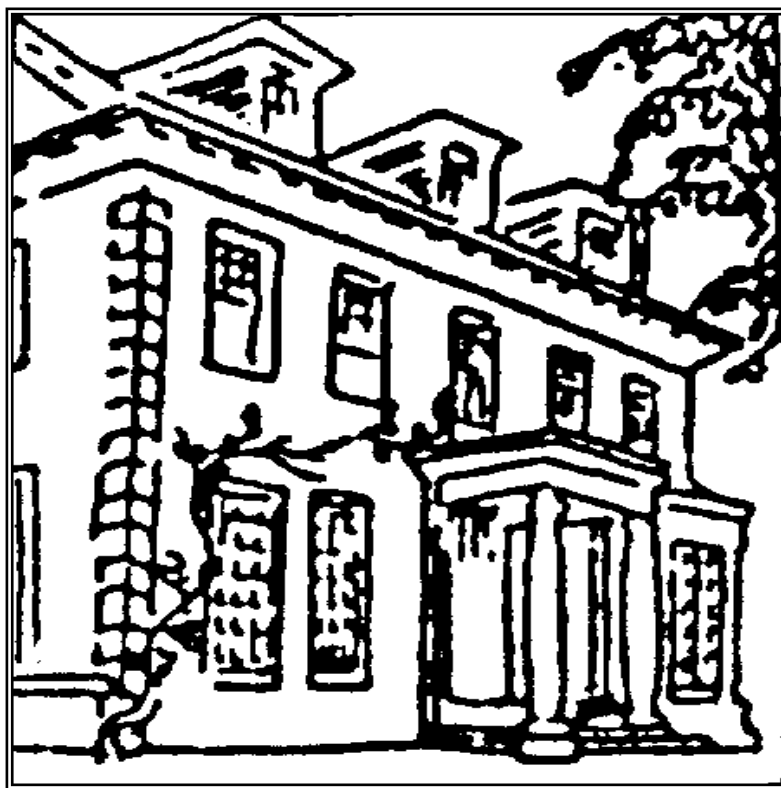


The Toronto Monthly Meeting Quaker Refugee Committee



Members of the Committee during 2010.

Brydon Gombay (Clerk)

Frank Showler

Fred Franklin

Judy Pocock

Sarah Hall

Eusebio Garcia (Refugee and
Settlement Worker)

Annual Report
2010

In the course of 2010 we were able to assist 303 people through our Direct Service Program, as well as aiding 761 people in detention, through the Toronto Refugee Affairs Council (TRAC), and 86 people through the refugee camp.

Our program offers the following services to the community:

- General and settlement Counseling
- Interpreters and escorts
- Translations
- Case assessment to refer to other programs and organizations.
- Weekly visits to people in detention.

The program fills many functions, such as providing information, orientation, assistance with documentation, advocacy and counseling. In general, the problems that people need help with are in areas such as immigration, citizenship, unemployment, pensions, taxes, housing, and social assistance.

Throughout the years our office has held the distinction of being smaller than other settlement agencies, yet having the capacity to deal with a great number of enquiries and problems. This is partly due to the level of coordination between the staff and members of the Quaker Refugee Committee, who spend much time networking and consulting with the federal government on matters that affect the wellbeing of those who come to Canada as refugees or new immigrants. As in previous years, the staff makes a particular effort to reach out to refugee claimants, convention refugees and new immigrants, although we also continue to serve anyone who comes to us in search of assistance.

In this time of changes and cutbacks in the settlement community, and more restricted immigration policies towards newcomers, we can renew our commitment - thanks to the generosity of our donors - to client-centred, accessible and effective services that are not dependent upon government support which may be easily withdrawn. This year it was agreed that our office should be named The Nancy Pocock Room, to commemorate the Friend who started helping refugees in the seventies, making that help for refugees from many countries her life's work. Our committee has followed her leading ever since, and we plan a celebration of this new name in the near future.

The tables below provide some statistical and demographic information about the people who have received assistance from the office at Friends House in Toronto.

Table A

Nationality of People served

Afghanistan	5
Angola	2
Algeria	2
Czech Republic	1
Colombia	75
Costa Rica	19
Cuba	9
Chile	3
China	5
Dominican Republic	7
Ecuador	15
El Salvador	13
Ghana	2
Georgia	2
Guatemala	12
Guyana	3
Grenada	11
Honduras	11
Iran	4
Iraq	3
Liberia	3
Mexico	33
Nicaragua	12
Namibia	1
Tanzania	1
Sierra Leone	2
St. Lucia	5
St. Vincent	4
Somalia	4
Sudan	5
Paraguay	5
Peru	9
Pakistan	5
Poland	2
Uganda	3
Venezuela	5
Total	303

Table B

Types of Services provided to Refugees at Friends House

Application forms	145
Certification of documents	34
Food and transportation	3
Furniture bank appointments	14
Intake forms for Christmas party	50
Income taxes	20
Letters	45
Long term housing	9
Oral interpretation (lawyer's office)	25
Personal Information Form (PIF) assistance	15
Referrals	129
Resume writing	1
Short term housing (shelters)	32
Translations	91
Telephone calls	1,550
Grand Total	2,163

Table C

Immigration Status of People Assisted

Convention refugees	71
Caregivers	5
Failed refugee claimants	55
Landed immigrants	85
Persons without status	10
Refugee claimants	62
Temporary residents (Students, temporary workers and visitors)	15
Total	303

Children's Christmas Party



Thanks to the generosity of CHUM Christmas Wish and the work of many volunteers our 2010 Christmas party was a great success.

The evening program started with the MC providing a bit of background of this special occasion at the Quaker House stories about "Mama Nancy" and her constant persistence in holding a special event at Christmas for refugee children.

This time more than a hundred children and their parents enjoyed this special activity; they had an opportunity to be greeted by Judy Pocock, "Mama Nancy's" daughter, who shared with them the traditional Christmas story, Elizabeth Block, a folk singer, potter and regular volunteer shared some Christmas songs, and "El Gusanito Pirolon" a puppet show that makes children and adults laugh while creating a family environment. It was a real joy to see some children volunteering to play the guitar and sing.

This time, a Salvadoran Santa Claus closed the evening with a big hug, a picture and a gift for every child present. Although the man who play Santa was shy and reluctant to play the role at first he surprisingly ended up being enthusiastic and playing his role perfectly.

Special thanks to all those volunteers who helped with the present wrapping, and the preparation and distribution of the food.

Refugee Summer Camp



As in previous years, the Quaker Refugee Committee organized a Refugee Camp for new immigrants, non-status and refugee families. For most newcomers who have never been out of Toronto going to Muskoka is a marvellous gift and revelation. Some of them have experienced incredible stress and difficult adjustment as we have helped them to overcome barriers to public services, and many other problems. Refugee camp is a wonderful way to welcome them and make them feel accepted, counteracting their feelings of loneliness and isolation. With the help of many volunteers, we were able to teach them not to be afraid of wild animals, and to enjoy the camp's natural environment, as well as learning about the ways in which they can protect that. Adults and children also joined in recreation activities such as art, singing together, canoeing, swimming, cooking sessions, sports and karaoke.

Thanks to the 86 participants from Tanzania, Congo, Iran, Ethiopia, Uganda, Oman, Somalia, Gabon, Chile, El Salvador, Colombia, Paraguay, Mexico and Nicaragua, this year's camp was a success despite the inclement, cold and rainy weekend. Without a doubt, Camp Nee-kau-nis was a great joy for all the children and adults who were part of the group. We are grateful to Future Watch and the Salvadoran-Canadian Association for their constant support and collaboration in this common effort. Special thanks are due to the Camp Committee and to Amanda Mckinnon, Helen Melbourne and Elizabeth Block for their dedication and invaluable hours of work.

Detention Report

One of the constant challenges for the Toronto Refugee Affairs Council (TRAC) and the staff at the immigration holding centre is to be able to work well under what are now more restricted regulations, while at the same time maintaining good relations with members of the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). Despite these restrictions, we serve those who are in detention to the best of our abilities, through the Ontario Detention Network.

TRAC maintains and supports our presence at the Holding Centre two days a week, on Mondays and Thursdays. We benefit there from the cooperation of the Refugee Law Office, Legal Aid, committed lawyers and shelters. The Red Cross and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees continue to pay periodic visits to monitor the conditions of people detained at the facility.

We serve two groups of people there: new arrivals, and those who have overstayed their status in the country. In either case, our priority is to provide orientation, to make sure they understand why they are detained, to refer them to Legal Aid, shelters, and other services available to them.

In the spring of 2010 we started participating in a research team's study of the impact of detention on the mental health of vulnerable asylum seekers conducted by a group of researchers from McGill University and Mount Sinai Hospital and in partnership with TRAC and Action Réfugiés Montréal (ARM).

One of the goals of this study is to document the impact of detention in Canada on the psychological health of adult asylum seekers, with a particular focus on especially vulnerable persons such as pregnant women and parents with young children. We hope that this study and its findings will contribute to our ongoing efforts to promote greater acceptance of the use of alternatives to detention, through highlighting the effect of detention on the most vulnerable groups, when a systematic and compelling report is published at the end of the study.

We recognize the continuing need to work with other NGOs and government bodies to be able to maintain a tradition of service and our commitment to assist those detained. This is well done thanks to the outstanding role played by Fred Franklin, with his vast diplomatic experience and expertise in this field.

The number of people served at the immigration holding centre in 2010 by the staff at the TRAC office reflects only a small portion of the people detained. These numbers and their nationalities always seem to fluctuate although they are given here to provide an idea of the population of detainees as they face their imminent removal from or release into our country.

The tables below reflect the services provided to a portion of the population at the Immigration Holding Centre. They also give a sense of peoples' nationalities, and immigration status. Our presence at the detention center provides a link between detainees and outside community agencies such as the Refugee Law Office, Legal Aid Ontario, and Sojourn House.

Table D. People Served at the Holding Centre

Afghanistan	16	Grenada	1	Portugal	6
Albania	6	Guinea-Bissau	2	Rwanda	1
Algeria	1	Guatemala	4	Russia	2
Angola	13	Guyana	1	Rwanda	1
Antigua	2	Haiti	2	Slovak Republic	1
Australia	1	Honduras	4	Sudan	1
Argentina	2	Hungary	16	St. Lucia	59
Barbados	5	India	20	St. Kitts	1
Belarus	2	Indonesia	5	St. Vincent	46
Bolivia	1	Iran	18	Turkey	2
Botswana	2	Iraq	11	Trinidad	6
Brazil	9	Israel	5	Uganda	4
Cameroon	2	Italy	6	Ukraine	4
Chad	2	Jamaica	40	Uruguay	1
China	34	Jordan	2	Venezuela	1
Chile	2	Kazakhstan	1	Viet Nam	3
Colombia	12	Kenya	3	Total	761
Congo	1	Latvia	2		
Costa Rica	13	Lebanon	1		
Czech Republic	1	Malta	1		
Croatia	4	Turkey	1		
Dominica	6	Turks Islands	1		
Dominican Republic	1	Thailand	3		
Ecuador	3	Russia	3		
Egypt	8	Serbia	1		
El Salvador	8	Somalia	8		
Ethiopia	6	Slovakia	1		
Eritrea	12	Sri Lanka	15		
Estonia	1	Mexico	149		
Grenada	9	Nicaragua	1		
Ghana	7	Nigeria	74		
		Pakistan	21		
		Peru	1		
		Philippines	6		

Table E
Number of people by immigrant status

Live-in caregivers *	2
Failed Refused claimants	358
Safe Third Country **detained (Not eligible to make a claim in Canada)	11
Sponsorship breakdowns	10
Overstayed farm workers	8
Overstayed student visas	5
Overstayed visitors	47
Visitors (held on suspicion)	119
Withdrawal of Claim	14
Refugee claimants	187
Total	761

*Individuals who are qualified to provide care for children, elderly persons or persons with disabilities in private homes without supervision.

** Canada/US Agreement. Refugee claimants are required to request refugee protection in the first safe country they arrive in, unless they qualify for an exception to the Agreement.

Networks

We consult and work with national networks, such as the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR), Anglican United Refugee Alliance (AURA), Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives (KAİROS), Red Cross, Amnesty International, the Ontario Coalition of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), and many other community agencies, shelters, and legal clinics.

Thank you

The Quaker Committee for Refugees remains true to our mandate to continue serving the needs of the refugees and new immigrants so they can integrate and participate in Canadian society. Our capacity to assist the number of people mentioned at the beginning of this report would not have been possible without the assistance and support of many individuals and the following organizations:

The Toronto Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
Samuel Rogers Memorial Trust
Canadian Friends Service Committee
The Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception
The Donald Berman Foundation
Rob Adamson Memorial Trust
CHUM Charitable Foundation
Camp Nee-kau-nis Committee of CYM
Argenta Monthly Meeting
Kitchener Monthly Meeting
Individual Donors

In 2010 the expenses of the QCR were slightly over \$ 51,000.00. All of this money was received from the donors named above, and was administered by the Treasurer of Toronto Monthly Meeting (TMM). All donations to the QCR are spent on the work of the committee, which is required to raise these funds to pay for all its expenses. As a concern of the TMM (Quakers), the Refugee Committee is a federally approved charitable organization (#11926-6955-RR0001). We are always grateful for donations sent to Toronto Monthly Meeting, 60 Lowther Avenue, Toronto, ON M5R 1C7, with Quaker Committee for Refugees in the Memo line.

Our services to refugees are all provided free of charge. With only one paid staff member, volunteers on the QCR as well as volunteers and other members of TMM do the rest of our work. We are grateful to Toronto Monthly Meeting for the welcoming space it so generously provides for our work, the Resident Friends who facilitate that welcome, and all the donors and funding foundations that make our work possible.

