



FCJ Refugee Centre Annual Report 2007

Message from the Co-Directors

We are now in our 16th year of walking with uprooted people and the number of people needing our help continues to grow. We are welcoming them with open arms and with the help of the City of Toronto, Canadian civil society and Church-related institutions. We do not receive any help from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (Federal and Provincial). They believe that the people we serve do not meet their criteria, which is exactly why we help them and why the number visiting our office continues to grow-- because they are the forgotten ones.

2007 is the first year since the implementation of the Safe Third Country Agreement between Canada and the U.S. (in 2004) that the number of refugee claimants are up from 25,750 claims referred in 2004 to 27,865 claims referred in 2007. More than 50% come to the Central Region which means Toronto. Almost a quarter of them are from Mexico. This shows that the people of God, the people on the move, always find a way. We are often the last resource for them.

In recognition of the richness that uprooted people bring to Canadian society, we have produced a recipe book where we not only show the variety of food but also the cultures of the different countries and our common issues, such as looking at how corn has been feeding peoples for centuries. See page 4

We are developing a new model by which uprooted women can support each other, recognizing their human rights, and work towards a self-care process leading to a bright new life. See page 5

2007 also saw an increase in the number of people without status looking for help in our office. We estimate that there are close to 200,000 people living without status in southern Ontario. We have doubled the number of humanitarian and compassionate applications finalized and submitted to Canada Immigration for them. The observed trend is that the number of people will continue coming. We have become the recognized last resource for them as well.

Of course, with all the numbers up, and the lack of action from the federal government, the length of time that people have to wait has increased dramatically, therefore our organization is having to invest more resources in each case. We want to make very clear that we will continue to help them to materialize their right to be heard and their option of living safely in Canada, even though the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (Federal and Provincial) is not collaborating with us to support them. We need your help.

Francisco Rico-Martinez and Loly Rico
Co-Directors

Organizational Highlights

- * Provided shelter and basic life necessities to 35 women and 10 children.
- * Delivered 120 educational workshops involving more than 250 agencies and over 2,000 participants/refugees.
- * Responded to 3,264 phones for help about the immigration and refugee process.
- * Worked with almost 846 individual cases through at least one appointment for different immigration and refugee procedures.
- * 1,894 newcomers relied on the Centre's settlement and integration services.

MISSION STATEMENT

FCJ Refugee Centre strives to meet the diverse needs of uprooted people in communities across Ontario. FCJ Refugee Centre attempts to address the problems of poverty and lack of resources, isolation, and discrimination through community-based programs which promote self-help, personal growth, community economic development and social justice.



Making a donation to FCJ Refugee Centre is easier than ever!

You can make a donation to FCJ Refugee Centre through www.CanadaHelps.org, a secure online donation system.

Simply go to www.CanadaHelps.org and type FCJ Refugee Centre in "search".

or...

Click on the "Donate Now" button on our website located at

www.fcjsisters.ca/RefugeeCentre

Special features include automated monthly donations, or making your gift in honour or in memory of someone special. VISA and Master Card are accepted.

A charitable tax receipt will be sent to you immediately via e-mail by CanadaHelps.org.



2007 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Popular Education and Training

Designed and delivered over 100 “train-the-trainer” educational workshops to over 2,000 participants including refugee claimants, other uprooted persons at risk of homelessness, and service providers working with these communities. Training topics included: Homelessness and Survival, Immigration and Refugee Procedures and Options, Human Trafficking Issues.

Refugee Protection

Positive decisions were received on several successful refugee hearings including women from Zimbabwe, Eritrea, Hungary, Iran, Columbia, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, and Mexico. However, the refugee process is taking longer to complete. Our rate of acceptance for applications based on Humanitarian and Compassionate Grounds is higher than the national rate of acceptance of 50 % (based on CIC statistics). However, the rate of acceptance for Pre-Removal Risk Assessment (PRRA) has declined dramatically. In 2007, we received positive outcomes for only 2 cases.



Transitional Housing Support

Our two rooming houses and three self-contained apartments that provide transitional housing (12 family units) were fully occupied with new women from Columbia, Eritrea, Ghana, Haiti, Mexico, Nigeria, Burundi, El Salvador, and Zimbabwe. Tigest, a former resident from Eritrea, was hired in the position of Housing Settlement Worker. She has been a tremendous asset because she possesses an understanding of the residents’ needs from their own perspective.

Refugee Update

Three issues (58, 59, and 60) of the Refugee Update were produced. Some of the topics covered were the Safe Third Country Agreement, Refugee Family Separation: A State of Crisis, New Developments Regarding Humanitarian and Compassionate Applications, and the Protection of Trafficked Persons.

Women and Children’s Programs

Community Capacity Building:

Participation in leadership development, civic engagement, and community capacity building activities included: International Women’s Day, Refugee Rights Day, UNCHR World Refugee Day, and a seasonal clean up day of the houses.

Community Kitchen:

Cooking groups were held monthly for up to 30 immigrant and refugee women from Latin American and African communities.

The women learned how to cook healthy meals and how to eat a more balanced diet. Participants created and produced an international cookbook based on a compilation of the recipes cooked throughout the year. The cookbook can be downloaded from FCJ Refugee Centre’s website located at www.fcjsisters.ca/refugeecentre.

A community economic development component was introduced to teach the women how to start their own catering business.



Cooking together in the Community Kitchen



Our Supporters

We gratefully acknowledge our supporters....

On behalf of all of us at the FCJ Refugee Centre, thank you for joining us in our journey to improve the lives of newly arrived immigrants and their families.

Our organizational supporters...

Alterna Savings

Archbishop of Toronto, Cardinal's Dinner

Basilian Fathers

Canadian Autoworkers (CAW), Social Justice Fund

Canadian Union of Public Employees' (CUPE),

Local 3902

Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation

Catherine Donnelly Foundation

Catholic Charities

CHUM Christmas Wish

City of Toronto, Heart Health Partnership

City of Toronto, Homelessness Partnership Initiative (HPI)

The Redemptorist Fathers

Conventual Franciscan Centre

Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ)

Felician Sisters

F.K. Morrow Foundation

George Lunan Foundation

Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

Kiwanis Club of Toronto Foundation

Law Foundation of Ontario

The Maytree Foundation

Ministry of the Attorney General, Ontario Victim

Services Secretariat (OVSS)

School Sisters of Notre Dame, (SSND)

Second Harvest

Service Canada

Sisters of Charity of Halifax, Charity Alive Fund

Sisters of Service

Sisters of Saint Joseph of Sault Ste. Marie

Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada (WICC)

Volunteer Highlights

Throughout the history of the organization, the involvement of volunteers has been critical to the operations of FCJ Refugee Centre. Each year, various residents of the houses, and those who use the Centre's services, among other like-minded friends, volunteer their time. From lawyers contributing on a pro bono basis, law students, translators and interpreters, to people who organize the office, do accounting, provide companionship, help distribute food, clothing, and furniture donations, paint, and garden... **every part contributes to the whole.**



Loly and her helpers

Board of Directors

Patricia Binchy FCJ, President

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Edward Hyland, Lawyer

Shirley Majeau, FCJ, Liaison to the Board of Directors

Alejandra Priego, St. Joseph's Women's Health Centre

Francisco Rico Martinez and Loly Rico, Co-Directors

Maureen Silcoff, Lawyer



Programs (continued)



Making beautiful jewelry

Food Security Program:

Nutritious food donated by Second Harvest was delivered to residents each week, year-round. The donated food is comprised of food from all the necessary food groups needed to maintain a healthy diet.

Monthly Support Groups:

Monthly/support educational groups have been held for residents of the shelters, past residents, and women we are assisting through FCJ Refugee Centre's ongoing client intake process. The groups are very popular with up to 16 women attending each session.

Educational topics included Adapting to Western Society, Life Skills Building, Finding Employment in Canada, Navigating the School System, Evaluating Credentials and Parenting. A variety of new topics were introduced including the Benefits of Volunteering, Gender and Immigration Law, Navigating Ontario Works, Annual Tuberculosis Updates, Searching for Housing, Resume Writing, and Job Search Cover Letter Writing.

Cultural and Recreational Field Trips:

Day trips included two trips to the Royal Ontario Museum, two trips to the St. Lawrence Market, Pedestrian Sunday at the Kensington Market, Ontario Place, and Casa Loma. Nine residents and their children went on a three-day overnight cottage trip to Sanctuary North from August 28 to 30th. This outing provided a first-time experience of being in a natural setting!

Expressive Arts and Recreational Summer Program:

This program was held every Saturday during July and August for children of current and past residents. It promotes the development of our young participant's self-expression by taking part in artistic activities like self-portraits, print-making, tie-dye, creating dream boards, and pottery making. Opportunities for increased physical activity are provided through team sports and interpersonal outdoor games.



Distributing Second Harvest

In the Media

Outreach and public awareness building activities through the media were a tremendous success and continue to occur with increasing frequency using radio, written articles and interviews published in mainstream and local community newspapers, and television.

Media coverage included CBC, OMNI, and TVO for television, the Toronto Star, El Popular, and Correo Canadiense for newspapers, and CBC and Radio Canada International for radio. Francisco Rico-Martinez's interview on the topic of non-status people and work related issues on Canada AM can be viewed on the FCJ Refugee Centre website located at www.fcjsisters.ca/refugeecentre.

Other topics covered were issues relating to refugees and immigrants, human trafficking, and the plight of refugee claimants living with HIV/AIDS.



Programs (continued)

Violence Prevention Workshops:

Because many of the women have experienced domestic violence in their lives, a series of educational workshops were held.

Residents and non-residents learned about the issue of domestic violence and received training on how to build the community's capacity to respond to this issue by teaching them how to impart the knowledge they have learned to other women in their communities.

Educational workshop topics included: Welcome and Introduction to Domestic Violence, What is Abuse, Myths about Domestic Violence, Who are the Victims?, Who are the Abusers?, Understanding the Cycle of Domestic Violence and Re-victimization, Power Dynamics, and What Can I do to be Safe?.

Women's Economic Development Initiatives:

Residents worked with clay and learned how to start a small business to sell their wares. The Women's Craft Group has been a tremendous success and the women have been able to sell their beautiful necklaces and earrings at various venues. They also held a craft and food sale where they were able to sell their wares and keep the proceeds.



Celebrating

Networking

We continue to work collaboratively with the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR), Ontario Council of Agencies serving Immigrants (OCASI), KAIROS, and other agencies who support the welcome and integration of newcomers. Some of the issues we have collaborated on are: Trafficking of Women and Children, Family Reunification, Migrant Workers, Non-status Persons. Members of staff serve on various committees and boards such as OCASI, Legal Aid, Immigration and Refugee Board, KAIROS, Becoming Neighbours and Refugee Update.



Board of Refugee Update

New Programs and Projects

Clothing Bank:

The aim of the FCJ Clothing Bank is to directly impact people in our community. Clothing donations are provided to those who need them the most and are first given to families who cannot afford basic life necessities, and need a helping hand.

The preparation to officially start the Clothing bank began through a team of volunteers who are working diligently to clean and organize the program space.

Dancing Lessons:

Dancing lessons were held every Monday from 5:00 to 6:30 pm. The women learned about different forms of dancing including Latin, Salsa, Modern, Ballroom, etc. Benefits to the women include taking part in an activity that promotes improved health through increased levels of physical activity, having fun through a recreational activity, and socially by meeting and keeping new friends.

A Support Network/Model of Service Delivery for Refugee Women Who Are Victims of Violence and Human Rights Violations:

This project will develop and implement a model of service delivery that provides a "support network" as well as prevents re-victimization for women who are refugee claimants and victims of human trafficking, domestic violence, war crimes, religious persecution, and female genital mutilation.



STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS		
For the year ended December 31, 2007		
	2007	2006
Revenues:		
Contribution – The Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus	\$58,470	\$53,470
—Forgiveness of advances	\$230,653	
Donations	\$13,946	\$19,887
Grants	\$191,661	\$155,551
Rental Income	\$56,416	\$61,030
Other	\$36,033	\$6,530
Total Revenues	\$587,179	\$296,468
Expenditures		
Administration	\$67,687	\$48,032
Communications	\$9,253	\$8,255
Household: - Oakwood Office	\$22,803	\$21,003
- Oakwood	\$16,027	\$20,176
- Dufferin	\$36,477	\$11,780
- Dovercourt	\$12,571	\$24,294
Salaries and benefits	\$177,855	\$170,738
Refugee support	\$5,527	\$4,563
Support group activities	\$5,674	\$10,105
Automobile	\$8,661	\$4,686
Manuals and production	\$647	\$3,271
Total Expenditures	\$363,182	\$326,903
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures for the year	\$223,997	(\$30,435)
Net assets (deficiency) – at beginning of the year	(\$207,773)	(\$177,338)
Net assets (deficiency)– at the end of the year	\$16,224	(\$207,773)



Yes, I want to help support settlement and integration programs that improve the lives of newcomers.

Enclosed is my donation of:

☐ \$35 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$500 ☐ I prefer to give _____

☐ I have enclosed a cheque made payable to the FCJ Refugee Centre.

CIRCLE OF SOLIDARITY WITH REFUGEES MONTHLY GIVING PROGRAM

☐ Yes, I want to provide dependable funding and strong financial backing for the FCJ Refugee Centre.

Please process my monthly donation for:

☐ \$20 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$100 ☐ I prefer to give _____

I authorize FCJ Refugee Centre to withdraw monthly donations from my chequing account on the last day of each month. Enclosed are 12 post-dated cheques.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Please detach this coupon and send with donation to the address below. All donations are tax deductible.

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Phone: (416) 469-9754 Fax: (416) 469-2670 Email: fcjrefugeecentre@on.aibn.com Website: www.fcjsisters.ca/RefugeeCentre