



# CCI OTTAWA



**2017-18 ANNUAL REPORT**

# Our Vision

**Helping newcomers  
realize their full  
potential in society**

**Building a more  
welcoming community  
that values diversity**



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**Cover Photo: Reuben participates in the Youth Program Dragonboat event**



# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

This is my first report as President of the Board of the Catholic Centre for Immigrants. It is an honour to help deliver CCI's mandate.

Given the current conversation on immigration, I want to share my personal story.

I came to Canada as a government-assisted refugee. In 1979, as turmoil grew in Iran, my mother moved to India with two young boys. She hoped things would settle down in a few months and that we would be able to return. That did not happen and 11 years later we were fortunate to be accepted as refugees.

We arrived in Winnipeg in November of 1990. As you can imagine, it was a bit of a cultural and climate shift! The immigration centre in Winnipeg helped us overcome this shift – hosting us at a reception house for a few weeks. They helped us find a home, enroll in school and supported my mother's efforts to retrain and enter the workforce. Like it is for other immigrants, it took time to truly integrate in our community and to feel that this is our country. Was it easy? No! Is my story unique? No! Am I fortunate to be Canadian? Yes!

Here I am, 28 years later with two young children of my own and volunteering with CCI. Now that's full circle. I ask myself – how can I pay it forward and help new immigrants integrate in our community, achieve their dreams and succeed as citizens? How do I learn from our Canadian and global history and culture to continue to shape the future of Canada as a welcoming nation that utilizes diversity to continue its success?

I believe these questions are integral and to the heart of CCI's mission and have been for the last 64 years.

Under the strong leadership of Executive Director Carl Nicholson and the senior leadership team, CCI staff continues to deliver exceptional service to our clients and continues to garner confidence from the community, our peer organizations, and from local, provincial and federal funders.

Thank you, CCI staff! You are the true heroes whose hard work makes a real impact to our clients.

In an environment where differences are used to drive divisions for self-interest, our mandate has never been more relevant.



*Armin Nourozi*

# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By its definition, an annual report is a snapshot of the work we have done over the course of a year. That's what you'll find in this year's edition.

But there is an element to our work that is not so easy to measure. The work I'm referring to is building a more welcoming community.

We can only do this work with you. It's a two-way street. So how do we build a more welcoming community?

We engage with every day Canadians like yourself and introduce you to newcomers. Perhaps you are a volunteer who is helping a newcomer learn a language. Perhaps you are an employer who has provided a newcomer with her first Canadian work experience. Or maybe you are part of a church group that has sponsored and helped settle a refugee family.

All of the work you do with newcomers helps them settle and integrate into Canada and helps build a more welcoming community.

How do we know if we are having success? We know because you are sharing with us heartwarming stories about how newcomers and Canadians are coming together.

I have met with many of you and you have told me about how fulfilling it is to work with newcomers. You have talked about the deep friendships, the widened horizons and the pride in knowing more about people from around the world.

Canada has a proud history of helping those less fortunate. It has welcomed millions of immigrants to this country over the years. If our country is to continue thriving, we must not lose that momentum. More than ever, we need to continue to build a more welcoming community that celebrates diversity as its strength.

Building a more welcoming community is more than a slogan.

It's you, me and newcomers living and working together, forging deep bonds, creating long lasting friendships and appreciating our diversity. It's building a community in which we are all active, productive members.



*Carl Nicholson*



**447**

Government-Assisted-Refugees got help finding their new home in Ottawa



**4,500 Refugees**

and immigrants were provided with programs and services in our Settlement Department

**320**

Youth participated in workshops and activities



**1856**

Government-Assisted Refugees received support from Client Support Services counsellors

**153**

Foreign-trained medical professionals joined Career Transitions to find employment in Ottawa



**561**

Refugees made Reception House their first stop in Ottawa



**127**

Newcomers accessed counselling services as part of our mental health program



**600**



Seniors practised their English in our Seniors Circles

**286**

Newcomers were connected to their faith communities through our Pastoral Program

**30**



Newcomers were matched with members of the Ottawa community to help with daily life



**51**

Refugees call Ottawa home thanks to our Sponsorship Program

**650**

Newcomers participated in regular activities, field trips and workshops to ease transition



# SETTLEMENT

**Imagine moving your family to a new country with little notice and no belongings. You don't speak the language. Everything is strange. Everyday life is turned upside down. At the Catholic Centre for Immigrants, one of our missions is to help newcomers realize their full potential in Canadian society.**

## HOUSING

Reception House is often the first home for refugees when they arrive in Ottawa. We provide temporary



accommodation as well as meals, shared common areas and transportation, while we secure long-term

housing. We offer programs, workshops and children's activities to help newcomers adjust to life in Canada.

## LANGUAGE

Being able to speak English opens up a world of possibilities for newcomers. We have programs that allow them to practise their English.

## JOBS

A job not only provides for your family, but it offers a life of dignity. All newcomers want to give back when they arrive in Canada. We

help them with resume writing, networking, navigating job sites, learning a second language and more. We help health care professionals find work in their field or transition to a new career. We also offer online



training to people who are moving to Canada that teaches them about Canadian work culture and life.

## HEALTH

Whether it's counselling for newcomers traumatized by war and violence or helping them navigate the health care system, we work with everyone to ensure their new lives in Canada can be enjoyed in good health. The Newcomer Clinic is often the first experience newcomers have with our health care system. We look after their physical and mental health needs.

## EDUCATION

One of the keys to success in Canada is a proper education. We help newcomers enroll their children into school. We also help newcomer youth explore post-secondary education opportunities.





# INTEGRATION

**Integration is about helping people adjust to life in Canada and helping them become part of their new community. It's about helping children and young people make friends and discover their neighbourhood. It's about helping moms and dads with those daily activities we take for granted. It's about ensuring seniors don't become isolated in our city. It's about making everyone feel like they belong.**

## EVERYDAY LIFE

Shopping for groceries, driving on the right side of the road, opening a bank account, finding a school, taking public transit — these are things we take for granted.



But they can be challenging for newcomers. We have programs that help newcomers adapt to everyday life in Canada.

## MAKING CONNECTIONS

One of the best ways for newcomers to integrate into their community is to make connections with everyday Canadians. By introducing them to established



members of the community, we help newcomers avoid isolation, make friends, and over time, understand the nuances of Canadian life.

## GETTING OUT AND ABOUT

The perfect way to learn about a new community is to get out and explore it. We help newcomers explore Ottawa by offering them field trips and activities that



introduce them to the Canadian way of life as well as our history. They share that experience with other newcomers as well as members of the community.

## A STRONG SPIRIT

We believe it's important people have strong spiritual health. We help newcomers meet their spiritual needs by connecting them with the faith community of their choice. Their faith community is also another source of support and an opportunity to make friends with people who share the same values.



WELCOME TO CANADA!



# BUILDING A MORE WELCOMING COMMUNITY

**Building a more welcoming community involves everyone — not just the newcomers. We believe for newcomers to truly integrate, thrive, and feel at home, takes the support of the whole community. Here's what we do to help build a more welcoming community.**

## RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS

Every day volunteers help us deliver programs and services to newcomers in Ottawa. Volunteers give but also receive. When they work with newcomers, they learn about new cultures, meet new people, expand their horizons and realize they share similar values. All of this contributes to a more welcoming community.



## PARTNERSHIPS

By working with numerous organizations, together we are able to talk about the value newcomers bring to all of our organizations and communities. We explore ways of helping newcomers integrate into everyday Canadian life. This helps build a more welcoming community.

## RAISING AWARENESS

Last year, we introduced a new monthly e-newsletter that provides facts and figures about immigration. We made presentations to schools, service clubs, churches



and other organizations to talk about the value newcomers bring to their community and how they can welcome newcomers. This outreach helps us all build a more welcoming community.

## SET AN EXAMPLE

Often we are asked, how can I welcome a newcomer? Simple gestures will help build a more welcoming community. Here are a few to try. Introduce yourself to the newcomer families in your neighbourhood. Ask how their children are doing in school. Invite them to a barbecue or out for coffee. Ask them to join you the next time your family participates in a local activity. Be a friend and help them adjust to daily life in Canada.

These are simple, yet powerful gestures that will build a more welcoming community for all.

# DOUAA'S STORY



Douaa Amir escaped the brutal civil war in Syria and came to Canada in December 2016 as a refugee.

“I left Syria with my parents and three brothers because my brothers were going to be forced to join the army,” she remembers.

As soon as the Amir family found refuge in Lebanon, they realized Lebanon wasn’t a long-term option.

As a refugee, Douaa wasn’t allowed to go to school even though she had studied law in Syria. “All I wanted was to go to school. I always wanted to study law and help people.”

Douaa was 19 when she started working at a supermarket in Lebanon. “I walked in and told the manager that I needed a job. The manager asked me to bring my resume and when I brought it I was hired immediately.”

Life was still difficult. She constantly feared her brothers might be recruited into the army. She also still had dreams of going to university.

Douaa approached the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNCHR) about resettling to a safe country.

Douaa already spoke English which she learned from watching TV.

“I could not believe it. Just after two weeks of applying, the UNHCR called us for interviews. We had two

interviews with the UNHCR and the third interview was with a Canadian representative who had come to give us our medical exams. I was so happy!”

Canada offered to take Douaa because she wanted to study but “I could not leave my family.”

Resettlement happened quickly. The Amir family celebrated their first Christmas in Ottawa in 2016. But they found the Canadian winter harsh.

“Everything was white with snow. The temperatures were freezing and this was all a new experience. I was happy and sad at the same time. I was happy that my brothers were now safe but sad because I missed home and my friends back in Syria. I was also lonely.”

Restarting school in Ottawa was not easy. She was told she had to upgrade her English but a teacher at the Adult High School realized she knew the language well enough.

In September 2017, Douaa started at Algonquin College but after a year enrolled at Carleton to study political science. “I want to work at Parliament Hill or be a diplomat. This will help me make a difference in people’s lives, especially women who are not educated and need opportunities in life.”

# REUBEN'S STORY



It didn't take long for Reuben Nashali to get involved in his community. The young man from Kenya got involved with the CCI Youth Program on his second day in Ottawa.

It was 2017 when Reuben joined his mother and siblings who had arrived in Ottawa a year earlier.

Reuben says he didn't hesitate to join the youth program. As a young newcomer, he wanted help learning about his new city.

After participating in several youth activities and programs, Reuben was introduced to our Youth Leadership Team.

“As a youth leader, I learned that there are many refugee youth who are suffering and waiting for their chance to come to Canada. I was able to understand what other youth like me are experiencing and how I can help them.”

One of the activities Reuben got involved with was our bike day.

Bike day was organized by the Youth Leadership Team. Most young newcomers don't know how to ride a bike even though it can be a great and cheap way to get around the city.

“I'm happy that the bike day was a success. Some youth are living on social assistance and being out of school means they don't have transportation. Learning to ride a bicycle will come in handy to most

youth who can afford a second-hand bike,” says Reuben.

He says young newcomers need help from the community if they are going to adjust quickly to life in Canada.

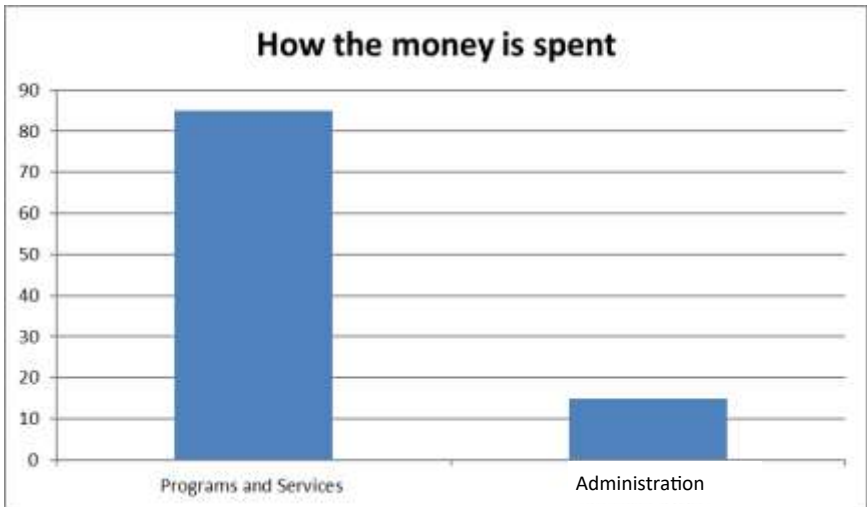
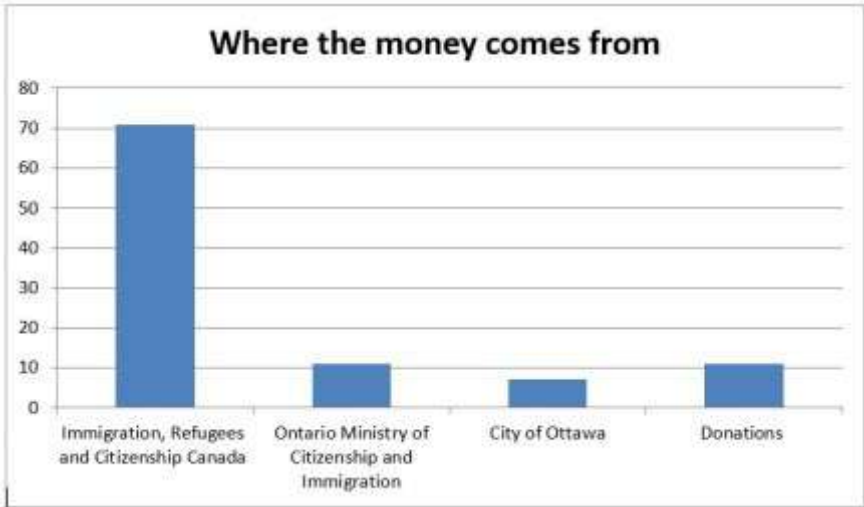
“Just like any other ordinary youth, they are confused about a lot of things. They are discovering their identity. They are trying to figure out what they want in life. Being in a new country makes these teenage years even more challenging for many young newcomers.”

Reuben also wants to shed light on the plight of other young people around the world. He shares a story that to this day motivates him to help other refugees. In Tanzania, the government passed a law that makes it illegal for refugees to live in Tanzania.

The government conducts random raids with authorities going door to door. If one doesn't have proper ID or doesn't speak like a Tanzanian, it can mean arrest and deportation.

Reuben has sworn to help as many refugees as he can because he experienced the challenges of living in a hostile country as well as the challenges of settling into a new community.

# OUR FINANCIALS



# HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED



## Volunteer

We rely on the contributions of generous and committed volunteers. You can help newcomers learn a language or how to navigate the city. You can introduce them to everyday services as well as learn more about Canadian culture and values. We offer a variety of meaningful volunteer opportunities.



## Donate

**One-time Gift:** Go to [ccciottawa.ca](http://ccciottawa.ca). All it takes is a few simple steps for you to make an impact in a refugee's life.

**Monthly Gift:** A monthly gift provides predictable and stable funding.

**Tribute:** Make a gift in honour or memory of a loved one.



## Sponsor

We are able to help groups who are committed to sponsoring a refugee family.

- Recruit and train sponsors
- Help submit documents
- Support sponsors as they prepare for their refugee families to arrive
- Ensure sponsored refugees are supported quickly



# Thank you for your support

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