



# The CCVT Connection

**The CCVT Newsletter**, which is published monthly, is intended to inform the Centre's volunteers of important news, events and meetings and, in doing so, to acknowledge the vital role they play in fulfilling the CCVT's mandate.

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The Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture aids survivors in overcoming the lasting effects of torture and war. In partnership with the community, the Centre supports survivors in the process of successful integration into Canadian society, works for their protection and integrity, and raises awareness of the continuing effects of torture and war on survivors and their families. The CCVT gives hope after the horror.



**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The information provided in this publication is not controlled by the CCVT and therefore may not reflect the Centre's views.

## Interview with Resmi Malko, CCVT Client

By Suzanne Roberston, CCVT Volunteer

It is windy again, windy and cold and I am feeling under the weather and already sick of winter as I drag myself up the stairs in a café, looking for a dancer. Yes, a dancer from Albania who now teaches at the National Ballet School here in Toronto. I reach the top of the stairs and I'm greeted with a confident smile and a man rising from his chair to shake my hand. Fluidly. Resmi is definitely a dancer, noticeably so; lanky and strong, his movements filled with strength and intention. He looks me straight in the eyes.

I unload my daily cargo: bags, bike helmet, jacket, sweater, mitts, scarf, handkerchiefs all piled up beneath the table. He waits patiently as I stumble down the stairs to buy a cup of tea. Finally I arrive, fully there. Tea in hand, tape recorder on the table, Resmi Malko watching me, sitting very, very still, as he waits for the questions to begin:

*How long have you been in Canada?*

I came to Toronto four years ago. I grew up in Tirana, Albania and when the political situation became difficult I decided to come to Canada.

*Why Canada?*

It is a democratic country, one of the best places for immigrants to start a new life with good programs and opportunities to support them. I also had friends from Albania who already moved here.

*What was it like when you first arrived? Can you remember those first few months?*

It was strange. I have no family here, just friends. When I first

arrived I stayed at a shelter, I didn't have much money and I couldn't speak the language. It was a big shock to me. It was like standing in a strange forest with no one around you. But I made contact with good friends and they really helped me out. Everything took time - to get my papers, my documents, a job, a place to live - I just had to be patient.

*How was CCVT helpful to you?*

Well they have good counsellors there, and they helped me with all the immigration documents, but one of the most important ways they helped me was by providing ESL classes. This is where I really began learning English. CCVT was like home in the beginning, they were very flexible and welcoming to newcomers. Back then I would go to CCVT everyday. If you want to learn the language you must go everyday, and you must be able to practice it in social situations.

*And now you are a teacher at the National Ballet School. Tell me about dancing, when did you start?*

I started to dance when I was eight years old. My father placed me in classes and I was a natural. My body took to dance right away. I danced for most of my life in Albania. I was the principal dancer with the National Ballet Company. I've danced for so long now, I don't have any choice but to do it, and I do it because I love it, it is my life.

*Tell me how you found your current job teaching dance in Toronto?*

My first job was dancing with the Ontario Ballet Theatre in 'The Nutcracker' and I toured all over Eastern Canada. Then I studied at the National Ballet School, tak-

ing the teacher-training program for professional dancers. As soon as I graduated the school hired me right away.

*Wow that's pretty incredible.*

Yes... and it all took time, this happened over 4 years. But if you have a goal and if you know what you love, you can do it.

*That's true. And I suppose it's helpful in some way to be an artist and to be able to already know what you really love to do. Because it's always a challenge to be an artist anywhere in the world. Yes, even back in Albania I was always on the road, touring and performing. I came with that experience and motivation. I came already with a goal in mind. I have this gift. I came to Canada with this gift to dance. Immigrants forget they bring their knowledge with them from back home. And if they can find new ways to use it and adapt it here, it will help them. A big difference in a new country is that no one is knocking on your door. You have to knock, you have to push. But we are not coming here empty, everybody brings something from their own country. I know it's not easy, believe me I know, but it just takes time. And one of the most important things you must do is learn English, you must be able to talk to people. But people can be cold like winter here (he laughs), Toronto can be a tough place to meet people.*

*I agree. I have found it has taken me a long time to make good friends here... and I don't even face a language barrier... so what's been the most difficult part about coming to Canada?*

Being alone, I think. This is the hardest part. Being away from my family and friends in Albania. People are harder to get to know in this city.

*How do you keep in touch with people back home?*

We talk on the phone and email each other. But all of this can be very expensive. I'm waiting for my citizenship before I return, to be safe, to feel more secure... I haven't been home in 4 years now. But Toronto is feeling like home. I like living here. I've travelled through Europe and the States and compared to many cities Toronto is a clean and quiet place.

*Is there a very big Albanian community here?*

Yes, I think there's approximately 10,000 - 15,000 Albanians now living in Toronto.

*What been the most rewarding part about coming to Canada?*

The freedom here is everything. You can say what you think, you can do what you like, and there's so much space. I love being a part of the National Ballet School, I've made contact with other dancers and I've met new people... (he pauses) I feel like I can finally breathe easier.

Resmi smiles. I smile. We both take a deep breath and shake hands again. Our meeting has been brief, but succinct. I watch him put on his coat, as I gather up the pile of clothing and bags beneath the table. We walk downstairs together. The night is now more whimsical, the wind has softened. Resmi nods his head goodbye, then walks out the door and into a lovely performance of falling snow.

*When Suzanne emailed Resmi this article for his approval, he wrote back:*

"hi is nice to here back from you ....i really like it but i should let you know CCVT has great teacher too i really have big thank you to my teachers there ....MARION, JO, ALAN, AND FOR SURE TO PETER ENGLEHUTT [a CCVT Volunteer] who is my friend now...."

### WELCOME TO OUR NEW VOLUNTEERS!

Hasan Al-Batran  
Mark Shouldice  
Zahra Ratansi

Julie De Corneille  
Alex Teleki  
Lisa Inglis  
Dee Davis

Nyka Alexander  
Yeon Wha Kim  
Funda Pakis

# CCVT Monthly Volunteer Meeting

## Right To Play

### Guest Speaker:

Mark Shouldice, Volunteer Services team, Right To Play

In search of a meaningful travel experience after graduation from Brock University, Mark interned with the Canadian Sport Leadership Corps through Commonwealth Games Canada. While in Grenada, W.I. he helped develop "Project Strong", a national program for at-risk youth. After this eye-opening experience it was off to Africa as a volunteer Project Coordinator with Right To Play. Central to Right To Play's philosophy is the belief that "every child has the right to play". Working in Imvepi Refugee Camp in northern Uganda, Mark was involved in a variety of projects which used sport as a development tool.

His current position is with Right To Play in Toronto as the Volunteer Recruitment Coordinator. Thoughts of returning to Africa and experiencing different parts of the world still remain at the forefront of his mind.

Thursday March 18, 2004  
7:00pm

CCVT  
194 Jarvis Street, 2nd floor (corner of Dundas and Jarvis)  
Toronto, Ontario

For further information, please contact Michele Millard  
at 416-363-1066

PLEASE POST

JOB OPPORTUNITIES  
**CONTRACT**

PLEASE CIRCULATE

**Applications will be received for the position of:**  
**Assistant LINC Instructor at the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture**

LINC is a federally funded English language training program which adheres to the Canadian Language Benchmarks and the Revised LINC Curriculum Guidelines. The LINC Program is one of the services offered through the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture, and serves CCVT clients exclusively.

**Type of assignment:** Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)

**Rate of pay:** \$20.00/instructional hour (plus statutory holiday and 4% vacation pay)

**Location:** The CCVT, 194 Jarvis Street, 2nd Floor (at Dundas)

**Starting Date:** immediately

**Qualifications/Requirements:**

- TESL Certificate from an accredited institution or a minimum of three years adult ESL experience
- Post-secondary degree from an accredited institution
- Excellent English communication skills
- Demonstrated sensitivity to adult learners
- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Demonstrated willingness and ability to work in a multiracial, multicultural environment
- Demonstrated ability to develop a program based on the experiences, social context and life goals of learners
- Proven ability to work effectively as part of a team

**Assets:**

- Understanding of issues affecting refugees/immigrants
- Experience working with refugees/immigrants
- Two years experience at the LINC 1 or LINC 3 level, or equivalent
- Experience with a community service agency

The CCVT wishes to thank all applicants. Only those applicants chosen to be interviewed will be contacted..

Please send all applications and resumes to:

Mulugeta Abai, Executive Director

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**Closing date: 4:00 p.m. March 18, 2004**