



2025-2026

Annual Report



Romero
House

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.

Table of Contents

Message from our Executive Director	2
Housing Programs	3
Immigration & Settlement Programs	5
Community Programming	7
Our Team	9
Our Partners	11
Our Finances	13
Looking Ahead	14



Message from the Executive Director



One of the paradoxes of this past year at Romero House is that we had fewer people seeking our support. Our transitional housing was always full, but fewer people showed up at our door without shelter or looking for settlement help.

In many ways, this is not good news. It reflects an increasingly restrictive environment for refugees in Canada and around the world. Behind the numbers are people who never made it to safety, people separated from family members, and people facing greater barriers to rebuilding their lives.

At the same time, this change gave us a rare opportunity to pause and strengthen the foundations of our work. We completed a major transition in our staffing model, moving away from the Intern/Worker Program that had been part of Romero House since the early 1990s. While the program transformed generations of young people and helped shape the spirit of Romero House, we recognized the need for greater continuity and stability for residents and staff alike. Today, community living remains at the heart of Romero House through our dedicated House Coordinators and live-in staff, supported by a strong full-time live-out team.

This year also allowed us to deepen our investment in community life. We expanded and strengthened programming for children and teens, continued settling into our newest building (Edna Lane), and improved the systems that help us support refugee families with warmth, consistency, and care.

As I reflect on the year, I am struck by the many people who make Romero House possible: residents and former residents, volunteers, House Coordinators, staff, neighbours, donors, and partners. Every day, I witness acts of generosity, resilience, friendship, and welcome.

Thank you for being part of this community. In a world that often feels divided and uncertain, your support helps ensure that refugee families arriving in Toronto can find not only housing and practical assistance, but also friendship, dignity, and a place to belong.

With gratitude,
Francesca Allodi-Ross

Transitional Housing

2025/2026

Turnover in our housing program returned to a more typical pace after several years of unusually rapid move-outs.

In recent years, programs such as the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) helped families move quickly into permanent housing. With fewer rent supplements available, residents faced greater challenges securing affordable housing and often needed to remain at Romero House for longer periods.

Our housing and settlement team is working with residents & adjusting to a changing housing landscape to find permanent housing.

Refugees Housed

	Moved in	Total
Families	9	27
People	39	110
Children	15	67

“

We would love to express our deepest gratitude for all the help, care, and love you have offered throughout the year. Your kindness, support, and dedication have made a meaningful difference during a very important chapter of our life.

You guys have been more than just a team to support, it has been a place of comfort, understanding, and encouragement. Every gesture, big or small, has been truly appreciated, and we will always carry this experience with us.

”

- Former Resident



Community Host Program

The 2025/2026 year closed with a **total of**

910

nights where refugees were housed by community hosts

Average # of nights **61**

Total # of matches **15**

Total # of available hosts **16**

Total # of guests who moved to permanent housing post-stay **4**



“

I wanted to let you know that my hosts are such a great people. I have never felt welcome in my life like they make me feel. I will always be grateful for Romero House for this opportunity. Thank you so much for letting me know these people.

”

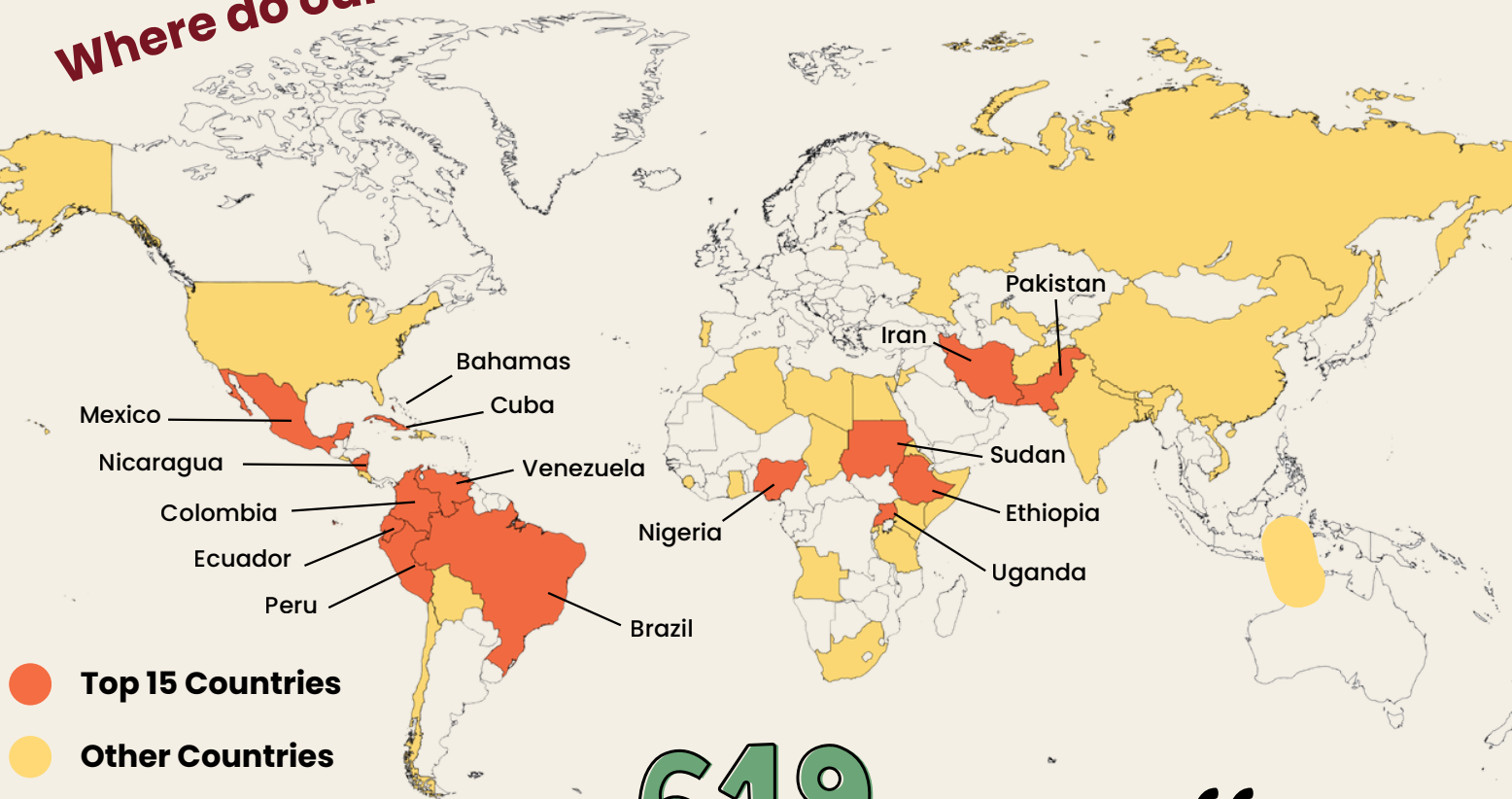
- Community Guest

We are proud of the lasting impact brought by the Community Host Program (CHP). Since March 2026, the CHP has been placed on pause as the demand for hosting placements has steadily declined. This shift reflects increasingly restrictive immigration policies and procedures that have reduced the number of newly arrived refugee claimants seeking temporary accommodation support.

We are grateful to all of our hosts and community supporters whose dedication made the program possible and meaningful for so many individuals seeking safety & stability in Toronto. If the need returns, we will be ready.

Immigration & Settlement Program

Where do our beneficiaries come from?



619

**Services
Provided**

+

432

**Households
Served**

“

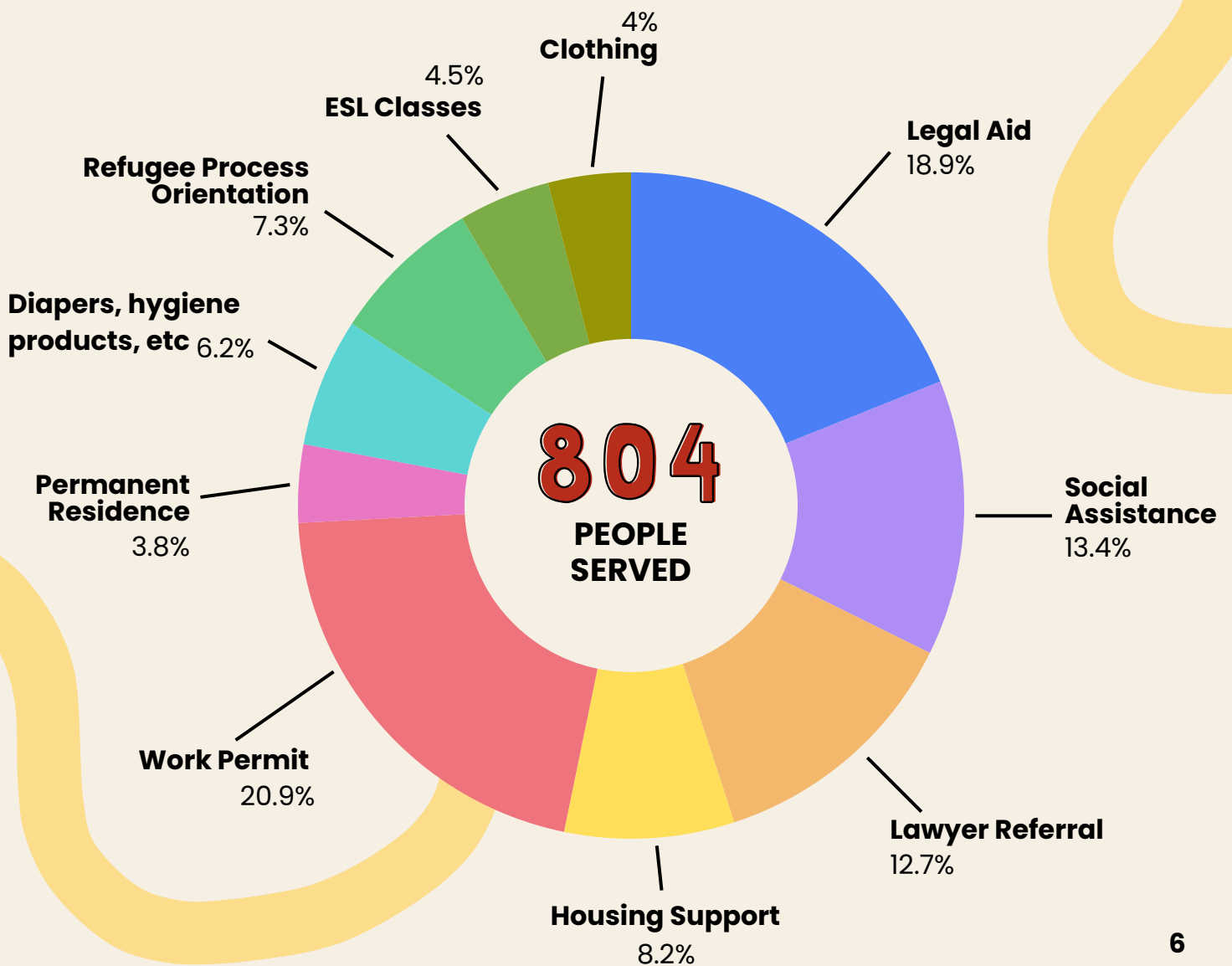
We appreciate all the effort and sense of belonging that each of you dedicates to us when we arrive to build a new future far from our countries, customs, and families. It is a beautiful act of humanity that allows us to move forward.

”

- Intake Guest



Top 10 services provided





Mary Jo's 80th Birthday
(Romero House Founder)



Monthly Resident Potluck

Community



March Break Kids Camp



Romero Moves 5km run



Beach Day



Romero Family Summer Camp

Programming



Niagara Falls Trip



Kids Club



Bob Rae Speaking at Mary Jo's birthday

Board of Directors

Alexi White, Amensisa Neway, Anil Varughese, Joan Leishman, Maureen Brosnahan, Michael McMorrow, Nina Solomun, Rahel Woldeselassie, Sara Guerrero, Shahid Akhtar, Tom Abel



Our Team

Staff

Ann Khatter, Francesca Allodi-Ross, Jalal Nazari, Jenn Stephenson, Karen Sierra, Marisol Larrea-Clark, Mary Jo Leddy, Masooma Ahmadi, Mercy Kiplagat, Oren Jungreis, Patrick King Mwesigye, Pax Ocampo, Rahima Paiman, Robbie Arzumanov, Robelin Severino, Sana'a Jaber, Vincent Smith, Yasmin Calderón



“

For me, the specialness of being a house coordinator comes from the small moments with residents that happen in passing: kids playing with a pot that they found, adults who don't speak the same language sharing food with each other, running into a bunch of Romero community members on the sidewalk all at the same time.

”

- House Coordinator

House Coordinators

Almustafa Abbas, Anjali Mishra, Carmen Bezner Kerr, Lucero Trujillo, Marlon Oyarce, Masooma Ahmadi, Matthias Leuprecht, Natalie Lau, Sarah Buisman

“

As a House Coordinator, my job is to be a good neighbour. But I do this with super neighbours who share smiles, friendship, and delicious meals as we go about our days. Mutuality is everywhere in this community of welcome.

”

- House Coordinator





Throughout the 2025/2026 year

100+

volunteers supported our work

Supporting walk-in clients & residents with settlement needs

Supporting the kids & youth at Romero House

Supporting our community events

Supporting residents with translation and ESL classes

Supporting our residents with social integration

**TOP 5
volunteer
roles**

THANK YOU

Organizational Partners

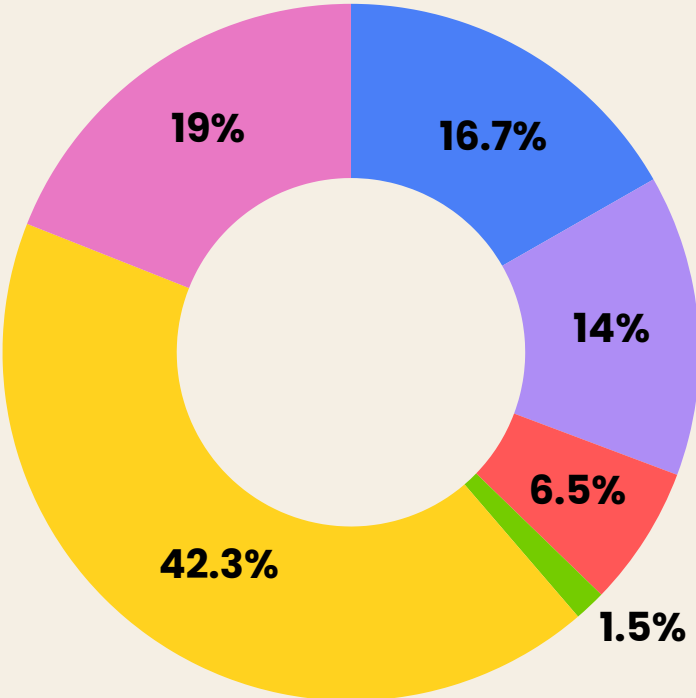


Thank you also to West End Book Club, Royal St. George's College, Great Lakes College of Toronto, Crestwood Preparatory College, and Osgoode Hall Law School.

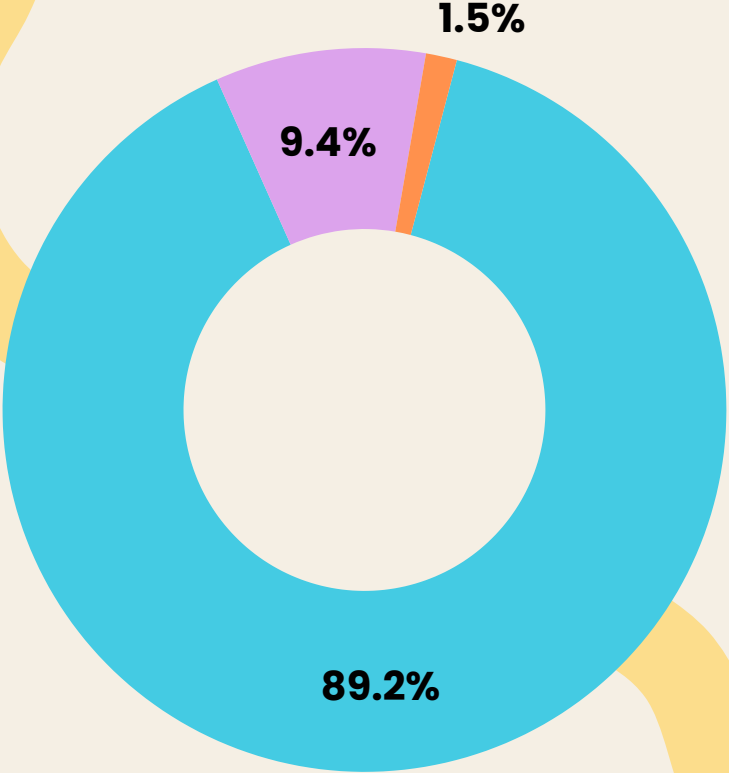
Revenue

- City of Toronto- Shelter
- City of Toronto- Housing
- Donations
- Grants
- Rental income
- Other income

Total= 1,917,317



Our Finances



Expenses

- Charitable Programs
- Management & Administration
- Other income

Total= 1,835,572

Looking ahead

We are now in the final year of our 2024–2026 Strategic Plan — and what a journey it has been. We doubled our housing capacity, made a significant transition in how we staff our homes, and adapted to a changing landscape for refugees in Canada. As we look ahead, we carry that momentum forward.



A space for one more family. We are planning to renovate the basement of one of our homes to welcome an additional family each year — a small but meaningful expansion of our core mission.

Evaluating change. Having grown for the first time in decades, we want to understand what this growth means for who we are. We will complete a thorough evaluation of how opening the Edna Lane transitional shelter has impacted us. We will also examine the transition from the Worker Program to House Coordinators. This evaluation will help us discern our ideal size and staffing model going forward.

A new strategic plan. We are navigating an increasingly challenging environment for refugees in Canada, and this context will shape the next chapter of our work. This year, we will begin developing our next strategic plan — asking fundamental questions about our mission, our theory of change, and the right size and scope of our work. As always, we will be guided by our values and the voices of our community.

Cover photo credit:
Alex Usquiano



**Romero
House**

romerohouse.org



Tel: 416-763-1303

1558 Bloor St. W.

Toronto, ON M6P 1A4