

Challenge & Change



COMPASS

REFUGEE CENTRE

Assist • Accompany • Advocate



ANNUAL REPORT 2021 - 2022

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE COMPASS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Peggy Snyder



To Assist, Accompany, and Advocate so that ***“every person coming to Canada seeking refuge has unhindered access to justice and opportunity to thrive in welcoming communities.”*** This is the work and vision of COMPASS Refugee Centre. We welcome the stranger because once we may also have been a stranger; because our communities are stronger when diversity is embraced; because being human means taking risks and extending a hand of welcome to others who have been made vulnerable. This past year COMPASS extended that hand of ongoing welcome to over 1,900 individuals from 70 countries.

In a recent visit to COMPASS, I was greeted by laughter and chatter coming from the newly designed community space. I peeked in to see a couple of round tables occupied by newcomers who were clearly enjoying the connections and sense of safety over coffee and snacks. It was so satisfying to witness this sense of growing community for individuals and families and to know that caring staff accompany them.

Over the past year, the Board began the discussion of increasing the influence of COMPASS to a broader geographical area including Cambridge, Guelph, and London. This expansion would fill the gaps in service in these areas, as well as increase opportunities for housing and jobs and increase our donor base. As we expand these services, we consider the benefits of collaboration with other organizations that do like-minded work. This direction meets our Strategic Plan objective to engage in collaborative initiatives.

The World Café at last year’s AGM engaged in conversation regarding collaboration and the concept of a Refugee HUB. Collaboration has taken a rather organic shift over the past year as regional government and community organizations come together to explore issues like housing. Our Executive Director, Shelley Campagnola, has been engaged at these tables bringing COMPASS’s experience, knowledge, and skills to these discussions. Shelley also brings influence to several tables with like-minded organizations locally and provincially.

A major initiative for the coming year will be to revise our Bylaws in line with new provincial legislation, *Ontario Not-For-Profit Corporations Act (ONCA)*, with special attention to the question of membership in COMPASS.

COMPASS is blessed with strong leadership, passionate Staff and committed Board members. We look forward to engaging with the work in the new year.

“I just want to say thank you for your help. May God bless you all and give you the strength to help more and more people everyday.” – E. K.



REFLECTIONS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Shelley Campagnola



We began fiscal year 2022 with cautious optimism and a new T.H.R.I.V.E. framework that would meet claimant needs through community collaboration and engagement. We had high hopes that we would emerge from the pandemic restrictions and rebuild the strong trajectory we had been on before it began, with year over year over year significant growth. We had seen God at work in 2021 declaring he was *“ahead of us, unstoppable in his provision, and generous in the outcomes.”*

We put together a careful budget, yet also made room for new initiatives. This includes our partnership with Wilfred Laurier University’s ISOW program to launch a scholarship for refugee claimant youth. It was a great day when a young woman from one of our claimant families began her studies at Laurier in September 2022, financially supported by Laurier and COMPASS.

We had anticipated challenges, uncertain along with others if we were truly emerging into a new day. Yet, we were hopeful and knew that we could not afford to be complacent as wage and rent subsidies came to an end. We did not anticipate just how challenging things would become and how many changes there would be. While wage subsidies ended, restrictions did not. Our first ability to get together with donors again was almost half-way through our fiscal year. Before then, Russia had invaded Ukraine, and inflation had begun to rise at a torrid pace, straining people’s hope and resilience.

There were many highs. We were nominated for the Greater KW Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Award; our event on Refugee Rights Day at The Walper was a success; and occasional large gifts from Foundations encouraged us. A Creekside Church BIG Serve team painted our new T.H.R.I.V.E. space and soon clients enjoyed access to nutritious snacks and support from our gifts-in-kind donation room. A Google Serve team painted our reception and office areas; we had a wonderful return to our annual Summer Picnic; and Equitable Life donated beautiful office furniture, elevating our staff morale.

There were also some lows. Internally, many staff continued to face waves of illness and challenge within their families, taking a toll on their well-being. By mid-summer, two of our team moved on from COMPASS, needing time for rest and renewal. At the same time, we were facing record levels of people needing our help, especially as claim processes were changing rapidly, becoming more complex and delayed at the same time. You can read more about that in the report from our Program and Operations Manager. The hardest challenge and change was in our funding. Historical trends fell away. While individual donations rose other sources of revenue dropped off. Though we had strong reserves to weather dry months, there were too many. Thankfully, many churches and individuals responded generously to our appeal, sustaining us, but we still fell far short.

We finished the year celebrating extraordinary program outcomes, humbled by the hard shifts, and cautiously courageous, knowing we still needed to be here, pursuing our mission, and gripping our vision and values as non-negotiable for the sake of all those who have come, and will still come in 2023.



498 new arrivals to COMPASS

193 granted protected person status

1,477 remained in process at our year end

COMPASS AT A GLANCE IN 2022

Our charitable work is heavily impacted by upheavals around the world. These drive some to Canada seeking safety, and they also raise the consciousness of human suffering and the compassion of Canadians to help. Refugee claimants lack any kind of status that would give them access to many of the rights, privileges, and services that are granted to others such as visitors, temporary workers, and international students, nevermind those with permanent residency and citizenship. This leaves claimants vulnerable to exploitation, discrimination, and questions of belonging. The outcomes of our work are profound, with lives saved and changed forever, and hearts of gratitude multiplied.

PURSUING EXCELLENCE

COMPASS is a leader in assisting refugee claimants as they navigate the refugee claim process, accompanying them as they seek to thrive in a new life in Canada, and advocating for them as they become contributing members in welcoming communities. Our experienced staff and volunteers are deeply passionate as they respect, empower, encourage, and support refugee claimants as they face their immediate crisis situation.



ASSIST

Focused on access to justice in a world of closing borders and complex systems



ACCOMPANY

Focused on helping people thrive with limited resources and access to supports



ADVOCATE

Focused on encouraging welcoming communities that foster belonging



1,954 household members served



70 countries of origin



49 volunteers
3,734 hours



REPORT FROM THE PROGRAM AND OPERATIONS MANAGER

Tony Van Giessen



At COMPASS, our clients' experience and needs are determined largely by challenging processes and policies outside of our control. In order to provide quality guidance and assistance, we must stay well informed and regularly adjust program offerings to meet changing needs.

Over this past year, the refugee claim system in Canada has changed dramatically. The refugee claim eligibility process has gone from days or weeks to months. Identification documents that were once standard are now not available and claimants can now expect to wait six months to a year before they can work legally. Once a claimant has struggled through this process, the wait to be reunited with their loved ones remains agonizingly long and the ability to travel and see family outside of Canada has become all but impossible.

In addition to these challenges, the housing struggles facing our clients have only increased as rents have risen dramatically and shelter options have remained limited. All this has required us to adjust our services to remain a valuable and relevant resource to those seeking help.

The critical need for assistance through the claim process remains and we continue to offer many supports in this area, including system orientation, documentation support, translation, hearing preparation, and access to a safe and reliable space for hearings and legal appointments.

We have also worked closely with our local legal partners to ensure claimants have done all they can to expedite their process. For those who celebrate positive decisions we continue to offer Permanent Residence and Family Reunification assistance. We have celebrated many reunions over this past year.

The system changes have also required us to work even more closely with local settlement partners. This includes advocating and educating around changes to documentation and timelines in order to ensure claimants remain able to access the essential programs and services they need. We remain close partners with many agencies offering housing and employment support services, health care, education, and basic daily needs.

Most importantly, we have continued to remain a source of support, empowerment, and warmth to claimants who are navigating a truly inhospitable system. COMPASS has often played the role of a port in the storm, a place to find stability, comfort, and direction. This past year the need for that has only increased and we will continue to play that role in the years to come.

“My caseworker has also been a friend and mentor. I can't thank you enough COMPASS

...it is because of you I have my family with me now.” – M.H.



COMPASS 2022 YEARBOOK HIGHLIGHTS

OCTOBER 2021: RIDE FOR REFUGE



DECEMBER 2021: CHRISTMAS



APRIL 2022: REFUGEE RIGHTS DAY



JUNE 2022: GOOGLE SERVE TEAM



SUMMER 2022: QUILTS, VISIT WITH MP MIKE MORRICE, TIMS FOR GOOD, AND COMPASS PICNIC



COMPASS GRATITUDE TO OUR FUNDING PARTNERS AND DONORS

We could not help refugee claimants in all the ways that we do were it not for the people who provide generous financial support for COMPASS Refugee Centre. Thank you to all who give at different times throughout the year! We have worked hard to steward your gifts for maximum impact with high standards of practice and program. In 2022, our excellence was affirmed by our nomination for the Greater KW Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards.

“We are beyond grateful for all the help and support that COMPASS has provided to us when we most needed it.” – H.L.

We also want to recognize – and encourage – distinct giving pathways that have significant impact:



Monthly donors are essential to the sustainability of COMPASS. They provide the anchor needed to ensure cashflow. The certainty of funds on a regular basis enables us to be consistently agile and responsive to the needs of claimants throughout the year. THANK YOU to our Northern Stars.

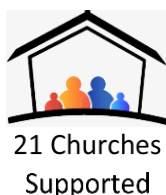


United Way WRC has been a generous source of funding for COMPASS for a few years now. The organization also provides individuals and businesses other ways to give. This summer we received an incredible donation of office furniture from Equitable Life, a UW-WRC partner. This generosity has elevated a healthy sense of pride in the workplace and made it possible to begin to meet with claimants in our offices again.

If you work for **Google** or **Manulife**, you can double your donation impact through their employee donation matching program. In 2022, this worked out to thousands of dollars for COMPASS. We are so thankful for this corporate generosity that values the passions and priorities of employees, doubling their impact for COMPASS.



Ride for Refuge is our premier family-friendly P2P fundraising event. We are thankful for Blue Sea Foundation, the parent organization for the RIDE. Their years of experience, web-based platform, ongoing training and support, and generous promotion are what makes it possible for us to do this event. More than a fundraiser, the RIDE is a showcase event, bringing together everyone passionate about COMPASS each Fall. It is the one time in the year when all stakeholders can meet and celebrate lives forever changed through the collective effort of a welcoming community.



- Jim & Lorna Blair Charitable Foundation
- Mersynergy Charitable Foundation
- Ross-Shire Foundation
- The Mark and Jenny Guibert Foundation
- Veitch Family Foundation



TREASURER REPORT

Thom Dixon

Last year's COMPASS Annual Report on Financials reads in part: *"As Canada's economy emerges from COVID restrictions, and as government wage and rent subsidies are discontinued, COMPASS reaffirms its faith in its traditional supporters, complimented by a search for new avenues of support, to ensure its good work continues expanding in 2022."*

Though 2022 was challenging for all, COMPASS's donors and supporters responded to this expression of faith, surpassing previous giving by nearly 13 percent. However, as pandemic-era government wage and rent subsidies halted, COMPASS's total revenue fell. Recognizing the impending shortfall, management achieved a 2.3 percent reduction in operating expenses, but the year still ended with a deficit for the first time in recent history. Net assets declined as COMPASS was forced to draw on reserves to pay its bills.

In celebration, revenue from gifts, grants, and donations outperformed previous years—YOU WERE MORE GENEROUS THAN EVER! This gave resources to the staff team to support record numbers of families. And building on a platform COMPASS established in the United States, charitable receipts were issued there for donations to COMPASS, initiating a new avenue of financial support to COMPASS.

On the challenge side, government wage and rent subsidies had buoyed COMPASS's finances during the pandemic and secured jobs when jobs were hard to find. When subsidies were halted early in the fiscal year, this led to an overall drop in revenue that we could only partially recover as COVID restrictions continued well into 2022. Management sought to reduce costs, but with mostly fixed expenses such as labour, rent, insurance, and I.T. support, it was not possible to fully offset the drop in revenue. This led to the first operating deficit in recent history for COMPASS.

The coming year brings uncertainties, as inflation drives COMPASS's operating costs up, while also impacting the pocketbooks of COMPASS supporters. What remains constant is the hope shining in the eyes of those who seek COMPASS, the positive stories emerging, the dedication of our staff working in an often-difficult position, and our loyal donors—providing cheques, grants, and awards that further COMPASS's threefold mission.

The excellent stewardship of that generosity has been confirmed by COMPASS auditors who delivered a clean report once again, expressing confidence specifically on the rigour of COMPASS practices and controls. This is reassuring, as we all want to see our contributions serve the purposes intended.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2021-2022					
REVENUES		EXPENSES			
Donations	388,211	Program	296,328	(45.8%)	
Grants	138,690	Facilities	69,373	(10.7%)	
Gov't Subsidies	7,603	Management/Admin	196,905	(30.5%)	
Other Revenue	6,597	Fundraising	83,946	(13.0%)	





675 Queen Street South Unit 230
Kitchener, Ontario N2M 1A1
Telephone: 519-571-1912
Email: compass@compassrefugee.ca
www.compassrefugee.ca

TO DONATE: <https://compassrefugee.ca/donate>

