

# **Annual Report**

## **2024 – 2025**



**Romero  
House**

**Walking with Refugees**

# What is Romero House?

## OUR VISION

Refugee claimants in our neighbourhoods are safe, thriving, and know that they belong.

## OUR MISSION

The Romero House community welcomes refugee claimants with housing, immigration, and settlement support.

## OUR VALUES

We live together as good neighbours, valuing care and mutuality.

We respect the dignity of all.

We trust one another.

We are present in joy and suffering.

We are inspired by the radical example of Oscar Romero.

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# Message from the Executive Director



This year saw important change at Romero House. For the first time in 25 years, our housing capacity grew. We partnered with the City of Toronto's shelter division to open a new home called Edna Lane. Here we have been able to welcome eight new families at a time, bringing our capacity up to 80 beds.

The timing worked well. We saw decreased demand for our immigration and settlement services for people living outside Romero House, as the number of new refugee claimants in Toronto began to fall and supports from other organizations caught up. This allowed us to shift our services from our walk-in program to our expanded housing program. We welcomed more kids to kids club, more people to our monthly community potlucks, and provided wraparound support to more families in our homes.

This expansion is in line with the strategic plan that we shared last year. The first pillar was to discern the right size for our live-in community. We wasted no time in experimenting with growth! And we continue to reflect on how this building--with its larger size and different funding model--affects who and how we are. Our lease on Edna Lane goes until December 2026 and we will find the next most graceful step in Romero's evolution before then.

None of this would be possible without our supporters: neighbours who give care baskets to new moms, volunteers who teach English, donors who trust us to do what is needed, and partners who find ways we are stronger together. Thank you to all of the people who made our work this year possible. To be the recipients of such kindness and generosity brings joy to all of us at Romero House.

Many thanks,  
Francesca Allodi-Ross





## IMPACT

# Transitional Housing

### Refugees Housed

	New in 2024-2025	Total housed in 2024-2025
Families	25	35
People	116	157
Children	65	87

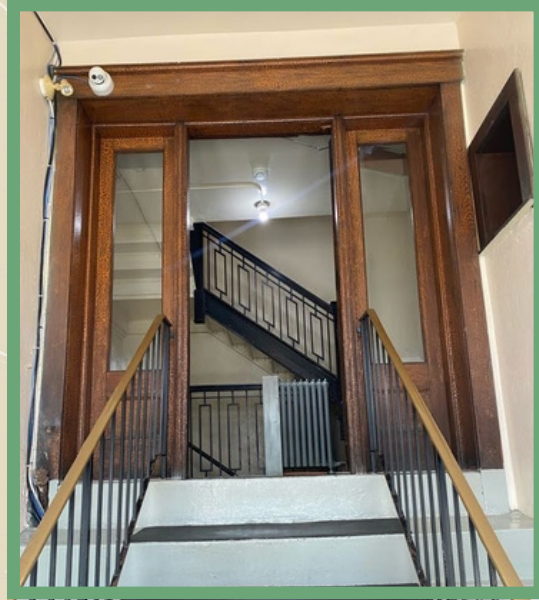
The heart of Romero House continues to be our transitional housing. We house refugee claimant families for up to one year, acting as a bridge between emergency shelter and permanent housing. We have 18 one, two, and three-bedroom apartments spread over five buildings in the West Bend neighbourhood of Toronto.



# IMPACT

## Edna Lane

For the first time in 20 years, Romero House grew. We opened a small apartment building called Edna Lane and were able to welcome 8 more families at a time. We are very happy to be partnering with Toronto Shelter and Support Services to make this possible.



## IMPACT

# Community Host Program

Last year marked an exciting milestone for our Community Host Program as we strengthened the foundations on which it was built. We were able to put into practice the tools we developed through the Community Services Recovery Fund, such as a program manual, program materials and training for hosts and guests, and evaluation and reporting tools. We extend a heartfelt thank you to all of our hosts. Your hospitality makes a world of difference in the lives of those seeking refuge.



**25 refugee  
claimants  
housed**



**5 new hosts**



**Average nights  
of stay per host**

## Guest Experience

*When I was with my host providers, it felt like I was at home. They were so kind and hospitable, making me feel like part of their family. I'll never forget their kindness and warmth.*

# IMPACT

## Immigration and Settlement Program

482

Households served

1,087

People served

1,001

Services provided

Top countries of origin:  
Mexico, Colombia, Ethiopia,  
Peru, Nigeria, Uganda, Iran,  
Venezuela

### Top services provided



Registering for English classes



Finding a refugee lawyer



Finding shelter or housing



Explaining the refugee process



Applying for social assistance



Providing access to clothing, toiletries, menstrual products, diapers and food





# IMPACT

## Community Programming



**Top:** Watching the Easter sunrise at Humber Bay Park **Bottom, L-R:** Winning the refugee house soccer tournament; potluck supper with residents



# IMPACT

## Community Programming



**Top:** Trip to Niagara Falls **Bottom, L-R:** Canoeing on the Humber River;  
playing games at our monthly Super Supper





THANK YOU

# Our Team

## Staff

Ann Khatter, Francesca Allodi-Ross, Jenn Stephenson,  
Karen Sierra, Mary Jo Leddy, Oren Jungreis, Robbie  
Arzumanov, Robelin Severino, Sana'a Jaber

## Worker Program

2023-2024: Rafael Llamas, Suyeon Kang, Marisol  
Larrea-Clark, Marnie Klassen

2024-2025: Jalal Nazari, Mercy Kiplagat, Yasmin  
Calderon, Marisol Larrea-Clark, Masooma Ahmadi,  
Soyun Kim

## House Coordinators

Sarah Buisman, Carmen Bezner-Kerr

## Board of Directors

Amensisa Neway, Anil Varghese, Joan Leishman, Kathy  
Butkovich, Lori Neale, Maureen Brosnahan, Mercedes  
Arias, Michael McMorrow, Sara Guerrero, Shahid Akhtar,  
Tom Abel









## THANK YOU **Volunteers**

This past year, our volunteers have played an essential role in supporting refugees, newcomers, and vulnerable families in our community. Their time, skills, and compassion have helped create meaningful connections and life-changing opportunities for residents across a variety of programs. This year, 35 families living with us have directly benefited from the kindness, dedication, and unwavering support of our incredible volunteers. From tutoring children and translating at critical moments, to offering mentorship, delivering food, and simply showing up with compassion—you have made a real difference.

**64**

Volunteers helped with interpretation & translation

**41**

Residents had regular English conversation partners

**30**

Volunteers supported events and community celebrations

**23**

Residents were supported with job and housing search

**5**

Volunteers assisted with administrative and website support

**163**

Volunteers engaged across all programs

# THANK YOU

## Organizational Partners

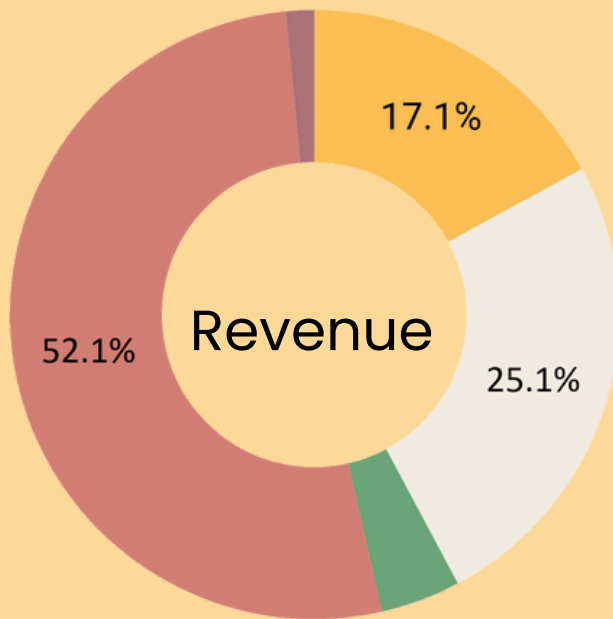


Thank you also to Sanctuary North, West End Book Club, Royal St. George's College, Methodist Girls High School Alumnae, #WithLove Inc, Black Fathers' Group of 3398 Inc, Great Lakes College of Toronto, Crestwood Preparatory College, and Francoise Cockburn.

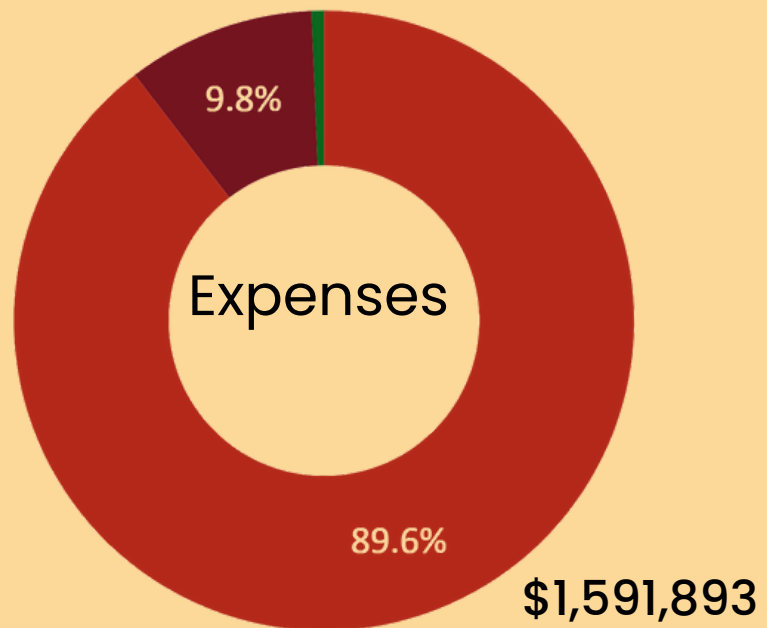


# Finances

**\$1,630,786**  
(‘23-24: \$957,179)



- City of Toronto
- Grants
- Donations
- Rental Income
- Other



- Charitable Programs
- Management & Administration
- Fundraising

# 2024–2026 Strategic Plan

## Progress Report

In our 2024–2026 strategic plan, we set out 4 ambitious goals to guide our work:



### **PILLAR #1: Discern growth**

Strengthen and possibly grow our core practice of providing transitional housing with live-in staff and volunteers.



### **PILLAR #2: Innovate our people model**

Continue experimenting with different staffing and volunteer models to find the best fit for our current needs.



### **PILLAR #3: Strengthen funding**

Improve our evaluation, communications, and revenue systems to support our program needs.



### **PILLAR #4: Make CHP sustainable**

Improve the Community Host Program and find sustainable funding.

To advance our Strategic Plan in 2025–2026, we will:

- Evaluate our new housing project, Edna Lane, and establish our ideal size, both in terms of residents and staff
- Pilot replacing the Worker Program with more House Coordinators and live-out staff
- Continue to strengthen our internal evaluation capacity by undertaking a large-scale evaluation project of Edna Lane
- Cultivate funding support for the Community Host Program, continuing to operate at partial capacity until additional funding is secured





**Romero  
House**

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