

# CARTY HOUSE ANNUAL REPORT

## 2017



Sister Maureen Killoran of the Congregation of Notre Dame (CND) founded Carty House in 2001 to respond to the needs of female refugee claimants arriving alone in Ottawa. In 2009, it was recognized as a charitable organization with the following mission and objectives:

### **Mission Statement**

Carty House provides a first home and a helping hand to refugee women in need in the Ottawa area to assist them in pursuing their claims and adjusting to their new life on arrival to Canada through the provision of accommodation along with material, financial and psychological support.

### **Overview of 2017 Refugee Situation**

Globally, we are witnessing the highest level of human displacement on record. According to the UNHCR<sup>1</sup>, the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide at the start of 2017 was 65.6 million people, more than ever previously recorded. Of those forced to flee their homes and communities, 22.5 million are refugees – almost half of whom are women (49%). Refugees remain uprooted for an average of 20 years. Only 1% of the world's refugees are legally resettled, and by the end of 2016 there were 2.8 million<sup>2</sup> asylum seekers – people who are seeking international protection but whose refugee status is yet to be determined.

Canada has an exceptional history of welcoming refugees and is the second largest resettlement country in the world. In particular, Canada's response to the Syrian refugee crisis has been considered a model example of resettlement and crisis response around the world. Canada resettled 46,700 refugees in 2016<sup>3</sup> (the majority were Syrian refugees), the highest number since 1978, when the Immigration Act came into effect. In addition to refugees being resettled through government and/or private sponsorship, many migrants seek asylum and make refugee claims once they arrive in Canada. In 2017, over 22,000<sup>4</sup> asylum claims were made in Canada, with a significant increase in irregular border crossings by land from the US. The media coverage of these crossings and the overall tone of refugee reception in Canada has shifted somewhat compared to the 2015-16 Syrian refugee resettlement response. Today, the Canadian public remains supportive and open to immigration in general (Environics Institute, 2018<sup>5</sup>). However, there are some indications that support for refugees and asylum seekers has shifted. A 2017 survey of Ontario residents showed that one in two Ontarians believe that many people claiming to be refugees are not real refugees (Parkin, 2018, Mowat Centre).

Canada's general openness to immigration and refugees make it easier for Carty House to fulfil its mission; however, there are still several barriers to integration for residents and the demand for services to support refugees cannot keep up with the growing number of refugees and refugee claimants who need support. Refugees and refugee claimants face a number of barriers once they arrive in Ottawa, including: the high costs of living, language barriers, access to

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<sup>1</sup> [www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html](http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html)

<sup>2</sup> [www.unhcr.org/5943e8a34](http://www.unhcr.org/5943e8a34)

<sup>3</sup> [www.unhcr.org/news/press/2017/4/58fe15464/canadas-2016-record-high-level-resettlement-commended-unhcr.html](http://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2017/4/58fe15464/canadas-2016-record-high-level-resettlement-commended-unhcr.html)

<sup>4</sup> [www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/asylum-claims-2017.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/asylum-claims-2017.html)

<sup>5</sup> [www.environicsinstitute.org/docs/default-source/project-documents/focus-canada-winter-2018---immigration-and-minority-groups/focus-canada-winter-2018-survey-on-immigration-and-minority-groups-final-report.pdf?sfvrsn=ede94c5f\\_2](http://www.environicsinstitute.org/docs/default-source/project-documents/focus-canada-winter-2018---immigration-and-minority-groups/focus-canada-winter-2018-survey-on-immigration-and-minority-groups-final-report.pdf?sfvrsn=ede94c5f_2)

employment opportunities, credential recognition, health and wellness issues, accessing trauma supports, navigating the immigration and refugee process, sponsoring family, and planning their financial independence. The lack of affordable housing options available in Ottawa and other major cities makes financial independence an increasingly difficult goal. For unaccompanied refugee women there are also unique gendered challenges and risks of isolation in the resettlement process.

Carty House provides a safe space for these women to build a community and settle into their new lives in Canada. Funding from the Catholic Centre for Immigrants (CCI), a generous donation from the Congregation of Notre Dame (CND), grants from the May Court Club of Ottawa and Shopper's Drug Mart, and the generosity of many volunteers and donors (including the 28 first-time donors who contributed to Carty House in 2017) all worked to ensure Carty House residents felt supported and prepared to navigate their Canadian journey. The scale of the current refugee crisis has made it clear that everyone from the U.N. down needs to rethink how to better protect and care for refugees. Carty House reaffirms its commitment to prioritize the safety, care and support of its residents.

### **Relations with the Congregation of Notre Dame (CND)**

The Carty House property is owned by the CND, Visitation Province, located in Bedford, Nova Scotia. In 2017, the CND covered the cost of many repairs to the building including damage to pipes and flooding resulting from a rat infestation. We sincerely thank the CND for their on-going support and generous level of funding.

### **2017 Personnel**

In 2017, our staff included:

Executive Director Juliet Schimpf (on leave May-December 2017)

Refugee Services Coordinator: Louise Ebeltoft (Acting Director May-December 2017)

Part-time bookkeeper: Robyn Chalmer (Jan-April 2017)

Part-time bookkeeper: Charity Chavez (Hired May 2017)

Carty House would not be able to provide the many services it does without the help of our many loyal, caring and committed volunteers. They provide countless valuable hours of assistance. Their contributions include: Communications and Fundraising committee work, cultural outings, ESL tutoring, job search, résumé writing and coaching, maintenance and repair, gardening, painting, social media postings, spring-cleaning, website updates, support and friendship.

### **2017 Board Members**

The Board went through several changes to its composition in 2017. Six board members were engaged throughout the year: Bernadette O'Neil, Julie MacGarvey, Tobi Cohen, Kris Kelly Stacie Travers and Zeenat Chisti. We also saw one member return from leave, two new members join and several members resign, including two long-term members ending their six-year term with Carty House.

## 2017 Returning board members

Lisa Nesbitt returned in October after a year of leave.

## 2017 New board members

- Diana Martin (October)
- Sophia Lowe (December)

## 2017 Resignations

- Linda Nesrallah (May)
- Caitlin Williams (Vice-chair, February)
- Hannah McGechie (April)
- Natalie Scott (April)
- Jamie Lenet (Executive Secretary, May)
- Michelle Maloney (May)
- Lorna Book (Chair, August)
- Bernadette O'Neil (December)

## Changes to the Executive Committee:

- **Zeenat Chisti** replaced Julie MacGarvey as Treasurer in January
- **Stacie Travers** replaced Caitlin Williams as Vice-chair in February after she resigned
- Stacie Travers, then **Tobi Cohen** rotated as Acting Chair after Lorna Book resigned in August
- Hanna McGechie joined the Executive Committee as Secretary, replacing Jamie Lenet in March
- **Julie MacGarvey** replaced Hanna McGechie as Secretary after she resigned in April

## Joint Communications and Fundraising Committee included:

- Kris Kelly - Chair Fundraising
- Tobi Cohen - Chair Communications
- Stephanie Claros
- Maria de los Angeles Uribe Saieg
- Betsy Schuurman
- Jacqueline Romero
- Diana Martin
- Michelle Maloney (departed May)

## Program and House Accomplishments

### Residents

In 2017, Carty House welcomed eleven new residents between the ages of 25 and 60. The new residents came from Burundi, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, and Rwanda. Staff helped eleven residents to move into their own apartment units and rooming homes. Most residents were refugee claimants, convention refugees, private sponsorship and government sponsored refugees. All the residents who attended refugee hearings, had positive rulings. A total of 18 residents were housed during the year.

## **Services Provided**

Carty House staff provided numerous services such as ESL, health care, vision care, dental care, job interviews, employment search and coaching, applications for work permits, drivers licence, schooling, permanent residency, proper nutrition, health and fitness, budgeting, legal aid, family reunification and housing.

We also provided various referrals to agencies such as “Dress For Success” that outfit women for employment and established new partnerships with numerous other agencies such as the Matthew House Ottawa Furniture Bank, and employment mentorship programs such as Experica and Employment Ontario. We supported residents through the refugee claim process including counseling, referrals to legal services and providing transportation to their hearings with the Refugee Board in Montreal.

## **Successes**

The majority of women enroll in continuing education classes to complete required diplomas and intensive ESL classes. Several have successfully taken professional training programs such as leadership courses, teaching certificates, hotel and hospitality management and culinary management courses. Several have written articles in our newsletter, and other newsletters for agencies serving refugees, been interviewed several times in the media and have had jobs on local radio stations such as Radio Canada. Several have been successful at getting their driver’s licence and finding employment in the hotel and hospitality, teaching, as a medical receptionist, and a personal support worker. All of them have worked very hard at school and to find employment. Several go to school and work 2 jobs.

## **Challenges**

Due to the lack of government personnel resources, refugee hearings are being canceled and not rescheduled. There is on average a 20-month wait for an immigration hearing, which is affecting our clients mentally and we are seeing some health issues develop as they struggle in this state of limbo.

There are still huge gaps with housing and health care partly due to shortages of staff and funds but also due to the need to improve delivery of services for a culturally diverse population. Housing is still a major concern. Clients are being bounced from place to place making it very difficult for front line workers to provide a better client experience. Shortage of emergency housing for families continues to be a serious concern. Most shelter applicants who are rejected by the City are staying with family or friends, which is an unsustainable solution that is leading to tension and hardship.

## **Volunteers**

The many dedicated volunteers at Carty House have assisted in running ESL tutoring in a variety of fun ways, helped with budgeting, CV writing, the employment and housing search, interview coaching, driving lessons, baking, fundraising, spring cleaning, gardening, dental care, and creating long lasting friendships along the way. This year we had yoga lessons and a “Galentines” event to pamper the women” mind, body and soul.

## **Facilities**

Carty House experienced several maintenance related issues this year, including plumbing problems, appliance breakdown, and flooding. We’ve had to do some expensive and large repairs/renovations. On a brighter note, we received many wonderful donations such as toiletries, appliances, bedroom furniture and kitchen supplies.

## **2017 Board Objectives**

### **1. Create an ad hoc committee for board recruitment to fill vacancies on the Board due to end-of-term positions and support election of a new Board Chair**

An ad hoc committee for Board recruitment was created and led by Stacie Travers and Julie MacGarvey, and later Lisa Nesbitt. Recruitment ads were posted on Volunteer Ottawa and Charity Village. Over 50 CVs were received. Early efforts in January resulted in interviews with three candidates, to whom invitations to join the Board were extended and accepted. Unfortunately, for a range of personal and time commitment reasons, all three new members chose to resign. A second wave of recruitment got underway at the start of the summer. A board skills matrix was created to help identify gaps that new candidates could help fill in terms of skills, knowledge and experience. It was decided to replace formal interviews with more opportunities for candidates to determine if the Carty House Board was the right fit for them. Introductory phone calls were conducted to provide detailed information on the type of commitment required and gauge the candidates interest and motivation. Qualified and interested candidates were invited to attend a board meeting and given practical opportunities to engage with Carty House before committing. For instance, invitations were extended to help coordinate volunteers for the Ride for Refuge, to assist in planning of a Silent Auction and help with the Annual Gala. Our efforts results in two new members and a new volunteer.

### **2. Identify and fill gaps in staff and board policies, procedures and by-laws (e.g. confidentiality agreement, donor privacy agreement, workplace violence and anti-harassment policy, leave policy, Executive Committee Terms of Reference)**

A number of policies were developed during 2017, including all listed here with the exception of the Executive Committee Terms of Reference. The Executive Committee did not meet separate from the board as a whole after May. The total Board size at this time was very small and all matters were discussed openly with the full Board at the monthly meetings.

### **3. Increase types of donor profiles and expand 'giving' options**

2017 saw the collection of historical donor data to gather demographic information. We moved to a cloud-based donor database for ease of data collection and interpretation. The donor expansion program was delayed due to the maternity leave of our Executive Director, Juliet Schimpf.

### **4. Provide immediate and forwardlooking guidance on issues pertaining to house maintenance and related expenditures**

The Carty House Acting Executive Director, Louise Ebeltoft, took a very aggressive approach towards troubleshooting and handling maintenance issues in 2017. An exterminator was hired to proactively manage and prevent an infestation that had been a problem for a prolonged time. Moving away from reactive steps went a long way to keeping a safe and healthy environment.

CND (landlord and major donor) was kept abreast of any ongoing maintenance issues. With full reporting and a proactive plan, Carty House successfully received additional funding to address maintenance issues in a timely manner.

## **5. Develop a strategic plan with stakeholder engagement**

A Strategic Planning Committee was formed in February, led by Stacie Travers it comprised the Executive director Juliet Schimpf, and Board members: Bernie O'Neil, Hanna McGechie and Natalie Scott. Two meetings were held and options outlined to the Board suggested possible ways forward in the planning process. Once the Executive Director went on leave in May, the decision was made to postpone the planning and focus on supporting the Refugee Services Coordinator through the transition into an acting role with greater responsibility. Publishing a downloadable three-year Strategic Plan is a top priority for 2018.

## **6. Support the Refugee Services Coordinator as needed to ensure that frontline services meet identified needs and that organizational and operational goals are met**

Louise Ebeltoft began the year as Refugee Services Coordinator, handling the daily needs of the residents and oversight of house maintenance, volunteers and key operational tasks. She exceeded expectations in her first few months, making a number of changes with notable impact. Initially reporting to the Executive Director Juliet Schimpf, Louise was left as the sole employee in May when Juliet left on leave. Louise expressed an interest in taking on additional responsibilities and had demonstrated her ability to problem solve, plan, and provide important support to the women of Carty House. The Board offered her an increase in salary and provided a new job description. She joined the monthly board meetings and provided comprehensive reports on all service and operation issues. After 6 months acting in the revised position, the Board was notified that the Executive Director would not be returning. The board met with Louise to hear how she was doing in the new role and whether there were areas where she needed additional human resources. Louise indicated that she was enjoying the role and eager to maintain the status quo. The Board ended 2017 with a priority task of issuing Louise a new contract as Manager, Refugee Services and Operations of Carty House.

## **Fundraising Committee**

This was a successful year for the fundraising committee. Overall fundraising revenue was up over 20% year over year.

The Fundraising Committee has a number of revenue streams. The first is grants and major donations. Carty House continues to be well funded by the Congregation of Notre Dame (CND) and The Catholic Centre for Immigrants (CCI Ottawa). General donations continue to be from varied sources, the donor base continues to expand and this remains Carty House's largest revenue stream.

The Committee held a number of fundraising events in 2017, including the Green Door Gala, the annual raffle and participation in 'Ride for Refuge'. Carty House were also the recipient of funds from an event organized and held by The Royal Oak pub in Orleans. These events all went a long way towards raising the funds required to operate Carty House as well as raising awareness in the community about our cause.

One of the major successes of the Fundraising Committee in 2017 was the Green Door Gala. This event more than doubled the revenue from the 2016 version of this event.

<b>Sources of Revenue</b>	<b>Amount</b>
General Donations	\$41,965
Catholic Centre for Immigrants NSP	\$32,325
CND Donations	\$30,000
Green Door Gala	\$7,726
Annual Appeal	\$6,893
Royal Oak Event	\$1,348
Ride for Refuge	\$1,942

## **Communications and Outreach Committee**

The Communications and Outreach Committee enjoyed another busy year in 2017 managing our social media pages, revamping our website, and promoting Carty House events.

Our Facebook and Twitter feeds were kept up-to-date with two to four items per week. We also created a LinkedIn page for networking this past year. Our Twitter followers now number 262, up from 225 last year. We ended 2017 with 205 Facebook followers, up from 162.

Carty House was featured in a CBC News report on Burundian refugees in Ottawa, while a former resident appeared in an article in the New York Times on a similar subject. She also shared her story for a UNHCR Canada 150 campaign called #FromHomeToHome. Our Green Door Gala got a write-up on Apartment 613, an Ottawa arts and entertainment website, and The Mainstreeter, a community newspaper in old Ottawa east ran a piece about board recruitment at Carty House. We were also featured in a holiday giving piece around Christmas time on CTV News.

The Carty House Chronicle newsletter was issued four times, in February, May, September and December. It was last emailed to 428 electronic subscribers, up from 412 in 2016.

Approximately 45 supporters continue to received the newsletter by mail, though we continue to encourage supporters to “go green” and subscribe to our mailing list.

Another big initiative in 2017 involved moving our website to a more user-friendly platform. The new host allows us to update the site more regularly, which we’ve been doing. The site now features a “latest news” blogroll where we can share our activities in a timely fashion. We’ve also personalized the site with more photos from Carty House events.

A number of outreach opportunities also took place in 2017. A group from the Canadian Mint came to Carty House to decorate for Christmas and build gingerbread houses with the residents. The Church of Latter Day Saints came on several occasions to do yard work, while a group from Export Development Canada came to do gardening last spring. The Royal Oak Orleans also teamed up with Carty House in May 2017 to raise money through a silent auction, 50/50 draw and BBQ, while Kent Street Dental welcomed Carty House residents to its clinic for much needed dental work. Several residents also served as “ambassadors” for Carty House when they sang at Centretown United Church.

## **2018 Board Objectives**

1. Formalize a program of core services that Carty House offers to residents based on their needs, our areas of expertise and what is offered by other community partners.
2. Maintain our ability to service a full occupancy of the house and our current quality of services.



3. Increase our efficiency as a Board by developing and adopting a clarified decision-making process.
4. Create and begin implementing a long-term fund development strategy.
5. Complete our first external audit.
6. Recruit an experienced, sustainable leadership team (e.g. via membership to the Board, staff and volunteers) in the necessary core competency areas such as finance, law and human resource management, etc.
7. Work towards a 10-year financial projection that considers our needs for capital expenditures, capacity to expand occupancy and our programs.

Thank you to all staff, volunteers and board members who work tirelessly to sustain Carty House in carrying out its mission and objectives to assist those female refugee claimants and female convention refugees who come to our home seeking assistance.



Kris Kelly  
Chair, Carty House Board of Directors