

In 2021



89
refugees

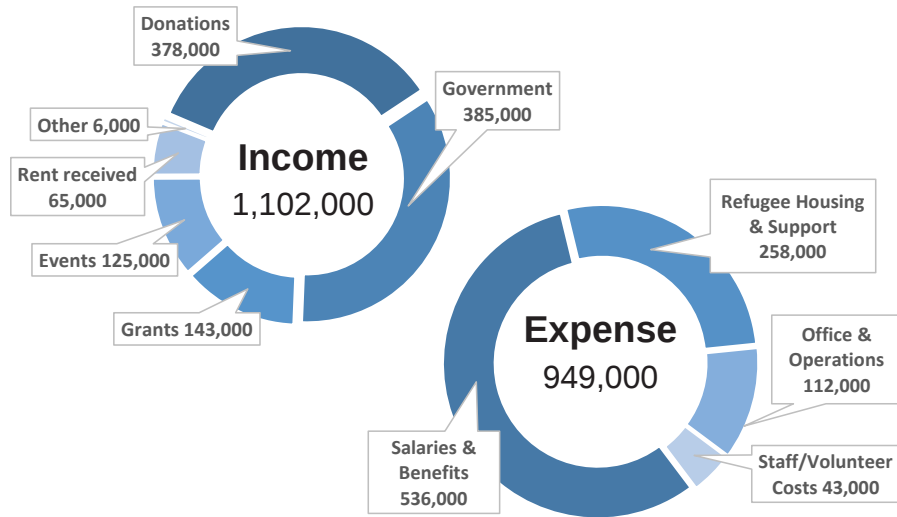
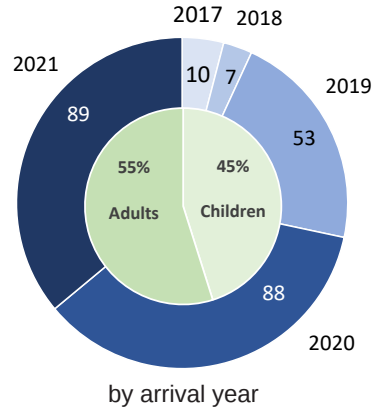
provided transitional housing



96
Afghans

supported through advocacy

246
refugee claimants
provided settlement support



THANK YOU



Partially funded by the Government of Canada's Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy

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SAFE NOW

WE'RE HOME

TOGETHER



Annual Report 2021



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I just left family behind

For us, this scenario is the stuff of nightmares. For claimant families, this is a regular occurrence.

As newly arrived refugee claimants begin to trust us we hear of their pain, loss and heartache. As this grief and trauma come to the surface we learn to listen and pray.

We hear of those who have left their aging mothers behind, knowing that they will never see them again.

We walk with a mother, coming from a country where men have all the power. She had fled for her life, with no option but to leave her children in the custody of their father.

We listen to a brother, anxious for his sister, an international student from Afghanistan who is now trapped in Ukraine and unable to escape that war.

As the Afghan tragedy unfolded, we advocated for Afghan community members whose families are now in hiding, because of *their* previous work improving education, security, and human rights. Their families are now in grave danger as the Taliban uses extreme measures to force their dangerous beliefs on all. Together we developed a presentation to the federal government imploring them to expand their narrow definition of family. To save lives.

Then, on occasion, we rejoice as families come together. After being accepted as permanent residents, refugees apply to bring family members over, anxiously waiting the moment they are together again.

We rejoice as a mother separated from her two children for years welcomes them to their new life in Canada. We celebrate as a church community embraces this family with needed love, attention, and assistance.

We visit a husband, separated from his wife and child for many years, and watch as he carefully sets up his apartment, lining up new shoes for his son. One staff will be there to share that precious moment when this family is reunited at the airport and becomes whole again.

And we are striving, working hard to expand so that homeless refugee families are not separated into separate shelters until they find a place, any place, where they can be together.

This is just part of what you make possible through volunteering, giving and praying. And we are grateful.



Welcoming refugees as our brothers and sisters

If there are two words that describe 2021 at Journey Home Community, they are “transition” and “expansion.” At the end of June, our founder and longtime Executive Director, James Grunau transitioned away from his position of leadership. We are thankful for the solid foundation he built which has allowed us to expand.

In 2021, our staff grew from 8 to 11 people. As we grow, we are investing in people with a diversity of skills and backgrounds, who have lived immigrant and refugee experiences, who feel called to welcoming refugees to Canada. As a team we stand ready to respond to the growing numbers of refugees.

In August, we reached out to our Afghan community who were shocked and in anguish over the resurgence of the Taliban. We provided information, we prayed, and we organized a response. We can't say for sure that these efforts led directly to any evacuations from Afghanistan, but we stood alongside our Afghan brothers and sisters.

In 2021, we launched “Meanwhile Spaces”, a new project exploring the question, “Can developers, non-profits, and municipalities utilize buildings scheduled for demolition, to house refugees?” In December, Concert Properties offered the use of 9 two-bedroom units for 8 months. In a region where there is a housing crisis, we need to transition to new ways of thinking to overcome this significant problem.

As the world transitions to a post-pandemic reality, the rights of refugees who seek places of safety is of paramount importance. We look to the crisis in Ukraine, the ongoing Syrian situation, and the Genocide of Rohingya to understand the grave situations faced by people around the globe. And this is without mentioning other mass displacements in Venezuela, Colombia, South Sudan, and Ethiopia. From October - February, BC saw more than 4,000 refugee claimants processed by our local immigration offices.

Given our current reality, Journey Home looking to expand. We are convinced that welcoming refugees as our brothers and sisters is at the centre of God's heart.

I want to express my gratitude to our committed, volunteers, our board of directors, staff, and so many generous donors, foundations, and churches. Each one of you joins a movement of “welcome” that has made a difference in the lives of our refugee friends.

Thank you.

Brad Kinnie - Executive Director



From the Street to a Home

Having met overseas, two young men presented themselves at the Peace Arch Crossing claiming asylum. In seeking safety, they had become like family. What followed is hard to believe.

The border guards interviewed them at length to determine if they were legitimate. Satisfied they were, they allowed them to enter Canada. When asked “Where do we go now?” The border guard shrugged and said, go to Vancouver and see if you can get into a Shelter.

Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside is notorious . The tragedy of poverty, addiction and mental illness is on display for all to see. Imagine this being your first impression of Canada! This cannot be. But it is.

After spending what little money they had on a hotel, these two friends ended up on the street, then in a shelter. Already traumatized by the violence they had fled from, bunking with those suffering from addiction and mental illness was too much, and they fled. Where to go?

In 2021 through a grant from Vancouver Foundation, ‘Meanwhile Spaces’ launched. This initiative utilizes empty apartments and houses waiting redevelopment. Concert Properties gave nine 2-bedroom apartments, and we offered one to these two men. Their relief was evident as they relaxed for the first time since being in Canada, now ready to begin their settlement journey. What a contrast! Going from being on the street to a furnished 2-bedroom apartment.

UPDATE: In January, Journey Home Community received an interesting call from Chalmers Foundation who operate a 114-unit high rise seniors tower in Vancouver near 12th and Granville. Chalmers Foundation had purchased a newer facility and are moving all their residents over by the end of this June. Their eventual plan is to tear down and redevelop their current property to increase overall capacity.

In the interim, the foundation’s desire, along with the City of Vancouver and BC Housing, is to see this building used by a not-for-profit organization to provide housing to vulnerable people.

When we shared about Meanwhile Spaces and its initial success, and the Board of Chalmers concluded that we share a common belief in the centrality in creating community, not just housing people. They have chosen to proceed exclusively with Journey Home Community.

This building is an unprecedented opportunity for Journey Home and for the whole refugee serving sector. We are finalizing details and will provide you further information shortly.