

June 30, 2017

## City of Toronto hosts Canada Day picnic for Syrian newcomers

Mayor John Tory was joined by more than 200 Syrian newcomers to celebrate Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday at a picnic in High Park this afternoon. The event was held in partnership with the City of Toronto's Newcomer Office and COSTI Immigrant Services. COSTI is celebrating their 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

Celebrating Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday with some of the people who have so recently made this city their home is fitting," said Mayor Tory. "I'd like to congratulate COSTI on their milestone as well, and to thank them for the support they have shown in this settlement effort."

The new Torontonians in attendance enjoyed a lunch with Mayor Tory, and face painting, soccer and frisbee were available for children.

"We are honoured to be working together with the City of Toronto Newcomer Office to successfully integrate newcomers to the city and in partnering for this special occasion," said Mario J. Calla, Executive Director of COSTI. "It's an opportunity for us to reconnect with our clients and to mark both Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary and COSTI's 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary."

Since 2015, close to six thousand Syrian newcomers have settled in Toronto. As part of its Refugee Resettlement Program, the Toronto Newcomer Office has worked to increase supports and services available to new Torontonians and their sponsors, in partnership with community agencies. More information on the program is available at [toronto.ca/refugees](http://toronto.ca/refugees).

For 65 years COSTI has contributed to the social fabric of our great city, province and country. COSTI was founded in 1952 by the Italian community, to help Italian immigrants settle in their new home. Today COSTI is a community-based multicultural agency providing employment, language training, settlement and social services to all immigrant communities, new Canadians and individuals in need of assistance.

Toronto is Canada's largest city, the fourth largest in North America, and home to a diverse population of about 2.8 million people. It is a global centre for business, finance, arts and culture and is consistently ranked one of the world's most livable cities. In 2017, Toronto will honour Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday with "TO Canada with Love," a year-long program of celebrations, commemorations and exhibitions. For information on non-emergency City services and programs, Toronto residents, businesses and visitors can visit <http://www.toronto.ca>, call 311, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or follow us on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/TorontoComms> and on Instagram at <http://www.instagram.com/cityofto>.

- 30 -

**Media contact:** Jane Arbour, Strategic Communications, 416-338-0944, [jane.arbour@toronto.ca](mailto:jane.arbour@toronto.ca)