

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Catholic Charities



BRINGING HOPE AND HEALING TO THE MOST VULNERABLE

Compassion and Mercy

THE Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Vancouver exist to bring hope and healing to the most marginalized in our society.

The Men's Shelter offers healing to men undergoing and recovering from medical procedures who would otherwise be on the streets. The Door is Open continues to have a steady and dedicated team of volunteers to help with serving breakfast and lunch to those on the Downtown East Side.

The Refugee Support Program welcomes refugees to Canada, uniting families, and helping them to thrive in their new communities.

Your support and generosity allow us to extend a hand of compassion and mercy to those most in need. You have helped these ministries to offer healing, both physically and mentally, and to become a place of faith and hope for those who are suffering.

This year's Annual Report contains various highlights from these ministries. None of what they do would be possible without your sustaining support and we are truly grateful for your generosity.



James Borkowski
Archbishop's Delegate for Operations

Our Mission for Catholic Charities

THE DOOR IS OPEN

Our mission is to lessen the social alienation of the poor, the homeless, and the single room tenants of Vancouver by funneling the community resources available to us.

MEN'S SHELTER

The Men's Shelter provides shelter, food and supportive services for men struggling with homelessness. Our team models the caring and compassionate spirit of Jesus.

REFUGEE SUPPORT

We care for and love those fleeing persecution and violence in their home countries.

IN PHOTOS

From top: Alex Legere and Thiago Camargo with a guest at the Men's Shelter. Sister Gerlette Cabahug and a volunteer at the Door is Open





IN PHOTO

Thiago Camargo and Alexandre Legere at the third floor recovery unit of the Men's Shelter.

MEN'S SHELTER

Your impact:



29,758
second floor
overnight stays



62,268
meals served

1,081
new guests



5,131
third floor
overnight stays

301
haircuts

Hope on the third floor

WHEN Thiago Camargo arrived in Vancouver, he was stunned by the struggles of the poor and marginalized in downtown Vancouver. He wanted to make a difference, but wasn't sure how. Four years later, he says, "God opened the door." In April 2021, Thiago joined the Men's Shelter as the Medical Case Manager of the Medical Respite Program (MRP) on the shelter's third floor.

Operating in partnership with Providence Health Care, the MRP meets a need which particularly afflicts homeless populations. After being discharged from hospital, many underprivileged individuals do not have the time or space to fully recover, increasing the likelihood of further injury. By providing an environment for recuperation, the MRP offers patients the opportunity to break the cycle and envision a new life. Thiago sees the mission of the third floor as one of accompanying and healing the whole man. "Our first calling," he says, "is to invite people back to the mercy of the Father." Many clients, he says, have lost the ability to communicate their needs entirely because they are so used to being ignored. What they need is someone to see them and to listen to them. Most of all, he says, "We need to offer them Jesus to fill an emptiness which only He can fill."

Encouraged by the impact of the program, Thiago hopes that Vancouver's Catholic community will continue to think creatively to meet the needs of those who are suffering: "We should dig deep. If we don't do anything as a community, it's never going to happen."



MEN'S SHELTER

Stories of Hope on the third floor

IN PHOTO

Guests and staff at
the Men's Shelter.

K.G. came to the third floor after suffering a serious lower-body injury in a workplace accident. He arrived at the shelter in a wheelchair and in a lot of pain. Thiago Camargo at the Shelter noted that: “His leg was kind of swollen. It was clear that something was wrong.” Three weeks after his arrival, with the shelter’s assistance K.G. was assessed again. X-rays revealed nothing, but Thiago and his team kept pressing the case. Finally, a radiologist phoned back: tests revealed a fractured hip that had gone undetected. “Imagine,” says Thiago, “if he had gone back onto the streets with a broken hip.” K.G. went into surgery the very next day, and spent four more months in recovery on the third floor. While he recuperated, Thiago and his team helped find housing and assistance for past substance abuse. Thiago says, “I know that in the time he was here, he could see that there was a way for him out of the drugs. He felt the love of somebody caring for him - someone who looks at him and listens to his pains. He was happy.”

J.S. came to the shelter with leg wounds that had not healed properly and had become infected. By the time he arrived on the third floor, the infection had spread to his kidneys, shutting one down entirely. Under the care of the shelter, he began dialysis treatment and stayed for six months. Against the odds, his kidneys were saved. With the help of a peer accountability partner, J.S. overcame addiction, got his old job back, and started a new relationship. “He left joyful and very thankful,” says Thiago, “because the support we provided was essential not only to save his kidney, but to give him back his life.”



IN PHOTO

Volunteers from St. Andrew Kim
Parish making sandwiches.

THE DOOR IS OPEN

In 2021, you provided:



115,000
meals

327
breakfast services

21,000
snack servings

300
lunch services

68
ministry services

300
snack services

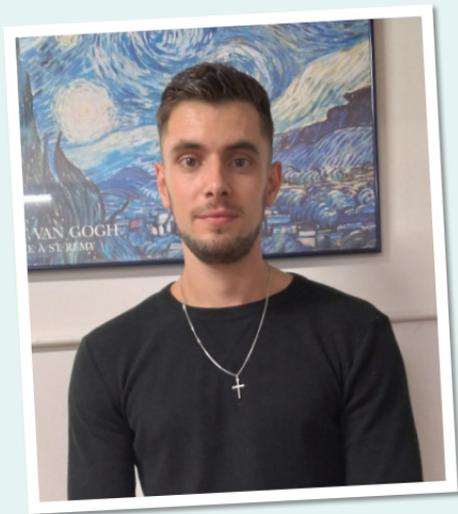


The Door is Open Volunteer Story: Evelyn

EVELYN is a caseworker who has worked with people with disabilities for over thirty years. Since 2018, Evelyn has been coming in twice a week to serve sandwiches and to clean up the kitchen after the cooking is done. She learned about the Door is Open after meeting one of the Carmelite Sisters while on a Marian pilgrimage.

Evelyn found that volunteering at the DIO helped to relieve her stress from the challenges of her work as a caseworker, but as she served, she found further sources of connection. For one, the sense of community: “We work together and we all understand each other to better serve the people we are helping,” she says.

Evelyn also sees her volunteering at the DIO as a way to continue her family’s tradition of helping within the church, as her mother was a major organizer in their parish. “I can see a lot of people we need to help. This volunteering role is the biggest way that I can help,” she says.



The Door is Open Volunteer Story: Florian

FLORIAN started volunteering at the Door is Open two years ago after entering the RCIA program. He serves every weekend with meal prep, service, and clean-up. Florian's love of service originated while living in France, where he helped bring meals to homeless people, and he was excited to be part of something similar when he arrived in Vancouver.

Along with his love for serving the marginalized members of our community, Florian also loves the camaraderie of the staff and volunteers who run the meal programs. Florian says, "Coming to the DIO has helped me feel part of this community and I'm happy to serve in the name of the Church. It helped me to be closer to the reality of people's lives and to understand the Scripture about helping and loving each other. The DTES neighbourhood may be hard but being here helps us learn the faith in a fast way."



The Door is Open Guest Story: Bradley

BRADLEY has been a familiar presence at the Door Is Open for the last fifteen years. He remembers coming to the DIO in its former location next door - back when the Franciscan Sisters ran the bread garden.

Today, a visit to the DIO for a morning coffee and lunch is part of his daily routine. “If I don’t come here I feel off,” Bradley says. Unable to work due to disability, Bradley appreciates how the DIO’s staff and volunteers have helped him over the years with meals, clothing, and toiletries. “I am not fussy,” he says, “But everything here is A1. You have everything I need.”

There are also times that Bradley will pass on essential care items to others, because he sees many people in the neighbourhood who also need help. “I like to pay it forward and give to someone else.”



REFUGEE SUPPORT MINISTRY



30
applications



69
persons



13
parishes



4 countries of origin
(Eritrea, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria)

10 countries of asylum
(Ethiopia, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, Uganda)

THE Refugee Support Program is a humanitarian service that assists persons fleeing from persecution and violence in their home countries. It aims to minister to marginalized families as they resettle in a new country with a culture that is different from theirs.

Assisting refugee settlement in our country has always been a part of the Archdiocese's charitable work. Since 2007, when we began keeping detailed statistics, 41 parishes have welcomed more than 1,800 refugees. Refugee families arrived from a vast number of locations including Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Burma and Tibet. Past generations have welcomed more than 30,000 refugees from many countries including Vietnam and Poland.

Read on to learn more about the program's work in recent years.



FOR OVER TWO DECADES St. Francis de Sales parishioner Ed Gaines has had a front row seat to the sponsorship process. From filling out forms, to various advocacy meetings, to picking up new refugee families, he's seen it all.

Ed first got involved in the 1990s when he was approached to co-sponsor refugees fleeing the Bosnian crisis. An intense new chapter began in 2013 when multiple crises in Syria and North Africa initiated a massive movement of refugees. The St. Francis team stepped up and took on dozens of cases from Eritrea between 2013 and 2018.

Ed's primary task as a co-sponsor was to prepare for families to arrive, which required hours of careful work. "At its height, we had around twenty to twenty-five applications in process at any given time."

And, he says, there is no feeling like finding out a claim was accepted or making a late-night dash to the airport to welcome a new arrival. Ed has also been grateful to develop friendships with some of his refugee families and see how their lives have flourished. "It's a part of my life I regard as a real privilege . . . to help somebody who doesn't have a home is a very noble and worthy activity. I don't know why anybody wouldn't do it."

IN PHOTO

Ed Gaines welcoming newcomers at YVR International Airport.



Refugee Support: God's Unending Grace

ONE ERITREAN FAMILY'S JOURNEY began in 2012, when a husband and father of four escaped to Sudan after ten years of forced military service. He made his way to Uganda, where he began an application for sponsorship in 2014. He arrived in Canada in the fall of 2016 and began earnestly working to bring his family over.

“All those years,” he writes, “I desperately prayed to the Lord for protection and guidance for me and my family.” His prayers were answered: His wife and two younger sons, both under the age of 5, were allowed to move to Sudan in 2017, and arrived in Canada in 2018. But there was also heartbreak: his two older children, ages 8 and 10, were required by law to stay in their homeland. The father redoubled his efforts, praying constantly while looking to secure a way out for them.

“By the grace of God,” he says, “the border to Ethiopia opened in July 2018.” His kids were able to cross over and enter a refugee camp, but they had no one to take care of them. They were finally reunited and arrived in Canada in December 2018.

Looking back, he writes, “Finally, we are united as a family, and we are doing good. My children are studying, I am working, and we are able to live peacefully. I thank God and I thank those who helped give my family a safe and bright future.”

Refugee Support: You Are Not Alone

A PAKISTANI COUPLE resettled through the Support Program had a long and harrowing journey to Canada. Their ordeal began when the wife was falsely accused of teaching Christianity to the children at a daycare she operated. After receiving violent threats, she and her husband escaped to Thailand. Unable to work, they survived on the donations of friends while seeking asylum through the UN High Commission for Refugees. They also welcomed the birth of their first child.

Their options began to run out. When their visas expired, the husband was arrested and imprisoned as an illegal immigrant. His wife could not visit him for fear of being caught herself. She prayed and fasted for a breakthrough. Then came grim news: their case had been rejected by the UN.

But they did not give up. “One day,” she writes, “I felt strength and a voice saying ‘You are not alone my child.’ From that day my life changed.” Eventually, their sponsorship application to Canada was successful. After two and a half years of separation, the family was reunited at the airport and flown immediately to Canada.

“We always thank God for our new life and freedom. We thank the Archdiocese of Vancouver and our sponsoring parish for making this possible for us. We now live our Christian faith without fear.”



15286 12a Ave
SURREY B.C.
V3R 0B3
CLIMAD AMAGI
+1 604 500 7744

DM Airlines

CHECK-IN
CHECK-OUT



For over 60 years, you have made it possible to serve
our vulnerable brothers and sisters in Vancouver.

Thank you for your generosity.

THE DOOR IS OPEN

255 Dunlevy Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6A 3A5

604.669.0498

thedoorisopen@rcav.org
thedoorisopen.ca

MEN'S SHELTER

1056 Comox Street
Vancouver, BC

604.443.3292

menshostel@rcav.org

DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

4885 Saint John Paul II Way
Vancouver, BC V5Z 0G3

604.683.0281

development@rcav.org
support.rcav.org



Archdiocese of Vancouver
DEVELOPMENT OFFICE