



Giving
Hope
Today



IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE SERVICES

HISTORY

1989 - 2005

BEGINNINGS

RATIONALE

- Based on S.A. Mission Statement.
- Refugee numbers' dramatic increase:
 - 1980: 1,600 claims
 - 1987: 25,944
- Master Agreement with Federal Government

VISION

- Regional offices (Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, Montreal, Windsor)

BEGINNINGS

OBJECTIVES

- Sponsorship & Reception
- Settlement Services (emergency aid, information/referral/advocacy, counselling, legal, escort and interpretation)
- English as a Second Language classes

BEGINNINGS

INAUGURATION

- Refugee Sponsorship & Settlement Services (RESPONSE) opened the door to its first client in February 1989 at 148 Jarvis St. in downtown Toronto.
- RESPONSE was developed and supervised by the Ethnic Ministries Department of THQ. After one year, collaboration with DHQ.

PROGRAMS

- **1990:** First English as a Second Language class, co-sponsored with the Toronto Board of Education.
Location: Regent Park Recreation Centre.
- Eventually: 3 a.m. & 2 p.m. classes, taking up all of the building space at 148 Jarvis St.
- **1993, February:** Name change to Immigrant & Refugee Services Centre.

PROGRAMS

- **1993, Fall:** Two LINC classes were opened, funded by CIC. Part-time LINC Coordinator hired. The Toronto Board of Education was sub-contracted to provide instructors. With CIC funding, 10 computers were purchased for LINC students to use. The LINC program ended in December 1999.
- **1995, December:** First Christmas Program at the Immigration Holding Centre (Celebrity Inn).

PERSONNEL

- Programs and office operated with: Receptionist/Secretary, Settlement Worker, Director.
Other than an Assistant Officer for 6 months, no personnel added until:
- **2001:** Part-time E.S.L. Coordinator hired. (Up to that time, ESL Coordination was an add-on to other responsibilities.) When Program Coordinator responsibilities were added, this became a full-time position.

PROGRAM EXPANSION

- Since then, a multitude of programs have been offered with the aim of developing skills, promoting community and empowering newcomers.

Some examples:

Computer and Accounting classes; English Conversation, Writing, Movies and Conversation Partners; E.S.L. and Spanish Bible Studies; International Cooking and Craft classes; Multicultural Choir.

- Group information sessions have covered topics such as: Immigration, Tenants' and Workers' Rights, Accessing the Health Care System, Parks & Recreation, Fraud Prevention, Budgeting, How to Start a Small Business, Networking, and other Job-Search topics.

EXPANSION & TEMPORARY RELOCATION

- **2000:** Mapping of Toronto Research (looking for areas with greatest concentration of newcomers, least number of services and an existing S.A. presence). Researcher: Community Services Program Director, DHQ.
- **2001:** New Director was appointed with mandate to expand services.
- **2002, November:** North York satellite launched, in collaboration with Yorkminster Citadel.
- **2003, May:** Scarborough satellite launched, in collaboration with Cedarbrae Community Church.

EXPANSION & TEMPORARY RELOCATION

- **2003**, September: First Chaplain appointed to IRS.
- **2003**, October: Temporary move of downtown office to leased space at 7 Labatt Ave., Suite 204. (Pending return to Jarvis St. property, in a new building.)
- **2005**, January: IRS Chaplaincy started at Immigration Holding Centre (Heritage Inn).
- **2005**, September: Mississauga satellite launched, in collaboration with Mississauga Temple.