

2020

ANNUAL REPORT



**Welcome, safety,
and support for refugees.**



LEADERSHIP REPORT

It was a Wednesday in March 2020 when we realized that everything we do at Christie had to change, because a new unknown danger was stalking us: COVID-19. We had a special challenge because people live with us: mothers, children, families. We had to adapt quickly. In the space of a few days we changed our Food Service so that residents ate in their rooms; we started disinfecting high-touch surfaces more often; we moved all of our Children's Programming to be online; and we learned how to serve our clients while moving to an onsite/offsite staff rotation.

Our families were facing their own challenges. As school shifted online, we provided tablets so that children could continue their education. Former residents who now live all over the GTA found themselves more socially isolated, so we began monthly wellness checks. We had to close our weekly Food Bank for safety reasons, so we started sending Grocery Gift Cards to clients in need.

In the Fall we started to plan for a post-pandemic reality, and renovated our Dining Room to expand it and create a multi-purpose space. We started planning to launch two new major initiatives in 2021: the Centre for Refugee Children, and a new Employment Program.

"Exactly one year ago, we arrived to Christie and our lives changed. You gave us not only a place to live but a home. You taught us that in the middle of the storm we always can find peace, faith and people who can offer us not only a service but a hope and future...you gave us a new life." - former Christie client

There's something about the culture of CRWC that allows it to be more than just a professionally-run emergency shelter. Our staff go the extra mile to serve clients, trying to tailor-make solutions that work with the distinctive needs of each family. We don't have to do that: we want to do that. It's been a part of our founding culture since we were started by World Vision. And it continues through to today, as we live in the ancient Christian tradition of 'Welcoming the Stranger' and offering support to those in need. At the heart of Christie isn't a set of programs or a building . . . at our heart is a special culture of service.

- CLEAN HANDS, CLEAR HEADS, OPEN HEARTS -

We know that our organizational culture is one of our greatest strengths. It became a key resource that we used to not just survive the COVID-19 pandemic, but to continue providing exceptional service throughout it. We established a specialized approach to the crisis we encapsulated within the phrase above (loosely based on the show Friday Night Lights).

CLEAN HANDS meant that we would review all of our protocols to ensure that they minimized risks resulting from the new virus and kept everyone as safe and healthy as we could.

CLEAR HEADS meant that we would get and share information from credible, evidence-based sources.

OPEN HEARTS meant that we would not shy away from serving because of our own fear – instead, we would lean into serving, knowing that our own sense of vulnerability (which was new to us) was the exact sense of vulnerability that displaced persons have felt for years.



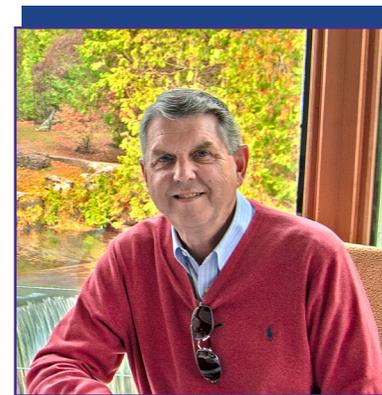
A year into the pandemic, we can look around and take pride knowing that we did it! And that our extended community of donors and supporters took on this challenge with the same culture of service and did it with us! We are so grateful for your support.

Sam Chaise, Executive Director

Bruce Cameron, Chair of the Board



Sam Chaise, Executive Director



Bruce Cameron, Board Chair

SHELTER PROGRAM



88
clients



66%
female



43%
children



18
single mother
households



154 days
in shelter



16
source countries

TOP FIVE SOURCE COUNTRIES



Nigeria **26%**



Egypt **11%**



Mexico **10%**



Ethiopia **10%**



Czech
Republic **6%**

POST SHELTER SUPPORT



390
clients



6,559
consultations



13
workshops



105
workshop participants

PROGRAMMING & SERVICES



Literacy

- 53 classes provided
- 30 children in the program



Fitness

- 22 classes provided
- 30 children in program



Music

- 52 classes provided
- 30 children in program



Housing

- 45 families assisted in securing and moving into permanent housing
- 1 year of ongoing consultation provided to each client
- 4 dedicated staff



Women's Wellness Program

- 14 workshops
- 55 women

2020 HIG



Coronavirus: Meeting New Needs

Thanks to the hard work of our staff and generosity of our community, we were able to secure the necessary protective equipment to safely remain open and continue serving refugee families throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Gifts from the Community

As celebrations took a different form this year, the outpouring of community support, alongside a visit from Santa (also known as Dr Jim in our onsite medical clinic), helped maintain the holiday cheer.



Navigating New Systems

The success of our 'Tablets for Kids' fundraiser helped us provide our families with tablets so their children could shift to online education. They also allowed parents to meet online with our staff, connect with family in their country of origin and touch base with their immigration lawyers



HIGHLIGHTS



Dining Room Renovations

We were delighted to give our MPP, Jessica Bell, a tour of the construction as our basement dining room was transformed into a new multipurpose space where our staff and clients can come together.

Community Garden

A community project from start to finish! Made possible by grants from TD Canada Trust and Palmerston Public School, with garden boxes built by a generous family, and with our clients helping to plant and upkeep, we launched a beautiful community garden.



Ride for Refuge Fundraiser

Despite the added challenges this year brought, spirits and enthusiasm remained high for RIDE 2020. We raised an outstanding total of \$110,000!

DINING ROOM RENOVATIONS

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY AT HOME

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted both the importance of having a space to feel safe and comfortable, and the value of feeling connected to the world around us. Finding home and finding community are typically two of the largest obstacles our clients face, and battling feelings of social isolation is unfortunately a common struggle for many.

Therefore, we were excited to be given the opportunity this year to renovate our basement dining room into a new multipurpose social space. Thanks to the generous support of Ontario Trillium Foundation and our donors, the larger, more durable, and purposeful space will not only allow for communal dining, but can host our children's programming, women's wellness programs, workshops, and more.

As the physical walls of the old rooms came down, so too did some of the barriers our clients face. The bonds that families form with one another at Christie are often their first friendships in Canada and a significant sustaining force. Once the pandemic is over the new space will surely strengthen our sense of community at home.



COMING TOGETHER IN NEW WAYS

A GROCERY GIFT CARD DRIVE



"I'm really happy with how many people got involved and hopefully also took some time to learn more about Christie. Hopefully we can do it again next year." - Taya Cook

This year, our community rallied together to support our organization and families in some pretty incredible ways! One example was a grocery gift card drive organized by Christie board member, Taya Cook, who decided to challenge her network to help her raise \$5000.

During the pandemic, many of our clients experienced extreme hardship through loss of jobs, medical issues, and barriers to basic needs and support services. "Having the ability to support clients during these difficult times with grocery gift cards has been a tremendous help to staff and a relief to families that have recently moved out of the shelter. We have had clients express great relief by sending emails of gratitude and calling to thank staff," Christie Manager Kerri Sylvester shared.

As we could not carry out our normal holiday traditions, gift cards for places like Walmart offered a unique and special gift – the gift of options. Families could make the choice for themselves whether to buy groceries, winter boots, or special gifts.

Taya ended up far surpassing her original goal. Together, with the 76 individuals who contributed, she was able to raise an incredible \$9000! Donations came from her friends, family, coworkers, fellow parents, and neighbourhood networks. One friend got extra creative and offered to cook a free dinner to any of his clients who donated \$100. She also inspired one friend, Irene Kim, to hold her own gift card drive which raised an impressive \$5000.

RIDE FOR REFUGE

SPOTLIGHT ON A YOUNG LEADER

The Flynn Group of Companies team, led by John and Tracy McManus, stood out as the top fundraising team in Canada for the third consecutive year, raising \$75,000.

One specific team member's fundraising efforts and drive to make a positive impact set a new bar. At only 16 years old, Mason Di Pierdomenico was the number six fundraiser in all of Canada and raised over \$11,500 in just a few short weeks. He also impressively secured 88 donors, a significant number for anyone, but unprecedented for a high school senior.

We are so grateful for the support he has shown us. It is an enormous encouragement for our staff to know that they are not alone in their work. It is especially motivating when young people show they also care that refugee families are safe, supported, and receive a warm welcome to Canada.



Mason Di Pierdomenico about to start off.



The Flynn Group of Companies team in their masks and ready to go!

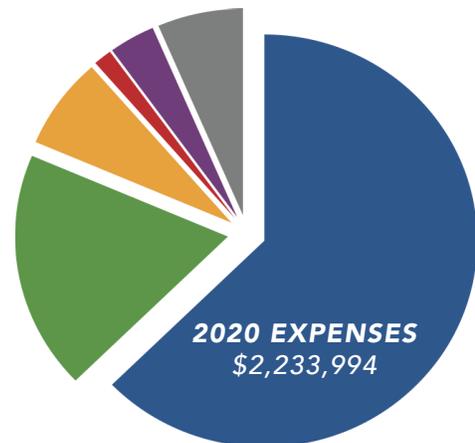
\$109,967
RAISED

5
TEAMS

42
PARTICIPANTS

417
DONORS

FINANCES



- **CITY OF TORONTO** 72.1%
- **GRANTS** 16.4%
- **DONATIONS** 7.9%
- **OTHER** 0.1%
- **DEFERRED REVENUE FOR AMORTIZATION** 3.5%
- **STAFFING** 62.7%
- **CLIENT CARE** 18.7%
- **FACILITIES** 7.2%
- **OPERATIONS** 1.4%
- **ADMIN** 3.5%
- **DEPRECIATION** 6.5%

PARTNERS & DONORS

BETTER TOGETHER

In a year full of challenges across the world, we are so thankful to the following key partners and donors who have supported us this year: City of Toronto (shelter services), Government of Ontario (outreach services), United Way Greater Toronto (children's programs), Canada Summer Jobs (summer students), Tawse Family Foundation, Frederick and Douglas Dickson Memorial Foundation, Dez Capital, and Ontario REALTORS Care Foundation (dining room renovations), Alice and Murray Maitland Foundation and George Lunan Foundation (beds and mattresses), Toronto Kiwanis (children's fitness program equipment), Hodgson Foundation (Centre for Refugee Children), United Way Local Love Fund, Emergency Community Support Fund, and Food Rescue (grocery gift cards), Home Depot Canada Foundation, Brown-Nusbaum Family Fund, and Rotary Club of Toronto (COVID-19 related), Toronto Vital Signs Grant, Better Toronto Coalition, Peter Gilgan Foundation, Dandelion at Toronto Foundation, and Tishan and Nicole Mills Foundation at Toronto Foundation (unrestricted), Daily Bread Food Bank and Second Harvest (food donations), Diaper Bank of Toronto (diapers), Holiday Helpers, Shoebox Project, New Mom Project, and Fix the 6ix (donation packages), and hundreds of individuals throughout the community.



MISSION	CORE VALUES	BOARD	FIND US
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We are a Christian organization serving and advocating for refugee families by providing safe, temporary housing, initial settlement services, and follow-up support. We influence and engage the broader public through education and advocacy networks.

We are *Christian*. We respond to refugees with *dignity and respect*. We are *resilient and responsive* to the changing needs of refugees. We are committed to *children and families*. We *partner* with others to serve refugees more.

Bruce Cameron, *Chair*
 Alex Sancton, *Vice Chair*
 Rosie Yeung, *Treasurer*
 Tracy McManus
 Charity Kabango-Lowe
 Randy Dearlove
 Taya Cook

43 Christie St.
 Toronto, ON M6G 3B1
 416-588-9277

www.crcw.TO
 twitter.com/crcwTO
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