

Victoria News

Looking for love in multicultural places



Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society staff members Gagan Leekha (left), Rosalyn Cua and Aviva Shtoll are organizing VIRCS' Multicultural Speed Dating Night, to be held April 2.

Don Denton/News staff

[Buy Victoria News Photos Online](#)

By Rebecca Aldous - Victoria News

Published: March 24, 2009 5:00 PM

Speed dating event aims to make socializing easier for newcomers to Canada

On Saturdays, church was the place to be, says Hooney Seo.

It was the hot spot of the youth social scene in his former home of Seoul, South Korea.

Speed dating, conversation groups were all held within the church's walls. Once church was over, the gaggle of youngsters headed to restaurants, where they would continue to chat and, if lucky, arrange to go on dates. In some cases the dates led to the hefty title of boyfriend and girlfriend, Seo said.

"Boyfriend and girlfriend was serious," he said. "It was almost like getting married."

Three months after arriving in Canada, Seo notes

that some of this country's dating customs are different than what he's used to.

It's a topic Aviva Shtull sometimes faces in her job as the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society's buddy program co-ordinator.

People jokingly tell her they're getting involved in the program to meet a love interest.

But Shtull heard truth coming through the remarks and got to work organizing a multicultural speed dating event hosted by the centre.

"I have people in (the buddy program) who ask how you meet people here," she said.

"I don't know what to answer, because we don't have a norm."

The event, set for Thursday, April 2 downstairs at the Fort Street Cafe (742 Fort St.), will provide an opportunity for people from many different backgrounds to mingle, Shtull said, noting that Victoria is home to a large multicultural community.

The event runs from 7 to 9 p.m. and is open to people age 25 to 39. To register, please call Shtull at 250-361-9433 or e-mail aviva@vircs.bc.ca. Tickets cost \$20 and can be purchased by phone or at the VIRCS office, third floor, 637 Bay St.

Romantic holidays

- Qi Qiao Jie: The seventh day of the seventh month in the Chinese calendar, sometimes called the Daughter's Festival, sees couples pray for loved ones and marriage.
- In Korea people celebrate Nov. 11 by exchanging candy and cards.
- Russia's Women's Day, March 8, is a cross between Valentine's Day and Mother's Day. On this day men honour the women in their lives.

raldous@vicnews.com

Find this article at:

http://www.bclocalnews.com/vancouver_island_south/victorianews/community/41768707.html