2011 in a combined cohort for both RNs and RPNs.

The courses are taught by a team of expert nurse educators who use a dynamic format to engage students in reviewing core exam competencies. The emphasis is on knowledge, comprehension, application and critical thinking. In the last year CARE Centre was also able to deliver exam preparation through regional offices. The program provides significant value to members, at a cost of about one-tenth of some commercial exam preparation courses.

## OBSERVATIONAL JOB SHADOWING

CARE Centre's Observational Job Shadowing (OJS) program allows participants to learn from expert nurses in a variety of health care settings, and in 2011-2012, CARE Centre was able to bring new partner organizations to the program, and expand member participation. The program is now open to members at any stage of their journey to registration. While OJS does not offer clinical hands-on



*Instructor Gyongyver Angi teaches a Language and Communication for Nurses class*



*Case Manager Norma Tomlin delivers an Information Session in Peel Region*



Ahmad Baki at work, University Health Network, Princess Margaret Hospital, Chemo Day Care

patient care, it increases the understanding of IENs about the role and scope of practice of nursing in Ontario. In 2011-2012, 30 CARE Centre members were accepted into OJS placements including acute care, mental health care, community health care and long-term care offered by six participating organizations.

## NETWORKING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CARE Centre’s Alumni Networking Group (ANG) held seven “Meet and Greet” gatherings in 2011-2012, regularly attended by a total of 65 members in the Greater Toronto Area. The ANG develops and promotes a series of professional development events throughout the year which are also open to members still pursuing their registration.

Events held this year include multiple presentations from RNAO and RPNAO, including a three-day Nursing Week career workshop attended by 45 members in partnership with York University, Centennial College, and Ryerson University. CARE Centre also presented six of the very instrumental Wound Care Workshops, and sessions with Epilepsy Toronto and Port a Cath and Quality Assurance. The OTN video-conferencing system was used to present workshops to 273 members in all regions served by CARE Centre, with topics including Breakthroughs in Osteoporosis, Nutrition and Healthy Aging in Community,

Frailty: Current Insights and Applications, Care of the Ventilated Infant, Outbreak Tips and Tricks and Diabetes Management.

## EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

Throughout 2011-2012 CARE Centre continued to provide members assistance in accessing employment services specific to their needs. For the most part this was achieved through support from case managers and partnerships with community agencies. Five separate workshop offerings were scheduled throughout the year four of which involved a partner agency delivering the workshop material.

In total 53 members participated in these workshop deliveries. There were 39 attendees at workshops provided by Skills for Change in Toronto, five through a course offered by Mohawk College in Hamilton and an additional nine participated in the in house workshop provided by CARE Centre.

While the community based workshops continue to be reasonably well received by the CARE members attending, it is anticipated the course materials developed through an in-house employment strategies project will cover the full range of standard topics but through a nursing lens and in a more flexible format which will better meet the individual needs of CARE Centre members.



Loy Asheri was the inaugural winner of the CARE Centre Joan Lesmond IEN of the Year Award. Loy’s Sunnybrook Hospital colleagues, family and friends celebrate her win: From left: Janet Lewis, Pamela Meyer, Loy Asheri, Rosario Soropia and Marcia Asheri. To see a promo video about the award, [click here](#).

# Financial Statements 2011-2012

CARE Centre had an excellent tenth year of operation and ended the year in a solid financial position. For a copy of our audited financial statements, please contact CARE Centre.

## STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND NET ASSETS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2012

REVENUE	2012	2011
Ontario Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration	\$ 2,092,122	\$ 2,097,465
Services	210,885	157,067
Fundraising & donations	40,616	854
Interest	28,473	15,416
Expense recoveries & rebates	13,404	22,508
	<b>2,385,500</b>	<b>2,293,310</b>

### EXPENSES

Staffing costs	1,170,010	1,061,102
Professional fees & contract services	521,594	383,704
Occupancy	258,524	226,350
Resources & materials	73,930	169,879
Capital asset purchases	49,989	76,257
Office & general	44,298	35,140
Meetings, travel & training	43,438	32,132
Outreach & promotion	38,645	68,814
Fundraising	35,046	
Communications	26,865	22,568
Insurance	16,327	14,620
Partnership & volunteer recognition	10,193	20,470
	<b>2,288,859</b>	<b>2,111,036</b>

### EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR

	96,641	182,274
Unrestricted net assets, beginning of year	351,360	249,086
Appropriation to reserve for operations	(50,000)	(80,000)

### UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR

**\$398,001**      **\$351,360**

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT MARCH 31, 2012

ASSETS	2012	2011
Current assets		
Cash	\$717,370	\$309,378
Short-term investments	1,214,893	2,104,871
Accounts receivable	63,490	84,011
Prepaid expenses	9,018	23,343
	<b>\$ 2,004,771</b>	<b>\$ 2,521,603</b>

### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current liabilities		
Accounts payable & accrued liabilities	\$146,897	\$225,109
Government remittances payable	26,868	23,843
Deferred revenue	853,005	1,391,291
	<b>1,026,770</b>	<b>1,640,243</b>

### Net assets

Reserve for operations	580,000	530,000
Unrestricted net assets	398,001	351,360
	<b>978,001</b>	<b>881,360</b>
	<b>\$2,004,771</b>	<b>\$2,521,603</b>

# Appendix I

## Address to CARE Centre's Toronto Graduation, MAY 11, 2011

Karen Ellis-Scharfenberg, Associate Director,  
RNAO Centre for Professional Nursing Excellence

**To Return to CARE Highlights, click here**

In 1971, the International Council of Nurses (ICN) designated May 12 – Florence Nightingale's birthday – as International Nurses Day. In 1985, in recognition of the dedication and achievements of the nursing profession, the minister of health for Canada proclaimed the second week of May as National Nursing Week.

As many will know, Florence Nightingale is best known around the world as the "Lady with the Lamp" who turned nursing into a profession. That is a very important statement, Florence Nightingale turned nursing into a profession.

This year's Nursing Week theme, Nursing – the health of our nation, is prompting Canadians to consider the cumulative impact of individual nursing gestures in building a healthy society. Nurses are seen to be leading innovations in research but most importantly leading innovations in clinical frontline care. You as a new nurse in Ontario are expected to lead clinical care. The general public expects you to be a leader and RNAO promotes this strongly as a key piece of the nursing profession. RNAO knows that nurses are strong advocates and we must maintain this advocacy on important issues such as defending and improving Canada's medicare system – one of the best health care systems in the world. As you know, nurses work tirelessly – but RNAO hopes not thanklessly. RNAO thanks you for your commitment to nursing in Ontario.

Every single day, you as a nurse apply your extensive knowledge, experience and skills to assure the well-being

of individual's clients, patients, residents, families, and communities across the city of Toronto and potentially across this country. This CARE celebration and National Nursing Week is a time for us all to reflect on the tremendous positive impact of nursing on our lives.

Nurses are by far Canada's largest group of health-care providers and they support the health of Canadian through an astounding diversity of roles. I am so pleased that CARE has taken this moment to acknowledge and celebrate all the internationally educated nurses that have received registration with the College of Nurses this past year. I'm sure you will find as you take on employment as a nurse that nursing in Ontario is a profession in which you go above and beyond daily.

RNAO welcomes all of you to the profession of Nursing in Ontario. A profession is based on knowledge, not just tradition and caring. A profession that can change legislation and government and organizational policies for the betterment of the public. A profession that can change the world.

Congratulations to all graduates, their families, friends and supports. You have achieved a great accomplishment and we welcome you to nursing in Ontario.

Also, congratulations to CARE including the staff and board of directors in another successful year supporting internationally educated nurses as they pursue their dream of becoming a practicing nurse in Ontario.



*Executive Director Zubeida Ramji with member and valedictorian Adela Belisario at the Toronto Nursing Week Celebration and Graduation in Toronto*



*Member Felina Ugale with Manager of Language Supports Michelle D'Alessandro Hatt, and John Mavrogiannakis, Regional Manager, East.*

## Teresa Piruzza's Speech

At the CARE Windsor Launch

[To return to CARE Highlights, click here](#)



*Teresa Piruzza, MPP speaking at the Windsor Launch*

Thank you very much and hello everyone, it is great to be here this morning. What a great way for CARE to kick off the new year with a new office and all new equipment. I know this will be a very happy and productive place to work, and so it should be. We need you at your best because you are doing important work; you are pioneers in providing bridge training for internationally educated nurses. Back in 2001, CARE was the only organization in Ontario providing bridge training for internationally educated nurses, so you really led the way.

In the last 20 years, immigration has transformed many communities in Ontario, including Windsor. There are two questions that are often asked: why are we bringing in so many people and what are they contributing?

Well, let me try and answer those questions.

If I told you that 35 percent of Canada Research Chairs are immigrants, or that 29 percent of Giller Prize finalists are immigrants, or that newcomers register 43 percent of all patents in Canada, would you agree that immigration is good for Canada? I am pretty sure you would.

Today's immigrants to Canada are very well educated, innovative and entrepreneurial, all of which helps our economy. We particularly need immigration now because the stakes are so high. Our birthrate is declining and our population is aging. We already face shortages of skilled labour and more are on the way.

What's more, seven out of every ten new jobs created in Ontario in the next decade will require some form of postsecondary education. Immigration will help Ontario fill these gaps, yet there is a challenge. Statistics Canada figures from 2006 show that the underemployment of newcomers continues to be a concern. After four years in Canada, only 28 percent of immigrants with foreign credentials had those credentials recognized. Just four in ten had had their foreign work experience accepted. And only one in four newcomers with a university experience was working in their field of study.

We need to up our game. We need to understand that we are in a race for skills and talent that is global in scope. Highly skilled newcomers have choices. They don't have to come here. It's very much a buyer's market. So we have to welcome our newcomers and get them settled quickly. And that's where bridge training and the great work of CARE Centre comes in.

Our government has made a major commitment to support bridge training in many professional fields. Bridge training works. It has a strong success rate of preparing skilled professionals for work in their chosen field. In the last eight years, bridge training investments have helped more than 50,000 newcomers find work in their fields thanks to more than 240 bridge training programs spread over 100 different professions and trades.

There are currently 12 bridge training programs serving internationally trained nurses across the province, including the CARE program right here in Windsor. In the past two years, CARE has helped 253 International Educated Nurses become registered in nursing and 227 gain employment as nurses in Ontario.

So I want to celebrate this achievement with you here today and wish you continued success in your new location. We will continue to support your vision of an Ontario where highly skilled internationally educated nurses contribute to our health and well being. And we will work hard to ensure that newcomers from all professions feel welcome here, experience success quickly and put down roots in their communities.

It's the Ontario way. Thank you.

## Valedictorian Speech, Yemewedish Daemo, RN

Hamilton Graduation, March 30, 2012

[To return to CARE Highlights, click here](#)



*Yemewedish Daemo, RN speaking at the Hamilton Graduation*

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen!

I am excited to be with you here today to celebrate my graduation, your graduation and our graduation! Graduation is an exciting event. Isn't it? It is a time for celebrating our successes and achievement, but it comes with hard work and dedication. Hard work, a lot of support from families, friends and colleagues together makes this event possible. I take this opportunity to thank all of you who believed in us and who supported us in this process. Thank you very much!

As we celebrate our graduation, I would like to share with you my experience in this process and how I benefitted from the CARE center and how I personally indebted of Maria Burger's and her colleagues' kindness and support.

Back home in Ethiopia, I was a respected and much wanted nurse, especially by women and children. I used to work around the clock for there were a few nurses in the district. I worked days, nights, weekends and holidays. Women desperately needed my assistance. It is not only I am one of the few nurses, but also women and children had trust on me and wanted to be assisted by me specifically for reasons I don't understand. I am not saying this to magnify my past. Who I was and what I was doing in the past is not that much relevant in here. But, I just wanted to highlight

my background and that I was a nurse by training and also feedback from my clients confirmed to me that I was nothing but a nurse.

Then, I had to leave my country and my work which I loved dearly because my husband was given a scholarship to study in Germany. When we came to Germany, we thought we had to give our children a better chance than we had and decided to immigrate to Canada. When we came to Canada, I had no doubt that I would continue working as a nurse. Because this was what I was trained for and nursing was what I knew. I couldn't think of anything else. But, I didn't know where I had to start. I didn't have any information and I didn't know anyone that could help. So, things became more complicated than I had expected. Working as a nurse has suddenly become a very remote dream that may not be lived.

I started searching in the internet about how I could be registered in Canada and I suddenly came across CARE and CNO. I sent an e-mail to CNO and they referred me to Mohawk College. I contacted Mohawk College and the Program Manager for IEN, Nancy Brown gave me an information kit that included CARE's brochures. I soon contacted the CARE center and learned that Maria Burger will be coming to Kitchener for an outreach. I used to live in Kitchener at the time. Maria came to Kitchener in the summer of 2009 and I met her. She gave me all the relevant information that I needed to register in Canada. I don't forget my first meeting with Maria. She was the first person to tell me positive words about the possibility of being registered in Canada as long as I meet certain requirements. Since then, Maria Burger has become my coach, mentor, advisor and also an activist for me. If it weren't for the CARE center and its staff specifically Maria Burger, I couldn't be an RN in Canada. I would like to take this opportunity and express my gratitude to Maria Burger, her team at the CARE center for the support and encouragement they have given me and also to other nurses so that we live our dreams.

There was a time when people doubted my competency in nursing. I was told to go back to my country and not to waste my time in Canada. I don't blame them. My training, my work experience and my nursing skills were from a different country and in a different work setting. But, that doesn't mean that the art and science of nursing is different from place to place. It is only the context which differs. Some people even thought I didn't have the minimum training and experience to work as a nurse. I tried to explain and demonstrate that I am a qualified nurse, but needed some support in learning the Canadian context. Not many people believed in me, except Maria

Burger and some of my teachers. With their continued support and encouragement, I completed the required courses and passed the CRN exam successfully and registered as a nurse in December 2011. It is very difficult to summarize all the ups and downs, the disappointments, the sleepless nights, struggles to pay rent and other utilities etc... in five or ten minutes, but it is worth noting that CARE was there to help me at all times. I am also grateful for the Province of Ontario for paying my tuition fees from the Ontario bursary for bridging program.

The next step in this process was finding a job and integrating in the Canadian work place. Again, CARE cares! I was introduced to IEN integration project and I came to know Daniela. With Daniela's support and coaching on writing resume and interview tips, I was able to land a job at Hamilton General Hospital in January 2012. I am grateful for Daniela and IEN for their support and encouragement in this regard.

I would like to summarize my speech with the following notes:

Firstly, CARE center has been very helpful in informing, coaching and directing me in this process and I think other nurses too. As I celebrate my graduation with you, I will also celebrate CARE and IEN integration program for

being there for me and you in this process;

Secondly, foreign trained nurses have so many challenges in achieving their professional goals in Canada. But, they also have a lot of potentials in terms of experience and knowledge that can be tapped for the betterment of the Canadian society. Agencies such as CARE and IEN program who are engaged in supporting foreign trained nurses are critical in this aspect and have to be encouraged so that both foreign trained nurses and the Canadian society could benefit;

Lastly, supporting a foreign trained nurse to achieve her/his goal is building Canada! To tell you from my experience, in the first week I was registered as a nurse, my daughter who is in Kindergarten told her teacher and all her classmates that "her mommy" was an RN. I soon realized that my registration as a nurse in Canada was beyond a professional dream and beyond building a career for myself. It was a source of pride for my kids. I knew I was not only able to meet their basic needs but also setting standards for my children who are going to build Canada tomorrow.

Thank you all for helping me to achieve these! Without your support and encouragement, this would have been impossible. Thank you!

## Our Hamilton Nursing Community



Member Ronette De Mesa with Janice Collins, Daniela Dijmarescu and Dr. Ruth Lee of Hamilton Health Sciences



Member Adriana Dragoi with Case Manager Maria Burgar

# Thanks & Acknowledgements

The Board and Staff thank the many individuals and organizations who contributed to the work of CARE Centre over the past year.

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Victorian Order of Nurses (VON), Hamilton

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