

■ NEW WESTMINSTER NEWS LEADER

## Locals respond to Obama's call

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The election of U.S. President Barack Obama is seen as the beginning of a new era in that country and one local group wants it to be the start of a new tradition in Canada.

Inspired by Obama's call to service, members of the Canadians for Obama group met Thursday at the New Westminister-based Centre of Integration for African Immigrants (CIAI) and began painting the walls of the non-profit group's office.

More than 15 volunteers converged on the Downtown office, cleaned up the office and then painted the walls.

"This was a one-time event (at CIAI) but we hope our community service will have continuity," said Benjamin Lee, an organizer and Simon Fraser University student.

The group is committed to taking on similar community service on the 19th of each month. That day was chosen because on Jan. 19, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Obama asked every American citizen to volunteer in their community.

"We want to ignite that idea," said Lee, who travelled to the U.S. and volunteered on the Obama campaign.

"As a group we don't want to be bystanders on the sidelines. We want to be directly involved and inspire others," he said.

Many of the volunteers at Thursday's event worked for seven hours on the CIAI project. Lee hopes that energy and commitment doesn't wear off.

"It was a great start. People are eager to make an impact on their community and this shows they are committed to do that."

For more information on future community service events, go online to [www.canadiansforobama.ca](http://www.canadiansforobama.ca).

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