

CONNECTIONS

QUIS Newsletter



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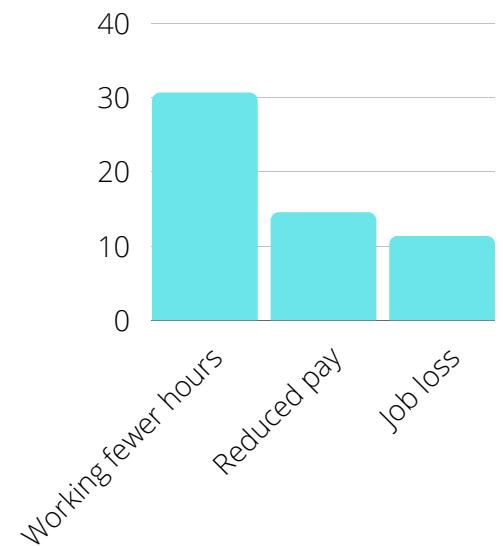
- IRCC Updates
- COVID-19 Information
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CLIENT SURVEY RECAP

QUIS would like to extend a huge thank-you to everyone who completed our 2021 COVID-19 Impacts Survey! This survey will help us create programs and resources to address the needs of our community during the pandemic. Raffle winners have been contacted, and we appreciate everyone taking the time to share their honest experiences during this difficult and stressful time. We want to share some of what we learned from the survey results.

Of the 62 total respondents, 37.1% were Permanent Residents, 27.4% were Canadian citizens, 14.5% were international students, and 12.9% were on Post-Graduation Work Permits. More women responded than men with 64.5% compared to 35.5% respectively.

As to be expected, many people have had their jobs or businesses affected by the pandemic – 30.6% of survey respondents indicated they are now working fewer hours, 14.5% have had their pay reduced, and 11.3% have lost their jobs. Many clients, 1 in 4 people, also identified as working in high-risk environments such as healthcare, retail and grocery stores. Only 1 in 10 people who completed the survey indicated they are now working from home.



1 in 4 people are working in high risk/exposure jobs

CLIENT SURVEY RECAP...

Our family and social lives have also been impacted by COVID-19. One-third of respondents mentioned being separated from family due to travel restrictions and almost one-quarter have had trouble connecting with those long-distance family members.

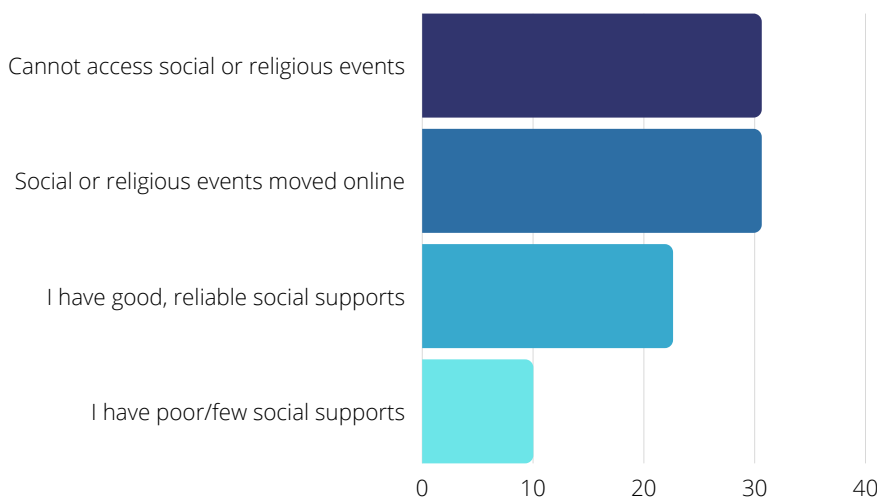
The loss of social, recreational or religious activities has had an impact on one's general wellbeing and though many of these activities have moved online, the loss of community events and spaces has been felt across the region. In addition, 30.6% of respondents also indicated that they had cancelled medical, dental, or other health-related appointments because of the pandemic. Some respondents said they were finding new and creative ways to stay connected, but many mentioned significant challenges and feelings of anxiety and depression.

Lastly, many people indicated they had accessed various benefits including the CERB, EI, the increased Canada Childcare Benefit, and others. However, 22.5% of survey respondents indicated they were unsure which benefits they are eligible for. This aligns with what other reports and surveys from similar agencies have reflected in terms of accessing tax benefits and income supports. It appears that many newcomers/recent immigrants across the entire country remain unsure if they qualify for benefits or believe that they cannot access support programs.

QUIS will be hosting more information sessions in the near future, but for now, please feel free to reach out to us at 613-968-7723 or info@quinteimmigration.ca if you want more information about, or need help, applying for government benefits.



Almost 30% indicated they had not accessed any federal benefits but 22.5% also stated they were unsure if they were eligible to apply



Even Though
WE'RE APART



You're in
MY HEART

IRCC UPDATES

NEWS RELEASES FROM IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES & CITIZENSHIP CANADA

POST-GRADUATE WORK PERMITS (PGWP)

The pandemic has made it very difficult for PGWP holders to find suitable jobs and many have had their working hours reduced. IRCC is allowing people to apply for a one-time open work permit of up to 18 months if they apply by July 27, 2021, under the following conditions:

- Your PGWP expired on or after January 30, 2020 or will expire within 4 months from the date you apply for this open work permit
- You were in Canada as of January 27, 2021, when the policy went into effect, and have remained in Canada
- You have either a temporary resident status OR you lost your temporary resident status and have applied to restore it OR will apply to restore it at the same time you apply for this work permit

STUDY PERMITS & ONLINE LEARNING ABROAD

All students who were enrolled in a PGWP-eligible program from March 2020 or who started a program of study from spring 2020 up to and including the fall 2021 semester are no longer required to complete 50% of their program (or programs) of study in Canada. **Up to 100% of their program can be completed online from outside Canada.** The length of study outside of Canada will count towards the length of a PGWP upon completion of the academic program. All other eligibility criteria for applying for the PGWP remains in place.

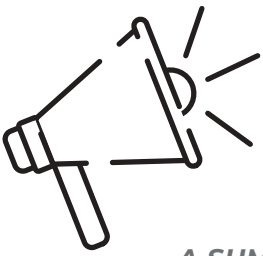
HEALTHCARE PR PROJECT FOR REFUGEE CLAIMANTS

IRCC acknowledges that there are refugee claimants in Canada who have worked in the health care sector throughout the pandemic and believes that their contributions are valuable and that they should be given the opportunity to qualify for permanent residence. To qualify, refugee claimants have to have worked a certain minimum number of hours in the health care sector and provided direct patient care as part of their job. Even if a person's refugee claim has failed, they can make an application, provided they meet all the eligibility criteria. Also, a spouse of an eligible refugee claimant can use this application process if their spouse passed away as a result of COVID 19.

TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS - UPDATES

As most people know, COVID 19 has caused the government to restrict who can enter Canada. The border between Canada and the U.S. remains closed and visas to enter Canada are difficult to obtain without an essential reason for travelling (ie. employment offer, study permit, family reunification). There are also new measures for quarantine and testing upon re-entry to Canada for citizens, permanent residents, visitors and foreign nationals who have travelled internationally.

Have questions?? Contact QUIS for more details at 613-968-7723



COVID-19 VACCINE - QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

A SUMMARY OF THE MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT VACCINATIONS TO PROVIDE YOU WITH ANSWERS YOU CAN TRUST

By now, you have probably heard quite a bit about the COVID-19 vaccines. Canada has approved four vaccines so far - created by Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, AstraZeneca, and Janssen/Johnson & Johnson. As we continue to move through the pandemic, it's important to stay informed and avoid misinformation so you can protect yourself, your family, and your community. You deserve to have all your questions answered, and we encourage you to check out the resources listed at the end of this article!

Currently in Ontario, vaccines are being given to the elderly and high priority healthcare workers. An online and telephone booking system opened on March 15th for people aged 80 and over. The booking system for people aged 75 and up opened on March 22, earlier than expected. As the rollout of vaccines continues, the timelines will change to adapt to current rates and increased access to vaccines. Currently, between April and July, vaccinations will be available to those aged 60 to 75 with appointments booked in 5 year increments. In July, vaccination appointments are expected to open up to anyone who wants to be vaccinated regardless of age or other factors. To find out if your age group has opened up, visit <https://hpepublichealth.ca/covid-19-vaccines/>.

Public Health offices ask that people not try to book appointments until it is their age group's turn. Please speak with your family doctor or another health care provider prior to receiving the vaccine if you have a history of severe allergic reactions, have a bleeding problem/bruise easily, have an autoimmune disorder or weakened immune system, or are pregnant, breastfeeding, or want to become pregnant.

Q: Are the vaccines safe?

A: Yes. The mRNA technology used to create both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines was developed several years ago and is being used to develop vaccines for other illnesses such as malaria. The AstraZeneca and Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccines use viral vector technology, which use a harmless virus (adenovirus, which causes the common cold) to deliver the "spike protein" and cause the body to produce antibodies against the virus that causes COVID-19. Viral vector technology is used in many other vaccines. There were thousands of participants in the clinical trials and no safety-testing steps were skipped. The vaccines were created quickly because so much money, time, and resources were invested into developing, testing, and approving them.

Q: Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?

A: No. The vaccines do not contain the live COVID-19 virus, they contain the virus' "spike protein" or RNA from that protein that encourages your body to make antibodies against the real virus. As with all vaccines, side effects are possible and may be similar to symptoms of COVID-19, but you cannot become infected from the vaccine.



As of March 29, 2021 health officials have paused use of the vaccine AstraZeneca for adults under the age of 55. More details will be released over the next days and weeks.

COVID-19 VACCINE - QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q: What are the side-effects of the vaccine?

A: Most people will experience no side-effects or mild side-effects such as pain/soreness at the injection site, headaches, fatigue, muscle or joint pain, fever or chills, and/or swelling or tenderness under the armpit. Less common side effects include redness and swelling at the injection site, nausea and vomiting, and/or enlarged lymph nodes. Similar to side-effects from other vaccines, symptoms should resolve within 1-3 days.

Less than 1% of people may experience a severe allergic reaction, typically to one of the vaccine ingredients, polyethylene glycol. Polyethylene glycol is also found in many medications such as laxatives, Tylenol, Benadryl, Reactin, and Advil Liqui-gels. If you have a history of severe/ anaphylactic allergic reactions, please speak with a doctor before receiving the vaccine.

Q: How much does it cost to get a vaccine?

A: Nothing! Vaccines will be distributed to everyone in Ontario for free. If you do not have a health card/OHIP coverage, you can still receive the vaccine if you bring another form of government-issued ID to your appointment. If you see or receive a phone call about COVID-19 vaccines being offered at a cost, this is a scam. Do not answer, and report the phone number, social media post, or email to the police.

Q: Will I be completely protected against COVID-19 after receiving the vaccine?

A: All but one of the vaccines require two doses. The Pfizer vaccine is 95% effective 7 days after the 2nd dose, the Moderna vaccine is 94.1% effective 14 days after the 2nd dose, the AstraZeneca vaccine is 60.3% effective after the 2nd dose, and the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine is 66.9% effective after a single dose. At this time, it is unclear if people who are vaccinated can carry and give the virus to people who are not vaccinated, so social distancing, mask-wearing, and hand hygiene measures will need to continue until COVID-19 case numbers are low enough and vaccination numbers are high enough that it is unlikely for the virus to spread in public places such as stores, workplaces, public transit, and etc.



For more information, please check out the following links:

Hastings & Prince Edward Public Health Unit COVID-19 information:

<https://hpepublichealth.ca/the-novel-coronavirus-2019ncov/>

COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Sheet (available in multiple languages):

<https://www.womenscollegehospital.ca/patients-and-caregivers/covid-19-vaccine-multi-language-information-sheets>

COVID-19 Vaccine Bulletin (available in multiple languages):

<https://ocasi.org/covid-19-vaccine-bulletin>



We know it is difficult to keep going when there is no clear end-date to this pandemic, and we know how much we all want to go back to visiting our friends and hugging our extended family.

Please reach out for emotional support if you need it.

This is an exceptionally hard time, but easier days are coming.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Bounce Back Ontario - <https://bouncebackontario.ca/>

BounceBack is a free, guided self-help program that's effective in helping people aged 15 and up who are experiencing mild-to-moderate anxiety or depression, or may be feeling low, stressed, worried, irritable or angry. Participants receive telephone coaching, skill-building workbooks and online videos to help them overcome these symptoms and gain new skills to regain positive mental health. Referral from a family doctor or self-referral with connection to a doctor. This service is not for crisis counselling or psychotherapy.

Enrichment Centre for Mental Health - <https://enrichmentcentre.ca/>

The Enrichment Centre for Mental Health, is a non-profit agency that strives to enhance the mental wellness and quality of life of people in our diverse community. Through our direct services, education, advocacy and consumer involvement we work together to create an environment that supports mental well being.

BQW Community Health Centre - <https://www.bqwchc.com/services/primary-health-care/social-worker-support/free-resources-for-mental-health>

Listing of free resources for mental health, wellbeing and emergency crisis lines

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis please contact 1-888-757-7766

Available 24 hours a day for emergency mental health & addictions

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

PROFILING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF IMMIGRANTS IN OUR COMMUNITY



Mama's Kitchen is one of Belleville's many newcomer-owned restaurants. Established in 2018, this breakfast and lunch spot serving Greek food is owned by two young brothers, Dimitri and George Karaponos. Although Dimitri is a Canadian citizen from birthright, he only arrived in Canada for the first time in June 2018, having lived in Greece all his life. George and Dimitri's father was a Canadian citizen who worked in the restaurant business for decades. Originally, Dimitri had less experience than his brother George, but he learned the basics from his brother and father on how to establish and run a restaurant. So in 2018, the brothers bought an existing business, renamed it and renovated the space.

The brothers chose the Quinte area for their restaurant because their family members had lived in Belleville for many years and it was familiar to them. Dimitri says his family told him that "...Belleville was not very expensive, people are friendly, and it would be a perfect area to start my business." He says there is strong community support for small local businesses in the Quinte region and this has made it easier for them.

Running a small business, however, has also proven to have its challenges. Dimitri relayed that the hardest part in the beginning was to attract customers and to make ends meet because expenses were high. But a few months after being established, they realized that customers were happy with the food and the service and were recommending Mama's Kitchen to their friends and family. Dimitri believes "word-of-mouth" is the best way to get your business off the ground.

Dimitri advised newcomers who want to start their own business to study in college or university first if it's possible. He said, "It's challenging to own a business nowadays. It has to be a really good idea. Something different." But the challenge has paid off for Dimitri and his family (his wife Katerina, a newcomer to Canada, also works at the restaurant). They are very grateful to their customers, especially during the pandemic. Dimitri says, "We've been doing really well in hard times thanks to our customers' continual support. We want to thank them for supporting small local businesses".

At the moment the restaurant serves breakfast and lunch but the family would like to expand the operations to dinner in the future, and maybe add a new cuisine like Italian to their menu!

Mama's Kitchen is located at 191 Dundas Street East, Belleville. They are open for breakfast and lunch with hours of operation from Tuesday to Sunday, 7am to 1:30pm. They have eat-in, take-out and delivery. Reservations are not required. The restaurant is following all safety pre-cautions for COVID-19. Visit their website at: <https://mamas-kitchen-lunch-restaurant.business.site/?m=true> or Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/Mamas-Kitchen-2334016200210068>



HAPPY HOLIDAYS & SPRING EQUINOX



HERE'S TO WARMER DAYS, OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES AND A CHANCE FOR RENEWAL

SPRING EQUINOX - MARCH 20

Equinox means equal hours of daylight and darkness. This happens when the moon is directly over the hemisphere and is believed by many to represent a new beginning or new horizon. It is commonly associated with hope and renewal as it brings a new season of spring.

PASSOVER - MARCH 27-APRIL 4

Passover is a Jewish holiday that celebrates the Exodus of the Israelites from slavery to freedom as described in the Old Testament of the Bible, or the Torah. It is a festive event that involves celebrations in both meals and prayers. There are special rules for the food eaten during Passover and the first meal is called a seder where the story of the Exodus is retold using a special text called the Haggadah.

EASTER - APRIL 2-5

Easter is a Christian observance of the resurrection (coming back to life) of Jesus Christ, who was killed by the Romans in AD 30, according to accounts in the Bible. The forty days leading up to Easter are called Lent. This is a period of prayer, fasting and penance. Many Christians try to change some aspect of their behaviour, for example by giving up sweets or alcohol for this period. The date of Easter changes every year and because of this, it is referred to as a "moveable feast". Easter Sunday marks the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the Friday before is known as Good Friday. According to the Bible, this is the day that Jesus was executed. It is a solemn day in the Christian churches.

EASTER BUNNY - While not religious, the Easter holiday is also connected to the arrival of spring and eggs, rabbits, and chocolates are also symbols of Easter. Eggs are considered a symbol of new life and the Easter Bunny is a magical creature that delivers chocolate eggs and other treats to children. Easter egg hunts are also common, in which adults hide candies for children to look for.

RAMADAN - APRIL 12-MAY 11

Ramadan is a Muslim holiday that is largely known for its month long fasting period. The date of Ramadan also changes every year on account of differences between the Islamic and Gregorian calendars. This is a time for Muslims to focus on their faith and spend less time on everyday worries. Muslims strictly fast during daytime hours during this period. The holiday of Eid al-Fitr marks the end of Ramadan and means "festival of breaking the fast".



UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL 2021

What goes in that blue box?

Recycling & Hazardous Waste Information Session

April 7th - 11am to 12pm via Zoom

To register, contact Meghan at ceotis@quinteimmigration.ca

Easter holiday office closure

QUIS will be closed from April 2 to April 5. Remote services resume at 8am on April 6.

Income Tax Clinic

There is still time to schedule a phone or Zoom appointment to file your taxes with our volunteer. The filing deadline is April 30.

To register, contact John Mark at jmrobertson@quinteimmigration.ca

Game Nights at Scalliwag Toys

You're invited to use the play space at Scalliwag's on Thursday and Friday nights. Contact them directly for details.

Virtual Yoga at The Yoga Hub

Vinyasa Flow on Sunday evenings, accessible for everyone. Contact them directly for details.



MAY 2021

Arts & Crafts session

"Learn how to felt' workshop - date to be announced

Contact Meghan for more details at ceotis@quinteimmigration.ca

Questions about your legal rights?

Community Advocacy & Legal Centre (CALC) Information Session

May 14th - 11am to 12pm via Zoom

To register, contact Meghan at ceotis@quinteimmigration.ca

Victoria Day office closure

QUIS will be closed for the holiday on Monday, May 24

Vicki's Veggies Seedling Sale

Heirloom tomatoes and herb plant seedlings for your gardening delight.

May 15&16 and May 22&23 - drive thru only. <https://vickisveggies.weebly.com/>



SKILLS TRAINING EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (STEP)

USE YOUR TRANSFERABLE SKILLS TO GET EMPLOYED!

Coming to a new country often means a change in career for new immigrants. When you first arrive in Canada, you may need to consider working in a different job from your previous occupation. Many newcomers experience doubt in their abilities, wondering if they'll be able to adjust to life in a new country.

Questions such as "is my English good enough?" "Will my education and foreign experience be considered?" may cross a newcomers mind. Some other newcomers could also direct their efforts to the field of their expertise to obtain opportunities related to their previous occupation, which might be a long term strategy.

Whatever job search path you decide to take, you need to identify the skills and attributes required to obtain a job or start a new career and recognise the transferable skills you already have. Taking the time to improve your soft, hard and job search skills is worthy if you are looking to obtain and further retain a job in the Canadian labour market.

The list of skills mentioned most by Canadian hiring managers and recruiters seeking to hire new employees usually include:

- Communication skills (oral and written)
- Teamwork/group/interpersonal skills
- Work-ethic traits, such as drive, stamina, self-motivation, ambition, initiative, reliability, positive attitude toward work
- Logic, intelligence, proficiency in the field of study

Participating in Government funded employment programs is an excellent opportunity to identify transferable skills, learn about the Canadian workplace, learn or increase your soft and essential skills, access job placement and further gain employment.

We can help you!

The Skills Training Employment Program (STEP program) at Quinte Immigration Services supports eligible newcomers and Canadian job seekers to identify and improve their transferable skills and essential, soft, hard skills to overcome employment barriers.

We provide a 6-week online training program and technical courses to boost your employability in one of the following sectors: Accounting, Financial, Transportation & Hospitality industries. Our training is at NO COST TO PARTICIPANTS, and later, we will connect you to job placement in an entry-level position.

This program could be the right STEP towards your employment goals!

Visit our website www.quintestep.ca
to learn more

Contact us to find out if you are
eligible 613-968-7723 EXT.231,
step@quinteimmigration.ca.

QUINTE
STEP
PROGRAM

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

PROGRESS REPORTS ON COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH PROJECTS

The Quinte Local Immigration Partnership (QLIP) and QUIS have been working with two committees in our community that are working on researching and developing solutions to better serve the social, economic and health needs of the Quinte community. Newcomer/immigrant needs and issues have been identified by both the projects to be important for our community's future development.

Belleville Quinte West Community Health Centre (BQWCHC) Community Assessment Project

The Belleville Quinte West Community Health Centre (BQWCHC) conducted a survey with Quinte region community members in order to investigate and improve community engagement on health and other needs for now and in the future. Those surveys have now been completed and the results are being compiled. A report will be developed when the project is completed, which will be shared with QUIS and other community agencies. It will help our agencies better understand the health and welfare priorities of different populations in our communities.

Quinte West Community Safety and Well-Being Committee Project

QUIS is also a part of the Quinte West Community Safety and Well-Being Committee and that group has requested responses from Quinte West residents about their experiences related to mental health, affordable housing or homelessness. Those stories and previous survey results have now been collected. The committee is now working on a plan to address the issues of affordable housing and mental health issues in the Quinte West community.

You may have received a previous request from QUIS to complete a survey from one these two community agencies/committees. QUIS and the committees involved deeply appreciate your help on these issues if you contributed to one of those projects. We are looking forward to continued work with those committees to better address our newcomer community needs!

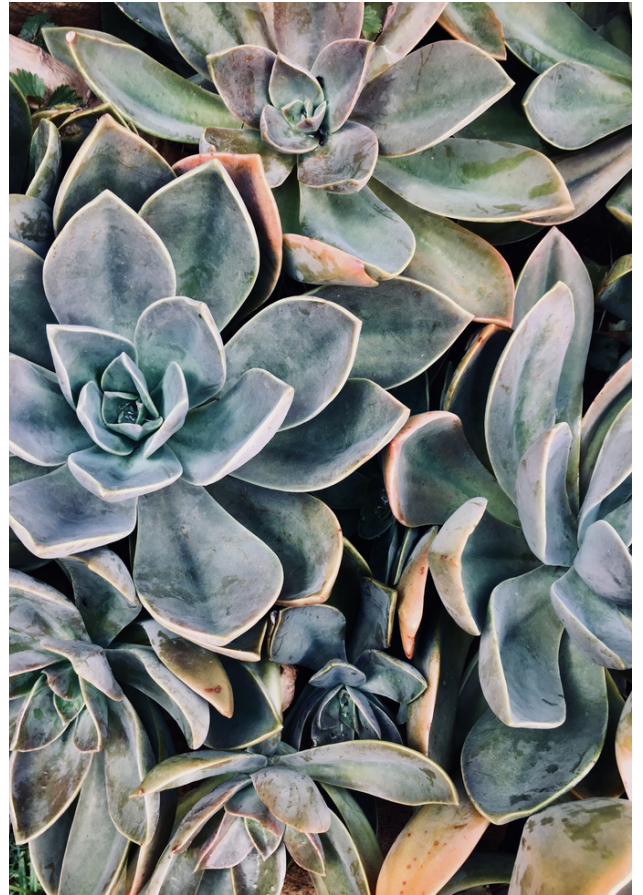
For Quinte West residents looking for updates and news on the progress of this project, you can visit <https://getinvolved.quintewest.ca/community-safety-well-being-plan> for more details.



*Spring will come and so will
happiness.*

*Hold on. Life will get
warmer.*

Anita Krizzan



*Nature does not hurry,
yet everything is accomplished*

Lao Tzu