

Be the Welcome

Journey Home Community Association
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2022





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We acknowledge that Journey Home Community works on and welcomes arriving refugee claimants onto the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the ǵícǎý (Katzie), Kwantlen, kʷikʷǎłǎm (Kwkwetlem), Matsqui, xʷmǎθkʷǎýǎm (Musqueam), Semiahmoo, Sumas, Sḵwḵwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), Tsawwassen, sə́lilwǎtaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh), and QayQayt First Nation.



WHY WE EXIST

REFUGEE CLAIMANTS ARE BEING FORGOTTEN. WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

In 2005, when a small group out of Willingdon Church saw that arriving families needed housing, community, and assistance, they decided to do something about it. With little money or experience, they started to reach out. Some of those early relationships formed have lasted to this day.

In 2008, Journey Home Community officially became a charity, led by one of the founders, James Grunau. In 2021, Brad Kinnie, highly experienced as having served as our program manager, was chosen as our second Executive Director.

Right from the start, we quickly learned that recognizing people's God-given value — while celebrating diversity and practicing mutuality — transforms the lives of

arriving claimants, staff and volunteers. We know the power of a warm welcome that says, 'We are here to walk with you during your first difficult months here in Canada. You are not alone.'

Such a welcome provides arrivals the stability to begin to overcome the trauma of their fleeing and culture shock. Then, refugees can truly focus on the many tasks of settling now facing them.

Through the generosity of donors, strong partnerships with churches, housing providers, and through the many excellent services offered by settlement agencies and community resources, our understanding and capacity to serve has grown.

OUR MISSION

Inspired by God's love, we are creating caring communities that offer refugee claimants housing, settlement support, & opportunities for connection.

OUR VISION

We envision a society where all refugees experience hope and belonging as they engage in meaningful participation in their community and flourish in all aspects of life.



WHO WE SERVE

Refugee Claimant: A person who has made a claim for protection as a refugee in Canada. This term is equivalent to asylum-seeker and asylum claimant. Refugee claimants make their own way to Canada, arriving by regular travel means or by irregular border crossings, and claim protection on arrival.

Once found eligible to make a refugee protection claim, they then wait months for their Refugee Protection Hearing. Refugee claimants are legally in the country as temporary residents, eligible for Interim Federal Health Program benefits and provincial income assistance benefits, but must wait for a work permit. They are not eligible for federally funded settlement services.

HOPE BEGINS WITH A HOME

MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As a community, I invite us to look back on 2022 and to respond with thanksgiving and celebration.

We have observed and listened to community members who share with us that despite suffering displacement, trauma, and uncertainty, arriving at Journey Home was a beginning point where they began to experience hope again. For these families, hope begins with a warm welcome. And then hope continues to grow with new friendships, opportunities to connect in the community, and experiencing the love and care of a welcoming community. This is good news worth celebrating.

In 2022, wanting this to be the experience of so many new refugee claimant arrivals, and desiring to offer more housing, we expanded our Meanwhile Spaces Housing Program. Partnerships with Concert Properties and Wesgroup added 14 temporary housing units. This doubled our capacity, allowing us to offer transitional housing to 184 individuals. Let's celebrate this!

We expanded our staff team through additional government funding and the generosity of the community. A talented and passionate team of 16 individuals with heritage from 10 different nations, speaking 5 different languages, works together to welcome refugees and live into the teachings of Jesus to love our neighbours. Let's be thankful for this!

Our volunteer community is made up of more than 70 individuals who cook, clean, garden, move, drive, lead, and befriend. They enter data, go shopping, interpret and translate, research grants, care for children, move furniture, support events, and fix things. The commitment of these volunteers allows us to create a welcoming community. Let's celebrate this!

2022 was another healthy year financially for Journey Home. Donors gave more than ever and two successful events, The Ride for Refuge and the Welcome Table Gala demonstrated the generosity of a supportive community. We are so thankful!

As we continue onward in 2023, we will welcome more refugee claimants than ever before by offering transitional housing, then support their move into homes. Our motivation is because people matter and because the need is so great. So in response, our team of staff and volunteers will create connections, refer to services, and ensure that newcomers have the resources needed to experience stability.

We will expand our Meanwhile Spaces housing and launch a new community house in partnership with Willingdon Church. And the community will organize to share love and welcome with dignity, respect, and friendship.

Thanks to each of you for playing a part in this good work. Let's celebrate our community!



Brad Kinnie
Executive Director
Journey Home Community

FINDING A PLACE TO CALL HOME AGAIN

MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT

My first home was a very modest and rudimentary place in Guayaquil, Ecuador. But it was home, and that was all that mattered. I have lived in many different places since then in various parts of the world, and adapted to a variety of buildings which came to serve as my home. No matter what condition they were in, they represented a place where I could find shelter, safety, and by extension, hope.

Over the past several months, I have provided assistance to our settlement workers as they provide information about housing for the families Journey Home is serving. When you leave everything behind, and especially when you have had to abandon your own home, housing becomes a paramount concern when you arrive. Home represents a place of safety and some measure of stability, especially when you have already traversed a journey often fraught with fear and daunting challenges. Home becomes a tangible place where a family can finally come together and not worry about where they will sleep tomorrow.

I remember one interview where the mother, D, blurted out in anguish "No quiero estar aquí" (I don't want to be here!). She was referring to what she had left behind, and overwrought by what would happen now to their little two-year-old girl who was oblivious to her mother's anguish. While finding housing for this family certainly did not solve all their problems, it was a starting point for D who desperately needed HOPE in the midst of her despair.

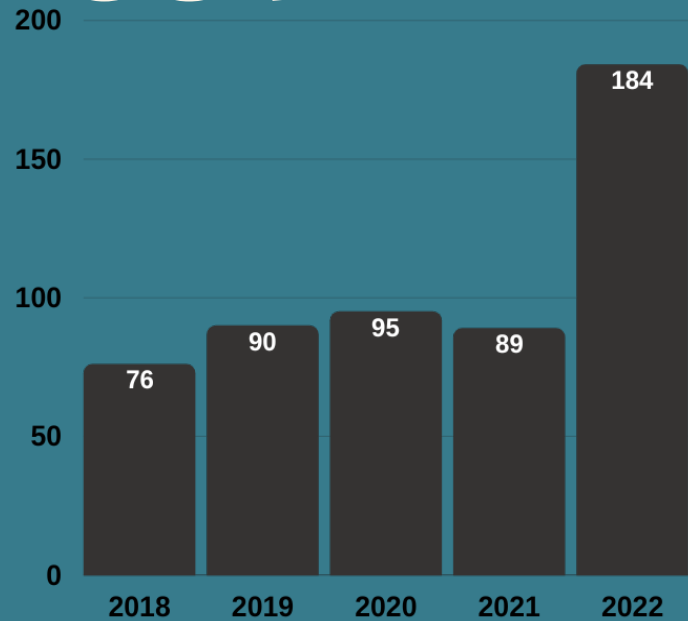
I have gained a lot of respect and admiration for the very caring way in which Journey Home staff guide our families through the complex decisions they struggle with as they go about finding housing in Metro Vancouver's difficult housing market. Unfailingly, staff provide ways for the families to be hopeful about their future here and provide these families assistance as they solve their foremost concern: finding a place they can call home again.

Over the next months, Journey Home Community will work hard to find creative and practical ways to welcome our families into homes where they can find sanctuary after their harrowing journeys. It's not an easy task, starting with first finding enough locations which will serve as transitional housing for their first three months, and then obtaining furnishings to make these places feel like home. This is always going to be a journey of faith and we look forward to seeing how God will give us both the wisdom and the resources to do this well.

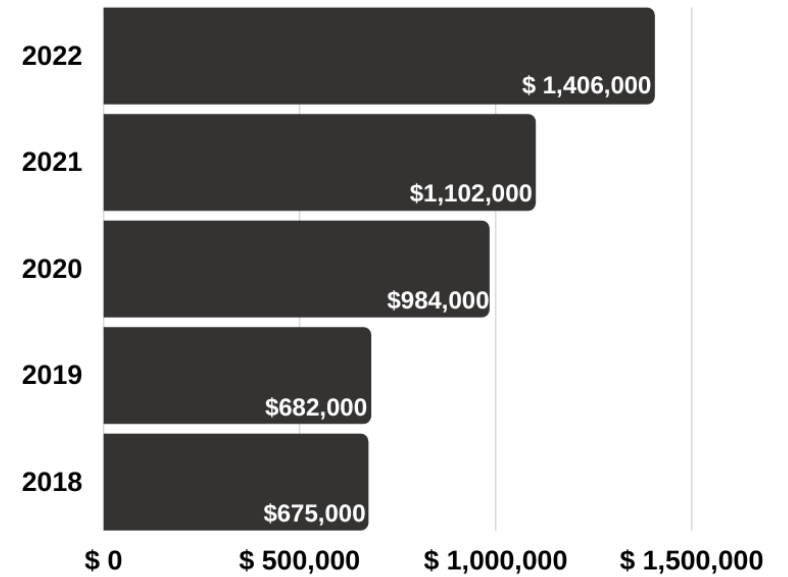


John Dyck
Board President
Journey Home Community

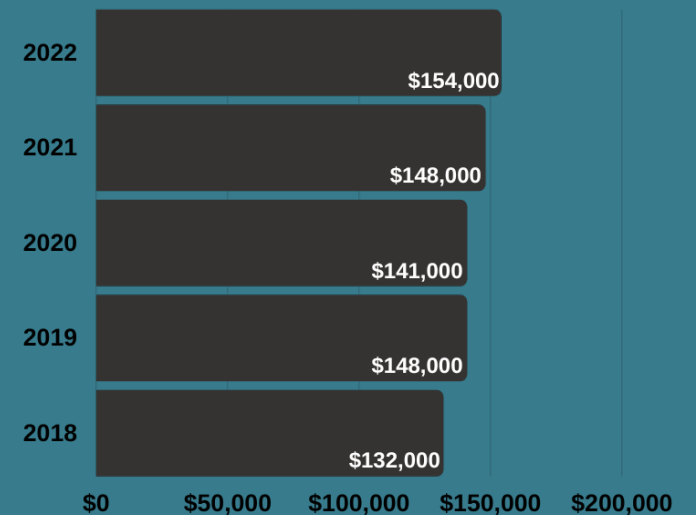
Total Refugee Claimants: HOUSED & SUPPORTED IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS — 534



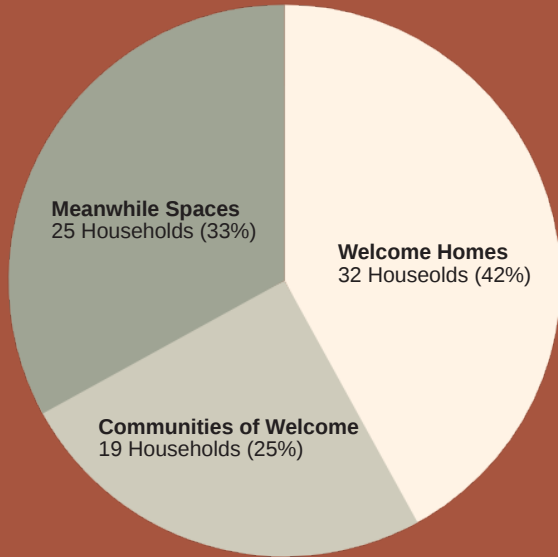
Annual Income: FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL



Ride for Refuge: IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS — \$723,000



Refugee Claimants: HOUSEHOLDS HOUSED



Journey Home Community: SETTLEMENT PROGRAMS

MEANWHILE SPACES house refugee claimants in vacant apartments and houses slated for redevelopment.

We prepare and lightly furnish these units prior to move-in and provide settlement support, connections to community services and assistance in finding permanent housing.



Journey Home Community: SETTLEMENT PROGRAMS

COMMUNITIES OF WELCOME offer a home and critical settlement support for a refugee claimants during their first year in Canada. We train and equip community groups, who then assist refugee claimant families/individuals for twelve to eighteen months.

WELCOME HOMES offer refugee claimants a safe place “to land” as they begin their settlement process. Our initiative offers two housing styles: community living with house hosts and private units – both furnished and ready for their arrival.



Welcome Homes (units)

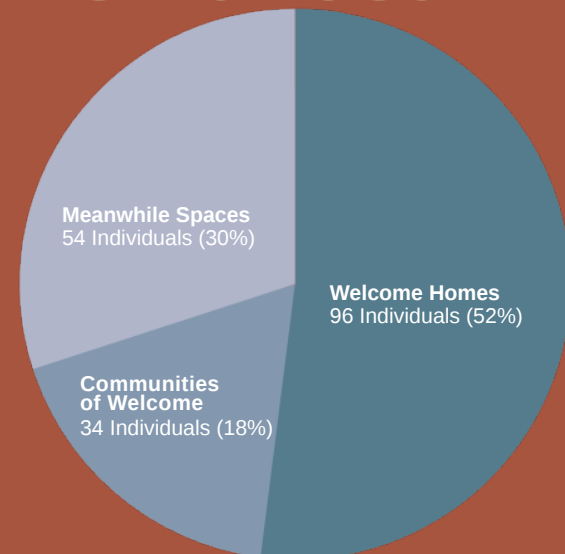
- 2 Olivet Houses
- 4 Hillside Garden Units
- 1 Surrey Condo (now sold)
- 1 New Hope Apartment



Communities of Welcome

- Tenth Church
- Willingdon Church
- Trinity Central (complete)
- St. John's (complete)
- Secheclt Volunteers (complete)

Refugee Claimants: INDIVIDUALS HOUSED



WELCOME HOMES HOSPITALITY IS A 2-way STREET

Welcome Homes offer refugee claimants' their first experience of living in community in Canada. This can be especially important for those who come from cultures that place a high value on relationships. Having had to leave lifelong relationships behind, community is something they long for.

As they enter Canada's refugee protection system, many refugees feel uncertain and alone while they pursue refugee status, safety, and belonging.

“In a new country, with no job and no family, you feel that you have no identity. That is why Journey Home Community was so important to us. They gave us friendship. They helped us to do the simple things like start a bank account, find a house, a school for the kids, furniture ...”

— Journey Home Community Member

Through Welcome Homes, refugees are provided with a furnished and ready place “to land” during their critical first months in Canada. The sad reality is our community members first must learn how to live with little — in poverty — in an increasingly expensive country. Our experienced settlement team, along with trained volunteers, assist them with:

1. Housing (tenancy rights and responsibilities, transition to permanent housing)
2. Finances (social assistance, work permits, move towards financial stability)
3. Belonging (orientation & cultural education, support through refugee hearings, applying for permanent residence)
4. Networking (school registration and English language services, connections to health & community resources, developing key friendships and their own supportive networks)

Journey Home Community believes support offered unconditionally is best carried out in mutual relationships. All refugee claimants, regardless of their race or ethnic background, religion, political opinion, gender identity or sexual orientation are welcomed with dignity, relational care, and wrap-around support.

Prior to moving a family from our Burnaby Welcome Homes to an apartment in Surrey, I called the father to confirm arrangements. Moving from our Welcome Homes to their first independent housing can be scary for refugee families who are adjusting to a new life in Canada.

As we talked, at first, he was ready, and then he said, ‘I can’t do it, I am confused, worried, please give me a few minutes.’ 15 minutes later he phoned back, ‘I am going to move tomorrow, with my family.’ When we went to inspect the transitional housing they were moving out of, it was spotless. They stated they wanted to have it nice and welcoming for the next family who was arriving.

When the family arrived at their new apartment, they were so happy. Their young children ran around looking through all the cupboards.

After the moving crew left, they insisted I stay for lunch. Feeling comfortable in my presence, the mother removed her hijab. Out of their limited funds, they ordered in Canadian food. During the meal their mother phoned. Hearing a stranger's voice, she asked, ‘Who is there with you?’ The mom replied, ‘This is our new family, Grace, from Journey Home, they have helped us so much!’

When leaving, the father smiled and said, ‘Today we ordered in Canadian food just for you. You know our address, come anytime and we want to cook Arabic food for you.’ – Grace, Settlement Worker.



Communities of Welcome was born out of this simple idea. If Canadians are known for sponsoring refugees, could we mirror this approach for vulnerable families who have fled to Canada from danger and persecution?

Using the knowledge and experience gained through settling refugee claimants, we launched Communities of Welcome, where we educate and equip community groups. This initiative has these goals.

1. Create awareness for appropriate housing and supports refugee claimants need to successfully settle in Metro Vancouver.
2. Recruit, train, and mentor community groups as they provide housing and support to refugee claimants in their many tasks of settlement. These dedicated volunteers then work with refugee claimant families and individuals to locate, furnish, and move into affordable homes.

Some churches also participated to train their members on how to support future sponsored refugee families. Through this initiative, churches are better equipped to welcome claimants and sponsored refugees.

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**In 2022,
19 households &
34 refugees
were supported through
5 Communities of Welcome**

This is an excerpt from an interview with Amina. These are her own words:

My name is Amina, and I'm from Central Asia. In my country, I was a social justice activist. I longed to see change in my country, particularly for the rights of women. I raised my voice. When I did, I was targeted and received death threats. These threats came from government officials and terrorist groups.

For safety, I had to shelter in my home for a few months. Eventually the pressure was too much and I had

to run. I was able to get a visa to the United States and then travelled to the Canadian border. My first few days in Canada were so hard. It was the toughest time of my life. I had to live in a shelter. I didn't know anyone. I couldn't sleep. I was afraid and lonely.

But then I was referred to Journey Home and they connected me to a Community of Welcome team at Tenth Church. When I met them, everything changed for me.

I felt safe and secure. I felt like I found a new family, friends, and community. They gave me what is required for life. I have new memories which I will always appreciate. The Community of Welcome team made such a difference to me and I will never forget what they did.

It is so important for churches and other community groups to form Communities of Welcome. In my story, I don't know where I would be without the Community of Welcome group. What I have in my life came because of connections shared with me. I have a good job. I learned about Canadian culture. I explored Vancouver. I have learned so many things.

I am so thankful for the Tenth Church Community of Welcome team.

“We came here for a better life, for freedom, for life living, freedom of speech, freedom for everything, that we are acknowledged as human...”



Now My Daughter is Safe: STORY & UPDATE

In 2021, Journey Home Community launched Meanwhile Spaces, using empty properties slated for redevelopment to provide housing to refugees. The initial pilot project was a partnership between Journey Home Community, ISS of BC and Concert Properties. A proven international model, this initiative is expanding our housing for refugee claimants in the Lower Mainland.

Wahida and her daughter Maala, arrived from Afghanistan. They were one of the first families to live in our Meanwhile Spaces. Married to an addict, Wahida was forced to become a sex worker to survive and provide for her daughter, and provide for his addiction. However, when Maala's father planned to sell her, Wahida had no choice but to flee Afghanistan, to keep both of them safe.

Before coming to Canada, everyday was a struggle for Wahida. Arriving in Canada, she couldn't believe it was real. They were safe!

However, their initial months in Canada proved difficult. While Wahida was able to find shared accommodations, this was far from an ideal situation for her and her daughter, but she just couldn't afford rent on her own. After paying their month's rent they were left without any money for all their other expenses, such as food. Unable to find another, cheaper rental option because she did not yet have a job, she was forced to seek out emergency shelter.

Searching all over the Lower Mainland, Wahida couldn't even find a shelter that had space for her and her daughter. Then, through ISS of BC, Wahida was introduced to Journey Home Community.

Through our new Meanwhile Spaces initiative, Wahida moved into her new apartment the same day she came to our office. After an initial meeting staff and volunteers helped Wahida and Maala pack their stuff and took them to their new home.

After moving into a safe place of their own, Wahida finally felt at peace. She shares, "I had severe depression. In here I got much better. I felt like someone was supporting and helping me. That there is someone who I can count on to help me. Before this, I never had someone who was supportive of me."

The sad reality is, Wahida and her daughter Maala's struggles to find a safe home is not unique. Having fled their homes, many arrive in BC with few, if any, financial resources. They too, are at grave risk of homelessness.

Through Meanwhile Spaces we are able to help more arrivals. As well as transitional housing, refugees receive settlement services and support in finding long-term affordable housing. In 2022, we housed and supported 54 individuals. We also thank Concert Properties and Wesgroup, two developers who partnered with us on this initiative and have continued their partnership into 2023.



VOLUNTEERS

From Our Heart TO YOURS



2022 was a big year for the Volunteer Department at Journey Home Community, welcoming twenty-two new volunteers to our teams of movers, translators, Community Dinner hosts and other vital roles. The true joy of this for me was getting to meet new faces from all walks of life, hear about your interests and passions (often over hot cups of coffee and tea), and connect you to resilient families in need of practical support. Additionally, I also meet and get to know many long-term volunteers at Journey Home, hearing story-after-story of how you have been personally impacted while walking alongside our community members.

Another huge addition to the Volunteer Program came in the Fall when one of our former Welcome Homes participants, Kochar Saleh, was hired as Volunteer and Community Coordinator. I first met Kochar, a Kurdish writer and journalist for women's and children's rights, while helping facilitate our Volunteer Trainings. Kochar, a gifted storyteller, has been volunteering at these trainings for the last few years, sharing her own refugee journey — a remarkable tale of courage and perseverance in the face of adversity.

2023 promises to be an even bigger year for us, with the opportunity to acquire more housing for refugee claimants through our Meanwhile Spaces initiative. This means that there will be a great need for Settlement Support Volunteers to help turn temporary apartments and houses into homes — this includes cleaning, assembling furniture, painting, decorating spaces, etc.

As we continue to grow, we also don't want to lose sight of our relational ethic and value of creating caring communities. This means that we will need Family Friends to walk alongside a family for a year, and Community Bridge Builders to help connect newcomers to local resources. If you are able, would you be willing to partner with us in these roles and “be the welcome” to those who have been displaced?

I say this almost every time I have the opportunity, but Journey Home wouldn't run without the support of volunteers. For those of you who give freely and generously of your time, we need you and appreciate you!

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison[/detention] and you came to visit me.”

Matthew 25:35-36, NIV

Gratefully,
Seth Anderson, Volunteer Supervisor



HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

After experiencing persecution and trauma, refugee claimants arrive in Metro Vancouver hoping for a safe and secure future. They arrive with skills and determination but are left vulnerable to poverty, homelessness, and isolation. In 2022, 3,915 refugees claimed asylum in B.C. You can be part of drawing alongside families, offering them community and care.

1. VOLUNTEER

We invite you to be part of our welcoming community. Our many different roles range from helping move refugee claimants out of transitional into more permanent housing, to supporting their settlement process, to creating relationships through community activities, to helping build Journey Home Community's capacity to serve through assisting with administration and fundraising.

2. DONATE

Providing refugee claimants' housing, settlement support and community during their first critical months in Canada requires finances. We are grateful that many choose to support this vital work.

Consider becoming a monthly donor, as scheduled giving allows Journey Home Community to better plan and sustain our work with refugee claimants.

3. PRAY

Join with us as a prayer partner as we collectively pray for the staff, the board, volunteers, the refugees that Journey Home Community welcomes to Metro Vancouver, and for the general needs of refugees around the world.

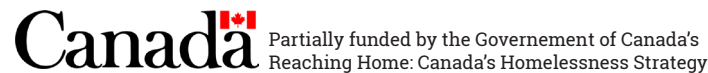
To learn more about how to get involved, scan the QR code or visit us at journeyhomecommunity.ca or phone us at 604.568.4892. Let's have a conversation.



Scan to visit our website.

THANK YOU'S & MORE

Thank you to our donors, sponsors and volunteers. Your partnership allows us to realize our vision of a society where all refugees experience hope and belonging as they engage in meaningful participation in their community and flourish in all aspects of life.



JOURNEY HOME COMMUNITY IS A PROUD MEMBER OF:





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