



FCJ Refugee Centre  
*Walking with Uprooted People*



2013

# SUMMER NEWSLETTER

*Dear friends of FCJ Refugee Centre:*



*for all your support .*

## Inside of this issue

Settlement Program:: walking together	2
Coming events: Street Party	3
Primary Health Clinic	3
The Great Hall: a new recreational space	4
Diverse Residents One Community.	5
Youth Voices	6-7
Refugee Protection Program	8
Popular Education Program	9
Anti-Human Trafficking Program	10-11
Announcements and events	12





## **RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS**

Thanks to the generosity of some people who volunteer with us, there are some other weekly activities that are held in the office: Our artist of crafts, Ana Perez, started a jewellery class this summer (every Wednesday from 2.00 to 4.00 pm). The participants receive techniques on how to create beautiful necklaces, earrings, bracelets, etc.

The class helps them forget about their daily stress and at the same time they learn something that can help them earn some extra money.



**Craft Class**

Every Saturday morning Dione Mason leads the Zumba Class. This is a dance fitness program from 9.00 to 10.00 am which helps the women keep in shape with exercises that include music with fast and slow rhythms. Immediately after, from 10.00 to 11.00 am we have the Yoga Therapy class given by Susana Aguilera. Yoga Therapy helps individuals facing health challenges at any level to manage their condition, reduce symptoms, restore balance, increase vitality and improve attitude.



**Zumba and Yoga Therapy Class**



**SETTLEMENT PROGRAM**

During the first semester the FCJ Refugee Centre provided accommodation to eighteen women and five children, coming from El Salvador, Hungary, Indonesia, Eritrea, Mexico, Nigeria, St Vincent, Afghanistan, Iran and Korea.

All the women living in the houses have received support through counseling. We book their appointments with a counselor that comes to our office every other Saturday. Also we escort them to immigration offices, Ontario Works appointments, to their immigration hearing, or to hospitals if it is necessary.

During the first period of 2013 a total of six women were accepted as a Convention Refugees. After this step we help them to find a place to live.

## **WALKING TOGETHER**

The residents at FCJ Refugee Centre have access to small apartments, thanks to the St. Clare's Multifaith Housing partnership. Through this program many of our former residents have access to affordable housing. FCJ Refugee centre keeps providing support through monthly partners meetings and maintains

communication with the tenant support coordinators. The goal is to help the women with their integration into Canadian society.



**Group of residents with Diana at Woodbine Beach**





## **FIELDTRIPS**

Diana Leguizamo, who is the Transitional Housing Worker, planned different activities and trips with our residents. One activity was a trip to Woodbine Beach in Toronto.

## **CHALLENGES**

For many different factors which may include language barriers, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or simply because they do not have anybody else in the city, one of the challenges that some women face is isolation. Another challenge has been to get appointments with a family doctor or with a psychiatrist because the waiting list is too long or they are not covered for those services once their case is denied.


## **ACCESS TO FOOD**

We continue receiving weekly donations from Second Harvest. Every Thursday an eager team of volunteers wait until the truck arrives with donations. Diana coordinates the distribution of the food to our residents, volunteers and staff.

The opening of a primary care space on Saturdays was a success and it has been working for one year, every other Saturday (with the exception of long weekends).

**PRIMARY HEALTH CARE CLINIC:** Doctors assist clients with primary health care on a continuing basis to prevent, diagnose and treat a wide variety of medical ailments in patients of all ages.

**COUNSELLING CLINIC:** We assist clients in dealing with personal experiences of trauma and abuse; and offer support in coping with these issues in their lives.




**FCJ** Refugee Centre  
Walking with uprooted people

# STREET PARTY!

**SEPTEMBER 14TH, 2013**


*11 am to 4pm*

**Activities and entertainment for children and adults**



**Piñatas  
Face painting  
Live music  
Performers  
Arts and crafts  
Jewelry  
Garage Sale**

**SEPTEMBER 14TH, 2013**



**11:00 to 4:00 pm**

**Time: from 11:00 to 4:00 pm  
Place: 208 Oakwood Ave.  
On Glenhurst Avenue one block  
north of St. Clair West and Oakwood**

# PRIMARY CARE AND MENTAL HEALTH FREE CLINIC




**FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE**

Clinic runs every Saturday  
(except long weekends)  
from 10- 2 pm  
Location: FCJ Refugee Centre  
208 Oakwood Ave. Toronto  
Phone: 416 - 469 9754



## PIONEERS FOR CHANGE AWARD

“Access to information means access to justice, access to knowledge and the tools necessary to mobilize that knowledge and lead to integration”.

With this affirmation the co-directors of FCJ Refugee Centre received the Pioneers for Change Award in Literacy and Access to Information 2013.

During the ceremony they highlighted that access to information means access to justice; access to knowledge and the tools necessary to mobilize that knowledge and lead to integration; there is only one kind of integration and it is called successful integration. It means access to equity; access to civil society, wherever it is defined by them; access to social services and diverse arenas of support; access to fair and sustainable housing; access to healthcare. And despite the progress that has been made in the past, avenues to access have become increasingly narrowed, particularly with the disturbing changes that have taken place over the past year.

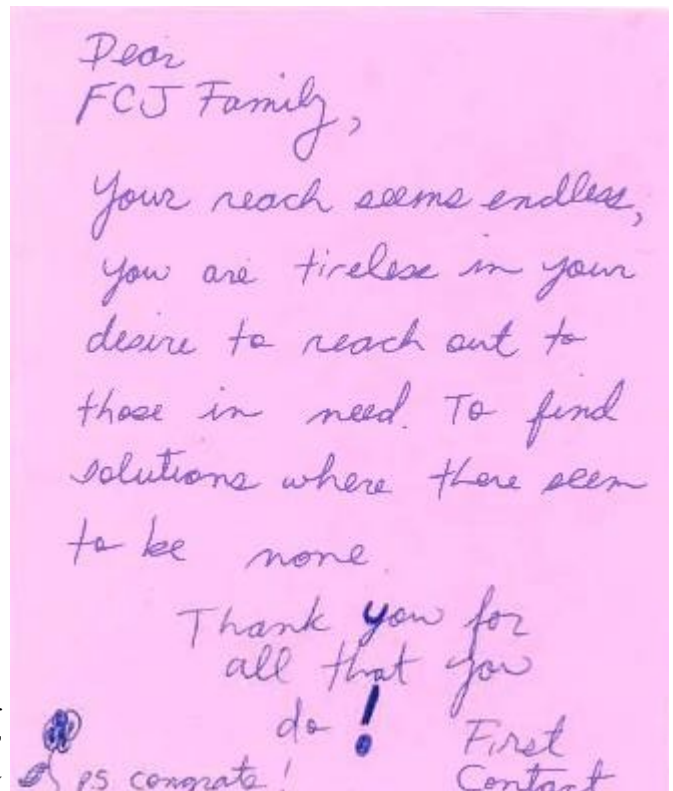


## THE GREAT HALL: A NEW SPACE FOR ART AND CULTURE AT FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE



FCJ Refugee Centre unveiled its new space which has facilities for meetings and conferences. The new room, known as THE GREAT HALL, is housing all the cultural activities and events organised by the community. This is a dream that came true thanks to the contributions of The Trillium Foundation and the Sisters, Faithful Companions of Jesus.

“The opening of the new space shows how the office is growing—you can see it with all our new staff and the number of students and volunteers that every day support the centre with their hard work,” said the Co-Directors of the Centre, Loly and Francisco Rico.



**Sample of good wishes received during our open house. Thank you for all your support!**



## LEARNING AND CELEBRATING

We have organized approximately one workshop per month since February 2013. At the beginning of the year our residents selected a series of workshop-topics in which they were interested and each month we met at the FCJ office and had a workshop on one of the topics that was previously selected by them.

The sessions become a very nice experience for every one of the women because it is an opportunity to share, learn and also celebrate. At the end of the meeting all of them celebrated the birthdays of the month. Until now we have had four workshops; the first one was on Garbage Disposal from which they benefited either learning how to separate garbage from recyclable items, or reinforcing their knowledge on the topic. The second one was on Self-Esteem where they learned not only about it and the importance of having a healthy self-esteem, but also learned about some activities that will boost the way they feel about themselves. The third one was about Diversity Awareness where the main objectives were to understand the world as a mosaic, exercise diversity in different situations in their lives and appreciate their differences. The last workshop, but not the least, was based on Goal Setting, which helped the women to start thinking about what they would like to do once they are accepted as Convention Refugees. Some of them would be able to learn or work on what they have a passion for, but others feel frustrated since it is not easy to continue working in their field, so they would have to start thinking of other areas in which they can transfer their knowledge and their skills.



## REFUGEE RIGHTS DAY



## WORLD REFUGEE DAY 2013

**DIVERSE RESIDENTS  
ONE COMMUNITY**

Funded by the City of Toronto, The Diverse Residents one Community Celebration was aimed at creating a safe and positive artistic space for various migrant populations, mostly the LGBTQ communities and Refugees. It spanned a variety of different identities, and included many different types of food, artwork, music, and dancing, all celebrating together with love. Also present at the event were various community leaders, including El-Farouk Khaki and Debbie Douglas, and other influential speakers who joined in the Diverse Residents Celebration.

Held at Artscape Wychwood Barns, The Diverse Residents One Community Celebration served the purpose for which it was intended as various newcomer groups made the day with spectacular performances and showcased their talent in this positive space.







*Representative of The Counselling Foundation of Canada with some of the members of the Youth Network unveiling the new space for the group at FCJ Refugee Centre.*

## YOUTH VOICES GETTING TOGETHER

The FCJ Youth network witnessed a significant increase recently, welcoming new members from all parts of the world, mostly from Latin America, Africa and The Caribbean. As diverse as usual, it has been a safe space for all newcomer youth, irrespective of race, colour, gender/sexual identity and religion. The group has been actively involved in community activities, and activities with the FCJ Refugee Centre.

The group welcomes new members every Wednesday at 4:00 pm at 208 Oakwood Ave, Toronto.



## VOICE OF THE YOUTH

A very excited project for the youth group is a new publication they are working on right now: **VOICE OF THE YOUTH**. The goal of this project is to express their thoughts, dreams and challenges they are facing.

The new publication is coming this summer and it will be available at FCJ Refugee Centre website [www.fcjrefugeecentre.org](http://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org) and the FCJ youth website: [www.fcjyouthnetwork.tk](http://www.fcjyouthnetwork.tk)



## A LOT OF ACTION DURING SUMMER TIME!

The youth have also been part of some major projects like the significant Mural Project on the FCJ Refugee Centre wall, the FCJ Super garage sale, which was a fundraiser for the Youth Action Gathering to Edmonton, and also put on amazing performances at the Diverse Residents One Community Celebration. You can find detailed information about all of this activities at the FCJ youth network website.

## YOUTH DAY CELEBRATION

The FCJ Youth Network Day which was one of the events for the Hispanic Heritage month was celebrated by the youth and general public.

This event was an opportunity for the youth to showcase their talents in various dance, and musical performances.





## CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR REFUGEES YOUTH ACTION GATHERING

This year the FCJ Youth Network had the opportunity to attend the CCR Youth Action Gathering that was held in Edmonton, Alberta.

This event was happening in partnership with the John Humphrey's Centre Global Youth Assembly. At the event youth from all over Canada gathered to share their knowledge and learn more about issues that are affecting youth around the world.

As part of the Canadian Council for Refugees Youth Network, our youth network had the opportunity to organize and participate in workshops and the Ignite Change Talks. Some of the



workshops and Ignite Change talks the FCJ Youth Network organized were Intersectionality and Identity: Challenges and Strategies for newcomer youth, Human Trafficking and East African Refugee Camps, and Education: Transitions and Integration.

With these workshops and talks the FCJ Youth Network addressed the issues and barriers newcomer youth face in Canada. An important part of attending the CCR Youth Action Gathering is that it is a youth-led event, therefore newcomer youth are able to showcase their talents and leadership skills.

The CCR Youth Action Gathering was an amazing and fun event because as a youth network we were able to meet youth from all over Canada. It was great to meet new people and see our friends, whom with we have been working and sharing in the previous Youth Action Gathering.



As the FCJ Youth Network we are very grateful for this amazing opportunity that brought us a lot of learnings and knowledge, and we are looking forward for next year's Youth Action Gathering in Toronto!





*The Refugee Protection Program works thanks to the support of volunteers and law students who do their placement/internship at our organization .*

My time at FCJ Refugee Centre has been both educational and fulfilling. I had the opportunity to acquire knowledge and training in various areas of immigration and refugee law by working with local community members and leaders. Specifically, the Centre gave me the opportunity to work on immigration and refugee cases, important research projects, and educational outreach initiatives under the supervision of experienced legal professionals.

The Centre provided me with professional legal mentorship while allowing me to work with traditionally underserved community members. During my time at the Centre I truly felt as if I were a part of the FCJ family, working with them to make a positive difference in lives of local Toronto community members.



**Giselle Salinas**

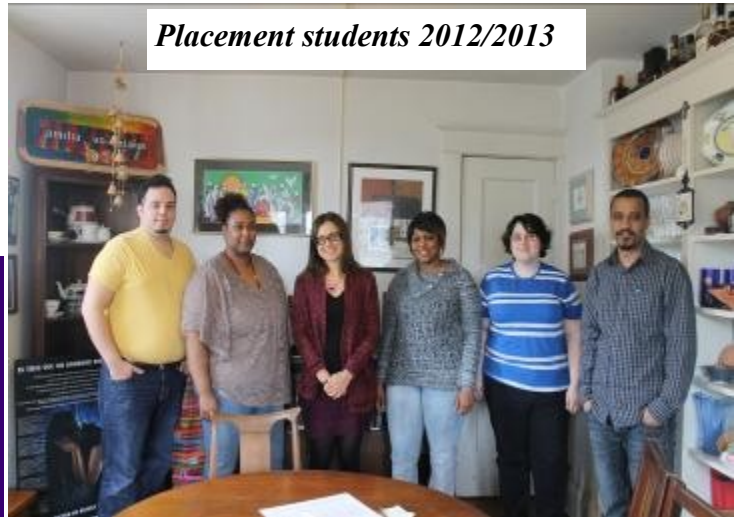
I want to thank all of you for the wonderful time I had and for everything I learned this summer at the FCJ Refugee Centre. It truly felt special to be among such a devoted group of people. People came in with many different, complex problems but we never turned away any of them empty-handed or gave up when things seemed hopeless.

It was also inspiring to see how everyone was always looking for new ways to help and improve whether it was to provide public legal education to ESL teachers, to host free dance and craft classes, to write and publish articles in newspapers to raise awareness, to work as a full-time in-house counsel, or to give up a part of their house to those in need. I'm leaving (temporarily) to finish school but I can't wait to be back and working with all of you again.



**Jacqueline Yeon Chu**

### Placement students 2012/2013



### REFUGEE PROTECTION PROGRAM

In the previous 8 months of services we have seen two different scenarios in the clients we have served. At the beginning of the year it was a low number of refugee claims and high number of orientations in the immigration process as clients were looking for an alternative to the refugee stream.

This year we have submitted a high number of permanent residence applications in both Family Class as well as Humanitarian and Compassionate grounds. A lot of the responses that we have received this year have been positive though we have noticed that people are being removed more than they have been in the past.

As we got into the summer months we have seen an increase in the refugee claimants both in-land claims as well as port of entry while the number of permanent residence applications have remained constant. It appears that refugees continue to see Canada as an option and after analysing the new system have decided that it is still better than their situations in their home countries, therefore we believe that the trend will continue and therefore the decrease in claimants at the beginning of the year was just a feel out period for refugee claimants to become aware of the system before they applied.

We are also concerned on how this trend will affect the "legacy cases", that is, the ones that are in the old system because if this increase in new cases continues their hearing dates will be on hold as they are not a priority and we are seeing some of the cases going over the two year wait for the initial hearing which is creating unjust and undeserved uncertainty for all these claimants. This is something that we will continue to monitor as it is something that concerns us.





**POPULAR EDUCATION PROGRAM**



During the first semester of 2013 FCJ Refugee provided 51 workshops, reaching more than two thousand front line workers from different agencies across Ontario.

Due to all the changes in the immigration system, the most requested topic was Refugee Determination Process and Immigration, followed by Human Trafficking: Impact and Solutions. The presentations on Refugee Health Cuts and Non-status and Precarious Migrants Youth emerged as a new interest among front line workers.

**REFUGEE HEALTH CUTS**

After the changes to the Interim Federal Health Program implemented last year, sectors linked to health services contacted us looking for more detailed information related to immigration. For example, students are interested in advocating for REFUGEE HEALTH; we are hoping to raise awareness of refugee health cuts in Canada, and the issue of refugee health as a social justice issue: health as a human right.

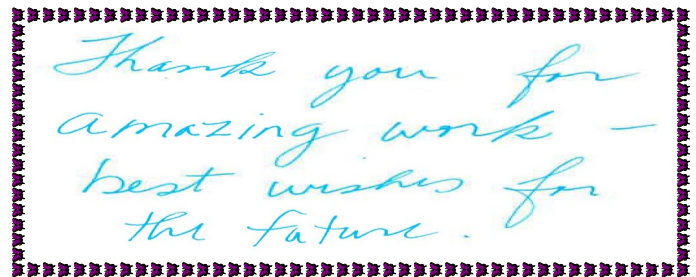
**WORKSHOPS 2013 BY MONTH**

MONTH	NUMBER OF WORKSHOPS	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
JAN	4	55
FEB	10	531
MAR	18	755
APR	8	344
MAY	6	457
JUN	5	152
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51</b>	<b><u>2,294</u></b>

**REFUGEE FORUM II**

Refugee Forum on Recent Changes to Canada's Immigration System attracted more than 200 participants. FCJ Refugee Centre and Downtown Legal Services organized an action-packed day of highly informative workshops in downtown Toronto.

Hosted at The Salvation Army's Harbour Light Centre on Jarvis Street, the day consisted of 10 presentations and question and answer sessions on a variety of topics to do with the new Canadian Refugee System. Experts, front line workers and students in the field of refugee protection led each session.



**The National Day of Action**





## **COALITION OF SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR REFUGE CLAIMANTS.**

Some of the more common issues that emerged during the last meetings were related to the reduction of legal aid support for clients, difficulties filling out the new refugee forms, confusion because of the refugee health cuts, new city policy, interpretation/translation, and timing problems with submission of documents.

The participation of a representative of the Immigrant and Refugee Housing Committee (develop strategies to deal with housing-related issues for refugees and vulnerable immigrants) helped a lot in clarifying information about the new policies implemented in the city. Also we have the participation of the Canadian Council for Refugees.

## **REPORT ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING FOR FORCED LABOUR FORUM**

The Forum on Human Trafficking for Forced Labour: Raising Awareness and Building Response was organized by the FCJ Refugee Centre and was made possible with the financial support of the Department of Justice Canada, and took place during the National Victims of Crime Awareness Week 2013: We All Have a Role.

The forum was focused on persons trafficked internationally for the purposes of forced labour, the programs that increase people's vulnerabilities to this crime, and the barriers to services and protection for these populations. Approximately 100 participants took part in the event, mostly from Toronto and the GTA. You can find the summary report at FCJ Refugee Centre website under publications.

## **ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROGRAM**

While some of the Anti-Human Trafficking projects are coming to an end, others are just beginning. The training modules on legal and mental health support for survivors of human trafficking, funded by the Canadian Women's Foundation, were presented to legal clinics and mental health organizations. We delivered six workshops to legal clinics in the Toronto area, and presented one webinar, through the CCR, to participants across the country. These presentations allowed us to share critical information about the Temporary Resident Permits to over 130 legal experts and advocates. While the mental health workshops were more slowly received, the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and several other organizations have expressed interest in receiving training in the fall. We also continue to deliver presentations on human trafficking for service providers, religious congregations and government and academic institutions.

Through our work coordinating the Toronto Counter Human Trafficking Network, we have also participated in various meetings and discussions with City of Toronto officials. These collaborations helped to support our newest project, which will involve a greater and more diverse co-operation between different sectors and key stakeholders. We hope to inspire and facilitate a broad and in-depth discussion in order to develop future protocols.



*Workshop about immigration changes in London*

## **REQUEST FOR ACTION**

The FCJ Refugee Centre presented a request for action, suggesting policies for protection and services tailored to the needs of internationally trafficked persons. The request for action was debated among the participants who provided input and also developed their own recommendations. You can find the request for Action document at FCJ Refugee Centre website under publications.





**POPULAR EDUCATION PROGRAM TRAININGS**

**IMMIGRATION AND  
REFUGEE TRAINING**

Workshops on issues related to legal protection of immigrants and refugees as they impact Ontario's settlement and integration sector, refugee claimants and non-status people:



The workshops can cover the following issues :

- Introduction to refugees changes
- Overview of the new Regulations on the refugee process, new timelines, etc
- Voluntary Return Program: how it works.
- Refugee Health Cuts: consequences and alternatives
- How to fill out the new refugee forms
- How to prepare a client for a refugee protection hearing
- Pre Removal Risk Assessment (PRRA)
- Humanitarian and Compassionate application: level of establishment, hardship, stages in the application.
- Parents and grandparents super-visa
- Sponsorship breakdown
- Work permit extension
- Violence against women
- Mechanism of regularization and alternatives for precarious migrants.

**1**

**ANTI-TRAFFICKING TRAINING**



**THIS IS AN IMPORTANT TRAINING INITIATIVE AIMED AT EDUCATING TEAMS OF SERVICE PROVIDERS ACROSS ONTARIO TO BETTER SUPPORT SURVIVORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING.**

**FACTS**

- The Temporary Resident Permit (TRP) program is the only federal service available specifically to secure immigration status for victims / survivors of human trafficking in Canada.
- Experiences of human trafficking not only have serious impacts on survivors' physical well being, but also integrally affect their psychological and emotional well being. As a result, mental health support is an essential component of recovery and to regaining a sense of control.

**BENEFITS WORKSHOP**

- Access to crucial training material
- Identify and provide better services to women and girls who had been trafficked
- Increase access to legal education
- Learn the ins and outs of the TRP application process, the advantages and disadvantages, the services covered and obstacles encountered.
- Offering Mental Health Support to Victims/Survivors of Human Trafficking.

**2**

**INFORMATION TRAINING FOR  
ESL TEACHERS AND SUPPORT  
STAFF ACROSS ONTARIO**

The trainings are for English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers and support staff, to better equip them to respond to issues related to immigration and human rights, including the refugee process. As a result, migrant populations studying English will gain greater access to legal information and resources as they navigate Canadian systems.



The workshops can cover the following issues identified by ESL students:

- Right to work (obtaining a work permit, labour regulations, etc)
- Housing (landlord/tenant, homestay, etc)
- Immigration (renewing visas, regularizing, sponsorship, etc)
- Health (access to health, payment, IFHP/OHIP, etc)
- Volunteering (finding volunteer work, police checks, etc)
- Criminal law (Canadian law, fighting tickets, petty crimes, etc)
- Violence (experiences of abuse, child welfare, access to family law, etc)
- Discrimination (information for LGBTQ, fighting racism, discrimination, etc)

**3**

**BUILD YOUR DIVERSE EXPERIENCE  
WITH VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AT  
THE FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE:**

Administration, front desk, ESL class, social events, public education etc.

**Contact Diana Da Silva at (416) 479-9754 Ext. 223**







We did it!!! We launched our new website. It's more user-friendly and let people navigate more quickly and easily to learn more about the Centre's various programs and services. Simplicity and focused on content delivery are the main characteristics of the redesigned layout. Through our website you also are able to register for our e-mail list so that you can receive directly all the information related to immigration and FCJ Refugee Centre's activities. We truly hope you enjoy exploring our new website [www.fcjrefugeecentre.org](http://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org).

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS**

Our annual event is coming: Street Party on September 14. Come and celebrate with us!

FCJ Refugee Centre welcomes the new group of placement students who are going to start in September 2013. Also we welcome the new volunteers who join our community through our monthly Volunteer Orientation Session facilitated by Diana Da Silva.

Giovanni Rico is leaving for 6 months and Tanya Aberman is substituting for him in the Refugee Protection Program. Tanya will start to assist clients: providing orientation, coordinating placement students, referring clients to the lawyer, etc. Thank you Tanya for your continuing contribution to our community

After 1 year of maternity leave, Varka Kalaydzhieva is returning to her position as Anti Human Trafficking Project Coordinator. Welcome back Varka!

## **FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE STAFF**

Loly Rico Co-Director x 224  
Francisco Rico Co-Director x 227

Philip Ackerman Research and Resource Development x 228

Carolina Teves Popular Education and Communication Coordinator x 226

Giovanni Rico Advocacy and Volunteer Coordinator (On parental leave starting Sept. 3, 2013) x 225

Tanya Aberman Acting Advocacy and Volunteer Coordinator x 225

Varka Kalaydzhieva Anti-Human Trafficking Project Coordinator x 222

Immigration Lawyer Steve Foster x 227

Kanishka Basnayake Bookkeeper x 226

Akbar Munawar Durrani Intake and Case Management x 225

Diana Da Silva Office Administrator x223

Diana Leguizamo Transitional Housing Worker x 223

Destin Bujang Events Coordinator x 223

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