A Letter to New Edmontonians;

Having been born and raised in Edmonton, I have realized that we have a distinct habit of being harsh and self deprecating about our city, which is why often the first question you will receive after saying you **CHOSE** to move to Edmonton is ‘Why on earth would you do that?!’, or something along those lines. But don’t worry, the city itself has much to offer, and when push comes to shove we are vigorously defensive about our city. Edmonton has not always been the most hospitable place for migrants to settle, and as in many places around the world there are always barriers to face. Whether it be prejudice brought on by an ignorance of the needs of the job market, or a lack of government funding for settlement and support services, there will be social, economic and cultural barriers to face. However, I am happy to say that the range of services and programs for migrants (both temporary and permanent) to the city has expanded significantly. One such organization is Edmonton Immigrant Services Association (EISA); it is located in downtown Edmonton and easily accessible via public transport. Notably, they offer programs to overcome social isolation; you could call it a free match making service between migrants of all ages and needs, and Edmontonians. EISA also offers translation services, and activities that help you get acquainted with the city and assist in the integration into Canadian society. EISA is partially funded by the government, but there are many other organizations in Edmonton funded and run entirely by volunteers. A couple examples are The Centre for Race and Culture, which provides links to many immigrant serving agencies (Health Services, Housing, Cultural competence, etc.), and Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers. Additionally, the U of A Centre for Student Development runs the orientation program and provides a chance to interact with fellow students outside of classes. A link to a website where many of these can be found is provided below. Welcome to Edmonton!

<http://www.eriec.ca/settlement-integration/>