



FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE
Walking with uprooted people

SUMMER NEWSLETTER



SOLIDARITY STEPS

Solidarity Steps for the FCJ Refugee Centre! is an ongoing fundraising campaign through our social media.

Take from us what you need, and give to each other what you can. This is the guiding philosophy of not only the FCJ Refugee Centre, but is at the very core of our common humanity. In recent months, we have seen an enormous shift in the ways in which we interact, live our daily lives, and see the world around us. We have seen the turmoil that can be brought out in people when they are forced into situations of fear and vulnerability – circumstances so many of us who grew up in Canada with so many privileges have never had to face. But we've also seen the generosity of the spirit of our community. Our mandate is to support all uprooted people, and to keep our door open to the community.

From our homes to yours, we stand with you in solidarity. Our door is open today as it will be tomorrow. Please check out our page (www.fcjrefugeecentre.org), and stay tuned for more updates, weekly calls to action, how you can stay engaged, and more information about our upcoming walk-a-thon!

Stay safe, stay well, and stay kind.
In solidarity,

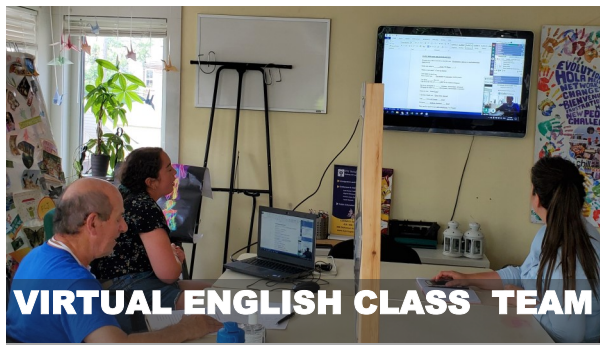
UPCOMING EVENTS

- FROM OUR KITCHEN TO YOUR TABLE : COOKING CLASS ONLINE
- VIRTUAL ENGLISH CLASSES : MONDAYS AT 2:00 PM . TO PARTICIPATE, FOLLOW THE LINK ON OUR WEBSITE
- INFORMATIVE SESSIONS THROUGH OUR WEBINARS ON THURSDAYS
- WEEKLY WOMEN'S PROGRAM STARTING IN OCTOBER

SETTLEMENT SERVICES

APPOINTMENTS

FCJ Refugee Centre keeps the door open. We are seeing clients only by appointment and under the new protocols we are implementing to keep everyone safe and healthy. At FCJ Refugee Centre we continue working in solidarity with precarious migrants. We understand that this is a difficult and uncertain time for many. We recognize that precarious migrants are severely affected already as racialized and marginalized persons. With the health and safety of our entire community in mind we did some adjustments to our daily work environment.

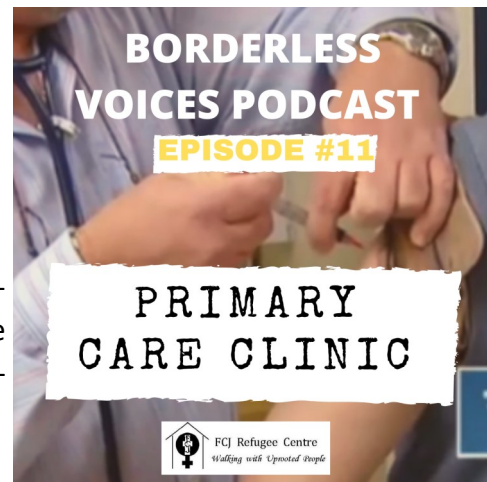


VIRTUAL ENGLISH CLASSES

We are happy to start our newsletter with the launching of the Virtual English Class on Mondays at 2:00 pm.

PRIMARY CARE CLINIC

Our primary Care Clinic is open. Doctors are doing virtual appointments. However starting in September the clinic is doing in person appointments. You have to con-



tact Elisa Ibarra, Health and Wellbeing Support Worker, who coordinates the appointments with doctors at the clinic. You are welcome to check our webinar and podcast with more details about the services we provide at our Primary Care Clinic.

For appointments send an email to Elisa:

eli.ibarra@fcjrefugeecentre.org or by phone 416 469 9754 ext. 230

FOOD HAMPERS

At the FCJ Refugee Centre we continue working in solidarity with precarious migrants. We understand that this is a difficult and uncertain time for many, and we're here to support and provide information to anyone who is in need. We continue walking with uprooted people and strive to build together a borderless humanity.

The food hampers you have been receiving every week are possible thanks to Second Harvest and the donations we have received from members of our community.

Through this spring and summer we were also able to distribute gift cards to more than a hundred families. Thanks to the support of the Emergency Community Support Fund grant through United Way of Greater Toronto (United Way) we will keep helping vulnerable populations

Moreover, we would like to acknowledge the support of all our staff and volunteers who make possible the food drop-offs and pick-ups every week.

Since the start of the pandemic, 195 people have benefited from grocery cards. From those 195 households, 119 households received rent assistance and 103 received food hampers.

The food deliveries have been taking place in high risk neighbourhoods for COVID-19 (Brampton, Etobicoke, Mississauga, North York, Scarborough).

We started delivering 10-15 bags per week (without including our residents). Now we are delivering 100 bags per week.

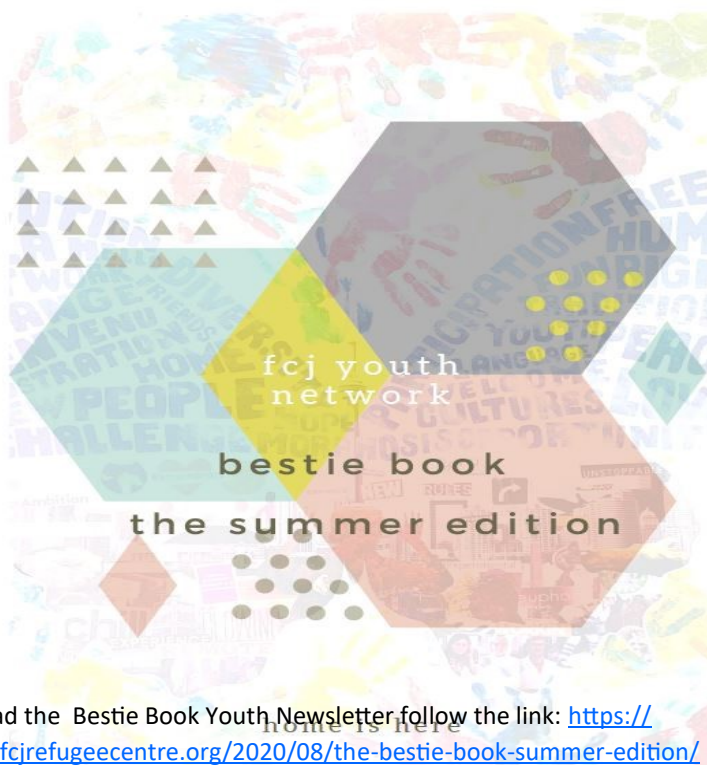
"My husband works four to five days a week in cleaning, gardening, whatever is available for him (most of our income goes towards the rent) The food hamper has helped us a lot. I spend less doing the groceries."

Family of 3 without status in Toronto



Most of the people we have served are precarious migrants working in cleaning or construction jobs. Also, a good percentage of the people served so far are single moms, racialized migrants, seniors and youth.

Even though some people have returned to work the need for food security continues as people are working less hours per week and are only able to pay rent.



To read the Bestie Book Youth Newsletter follow the link: <https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/2020/08/the-bestie-book-summer-edition/>

REMAIN CONNECTED DURING COVID-19: FCJ YOUTH NETWORK

The last couple months have been unlike any other for our youth network as many of our precarious status youth were impacted by the pandemic and we were forced to shuffle around or cancel many of our summer activities, many of which had become yearly traditions. Despite these changes, our youth team has been very busy and we've worked hard to facilitate programming that engages our youth so that they feel united, supported, understood and safe. One of the best ways we've been able to remain connected during this time has been through our virtual weekly meetings. We meet every Wednesday for workshops, games, engaging discussions and other activities. In August, we were happy to welcome Aura Freedom to conduct an impactful workshop on human trafficking, healthy relationships, internet safety and gender. Another way we've remained connected is in continuing our weekly movie nights. Every Thursday evening we connect virtually using our phones or laptops and we watch a movie together.

BESTIE BOOK

Something small to chronicle this time, and to share memories. And something you can have in your home to remind you that we're here, waiting until we can sit around the kitchen table together again. Around that table, we are a community, and we are a family. Until then, wherever your kitchen tables are; spread out across Toronto and all borders; wherever you are, those kitchen tables belong to all of us. Home is still here. And you can count on us. We feel so privileged to have been able to move our weekly meetings to online formats, so that we can still see your beautiful faces every week! We're loving watching movies together, and we'll find new ways of safely being together in person as soon as we possibly can.

MONTHLY FAMILY DINNER

Just like every other month, we're keeping up with our tradition of our monthly family dinners. In May we received a special request and surprised our youth group family with delivered homemade lasagna; in June we hosted a virtual Eid Al-Fitr to have

breakfast with our friends who fasted for Ramadan; in July we held a virtual grilled cheese making competition. It's been important for us to maintain this tradition as it allows us to spend a couple of hours together bonding over food and culture. In order to act on our commitment to make youth voices heard, we launched a podcast titled "Home is Here", in which we plan to feature our youth group members engaging in meaningful discussions on relevant subjects and sharing their perspectives as youth. Most recently, we sent out our "Bestie Book: Summer Edition", which featured the recipes, pictures, poems and stories created and taken by our youth. It was wonderful to see how our youth had spent the past couple of

family dinner
the tradition continues



months learning new hobbies and mastering old ones. We're currently working on bring back our Uprooted Junior Program in hopes of supporting many of the newcomer youth in our community with their learning as school begins again in September. We're also excited about our next project and were currently seeking more submissions - pictures, recipes, poems and stories - from the youth in our community. Most importantly, if you are a newcomer youth who would like to join our group we welcome you to reach out to us any way, any day! We're always looking for new friends to join our FCJ Youth Network!

BRIDGING PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS WITH PRECARIOUS IMMIGRATION STATUS

The FCJ Refugee Centre has been partnering with the Pro Bono Students OSGOODE Chapter since 2011. Since 2018, a group of students from the CARL U of T chapter joined our efforts to support us as well. For this coming year, during the fall, 2020 the Pro Bono U of T Chapter will be part of our program.

The Uprooted Peoples Protection Program provides information for refugee claimants and non-status people, including conducting research on country conditions and other immigration and refugee issues, assistance with filling out legal forms, conducting in-person sessions for people looking for immigration information. Students focus their work in assisting clients to complete their Humanitarian and Compassionate Considerations applications for Permanent Residence. Another unique aspect of this program is the provision of information specifically to people who have had their refugee claim denied, but are unable to return to their country. This comprehensive team works to support them in any and all ways possible with their refugee appeal.

AT THE FRONT LINE: TINBIT EYASU



Having the opportunity to work with FCJ as a summer student has allowed me to further ex-

pand my understanding of immigration and refugee protection. Working alongside the staff that have been dedicated, before and during this pandemic, in supporting people during their settlement in Canada has been inspiring for me. While the service delivery has shifted due to the pandemic, it has remained a busy time trying to navigate the new way of supporting and assisting clients. Seeing FCJ adapt by providing options like webinars and grocery gift cards to clients in need has shown their dedication.

FCJ has been a space where I have learned so much and that has to do with the support I received from the staff. Always ready to answer any questions I have about the immigration process or other related topics. I would suggest to anyone who is interested in helping in the settlement sector to volunteer here in the future because not only is it fulfilling work but you gain a great amount of knowledge from the years of experience the staff have.

I believe FCJ is a great example of what it looks like to stand in solidarity with immigrants and refugees (especially, precarious migrants). I will truly miss FCJ and I am grateful for the experience of working at such a welcoming and diverse environment.

ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MIGRANT WORKERS

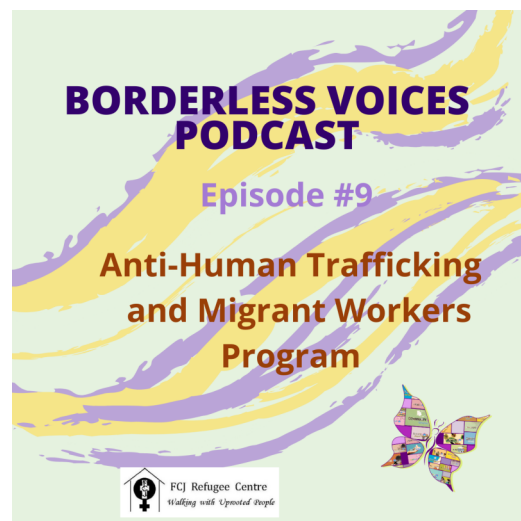
In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Grey-Bruce Community Legal Clinic and Anti-Human Trafficking and Migrant Workers Quinte Immigration.

Mobile Program team shifted focus in order to provide assistance to our community members who found themselves in precarious situations due to lack of status, victims of labour exploitation and labour trafficking, losing their jobs, falling ill and being ineligible for the government's support. Our team was part of the initiative at the FCJ to collect donations, gift cards and ensure that these were distributed to our community members in need. We also assisted in providing non-status families with rent assistance. In total more than 200 families, many of them without status in Canada, were supported by the FCJ and the Anti-Human Trafficking team.

Just before the pandemic, we had organized in partnership with the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking (Anti-Trafficking Line) and other organizations such as Migrant Ontario, and the Migrant Workers Resource Centre five focus groups with migrant workers, including factory and agricultural workers and caregivers, to address issues to prevent labour trafficking and labour exploitation in Ontario. Throughout this period, our team has been very busy supporting our clients with settlement and immigration processes such as open work permits and temporary resident permits. Due to the pandemic many of our in-person sessions were cancelled, and so we have offered various online webinars on Migrant Workers, Non-Status Workers and their rights, to service providers and the general public, in partnership with organizations such as the

Grey-Bruce Community Legal Clinic and Quinte Immigration.

On June 10th, our team was a central part of the organizing committee of the first online Anti-Human Trafficking forum: "Celebrating Courage, Renewing Commitment, Anti-Human Trafficking". Our team has also hosted podcasts and webinars at the FCJ, including a presentation in Portuguese about Humanitarian & Compassionate applications, a webinar in Spanish regarding the challenges faced by migrant workers due to COVID-19, and a general webinar to introduce the work done by the Anti-Human Trafficking team. In August our team went to London, Windsor, and Leamington to mediate interviews between migrant workers and CBC Radio Canada for an upcoming documentary. This was a particularly important experience for the FCJ and our team as we commit to offering support to trafficking survivors, migrant workers and people with precarious status, and remain dedicated in advocating against human trafficking and labour exploitation.





Natalie Gardiner, Luis Mata and Marcus Padilha: Migrant Workers team

ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING YOUTH WORKER: NATALIE GARDINER

Having volunteered at the FCJ Refugee Centre for some time, I formally joined the team this year as a project coordinator for a pilot project titled “Finding Homes in Inclusive Neighbourhoods”, which aimed to support refugee claimant families in finding transitional housing and other settlement support. Once the project ended, I was offered a new role as the Anti-Human Trafficking Youth Worker. In this role, I am part of both the Anti-Human Trafficking and the Youth Teams, and often act as a liaison between the two.

During the COVID-19 pandemic it has been incredible to be a part of a dedicated organization which adapted its working model immediately in order to offer better support to our clients and community. In the Anti-Human Trafficking Team we connect regularly with trafficking survivors, international students, migrant workers and non-

status workers, as these populations have been challenged during the pandemic due to losing employment, falling ill and being ineligible for government assistance. In addition to our regular work, as a team and organization, we have been able to provide rent assistance, food basket deliveries, and grocery gift cards to these populations during this time.

In the Youth Team we connect regularly with the precarious status youth in our community and engage in meaningful discussions on topics such as mental and physical well-being, youth rights, labour rights, regularization of status, and social justice issues as they pertain to youth. Despite having to hold our weekly meetings online, I have really enjoyed the creativity with which our youth always tackle the crafts we make and their friendly competition which ignites when we play games.

MIGRANT CASE WORKER: MARCUS PADILHA

My name is Marcus Padilha. I first started at FCJ in September 2019 as a placement student from George Brown College. As a placement student I worked with Diana Gallego, our Associate Director, on Immigration applications and Legal Aid calls with a client-centred approach. On February 2020 I joined the Anti-Human Trafficking team, coordinated by Luis Alberto Mata, as a part-time Remote and Rural Area Case Worker, bringing information sessions to remote areas in Ontario. The information sessions have the goal to bring awareness to migrant workers and partner organizations in rural areas about Labour Trafficking and immigration remedies for survivors of Human Trafficking. On May 2020 I started full-time as Migrant Case worker with a focus on non-status migrant workers. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our focus changed for a moment, to provide financial support to those not covered by governmental assistance.

Here at FCJ we have been able to provide financial assistance to non-status workers via grocery cards, weekly food deliveries and rental assistance, all this without interrupting our daily tasks which includes immigration orientation and application, housing support and service referrals. We have been offering weekly webinars to provide information on different topics, from Humanitarian & Compassionate information sessions in Spanish, to how we are

DONE WAITING! THE TIME IS NOW! STATUS FOR ALL! DEMOSTRATION DURING THIS SUMMER



FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE raising its voice to claim full immigration status for vulnerable migrants in precarious situations in Canada. Diana Gallego, Luis Mata and Elisa Ibarra at the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change demonstration. TWO ACTIONS ALREADY ANNOUNCED FOR SEPT. 20 in TORONTO: 2pm, Dundas Square and in MONTREAL: 2pm

PUBLIC EDUCATION

We have been very active providing virtual informative sessions through the year. During the last 2 months we facilitated 22 webinars. Thanks to our FCJ Refugee Centre team for providing these webinars every week. The webinars have been facilitated in different languages: Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic and English. Some of the topics:

1. The impact of the COVID-19 on the immigration system: measures in the refugee process in Portuguese, Spanish, Arabic and English
2. Impact of COVID-19 on the precarious migrants employment law problems and options for migrant workers.
3. Aplicación a la Residencia Canadiense por Razones Humanitarias
4. Anti-Human Trafficking Work Challenges during the Covid-19 Pandemic
5. Humanitarian and Compassionate application (H&C) in Portuguese, Spanish and English
6. Going back to School: support for parents
7. Health Care for Uninsured Migrants
8. Supporting Youth during COVID-19: options



PUBLIC EDUCATION



Tsering Lhamo, facilitating a webinar on Housing Barriers



Shaimaa Al-Dulaimi, during a webinar on the refugee process in Arabic

Videos

[See All](#)



Work permit webinar happening now.

Edgar Valderrama and Sebastian Garcia supporting clients on how to do a work permit online



Tee-Jay and Maria Alejandra (above) Natasha and Natalie (below) during the training Working with Youth during COVID 19



PUBLIC EDUCATION: LIST OF PODCASTS PRODUCED

The production of the Podcast BORDERLESS VOICES is another component of the Public Education. So far we have produced 27 Episodes on different topics and in different languages. All of them are available on our website and you can also follow us through Spotify.



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

We want to take this opportunity to send a special message of our most sincere gratitude to all of our funders for their support at this time. Without your generosity, we would not be able to do the work that we do. As we work to compile reports, we make concerted efforts to qualitatively and quantitatively measure the impacts of your giving. However, we humbly acknowledge that the impacts of your generosity go far beyond the data we are able to present. The impacts on the lives of our community members are in fact immeasurable. In solidarity, and with the deepest gratitude, we thank you.

- OCASI/Atkinson
- OCASI/WES
- Give Foundation
- Metcalf Foundation
- City of Toronto
- Toronto Foundation
- Canadian Women's Foundation
- United Way
- MCCSS (The Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services)
- Second Harvest
- The Conn Symthe Foundation
- The Basilian Fathers
- The Law Foundation of Ontario

...plus many individuals donations

Mummified Dreams

By: Regirousso

The Illusion of a smile,
The transparent wall, but what is it small
butterfly?
What caused you to lose your wings?
To retreat, to forget who you are,
Where are you heading.....
Only to remind you of where you are from.
Only to remind you of the journey you left
behind.
The soul they left behind.....walking dead in
reality.

Democracy, Freedom of the oppressors,
Harmony, a lost language in local
communities.

Religion as a way of teaching our
differences resulting in violence.
Islam as the “radical group” targeting the
western world.

And these immigrants? Eh,
I mean “Eh” as an emphasis of Canadians.
Otherwise you have an accent.
Where are you from originally?
What brought you here? You must have quite
a story.

Finding ourselves trying to please the
unpleasant.
Constantly having to prove who you are,
your pain, your scars...



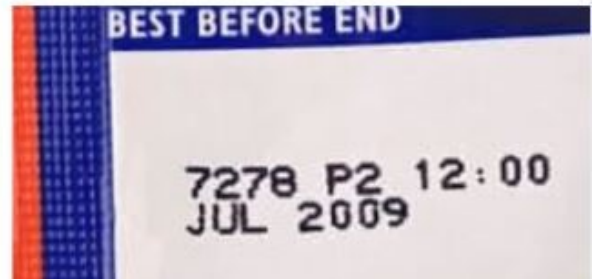
FROM OUR KITCHEN TO YOUR TABLE

Online sessions

- Cooking healthy during COVID-19
- Easy and affordable eating tips
- Meal ideas and recipes on Thursdays

Contact us: info@fcjrefugeecentre.org

This program is possible thanks to the support of the



FCJ Refugee Centre

Walking with uprooted people

► Immigration and Refugee Support

► Settlement & Integration

Anti-Human Trafficking
Migrant Workers Program
Primary Care Clinic
Youth Network

► Public Education



Connect with us



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