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Message FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This year Romero House strengthened its foundations: improving the quality of our housing so that refugees feel safe and dignified, expanding our volunteer base to enhance the support we can offer, and improving collaboration with partner organisations. After two difficult COVID years, we saw the return of many of the community events that make Romero House what it is, with suppers, celebrations, and adventures in nature.

This year we also continued in our process of “Discovery and Discernment”. In 2021 we asked those in and around Romero House how we are doing and where we could grow. One of the things to emerge from this process was a renewed focus on our mission, vision, and values. We are excited to share these with you on the next page.

None of our work – housing, immigration and settlement support, advocacy, and accompaniment – would be possible without the dedication of our incredible team and volunteers and without the support of our neighbours, donors, and partners. We regularly read the prayer of Oscar Romero and remind ourselves that “We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.” Thank you for choosing to do something, and for doing it with us.



Sincerely

F. Allodi-Ross

FRANCESCA ALLODI-ROSS



WHO WE ARE

OUR VISION

Refugee claimants in our neighbourhoods are safe, thriving, and know that they belong.

OUR MISSION

The Romero House community welcomes refugee claimants with housing, immigration, and settlement support.

OUR VALUES

We live together as good neighbours, valuing care and mutuality.
We respect the dignity of all.
We trust one another.
We are present in joy and suffering.
We are inspired by the radical example of Oscar Romero.

OUR IMPACT

Providing TRANSITIONAL HOMES

APR 2022 ~ MAR 2023

4	-----	HOMES
10	-----	FULLY FURNISHED APARTMENTS FOR FAMILIES
17	-----	FAMILIES
64	-----	PEOPLE
30	-----	CHILDREN
12	-----	LIVE-IN STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Our **24/7 Wraparound Support** includes caring neighbours; help accessing legal services, medical care, school, banking, social assistance, employment services, and more; connection with volunteers for social support or education; support in preparing for their refugee hearing; and finding housing after Romero House.

“

I never made plans to leave my country; my only plan was to grow old there.

But God always has other plans. I am deeply grateful to my Romero House family, who took care of us and provided the love and support we needed to get started in our new country. Thank you very much for everything you do for those of us who arrive here aimlessly, without hope and with pain. You can't imagine the impact of that help and that love that you put into your work. Everyone at Romero House makes the change the world needs.

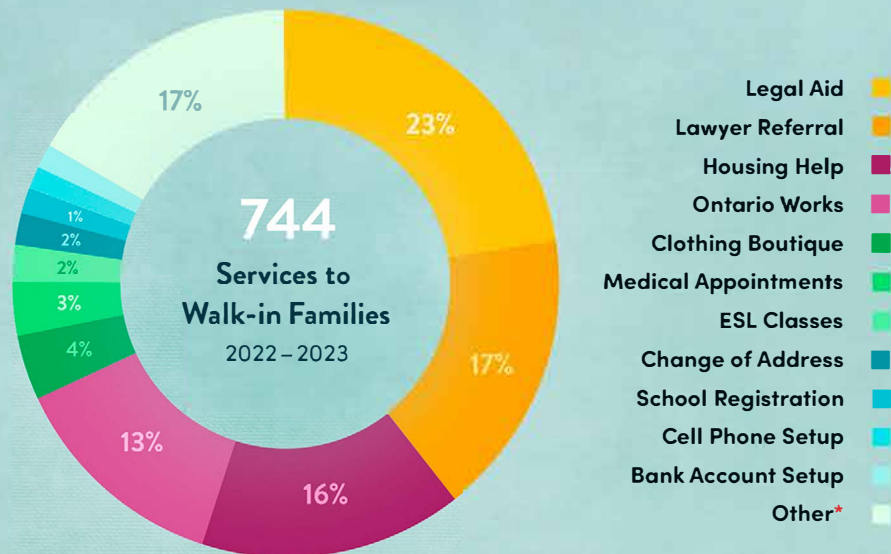
~ **Maria Jose + Family**



OUR IMPACT

Walk-in Program

In addition to our transitional housing program, we also support hundreds of refugee claimants who live outside Romero House. In addition to our immigration and settlement services, we helped meet the basic needs of those who showed up at our doors including food, clothing, diapers, and personal hygiene products. This year we supported 346 families consisting of 761 people.



Countries of Origin OF RESIDENTS AND WALK-INS



* Other includes application forms, initiating inland claims, orientations, permanent residence applications, work permits, travel documents, interpretation or translation.

OUR IMPACT

Emergency Shelter Program

Community Host Program

We continued to receive refugees at our doors with their suitcases and nowhere to sleep as the shelter system was often full. Friends and neighbours of Romero House graciously stepped up and became community hosts, kindly opening their homes to strangers in need. We cannot say thank you enough to our community hosts. For people fleeing violence and persecution, being welcomed with a warm bed, instead of sleeping outside, is no small gesture.

We are excited to announce that we will receive funding in 2023-24 from the Government of Canada through the Community Services Recovery Fund to evaluate our Community Host program and find ways to improve it and make it more sustainable.



KEY NUMBERS

People Housed: 60
Including 10 children

Host Homes: 19

Longest Stay: > 1 year

Shortest Stay: 1 night

Average Stay: 8 weeks

Emergency Hotel Program



Where community hosts were not available, a generous donation allowed us to put up families in hotels and motels temporarily.

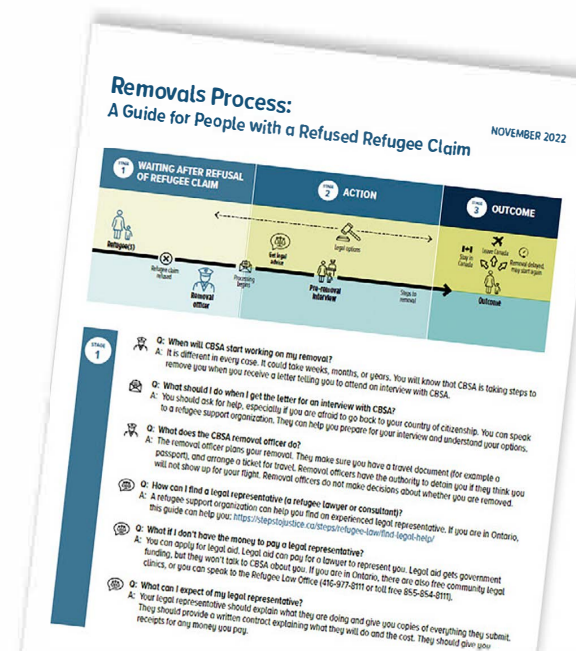
People Housed: 60
Including 14 children

EMERGENCY SHELTER PROGRAM COSTS

HOTELS	\$13,810
FOOD	\$7,882
TRANSPORTATION	\$4,402
PHONE CARDS	\$525
TRANSLATION	\$270
TOTAL	\$26,889

Advocacy

Romero House was proud to partner with York University researchers Kathryn Tomko Dennler and Brianna Garneau on a report on deportations, identifying problems in the process that can lead to unjust deportations. They also produced a [Know Your Rights guide](#) for people with a refused refugee claim to guide them through this difficult process.



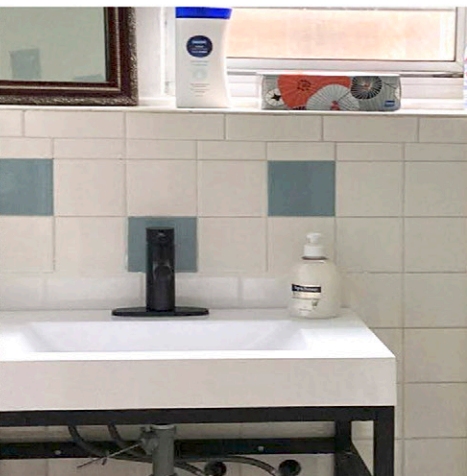


OUR IMPACT

Improved Housing

This year we worked hard to improve the quality of all of our housing to ensure families feel safe and dignified during a difficult time in their lives. This included making our maintenance manager a full-time position, improving our beds and mattresses, and renovating several washrooms.

We are grateful to the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI), which made possible the replacement of the roof at Keele House. We also want to recognize the support of the City of Toronto for their support in replacing our heating system at Wanda House.



OUR IMPACT

Building Community

Despite some ongoing COVID restrictions, we held events throughout the year that celebrate the community life that makes Romero House what it is.



We were welcomed wholeheartedly, accepted as we were and where we were at. We were offered a new and beautiful space, full of light and surrounded by beautiful people.

~ Former resident of Romero House ”

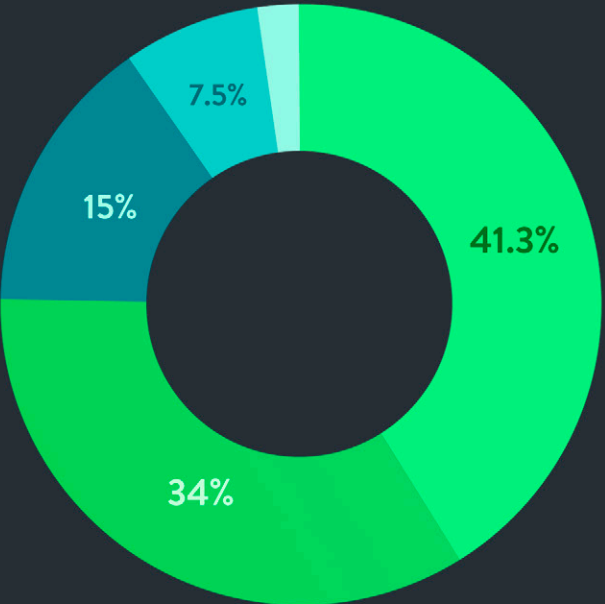


Clockwise from top left: celebrating holidays with Romero families, Halloween and Kids Club, the much loved Wanda Road Street Party in June, watching sunrise over Lake Ontario

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

April 1, 2022 ~ March 31, 2023

Revenue

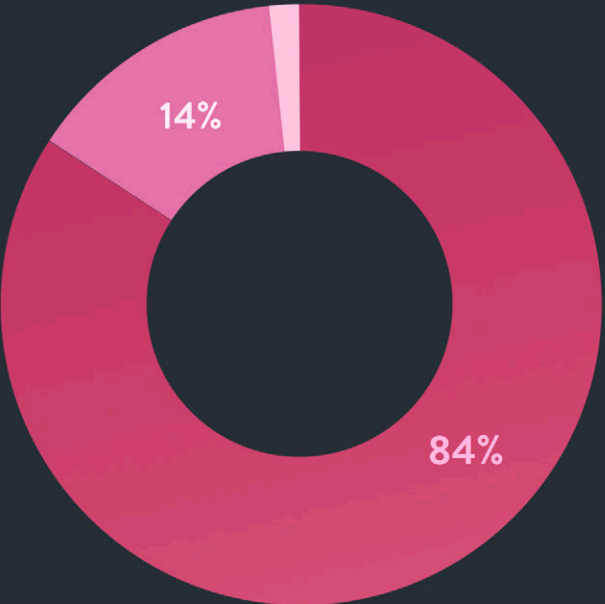


- City of Toronto Housing Subsidies + Grants
- Donations
- Grants
- Rental Income
- Other

\$ 852,427

Total Revenue

Expenses



- Charitable Programs
- Management + Admin
- Fundraising

\$ 835,328

Total Expenses

Official name: Toronto Refugee Community Non-Profit Homes and Services

Charitable registration no.: 134470939 RR 0001



CELEBRATING OUR TEAM

Thank you to our phenomenal team. Your unwavering commitment and hard work have made a profound impact on the lives of countless people seeking refuge in Canada. You have shown incredible cooperation, flexibility, and generosity.

Workers // Amelia Marfisi, Elaina Mohr, Laura Friesen, Marisol Larrea-Clark, Moses Simbeye, Paula Origua, Rafael Llamas, Sarah Buisman, Sayan Das, Suyeon Kang. Together they carried out countless programs including wraparound support for residents, house coordination, communications, food security, immigration and settlement services for walk-ins, emergency housing including our Community Host program, volunteer coordination, and community programming including kids activities.



Staff // Ann Khatter (Finance), Jenn Stephenson (Housing and Operations), Robelin Severino (Maintenance), Robbie Arzumanov (Community Services)

Founder // Mary Jo Leddy

Additional Support // Berleine Marin (IT), Kathy Adamo (Fundraising)

Students // Candy Geraldino, Giuliana Bertoia-Agredo, Jessica Haberman-Contreras, Joyce Gerges, Julio Valencia, Justin Parmar, Nahida Ahmadi

Board of Directors // Amensisa Neway, Anil Varughese, Jack Costello, Kathy Butkovich, Lori Neale, Martha Asselin, Sara Guerrero, Shahid Akhtar

CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS

A *Heartfelt* thank you to our incredible volunteers who have been instrumental in Romero House's work. Whether hosting a refugee family in your home, tutoring, answering the phones, or working in the garden, you are making a difference.



Adam Olkovich, Alexandra Ayala
Alice Craft, Amensisa Neway, Amy Baker, Amyris Rada
Angela Martinez, Anna Luengo, Anneli LeGault, Antara Baviskar
Aziza Maten, Bethel Tekie, Brianna Garneau, Brother Luke, Candy Geraldino
Carla Alegria, Carol Toller, Charlotte Sullivan, Cortleigh Teolis, Daniela Mallarino
David Myhre, David Walsh, Deena Altman, Dianne Dias Elizabeth Topp, Emily Reed
Erin O'Dacre, Erno Pongo, Evander Pereira, Fiona McHugh, Frances Cowan, Fancy Alexandra
Ayala Jimenez, Fausta Capogna, Frédéric Aubin, Freya Wainstein, Gabriela Garcia Calderon Orbe,
Gerlyn Henry, Giuliana Bertoia-Agredo, Gloria Nafziger, Guadalupe Escorcía Ordonez, Harold Wright
Hendrika Haasen, Hiba Essaadi, Hoi Wong, Huda Khoury, Ian Snider, Ildiko Franyo, Janice Gouse-Sheese
Jaslyn Prihar, Jatin Sehgal, Jazmin Rymberg, Jessica Haberman-Contraras, Jessy Rajan, Jessy Rizk
Jim Gough, Joan MacNeil, Joanne Bacon, Joaquin Cortezano, Jordan Meadows, Joseph Moore
Judith Forrestal, Judith Kidd, Julie Coleman, Julio Valencia Kaila Simoneau, Karla Galarza, Kathy Butkovich
Kathy McCabe, Kathy Simo, Katie Entigar, Katrina Hall, Krista Liacas, Leonardo Franco Escorcía
Leslie Dolman, Levon Karakoyun, Linda Ward, Lori Neale, Marcia Martin, Maria Paula Cortes
Montealegre, Mark Shouldice, Mariajose Serrano Serrano, Narian Raphaelle Concepcion, Marium Yousuf
Martha Asselin, Martin Boyd, Mary-Anne Watson-Bonsall, Masooma Ahmadi, Maureen Price
Megan Davies, Michelle Scott, Misrak Mengesha, Moksh Chaddha, Myriam Jarsky, Naman Thami
Nahida Ahmadi, Nancy Boake, Natasha Freidus, Nick Dreher, Nicolas Jaramillo Martinez, Nicole Jimenez
Nimerta Dhami, Osama Hasan, Pamela Munt-Madill, Paola Gomez, Paola Rosado Ferrari
Parisa Azari, Patricia Hayward, Patricia Estrada, Patricia Durand, Paula Kawakami
Piedad Garcia, Rhian Williams, Rodolfo Ovalle Rodriguez, Ruth MacLeod, Salvador Cusimano
Samantha Powell, Sandra Ramirez, Sandy Costa, Santiago Ovalle, Sara-Jane Whitaker
Sasha Gil Ospino, Sebastian Tansil, Shahid Akhtar, Shams Erfan, Sheila Blainey
Sheila Wainwright, Sini Maury, Smadar Peretz, Sofia Samper
Stephanie Barraco, Susannah Dainow Sveta (Alana) Kotseruba
Sybille Stahl, Tania Prendergast, Tania Riverol Diaz
Tara Mariee, Tara McCallum

Tasha Freidus, Tasleem Riaz, Thomas Rubino, Umu Nabie,
Uziel Zayas Velazquez, Rt. Rev. Victoria Matthews
Vanessa van den Boogaard, William Brereton, Yue Zhou
Yusur Al-Salman, Zainab Warah, Winifred Hunsburger

THANK YOU

CELEBRATING OUR DONORS

Thank You Donors!



254

Individual
Donors *



28

Grants and Donations
from Foundations,
Charities and
Nonprofits



9

Corporate
Donors



Thank you to everyone who donated furniture,
housewares, clothing, electronics, bikes, and more.
These items are a huge help to refugees
who are building a new life.

* Does not include anonymous donors or peer-to-peer donors
who donated through the Marathon fundraiser

A BIG THANKS TO OUR ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS

Thank you to the City of Toronto for their ongoing support of our transitional housing.



Lbs of food distributed : 25,570
Value of food distributed : \$88,472.20
Greenhouse gases diverted : 81,639 kg

Offered arts programming for kids for residents.



Provided free diapers for residents and walk-ins.

Provided menstrual products for residents and walk-ins.



WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR

Holiday Helpers and **West End Book Club** for providing winter holiday gifts to families.

The Parkdale Toiletry Project and **Fern Avenue Public School** for creating toiletry kits we could give away to those in need.

Rosedale Day School for collecting diapers, wipes and gift cards for our Walk-in Program.

StoneSoup Network for connecting us with local businesses eager to support refugees.

Sanctuary North and **Silver Haven**, retreat centres that allowed residents to enjoy time outside the city and in nature.

The **University Women's Club of Toronto** for all of your support.

TROOP for making it possible for all of the children at Romero House to receive back-to-school supplies.

Octopus Garden Holistic Yoga Centre and **Right2Yoga** for your yoga programs for vulnerable refugees and immigrants.

WE APPRECIATE OUR BUSINESS SUPPORTERS



Thank you Cobs Bread for providing fresh bread for dozens of people every week.



Thank you Staples Store 86 (Stockyards) for supporting our purchase of laptops for each new family through the Staples-Kiwanis partnership, as well as supporting our printing needs.



Thank you Koskie Minsky for your financial support.

Looking FORWARD

This year we are looking forward to experimenting with some of the ideas that emerged from our Discovery and Discernment process, a period of consultation with the many refugees and supporters who make up Romero House. For example, we look forward to piloting the **House Co-ordinator program**. We will invite one person to live and volunteer at Romero House who works or studies outside of our community. Their role would be to animate the community life of a home, support residents, and support Romero House to keep our homes clean and safe. Our hope is that this will enable supporters to live at Romero House for longer, building rich networks of relationships between current residents, former residents, and the wider Romero community.

We are also proud to be able to offer Workers compensation above the **Living Wage** this coming year (taking into consideration that housing is provided as part of the program). We believe this will make the program more accessible and sustainable. This brings their compensation in line with the staff of Romero House, whose salaries are above Ontario's Living Wage.

We unfortunately ended this past year with news of the greatest blow to refugee rights in Canada in 20 years: the expansion of the **Safe Third Country Agreement** between Canada and the US. The announcement came on the anniversary of the assassination of Oscar Romero and we continue to ask ourselves how he would respond in this moment. Despite this policy, the number of claims has barely decreased so far. We will continue to greet those arriving at our doorstep each day with a smile while advocating on a political level for fairness and compassion for refugees. Our neighbours deserve no less.



Clockwise from top left:
top two photos: the Wanda Road
Street Party; celebrating after the
Waterfront Marathon; the Worker
Appreciation party.

ROMERO



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