Carty House is a transitional home and a community for refugee women in Ottawa

CARTY HOUSE

FALL 2012

We are now online at www.cartyhouse.org

We have now officially launched our Carty House website, with the help and expertise of Tom Fotheringham (a Board Member) and Erika Balarezo (a graduate from Algonquin College).

THE BUMPY ROAD TO FAMILY REUNIFICATION

"I came to live at Carty House in July 2011. Shortly after I had arrived here, I received news that my husband passed away leaving our two children (6 and 8) without any parent in the country. I liked the manner in which I was treated upon my arrival at Carty House. I appreciated the assistance I received, for my studies, for looking for work, for looking for a place to live, and the help in assisting in all the difficulties with immigration. I am most appreciative of all the help that Sister Maureen has given me during some very difficult moments in the past year, and continues to give. Carty house is a calm and beautiful place.

I left Carty House July 29, 2012 and moved to subsidized housing. They will relocate us at a reasonable cost, when the children arrive.

In August I went to visit my children (now aged 7and 9) in Kenya as my cousin, who was caring for them, was moving. Twice I went with my kids to the High Commission of Canada office in Nairobi for help with the process of bringing them back with me to Canada. Security people did not allow me in to see the High Commissioner even though I showed them my permanent residence papers. I then wrote to the High Commission of Canada office in Nairobi via email to explain the situation and was told to contact the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) office in Mississauga. (Here I was in Kenya.) I tried many times to call the number given to me but never received a response. Sadly, I had to return to Canada without the children and immediately began to followC up with all the issues involved with my case.

I have found someone to care for my children for 3 months, while I anxiously await the outcome of my claim to have my children join me in Ottawa."

Dative

INTRODUCING TWO NEW CARTY HOUSE COORDINATORS

This fall finds us in a time of change and transition in more ways than one.

The community here at Carty House is diverse, with current residents from Rwanda, Congo, Burundi, Namibia, and a new resident from Colombia. We are honoured to be here and to work alongside such courageous women. We are humbled and enriched by their lives and experiences every day.

September brought with it a new school semester for many of the residents: ESL classes, Personal Support Worker program, Childcare Worker training, and Adult High School. The women are pursuing their educational and career goals, and many are also busy working.

We have hosted several in-house workshops at the House. These are a chance for the residents to gain skills and resources on a variety of different topics. We had guest speakers facilitate workshops on Budgeting & Financial Literacy, Women's Health, Refugee Law, Housing Help and Healthy Eating. From this programming, we have developed strong relationships with Entraide Budgetaire, Housing Help, Catholic Immigration Centre, Somerset West and Sandy Hill Community Health Centres.

From our outreach at the University of Ottawa and Algonquin College, we welcome new volunteers this fall. Some are working on fundraising, developing a Refugee Network, website design, ESL conversation and piano tutoring.

This year we have seen unprecedented challenges for women at Carty House and for refugees across the country. From the Federal Government cuts to refugee health coverage in June, followed by the passing of the anti-immigrant Bill C-31 in July, these repressive policies have made it increasingly difficult for refugees to settle here in Canada, and lead healthy dignified lives. As we embark on the year ahead, let us pay tribute to the courage and resilience of refugee women, and advocate for real immigration reform that ensures justice and dignity for all immigrants and refugees. For the right to remain, the freedom to move and the right to return!

We thank all of the donors, volunteers, Board members and residents who together sustain the Carty House community. Your contributions are integral to our work.

We look forward to working together in the year ahead!

Lena McFarlane, Residents'/Program Coordinator

*Glennie-Ruth Allum-Graves, House/*Residents' Coordinator

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Volunteers who contribute in a variety of ways are an important asset at Carty House.

An example is Karen Fee, who in addition to sharing her warm personality with the residents, she has taught piano lessons at the house. Karen studied piano to the grade 10 level and taught piano classes in the Ottawa School Board while she was a university student.

Later, Karen received training as a spiritual director at the Centre for Spiritual Growth in Carty House before it became a transitional home for refugee women. She participated in the life of the Centre for Spiritual Growth through 2006 and has continued to provide spiritual direction, using space at Carty House. Through this connection Karen became familiar with Carty House and its residents.

When a piano was donated to Carty House, Karen realized that she could offer piano lessons to interested residents. Over the course of a year and a half, Karen worked with Juliet, now a past resident. By the end of that time, Juliet had progressed to the point of being able to perform a duet with Karen at Carty House's AGM.

The Board and residents truly appreciate Karen's gift of time and talent, and we look forward to her sharing her gift of music in the future.

Nancy MacDonald

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

This year we have been engaged in the process of transitioning to a viable NGO. The process has mandated several changes in the structure of the management of the House, has caused much stress and generated many blessings.

We are not daunted!

I would like to share some highlights of the past six months.

- Carty House is now a corporation.
- Linh Le, our resident coordinator left Ottawa in mid-August, to return to University.
- Past and present board members, friends, co-workers and residents gathered to bid farewell to Linh and offer thanks. This was accompanied by a letter of thanks and a monetary gift from the Board.
- After much discussion, we attempted to introduce a more circular model of leadership and facilitation.
- The outcome from the many hours of deliberation was the hiring of two employees, Lena McFarlane as Residents'/Program Coordinator and Glennie-Ruth Allum-Graves as House/Residents' Coordinator, each working a 30-hour week (see feature on Page 1).
- Currently we are on the verge of hiring an individual to be an overnight presence in exchange for room and board and some amenities.
- We welcomed two new Board Members, Louise Lalonde and Lorraine Hubbs.
- The Lease has been finished and sent to the Congregation for signing.
- We received $40,00.00 promised by the CND.

We continue in our search for more hands, hearts, gifts and grace.

Perhaps you might be interested in joining the Board?

Carty House

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You can donate to Carty House directly by mail or through *canadahelps.org*

Our Registered Charity Number is 833764293RR001

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