

FCJ Refugee Centre Annual Report 2008

MISSION STATEMENT

FCJ Refugee Centre strives to meet the diverse needs of up-rooted 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 the FCJ Refugee Centre through CanadaHelps.org, a secure online donation system. Simply go to CanadaHelps.org and type FCJ Refugee Centre in "search".

or...

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

www.fcjrefugeecentre.org

Special features include automated monthly donations, or making your gift in honour or in-memory of someone special. Credit cards are accepted.

A charitable tax receipt will be sent to you immediately through email by CanadaHelps.org.

MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-DIRECTORS

This year we celebrate a big organizational accomplishment—we have our first Community Board of Directors. Besides the Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus, we have members from the community who have experience of the Immigration and Refugee process, plus former residents of our Centre. We welcome them and thank them for their commitment to the Centre and their leadership in moving us forward during these trying economic times.

Besides the changes in our organization we witnessed changes in Immigration Policies, which are moving farther away from the protection of refugees to focus more on the economic needs of the country, as witnessed in the large

numbers of temporary workers brought into the country with permits that do not allow them the possibility to apply for Permanent Residence. Canada is losing its image of a country that welcomes all newcomers.

Refugee claimants still don't have access to all the settlement programs available for immigrants, which gives them the sense of being second-class, of not belonging and of being forbidden access to needed services. As well, the federal government continues to deny the possibility of regularization to the thousands of people that don't have status but who are contributing to the economy and who face abuse and exploitation from unscrupulous em-

ployers.

We call on our government to recognize that Canada was built by immigrants and refugees and to change their policies to ensure that Canada continues to be a place where people will be welcome and feel they belong.

We continue our commitment to **walk with uprooted people!!** We ask you to continue helping us to provide hope to all the people who come to our door.

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*Francisco Rico-Martinez
Co-Directors*



ORGANIZATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Provided transitional housing and basic life necessities to 29 women and 10 children including welcoming five new babies into the world.
- ◆ Delivered 82 educational workshops on 36 different topics (Sponsorship Process, Work Permits, Visa Extensions, Family Sponsorship Breakdown, Immigration and Refugee Process, and many more) involving more than 50 agencies and almost 3,200 participants including front-line workers and refugees.
- ◆ Staff and volunteers responded to 4,979 phone calls for help on a variety of immigration and refugee issues compared to 3,264 in 2007.
- ◆ Worked with 1,492 individual cases through at least one appointment for different immigration and refugee procedures compared to 846 in 2007.
- ◆ 3,334 newcomers relied on the Centre's settlement and integration services, almost doubled compared to 1,894 in 2007 and over tripled from 1,062 three years ago.

OUR SUPPORTERS

We gratefully acknowledge our supporters....

Organizations

Alterna Savings
 Archbishop of Toronto, Cardinal's Dinner
 Basilian Fathers
 Canadian Auto Workers, Social Justice Fund
 Canadian Union of Public Employees
 Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation
 Catherine Donnelly Foundation
 Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto
 CHUM Christmas Wish
 City of Toronto, Heart Health Partnership
 Felician Sisters
 George Lunan Foundation
 Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

Green Shield Canada Foundation
 Law Foundation of Ontario
 Lawrence Park Community Church
 Maytree Foundation
 Ministry of the Attorney General
 Ontario Trillium Foundation
 Redemptorists
 School Sisters of Notre Dame
 Second Harvest
 Sir Joseph Flavelle Foundation
 Sisters of Charity of Halifax, Charity Alive Fund
 Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul
 Sisters of Saint Joseph of Sault Ste. Marie
 University of Michigan
 Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada

Individuals

Hilary Evans Cameron
 Juan Carranza
 Michael Casasola
 Joy and Paul Connelly
 David Da Silva
 Ellen Ewart
 Joe Gunn
 Ron Hodson
 Edward Hyland
 Priya Kissoon
 Elizabeth McIsaac
 Sue McIsaac
 Suzi Morrison and Manuel Rodriquez
 Jerry Neufeld
 Carlos Sebastian
 Peter Showler
 Chantal Tie

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**THE ONTARIO
 TRILLIUM
 FOUNDATION**



**LA FONDATION
 TRILLIUM
 DE L'ONTARIO**

Lois Anne Bordowitz, FCJ, Board President,
 Elizabeth McIsaac, Vice-President, Manager, Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council, Volunteer
 Edward Hyland, Secretary and Treasurer, Lawyer, Former Advisory Board Member

Patricia Binchy, FCJ, Board Member, Past Board Chair.
 Patricia Cruz, Board Member, Former Resident
 Clara Mupa, Board Member, Former Resident
 Alejandra Priego, Board Member, St. Joseph's Health

Centre, Former Advisory Board Member
 Carlos Sebastian, Board Member, Volunteer
 Maureen Silcoff, Lawyer, Former Advisory Board Member

IN THE MEDIA

Public awareness building activities through the media continue to make the general public more aware of and sympathetic to the issues related to refugees and immigrants. In 2008, the focus was on the issues of non-status refugees and the trafficking of persons, which are issues that are not close to being resolved and lack in-

terest from the government. Media coverage included CBC, CTV, Al Jazeera, OMNI, and TVO for television, the Toronto Star, El Popular, and Correo Canadiense for newspapers, and CBC and Radio Canada International for radio. We also participated in many background interviews with all the above mentioned media.



THANK YOU TO OUR OVER 100 VOLUNTEERS!!

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, post-secondary school students, among other like-minded friends, volunteer their time. From lawyers contributing on a pro bono basis, law students, translators and interpreters, post-secondary school students to people who organize the office, do accounting, provide companion-

ship, help distribute food, clothing, and furniture donations, paint, and garden ... every part contributes to the whole.

This year for the third time we

welcomed students from the University of Michigan for their alternative Spring Break. They learn from us and help us do spring cleaning and paint a room or two.



Celebrating at the Christmas Party

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Your generosity makes a difference to the almost 2,500 refugee claimants and uprooted people who rely on our comprehensive settlement and integration services annually.

There are many ways you can make a difference!

Make a Donation:

Make a donation, become a monthly donor, leave a gift to the FCJ Refugee Centre in your will, or make a donation in memory or in honour of someone special.

Hold a Fundraising Dinner:

Organize a fundraising dinner by inviting your friends, family, and/or colleagues to an evening filled with great food and conversation. Ask your guests for a suggested donation of \$50 each to the FCJ Refugee Centre in exchange for a great night out!

Through Your Workplace:

Through your company or at work through a corporate donation, employee matching gift, or corporate volunteer program.

Become an FCJ Refugee Centre Volunteer:

Each year, over 100 caring individuals volunteer their time and expertise. Refugees gain valuable Canadian work experience and are provided with letters of references, act as references for employers, and assist with covering letters and resumes.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Legal Protection and Integration Program for Uprooted People:

This volunteer-driven program was a major success with the support of 34 volunteers comprised of law students, post-secondary student placements, researchers, and community members. These dedicated volunteers were instrumental in exceeding our anticipated results in several areas including: providing legal education and information in person and through telephone and email enquiries to refugees and service providers, conducting research on immigration and refugee issues, assisting clients with filling out complicated legal forms, and much more. In total 7,752 volunteer hours were provided, the equivalent of almost five full-time positions.

Refugee Protection:

The Immigration and Refugee related forms filled by our Centre have tripled over the past year. We have received positive decisions from the Immigration Review Board for women staying in our houses from the following countries: Burundi, Cameroon, Ghana, Eritrea, Colombia, El Salvador and Zimbabwe. The number of applications based on Humanitarian and Compassionate Grounds have also tripled and our rate of acceptance is better than the national average. However, the rate of acceptance for Pre-Removal Risk Assessments (PRRA) remains at 0% for any country.

Country Research:

In the spring, Francisco Rico-Martinez travelled to El Salvador to conduct research on the ongoing human rights abuses in El Salvador to determine the cause of the increase in numbers of people from El Salvador coming to Canada to claim refugee status. The resulting research paper is available free-of-charge on our website: www.fcjrefugeecentre.org

Popular Education and Training:

The centre continues to build its reputation as a training centre that addresses new and emerging issues that impact the settlement and integration sector and strengthens the capacity of agencies to better serve newcomers.



Enjoying a meal outside

Women and Children's Programs Transitional Housing Support:

Our two houses and three self-contained apartments that provide transitional housing (12 family units) were fully occupied throughout the year with women and children from Chile, Swaziland, Guatemala, Eritrea, Zimbabwe, Burundi, Haiti, and Afghanistan. Ntombikayise, a former resident from Swaziland where she worked with pregnant women and the issue of infant mortality, was hired in the position of Housing Settlement Worker. She has been a tremendous asset, bringing with her an understanding of the residents' needs from their own perspective and a passion to help the women succeed in their new lives in Canada.

Cultural, Recreational, and Educational Field Trips:

Day trips included the Canadian National Exhibition, the CN Tower, the Royal Ontario Museum, and many more. Average attendance for each trip was 11 to 15 women and children. Thirteen residents and their children went on a three-day overnight cottage trip to Sanctuary North from August 8 to 10. This outing provided a first-time experience of being in a natural setting in Canada. We introduced educational day trips to communities to explore what services they provide that benefit our residents. Trips included Daventry Perth to learn about their employment services and health services for expectant women, and COSTI to learn how to fill out subsidized housing forms.

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. Topics and issues explored included: Domestic Violence, Genital Mutilation, Human Rights, Human Trafficking, Rape and War, and Forced Marriage.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (CONT'D)



Distributing food from Second Harvest

Community Kitchen:

Cooking groups were held on the 2nd week of each month for up to 16 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 are creating and producing the second volume of an international cookbook. The cookbook will be available for downloading from FCJ Refugee Centre's website located at www.refugeecentre.org. In 2008, the centre received funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to build a second kitchen to accommodate the growing number of women attending and will be completed by spring 2009. We will be able to accommodate 10 more women and the women will also be able to use the kitchen to help them start up their own catering businesses.

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:

The groups continue to grow in popularity with up to 16 women (residents, past residents, and women being assisted through the centre's client intake process) attending each session. Educational topics included: Adapting to Western Society, Life Skills Building, Parenting Skills, Human Rights, Benefits to Volunteering, Navigating Ontario Works, Immunization, and Searching for Housing.. Career Related topics were: How to Write a Covering Letter, How to Write a Resume, and How to Dress for a Job Interview.

Women's Circle Becoming Stronger Through Sharing and Learning:

Started in 2007, this project provides a "support network" for refugee women that are affected by the issues violence and human rights violations (domestic violence, discrimination, human trafficking, religious persecution, and female genital mutilation) so that they can begin the healing process, prevent re-victimization, develop leadership skills, and gain independence. This initiative also increases the capacity of service providers to enhance their ability to effectively provide services and supports to refugee women who are victims of violence and human rights violations.

Women's Economic Development Initiatives:

Residents worked with clay and jewellery and learned how to start a small business to sell their wares. Demand for this program continues to grow and program hours were expanded from bi-weekly to every Thursday from 4:00 to 6:00 pm with approximately 16 women attending. The women continue to sell their beautiful jewellery and clay wares at various venues in Toronto.



Drumming at the Christmas Party

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2008

	2008	2007
Revenues:		
The Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus - Contribution	\$38,000	\$58,470
- Forgiveness of advances	-	\$230,653
Donations	\$18,014	\$13,496
Grants	\$213,356	\$191,661
The Ontario Trillium Foundation grant	\$12,807	-
Rental Income	\$55,726	\$56,416
Other	\$16,340	\$36,033
Total Revenues	\$354,243	\$587,179
Expenses		
Administration	\$73,956	\$67,687
Communications	\$9,962	\$9,253
Household – Oakwood Office	\$23,106	\$22,803
- Oakwood	\$14,125	\$16,027
- Dufferin	\$12,628	\$36,477
- Dovercourt	\$14,912	\$12,571
Capital assets - The Ontario Trillium Foundation grant	\$12,807	-
Salaries and benefits	\$188,388	\$177,855
Refugee support	\$6,445	\$5,527
Support group activities	\$4,357	\$5,674
Automobile	\$5,633	\$8,661
Manuals and production	\$6,120	\$647
Total Expenditures	\$372,439	\$363,182
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures for the year	(\$18,196)	\$223,997
Net assets (deficiency) – at beginning of the year	\$16,224	(\$207,773)
Net assets (deficiency) – at end of the year	(\$1,972)	\$16,224

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.

www.fcjrefugeecentre.org

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