

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Columbus Centre completes its national project with the launch of a permanent exhibit, *Italian Canadians as Enemy Aliens: Memories of WWII*

June 2, 2012 Toronto, ON — On Thursday, May 31, 2012, Columbus Centre of Toronto officially opened its permanent exhibit, *Italian Canadians as Enemy Aliens: Memories of WWII*. The exhibit is part of the national project, funded by the Community Historical Recognition Program (CHRP), Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), that will acknowledge, commemorate, and increase knowledge about the Italian Canadian experience during World War II. The exhibit explores the repercussions of Italy's declaration of war and the Canadian government's implementation of the War Measures Acts.

The public event, held in the Joseph D. Carrier Art Gallery, was the second launch in the project; a website, www.ItalianCanadianww2.ca, and book, *Beyond Barbed Wire: Essays on the Internment of Italian Canadians*, launched on March 31, 2012.

Over 300 guests attended the opening, including families of enemy aliens, representing stories from Toronto, Montreal, Sudbury, Hamilton, Ottawa, Vancouver, Sydney (NS), and New Waterford (NS). Others present included members of the Italian Canadian community, university professors, museum professionals, government officials, and members of the general public.

The night began with a note of welcome from Pal Di Iulio, President and CEO of Villa Charities, followed by remarks by Karen Manarin, Chair of Columbus Centre Board of Governors, and Lucy Di Pietro, Project Director.

"With this project, we recognize the importance of memory, archives and redevelopment, all of which make us better, more engaged citizens, ensuring that we remember our past as we proceed into the future," says Manarin.

Many people who provided interviews to the project or donated items to the initiative were present at the event. Manarin and Di Pietro then presented these individuals with a certificate of recognition of their contribution to the project, as well as copies of books on the subject of the internment. After the official ribbon cutting ceremony, the timed viewing of the exhibit began.

- 30 -

Media Contact

Stefanie Polsinelli
Villa Charities/Columbus Centre
416.789.7011 ext. 320
spolsinelli@villacharities.com

**A project by Columbus Centre of Toronto
Funded by:**



Citizenship and
Immigration Canada

Citoyenneté et
Immigration Canada