

# FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE VALUES

Walking with Uprooted People



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## REFUGEES

The FCJ Refugee Centre tries to materialize the right of any person to seek and enjoy refuge; recognizes all uprooted/forcefully displaced persons as an asset to their receiving country and believes that the host country needs to create a welcoming environment for newcomers to realize their full potential.

## ADVOCACY/RESILIENCY

The FCJ Refugee Centre is not limited to the pursuit of short-term solutions for refugees but engaged in social justice-oriented advocacy, and in the promotion of newcomer rights and integration into Canadian society. The Centre works to impact policy makers to develop a broader view of migrant issues in order to formulate or improve better policies at the municipal, provincial and national level.

## VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

The FCJ Refugee Centre believes that vulnerability is often a consequence of oppressive and exclusive social, economic or political policies which fail to address the needs of the society members in an equitable manner. We prioritize the needs of vulnerable communities and individuals, particularly women and children, through our integration/settlement services, our immigrant and refugee protection program; the popular education services; our ever-growing youth group and our coordination of the Toronto Counter Human Trafficking Network.

# PRECARIOUS/NON-STATUS/ UPROOTED

The FCJ Refugee Centre recognizes that all uprooted people have strengths and capacities to contribute to the host country where their migration status is irregular. The Centre strives to offer holistic support and find ways and means to formalize status and where possible, advocate for new/evolving pathways.

## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Members of the FCJ Youth Network have defined youth engagement as “the meaningful and ongoing inclusion and participation of self-defined youth in the activities of the FCJ Refugee Centre – including program development, program implementation, planning, decision-making and even employment.” The FCJ Refugee Centre welcomes a space that is shaped by the youth, and as such should continually acknowledge and celebrate their talents, resiliency and contributions to society.

## ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The FCJ Refugee Centre supports victims and survivors of human trafficking. We provide immigration support and settlement assistance, advocating as well at the municipal, provincial and federal level to ignite political change to improve protection for them. The Centre believes that:

- 1)** human trafficking is largely driven by social, economic and political inequities.

- 2)** the best protection for any trafficked person is their integration in the society that witnessed the human trafficking exploitation and cruelty and
- 3)** this phenomenon will continue to flourish as long as these local and global factors are not addressed by government policy in a coherent and strategic manner.

# GENDER

The FCJ Refugee Centre considers gender as relational and self-defined as opposed to assigned, and recognizes the power relations involved in gender hierarchies. The Centre values the uniqueness of individuals' self-defined identity, personality and character, and strives to fight gender-based oppression. In this context, the Centre aims to offer extra support to vulnerable individuals, particularly self-identified women.

# DIVERSITY AND INTERSECTIONALITY

The FCJ Refugee Centre understands intersectionality as intersecting social identities, such as age, gender identity, ethnicity, class, social status, immigration status, sexual identity, experiences with authority, violence, etc., shape our uniqueness and inform our complicated relationships with power, privilege and oppression. Intersectional approaches invite us to value the diversity of those around us rather than make assumptions.

# 2SLGBTQ+

The FCJ Refugee Centre recognizes that there is a vast and ever-growing constellation of identities within the 2SLGBTQ+ community (ies). We also recognize that oppression and discrimination for individuals within this constellation take many different forms. As such, the Centre works to be simultaneously informed and organic in our reception and response, working towards creating a positive space free from judgement, assumption and discrimination.

# HONOURING INDEGINOUS PEOPLE

The FCJ Refugee Centre respectfully acknowledges our location on the traditional land of the different indigenous communities who have walked here; we recognize all people on this land as Treaty people and stand in solidarity with Indigenous communities striving for self-determination. We also recognize that refugees, migrants and the Indigenous Peoples of Canada have shared similar experiences with injustice due to persecution, oppression, colonization, discrimination, stereotyping and exclusion, and we work to illuminate those connections in our community.

## UPROOTED HISTORY

The FCJ Refugee Centre recognizes that while people become uprooted for many different reasons, they each have an unedited and untold personal history. At the Centre, we walk with, support and empower uprooted people to navigate their own path. We also feel that Canadian society can only grow in richness and strength when people learn about each other's histories and why/how some of us were uprooted from our original homes.

## NO EMPTY HANDS

The FCJ Refugee Centre's motto is to never send anyone away with empty hands. Whatever the issue, worry or concern that someone might have, the Centre either provides appropriate services directly, or we refer the person to the right place where they can get the services they need.

## **KITCHEN TABLE**

The FCJ Refugee Centre deeply understands the feeling and value of the kitchen in the culture of uprooted people. Once people are uprooted, it may be a long time before they can get settled in their own home and at their own kitchen table. Our vision of community welcomes newcomers to join us around our kitchen table and feel that they are at home away from home. For a family, eating together in a kitchen is the utmost expression of solidarity, safety, of feeling at home.

## **PEER MENTORING**

The FCJ Refugee Centre believes that for uprooted people, refugees or newcomers, the best way to become integrated in a society is through peer mentorship... equals helping equals. For any uprooted person who arrives in this new land, to meet with a peer, is a way to share experiences, insights, and expertise.

## **GRASSROOTS**

The FCJ Refugee Centre is a grassroots organization. Yet, while we are small, we are able to accomplish many things! The Centre believes that issues, particularly marginalization and oppression, can be addressed from the ground up through grassroots-level work.

## **OUR DOOR IS ALWAYS OPEN**

The FCJ Refugee Centre is an open space that welcomes all uprooted people and works from an intersectional lens to offer client-centred services. Many of the people that come to the Centre for support may have experienced various forms of oppression, thus we strive to ensure spaces that are safe and free from discrimination.

## **EDUCATION**

The FCJ Refugee Centre sees education and the access to it, as a human right and the greatest equalizer in our society. As such, the Centre works hard to increase access to education at all levels, for everyone, particularly for uprooted youth, regardless of their immigration status. Educated youth are the future of this country.

## **SERVICE/SUPPORT**

The FCJ Refugee Centre offers to uprooted people, regardless of immigration status, a holistic approach which integrates their compelling story, their unique set of needs and their own barriers. As such we attempt to offer the greatest quantity and quality of services and supports possible.

## **INFORMATION**

Access to information is a fundamental right, as it enables people to make empowered decisions. Thus, FCJ Refugee Centre places access to information as one of its top activities, through legal education, popular education and ongoing support. Uprooted people in particular need timely and accurate information so that they can establish their lives in Canada.

## **ACCESS TO JUSTICE**

The FCJ Refugee Centre has an established recognition for assisting refugees and non-status people who might not otherwise benefit from legal services or the legal system itself, thus denying them access to justice. We also support uprooted people in seeking justice in a variety of areas, advocating where necessary and empowering people to demand their rights.

# SHELTER/HOUSING

One of the core services we provide is the transitional housing program for recently arrived women and their children. We welcome refugee women from all around of the world, who are able to build new and diverse communities

# ADVOCACY IN OUR GLOBAL COMMUNITY

The FCJ Refugee Centre considers itself as part of the national and international community in the support of and advocacy for refugees. We work and network with different national and international organizations, partner with local organizations and develop relationships with diverse individuals.

# RECREATION

Recreation is crucial to human development, supporting creativity, health and social interaction. At the FCJ Refugee Centre, we strive to offer recreational opportunities for the youth network, the residents and other members of our community.

# SELF-CARE/MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

FCJ Refugee Centre's model of care is holistic, focusing on improving mental, physical and spiritual health. Through a variety of supportive programs and initiatives, the Centre has helped newcomers to take control of their bodies, minds and lives thus improving their overall wellness.

## **FAMILY**

The fundamental unit of any society is family, and we recognize that the construct of family is personal, and self-determined. In our office we feel like a family and interact like a family. That is why FCJ gives high priority to family integration, as all families should be united.

## **FAIRNESS**

At the FCJ Refugee Centre fairness is not only making sure that everyone is treated the same, but a commitment to encourage respect, responsibility, leadership, and trust. Fairness is rooted in equity and justice, and is a value that matters to our board, staff, directors, and volunteers.

## **CONSISTENCY AND CREDIBILITY**

The communities we serve are inspired by our trustworthy advocacy and commitment to migrants and refugees. Three decades of consistent work speaks to our credibility and reputation as a community-based organization.

## **TRADITION AND INTEGRITY**

The FCJ Refugee Centre is a community of refugees and migrants. This value is rooted in the origins of the FCJ Society, and is our most precious heritage. We have managed to keep, and year by year continue, cultivating strong ethical and moral principles connected with social justice and solidarity.

# MIGRANT WORKERS' LABOUR AND HUMAN RIGHTS

FCJ Refugee Centre values stand also for migrant workers' rights in Canada. Whereas migration could be a positive experience for many migrant workers, a significant number face serious violations of their human rights, by abusive or exploitative work conditions, discrimination, lack of basic labor standards and protections and limited access to social services.

## FOOD SECURITY

The 2020 pandemic uncovered or increased some inequalities rooted in poverty and lack of immigration status, which makes even more difficult for a migrant to have access to services and support. Lack of food was one of the issues we found among our community. FCJ Refugee Centre advocates for access to food security, collecting and distributing food to vulnerable families in Toronto and GTA.

## CONNECT WITH US



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