



Photo: Anika Bauman



Thank you for supporting refugee claimants through Kinbrace.

Since 1998, the Kinbrace community has been committed to welcoming refugee claimants with housing, education, and support.

Our shared dream for each refugee claimant is a world of welcome, a community of belonging, a life of opportunity.

The core values that define us as donors, volunteers, neighbours, staff: Welcome, Trust, Mutual Transformation, Celebration, Prayer.



2020–2021 Staff (Row 1) Ryan Reid, Loren Balisky, Ebenezer Joshua, Sophia Underhill (Row 2) Derek Chu, Fran Gallo, Suzannah Nacho, Laura Wallis-Wood (Row 3) Mohammad Zaqout, Emily Parsons-Dickau, Adriana Zapeda, Julie DeMelo (Row 4) Anika Bauman

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Borders closed. International travel restricted. A full year of the COVID-19 global pandemic.

For people seeking refugee protection, the 2020-2021 pandemic created a barrier to safety. Even as record numbers of people were forcibly displaced in 2020 (82.4 million compared to 79 million in 2019) the number of asylum seekers dropped from 4.3 million in 2019 to 4.1 million in 2020, an indicator of hardening physical borders and multiplying virtual borders.

These pandemic response measures reduced the number of people able to seek refugee protection in Canada from 60,045 in 2019 to 23,900 in 2020.

For those who made it to Canada, started their refugee claims, and began to settle, your support was life-changing.

With the number of refugee claimants accessing Kinbrace's programs slightly lower due to the border closure, the staff team and Board of Directors used spare capacity during 2020 and 2021 to:

- enhance the welcome extended to people seeking refugee protection by launching an Employment Program;
- prepare the ground for the start of the Beyond Refuge Program;
- update program evaluation tools;
- implement a new database for the organization;
- activate the new strategic plan;
- hire new staff;
- build Board capacity by recruiting more Directors; and,
- drive a still-exploratory conversation with a strategic partner (Co:Here Foundation) on approaches to scaling Kinbrace operations to be able to provide more transitional housing.



Board of Directors Elect:

(Row 1) Raymond Fung, Randall Kent Cohn, Maria Zerjav

Board of Directors 2020–2021:

(Row 2) Jaylynn Byassee, Chris Wiesinger, Erin Goheen Glanville

(Row 3) Tara Bental King, Sadiq Mohibi, Rosemary Toye

We honour each of the several thousand people seeking refugee protection who accessed Kinbrace's supports and offers this year. We are grateful to each donor for your unwavering support of refugee claimants, to all the dedicated volunteers who graciously helped navigate through the pandemic, and to the staff team who successfully navigated the ever-evolving challenges of the pandemic while fulfilling their roles.

YOUR IMPACT BY NUMBERS:

Your influence on the wellbeing of refugee claimants through the transitional (transformational) housing community in Vancouver:

83 people (new arrivals + former residents) received critical support, and of these:



30 people moved into transitional housing (16 families / individuals, cf. 45 in 2019–2020)



23 people moved from transitional into permanent housing (12 placements, cf. 28 in 2019–2020)

4 people moved into subsidized housing (2 placements)



9 people moved into below-market housing thanks to friends of Kinbrace (5 placements, cf. 1 in 2019–2020)



34 people received refugee protection (13 families)

4 people received Permanent Resident status (1 family)

Your influence on refugee claimants across Canada, helping them prepare for their refugee hearings through public legal education and information:

4196 downloads of the *Refugee Hearing Preparation Guide* (cf. 5021 in 2019–2020)

423 Ready Tour participants and family members impacted by the BC Ready Tours (cf. 797 previous year)



YOUR SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2020–2021:

- The record-breaking Ride for Refuge fundraising event in October 2020 with 32 teams raised over \$110,000.
- Keeping the approximately 100 people receiving or giving critical support in the transitional housing community healthy and safe during waves 1, 2, and 3 of the COVID-19 pandemic! Thankfully, only one person tested positive, and it was not traced back to the community.
- Launching the new Employment Program that seeks to address the unique employment challenges facing refugee claimants. Research was launched to template a unique employment offer for refugee claimants. The goal of this program is to help refugee claimants gain financial stability, transitioning them from unemployment to meaningful work.
- A warm welcome to the Kavanagh and Ewert families forming the new Host Community, and a heartfelt farewell to Anika and the Volkenant family.



Photo: Loren Belisky

The masked and unmasked faces of generosity, creativity, and hard work. Long-time volunteer Paul Whillans (l) stands with Verity (c), her mom Kallen, and brother Theo. Verity and her family raised \$21,380 through the sale of her musical CD!



Photo: Mark Janousek

Welcome to the new Host Community members (l-r): Ben and Rachel Kavanagh with Graeme, Jakob, Ella, Krista, Ben and Audrey Ewert (holding Sona the hen), Byron the dog

YEAR ONE OF KINBRACE'S INSPIRING TRANSFORMATIVE COMMUNITIES STRATEGIC PLAN SAW:

- The organization positioned financially to launch the Beyond Refuge Program in the next fiscal year, moving refugee claimants and Canadians from being apart to being together
- The partnership formed with Co:Here Foundation to envision and design a replicated transitional housing community
- The publishing of Anika Bauman's new book, *Becoming Neighbours: Five Values for a World of Welcome*



Photo: Hannah Esau

Becoming Neighbours tells a story of transformation where refugee claimants and their hosts flourish together. You can purchase the book at www.kinbrace.ca.



Photo: Anika Bauman



Photo: Loren Balisky

A huge thank you to Rhys and Emily Volkenant and Anika Bauman, who gave an enormous amount of care and time as Host Community members to keep the transitional housing community safe, fed, and comfortable during the first many months of the pandemic.

THE CHALLENGES AND STRUGGLES FACED BY KINBRACE DURING THE YEAR

- The hours of decision-making and constant readjustment of protocol to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, trying to keep the community safe while pushing forward with the mandate.
- The loss of community building events, which are central to growing transformative communities. The annual camping trip to Anvil Island was again cancelled, Tuesday dinners and afternoon teas were on-again-off-again in response to the infection waves.
- The worry for people in need of refugee protection yet stuck between worlds during the pandemic when international travel was limited and borders closed.
- The frustration of referral pathways and systems vanishing or changing during the pandemic, leaving refugee claimants in the lurch.

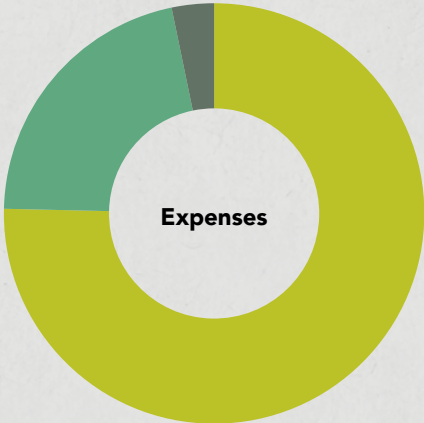
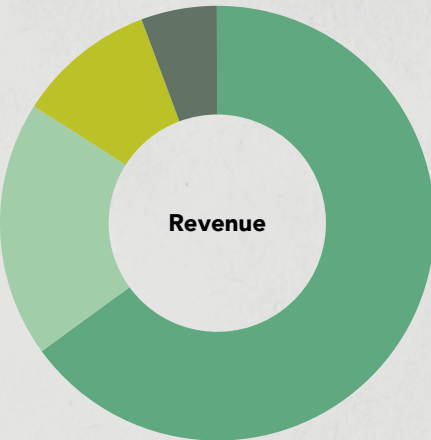
WHERE THE ORGANIZATION FAILED, WHAT WAS LEARNED AND CORRECTED

Seeking to save money and lacking capacity to initiate change over the past many years, the organization limped along with a less than adequate database. This year, we took the leap to a more intuitive, easier to use, made-in-Vancouver-with-servers-in-Canada database called Keela. We are now communicating better with donors, keeping better records, and lowering administration costs.

Financials 2020 – 2021

Good news! You helped achieve a much needed increase to the organization's contingency fund, increasing it from \$80,000 to \$230,000. The contingency fund goal is 50% of the operating budget.

Kinbrace's fiscal year is May–April.



65%	Not-for-profit organizations
	\$582,035
19%	Individual and Major Donors
	\$170,679
10%	Fundraising (Ride for Refuge)
	\$92,155
6%	Rental Income, Other
	\$50,437
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Total	\$895,306
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75%	Programs
	\$558,259
21%	Administration
	\$158,519
4%	Resource Development
	\$24,051
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Total	\$740,829
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THANK YOU, DONORS AND FUNDERS!

Refugee claimants across Canada received critical and caring support from:

- 24 foundations, churches, and other not-for-profit funders
- 79 monthly donors
- 159 individual donors

We need each other

Wilfred Thariki



Wilfred lived in Kinbrace's transitional housing community for one month and then moved into affordable housing thanks to the generosity of Kinbrace neighbours and supporters. Wilfred recently applied for a job posting and is now Kinbrace's Beyond Refuge Program Coordinator, bringing his lifetime of professional international experience, his care for those facing vulnerabilities, and his lived experience to the work of inspiring transformative communities, bringing refugee claimants and Canadians together.

ARRIVING AT KINBRACE

I arrived at the Kinbrace Community home on the 7th of August 2020 and since it was a Friday, Derek, the Director of Operations, was there to receive me. Of course I was impressed that I was being received by a director of an organization much as I later came to learn that team members are allocated days they should be in office because of the COVID-19 situation. I didn't have much in the way of luggage (as I suppose most refugee claimants don't), but I did have an inheritance of bottles of water from my quarantine stay.

Prior to arriving at Kinbrace, I was under a 14-day COVID-19 quarantine at a hotel in Surrey, courtesy of the Canadian government. This is actually where my connection with Kinbrace started. The immigration official gave me a detailed briefing which mainly centred around my expected good behaviour while in quarantine. But he also made it clear that he expects that by the end of the 14 days, I would have found a place to stay. A little confusing as my thinking was I was under the care of the govern-

ment and surely, the least they could provide as a basic necessity was food and accommodation. Nevertheless, he gave me a list of contacts to call. It was bewildering, as back home, we are more used to visiting offices rather than calling if we are serious about our enquiries. I called all the numbers and for some it was a straight no vacancy, we don't do prior bookings, and actually one of them (who shall remain unnamed) made me fill out forms and then frustrated me through the contact being inaccessible and promising to call back but never did. I did call Kinbrace and was politely but firmly informed that they don't take direct referrals. However, I was given some more contacts through which Kinbrace could give considerations. I think by day 10 I had not heard a word from any of the organizations and I was being reminded every morning and evening by the immigration official that if I don't get a place, they will sadly drop me off anywhere near downtown Vancouver. I finally got the life saving call from Kinbrace that they would accept me.

I was welcomed into Unit 3 which became my home for the rest of my one month stay at Kinbrace.

Being ushered into a room with a bunk bed initially took me aback. I asked myself, "Why am I being treated like a child...?" Back home it is children that sleep on bunk beds! I guess the question then was, am I going to be treated as a child for as long as I am here? So it was not so much the comfort or otherwise of the bed but maybe as a way of intimidating me and telling me this is how I would always be treated here in Canada.

Then a knock came on my door and Emily, one of the Host Community members, was at the door. She was very respectful while stating her name and her role. At this instance I was kind of confused... she seemed so nice (and so were the rest of the team as I came to know through continuous interactions) and to me it was... how come she is not treating me like a child given by bedroom configuration? Her presence was very comforting and she gave me the assurance that I could always knock on her family's door if I needed any assistance or to figure out things (and I sure did knock on the Volkenant's door many times).

There was a welcome package of essential supplies in my room that was very well received. I come from a culture where men are not that welcome in (or maybe they avoid) the kitchen and so it all of a sudden seemed strange that I had to cook for myself despite the fact that I had done it before the whole of 2015 in Khartoum, Sudan. There were days that I would sit waiting for a meal only to realize that I had to prepare it myself. I guess they call it a culture shock!

SETTLING INTO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

The balcony out my bedroom door was an interesting learning spot for me. I would spend hours just studying people in the streets... how they walked, wondering why almost everyone had dogs with them, the clothes, the cars etc. This was important for my confidence building because I could watch without being seen.

I came to Canada through the USA at a period when the aftermath of George Floyd's murder had happened. So being so noticeably black was kind of scary to me when I ventured out of Kinbrace into the neighbourhood. The

latest statistics show that the BC black community is only about 1% of total population. That made me very apprehensive and fearful. I took several "baby steps" on Commercial Drive, careful not to annoy anyone. I never went inside the shops, until I ran out of supplies, and then I had to brace myself to go into the stores.



Inside one of Kinbrace's smaller transitional housing units, similar to the one in which Wilfred stayed.

My neighbours at Kinbrace also had refugee claimant status, and it was not very easy to build friendship because each resident was wary of the other. It was the trust issue. For me, it was the question: if I expose myself too much to a stranger, I don't know how this may work against me. When I tried to create friendships with some of the residents, it was not easy even if I was not prying on their circumstances. It is a challenge to Kinbrace which has this innovative concept of open places for all to share.

MOVING TO PERMANENT HOUSING

After about a month living at Kinbrace, Ryan, the Housing Coordinator, called

on me and informed me of an exciting housing opportunity within the neighborhood. I must confess that I was not too excited about it but he was very persuasive and he laid it out very clearly that this was indeed a very rare opportunity in terms of location and the rent amount. I shall thank him forever for helping me make that decision... one of the best that I ever made.

But moving from my comfort zone was not easy. I had just started enjoying the comfort of the familiar surroundings that is the transition home. I had even started making friends with my fellow claimants.

I felt, again, like I was being pushed out... almost like getting rid off. I talked with other claimants and realized that a) some had stayed much longer than me at the transition home and b) at least one person had been offered the same place and declined. The mistrust (and fear of the unknown) was still alive within me.

Never-the-less, in September 2020, I moved into my new permanent home with a family in the neighbourhood and one year later, I have enjoyed a very warm relationship with them, beyond my expectations. The dinners, playing with kids, discussing topical issues, the respect, the introduction to church and above all the acceptance of who I am and being a vital contributor to our shared happiness are but some of the many things we have shared together with the Peters' family. The only thing that reminds me that I am a tenant is when I am paying rent. It took time to feel settled and free but in the end it worked for me.

THE CHRISTMAS HAMPER

Around the period coming to Christmas and the New Year festivities, I received a text message from Julie, the Community Coordinator, indicating

that a volunteer will get in touch with me to deliver a gift hamper to celebrate this period of the birth of Christ. It was a pleasant surprise and to think that somebody thought of remembering and sharing with me was a humbling experience in itself. And sure enough I got the call and a generous gift hamper arrived thereafter.

It took some time, but after a few days it hit me like a brick. I remembered that back home I used to do exactly the same thing at Christmas and new year's festivities. Assembling a few friends of mine who I grew up with in the village, we formed an association that we called the Ndenderu Residents Welfare Association. One of the projects that we were involved in was to contribute some money, buy and pack some gift hampers, and personally deliver them to seniors and persons with vulnerabilities. It was not just delivering the gift hampers, but spending time listening and enjoying moments with them. One thing you should know is that seniors have the sweetest and most intriguing stories you will ever hear. I used to look forward to those days.

Fast forward and here I am on the other end of the stick, receiving a gift hamper, because I also had been made vulnerable. It overwhelmed me because I previously could not have imagined being classified as a person experiencing vulnerability! I always believed that my life's long term role will always be responding to and not being responded to. I asked myself, are we that fragile; is life that transitory with no assurance or guarantees; where did I go wrong; could God have seen my previous work and sent angels to also look after me; will I ever revert to my original role?

We just have to appreciate each other and recognise just how much we need each other.



Refugee claimants need your continued immediate support.

- [Donate](#) now
- [Participate in the Kinbrace Ride for Refuge](#) on 02 October 2021
- [Join the Companion Circle](#), if not already a member
- [Volunteer](#) in one or more of the six program areas





REFUGEE HOUSING & SUPPORT

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Kinbrace Community Society is incorporated in
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by Canada Revenue Agency (80276 4209 RR0001).

kinbrace.ca