



Canadian Lutheran
World Relief

Annual Report

2025-2026

**CLWR's 80th
anniversary**
Celebrating a
legacy of refuge



**Canadian Lutheran
World Relief**

OUR VISION

A healthy and sustainable world where people live in peace with hope, justice, dignity and equality.

OUR MISSION

Inspired by God's love for the world, CLWR challenges and responds to the injustice which causes human suffering and poverty.

(Left to right) Urji Tahir, Abdunasir Mohamed, Situ Mohamed and Anisa Aman are members of the nursery seedling producers group in Tulicha Kebele, Ethiopia. The group helps raise seedlings to support landscape restoration and community-led environmental conservation efforts. (Photo/ Julie Krause Holiday Bunge)

On the cover: Halimé Josephine, in Logone Birni, Cameroon, holds freshly planted seeds that will grow into trees as part of the nature-based solutions reforestation efforts in Chad and Cameroon. (CLWR photo/Diego Contreras)

Thank you from our CEO



DEAR FRIENDS,

Grace and peace to you.

It is a privilege to write to you as Chief Executive Officer of Canadian Lutheran World Relief. I come to this role with deep

respect for the witness this community has carried for nearly 80 years: a historic movement of Canadians who choose not to look away from suffering — and who keep asking why that suffering is happening.

This annual report is a record of that conviction in action.

In a year marked by conflict, displacement, hunger and climate disruption, your compassion became practical help. Through trusted Lutheran and local partners, families caught in catastrophe received food, clean water, shelter, medical care and the dignity of knowing they had not been forgotten.

Here in Canada, congregations and sponsorship groups defended the right to refuge, helping people forced to flee find safety, welcome and

the chance to begin again. In communities facing the sharpest edges of climate change and conflict, your support helped farmers, women, young people and local leaders build stronger livelihoods and safer futures.

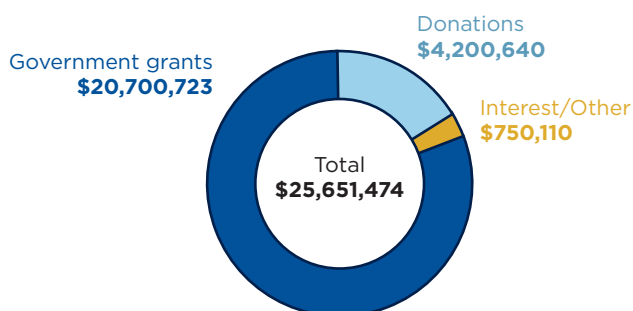
What has struck me most in my first months with CLWR is the depth of partnership behind this work. We do not go alone. We listen to people closest to the crisis. We work with communities that know their own needs, strengths and possibilities, so your care can travel farther than any one of us could carry it on our own.

As CLWR enters this next chapter, we have a remarkable legacy to steward — and a calling to renew it with courage, humility and faith. Thank you for your generosity, your prayers and your trust. Thank you for choosing not to look away.

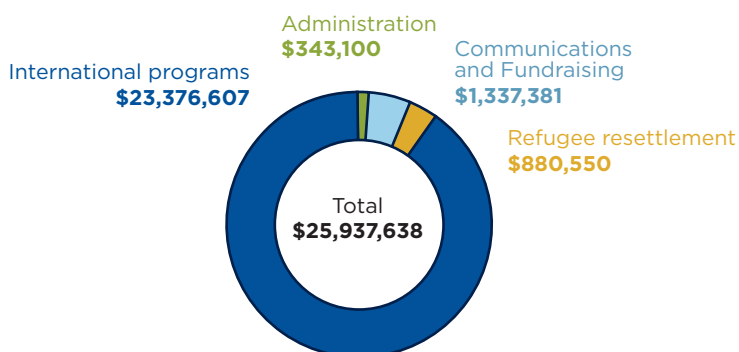


Darryl Loewen
Chief Executive Officer, CLWR

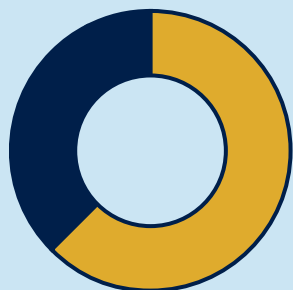
REVENUE



EXPENSES



Humanitarian response



BUDGET

\$14,627,965

Last year: \$6,664,758



BENEFICIARIES

413,886

Last year: 421,878



LOCATIONS

Colombia,
Ethiopia, Gaza,
Haiti, Honduras,
Myanmar, Somalia,
South Sudan

CLWR was founded 80 years ago when Lutherans in Canada saw the massive devastation after the Second World War. They chose to live out God's call to compassion, sending emergency supplies to Europe and helping refugees resettle in Canada.

Today more than ever, we need people like you who don't look away from suffering. Every day, political wars and unchecked climate change are displacing people and destroying livelihoods. There are more than 239 million people who need emergency relief¹, and more than 117 million people who have been forced to flee their homes.² And as the needs increase, governments of the world are walking away. But not you. You see people who are suffering and choose to act.

With your support, CLWR carries on its legacy of providing lasting help in the face of catastrophe: providing emergency relief right away, and staying to help people recover, rebuild and move forward. In Haiti, Marc Azar received emergency financial support after he lost his livelihood to Hurricane Melissa. The support you provided wasn't just relief — it gave him the ability to make decisions for himself again. "That cash assistance put me back on my feet," he said, "I do not even know what words to use to express my gratitude."

¹ United Nations estimate | ² UNHCR

Sabah (second left) is a Sudanese refugee living in the extension area of Arkoum refugee camp in eastern Chad, where CLWR is launching an emergency response providing clean water and services to protect women and girls from violence. (LWF photo/Marie Renaux)



Your gifts at work

3,190

displaced people received cash to cover urgent needs in Ethiopia

3,460,000

litres of drinking water distributed in Gaza, reaching 9,000 displaced people

117

households received emergency financial support in Gaza

Clean water improves health and school attendance amidst conflict

At Sawna Junior Secondary School, friends Yasara Afma and Heruit Sheko no longer start their school day walking an hour to collect drinking water. Now they can fill their bottles from a new on-site well before class. Before the well was built, students often arrived late after long walks carrying jerry cans of water weighing more than 20 kilograms. Many also left lessons during the day to collect water.

This school is located in Seqota, northern Ethiopia, an area deeply affected by fighting between the Fano militia and government forces. Since 2023, families have been living with ongoing violence, sometimes under occupation, while also facing drought and heavy seasonal rains. Across northern Ethiopia, CLWR is supporting families living with the ongoing threat of violence by bringing clean water closer to home.

With support from the Government of Canada and generous donors like you, CLWR is rehabilitating 74 water points across 11 districts. We're also building a 4.5-kilometre pipeline to connect water systems to three towns. In addition, 5,526 households are receiving water, sanitation and hygiene supplies, including jerry cans, basins and soap.

Today, Sawna Junior Secondary School's well serves 850 students, and a rainwater harvesting system stores up to 20,000 litres of water for handwashing and hygiene. Teachers say the difference is clear: fewer absences, less illness and more time in class.



Friends Yasara Afma (left) and Heruit Sheko (right) live in Seqota, a remote town in northern Ethiopia, where a new well brought clean drinking water to the school. (CLWR photo/Joanna Roidis)

Changed lives

40% decrease in households with a child under five who experienced diarrhea in Amhara, Ethiopia

85% of displaced people who received emergency relief in Somalia report adequate access to water (up from 43%)

100% of households that received cash for rent support in Lebanon reported improved living conditions (84% rated significant or moderate)

Food security & livelihoods



BUDGET

\$7,007,438

Last year: \$5,038,118



BENEFICIARIES

119,954

Last year: 168,705



LOCATIONS

Burundi,
Cameroon, Chad,
Ethiopia

In 2025, two simultaneous famines were declared for the first time this century — in Gaza and Sudan. According to the United Nations, more than 226 million people do not have enough food to eat. That number can make it easy to forget the day-to-day reality for families. It's parents waking up knowing they don't have enough food for their children, and that they won't earn enough money that day to buy more.

In the Lake Chad basin, there are thousands of small-scale farmers whose crops are damaged by flooding, drought and unpredictable rains. The same challenges are playing out in Ethiopia where recurring droughts and water scarcity have reduced harvests and impacted the health of livestock.

But families are already fighting back against climate change, and your support gives them the tools and resources they need to do it. Farmers are learning new techniques that increase their yields, and women now have access to loans and training to start new businesses. You are standing with families as they build a future where everyone has enough.



Abuna and Biftu Awel are part of a women-led cooperative in Ethiopia that produces aloe vera soap with locally grown ingredients. Through this initiative, part of the Nature+ project, women are learning new skills, building confidence and earning income. (Photo/Julie Krause Holiday Bunge)

Your gifts at work

35,000

seedlings planted to help restore the ecosystem in the Lake Chad basin

7,712

people practicing nature-based solutions like agroforestry, rotational grazing and mulching in Ethiopia

44

income-generating groups established in Chad and Cameroon

Supporting farmers' resilience around Lake Chad

A group of 28 farmers in the Lake Chad basin is adapting to a changing climate that is putting their ability to feed their families at risk.

Members of the group, who call themselves Diri Marmou — “let’s love one another” — say they used to harvest 50 sacks of chillies from a single hectare each season. In recent years they have harvested less than half.

Erratic rainfall, prolonged heat and declining soil conditions have made farming increasingly difficult. Crops are smaller and more vulnerable to pests and disease while growing seasons have shortened as seasonal weather patterns shift. In 2023, the community lost its entire tomato harvest, leaving families without income.

But now, nature-based solutions are helping farmers learn techniques to increase their income, like composting, natural pest control, water-conserving soil restoration methods and improved planting practices. Farmers also receive high-quality seeds and tools to improve productivity. And the community benefits from broader reforestation and peacebuilding work.

This work is implemented together with Lutheran World Federation, supported by the Friends of Creation campaign and with funding from the Government of Canada. These solutions are expected to directly benefit more than 128,000 people and improve the ecosystem for an additional 640,000 people across the region.

Farmer Kakami Ali is already seeing results. After receiving quality seeds, tools and training, he was able to harvest crops three times in less than two months, with more harvests expected.

This is what it looks like for the Diri Marmou farmers to fight for their future. They’re not waiting for the world to stop climate change, they’re learning new skills, adapting and protecting their livelihoods together. Thank you for standing with them.



Farmer Kakami Ali lifts a basin of chillies harvested from his field in Bougourma, Cameroon. (LWF photo/Sylvain Youta)

Changed lives

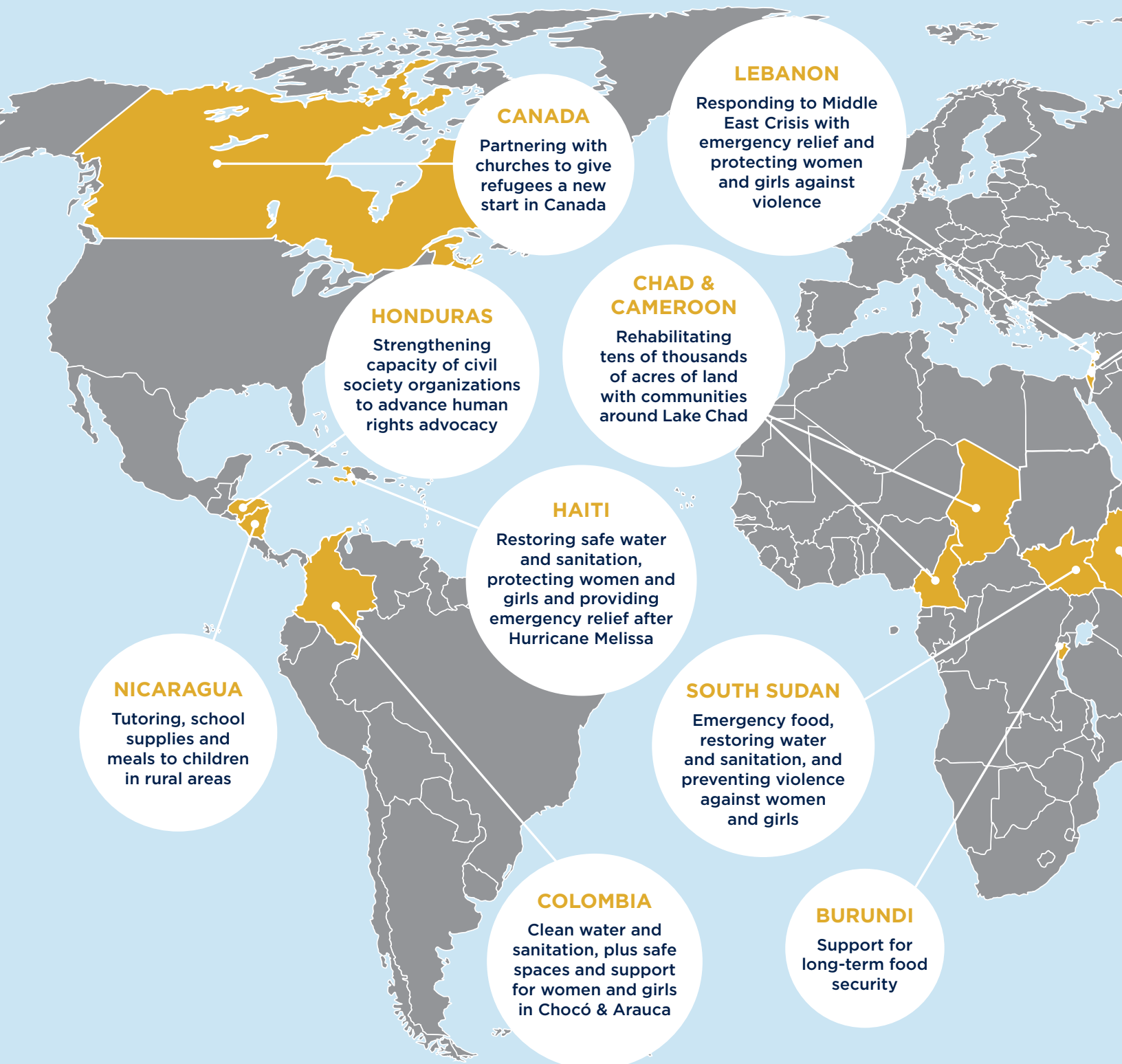
53x more land restored in Ethiopia, 18,627 hectares under nature-based management (up from 350 when work began)

\$1.5 million in additional income for Ethiopian households (approximately \$295 additional income per household)

394 households who now have increased capacity to respond to climate change in Burundi

Canadian Lutheran World Relief

2025-2026 Program highlights



elief

PALESTINE

Emergency response to Gaza war, including water, emergency medical care and trauma support. Ongoing technical training for women and support for Augusta Victoria Hospital

SOMALIA

Providing improved water and sanitation and safe spaces for women

ETHIOPIA

Responding to conflict in Tigray and Amhara with water, sanitation and hygiene, and protecting women and girls from violence. And improving food security through agricultural training and income opportunities in Afar and Oromia

Thank you for standing with people in need around the world!

Your partnership is making an incredible impact. Your generosity is:

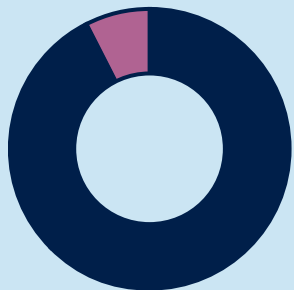
- Responding quickly when war or disasters hit, and staying to help people recover, rebuild and move forward
- Welcoming refugees to Canada and protecting the rights of people forced to flee around the world
- Helping communities build lasting futures where climate change and conflict have made that difficult

Your support is changing lives every day. **Thank you for putting your trust in CLWR!**



See your partnership at work at **clwr.org**

Education



BUDGET

\$1,741,204

Last year: \$2,612,564



BENEFICIARIES

26,987

Last year: 15,228



LOCATIONS

Jordan,
Nicaragua,
West Bank

Education should open a door to the future. But for millions of children, youth, women and people with disabilities, that door is held shut by conflict, poverty, inaccessible schools and social barriers that tell them they do not belong.

But with your support, communities are removing the roadblocks that keep children, women and people with disabilities from learning and shaping their own futures.

In places like Ethiopia and Haiti, we rehabilitated water and bathroom facilities in schools where illness and lack of clean water keep kids home. In Nicaragua, your support provides school supplies, tutoring and meals at school. And in Palestine, we provide scholarships, technical training and community education so women can build fulfilling careers.

In a world where wars, disasters and discrimination keep education out of reach, you chose to stand up for children, women and people with disabilities. Your support makes sure students have what they need to focus on learning.



Pierra Afelita, Jacinthe Wendy and Casimir Andjelica wash their hands at the drinking water and hand-washing point at their school in Roseaux, Haiti that was rehabilitated after Hurricane Melissa. (CLWR/Fairpicture photo/Reginald Louissaint Junior)

Your gifts at work

201

teachers trained in
gender responsive
teaching methods

6,653

people graduated from GRIT's
technical and vocational
education training (TVET)

9

partner training institutes
implemented policies for gender
equity and inclusive advertising

Inclusive vocational training allows Palestinian women to pursue their passion

From a young age, Fatima Dreimli enjoyed watching her brothers work on cars in their garage. Over time, her curiosity turned into a passion for mechanics and she dreamed of a career working with cars. But in Palestine, as in many countries, mechanics is a field that many think is just for men.

Thankfully, the automotive mechanics program at the Lutheran World Federation Vocational Training Center, with support from CLWR's GRIT project, has made their training programs accessible to women and people with disabilities.

Over five years, the GRIT project helped training institutes make changes like adding childcare, updating their physical space and purchasing accessibility tools like braille materials. They have also provided scholarships, covered transportation costs and worked with training institutes to update their curriculums. These changes improve the quality of education and make it possible for women and people with disabilities to attend.

Fatima enrolled in the automotive mechanics program and gained the technical skills needed to pursue her passion. She also completed a work placement to put her new training into practice. After graduation, Fatima was offered a job at the company where she completed her placement, and she now works supporting vehicle diagnostics and maintenance. Her journey shows that vocational training that's inclusive allows women to gain financial independence in jobs that once seemed out of reach.

In addition to practical skills, Fatima says the program gave her new confidence. "It has also strengthened my belief in my ability to create change and make an impact," she says.

Fatima hopes her story can inspire other young women. "I aspire to become an ambassador for vocational training for all girls ... many of them face fear, hesitation, or social barriers when considering non-traditional fields," she says. "Every girl has the right to discover her abilities and choose her path with confidence."



Fatima Dreimli took an automotive mechanics course at the Lutheran World Federation Vocational Training Center. With support from the GRIT project, the institute has made their training programs accessible to women and people with disabilities. (LWF photo/Noor Oda)

Changed lives

5x increase in labour force participation for women graduates of the GRIT project's technical and vocational education training (TVET)

76% of employed graduates report an increase in monthly earning after graduating from TVET, 90% for women with disabilities

50% increase in female trainees at TVET partner training institutes

Refugee resettlement

When Lutherans in Canada welcomed refugees after the Second World War, they didn't have the vocabulary of human rights yet. But they did have a faith that told them all God's children deserve safety, and that they had a responsibility to share with people fleeing wars and disaster.

Today you are carrying on that tradition, standing up for the rights of refugees, helping bring them to Canada and providing practical support as they build a new life. These are just a few highlights from the last year of refugee sponsorship. To learn more about how you can get involved visit www.clwr.org/rr or email us at rrinfo@clwr.org.



On October 2, 2025 Atem and Adau and their five children arrived at the Calgary airport. They were welcomed by a team from Immanuel Lutheran Church in Lethbridge, AB that sponsored the family through CLWR. Their children are now in school and doing well, and in February the family welcomed a new baby, their first Canadian citizen. Walter Egli, the church representative for Immanuel, says they saw the work of God through the long journey to get the family here. "Many miracles during the past three and a half years have shown to us that God has a hand in this process and opened doors at the right times. We fully trust in Him to lead these new Canadians to be a blessing to all whose lives they touch," he says.



In 2026, the North End Sponsorship Team in Winnipeg celebrated 40 years of refugee sponsorship. Since its first sponsorship in 1986, NEST has brought 253 people to Canada. They are the first people to greet refugees like Sara Dominic, from South Sudan. "The first people who make me feel welcome ... it was a group of NEST," she said. Along with some family friends, NEST was at the airport to greet Sara and her family when she landed. Thank you NEST for 40 years of faithful service welcoming newcomers and supporting them as they start again. Watch a video about NEST's work, including Sara's story, on our website at clwr.org/NEST.

Your gifts at work

177

people arrived in
Canada last year

Countries of origin: Afghanistan, Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Yemen

Refugee sponsorship phone ministry

A reflection from Pastor Marlys Moen, who volunteers with the refugee sponsorship program at CLWR's office in New Westminster, BC.

"Good morning! This is Marlys. I am calling from the refugee office of Canadian Lutheran World Relief. I wanted to check in with you about your sponsorship of...."

And so the conversation begins.

I have been volunteering in CLWR's western refugee resettlement office for about a year. My primary task is phoning people who are involved in refugee sponsorship. These conversations primarily relate to:

1. Pre-arrival – ensuring matters like trust funds are in place, contact information is accurate, or providing updates on individuals being sponsored.
2. Post-arrival – checking in to see how the sponsorship is going and a final check-in after 12 months to see how the newcomers are doing and get feedback on the process.

These phone calls are definitely a ministry. People are grateful that someone else cares about them and the people they're sponsoring. Some phone calls are difficult, such as explaining that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has increased the amount of funds required before a sponsored person can arrive; or following up when a scheduled flight bringing a family is cancelled due to bombing in the region.

Often these conversations reflect appreciation for the involvement of CLWR, and when there are difficulties or questions, I gratefully pass on these concerns to the team.

I am thankful for this opportunity to continue learning about the ins and outs of refugee resettlement and, in a small way, to participate in this life-changing and life-giving ministry. I encourage everyone to consider what gifts and skills they can offer. How can you help newcomers gain confidence and independence as they resettle in a brand new country, with different languages, food, shopping, health care, education and traditions?

There are so many ways to volunteer with CLWR and to assist newcomers in making Canada feel like home. Because of my previous experiences with refugee resettlement in various congregations, making phone calls is a good fit for me. Sadly, with the chaos in our world, I do not foresee an end to praying for God's peace and the need for making phone calls.

"Thank you for the opportunity to chat this morning. Enjoy the rest of your day!"



Pastor Marlys Moen volunteers with CLWR's refugee sponsorship program, calling sponsoring groups during and after the sponsorship progress to provide updates and check in to offer support. (CLWR photo/Senait B.)

Celebrating a legacy of refuge

In March of 1946, representatives from North American Lutheran churches gathered in Ottawa to discuss the pressing challenge of how to provide support for the millions of Europeans displaced by the Second World War. This was the birth of CLWR, a way for Canadian Lutherans to extend a hand of welcome to loved ones and strangers an ocean away.

CLWR quickly partnered with Catholic, Mennonite and Baptist church agencies to form the Canadian Christian Council for the Resettlement of Refugees (CCCRR) to assist refugees from Germany and Austria coming to Canada. The first arrivals joined relatives already living in Canada, who sponsored them and paid for the costly voyage. But soon, CCCRR's mandate was expanded to include refugees who did not have relatives in Canada.

Between 1947 and 1954, more than 33,000 displaced people travelled on the Beaverbrae to new lives in Canada. The Beaverbrae completed 51 voyages, made possible by Canadian Lutherans who believed that people forced to flee should be welcomed with courage and compassion.

CLWR's ministry has continued to grow over the past 80 years, providing lasting help during disaster and war, defending the rights of refugees and supporting communities as they build better futures.

Over the next year, please join us at a variety of events across the country as we honour the past and look to a future where welcome is not optional and every life is treated with dignity.

To learn more about the Beaverbrae or to find events near you, visit [**clwr.org/legacy-of-refuge**](https://clwr.org/legacy-of-refuge).



The Beaverbrae's legacy: a lifeline for thousands seeking safety

"We had to flee or end up in a concentration camp," says John Weingartner.

Born in 1936, in what was then Yugoslavia, now Croatia, John was just a child when war forced his family to leave everything behind. Alongside his parents and three siblings, he fled to Austria, where they lived in limbo for nine long years, waiting, hoping for a chance at safety.

That chance came in 1953, when they were resettled to Canada with support from CLWR. The Weingartners arrived on the Beaverbrae, a ship that made 51 voyages carrying emergency supplies from Canada to Europe, and then bringing refugees to safety in Canada.



After the war, many children in refugee camps were undernourished, prompting the Lutheran World Federation to organize a series of summer camps like this one. John's father, Pastor Philipp Weingartner, served as camp director for four summers. (Photo courtesy of John Weingartner)



John, Barbara and their growing family around 2010. (Photo courtesy of John Weingartner)

John's family found a home in Hamilton, Ontario. He went on to become a teacher, raise a family, and celebrate 65 years of marriage. Today, at 89 years old, he and his wife Barbara, who was born in Berlin but also fled with her family to Canada, still live in the same home, surrounded by a lifetime of memories made possible by that one journey.

That legacy of refuge carries on today. With your support we continue to stand with displaced people around the world, providing emergency relief, sponsoring refugees coming to Canada and creating more welcoming communities. Thank you for being part of that legacy.



The members of the Weingartner family that left Austria in 1953. (Photo courtesy of John Weingartner)



Fabian Giordano Florez Martínez is a water, sanitation and hygiene specialist with the Lutheran World Federation in Colombia. He's holding a water filtration kit that helps people in remote communities in Colombia access clean drinking water. (CLWR photo/Shauna Turnley)



**Canadian Lutheran
World Relief**

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