



Insights and Encounters

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Dr. Agnes Thomas
FCJ Refugee Centre AGM

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto provides leadership, supports social services, and facilitates advocacy for its member agencies and the people they serve. At its core is Catholic Social Teaching that focuses on the poor and marginalized, urging us all to build a just society and safeguard the dignity of every person.

Walking in Solidarity with People on the Move



Catholic Charities Executive Director, Agnes Thomas, was honoured to be invited to speak at FCJ Refugee Centre's recent Annual General Meeting, where she delivered a keynote titled “Walking with People on the Move: Reflections on Welcome and Community.” In her talk, Agnes reflected on the long and often difficult journey from uprootedness to rootedness, a reality faced by so many who have been displaced from their homes by armed conflict, war, and persecution. For many in the room, uprootedness was not an abstract idea but a lived reality. Agnes shared moments from her own experience of meeting people in their hardest times and bearing witness to their resilience.

Woven throughout her reflections were themes of hope, community, and solidarity. She invited those gathered into dialogue, asking them to reflect together on what community and home mean to them, and closed with a thought that has stayed with many since: that each person carries an inherent light and dignity within them and is, in their own way, a light-bearer for others.

We are grateful to the FCJ Refugee Centre for the invitation to take part in this year's Annual General Meeting. It was a privilege to witness firsthand the community they have built and the way they continue to show up for those who are displaced. Through their accompaniment of newcomers, they embody a spirit of solidarity that helps transform unfamiliar places into spaces of belonging. They truly offer themselves as a first home to those arriving in Canada.

CCAT Launches 2026 Community Grants Program

Hope Thrives Here!

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto is pleased to announce the 2026 Community Grants program, supporting initiatives that strengthen and serve our communities across the Archdiocese. With funding available across seven key priority areas, these grants aim to make a meaningful impact where it is needed most.

Learn more and apply through our website. <http://ccat.ca/>



Community Funding Opportunities!

Hope **Thrives** Here

Supporting local initiatives that promote human dignity, uphold the preferential option for the vulnerable, foster solidarity and subsidiarity and promote the common good in communities across the Archdiocese of Toronto.

APPLICATION DEADLINES:
**AUGUST 21 &
OCTOBER 23, 2026**

LEARN MORE & APPLY
<https://ccat.ca/>

- **FOOD SECURITY**
Initiating long-term solutions focused on community-based interventions with systemic impact.
- **HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS**
Creating safe, stable places to call home.
- **MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING**
Supporting healing, resilience and wellbeing for all.
- **MIGRANTS & REFUGEES**
Welcoming, supporting and walking together toward belonging.
- **PALLIATIVE CARE**
Providing compassion and quality care at life's most vulnerable moments.
- **PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**
Promoting inclusion, accessibility and equal participation.
- **SENIORS**
Reducing isolation and supporting dignity at every age.

Community Funding Opportunities!

Hope **Thrives** Here



Catholic
Charities
of the Archdiocese of Toronto



APPLICATION DEADLINES:

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**[LEARN MORE & APPLY
https://ccat.ca/](https://ccat.ca/)**

2026 COMMUNITY GRANTS AT A GLANCE

GRANT AMOUNTS

\$5,000–\$50,000

FUNDING AVAILABLE

\$700,000 across seven priority areas

FUNDING PRIORITY AREAS

- Food security
- Housing/homelessness
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Migrants and refugees
- Palliative care
- People with disabilities
- Seniors

WHO CAN APPLY

- Registered charities
- Non-profit organizations
- Sponsored or Trusteed community organizations or grassroots initiatives
- Indigenous organizations

PROJECTS MUST

- Benefit residents of the Archdiocese of Toronto in the City of Toronto, the regional municipalities of Peel, York and Durham and Simcoe County
- Address one or more funding priorities

GRANT APPLICATION DEADLINES

- **Summer Cycle:** August 14, 2026
- **Fall Cycle:** October 16, 2026

Applications can be downloaded from our website. The completed form and supporting documents should be submitted via mail to: allocations@ccat.ca

If you are unsure whether your organization or project is eligible, we encourage you to contact us via email allocations@ccat.ca before applying.



Celebrating Seniors: Connection, Creativity, and Care

Catholic Community Services of York Region



This June, as we celebrate Seniors Month, CCSYR is proud to spotlight the meaningful work happening every week through our Seniors Mental Health and Well-Being Program.

Each Thursday at our head office in Richmond Hill, older adults gather not just for activities, but for each other. Creative arts and crafts, gentle movement, friendly conversation, and shared laughter fill the room — small moments that carry real weight for those who might otherwise spend the day alone.

The program also offers one-on-one counselling and monthly psychoeducational workshops, providing seniors with practical tools to care for their emotional health with confidence and dignity.

What strikes our staff most is not any single activity, but the atmosphere that has grown over time — one of trust, warmth, and genuine friendship. Every smile in that room is a quiet reminder of how much connection matters, at every stage of life.

As one of our staff put it: "Every smile reminds us how important connection and engagement are at every stage of life."

Rooted in the call to love our neighbour, CCSYR remains honoured to walk alongside seniors with compassion and joy this month and every month.

We extend our sincere gratitude to CCAT and ShareLife donors for their continued support in making this work possible.



Catholic
Crosscultural
Services

Marjorie's Joy: Thriving at 91 with CCS

Catholic Crosscultural Services



At 91 years old, Marjorie continues to embrace life with enthusiasm, positivity, and a strong sense of community. While many older adults face challenges such as loneliness, isolation, or reduced opportunities for social connection, Marjorie found a welcoming space through CCS's programs for older adults and seniors.

By participating in CCS Settlement Resources Networking Hub activities, Marjorie has been able to stay active, meet new people, and enjoy meaningful experiences that enrich her daily life. The friendships she has built and the sense of belonging she feels have become an important part of her well-being.

For Marjorie, the hub is more than just a place to attend activities; it's a community where she feels valued, connected, and engaged. Whether participating in social gatherings, sharing stories with friends, or simply enjoying time with others, she continues to demonstrate that age is no barrier to living life fully.

Her joyful spirit and active involvement inspire those around her and remind us all of the importance of staying connected. Marjorie's journey shows how community programs can help older adults maintain their independence, build meaningful relationships, and continue thriving at every stage of life.

Today, Marjorie is a shining example of healthy aging, resilience, and the power of community connection. Her story reminds us that it is never too late to make new friends, discover new opportunities and find joy in everyday moments.



Strengthening Communities Through Family-Centered Support

Catholic Family Services Peel-Dufferin



Catholic Family Services Peel Dufferin (CFSPD) is a non-profit family service agency that provides counselling and therapy to individuals, couples, and families across Peel and Dufferin. A key focus of CFSPD's work is supporting individuals and families who have been affected by family and intimate partner violence (FIPV). The agency is committed to helping families rebuild safety, stability, and connection in their lives, while strengthening wellbeing across the communities it serves.

In April 2026, CFSPD was honoured to welcome Associate Attorney General, Honourable Minister Michael Tibollo, to learn more about our work, especially in the area of Family and Intimate Partner Violence. During the visit, the CFSPD team shared information about the programs and services available to families impacted by FIPV, from their first contact with the agency through ongoing counselling, groups, and connections to other resources. The discussion highlighted the importance of timely, accessible support for people who may be experiencing fear, uncertainty, or crisis in their home environments, and the importance of taking a family-centered approach to work with both survivors and offenders to mitigate escalating risk and plan for safety for both parties.

CFSPD also spoke about the importance of collaboration with community partners to ensure individuals and families can more easily access the help they need. The visit provided an opportunity to highlight both the ongoing need for these services and the positive impact that support can have when it is available early and consistently.

CFSPD is grateful for the opportunity to share its work with Minister Tibollo and to help raise awareness of the ongoing need for support for families impacted by family and intimate partner violence. Support from funders such as ShareLife enables CFSPD to continue offering compassionate, accessible counselling services that respond to the evolving needs of the community. CFSPD remains committed to continuing this work alongside community partners to ensure that individuals and families have access to the support they need, when they need it most.



Home of the Unbreakable

Covenant House Toronto



Every day and every night, too many young people are facing an impossible choice: Stay in unsafe situations, or face homelessness alone.

It's an emergency with real human costs - and one that continues to grow.

In the last year, over 2,000 people aged 16-24 turned to Covenant House at a critical moment in their lives. They were fleeing family conflict, navigating mental health challenges, or just needing a safe place to stay amidst the overwhelming pressures of their circumstances.

Homelessness is a profound experience, especially if it starts early in life. But there is hope. We know that with the right support at the right time, we can break this cycle and prevent youth experiencing homelessness today from becoming tomorrow's chronically homeless adults.

Youth homelessness is a preventable crisis if we are willing to see the problem differently and help early when it starts.

At Covenant House, we believe every young person deserves a future that is safe, stable, and filled with promise – a future that cannot be broken by circumstance, crisis, or systems failure.

We are a way forward.

For more than 40 years, Covenant House Toronto has helped over 110,000 young people find their unbreakable spirit so they can stay in school, pursue employment, strengthen family connections, and secure stable housing.

Our integrated model of care helps prevent homelessness before it begins, shortens it when it happens, and helps youth build lasting independence.

We see hope, courage, and the resilience of the young people who show up at our doors looking for a safe place to land, heal, and dream.

We don't see broken pieces. We see an unbreakable spirit waiting for a fair shot at a better future.

They may arrive at our doorstep at their breaking point. But they are not broken.



Creating Space to Thrive: Inside Deaf Services Canada's Summer Day Camps

Deaf Services Canada



Summer is one of the busiest seasons for Deaf Services Canada's Children & Youth Department. Each year, we run three summer day camps across Toronto, Milton, and Durham, the only summer day camps in Ontario to offer Deaf and Hard of Hearing children a fully accessible, ASL-immersive environment.

This access makes a real difference. Our campers connect with peers who share their experiences, break through barriers that exist in other settings, and build memories that last a lifetime. We also welcome siblings and Children of Deaf Adults (CODAs), providing ASL exposure that strengthens family communication. This summer, we're welcoming over 50 families through our program.

We are committed to never turning a family away due to financial barriers, and most of our families face exactly that. For many, this is an experience they couldn't access anywhere else, and the gratitude we hear from parents reminds us every day why this work matters.

From swimming and sports to field trips like the ROM and Canada's Wonderland, there is no shortage of adventure. Campers make friends, get creative, develop teamwork and life skills, and have Deaf counsellors as role models along the way. Deaf Services Canada is truly honoured to be part of each child's journey and the joyful memories they carry forward.



United in Mission

Rose of Sharon Services for Young Mothers



What a meaningful way to begin a gathering rooted in mission, connection, and care!

Ahead of the May 14–15 conference in Mississauga, Rose of Sharon was honoured to welcome members of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd CORE Group and members of the Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S./Toronto Region, to visit our new home at 1145 Nicholson Road in Newmarket.

Guests travelled from across Canada and the United States to join us for a special opportunity to tour our space, share in fellowship, reflect on our mission, and connect with our staff, young mothers, and their beautiful babies and children.

For many, it was a chance to see firsthand the impact of creating a welcoming community where young mothers feel supported, empowered, and cared for.

As Executive Director Deanne Kukulewich shared: “I have been excited to welcome our visitors for over two years, ever since we moved into our new space.”

Thank you for spending time with us and for continuing to walk alongside Rose of Sharon in our mission.

Guests included our former Executive Director, Anna Pavan, and the newly appointed Sr. Maureen McCowan.



Solidarity in Action: Celebrating Our Dedicated Volunteers

Saint Elizabeth Foundation

At Saint Elizabeth Foundation, solidarity is more than a concept—it is something we see in action every day through the dedication of our volunteers. By sharing their time, compassion, and talents, volunteers help build a community where no one faces life's challenges alone.

Our national volunteer program brings together individuals from diverse backgrounds who are united by a common commitment to caring for others. Whether supporting people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurities, interacting with those who are socially isolated, providing administrative support, or helping advance community-based initiatives, volunteers play an essential role in extending the Foundation's reach and impact.



Their contributions reflect the spirit of communion: a recognition that we are all connected and responsible for one another's well-being. Through acts of kindness, listening, advocacy, and service, volunteers help foster dignity, belonging, and hope for those facing some of life's most difficult circumstances.

This collective effort demonstrates that meaningful change happens when people come together in mutual respect and shared purpose. By working alongside staff, community collaborators, and supporters, volunteers strengthen the networks of care that promote greater equity, compassion, and social justice.

Each day, our volunteers embody the principle of loving our neighbour. Their generosity reminds us that stronger, more compassionate communities are built when we recognize our shared humanity and choose to support one another.

If you would like to learn more about our volunteer program, please visit: <https://foundation.sehc.com/charitable-programs/volunteer-services/>



Strengthening Care, Connection, and Belonging at Haven Toronto

St. Michael's Homes



Our Place Community of Hope, a drop-in program of St. Michael's Homes, has relocated to Haven Toronto's 170 Jarvis Street location as of Monday, May 25, 2026.

This move represents an important step in strengthening support for socially isolated and unhoused community members in Toronto. By bringing these two communities together under one roof, we are creating greater opportunities for connection, stability, and access to essential services—while remaining grounded in the shared values of dignity, compassion, inclusion, and care.

For Haven Toronto members, donors, partners, and stakeholders, we want to be clear: **Haven's programs, services, and supports for men aged 50 and older will continue as they always have.** The elder, homeless men we serve will continue to have access to the same trusted drop-in environment, meals, programs, services, and supports that are central to Haven's mission.

The Haven Drop-In Program will continue to operate **seven days a week, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., exclusively for men aged 50 and older.**

Our Place Community of Hope will operate **Monday to Friday, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.** During these hours, social recreation programming, dinner, and support services will be available and open to both Our Place participants and Haven members.

This transition reflects a shared commitment to building a more coordinated and responsive system of care—one that meets immediate needs while also fostering belonging, community, and hope.

We are grateful to our members, donors, partners, staff, and volunteers for their continued support as we take this next step in strengthening care for vulnerable people in our community.



IN OUR OWN WORDS

Fabiola Cruz Li

Past Recipient of the
Sisters of Service Scholarship

I am honoured to have received the Sisters of Service Scholarship.

As a former asylum seeker in Canada, I am committed to serving asylum seekers, refugees, and other migrants with precarious status. The Sisters of Service Scholarship has allowed me to pursue a Master of Arts in Latin American Studies at Stanford University, where I am examining the effect of Canadian immigration policy on Latin American refugee claimants.

Following my graduate studies, I wish to become an immigration lawyer in Toronto who provides low-cost services to asylum seekers of all backgrounds through Legal Aid. Pursuing an MA in Latin American Studies will equip me with the methodological tools necessary to analyze migrants' stories, making me a more well-rounded and compassionate lawyer for others seeking a new life in Toronto.

I would like to thank CCAT and the donors for their generosity!

PAUSE & REFLECT

Understanding and Responding to Uprootedness in Our Lives

Dr. Agnes Thomas



According to the World Health Organization, approximately one in six people worldwide experience loneliness. Social isolation and loneliness significantly affect the health and well-being of people everywhere. Another relevant data point, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), is that the number of people forcibly displaced worldwide now exceeds 117 million—roughly one in 70 people. What makes these two realities significant for this reflection is what they reveal about the human experience. Some are visibly displaced and uprooted, while others feel uprooted within their own homes and communities. Both carry a deep longing for connection, safety, belonging, and restoration. Though the causes of their displacement may differ, the human need for home and community remains essential to healing and flourishing.

We cannot create a sense of belonging for others if we do not know where we belong.

This reflection focuses on our calling to embody home and community, to practice radical hospitality toward one another and strangers, and to help those among us who feel uprooted find their footing again. One condition for helping others feel welcome is being grounded ourselves.

Where are you rooted? To whom are you connected? What gives you a sense of home? We need to examine our family, school, work, and faith lives to see whether these closely connected spaces are nurturing in us a sense of safety, well-being, and wholeness. If not, why not? How are we fostering the belonging we deeply desire in the places where we live, work, share meals, worship, and build community? Who offers a sense of home in these spaces? Who is being excluded from our homes and communities, and why?

PAUSE & REFLECT

This kind of questioning can make us uncomfortable, and we often look for the next distraction because everything feels overwhelming and beyond our control. So why bother? We see and hear this in both quiet and visible signs of despair across ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, cultural backgrounds, and faith backgrounds. What has happened to our deeper instinct to remain together in times of crisis, and to the inner voice that guides us toward trust and urges us to lean on one another in moments of need? All of it points in one direction: something needs to change, and the time is now.

We all need a place to begin, and it is never too late. If you are reading this, then perhaps this moment is yours. Now is the time to step forward and replant what has been uprooted within us, in our homes, and in our neighbourhoods, so that it may carry outward into the world and ease the turmoil of disruption, pain, and despair. This is not an idealized vision of what might be possible, but a reminder of what is still within our reach.

You may wonder how to break out of this cycle and open a new path. It begins with recognizing our capacity for resilience and hope, and our need for one another. We are strengthened in community, where encouragement, accountability, and belonging help us find our footing again. In a world marked by so much uprootedness, the invitation is simple but profound: To become homemakers, community builders, and peacemakers, creating spaces where both neighbour and stranger can belong. How can we respond with one small act at a time? It begins with simple, intentional choices in the places where we live and relate to others.

At home:

- Offer extra care, time, and attention to the child or adult in your life who is struggling.

At work:

- Choose patience and kindness with a difficult co-worker.
- Be a leader who listens, invests in people, and makes room for growth. Work in solidarity with one another

In the practice of Faith:

- Practice generosity of spirit toward people you may not feel close to, understand, or naturally welcome.
- Give what you can, even if it feels small, when it helps someone in need.


In our neighbourhood and community:

- Be the person who keeps the light on and makes space for the latecomer and the newcomer to feel welcome and included.

The work of belonging begins with each of us. We are called not to step back, but to step forward as homemakers, peacebuilders, and practitioners of hope. By extending radical hospitality and making room for one another, we help create the conditions where people can take root again and flourish.

-Originally published in <https://lightoftruth.in>

ON THE HORIZON

 Early Bird pricing ends soon...

Join leaders from across Canada at Synergy Toronto 2026
and be part of a movement toward deeper collaboration and greater impact.



Early Bird
Ends Soon

Save \$100

Register Now

www.SynergyTO2026.ca

#SynergyTO2026

ON THE HORIZON

SYNERGY
TORONTO 2026
CONFERENCE



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Deadline: June 30, 2026



Share your voice. Shape the conversation.

#SynergyTO2026



Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto



Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto



@catholiccharitiesutoronto



@CharitiesCares

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto

How you can contact member agencies and affiliated agencies of Catholic Charities

MEMBER AGENCIES

COMMUNITY/FAMILY SERVICES

Catholic Community Services of York Region
1-800-263-2075
www.ccsyr.org

Catholic Crosscultural Services
416-757-7010
www.cathcrosscultural.org

Catholic Family Services of Durham
1-877-282-8932
www.cfsdurham.com

Catholic Family Services Peel-Dufferin
905-450-1608
www.cfspd.com

Catholic Family Services of Simcoe County
1-800-726-2503
www.cfssc.ca

Catholic Family Services of Toronto
416-921-1163
www.cfstoronto.com

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Deaf Services Canada
416-463-1104
www.deafservices.ca

Mary Centre
416-630-5533
www.marycentre.com

Saint Elizabeth Health Care
905-940-9655
www.sehc.com

St. Bernadette's Family Resource Centre
416-654-9810
www.stbernadettesfrc.org

St. Michael's Homes
(Our Place Community of Hope Program)
416-926-8267
www.stmichaelshomes.org

SENIORS

Centres d'Accueil Héritage (CAH)
416-365-3350
www.caheritage.org

LA Centre for Active Seniors
416-452-4875
www.lacentreforseniors.ca

Houses of Providence
(Unity Health Toronto)
416-285-3666
www.providence.on.ca

Society of Sharing
416-413-0380
www.societyofsharing.org

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto
416-395-1500
www.torontoccas.ca

Covenant House Toronto
1-800-435-7308
www.covenanthousetoronto.ca

YOUNG PARENTS

Rosalie Hall
416-438-6880
www.rosaliehall.com

Rose of Durham
(Young Parents Division of CFS Durham)
905-432-3622
www.roseofdurham.com

Rose of Sharon
905-853-5514
www.roseofsharon.com

Vita Centre
905-502-7933
www.vitacentre.org

AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

Birthright International
1-800-550-4900
www.birthright.org

Good Shepherd Ministries
416-869-3619
www.goodshepherd.ca

Natural Family Planning Association
437-600-9333
www.toronto.naturalfamilyplanning.ca

St. Marguerite Bourgeoys FertilityCare Toronto
416-465-2868
www.fertilitycare.ca

Society of St. Vincent de Paul
(Camp Ozanam)
416-364-5577
info@ssvptoronto.ca

To learn more about
Catholic Charities, go to:

www.ccat.ca



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