Toronto
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Toronto Cultivates Hispanic Business

A city known for its cosmopolitan flair, Toronto's doors are wide open to a new wave of Hispanic business owners and entrepreneurs. And the Toronto Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (THCC) is there to greet them as they walk through.

"The Hispanic population is growing and gaining strength in Canada's business world," says Idalia Obregon, THCC's president. "New professionals from Latin America are coming, and they are bringing their ideas and their interest in strengthening the connection to Canada."

Obregon says Hispanics are no longer coming to Canada to escape their countries, but rather by choice and with a different perspective and goal of building their businesses. The THCC's primary role is to support them and be a resource to the entire Hispanic community.

Powered entirely by volunteers, the THCC is growing in reputation, numbers, and services. Founded nearly five years ago, the organization is proud of its work and its impact in the community.

The THCC is offering free educational workshops with presenters from both the public and private sectors on topics such as financing, developing business plans, and efficiency. A new mentoring program for entrepreneurs was launched in August in alliance with the Columbian Canadian Professional Association. This partnership program reflects the group's desire to link with other organizations with similar goals.

For the end of the year, the THCC is planning an international trade event with involvement from the Latin America Consular Group of Ottawa.

"The chamber plays an important role here in Canada," explains Obregon. "Our purpose is to support and facilitate the success of Hispanic businesses, but also to promote international trade between Canada and Hispanic businesses in the United States and Latin America."

Obregon says the THCC's biggest challenge is also its greatest strength. With no office or paid staff, all initiatives of the group rely on its volunteers. A business owner herself, Obregon acknowledges the time constraints for her and the 13-member board of directors, but says the commitment of the board and other volunteers is the key to the group's success.

"We want to make a difference in Canada," Obregon says. "We're on the right track."

"Our purpose is to support and facilitate the success of Hispanic businesses, but also to promote international trade between Canada and Hispanic businesses in the United States and Latin America."

— Idalia Obregon, CEO
Toronto Hispanic Chamber of Commerce