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GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

WELCOME TO CANADA: Halton Regional Police Chief Ean Algar joins a group of new Canadians for a photograph during the ESINC event in Oakville last Tuesday.

Program breaking down barriers for new Canadians

By Howard Mozel
SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

Halton Regional Police may have created their latest diversity initiative to help newcomers to the area but in practice, emergency personnel have learned a wealth of information from their students as well.

This two-way flow of knowledge comes as music to the ears of those behind the Emergency Services Information to New Canadians (ESINC) program, taught at local Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) to help explain the role of emergency personnel. The program — a first in Canada — also teaches new Canadians how to access services through 911 in an emergency or through non-emergency channels.

Police Chief Ean Algar characterized ESINC as a "proactive and inclusive" way of interacting with diverse communities, especially considering the

rapidly changing face of the public in Halton. "This is an important venture."

Sgt. Peter Payne said that by having police officers, firefighters and paramedics listen as well as teach, the ESINC program has been made even better and is now attracting interest from other jurisdictions.

"It's growing and we're excited about that," he said, delighted to be on the ground floor of such a fulfilling effort. "This could go Canada-wide and even across North America."

Although classes have already been held, the program was officially launched Tuesday during a special standing-room-only open house at regional headquarters attended by scores of ESINC graduates, some bearing small Canadian flags and all eager to mingle with a range of emergency personnel and see their vehicles up close.

One of those grads on hand was
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