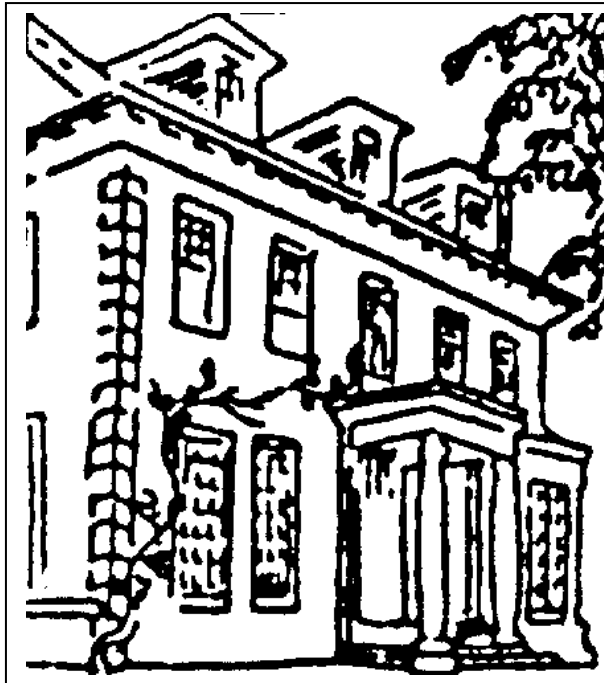


## The Toronto Monthly Meeting Quaker Refugee Committee



**Members of the  
Committee during  
2009.**

Annual Report  
2009

Brydon Gombay (Clerk)

Frank Showler

Fred Franklin

Judy Pocock

Sarah Hall

Eusebio Garcia (Refugee and  
Settlement Worker)

## Clerk's Message

Canada has a long history of providing a safe haven for refugees and immigrants. Early immigrants to this country were often refugees themselves, escaping from the War of Independence in the United States, or the potato famine in Ireland. Over the years Canada has accepted refugees fleeing from countries around the globe, for fear of persecution because of their race, nationality, sexual orientation, religion or political views.

In Toronto, the Quaker Committee for Refugees continues providing services for refugee claimants, convention refugees, and newly- arrived landed immigrants, both at Friends House and the Immigration Holding Centre out near Pearson airport.

Our strategy of working together with other agencies to improve our community portfolio is based on the need to increase our organizational and financial capacity while fulfilling the committee's mission and mandate. In following the trend from previous years, the committee makes a special effort to reach out particularly to refugee claimants and Convention refugees, although we continue to serve anyone who comes knocking at our door.

Our clients come from diverse parts of the province, including Mississauga, Brampton, Milton, Kitchener and the Greater Toronto Area. It's worth mentioning that we constantly receive phone calls and e-mail inquiries from potential new immigrants from Latin American countries and the United States.

This past year the activities of the Refugee Committee were characterized by significant advocacy work done by the Clerk and the TRAC Detention Committee Coordinator. Letters were sent to Members of Parliament, public servants and the Prime Minister of Canada asking for their prompt assistance. Unfortunately such letters often went unanswered, despite the serious needs they represented.

The committee continues its work of maintaining our programs and activities through implementing and developing policies which create and strengthen our priorities. Without a doubt, our achievements would not have been possible without the active participation of each committee member and our dedicated group of volunteers. We are grateful to all of them for their work, and above all to Eusebio Garcia, whose work for the refugees he serves is beyond compare. As well as thanking to all these people, we wish to thank 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 across the country who make our work possible. Through your generous support, we hope to continue working for the wellbeing and strengthening of our community, easing the lives of refugees, and of those who are in detention here through no fault of their own.

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
Argentina	8
Algeria	5
Czech Republic	5
Colombia	81
Congo	2
Costa Rica	15
Cuba	4
Chile	5
Dominica	7
Dominican Republic	5
Ecuador	11
Uganda	1
El Salvador	15
Ghana	1
Guatemala	11
Guyana	3
Grenada	1
Honduras	15
Iran	7
Iraq	3
Mexico	40
Nicaragua	5
Nigeria	10
Sierra Leone	1
Tanzania	3
St. Vincent	11
Somalia	5
Sudan	3
Peru	7
Pakistan	4
Philippines	5
Venezuela	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>307</b>

**Table B**

Types of Services provided to Refugees at Friends House

Application forms	165
Attended court hearings	1
Certification of documents	30
Food and transportation	15
Furniture bank appointments	11
Intake forms for Christmas party	48
Income taxes	23
Letters	30
Long term housing	8
Oral interpretation (lawyer's office)	20
Personal Information Form (PIF) assistance	16
Referrals	123
Resume writing	2
Short term housing (shelters)	30
Translations	87
Telephone calls received	1,500
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,109</b>

**Table C**

Immigration Status of People Assisted

Convention refugees	54
Caregivers	8
Failed refugee claimants	52
Landed immigrants	81
Persons without status	6
Refugee claimants	95
Temporary residents (Students, temporary workers and visitors)	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>307</b>



## **Children Christmas Party**

Volunteers are an important component in the life and work of the committee. As usual many of them provided much-needed services in the organization and distribution of food to more than a hundred children and their parents at the Christmas party.

The Christmas party is an annual event to welcome a stranger in a new land. As in previous years Friends House in Toronto was once again filled with music, children playing, cooking, pleasant running around, friendly conversations and the traditional refugee history of little Jesus. Santa Claus closed the evening with a big hug and a present for every child, leaving the building to great applause and appreciation from all who attended.

This special celebration would not have been possible without the support of Chum Christmas Wish, the Salvadoran Canadian Association of Toronto and many other friends of the Quaker Refugee Committee who made this event a memorable one for all the children.



## **Refugee Summer Camp**

The summer camp is the result of a partnership between the Salvadoran-Canadian Association, Future Watch and the Quaker Committee for Refugees. The program includes swimming, cannoing, baseball and soccer activities. Saturday night is a cultural journey where all participants share cultural games, songs and dances. Sunday is a mix of videos and films in the meeting room, and at nigh people gather around a fireplace, where children enjoy their marshmallows and adults sing songs and tell jokes. The art program includes the creation of crafts by children and adults who exhibit their artistic talent during our last day at the camp. An average of 80 people attended from different parts of the World. They register to work in groups since there is no paid staff. The result of these activities is a bonding experience that turns the camp into a very successful venture. In the end, Campers were very positive about the camp and responsible for their camp duties.

We would like to give special thanks to Amanda, Lyn Adamson, Elizabeth Brock and Helen Melbourne who gave so much of their time to make of the 2009 refugee camp a successful one.

## **Detention Report**

Our presence and work at the Immigration Holding Centre is under the aegis of TRAC, the Toronto Refugee Affairs Council. Fred Franklin of our committee, as the coordinator of the TRAC detention committee has oversight of the NGO staff at the Centre, and acts as liaison between TRAC workers and Senior CBSA Staff.

TRAC maintains and supports workers at the Immigration Holding Centre on two days per week. Our staff person, on loan from the Quaker Committee for Refugees, is present on Thursdays. A second worker, whose base is the FCJ Refugee Centre, is present every Monday. Both cooperate closely with a paralegal from the Refugee Law Office of Legal Aid Ontario (RLO) who comes in on Tuesdays and Wednesdays to offer summary advice and to interview and to represent needy detainees at Detention Reviews.

Our focus and priority at the Holding Centre are refugees. We try to see all new arrivals at least once, to find out what is their status, whether they have retained a lawyer, and to make sure they (and we ourselves) understand why they are detained etc, so we can advise on detention reviews and services available to help them through the process.

Fred has been instrumental in concluding a Protocol, a Working Agreement between CBSA and TRAC, and organizing the now regular meetings with CBSA, fostering ongoing good relations to support our work for the benefit of the detainees.

This ongoing dialogue concerning improvements needed in order to adequately meet the needs of those in detention has over time resulted in a paid teacher for children, a room set aside as a chapel, bible study, better attention to Health Services and to Mental Health, the services of a Psychologist volunteering time on Sunday mornings, as well as a better equipped office. The coordination of all this work is done by Fred Franklin whose long time service to refugees in and out of detention is respected and has resulted in friendship and cooperation with refugee advocates as well as officials.

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	7	Grenada	19	Portugal	3
Angola	1	Guatemala	1	United Arab Emirates	4
Albania	7	Guyana	6	Uzbekistan	1
Argentina	15	Haiti	4	Russia	3
Aruba	1	Hungary	10	Rwanda	2
Bangladesh	10	India	2	Senegal	3
Barbados	3	Iran	8	Somalia	1
Botswana	1	Israel	7	South Africa	1
Burundi	1	Ivory Coast	1	Sri Lanka	5
Brazil	10	Jamaica	33	St. Lucia	52
Cambodia	2	Kenya	5	St. Kitts	6
China	33	Kosovo	1	St. Vincent	72
Chile	3	South Korea	8	Thailand	7
Colombia	12	Liberia	2	Tibet	1
Congo	5	Laos	1	Turkey	1
Costa Rica	20	Libya	3	Trinidad	19
Cuba	4	Malaysia	2	Uganda	2
Czech Republic	1	Myanmar	1	Ukraine	7
Democratic Republic of Congo	5	Mexico	175	Uruguay	8
Dominican Republic	1	Morocco	2	Uzbekistan	1
Ecuador	2	Namibia	5	Viet Nam	3
El Salvador	9	Nicaragua	6	Zimbabwe	3
Ethiopia	1	Nigeria	50	<b>Total</b>	<b>749</b>
Georgia	2	Pakistan	12		
Ghana	2	Peru	2		
Ghutan	1	Philippines	9		
		Poland	10		

**Table E**

**Number of people by immigrant status**

Live-in caregivers *	8
Failed Refused claimants	275
Sponsorship breakdowns	9
Overstayed farm workers	91
Overstayed student visas	56
Overstayed visitors	105
Refugee claimants	205
<b>Total</b>	<b>749</b>

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



## **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 provides an invaluable service to hundreds of refugees and new migrants every year. We rely on the assistance and support of many individuals and organizations to make that possible, and we are so grateful for ongoing financial support from:

### Individual Donors

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  
Nancy's Very Own Foundation  
Argenta Monthly Meeting  
Kitchener Monthly Meeting

In 2009 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).

Our services to refugees are all provided free of charge. With only one paid staff member, volunteers on the QCR as well as other members of the TMM do the rest of our work. We are grateful to Toronto Monthly Meeting for offering us office and meeting space, as well as a welcoming atmosphere to the refugees who come to the door of Friends' House seeking help.