

Carty House is a transitional home and a community for refugee women in Ottawa



CARTY HOUSE

SUMMER 2013

Words spoken by two residents at the Film Screening & Fundraiser for Carty house held at Pressed Café on June 4th:

Speaker # 1

"I have been living at Carty House for three months. I learnt about Carty House through one of its residents from my country. She called me to tell me all about Carty House. She told me that the house was calm and, once I visited the home, the residence was in fact peaceful and finally gave me the feeling that I was at home.

When I arrived at Carty House, I was lost and heavy-hearted. I had no desire or motivation to wake up and leave my bedroom. I also had trouble concentrating. The first evening at dinnertime, I was pleasantly surprised when I saw the other residents interacting with each other so easily in the friendly and communal environment. During the next few days in the mornings, the house was silent. At first, the silence was pleasant but after a few days, the silence made me curious and I wanted to know where the other women went in the morning. I then learnt that some went for English courses while others went for job and skill training and internships. Seeing the other women with their activities and commitments, I was motivated to get away from my sad thoughts, my bed, and my room and then registered myself for English courses to be able to speak with the other women.

Every resident has helped me through the integration process at Carty House and in Canada despite the fact that they may not be aware of their contributions, for example:

- One resident told me about Carty House.
- I would see another when she was leaving for her work placement in the morning.
- Another paid attention to me by helping me undo my hair.
- Another taught me to use the washing machine and drying machine.
- The excellent cooking of two residents has motivated me to cook and eat healthily.
- Glennie-Ruth has suggested meal choices to help me adopt healthier eating habits.
- Lena has helped me improve my concentration skills. By speaking English she has motivated me to concentrate and understand.

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NEWS FROM THE CARTY HOUSE COORDINATORS

This spring has been a busy one at Carty House, with new residents from Burundi and Congo, as well as many events, activities and achievements. Two residents were successful in their claim for refugee protection, one resident received her high school diploma, two completed placements for Childcare and Personal Support Work, and others had their first volunteer and employment experiences here in Canada. There have been significant milestones as well for former residents and families, with Marie-Grace junior graduating from high school, Aynalem becoming a Canadian citizen, and Dative and Aimee embarking on studies in Nursing at the University of Ottawa. We gathered for our Annual General Meeting on May 14th, reviewing our challenges, celebrating our successes and looking forward to the rest of 2013.

On June 4th, the fundraising group from U of O organized a Film Screening & Fundraiser of *Everybody's Children*, to raise money and awareness for Carty House. On June 17th, we joined in solidarity with the doctors for refugee care, and on June 20th, we organized World Refugee Day activities with the Proud to Protect Refugees message, to raise awareness and support for refugees in our community. Our advocacy and support work will continue throughout the summer months. We continue to have close ties with Matthew House, CCI- Reception House, UNHCR, CPJ, and Y Newcomer Services, and continue to meet as the Ottawa Refugee Network.

House outings over the spring included a free theatre performance at the NAC and a concert by the Ottawa Choral Society. The residents are looking forward to an upcoming house outing to Park Omega to experience Canadian wildlife!

In-house workshops for the coming month include a series on restorative yoga, baking classes, and bike workshops. We have also become a Partner with the Ride for Refuge, "a family-friendly cycling fundraiser that partners with charities across Canada to raise money for their work with displaced, vulnerable, and exploited". **On October 5th, we will be riding to raise money for Carty House. Let us know if you are interested in joining!**

Once again, many thanks to all the volunteers, residents, Board Members, donors, and friends who sustain our work and community.

Glennie-Ruth and Lena

When I arrived at Carty House, I thought that I had found a place where I would not be obliged to talk and where I would sleep all day but it was quite the contrary.

I would like to thank everyone who supported me and helped me get back on my feet and heal from my depression. I am convinced that a residence like Carty House is a great initiative and very helpful for refugees in Canada. The community environment that Carty House provides helps us face the new challenges and obstacles that we will encounter in our daily and professional lives, and throughout our integration in Canada.”

Speaker # 2

“I came to Canada as a refugee in November. At first I stayed in a shelter and after one month I found a place to live at Carty House. It is not easy if you are a refugee in a new country, but in Carty House I began to live a new life. Carty House has helped me in many ways, from school, Sandy Hill health centre, doctors, English tutor, volunteer, and job.

Thank you Carty House, all responsible Coordinators, volunteers, the Board, and the other residents. They welcomed me. They helped while I’m a refugee. They understand if I need something. Carty House is a nice calm big house to live in. I feel in good safety and security. Carty House is a beautiful environment. Carty House is for new refugees who come to Canada. Carty House is on a beautiful street near many things, nice people who help one another, and good community with different countries. I feel I’m in good hands.

Thank you to Carty House for helping refugees.”

VOLUNTER PROFILE

JOSIE HOWITT is from Christchurch, New Zealand and has been in Canada since 2009.

She recently completed an M.A. in Globalization and International Development at the University of Ottawa. She currently coordinates transportation demand management programs at EnviroCentre, a local non-profit organization.

Josie began volunteering at Carty House in October 2012. As part of her Master’s work she had done community based fieldwork in Costa Rica and was interested in engaging with issues on the ground in her own community in Ottawa. She works with one of the residents as an English conversation tutor and also helps out with cooking on occasion.

She told the following story about Carty House, which highlights why she enjoys the women and time she spends there. “There is always great food being cooked whenever I come to volunteer. The first night that I ate at Carty House, one of the women from Rwanda had prepared a delicious meal. When I asked what it was called, they could hardly believe that I had never tried fufu, the Central African equivalent of rice or pasta! There is often laughter around the dinner table, as we share different life experiences and perspectives. Carty House is a great space for inter-cultural exchanges and mutual learning.”

Josie Howitt

APRIL 4th, Refugee Rights Day

On April 3rd the social justice group of All Saints Catholic School, led by the Chaplain Lindsay Moore, visited us for a workshop. They learnt about Carty House, local refugees and global refugees. Together they composed a prayer that in part says “ Merciful God, your own only Son became a refugee when he was forced to flee to Egypt as a baby. Look with mercy on those who today are fleeing from danger.”



Carty House

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