



Canadian Bhutanese Society

Cultural preservation through community participation

Hon. Nathan Naudorf,

On behalf of the Canadian Bhutanese Society (CBS), I would like to express our appreciation for the opportunity to introduce our organization during the meet-and-greet hosted in Lethbridge. We value the opportunity to establish a relationship with your office and to share the work our organization has been doing to support resettled Bhutanese refugees and strengthen Alberta communities.

The CBS is a registered charitable, not-for-profit organization based in Lethbridge, Alberta. We aim to preserve Nepali-speaking Bhutanese culture and enhance intercultural relationships in Southern Alberta through cultural programming, education, recreation, and settlement assistance. The resettled Nepali-speaking Bhutanese community arrived in Canada after their forced displacement from Bhutan and prolonged encampment in Nepal with Canada's government-assisted-refugee program. Recognizing the unique challenges experienced by this community, CBS was established in 2009 to support their settlement, integration, and long-term well-being. Of the approximately 6,500 Bhutanese refugees resettled across Canada, more than 2,000 now call Lethbridge home, making it one of the largest Bhutanese refugee communities in the country. The majority arrived between 2009 and 2015, and CBS has played a central role in supporting their successful integration in Alberta.

Over the past fifteen years, our community has made significant contributions to Alberta. Most working-age adults are employed and actively contribute to the local economy and community. As the community has matured, however, new needs have emerged. Our growing senior population often experience social isolation during the day while family members are at work. In response, CBS currently operates a seniors' program that promotes social connection, physical activity, and overall well-being. We also support children and youth through recreational activities, sports, and Nepali language classes that strengthen cultural identity while fostering educational success. Participation across these programs continues to grow, reflecting both the evolving needs of our community and the important role CBS plays in addressing them.

The continued growth of our programs has highlighted the need for a permanent community facility. At present, our activities are delivered in rented spaces, including the Lethbridge Public Library and various community halls, which limits our capacity to expand programming and respond to increasing demand. We have begun developing a long-term vision for a permanent community space that would serve as a hub for settlement services, educational initiatives, seniors' programming, youth activities, cultural celebrations, and community gatherings. As we move forward with this vision, we hope to build partnerships with government and community leaders, and we would be grateful for your support and guidance.

We appreciate the opportunity to introduce our organization and share our vision with your office. We are hopeful that your office will support our long-term vision.

Sincerely,

Hemlal Timsina
President
Canadian Bhutanese Society (CBS)

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