



## Peel newcomers learn universal language of food at culinary program

News Feb 25, 2015 by [Radhika Panjwani](http://brampton-on-author/radhika-panjwani/A71679F9-05D8-4F00-9B1D-0021C3B382B4/) [✉ \(mailto:rpanjwani@thebramptonguardian.com\)](mailto:rpanjwani@thebramptonguardian.com) Brampton Guardian

BRAMPTON – When Anna Derevainko, 30, immigrated to Canada from Ukraine two years ago, she knew just a handful of words in English and no transferable skills that would help her land a job.

This morning, a slightly nervous (but now gainfully employed) Derevainko shared the recipe for her integration into the Canadian workplace to a dozen or so people gathered at William G. Davis Centre for Families, 60 West Dr., during an employer appreciation breakfast.

The Mississauga woman credits her success to the Catholic Crosscultural Service's (CCSI) culinary training program for newcomers in Peel.

The program, introduced last year, offers new immigrants to Canada a chance to hone their skills in their kitchen and find work in the industry.

As part of the intensive course, delivered under the watchful eye of a qualified chef, Derevainko learned to plan menus, whisk sauces, prep food and add flavours to dishes. She also navigated various equipment and processes that are integral and common to commercial kitchens.

Upon completing her training at the state-of-the-art community kitchen– housed at the Davis Centre for Families – the Mississauga resident underwent a paid internship at a restaurant in Mississauga where she now works.

"All my life, I have liked cooking, but working in the kitchen at home is very different from working in a professional kitchen," Derevainko said. "Because of this program, I got good experience and skills. Every Friday, I would attend workshops on writing resumes and cover letters. This was important because in Ukraine the resume structure is a little bit different."

The culinary program for newcomer youth program is one-of-a-kind in the area and is offered to newcomers between the ages of 15 to 29, explained Rekha Mistry, employment facilitator for the program.

"This 16-week course is a stepping stone for the youth interested in a career in the culinary industry," she said. "There's nothing like this in Peel because our students get hands-on training in the kitchen, bus tickets, workplace placement, shoes and uniforms. Besides the in-kitchen training, our students also learn employment readiness skills such as interview skills, labour market information, networking and job placement."

Praveen Chilkuri, a chef with Good Food Brampton, said the purpose of the course is to equip newcomer youth with skills they can use with confidence and ease anywhere. Besides learning to make soups and entrees, the students learn to handle food and equipment as per Canada's health and safety standards.

"I often see students struggling with language that are just a week old in the country, trying to see where they fit in," said Chilkuri, who's also an instructor at Humber College. "This kitchen is a place where (newcomers) connect with others and feel a sense of belonging and community."

The culinary training for newcomer youth is open to new immigrants in Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon. Those interested in the program can email Rekha Mistry at [rmistry@ccspeel.org](mailto:rmistry@ccspeel.org)  [\(mailto:rmistry@ccspeel.org\)](mailto:rmistry@ccspeel.org) or call 905-457-7740 ext. 233.

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