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Turning the
beat around

A new VCC program makes life more harmonious for recent immigrants


**JORDANA
DIVON**
FOR METRO VANCOUVER

While there are numerous resources to help recent immigrants stay afloat, Vancouver Community College's World Beat program is designed to help young newcomers who often fall between the cracks of Canada's immigration settlement programs: Many are either too old to enter the public education system, or too young to be considered for support.

World Beat, which has partnered with the YWCA and SUCCESS, is a program that teaches language, creative and life skills to these 15-to-25 year olds, through an integrated educational model including arts-based activities, active conversation, and one-on-one support.

"I think the X factor here is we have a creative component of our class every day, so that students who come to us disempowered on a language level, but may be the best conga player in the group, get to experience what it's like to excel



▶ Graduates of VCC's World Beat program that helps recent immigrants learn the life skills necessary to function in Canada.

in that learning environment," says World Beat language instructor Nora Ready.

Raul Carillo, who moved to Vancouver from Mexico, says the program gave him the confidence to tackle a difficult employment situation.

The 22-year-old was working as a cook, and says his job was threatened be-

cause the restaurant manager didn't like that he was always speaking in Spanish with another employee.

"I told everybody at World Beat and they were concerned about my situation," he says.

"They told me, 'We're not going to leave you alone because what's happening is not fair.' So they helped me do my research

and everything worked out."

Job safety aside, Carillo says the best part about the program was what it did for his self-esteem.

"They make you feel confident of yourself, no matter where you come from, no matter which language you speak, you can only get better, and in Canada that's the point."



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