



Matthew
House
Toronto

Planning
Document
2021

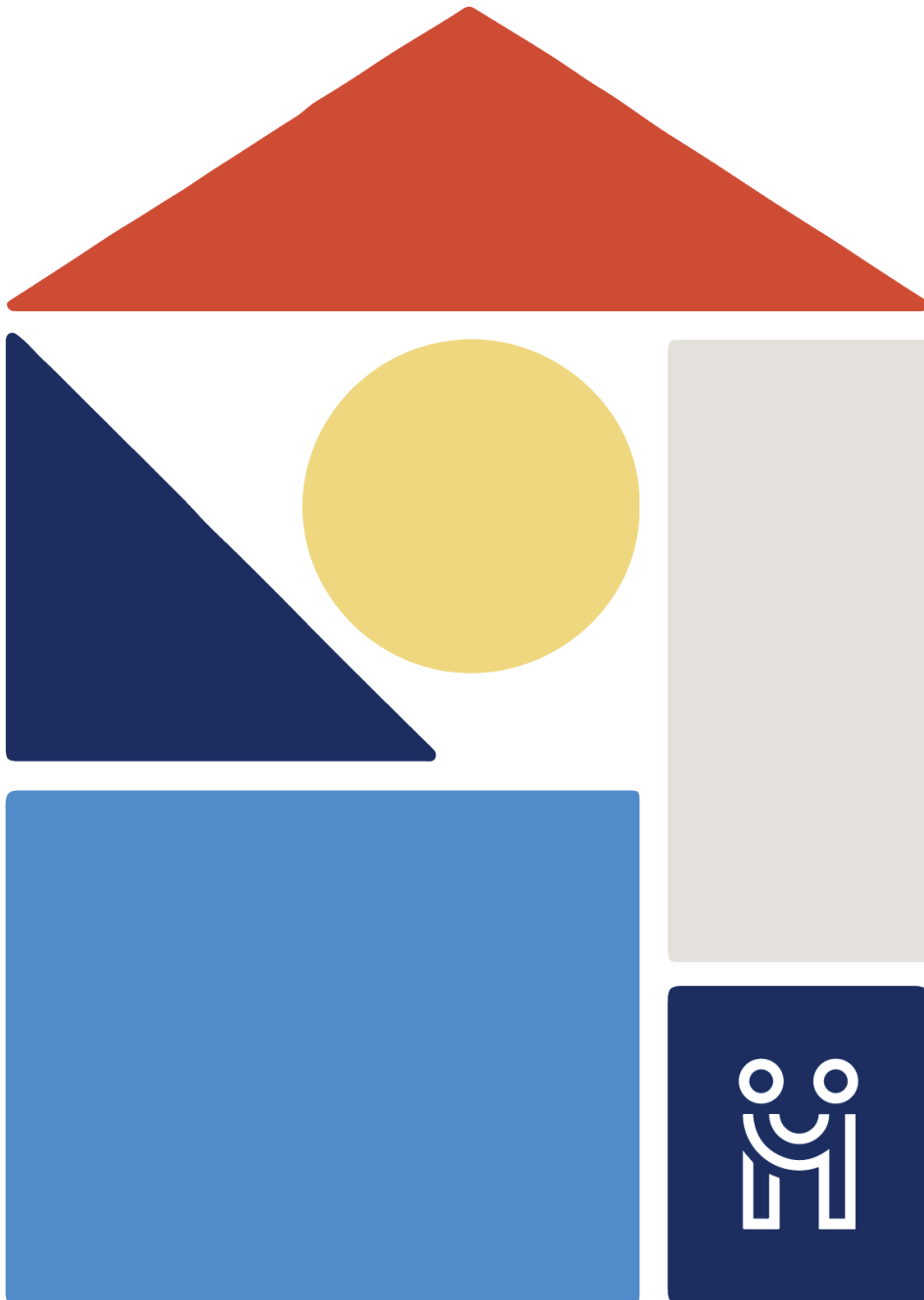


Table of Contents

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Introduction | 4 |
| Letter from Executive Director | 5 |
| Vision and Values | 6 |
| The Matthew House Model | 9 |
| Youth: Making a Meaningful Impact | 10 |
| Refugee Hearing Program Growth | 12 |
| Measuring Success | 15 |
| What The Future Holds | 18 |



“For I was a stranger, and
you welcomed me.”

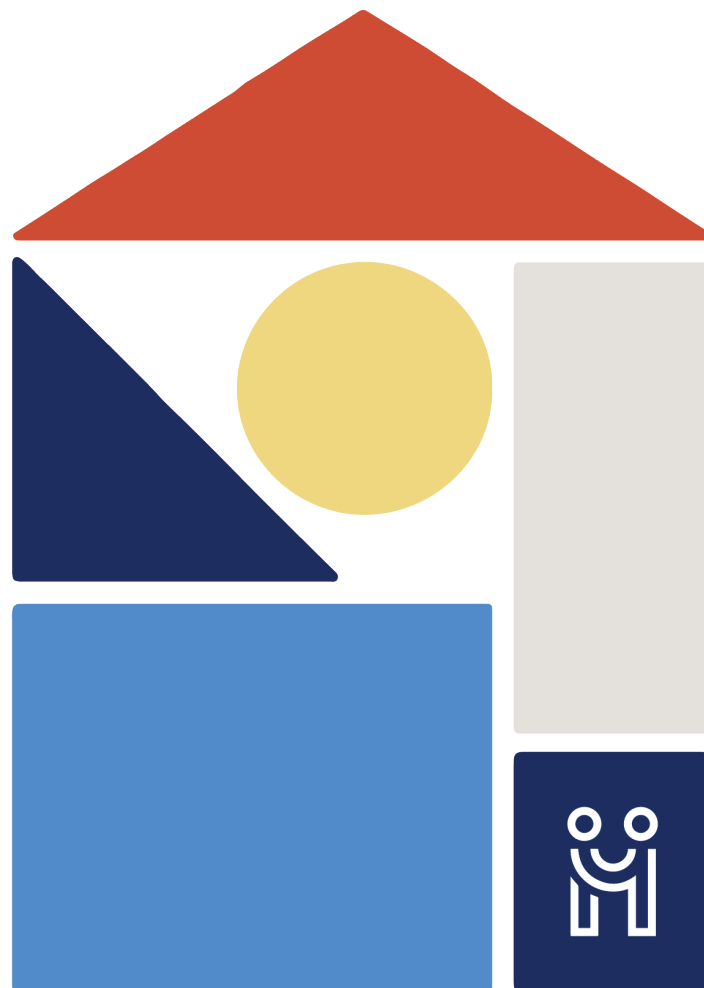
— **Matthew 25:35**

Who are we?

A community of 4 homes in Toronto that warmly welcome, shelter and assist newly arrived refugee claimants. Since opening in 1998, we have assisted close to 2,000 refugees fleeing war or persecution from 101 different nations.

Our mission is to restore refugees' dignity and hope by providing emotional and physical support in a homelike setting, helping them heal from their journeys and establish new lives in Canada.

In addition to practical assistance, our desire is to offer a deep sense of belonging to those who have lost so much yet whom we know will ultimately enrich our city and our nation so greatly.



Letter from Executive Director

“Welcome the stranger.”



In those three simple words, Matthew House finds its deepest conviction and strongest call to action. They're as vivid, countercultural and motivating as they were when we first opened our doors, and have only grown moreso as we've turned our gaze forward to plan the next 5 years.

We've listened to former residents, volunteers, staff and partners, and that same spirit of friendship shines through: we're a community of people who care before cure, who mentor and lead, who celebrate and who befriend. It's abundantly clear: those three words are in our organizational DNA. They're woven through our rhythms and processes. And they're the key to unlock where we go from here.

The stakes of living out this phrase are high. It's hard work. A calling lived out day by day, meal by meal, conversation by conversation. But as we've learned over and over, the hard work is worth it. Tangible. Life-changing. Life-saving.

Over the years we've welcomed hundreds of young people to Matthew House, many who are "unaccompanied minors" arriving in Canada with no family or guardians. They land here and find no listening ear. No helping hand. No support system. Too often, they end up numbered among the homeless, living in shelters that simply aren't set up to address the deep trauma and unique needs that are part of the refugee experience.

We stand in the gap to make a better way: a path to successfully transition to a new environment. A place where a young refugee can benefit from stability. A home with house parents who can guide and mentor. A community that cares. It's that stability

that sets the foundations for them to finish school, cement friendships, build confidence and feel as secure as possible in our city. Young people who pass through our doors have become engineers, teachers, accountants, chefs, physicists, community workers, parents, and business owners. And, to our great joy, they often return to become Matthew House volunteers.

It's these youth that have inspired us to make a commitment to spend the next five years re-orienting our homes as much as we can to welcome refugee youth. By providing up to two years of comprehensive support, our hope is our youth guests will prosper, thrive and add to our community.

Our plan for growth at Matthew House includes careful stewardship of the gifts we've been given, with a strong emphasis on looking to develop sources of self-sustaining income where available, to secure a future for Matthew House and our residents.

Our success will continue to be measured not just by how many 'strangers' we welcome, but by how well we welcome them: into long-term flourishing in their new home. Lives transformed, celebrations held, and New Canadians who give back.

I am awed by the resilience of the refugees that we serve.

So as we enter the next phase of life for the Matthew House community, we invite you to join your hope to that of our residents: a hope for a brighter future. A hope that is always standing by an open door, waiting to be welcomed in.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'JAH'.

Mission Statement:

Fueled by God's love, we aim to inspire hope, uphold dignity, champion independence and build resilient communities for refugees.

Vision Statement:

A 'Welcome Home' for refugees on the road to a new and prosperous life.



Core Values:

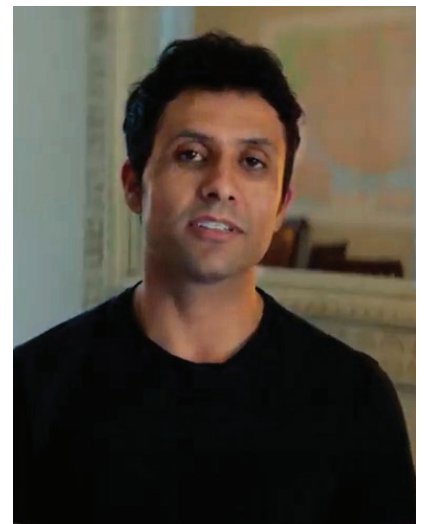
W.E.L.C.O.M.E

- **Worth and dignity:** We respect, protect and value the dignity of each person in our community and affirm their potential.
- **Excellence:** We pursue excellence in all aspects of our service. We continually develop our skills and knowledge.
- **Love:** We believe the path to hope begins with love. We cover our guests with care, consideration and compassion.
- **Community:** Friendships are built through communal living. Experiencing life together is how we create a sense of belonging.
- **Open Door:** We are a safe space for all refugees regardless of race, religion, ethnic or national origin, political opinion, sexual orientation, or gender identity. We welcome and affirm all who become part of our family.
- **Matthew 25:35:** Our core motivation to serve is captured in Jesus' words in Matthew 25:35: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me..."
- **Encouragement and Hope:** We ensure that our residents are not alone, and that their hope for a new future is now a shared one.

HOUSE STORIES

"Matthew House is always home. That people from different places come under one roof, at one table and talk even without words, without English, is still amazing to me."

R.E - Iran



Our
Services:

WELCOME TO
CANADA PROGRAM

SHELTER AND
SUPPORT

REFUGEE HEARING
PROGRAM

CHILD AND YOUTH
SERVICES



The Matthew House Model:

Small & supportive homes

Matthew House employs a model that prioritizes a family-like setting, high staff to resident ratios and communal living.

What defines a Matthew House home?

- Small family-like atmosphere (6-10 residents with 1-2 house parents)
- All rooms shared with at least one other. Everyone fits at one dining table and shares meals together
- Well kept homes and shared gardens
- Caring staff and volunteers
- Rooted in our faith motivation.
- Holistic support from moment of arrival until time of establishment in own home
- Well established routines with residents sharing in-house responsibilities.
- Special celebrations: birthdays, special days (World Refugee etc.) trips, summer camps
- Residents have staff to help them at every stage of their refugee claimant journey
- A secure and safe environment where other than our entry points, doors are not locked

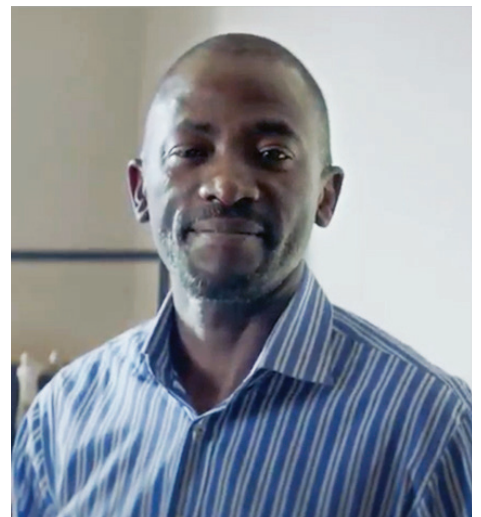
House Parents

House parents are the heart of each of our homes. To better support them we are committing to a new training and relief module that will centre on trauma-informed support, suicide prevention strategies, LGBTQ and gender sensitivity, healing and crisis-prevention.

HOUSE STORIES

“I appreciate the atmosphere and family. I was in a homeless shelter. It was horrible. Offloading the burden off my shoulders, the family atmosphere comforts people when you’re far and left your family.”

H.G - Ethiopia





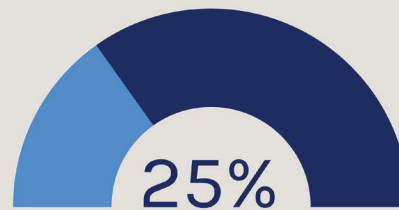
Youth: Making a Meaningful Impact

Youth & Unaccompanied Minors:

Without organizations like Matthew House, refugee youth often end up in homeless shelters where they can be retraumatized. We believe the environment we seek to create is essential for refugee youth to develop their full potential as new Canadians. These youth have endured trauma and violence in their homeland, and are now without parents or guardians in Canada. By living with volunteer house parents in a family-like environment, secure and safe settlement is possible.

When alone and neglected, refugee youth are at a higher risk of homelessness and substance abuse. By hosting these young people in a Matthew House home, we have a special opportunity to meaningfully impact their lives, in a caring community with refugee-specific sensitivity, support and education.

25% of refugee claimants are between 16-25 years old.



Currently Matthew House serves approx 25 youth annually.

In the next five years, Matthew House will shift our supportive homes towards housing primarily youth and work to add houses in order that we might double capacity for youth and unaccompanied minors.



Youth Engagement

We have engaged with experts in youth advocacy, child welfare and refugee advocacy to help revise our policies and practices.

We're committed to learning from youth as we make this change, and will engage them in an annual consultation to incorporate their perspectives into the ongoing conversation.

Home maintenance workshops, life skills coaching, and a mentoring program will be created for all youth residents, with a dedicated staff member to coordinate.

A new budget for mental health, counselling and occupational training for residents will be implemented.





Refugee Hearing Program

The refugee hearing at the IRB (Immigration and Refugee Board) determines if a refugee will stay in Canada or be sent back to a country where they may face persecution, violence or even death. Our RHP program aims to prepare refugees for this critical hearing event so they are fully informed and truly ready.

This program is currently running at full capacity and is in high demand outside of Toronto as well. Notwithstanding the inroads and resourcing we have been able to mobilize at Matthew House, the vast majority of claimants go to their refugee hearing without the benefit of preparation.

Our goal is to grow a national program that will serve 6300 individuals or 10% OF CLAIMANTS across Canada.

Program Goals

1. Demystify the hearing event at the IRB
2. Provide a space and time to emotionally prepare
3. Review the basis of claim through a different lens

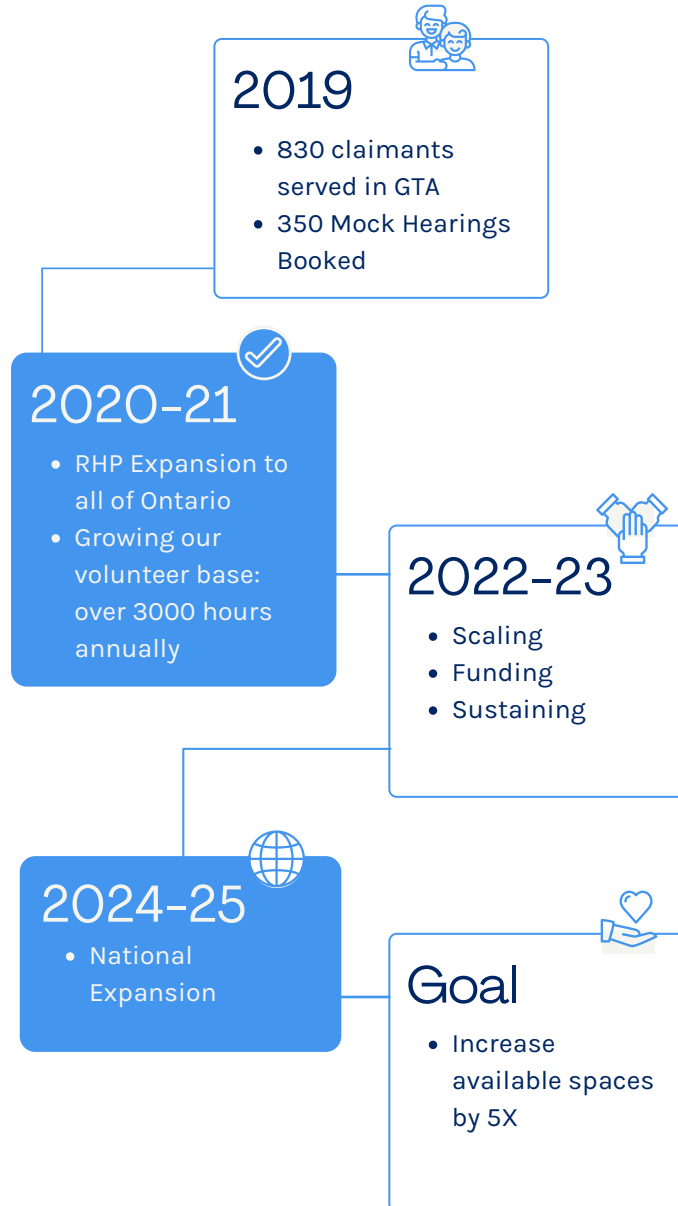
HOUSE STORIES

“You prepared me in the best way possible, I held to it like the last straw of oxygen.”

B.M - Colombia



Refugee Hearing Program: Five Year Plan





Public Action & Education

- Be a champion for vulnerable refugees
- Celebrate the contributions refugees make in our communities
- Advocate for justice and protection for those fleeing persecution
- Raise awareness of refugee rights
- Model meaningful change
- Share our success stories to inspire others





Tracking Progress and Success

It takes time to adjust to and make a new life in a new country. We measure our impact not just in numbers of people. We evaluate ourselves on maintaining an environment where HOPE, DIGNITY and RESILIENCE are cultivated.

Hope - Orientation sessions, referrals for counselling, RHP program, high staff to resident ratios

Dignity - Housing, budgeting, Legal Aid, help setting up their first home

Resilience - Community Mentoring and Training support. High engagement rates for our initiatives. High level of volunteer engagement.

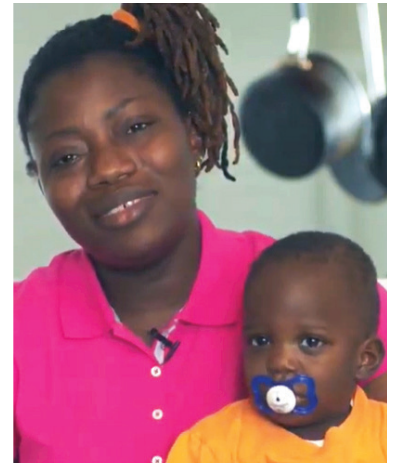
HOUSE STORIES

“Through Matthew House I made a connection in the community. It was a good choice and I loved it.”

J.A - Congo

“It was not at all lonely to move out for me. People from MH would still call, they sent me birthday cards. They checked on me.”

A.M - Pakistan



Services

Impacts

| | |
|--|--|
| Temporary Shelter at 981 Dundas | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meals shared• Homes furnished• Successful housing placements outside the shelter system• Satisfaction in exit interviews |
| Settlement Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• High Staff to resident ratio• Resident satisfaction with our Orientation Sessions• Referrals made• Settlement cases successfully completed• Relationships maintained post-move |
| Youth Homes | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• High school graduates• Mentorship relationships maintained• Post-secondary placements• Participation in Matthew House |
| Community & Advocacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteer engagement• Former Resident engagement• Resident participation• Advocacy Activities• Events |
| RHP | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Claimants served• Mock Hearings held• Degree of satisfaction in the post hearing surveys |



Responsibility to Our Stakeholders

- More than .80 cents of every dollar will go towards refugee care, community building, and the well-being of our residents.
- Annual former resident pulse check to gather insights for necessary changes and future initiatives.
- Continue to include refugees' lived experience across as many aspects of our services as possible.
- Energize our relationships with refugees beyond their residency at Matthew House.
- Commit to fostering a diverse and vibrant volunteer community through consistent touchpoints.





Securing Our Future

- When opportunities present themselves, prioritize the expansion of our real estate portfolio by adding up to four small homes by 2026
- Diversify our revenues by investing in social enterprises that support the Matthew House community as a whole
- Continue to invest in growing a sustainable donor base with a stretch target of 25%, including the increase of monthly recurring gifts
- Seek partners to accelerate our digital presence in an effort to build a robust online community and boost awareness of Matthew House and the global refugee crisis.





Strategic Outcomes for 2025

Expand number of beds available to youth and unaccompanied minors

Our goal is to dedicate over **75% of our housing to vulnerable youth** and build on our reputation for excellence in youth care.

Expand the Refugee Hearing Program

The need to increase capacity for this service outside of the GTA has never been greater. Alongside our strategic partners, we will create a scalable growth plan and governance structure that will precipitate the launch of a national service. We will recruit new volunteers and aim to have the capacity to assist **10% of claimants** nationally.

Capital growth plan to acquire new homes

This year we will open one new home and take ownership of a previous leased property. Over the next five years, if favourable market opportunities arise, our goal will be to seek capital gifts and leverage our current assets to invest in four new properties. Continued and robust risk management will ensure we have the resources to operate each home we add to the highest standard achievable.

Establish plan and/or pilot sustainable enterprise with recurring revenue streams

We will spark engagement in the digital space to host virtual fundraising events, launch a digital storefront and grow a larger audience on social media for Matthew House stories and appeals.

Our dream is to nurture a **fair trade, refugee-supported enterprise** that gives the Matthew House community the opportunity to develop the potential for a sustainable income over the long-term. This year we will seek to advance the partnerships needed to make this dream a reality.

Summary

We hope that sharing our 5 year Vision for Matthew House has revealed where our hearts and minds are turning. Some of our aspirations included in this document are ambitious, and will require the support and encouragement of the broadest cross-section of our communities.

If any part of our vision has sparked a seed of inspiration within you, let's continue the conversation. Whether you can lend us your talent, networks, know-how or financial resources, we would be honoured to count you amongst our motivated team.

After all, a true welcome takes more than a kind word—it requires a place to be made, a process to be refined, a community of support to be gathered; all before that deep breath of relief is released by a refugee, as they step inside the door.

We fully subscribe to the saying “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

The refugees we serve have come a long way to us. Let's go even farther in continuing to bring their hopes and dreams to life, together.

Please connect with us at: jacky@matthewhouse.ca