

Home news Local News Celebration offers taste of the world Celebration offers taste of the world Posted By HENRY BURY, THE INTELLIGENCER
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Yazmin Ramirez is proud of her Mexican heritage -- and she gave others a taste of it Thursday with such dishes as guacamole and pupusas.

She even created a giant pinata -- without candy -- for the "Window on the World" celebration of English as a second language.

The second annual event was held recently at the Loyola School of adult education and continuing education and featured native delicacies, artifacts and clothing from such countries as Japan, Korea, China, Iraq, Colombia, Philippines, Pakistan and India.

"I'm very proud of my country and my culture and I wanted to show people here some of the things that come from Mexico," Ramirez said.

Ramirez emigrated from Mexico a year ago and lives in Wellington. She is studying English as a second language on a full-time basis at Loyola and is planning to find a permanent job.

"I love your country," she said. "It is a beautiful country, but a little cold ... Prince Edward County is beautiful too."

Belleville is one of 18 Ontario communities to have declared Nov. 9 to 15 "English as a Second Language Week."

Barbara Dick, a Loyola teacher of English, said it's a week "to recognize both those who have contributed and those who have benefitted from English as a second language learning in Ontario," she said. "It celebrates ESL learners, teaches, instructors, international students and their hosts."

Dick said Loyola has adult learners from 19 different countries in both ESL and language instruction for newcomers to Canada.

"All have chosen to make Belleville their new home and are learning English so that they can fully participate in Canadian life," she said.

Dick said the adults are committed to learning English and adapting to a new culture.

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"Immigrants bring skills and knowledge, work experience and education, but without English, it is of no use in Canada," she said.

Belleville Mayor Neil Ellis enjoyed sampling foods from the different countries but he couldn't pick up any jellybeans using chopsticks.

"It's great to see this cultural diversity in Belleville," he said.

The mayor said immigration is essential for Canada to stay competitive in today's global economy.

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