

Summer 2004

Lighthouse News

The Lighthouse Community Centre, 1008 Bathurst Street, Toronto, ON M5R 3G7 • 416-535-6262

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Uniting Families

There are so many heartbreaking stories that we deal with at the Lighthouse involving our immigration system. We feel the pain of families that have been separated because of "rules" that often appear to make no sense.

The Guzman family has endured many such separations. Alejandro came to Canada from Chile as a convention refugee and several years later sponsored his wife, Ana, and children to come as landed immigrants. Immigration allowed only Ana and their youngest child to come leaving the four older children who were over 18 in Chile.

The next year Milagro, one of the daughters, and her two boys came to Canada. Ana, Milagro and the children were clients of the Lighthouse starting in 1996 when Ana brought her grandsons to our summer camp and then became a volunteer with the food bank.

Milagro was denied refugee status, but in the meantime had been married here, and her husband had filled out the papers to sponsor her and the boys. The lawyer they had hired, however, did not submit the papers, and so she and her sons had to return to Chile.

Shortly thereafter, Milagro was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease, and her husband withdrew his sponsorship on learning of her illness.

Ana and Alejandro began to try to bring Milagro and her boys back to Canada, where they could offer care and support for each other before yet another separation - her death. Ana was already working to

send money to Milagro so that they could survive in Chile. This year, while still not getting any commitment from immigration, they brought the boys to Canada on a temporary visa because Milagro could no longer look after them. They are in the process of adopting the boys.

In 2002 Samia, our Hispanic counsellor, became involved along with a team of people including Amnesty International staff and the Guzman's pastor and lawyer. They contacted politicians and collected 2000 signatures asking to let Milagro come to Canada on compassionate and humanitarian grounds where her family could care for her, and she could die with as much dignity as possible. The family has set up a trust fund for her and have assured Canadian authorities that they will cover all expenses, but still no response after several years.

Samia says that the team will meet again to plan new strategy, but that as Milagro's health quickly deteriorates they are getting tired and angry.

In Spanish Milagro means "miracle" That at the moment is what many people are praying for.





Due Thinh Nguyen, left, & Kim Ha, centre, share some memories with former director Dirk Jongkind

Celebration of Friendship

On Saturday, June 4 about 50 people gathered for a reunion of people who had been refugees sponsored over the past 25 years by The Lighthouse. It was delightful to see them renew old acquaintances and hear them tell their children things such as, "This was the person that met me at the airport when I arrived in Canada." Dirk Jongkind spoke about his memories of The Lighthouse and former executive directors Cindy Dickson and Ed Vandenberg were also present. We enjoyed music by Chosen, a youth band from Richmond Hill Chinese Baptist Church, and a wonderful array of food at the potluck dinner.



Income Tax

Thanks You To The Volunteers Who Completed Over 300 Income Tax Returns.

Alex Chan	Jennifer Sin
Andrew Elliott	Bill Wassenaar
Fred Heerema	Ad Welmers
Liana Ma	George VanDyk
Wilson Man	Ary Vender Hoeven
Tim Nguyen	Brian Zettler



Phone-A-Thon

In our annual Spring Phone-A-Thon to church members and supporters in the Toronto area, 400 people have generously responded with pledges over \$31,000. Without denominational or government funds, it is this type of support that keeps us going from month to month. Thank you!

Don't Plan Anything Else

Saturday, November 13 International Dinner & Silent Auction

Celebration and Fundraising
 Great Food! Great Fellowship!
 Great Christmas Shopping!
 New & Improved Central Location
 Columbus Hall at Lawrence & Dufferin
 Reservations Required
 More Information To Follow

Since 1968, the needs, responses, and programs have changed from time to time. But the one constant throughout all this has been the focus of sharing with others the Love and Compassion of our Lord.

Both change and consistency has continued this past year. We continue to stress the value and importance of refugee sponsorship. We are encouraging others to do more of the paperwork details, but the Lighthouse continues to be a resource on refugee issues and information, and especially dealing with difficult issues and problems for those who are already here.

We have been able to assist on a number of refugee and immigration hearings, helping to make sure their true situations are heard. We have given trauma and family counseling, intervened in abuse and other life-threatening situations, and dealt with generational problems with children and seniors.

This past year we have had life skills workshops and seminars on topics such as health, nutrition, cooking, sewing, crafts, parenting, family relationships, abuse, ESL, and employment. There are support groups, and people who meet for Bible study. I even had the privilege hearing recently arrived newcomers, who knew no English, proudly sing O Canada. That brought tears to my eyes for more than one reason.

Despite the changing demographics of our area, children remain an important part of what we do. Our Hispanic program in the summer includes a special "Mothers & Children" group, working separately and together to create Christian family relationships. Last summer we were privileged to have the Community CRC youth pastor and youth team conduct our VBS week a unique experience for everyone.

The neighbourhood is changing but there is increased wealth for some, and increased poverty for others. Volunteers who helped complete over 300 income tax returns for low-income residents can't help but wonder how one lives on \$6240 per year in Toronto.

Some of the street front "apartments" are tiny, run-down rooms with kitchen and bathroom privileges in exchange for high rents. These are the folks who need our Food Bank those on social assistance, seniors on fixed incomes, the working poor, and those medically unable to work or lead a normal life. We went from 800 food hampers in 1998 to a predicted 2400 hampers this year. We receive most of our food through the Toronto Daily Bread and the Second Harvest, supplemented this past year by the overwhelming response by the Toronto area churches to use our "Blessing Bags".

We are privileged to have an outstanding gifted and dedicated staff. Rita Wong, Samia Saad, and Thuy Tran are the Program Coordinators for their respective Chinese, Hispanic, and Vietnamese communities, and provide counselling and leadership in assisting those in need. Our Ministry Support person, Janet Elliott has responded to the tremendous growing demands of the Emergency Food Bank.

Probably the most difficult part of these extremely difficult jobs is listening to the hurts and pains of people, the anguished cries for help, the loneliness, the despair. How wonderful, then, to be able to reassure others of the love of God, his mercies and his grace.

Where possible, we join in partnerships to stretch limited resources. As an organization, we have a good working relationship with many others, from urban Christian ministries to government departments and church bodies. Our hardworking and supportive Board of Directors is diverse, and brings a broad range of experience, expertise, and connections.

Financially, we wish we would be in better shape. A decrease in contributions from churches last year was one of the reasons for finishing with a deficit, and beginning 2004 into our line of credit at the bank. Our budget is tight, with very little flexibility. Churches and individuals have reacted positively so far in 2004, but we have a long way to go.

Lives are being changed. The cup of cold water is given. People are being told of the Love of our Lord. This ministry needs your direction, your encouragement, support, prayers, and gifts to keep it in operation. That you have done so for over 35 years is a testament to God's faithfulness and grace.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS OPERATING BUDGET

REVENUE	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>% CHNG</u>
Churches, Classis			
Toronto Churches,	66,864	59,314	- 11 %
Other Donations,	33,109	29,881	- 10%
Fundraising Grants,	122,455	128,563	+ 5%
Fees, misc.	<u>13,179</u>	<u>9,506</u>	- 28%
Total:	235,607	227,264	- 3%
EXPENSES			
Salary & Benefits	186,193	198,756	+ 7%
Office & Administration	19,083	23,092	+ 21 %
Building & Occupancy	9,821	9,992	+ 2%
Direct Program	12,465	13,111	+ 5%
Expenses Fundraising	<u>4,935</u>	<u>4,096</u>	- 17%
Total:	232,497	249,047	+ 7%

Surplus (Deficit) 3,110 (21,783)

- Revenue from churches was down significantly
- Fundraising and promotional efforts increased donations
- Grants vary from year to year
- Office expense included purchase of some new equipment
- Most of salary is towards programs
- Contributions came from 68 churches, 637 individuals, and a number of businesses, organizations, and planned giving programs
- 5000 volunteer hours are not reflected in these financial statements
- As there are no retained funds, all expenses need to be met from current cash flows. We began 2004 already into the line of credit, which has put a huge strain on this year's work

Board of Directors

Alex Chan
Tine Houtman
Peter Jagt
Jessica Miedema
Trudy Ormel
Patricia Rodriguez
Ed Smit
George VanDyk
Jim Visser

Staff

Ben Vanderlugt-Executive Director
ben@lighthousecentre.ca

Rita Wong-Chinese-Coordinator
rita@lighthousecentre.ca

Samia Saad-Hispanic Coordinator
samia@lighthousecentre.ca

Thuy Tran-Vietnamese Coordinator
thuy@lighthousecentre.ca

Janet Elliott-Ministry Support
janet@lighthousecentre.ca

Miguel Avila-Custodian

Help Us To Help Others Help Themselves

The Lighthouse does not receive any public funds for its programs.
We rely on freewill offerings and donations from churches, individuals, businesses, and organizations.
Yes, I would like to help with a donation of \$ _____

Cheque Enclosed

VISA Number _____ Expiry Date: _____

Please Mail your contribution to:
The Lighthouse
1008 Bathurst Street
Toronto, ON M5R 3G7

Name _____
Address _____

City _____ Code _____

Receipts will be issued in the new year.

Canada Customs and Revenue Agency #13036 3740 RR0001

Other Ways to Help-Contact us for details

- United Way Payroll Deduction-just provide our CCRA# and address
- Matched Corporate Giving-many companies match employee donations
- Monthly Visa Donation-makes it easy for you and for us