

FCJ Refugee Centre Newsletter Winter 2025



Fundraising Party: Honouring Our Founder Loly Rico's Legacy

This winter, the FCJ Refugee Centre hosted its first Winter Fundraising Party, and it was a resounding success! It was heartwarming to see clients, donors, board members, volunteers, and loved ones come together to celebrate the Centre's work and honour our founder, Loly Rico, for her extraordinary contributions.

The evening was filled with lively performances, delicious food, and meaningful connections. The funds raised during the event were directed to the Loly & Francisco Rico Legacy Fund, and will help sustain and expand the FCJ Refugee Centre's core programs, which rely heavily on private funding to support refugees and precarious migrants.

A special thank you to Mayor Olivia Chow and Councillor Alejandra Bravo for attending and supporting our mission. Your presence was truly appreciated!





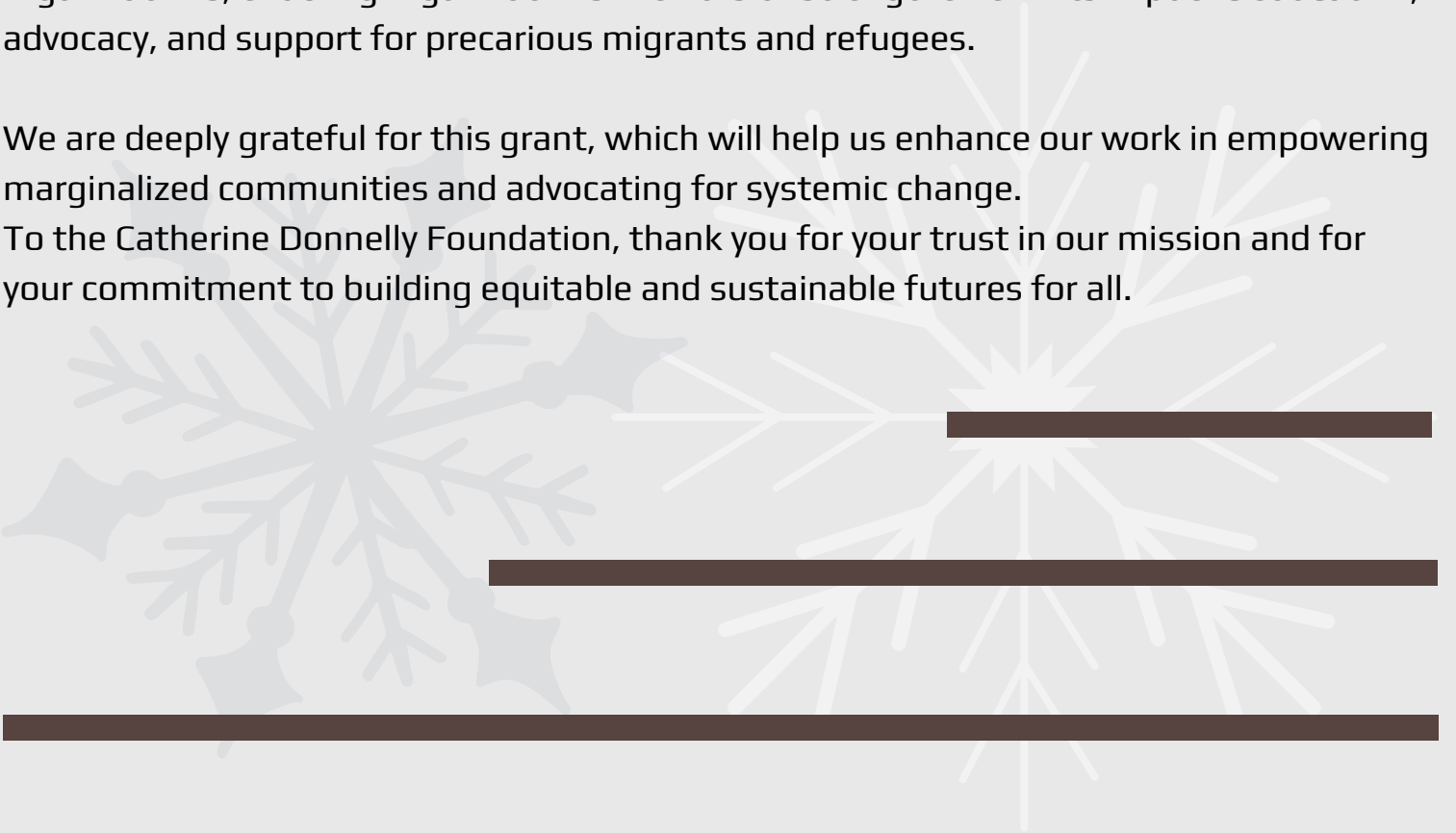
Gratitude for the Catherine Donnelly Foundation's Generous Support

The FCJ Refugee Centre is honoured to have been selected as one of the recipients of the Catherine Donnelly Foundation's Fall 2024 Civic Engagement for Social Change grants. This incredible support is part of their \$2.3 million funding commitment to empower 45 organizations across Canada.

The Catherine Donnelly Foundation continues to champion transformative solutions that promote civic engagement, climate justice, and housing access. Their commitment to empowering youth, migrant workers, Black, Indigenous, and racialized women, and advocating for tenants' rights aligns closely with our mission at the FCJ Refugee Centre.

Through their Civic Engagement for Social Change stream, this support fuels policy-making, advocacy, and capacity-building initiatives. They granted \$573,780 to 14 organizations, enabling organizations like ours to strengthen efforts in public education, advocacy, and support for precarious migrants and refugees.

We are deeply grateful for this grant, which will help us enhance our work in empowering marginalized communities and advocating for systemic change. To the Catherine Donnelly Foundation, thank you for your trust in our mission and for your commitment to building equitable and sustainable futures for all.

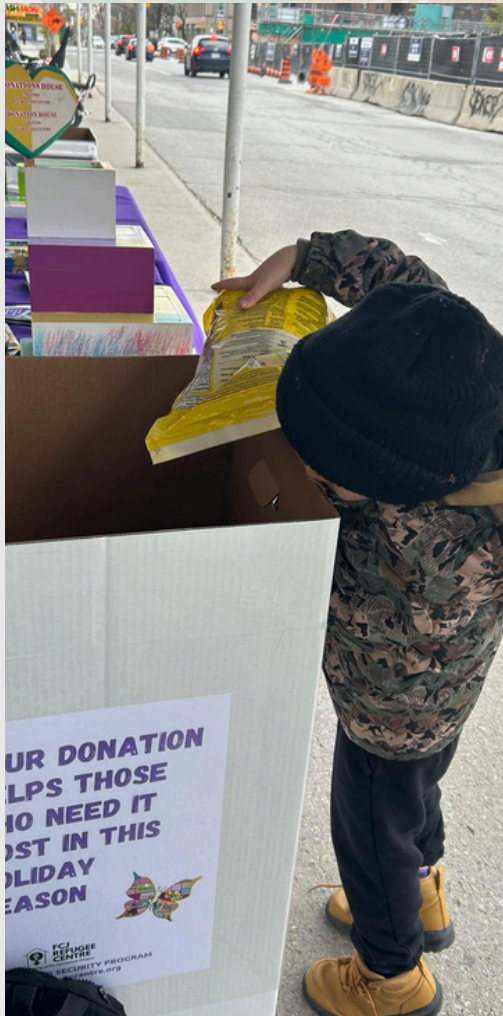


Toy Drive & Food Drive

Our 2024 Toy Drive brought joy to everyone who participated in this heartwarming annual activity. It was one of those incredible events where the entire team came together for a project with a huge impact.

Despite the cold weather, the spirit of giving remained alive during our Food Drive. Held at Luciano's No Frills (243 Alberta Ave, Toronto), the event welcomed many generous donors who contributed non-perishable food items and financial donations.

Through generous food drive and our Giving Thursday/Food Security campaign, we were able to provide essential food items that were added to our Thursday food distribution for clients. Thanks to your generosity, we were able to make the holiday season brighter for so many in our community!



Advocacy at the 2024 CCR Consultation in Ottawa

The FCJ Refugee Centre continued its advocacy work by actively participating in the 2024 Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) Consultation in Ottawa. The event featured key discussions, including a plenary session with the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Marc Miller. Our Co-Executive Director and CCR President, Diana Gallego, alongside CCR Vice President, Jenny Jeanes, and FCJ Refugee Centre Founder, Loly Rico, played pivotal roles in advancing meaningful dialogue.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who made the CCR Consultation a success. This year's theme, Reclaiming Public Support: Building the Movement for Refugee and Migrant Rights, inspired us to renew our commitment to advocating for justice and equity.



As part of the consultation, the workshop Current Immigration Policies and Their Effects on Young Newcomers shed light on how Canada's immigration and refugee policies impact migrant youth. Moderated by FCJ Refugee Centre's Stefan Enrique Joseph Kallikaden and Welcome Collective's Ekaterina Barrios, the workshop explored challenges such as family definition restrictions, financial precarity among refugee claimant youth, and caps on international students, emphasizing the barriers young newcomers face in their pursuit of safety and stability.

Another workshop, Building Stronger Support Systems for Migrant Workers in Canada, was moderated by FCJ Refugee Centre's Tenzin Khentse and Edwin Silang from Catholic Social Services (Edmonton). The session focused on the challenges faced by migrant workers in low-wage occupations, such as emergency housing needs and the lack of assistance during crises. Speakers, including Gabriel Allahdua and Hannah Deegan from the Association pour les Droits des Travailleur-ses de Maison et de Ferme, and Clarizze Truscott from the Kabisig Society of Fort Saskatchewan, presented innovative strategies to create robust support systems for migrant workers in agriculture, food processing, and other low-wage sectors.

Meeting with IRCC Officials

Earlier in the week, we met with officials from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) in Ottawa to address critical issues affecting migrant workers. Our discussions focused on the exploitative practices of recruitment agencies, which often make false promises, charge exorbitant fees, and leave workers without status or protection.

We advocated for improvements to the Temporary Resident Permits (TRP) system and the Open Work Permit for Vulnerable Workers (OWPVW), emphasizing the need to address exploitation and coercive control faced by workers. Migrant workers with lived experience joined us, courageously sharing their stories and insights, which added depth and urgency to the dialogue.



Student Testimonial

Tenzin Phakdon

My name is Tenzin Phakdon, and I completed my co-op placement as a Communications Assistant at FCJ Refugee Centre in December. FCJ's office is always busy with clients from around the world. My first Canadian workplace experience was great as everyone was approachable and supportive. They gave me the freedom to take initiative and contribute to projects.

I was the first student to join the communications team, and during my interview, I shared with Carolina that I was particularly interested in producing podcasts. I was given the opportunity to produce five episodes of Borderless Voices, featuring interviews with experts on various issues. Although I had a media background in India, this was my first time working on a podcast, so it was a valuable learning experience. The communications team was always there to offer constructive feedback, especially when it came to refining my questions for the interviews.

In addition to podcasting, I also had the opportunity to design the fall newsletter, as well as flyers and posters on Canva. It was my first time exploring Canva in detail. I enjoyed witnessing various programs and being part of the team during a fundraising event.



This experience not only helped me develop my interview and design skills but also taught me how to adapt to a fast-paced work environment. Working at FCJ Refugee Centre was never the same day twice, as the team runs a variety of programs to serve the diverse needs of the community. I am deeply impressed by the dedication and impact of their work, and it was truly an honor to contribute, even in a small way.

Refugee and Immigrant Youth Conference

Leading Change, Implementing Solutions, and Sharing Knowledge

Join us for an inspiring afternoon at the Refugee and Im/migrant Youth Conference! This event brings together refugee youth, youth workers, and community organizations to network, exchange ideas, and showcase impactful projects.

We are thrilled to announce that the conference will feature **the official launch of the "Pathways to Empowerment" toolkit**, a transformative resource designed to support survivors of human trafficking.

Developed with a survivor-centered approach, this toolkit equips youth workers, educators, and service providers with tools and strategies to prevent trafficking, deliver trauma-informed care, and empower survivors on their journey to recovery.

Toolkit Highlights

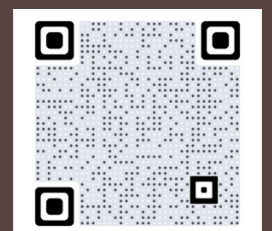
- Facilitate support groups with art therapy, mindfulness, and community-building.
- Offer practical solutions to reduce barriers, like flexible documentation and local resources.
- Promote collaboration through clear communication and shared case management platforms.
- Provide holistic support for housing, mental health, education, and stability.
- Train service providers in empathy and trauma-informed care.

Date: February 21, 2025

Time: 2:30 PM – 5:30 PM

Location: Innis Town Hall, 2 Sussex Avenue, Toronto

Scan the QR Code



Migrant Women's Counter Human Trafficking Alliance Workshops

This January 2025, the Migrant Women's Counter Human Trafficking Alliance was proud to launch Nail Care Essentials, a six-week training program tailored for migrant women and gender-diverse individuals. Designed to provide professional manicure and pedicure skills in a supportive and inclusive environment, this course offers participants a chance to learn the fundamentals of nail care, from understanding the anatomy of hands and feet to safely using tools and applying traditional nail polish.

And starting on February 28, you can also participate in Pages of Hope: A Mixed-Media Artist Book, a workshop where participants will explore the transformative power of positive words and vibrant colors through the creation of handmade Artist Books.

A workshop for migrant women and gender-diverse people

NAIL CARE ESSENTIALS

Learn the art of professional manicure and pedicure techniques in a supportive and empowering environment.

At FCJ Refugee Centre
English and Spanish

6 WEEKS
TUESDAYS
11 AM

More information and registration:
chiarar@fcjrefugeecentre.org

 Women and Gender Equality Canada  

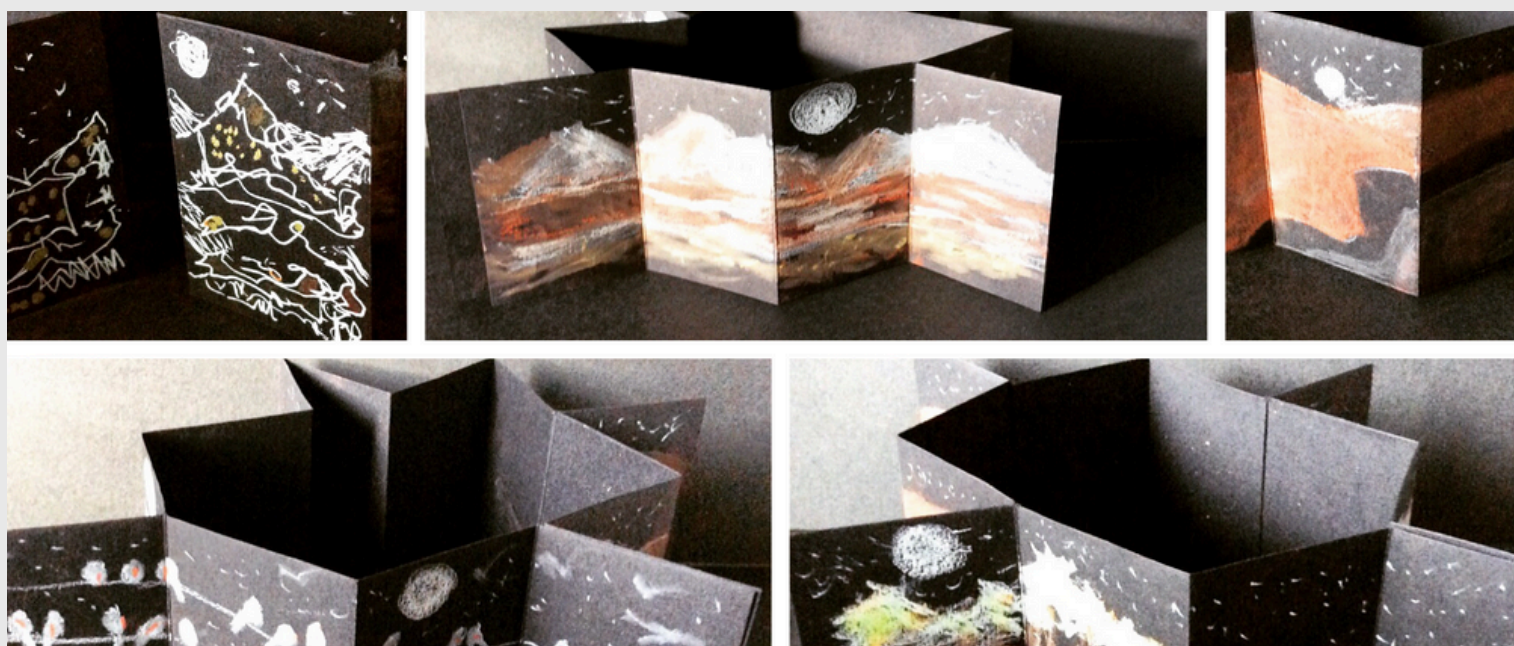
Pages of Hope: A Mixed-Media Artist Book Workshop

Every other Friday at 2pm, starting February 28
In person at FCJ Refugee Centre
In English and Spanish

Facilitated
by Carolina
Gajardo

For more information and registration:
chiarar@fcjrefugeecentre.org

 Women and Gender Equality Canada  



Ready Tours Schedule

If you are you a refugee claimant, you are invited to participate in the IRB-RPD VIRTUAL READY TOURS.

This is a great opportunity to meet the RPD (Refugee Protection Division) officers who will explain what is going to happen during your refugee hearing and how to be ready.

Ready Tours take place twice a month.

Link	Date	Time
Virtual Ready Tour	Thursday, February 6, 2025	1:00 pm - 3:30 pm
Virtual Ready Tour	Thursday, February 20, 2025	1:00 pm - 3:30 pm
Virtual Ready Tour	Thursday, March 6, 2025	1:00 pm - 3:30 pm
Virtual Ready Tour	Thursday, March 20, 2025	1:00 pm - 3:30 pm
Virtual Ready Tour	Thursday, April 3, 202	1:00 pm - 3:30 pm
Virtual Ready Tour	Thursday, April 17, 2025	1:00 pm - 3:30 pm
Virtual Ready Tour	Thursday, May 1, 2025	1:00 pm - 3:30 pm
Virtual Ready Tour	Thursday, May 15, 2025	1:00 pm - 3:30 pm



Book Your Workshop or Training Now!

The FCJ Refugee Centre offers engaging workshops and training sessions on a variety of topics, including immigration and refugee protection, housing, and issues related to human trafficking. We also provide training for frontline workers, tailoring each session to meet the specific needs of your organization.

These sessions are designed to empower participants with valuable insights and practical knowledge. If you'd like to take advantage of this opportunity, visit this link to book a session. We're also happy to tailor the training to meet your organization's specific needs

To access the webform go to <https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/workshop-request/>

Thank you for your donations

FCJ Refugee Centre depends on donations, financial and in-kind, to continue the work of protecting uprooted people. We welcome any contribution, big or small, and are grateful to all who participate in our work through giving.

Learn more about how you can help us:
<https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/donate/>





The Canadian Medical Association donated winter clothes, and we are truly grateful for their incredible support. This generous donation will make a significant difference, helping many families navigate this challenging winter season.



 **CONTACT US**

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