



Institute
for Canadian
Citizenship

Institut pour
la citoyenneté
canadienne

News Release

New campaign aims to inoculate Canadians against hate amid COVID-19 **#StandTogether video puts human face on new Canadians working on front line**

May 20, 2020 – The Institute for Canadian Citizenship (inclusion.ca) has launched a campaign to raise awareness of immigrants' front-line contributions to Canada during the COVID-19 crisis.

The campaign kicks off with the #StandTogether video (watch it [here](#)), which features new Canadians — all of them in their first year of citizenship — keeping Canada and Canadians safe. The video is a call to action for Canadians to recognize the work of immigrants on the front line and to combat racism and xenophobia in the midst of this pandemic, as well as long after it's over.

“The people who stood up for the citizens of this country have to be treated with enormous respect and thanks,” says Institute for Canadian Citizenship Co-chair and Co-founder John Ralston-Saul. “To turn our backs on them when this crisis is over would be a scandal. It would be disgraceful and unethical.”

The campaign is in response to a rise in racist incidents, many directed against Asian Canadians — from a Whole Foods shopper yelling at an Asian Canadian to “get away” to a Conservative MP tweeting that chief public health officer Dr. Theresa Tam “must go.”

“I worry now, that in this time of COVID-19 and the unknown, that fear might succeed in dividing us,” says the Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson, Institute for Canadian Citizenship Co-chair and Co-founder. “I see it as my renewed responsibility, as a citizen, a refugee, a neighbour, to do everything I can to keep Canada united and more vibrantly colourful than ever.”

The institute reached out to members of its network to assist in the campaign, and got dozens of positive responses from immigrants working on the front line in health, transport, food service and more.

“At a time of uncertainty, it is so easy to lay blame,” says the institute's CEO Yasir Naqvi, former attorney general of Ontario. “That is why it is so important for us to recognize the contribution of immigrants on the front line, to recognize the contribution of refugees, to recognize the contribution of our neighbours. We must stand together as Canadians.”

About the ICC: The Institute for Canadian Citizenship was founded in 2005 by the Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson and John Ralston Saul, who continue to serve actively as its co-chairs. The ICC is committed to welcoming new Canadians and encouraging active citizenship. It does this through inspiring citizenship ceremonies, partnerships with cultural institutions, and special programming that champions a more inclusive world. To date, the Institute for Canadian Citizenship has welcomed 331,000 new Canadians. Learn more at inclusion.ca.

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