



FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE

SPRING 2026 NEWSLETTER



TICKETS NOW ON SALE!

**FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE
35th ANNIVERSARY
GALA DINNER**

OCTOBER 15, 2026, 6PM

HONOUREE/SPEAKER:
ALEX NEVE

TIBETAN CANADIAN
CULTURAL CENTRE
40 TITAN RD, ETOBICOKE



Refugee Healthcare Cuts | Bill C-12: A Harder Reality For Refugee Claimants in Canada | The System Behind Labour Exploitation | 35th Anniversary Gala Dinner | Testimonials | Upcoming Events | And more...

A Severe Blow to Refugee Healthcare Coverage

"I'm devastated that the Liberal government has approved these cuts. Shame," Dr. Vanessa Reddit laments during a protest this April in Toronto. As a part of the cuts to the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) which came into effect on May 1st, the federal government has reduced the refugee healthcare budget and introduced co-payments for essential healthcare. Refugee support organizations, FCJ Refugee Centre among them, as well as healthcare providers, medical organizations and community members are protesting these cuts, denouncing that they will cause serious harm to refugees and other vulnerable and precarious people.



These cuts, they argue, will immediately harm refugees and other vulnerable populations, who are already struggling to meet basic needs such as housing, food and transportation. They explain that the implemented co-payments function as a "denial of care," and warn that refugees' health will worsen, more individuals will unnecessarily end up in already strained emergency departments and hospitals, and health care costs will rise. Financially, they say, co-payment plan will cost Canada more, not less.

As of May 1st, 2026 the federal government has cut the refugee healthcare budget by 15% and implemented user fees for essential health services under the IFHP, among other changes. These co-payments now apply to items such as medications, mental health counselling, physical therapy and vision care. For all other supplemental health benefits, beneficiaries will pay 30% of the cost of eligible services and products. Supplemental coverage covers extended health care like psychologists and counselling therapists; occupational therapists; physiotherapists and speech language therapists; assistive devices like prosthetics, mobility aids and hearing aids; home care and long-term care; urgent dental care and limited vision care; and medical supplies and equipment. Beneficiaries covered by the IFHP will be asked to pay these amounts directly to their health care providers when they receive IFHP-eligible supplemental products or services.

Organizations and health care workers engaged in the mobilization against the cuts are concerned the new co-payments will create further barriers to health care access, and may, in the end, put more pressure on emergency rooms and hospitals: "A small prescription fee when you have no income can be a difference between getting treatment and going without. Four dollars may seem like a trivial amount compared to what you might spend on coffee, but I have patients who miss medical appointments because they can't save up enough money to get on the TTC. I have patients who have diabetes, and they can't manage it properly because they can't buy the food that they're being told to eat, said a health care provider in one of the protests held in Toronto.

“This is cruel, shortsighted, and dangerous. It will make people sicker, increase pressure on emergency rooms and hospitals, and ultimately cost more. Stopping the cruel consequences behind the cuts to enter federal health goes against our Canadian values and unfairly forces those seeking justice into suffering and into precarious situations,” said Diana Gallego, FCJ Refugee Centre’s Co-Executive Director.

FCJ Refugee Centre joined the mobilization with health care providers and community organizations to call for equitable access to health care and to highlight the challenges refugees and precarious migrants already face in rebuilding their lives in Canada. At one of the the rallies, FCJ refugee Centre’s Founder, Loly Rico, shared her own story of coming to Canada as a refugee 36 years ago: “ I keep saying we were the golden refugees, we found open doors, open arms, whole coverage... We come here for protection. If Canada didn't receive us, my children would not have had their father. Canada has always given protection. And now what they are doing is closing the doors. So we are calling [Prime Minister] Mark Carney to stop this, to stop the cuts on the health care.”



Bill C-12: A Harder Reality For Refugee Claimants in Canada

The **Strengthening Canada's Immigration System and Borders Act**, also known as **Bill C-12**, passed and received Royal Assent on March 26, 2026, officially becoming law. The legislation introduces major changes, including stricter asylum eligibility rules, a 14-day deadline for certain claims, and authorized sharing of migrant data.

Speaking at the House of Commons of Canada on April 29, FCJ Refugee Centre's In-House Lawyer, Joshua Eisen, highlighted the need for regulatory exceptions to the new ineligibility provisions introduced by Bill C-12; and denounced "the extraordinary and unjustifiable delays" for Humanitarian and Compassionate applications, which according to IRCC now stand at more than 10 years.

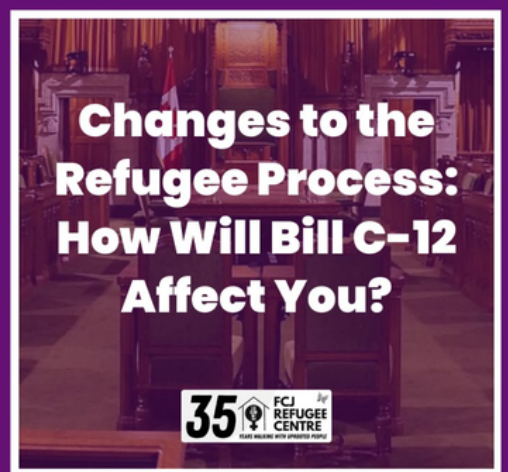
Eisen spoke as a witness at the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (CIMM). Following is the transcript of his declaration:

Good afternoon. My name is Joshua Eisen, and I am in-house counsel at FCJ Refugee Centre, a Toronto-based community organization that works with refugee claimants and other precarious migrants.

Today I will focus on two urgent concerns: first, the need for regulatory exceptions to the new ineligibility provisions introduced by Bill C-12; and second, the extraordinary and unjustifiable delays for Humanitarian and Compassionate applications, which according to IRCC now stand at more than 10 years.

I will begin with Bill C-12.

Under Bill C-12, individuals who wait more than a year after arriving in Canada before making a refugee claim are ineligible for a refugee hearing. Instead, they are diverted to a pre-removal risk assessment, which offers fewer procedural protections.



Visit our website to watch the webinar ***Changes to the Refugee Process: How Will Bill C-12 Affect You?*** You will get information about:

- How the new legislation will affect the refugee process
- New eligibility restrictions on making a refugee claim
- What is a PRRA application and how is it different than a refugee claim?
- What happens if you're referred to the PRRA
- Work permits, social services and identity documents for people with ineligible claims
- How to find out if someone's claim is ineligible
- How the new legislation affect those still waiting for their refugee hearing
- Practical examples
- And more

The webinar is presented by Edgar Valderrama Medina, Immigration and Refugee Protection Manager, FCJ Refugee Centre; and Joshua Eisen, In-House Lawyer, FCJ Refugee Centre.

You can see it here:
<https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/webinar-changes-to-the-refugee-process-how-will-bill-c-12-affect-you/>

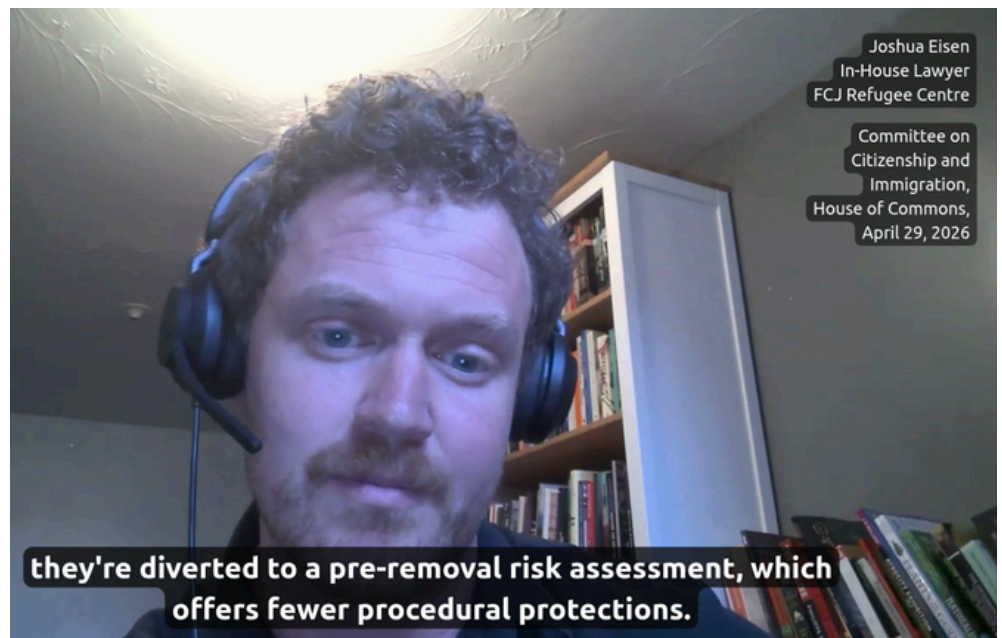
The one-year bar disproportionately harms some of the most vulnerable claimants: LGBTQ individuals, survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking, and people whose risk arises only after they have arrived in Canada, due to changes in conditions in their country of origin.

Importantly, these cases are not exceptional; I regularly meet with clients who have been delayed in filing a claim because of trauma, structural barriers, and other reasons beyond their control.

Under Bill C-12, these individuals lose their right to make a refugee claim simply because more than one year has passed since their arrival in the country. That is not a fair or logical system. It punishes delay without examining the reasons for the delay. It ignores trauma, fear, coercion, and changing global conditions. For that reason, regulatory exceptions must be created for vulnerable groups, including LGBTQ claimants, survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking, and 'sur place' claimants, so that these individuals can benefit from a guaranteed oral hearing before the Refugee Protection Division, along with the robust procedural protections that entails.

My second point concerns IRCC's disturbingly long processing times for applications for permanent residence on Humanitarian and Compassionate grounds, commonly known as H&C applications.

Section 25(1) of IRPA gives decision-makers discretion to grant permanent residence to individuals who do not qualify under other streams where there are sufficient humanitarian and compassionate considerations to justify relief.



H&C applications are a critical safeguard. They exist to ensure that cases that would otherwise fall through the cracks still have a pathway to permanent residence.

These applications are vital because they prevent some of the most complex and compelling cases from being lost in what can otherwise be a rigid and bureaucratic system.

The best way to understand the importance of H&Cs is through actual cases.

One of my clients was born in the United States while his mother was in transit to Canada from Haiti. He arrived in Canada as an infant, and his mother made a refugee claim. Her claim was accepted, but his was refused because he held U.S. citizenship. When his mother lost her refugee status after briefly returning to Haiti to attend her mother's funeral, my client was left without any clear pathway to permanent residence in the only country he has ever really known. Now 20 years old, he faces removal to the United State—a country he has not been to since he was a baby, where he knows no one and to which he has no meaningful connection.

Another case involves a young couple who fled violence in their home country and sought refugee protection in Canada. They were represented by a fraudulent “ghost” consultant who mishandled their claim and disappeared with their money, causing their refugee claim to be abandoned. During that time, they had a daughter.

For nine years, they lived underground, without status, trying to build a life and protect their family. Recently, they were located by CBSA, which initiated removal proceedings. Deportation would mean forcing their nine-year-old daughter, a Canadian citizen, to leave the only home she has ever known and relocate to a country she has never seen, where she does not even speak the language.

In both of these cases, the only realistic pathway to stability and permanent residence is an H&C application. Unfortunately, that safeguard is now effectively dead. IRCC’s current processing times for H&C applications exceed 10 years. During that time, applicants often remain without status, without the right to work, and under the constant threat of removal. In many cases, removal defeats the purpose of the application. By the time a decision is made, the harm the H&C process was meant to prevent has already happened.

If H&Cs are to remain a meaningful tool, there must be revisions to the government’s Immigration Levels Plan, at least as it applies to these applications. Under the current plan, more than 50,000 H&C applicants are competing for 1100 spaces this year. The number of applicants will only continue to rise, while the number of spaces is actually set to decrease in the coming years.

H&C applications cannot function as a meaningful safeguard if applicants are expected to spend a decade in limbo before receiving a decision. If we are serious about fairness, compassion, and the integrity of our immigration system, this must change. Otherwise, H&Cs are little more than window dressing, allowing Canada to maintain the illusion that there is an exceptional pathway for hardship cases, when in reality that pathway has been blocked.

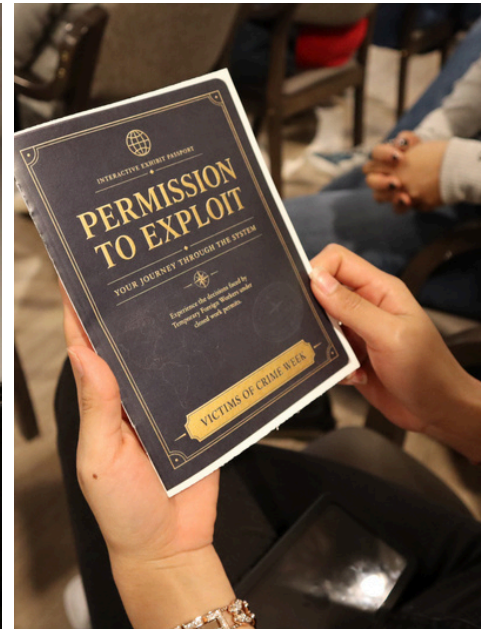
I thank you for your time.

Better Together

On April 7, we joined the panel discussion *Better Together: Resistance, Solidarity & Refugee Rights*, held in the context of **Refugee Rights Day**. Hosted at The 519 and organized by the Department of Criminology & Criminology Course Union (CCU), Toronto Metropolitan University, and the Toronto Planning Committee for Refugee Rights Day, the event was an inspiring and empowering experience, that truly recharged our commitment to fighting for the rights of refugees and migrants in precarious situations. As our panelists reminded us, current threats—such as the announced cuts to refugee healthcare and the passage of Bill C-12—make our continued advocacy more vital than ever.



‘Permission to Exploit’: The System Behind the Exploitation of Temporary Foreign Workers



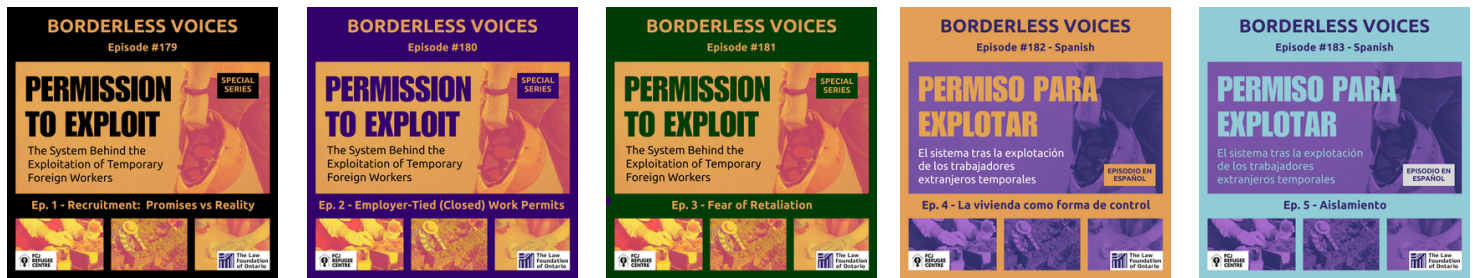
On May 13 the FCJ Refugee Centre’s Anti-Human Trafficking Team, together with the Mary Ward Centre, organised an interactive event on labour exploitation as part of Victims and Survivors of Crime Week. The event included the launching of the new special podcast series *Permission to Exploit*, a part of the FCJ Refugee Centre’s *Borderless Voices* podcast, and focused on the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and Closed Work Permit system in Canada, and how these systems create conditions in which migrant workers are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

Participants traveled through immersive stations that mimicked experiences many migrant workers encounter from false recruitment practices and unsafe working conditions to threats regarding immigration status and fear of deportation. The experience was designed to make attendees think about the systemic barriers refugees and migrants still face in Canada today.

The panel discussion was compelling, as speakers Megha Chandrashekar, Gabriel Allahdua, and Verónica Zaragoza spoke about their personal experiences and perspectives on migrant worker rights, systemic inequities, and the critical need for policy reform. The panelists stressed the importance of community support, advocacy and safer pathways for migrant workers that are free of exploitation.

You can watch a video of the event in our website: <https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/2026/05/permission-to-exploit-podcast-launch-panel-discussion-and-interactive-activity-on-labour-exploitation/>





When your immigration status as a Temporary Foreign Worker depends on your employer

Permission to Exploit is an eight-episode special series of the FCJ Refugee Centre’s *Borderless Voices* podcast, that combines lived experienced specialists and professional specialists’ insights to examine Canada’s closed work permit system, and the reforms needed to make it safer. Listen to *Permission to Exploit* on our website, Spotify, and wherever you get your podcasts: <https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/permission-to-exploit/>

With the Migrant Workers

Members of the FCJ Refugee Centre's Anti-Human Trafficking team attended the *Welcome Amigos: Spring BBQ* event in **Simcoe**, in honour of national mental health week. Agricultural temporary foreign workers in the Simcoe region came from farms nearby to attend the barbecue. The event was supported by community organisations such as TNO - The Neighbourhood Organization, the Huron Farmworkers Ministry, and the Canadian Mental Health Association.



The event held multiple mental health workshops which workers participated in for a chance to enter the raffle. The FCJ team got to hand out some raffle prizes to workers and also held an information table at the event, handing out resources regarding our programs.



Thank you to everyone who came to speak with us!

The Anti-Human Trafficking team recently participated also in an event in **London**, Ontario, organized by the Ministerio de Trabajadores Migrantes-Migrant Workers, of the Diocese of London. We gathered to share information about labour rights and protection against labour exploitation in Canada. It was a valuable experience of reflection, guidance, and support, where we reaffirmed the importance of being informed so we can protect ourselves and support others.

GET YOUR TICKET NOW AND COME CELEBRATE WITH US!

FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE 35TH ANNIVERSARY GALA DINNER

OCTOBER 15 2026, 6PM



SCAN FOR TICKET SALE & SPONSORSHIP OPTIONS



1991

We open our doors as a Refugee Centre, with a modest house that provide **two bedrooms** for uprooted women and their children.



1996

Our **Immigration and Protection** program for uprooted people starts.



1998

Responding to the increasing arrival of refugee claimants in need of housing, between 1998 and 2002 we obtain **3 houses** to shelter women and children.



2002

We start supporting women affected by human trafficking and, in 2014, we establish our **Anti-Human Trafficking** program, serving also migrant workers victims of abuse.



2012

We open our **Primary Health Clinic** for people without health card and in precarious situations. The **Youth Network**, a positive and inclusive space that welcomes migrant and refugee youth from around the world, is born.



2020

In response to the pandemic, we start our **Food Security** program.



2022

We launch the **Refugee Hub** program to support refugees with temporary accommodation.



2024

The Centre is being **renovated** and expands its service capacities. **New leadership** team.



2026

13,494 clients served through a range of services, including support with immigration process, referrals to related services, assistance for migrant workers, help for youth and children to access education, and many other.



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40 TITAN RD, ETOBICOKE



Youth Network: Warming Up for the World Cup!

FCJ Refugee Centre's Youth Network partnered with Sports Pay Foundation this year to set up several sports tournaments as a part of our Wednesday weekly sessions. Sports Pay Foundation is an organisation which works to eliminate financial barriers in grassroots and amateur sports, by funding "local teams and facilities, sponsoring young athletes, creating safe, inclusive environments, supplying essential equipment to get players started, coaching and instruction for those who need it most."

The first of our partnered events with Sports Pay was on April 22nd, a soccer tournament held in a local park. Sports Pay was generous enough to facilitate the session with two coaches, Alish and Will, as well as providing donations of new soccer balls, and frisbees. We all had a ball (no pun intended!). The game lasted almost two hours, and was a great chance to get outside, and get moving on one of the first properly sunny days of the year.



A lot of our youth network members had recently identified the need to host more Youth Network sessions which prioritised mental health, exercise, and community. The soccer event was a huge success and could not be done without the help of Sports Pay, who we extend our sincere gratitude to!

Later into the summer, the FCJ Refugee Centre Youth Network will also be hosting a ping pong tournament, and a yoga session for the Youth Network, with the support of Sports Pay Foundation.

The Youth Network also received donations for 6 Blue Jay's tickets from the Sports Pay Foundation, which have been awarded to members of the Youth Network who have been committed and engaged leaders of our weekly programming since 2026. For some, it was their first live sports event in Toronto, or their first baseball game. It was a great chance to experience something new!

Thank You for Your Donations for the Garage Sale!

On May 23rd, the Youth Network hosted their annual garage sale. Thanks to donations from the community members in the neighbourhood, we could make it possible. This garage sale is a crucial aspect of the Youth Network's funding, and allows their members to plan exciting excursions to build community (such as a yearly trip to Canada's Wonderland), funding to cook "family dinners" altogether once a month, and more outings, such as to parks, concerts or even Toronto Islands!



A Healing Space for Migrant Women: “You’re Not Alone”

For this past Mother’s Day, FCJ Refugee Centre hosted a Creative Wellness Workshop to create a safe, welcoming and healing space for migrant women. Participants called the experience relaxing and therapeutic. We focused on connection, and self-care while building meaningful friendships in our community.

Special thanks to Carolina Gajardo for her time, kindness and support throughout the event, and for creating a space for women to come together and share their journeys.

Carolina told us that she volunteers because she believes in “giving back to the community and supporting humanitarian services.” She feels that “FCJ Refugee Centre represents those values and provides meaningful support to migrants and newcomers.”

Luisa Moncada, Women’s and Transitional Housing Coordinator at FCJ Refugee Centre, and the event organizer, shared, as a migrant herself, that she understands “the challenges of starting over in a new country,” and hoped to remind participants that “they are not alone.”



Carolina Gajardo, during the workshop



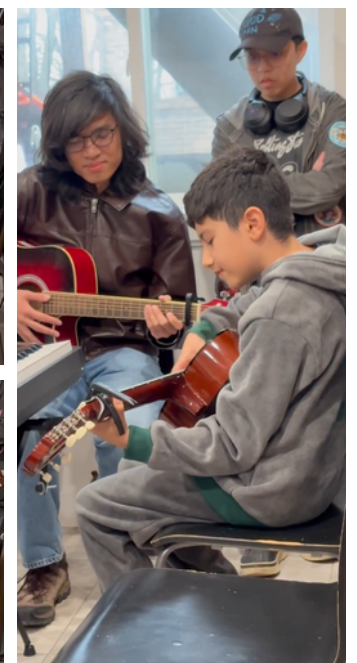


The second annual recital, a perfect ending to two more semesters of our music classes for children

To conclude another two great semesters of MusicBox Children's Charity Private and Group Lessons offered through the amazing talents of volunteer teachers from the Toronto Chapter, we had our second annual recital, that was well attended by students, their families and this cohort of teachers!

There were 6 performances on the keyboard and 2 on the guitar. The evening was filled with joy and celebration, where parents got to witness the hard work their kids have been putting in over the past many weeks.

We want to thank Centre Coordinators Chloe Lin and Yan Qing Lee, and Junior Executive Gray Dibben for their ongoing dedication to the program and students at FCJ Refugee Centre. A special shoutout to all our amazing teachers from this period: Vitta, Adrian, Ava, Natalie, Ale, Helen, Audrey, Eileen, Alethea, Emma, Yolanda, and Nathan. We also want to thank our volunteer Ayel Santos Vivares Martens for his commitment and support to the weekly Group Lessons.



TESTIMONIALS



I wanted to take a moment to sincerely acknowledge and thank Selvajayan Vijayarangan and Joshua Eisen for the incredible support they provided to one of my clients and to me throughout an extremely difficult journey.

As a Settlement Worker in Windsor, I have spent the past two years trying to help one of my clients access support she desperately needed. During that time, we faced countless barriers, dead ends, refusals, and moments where it truly felt like nothing would ever change for her situation. After so many attempts and so much time passing without results, both my client and I were beginning to lose hope.

After extensive searching, I came across your centre and reached out to Joshua. From the very beginning, he treated us with kindness, patience, and genuine care. He took the time to truly listen and understand what my client had been going through, and he connected us with Selvajayan.

Over the following weeks, Selvajayan worked with us with such compassion, professionalism, dedication, and persistence. He never made us feel like we were just another file or another case to process. He treated my client with dignity and humanity during a time when she felt exhausted, defeated, and forgotten by the system.

Because of their support and advocacy, my client was finally able to receive help that she had been denied for the past two years.

I cannot fully express how life-changing this has been for her. My client is in an extremely difficult situation, and what Selvajayan and Joshua gave her was more than just assistance — they gave her hope again. They reminded both of us that there are still people who genuinely care and who are willing to go above and beyond to help others.

As someone who works in this field myself, I know how heavy this work can be and how easy it can become to overlook the impact we have on people's lives. That is why I felt it was so important to write this feedback. The kindness, empathy, and dedication shown by Selvajayan and Joshua deserve to be recognized. Their work made a real difference in someone's life during one of her darkest moments.

Please extend my deepest gratitude to both of them.

I am incredibly thankful for everything they have done, and I truly appreciate the work your Centre continues to do for vulnerable individuals and families.

Yuliya Kapusta, Employment Caseworker | Youth Engagement and Employment Services
YMCA of Southwestern Ontario





As a placement staff member from Skills for Change, currently participating in the Child and Youth Program, my time at FCJ Refugee Centre has been an incredibly enriching experience.

I had the opportunity to learn about the many forms of advocacy that take place within the organization and witnessed firsthand the meaningful impact this work has on the lives of newcomers and refugees.

I also gained valuable knowledge in helping individuals with precarious immigration statuses navigate the process of obtaining study permits, as well as guiding them through various bridging programs to support their continued education in Ontario.

FCJ's commitment to empowering vulnerable communities has deepened my understanding of what it truly means to serve with purpose, and I am grateful to have been part of such a dedicated and mission-driven team."

Demoi Brown, Placement Student at FCJ Refugee Centre



I'm thrilled to share how grateful I am to the FCJ Refugee Centre for welcoming me into the team as a Refugee Housing Support Worker.

This opportunity holds deep personal meaning for me. As someone who arrived in Canada as a refugee just two years ago, being welcomed into this role is both a milestone in my own settlement journey and a powerful reminder of the support that helped me rebuild my life.

FCJ believed in my potential and offered me the chance to give back by supporting newcomers who are now navigating the same challenges I once faced.

Contributing to their housing and settlement journey is not only meaningful work — it is a privilege that strengthens my sense of belonging in Canadian society.

I am grateful for the trust, encouragement, and community I have found at FCJ. I look forward to growing with this remarkable team as I begin this new chapter.

Merci beaucoup. Cheers.

Mariam Kaweesa Nannyonga, Refugee and Housing Support Worker at FCJ Refugee Centre



UPCOMING EVENTS

TORONTO NEWCOMER DAY

Join us to celebrate and welcome newcomers

Nathan Phillips Square
Friday, May 29, 2026
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

- ✓ More than 100 information booths
- ✓ Cultural performances
- ✓ Children activities
- ✓ Food fair
- ✓ Marketplace
- ✓ City Hall tours
- ✓ Citizenship ceremony

@TONewcomer
#TONewcomerDay

Join us at Nathan Phillips Square in welcoming and celebrating newcomers!

Now in its 12th year, **Toronto Newcomer Day** provides a fun way for newcomers to learn how to get set up in their new city while enjoying festivities that showcase Toronto’s diversity.

- **When:** Friday, May 29, 2026, 10 am to 3 pm
- **Where:** Nathan Phillips Square, Toronto

All are welcome and admission is free.

Festivities include cultural performances, children’s activities, a food fair and marketplace, tours of City Hall, a citizenship ceremony and more than 100 information booths where newcomers can meet representatives from local organizations like us.

You are invited to our **Annual General Meeting.**

- **When:** Thursday, June 11, 2026, 6:00 pm
- **Where:** The Mary Ward Centre (70 St Mary St, Toronto)

Presentations by:

- **Dr. Agnes Thomas**, Executive Director of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto (CCAT): *Walking With People on the Move: Reflections on Welcome and Community*
- **Ms. Adriana Vargas Chavez**, FCJ Refugee Centre’s former client

The Annual General Meeting is open to the public, but only members can vote. Registration: <https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/events/annual-general-meeting-2026/>

FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE INVITES YOU TO OUR

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, June 11, 2026, 6:00 PM
The Mary Ward Centre: 70 St. Mary Street, Toronto

Presentations by:

Dr. Agnes Thomas
Executive Director of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto (CCAT)
Walking With People on the Move: Reflections on Welcome and Community

Ms. Adriana Vargas Chavez
FCJ Refugee Centre’s former client

To become a member please register and pay the membership fee (\$10.00) at [fcjrefugeecentre.org/donate](https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/donate) (Financial donations - Membership fee), or send a cheque payable to FCJ Refugee Centre: 208 Oakwood Ave., Toronto, ON M6E 2V4.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Let's get together and build community!

The FCJ Refugee Centre's annual **Diverse Residents, One Community Street Party** is coming up!

Join us for this family event, where you'll find activities for children, games, food, music, live performances, piñatas, and much more.

- **When:** Saturday, June 27, 2026, 10am to 4pm
- **Where:** Right outside of our office location, at 208 Oakwood Ave., Toronto

As the world comes together for the 2026 World Cup, we bring that energy off the pitch and to the table!

World in a Bowl is a communal, family-style dining experience that takes place on June 16th, 2026 at La Palette restaurant in Toronto. Bringing 30 guests together around one table, the evening celebrates connection, culture and storytelling. Inspired by the countries playing for the cup that day, Chef Diego and collaborators have created a menu that fuses the culinary traditions of Senegal and France.

Beyond the table, World in a Bowl is about impact. On the occasion of World Refugee Day (June 20), all proceeds from ticket sales will go to the FCJ Refugee Centre, funding sports activities and equipment for refugee and newcomer children and youth in Toronto.

For more information and to reserve your seat:
<https://www.zeffy.com/en-CA/ticketing/world-in-a-bowl>



UPCOMING EVENTS



Facilitated by community artist Carolina Gajardo, the **Rock Painting Workshop: Create, Connect and Heal** invites migrant women to come together in a safe and supportive space to explore art as a tool for healing, empowerment, creativity, and self-expression.

Through the simple and beautiful act of painting rocks, we will create meaningful pieces while making space for connection, reflection, and community. Art can transform ordinary objects into something unique, and remind us of our own resilience and strength.

No artistic experience is needed — just come as you are and allow yourself a moment to create.

- **When:** Thursday, June 4, 2026, 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM
- **Where:** FCJ Refugee Centre (208 Oakwood Avenue, Toronto)
- **Language:** English with simultaneous Spanish interpretation
- **Materials:** All painting materials will be provided (we would greatly appreciate it if participants could bring a few clean, washed rocks to paint - optional).
- **Experience:** No previous art experience needed — just come as you are!

Spaces are limited — register by emailing luisam@fcjrefugeecentre.org.



The primary goal of the **food security program** is to provide access to nutritious food to refugee claimants and families, and to people with precarious status, to alleviate one of the fundamental rights, and to support their settlement and integration into their new home.

Food distribution takes place every other Thursday, from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. More information and pick up days calendar: <https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/food-security-program/>



Family dinners, workshops, movie nights, art classes, advocacy work and outings, discussions about human rights and the challenges that migrant youth face... Join us every Wednesday for the **FCJ Youth Network gathering!** The group is open for migrant and refugee youth between the ages of 13 and 30.

Learn more: <https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/fcj-youth-network/>

Are You Waiting For Your Refugee Hearing?

Un programa gratuito para solicitantes de refugio

REFUGEE HEARING ORIENTATIONS

Every other Thursday, 12:00 PM to 2:30 PM

MAY 21 **JUN 4** **JUL 16** **AUG 6**

JUN 18 **JUL 2** **AUG 20** **SEP 3**

You will learn:

- What a virtual refugee hearing is
- How to be prepared
- What to expect, who participates

A great opportunity to meet the RPD officers who will explain what is going to happen during your refugee hearing and how to be ready.

FCJ Refugee Centre

Our Virtual Refugee Hearing Orientation sessions are designed to help you feel prepared, informed, and supported throughout your journey. These sessions provide refugee claimants with the knowledge they need to understand the hearing process. If you are waiting for your refugee hearing, we invite you to join the Refugee Hearing Orientation — a friendly and informative ONLINE session designed to help you understand the hearing process and feel more prepared. The session includes an overview of free resources as legal aid, employment support, social assistance, etc.

During the session, you will learn:

- What to expect before, during, and after the hearing
- How to prepare your supporting documents
- Your rights and responsibilities as a claimant
- Tips to reduce stress and feel more confident
- Where to find legal, settlement, and community support

Check the upcoming sessions calendar, choose the date that is more convenient for you and register online:

<https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/refugee-orientations-online/>

Refugee Hearing Preparation Toolkit

Prepared by the FCJ Refugee Centre, this toolkit is a comprehensive guide to the refugee hearing (before, during, and after), how to prepare, and what to expect. It also includes an extensive additional section with resources available to refugee claimants. Download it here:

<https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/toolkit-refugee-hearing-preparation-what-to-expect-and-how-to-prepare/>

FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE

REFUGEE HEARING PREPARATION


What to Expect at a Refugee Hearing and How to Prepare

- ✓ The Basis of Claim Form and your narrative letter
- ✓ How to answer questions
- ✓ Making changes to my claim
- ✓ Preparing evidence
- ✓ Who needs protection in Canada?
- ✓ What questions will be made at the hearing?
- ✓ What am I allowed to do at a hearing?
- ✓ Refugee claimants resources
- ✓ And much more

TOOLKIT



Connect with us:

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