



The LIGHTHOUSE

Helping People | Changing Lives

1008 Bathurst Street • Toronto • ON M5R 3G7

416-535-6262

“Mi Casa:” Celebrating 16 years with Seniors

By Irma Luque

On November 16, 2014, we celebrated the 16th anniversary of the Hispanic Seniors' Program at The Lighthouse. *Mi Casa*, meaning my home in Spanish, is the name a group of Spanish-speaking seniors gave to this friendship group which they saw as their home away from home. *Mi Casa* started as a



Lighthouse program 16 years ago to address/counter the isolation experienced by many senior Hispanic newcomers who did not speak English and who had few places to feel useful or to share moments of joy and sadness.

My story starts fifteen years ago, when I was invited to replace a volunteer for The Lighthouse's food bank. It was later on in that year that I joined *Mi Casa* with the job of facilitating different activities for this senior's group, such as trips, crafts, Bible studies and group conversations. I also helped in sourcing and providing the members of the group with reliable information about services available to them, and most importantly by sharing my friendship and care. Little did I then know that this group would soon become my second family. Words

cannot express all the support that this beautiful group gave me. Tears run down my cheeks when I think of all the moments of happiness and sadness we shared together; they were, and continue to be, a great support to me and my family. Every time I get to The Lighthouse on Fridays, they receive me with a big hug and make me feel like an important person in their lives. In the beginning, my priority was to serve them and help in whatever was needed. But as time went by, I realized that it was not just me giving to them, but that I was receiving love and belonging from this inspiring group, a group that is always willing to receive and welcome anyone who comes.

Mi Casa has become a pillar in my life and also to my husband and son, who also volunteer with serving the

Hispanic senior community. The seniors are important to us because, after we left our native country full of dreams and aspirations for the future, we had to face a harsh reality in our new country. This difficulty was aggravated by the fact that we were alone with no family here. It was the seniors who offered us all the love we thought we had left behind, and who supported us through all the years that it took for our immigration situation to be finalized. I want to thank all the people that work at The Lighthouse, especially our coordinator, Samia Saad, who has personally extended her friendship and support. We also thank God for allowing us to know our second family, *Mi Casa*.

Spanish version of the article is available at lighthousecentre.ca/lives-changed

Through the Eyes of an Intern

Michelle Bauer

“As a multi-cultural Christian outreach and community centre, The Lighthouse demonstrates God’s love by offering unconditional hospitality, by sharing our resources and by helping people in need.

We offer an atmosphere of respect, dignity and security in order to address spiritual, emotional and physical needs, all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The Lighthouse’s Mission Statement

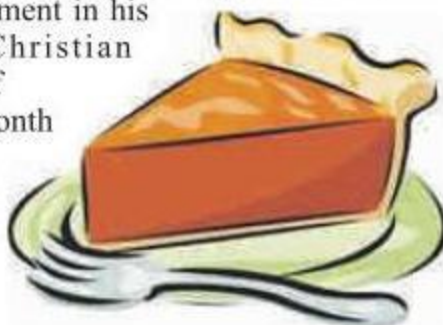
As an intern at The Lighthouse from September to December 2014, I have witnessed first-hand the above Mission Statement in action as the staff and volunteers at The Lighthouse Centre work together to embody the love of the gospel message. They are, and have been to many marginalized people in the GTA particularly newcomers from China, Vietnam and Spanish-speaking regions of the world a light, as contemplated in Matthew 5:14-16. It has been an exciting journey partnering with The Lighthouse for this season!

One of the ministries which I would like to highlight is the Chinese ESL program, which involves weekly classes at a partnering Chinese church located in Scarborough. Of the ministries I have been a part of, I have had the most opportunity to enjoy friendships with these students, who number about 60 in total. The majority of these students are seniors who find fellowship, community and hospitality through this ministry, in addition to learning English.



Pumpkin Pies Raise Big Bucks!

Last Fall Michael Wyberga wanted to bake pumpkin pies... a lot of pumpkin pies! As a way to satisfy his own baking needs and help the needs of an organization close to his heart, he decided to have a pumpkin pie fundraiser. Sunday September 28th he made the announcement in his church (First Christian Reformed Church of Toronto) and 1 month later he had baked 66 pies and raised \$587. Now that’s a delicious idea!



The ESL teachers are all believers who integrate lessons of faith with lessons of grammar. Once a month following class, the host church offers a meal and a worship service in Mandarin in order to further share the gospel with the students. This approach is both relational and culturally sensitive, with the tight-knit community fostering a safe place to explore the gospel. One of my favourite lessons was one in which Rita urged me to teach the past-tense using the Christmas story found in Matthew. The students were engaged and interested in knowing the meaning behind Christmas.

Few things in life are more worthwhile than this: to be an instrument of God’s peace and hope in a world that does not know the love of the Father. According to Rita, approximately 80% of the students and 50% of the dance class are not followers of Jesus; yet each week, these programs provide opportunities to discover more about who God is, and to experience His love first-hand. I have been blessed and enriched by the time I have spent with Rita and the Chinese clients who have taught me so much about the importance of community, sharing, hospitality and looking out for one another. I am grateful for this experience and pray that God would continue to bless the ministry of The Lighthouse through the care and support of the wider Christian community.

See full article at lighthousecentre.ca/lives-changed

Correction: In our Summer 2014 newsletter, we misspelled Zaur’s last name. The correct spelling is Gassanov. The Lighthouse regrets the error. Below is the corrected introduction to our new Board Member, Zaur Gassanov.

Zaur Gassanov

- Principal at *Equilibrium Financial*
- Designated Accountant and finance professional with extensive non-for-profit experience
- BBAIS, ITIL, MBA, CPA, CMA
- Canadian: ex-pat from the former Soviet Union
- “I am delighted to contribute to The Lighthouse and to support its vision.”





Ride for Refuge 2014 comprised of 7 teams, 46 riders in 4 locations around Ontario. With the generous support

of more than 330 donors, our ride warriors were able to raise \$21,160.75. A big thank you to all our riders and donors for making Ride for Refuge a success. Find out how you can get involved in Ride for Refuge 2015, by contacting Rob at 416-535-6262 or rob@lighthousecentre.ca.



Refugees are Our Neighbours

When we think of refugees we often think of the Biblical call to 'welcome the stranger.' And welcoming the stranger is a good first step. But in this increasingly interconnected world, these strangers are our neighbours and we need each other. When one part of a community struggles, the entire community is incomplete.

The Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue and their partners have created a toolkit to help Christians work with their refugee neighbours for justice.

Children's books, a workshop, films, worship resources, Sunday school plans, and more. Visit their website and dig in!

http://www2.crcna.org/pages/publicdialogue_toolkit.cfm



Want to see Christmas celebration pictures? Check out our website today!

A Warm Lighthouse



to everyone who attended this year's Annual Dinner and Auction It was an evening of wonderful sharing and community building.

Your donations contributed over \$26,000 to The Lighthouse's ministries and programs. Together, we are impacting the lives of people by offering community, food, healing and hope in the name of Jesus.

We look forward to seeing you at our next event!

PAR Have you heard about PAR?

The Lighthouse continues to see challenges in reaching its financial goals. You can help us with monthly giving through PAR (Pre-Authorized Remittance) which is a "direct debit" program that allows you to give through an automatic monthly withdrawal from your bank account.

PAR is giving, made easy. You just provide The Lighthouse with your bank info and your monthly giving amount, and the rest is automatic. No more cheques. No more fees. Of course, you may cancel or change either the amount of your monthly gift or other information at any time.

PAR is advantageous:

- It provides an opportunity to give faithfully
- It provides regular, dependable flow of contributions
- It reduces bank fees for The Lighthouse.

For more information concerning the PAR program, please contact The Lighthouse at 416-535-6262 or rob@lighthousecentre.ca

Upcoming Events:

February 21th, 2015 — Coldest Night of the Year
A wintery walking fundraiser that raises money for the hungry, homeless and hurting.

From the Desk of Rob

While reflecting on 2014, I see blessings and challenges at The Lighthouse. These blessings and challenges helped us in our ministry and stretched us.

Among the blessings experienced, The Lighthouse:

- received a substantial grant from Sea to Sea through the Christian Reformed Church in North America;
- hosted five successful fundraising events: Coldest Night of the Year, Phone-a-thon, Ride for Refuge, Annual Dinner and Benefit Concert;
- provided important summer positions to two summer students;
- hosted a public Open House;
- provided three fun Family Camps for children and parents;
- received fantastic support from churches, organizations, businesses and individuals to help meet our financial obligations; and
- was led by a committed and passionate Board of Directors.



Some of the challenges faced by The Lighthouse include:

- limited space for our programs and staff;
- the ongoing concern for the financial position of The Lighthouse; and
- not having the capacity to help all those in need.

With these blessings and challenges, we feel grateful for all we were able to achieve in 2014. *We are thankful to you* - the churches, organizations, businesses and individuals - for your continued support of The Lighthouse. Without your support, none of this would be possible.

We are excited about 2015, and all the blessings and challenges it will bring!

The Lighthouse partners with Christian Stewardship Services (CSS) to provide you with opportunities and Planned Giving strategies to support The Lighthouse through various means, such as revocable deposit agreements, testamentary legacies and charitable gift annuities. CSS provides personal, confidential and cost-free services. For more information, contact The Lighthouse.

Board of Directors

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Adrian Helleman
Jane Moore
Juan Rojo
Jeanette Romkema (Chair)
Fadi Sharaiha
Roger Visser
Daisy Wai

Staff

Rev. Rob Datema
Executive Director

Tracy Dang
Vietnamese Assistant

Tiffany Kwok
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Madeley Perez
Hispanic Assistant

Samia Saad
Hispanic Program Coordinator

Thuy Tran
Vietnamese Program Coordinator

Rita Wong
Chinese Program Coordinator

Helping People Changing Lives

Thank you for being partners with us in this ministry.



Yes, I would like to help with a donation of \$ _____

Cheque enclosed

VISA MASTERCARD # _____ Expiry Date: _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Postal Code _____

Other Ways to Help - Contact us for details

- PAR PreAuthorized Remittance
- Monthly Visa or MasterCard donation - makes it easy for you and for us
- Canada Helps on line at www.canadahelps.org
- Giving through Christian Stewardship Service
- United Way Payroll Deduction - just provide our CRA # and address
- Matched Corporate Giving - many companies match employee donations

Please mail your contribution to:

The Lighthouse
1008 Bathurst Street
Toronto, ON M5R 3G7

Receipts will be issued in the New Year.
Canada Revenue Agency #13036 3740 RR0001