



Western

Centre for Research on
Migration and Ethnic Relations

Fall Colloquium Series 2012

Cathy Kolar

Legal Assistance of Windsor

Cathy Kolar was educated in political science at the University of Windsor, and subsequently pursued a graduate degree at York University. For the past 20 years, she has advocated for displaced persons, non-status migrants, and refugees in both Canada and Central America. Her introduction to refugees began as a frontline volunteer with the Scottish Refugee Council, followed by work with indigenous communities displaced by the civil war in Guatemala (Rigoberta Menchu Tum Foundation, Guatemala). Upon return to Canada, she collaborated on a CIC funded project to resettle government sponsored refugees. She works closely with the Diocese of London Ministry to Refugee Claimants and Justice for Migrant Workers. She has also been involved in the sanctuary movement



Her current work as a Supervisor of Immigration files with Legal Assistance of Windsor involves supporting survivors of human trafficking and vulnerable workers living with precarious immigration status. She sits on WEFIGHT, a public education and community response initiative addressing the issue of human trafficking in Southern Ontario. As part of her responsibilities, she provides training to legal and NGO workers in a bid to enhance their ability to support human trafficking survivors. As a side note, she paints and is co-founder of a company that supplies books and media in 15 languages to public libraries throughout Canada.

Advocacy in an Era of Forced Labour: Notes from the Field

Between 2007 and 2011, almost one in three new jobs created in Canada were filled by migrant workers under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. Recent studies have sought to demonstrate inherent flaws in the structure of the program that allow for exploitation. Citizenship and Immigration Canada's own statistics lend credibility to these studies --- more than half of those recognized as victims of human trafficking entered Canada through this program. This talk will address the manner in which the temporary foreign worker program allows for labour exploitation with strong indicators of human trafficking, while exploring how anti-trafficking initiatives force migrant workers recognized as victims into a state of 'inadmissibility'. Cathy Kolar will explore these issues in light of her field experiences and discuss advocacy strategies to assist survivors of forced labour in Canada.

Thursday, November 15 2012
4:00 pm - SSC 5220
Refreshments 3:30pm - SSC 5230

All Welcome !

For more info: nsolomon@uwo.ca