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Organizations in Southwestern New Brunswick Honoured as Newcomer Employment Champions at YMCA NEC Awards

Saint John, NB - YMCA of Southwestern New Brunswick's Newcomer Connections department proudly hosted the annual Newcomer Employment Champions (NEC) Awards Breakfast, bringing together employers, community leaders, and partners to celebrate organizations creating inclusive employment opportunities for newcomers across the region.

The event recognized outstanding employers who have demonstrated leadership in building welcoming workplaces and supporting the successful integration of newcomer employees into their teams and communities.

"Supporting newcomer employment is essential to building a strong, resilient, and inclusive workforce in Southwestern New Brunswick," said Jordan Reed, General Manager of Newcomer and Community Connections. "The organizations recognized today are true champions of inclusion. Their commitment to hiring, mentoring, and empowering newcomers is not only changing individual lives, but also strengthening our regional economy and enriching our communities. We are proud to celebrate their leadership and partnership."

This year, organizations were nominated across categories, highlighting innovative approaches to newcomer recruitment, onboarding, retention, and workplace inclusion. A dedicated selection committee reviewed nominations and selected the winners based on demonstrated impact, best practices, and their commitment to fostering diverse and welcoming work environments.

Ariston Canada received the **NEC Advocacy Award** for championing inclusive hiring practices and supporting newcomer integration both within the workplace and the broader community.

Jobseeker Recruit Limited was honoured with the **NEC Engagement Award** for its proactive efforts in connecting newcomer talent with meaningful employment opportunities and fostering inclusive workplace communication and professional development.

Horizon Health Network was named **NEC Employer of Choice** for its continued leadership in creating supportive healthcare environments, mentoring internationally trained professionals, and strengthening workforce diversity.

This year also marked the introduction of a **new recognition category, The NEC Trailblazer Award**. **Bridge-Us Solutions** was recognized as the inaugural recipient for its innovative initiatives, collaborative partnerships, and commitment to advancing newcomer workforce integration in new and impactful ways.

In addition, **Crosby Foods Ltd** was inducted into the **NEC Hall of Fame** in recognition of its sustained leadership and long-standing commitment to supporting newcomer employees and fostering an inclusive workplace.



The NEC program, funded by **WorkingNB** and originally developed by the **Saint John Local Immigration Partnership**, continues to play a vital role in equipping employers with the tools and knowledge needed to successfully integrate newcomers into the workforce. Through training sessions, employer engagement, and ongoing support, the program helps organizations build inclusive workplace cultures where newcomer employees can thrive.

Since its launch, the has grown to support 109 employers across the region, with interest continuing to rise as businesses recognize the value newcomers bring through their skills, global perspectives, and commitment to community growth.

The Awards Breakfast also provide an opportunity to strengthen partnerships between employers, settlement organizations, and community stakeholders, reinforcing a shared commitment to creating pathways to meaningful employment for newcomers in Southwestern New Brunswick.

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About YMCA of Southwestern New Brunswick

The YMCA of Southwestern New Brunswick is a charity dedicated to building healthy, connected communities where everyone belongs. Through health and wellness, newcomer support, child and youth development, and community programs, we remove barriers, stand against racism and exclusion, and ensure people of all backgrounds have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

For over 30 years, Newcomer Connections department at the YMCA of Southwestern New Brunswick has supported immigrants and refugees in their settlement journey and community integration. Through programs such as language training, employment readiness support, cultural orientation, and individualized case management, the Y helps newcomers build successful lives in Southwestern New Brunswick. With a diverse multilingual team representing many countries and cultures, services are delivered in a client-centred and inclusive manner.

About Newcomer Employment Champions

Many newcomers arrive in Canada with valuable skills, professional experience, and international education but may face barriers in accessing meaningful employment. The NEC program supports employers in hiring, onboarding, and retaining newcomer employees by providing training, best practices, and practical tools to build inclusive workplaces. Delivered by YMCA Newcomer Connections and funded by WorkingNB, the program strengthens workforce participation and supports long-term economic and community growth in the region.

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