



“...although we have been separated from you for a little while—in person but not in heart—we eagerly desire to see you again face to face.”

- 1 Thessalonians 2:17

## MCRS CHRISTMAS 2020

What a year it has been! In January, we were deep into visioning and strategic planning. We were also getting to know the 22 residents at our Guest House. We began an Employment Readiness program. We were developing a Refugee Hearing Preparation program. All of this, and more, was possible because of the generosity of donors like you.

**FOR 1,630  
REFUGEE  
CLAIMANTS AT  
MCRS,  
WELCOMING  
COMMUNITIES  
STILL MATTER**



Then COVID-19 came knocking! Within 48 hours we went from in-person meetings and warm hugs to being fully virtual and smiling at webcams. We bought the groceries for residents at the Guest House to keep them safe. We worked tirelessly to address precarious housing situations and helped people to find jobs. We listened to many who needed a caring, listening ear. Through this God showed us that **welcoming communities still matter**, even in a pandemic.

Like you, we learned words like isolation and distancing. We also learned what refugee claimants already know too well - how profoundly unsettling it is to have relentless uncertainty about the future and to not know if those we are separated from will be a part of it. How we all have eagerly desired to see those we love again face to face!

In August, refugee claim processes began again, but at a fraction of the usual pace. To help speed things up we advocated for access to virtual hearings. We are now set up for those hearings at our Queen Street, the first one held December 11<sup>th</sup> with a positive outcome for the family! Add them to the 101 other people who will celebrate Christmas this year knowing their refugee claim was accepted in 2020; the fear of being sent back to the dangers they fled has been removed.

All of this happens because of the generosity of donors like you. We can have celebrations, find solutions, and renew hope for an end to the uncertainties that keep refugee claimants awake at night.

*Keep reading....*





There are many charities to give to. **This Christmas, we ask that you choose us!** Our only way to raise funds right now is to ask. Our goal this year – **\$98,000** – will help get us through the winter months when, more than ever, we need to show that **welcoming communities still matter**.

For your convenience, we have two ways you can give:

1. Donate directly and securely at <http://www.mcrs.ca/donate>
2. Write a cheque payable to **MCRS** and mail to:

675 Queen St. S. Unit 230  
Kitchener, ON, N2M 1A1

***All donations received by December 31st will be eligible for a 2020 income tax receipt.***

Every one of the 1,630 refugee claimants we are serving had hopes for 2020, just like you and me. They had dreams for a safe future. The pandemic has changed things for all of us. Going back to normal is not an option for these people because that would mean leaving this **welcoming community** and being sent back to the dangers they fled. Together, we can make sure they have every chance to be safe from more than just COVID-19.

On behalf of our Board, staff, volunteers, and the people we help, I thank you for your support of MCRS. We wish you and your loved ones a hope-filled Christmas!

We look forward to when we can see you again face to face.

Peace to you,

*Shelley Campagnola*

Shelley Campagnola  
Executive Director  
*Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support*

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**Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support | [www.mcrs.ca](http://www.mcrs.ca)**  
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