



CCI OTTAWA

June 2017 Newsletter



You can support a Syrian refugee today, our work isn't finished

Here we are, 18 months after the first Syrian refugees arrived. And there is still a lot of work to do.

And we need your support to help us do that work.

Newcomers need help learning a language. They need jobs. They want their children to thrive. They want to feel connected and part of the community. They want a home and they want to feel safe.

That's the type of help you're providing when you make a donation to the Catholic Centre for Immigrants.

The transition to a new life in a strange country, learning a new language, and adapting to the culture and societal norms, takes time.

We need your help to ensure every newcomer to Ottawa feels at home.

Your donation will ensure every newcomer has the opportunity to succeed and give back to Canada. We know from experience they will.

When you give today, they will give back tomorrow.

Your support will help the thousands of refugees who arrive in Ottawa every year looking for a new start.

To make your donation, please call Dora at 613-232-9634, ext. 359.



Mohammed Ali and his family say they will never forget their first Canada Day celebration last year. See full story Page 3

Catholic Centre for Immigrants, helping newcomers for over 60 years

For 150 years, waves of people from around the world have travelled great distances to start new lives in Canada.

For some, it was an adventure. For others, it was an escape from poverty or war. But when they arrived, they all had one dream — a dream of a better future.

CCI Ottawa has been helping turn dreams into realities for more than 60 years. We help refugees find housing and jobs. We teach them about Canadian culture and our way of life. We provide them with the tools to contribute to their new country.

It all started when the

Archdiocese of Ottawa recognized the need to help immigrants desperate to start new lives.

In the late 1950s, we were there when waves of Hungarians fled to Canada to escape communist persecution. We were there in 1979-1980 when 4,000 Vietnamese Boat People made their way to Ottawa. We were here last year when Canada provided a safe haven to 25,000 Syrians. And we have been here in all the years in between when refugees and immigrants arrived in our city without fanfare.

Please help us help them by making a donation today!

Message from the Executive Director

We all go through life with core beliefs and philosophies.

I have several. One is to be kind whenever possible. It's a message from the Dali Lama, who says: "Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible."



Let me illustrate with a story on how kindness is reflected in our actions.

I recently met a young man from Syria. He came to this country in 2016 with his wife and three children. They came to Canada to escape the horrific civil war in Syria. For three years, they lived with thousands of other refugees in a tent city struggling to survive each day. We've all read the headlines of the atrocities that take place in that country.

There are many ways to help this family and many things they need. But it starts with being kind.

Being kind first means welcoming them into our community. And with kindness, we help this family settle in Ottawa and start a new life. We find them housing, connect them with employers, teach them a new language, and offer counselling to those who need it. We teach them Canadian values, our way of life. We show them how to navigate life — such as where to shop for groceries, open a bank account, find a family doctor, and connect with their neighbours.

We do all of this with kindness.

By being kind, we know from experience our community becomes stronger – not just today but tomorrow. This man's children are going to grow up and contribute to society. They will pay taxes and create jobs. They will volunteer. Like so many Canadians, they, too, will be kind and help others in need.

We've seen refugees in waves before. The Irish in the 1840s, the Hungarians in the 1950s and the Vietnamese Boat People in 1979. History has proven Canada became stronger when we opened our doors and were kind to those in need.

When you support us, you provide help to those who need it today. But your kindness today will also help Canada of the future. So please, be kind.

Carl Nicholson, Executive Director

Reception House: The first home for many refugees arriving in Ottawa

It can be a lonely and frightening experience to arrive in Canada. Newcomers are often fleeing violence, war and poverty. They need a welcoming hand.

Reception House is a welcoming hand that builds hope and trust in a safe and warm environment.

We are the first home away from home for many immigrants and refugees landing in Ottawa.

Many are dealing with issues we will never face in our lives. We consider it an honour to hear their beautiful, inspiring, but also heart-wrenching, stories. Together, we share many smiles and tears, but most of all, we share hope.

We work hard to let newcomers know they are welcome in our community.

We help them in a variety of practical ways. In addition to providing a home, we prepare three meals a day, offer orientation sessions on life in Canada, run programs for children, and help them access a variety of government and community services.

We introduce them to life in Canada, our laws and our values. We find them housing and start them on the path to becoming settled and self-sufficient in their new community.

Staffed around the clock, the 24 rooms at Reception House can accommodate 96 people, many of them women and children.

When you support Catholic Centre for Immigrants, you ensure newcomers get the welcome they deserve. You ensure they can build hope and trust as they start their new lives in Ottawa. When you give today, they will give back tomorrow.

CONTACT US

Phone: 613-232-9634

Fax: 613-232-3660

Email: cciottawa@cciottawa.ca

Facebook: @cciottawa

Web: cciottawa.ca

To donate, call Dora, 613-232-9634, ext. 359

You helped this family escape a war and start a new life

But more families from Syria still need your help today

Mohammed and his family lived in one of the world's oldest cities – Damascus, a city where the dialect of Jesus is still spoken today. The culture is rich and diverse. History abounds everywhere you look.

But then civil war broke out in Syria six years ago. The family had to flee everything they knew and loved. They ended up in a refugee camp in Jordan after walking through desert-like conditions for eight hours to get across the border. Their home for the next three years was a tent.

“I was very frightened for my family. The children kept crying,” remembers Mohammed.

“We were so desperate. We were very low and depressed. There were times when I wondered if there was a light at the end of the tunnel.”

He says it was very painful living in a camp. They arrived with nothing but the clothes on their backs. The weather was extreme with temperatures reaching 40 degrees in the summer and with snow on the ground during the winter.

Through it all, though, Mohammed kept thinking, “there must be a point to all of this suffering.”

He provided for his family as best he could. A painter, he taught other children how to create art and raised enough funds to build a small park in the tent city.

Finally, they were one of many families selected to go to Canada. The family of five landed in Ottawa after a 12-hour flight.

Mohammed, who worked as a nurse for 20 years, goes to school five days a week to learn English. Sarah, 14,



Hamza, 13, and Jawad, 9, are in their first full year of school and have made many friends.

Mohammed is giving back to his new community. He teaches children how to paint. He says it helps them express their emotions. Recently, his team of young painters held an exhibition at City Hall.

On Mother's Day, they volunteered at a seniors' home. He wants to teach the children how to be welcoming in the way Canadians welcomed them.

Mohammed says he can't thank the Catholic Centre for Immigrants enough for their hard work. Under the Matching Program, he was teamed up with a volunteer who has helped the family adjust to life in Canada.

“When the whole world turned its back on Syria, Canada opened its doors. We will always be grateful.”

Donate today and you will help more families find safety and hope in Ottawa.

Above: Mohammed and his youngest son, Jawad, attended the Dow Honda Volunteer Thank You Breakfast. From the left: Councillor Michael Qaqish, Dr. Alsharif, Mohammed, Jawad, and Charles, a volunteer who is helping the family adjust to life in Ottawa.

Below: A print by Mohammed depicting a Canadian girl hugging a Syrian girl at the airport.





Temur puts tech skills to work

What's the one thing Temur is looking forward to this summer? Canada Day!

Temur, his wife, and his three children (all under the age of five), experienced their first Canada Day last year, just two months after arriving in Ottawa from Uzbekistan. He says all of the events on Parliament Hill were family friendly and they can hardly wait for the 150th birthday celebrations to begin.

Temur brought his family to Canada because he wanted everyone to have a chance at a better life. One of the first things he had to do was find a job and a place to live. Finding a job was made easier thanks to the help of the Settlement Online Pre-Arrival Program (SOPA) at the Catholic Centre for Immigrants.

SOPA offers a variety of online courses and one-on-one counselling sessions that help newcomers find employment before or soon after they arrive in Canada.

Before coming to Canada, Temur signed up for the Job Search Strategies course. It helped him tailor his resume and cover letter for the Canadian job market.

He says the program gave him a better understanding of what a Canadian employer was looking for. He enjoyed taking the courses and says they were a key reason why he found a job so quickly after moving his family to the nation's capital.

Now, a little more than a year later, they are excited to celebrate Canada Day for a second time.

You can be a mentor and help people like Temur navigate the Ottawa job market. To find out more about volunteer opportunities, please visit cciottawa.ca.

Cleo on her way to becoming a family doctor

When Cleo was a little girl in Taiwan, she dreamed of being a doctor.

She studied hard and one day realized her dream. But when she moved to Canada with her husband, that dream almost died ... until she connected with the Catholic Centre for Immigrants.



Thanks to our Career Transitions Program, Cleo is getting a second chance to live her dream in Canada. In a few short weeks, she'll start a two-year residency in medicine.

Career Transitions works with people like Cleo who are health care professionals. Often, they arrive in Canada only to discover their credentials aren't accepted here.

Some, like Cleo, get a second chance while others are taught how to translate their skills to other positions in the health care sector. Some immigrants transition to research or find employment as a technician at a medical facility.

We help them find the job opportunities, ensure their resume matches what employers are looking for and teach them interview skills.

"I can't say enough good things about the help I got from the program," says Cleo. "The Canadian health care system is very accessible to everyone and I'm looking forward to being a doctor."

While waiting for her chance, Cleo embraced the Canadian winter. Soon after she moved here, she took skating and skiing lessons. "Taiwan is a tropical country and I had never seen snow before. I was quite excited," she says.

In two years, Cleo will also be able to call herself a Canadian doctor.

Cleo says she's eagerly looking forward to that special day. "Canadians are so friendly and so open-minded."

Meet two Ottawans who help newcomers

Here are two ways you can support Catholic Centre for Immigrants



Ria helps newcomers learn a language

Q: Why do you volunteer?

A: I volunteer because I recognize I've had a privileged life through the generosity of others. I was given up for adoption and life could've been different if it hadn't been for the generosity of spirit of those who adopted me. It makes me feel good and I believe it's my responsibility. It's one way to show my gratitude.

Q: What do you do?

A: I'm a facilitator for English Conversation Circles at Catholic Centre for Immigrants. For 30 years, I was a hospital chaplain, and I traveled the road with people from many different cultures. It's been a rich life.

Q: How has volunteering enriched your life?

A: Let me count the ways! I've volunteered all my life in all different kinds of agencies. My life has been enriched in countless ways — by people I've met, by skills I've learned, by the sense of making some difference, how ever small. I've always been involved in one way or another with marginalized people.

* * *

Volunteering provides so many rewards. To find out more, please visit cciottawa.ca. or call Velinka at 613-232-9634, ext. 327.



Meiz helps CCI do its work every month

Q. Why do you donate monthly to CCI?

A. For many reasons. I think CCI over the last 20 years has established itself as a home away from home for refugees and immigrants. They help many people from around the world. CCI needs my support to help make new Canadians comfortable. A lot of people who come to Canada are not familiar with the immigration process. They get the help they need thanks to CCI.

Q. Why is the plight of refugees and immigrants important to you?

A. Refugees and immigrants are the core of the growth of this country. Many Canadians do not realize it. Whether it's our social spending, our CPP (Canada Pension Plan), or taxes, these are the people who will help ensure Canada grows and prospers.

Q. How easy was it to become a monthly donor?

A. It was very easy to become a CCI monthly donor. It's very important, when we can, to make a contribution to an organization like CCI that helps so many people regardless of their religion.

* * *

To become a monthly donor, please call Dora at 613-232-9634, ext. 359 or visit cciottawa.ca.



Some of our programs and services

Settlement Services

Information services on topics such as housing, obtaining Canadian documents, finding employment, accessing medical services and so much more.

Counselling Services

We help immigrants cope with stress of every day living and those suffering from PTSD.

Client Support Services

Intensive case management to help immigrants cope with everyday living, such as finding a place to live, jobs, accessing services such as medical, social, banking, and transit.

The Pastoral Program

Connect people to their faith communities for support.

Community Connections

Connect newcomers with community members through group activities. Participants can practice a new language, learn about their community and connect with a variety of services.

Matching Program

Match individuals or families with newcomers for one-on-one interaction. Newcomers get help adapting to life in Canada.

Youth Program

Host a variety of activities and workshops, such as homework clubs and job search seminars, for youth ages 14 to 24. Youth get an opportunity to connect through community-based events.

Career Transitions

Connect employers with newcomers who are medically trained professionals.

Sponsorship

Organize, support and assist groups of Canadians to sponsor newcomer families.

Reception House

The first home-away-from-home for newcomers who are fleeing war, violence and poverty. Offer services in a warm and safe environment.

Settlement Online Pre-Arrival Program (SOPA)

Offer a variety of online courses for immigrants before or shortly after they arrive in Canada. Courses deal with life in Canada and the job market.

Ottawa Newcomer Clinic

In partnership with Somerset West Community Health Centre, we provide comprehensive and extensive health screening and unique services to immigrants and refugees.

Volunteers

We could not do the work we do without the support of volunteers and sponsors.

Last year, more than 1,300 people helped us deliver programs and services or sponsored a family and provided ongoing support for a minimum of one year.

Volunteers and sponsors help newcomers learn a new language, navigate the city, access services, discover our vibrant Canadian culture and more.

For more information, call Velinka at 613-232-9634, ext. 327.

Look at some of the things your donations help us accomplish



Welcoming immigrants and refugees

In 2016, we helped more than 6,500 immigrants and refugees settle and adapt to life in Ottawa.

The Syrian Wave

A brutal civil war forced thousands of Syrians to flee. We helped more than 1,500 settle in Ottawa.



Finding refugees a forever home

Last year, we helped 1,628 refugees and their families find a permanent home in Ottawa.

Providing skills to adapt and thrive

We held more than 35,000 learning and counselling sessions with newcomers.



Young people are your future

More than 350 youth participated in a variety of events and workshops. More than 100 youth from 11 countries are in our first summer soccer league.

Spiritual health is important

We helped 255 families and individuals connect with their faith communities in Ottawa.

Thank you

By supporting Catholic Centre for Immigrants, you are helping all newcomers realize their full potential

Imagine going on a trip — but not a vacation.

You're only allowed to bring the clothes on your back. When you arrive, you don't understand the language people are speaking. You don't even recognize a sign.

You don't have any money. Your children are exhausted and frightened. Imagine all those questions you have. Where will we live? Where will my children go to school? How do I find a family doctor? How will we support our family?

For thousands of refugees every year, that's what life is like when they first arrive in Ottawa. But your support allows us to start the settlement process for families who are escaping war, poverty and violence.

But the work is far from over. We need your help



more than ever to ensure every newcomer can integrate into Canadian society successfully.

When you give today, they will give back tomorrow.

MAKE A DONATION TODAY

A donation today helps us provide programs and services to ensure every newcomer realizes their full potential.

JOIN OUR FRIENDS OF CCI MONTHLY GIVING PROGRAM

A monthly donation provides us with predictability and reliable funding. It's easy to sign up. You decide how much you want to give each month.



Please make a gift today!

- Donate Now
- Donate Monthly Void cheque Credit Card
- \$25 \$35 \$50 \$75 \$100 Other _____



Please mail this portion with your donation. All gifts of more than \$10 are acknowledged with an official tax receipt for income tax purposes. **Please make cheque payable to:**

Catholic Centre for Immigrants Foundation
219 Argyle Ave.
Ottawa, ON K2P 2H4

**To make a donation by phone,
please call Dora at 613-232-9634, ext. 359**

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