

Reflections from a Past Resident

My name is Carole Rosine Uwiteka. I was born and raised in Burundi, a beautiful East African country, with a nice weather all year long, fresh food and very genuine people. I grew up in Bujumbura, the capital, and had a very loving family. I had two siblings to play with and even today, I can sometimes smell my mother's roasted corn.

My home country is also known as a country that has experienced a lot of wars and political instability for the past few decades. At 21 years of age, I was forced to leave my country, my family, my friends to take refuge in Canada.

When I first landed here, I can still remember being very frustrated because I could barely understand English. The days went by, and I was lonely thinking of my family and missing them so much. I would cry all day long looking at their pictures and thinking of when I would see them for the next time. The weather would also make me cry sometimes, and you know what I'm talking about!

My loneliness didn't last long because I was lucky enough to be admitted to Carty House. I still remember that cold Monday in February. I was in tears, terrified, hopeless thinking of what was going to be my future in a country where I didn't know anyone. Louise, the Carty House Manager, immediately hugged me, listened to me, and cried with me. It was a moment of relief; I could immediately feel reassured and supported. I was then introduced to other residents that I still consider precious friends.

At Carty house I finally had a home, good food, medical support such as eye and teeth checkups, and even piano lessons! We would celebrate our birthdays, we would dance, play games, cook and eat together, memories that I will forever cherish. Above all, I received loving emotional support. Carty House was not only a shelter for me, Carty House was, and still is, home.

Carty House has played a big role in my integration in the Canadian society. Carty House also helped me to trust myself and move forward. After my journey at Carty House, six years later, I have graduated from the university of Ottawa, I'm working for the federal government, I received my Canadian citizenship, and I am recently married.

From the bottom of my heart I want to say THANK YOU!

THANK YOU for giving hope to the hopeless, THANK YOU for providing a smile to the wounded people, THANK YOU for lifting the spirits of so many of us! You are changing lives, one woman at a time.

I thank you on behalf of all the women who have called Carty House home. Please continue to support Carty House, it is a unique and worthy cause. Our lives depend on it.

Thank you so much for caring.

Carole

