

London agency showcases immigrant entrepreneurs; I Am London social media campaign runs three months

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Body

From newcomer to new business owner.

The London and Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership is launching its I Am London social media campaign, a threemonth initiative showcasing area entrepreneurs who immigrated to Canada.

"We want to share these kinds of inspirational stories with everyone," said Huda Hussein, project co-ordinator for the London-area resettlement agency.

"Everyone comes with objectives; to raise their children, to have a better life and to contribute, most importantly."

The campaign has two goals, to share stories from local immigrants and inspire newcomers by highlighting the successes of people like them, Hussein said. Each story will be shared on the agency's website and social media feeds.

The agency has been running the fall social media campaigns for six years, each one with a different immigration-related theme. This year's initiative highlights nine immigrant entrepreneurs in the London-area.

Kay Habib, an interior designer and owner of Skilled Accents, grew up in Lahore, Pakistan, and came to Canada with her husband and son in 2006. She worked in the corporate world before striking out on her own and starting an interior design business.

By May 2018, Habib expanded her business by rescuing discontinued fabric samples and swatches to manufacture decorative pillows. Her company now has a showroom in northwest London and employs nine Syrian and Iraqi refugee women.

"It's an honour to be featured," said Habib. "There's two aspects to my business: social and environmental. I really want to convey that message."

Vasile Caniucă, a Romanian immigrant and owner of luxury homebuilder Millstone Homes, also is being featured in the first month of the campaign. Caniucă arrived as a stowaway in shipping container at the Halifax harbour, claimed refugee status and built a life and business in Southwestern Ontario.

The social media campaign is launching as Canada gears up for a federal election, one where immigration has been a key issue.

Though it's a coincidence the social media initiative and the federal election line up, the initiative has some important messages for the public and politicians alike, Hussein said.

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"Canada is a land of immigration," she said. "We are in a community, we all live together. If one person succeeds, we all succeed." !@COPYRIGHT=© 2019 Sun Media Corporation. All rights reserved.

Graphic

Jennifer Bieman; Kay Habib, owner of Skilled Accents, is one of the London-area ***immigrant*** entrepreneurs featured in a social media campaign. Habib immigrated to Canada in 2006 and started a decorative pillow business that now employs nine Syrian and Iraqi refugees.;

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