

Reaching Out Assisting Refugees 2024 Annual Report



During this past year ROAR has achieved many milestones. A key achievement was becoming a registered society under the Societies Act of BC. This paves the way for ROAR to begin the process for becoming a federally recognized charity in the coming year.

ROAR also continued working on its main objective, refugee resettlement. We have now brought 7 people to safety in Nanaimo. A few of those we have helped resettle are now Canadian Citizens. In this past year:

- Two newcomers completed their first year of life in Canada with the support of a sponsorship group.
- Two new people arrived to start their first year in Canada.
- Three new sponsorship groups were formed.
- Another sponsorship group is in formation.

We could not do anything without the essential and extremely generous donation of good-will, time and effort of volunteers on sponsorship groups. There are currently 28 members of five sponsorship groups. Volunteering for a sponsorship group is where the actual difference is made in a newcomer's life.

We hosted an extremely busy booth at the Nanaimo Pride festival. Many new volunteers were recruited, and we continued to successfully raise our local profile.

ROAR also met important fundraising goals. These funds are raised for refugee support and resettlement. We work in very close collaboration with Brechin United Church who operate Brechin United Church Refugee Fund as we are not yet a registered charity. In the 2023 matched fundraising campaign we raised about \$21,000 mostly for the Refugee Fund. The first \$5,000 were triple matched. In

addition, we have several very generous monthly donors who have added significant funds to the Refugee Fund.

ROAR also raised about \$7,000 through our Picnic en Blanc. These funds can be used for pre-arrival refugee support as well as refugee resettlement.

We are grateful to the many business organizations who have donated goods and services to help with fundraising and the many people who support our work. We would especially like to recognize Save On Foods, Country Club for their outstanding support.

We have connected with the community through:

- The 2024 Picnic en Blanc, attended by 200 people where a newcomer (former refugee) addressed the crowd.
- Two newsletters were sent to just under 300 people.
- We have an active 'X' account with 698 followers.
- Our Facebook page has 740 followers.

We also wish to recognize the organizational partners who support our work. Our main partner has always been Brechin United Church. Their Refugee Fund is the repository of funds used by our sponsorship groups. As the church is a charity they can provide charitable tax receipts for donations to the Refugee Fund. In addition, the church itself often hosts ROAR meetings. Church members have been important volunteers on sponsorship groups, participated in fundraising activities and provided financial support.

ROAR couldn't do any of this work without our strong partnerships with Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs). The Intercultural Association of Greater Victoria is the SAH for three of our current groups. The United Church of Canada is the SAH for one of our current groups.

We work closely with Rainbow Refugee as a co-sponsor. Co-sponsorship allows SAHs to create spaces additional to their quota (quotas are usually fully used) for our groups to be able to sponsor a

refugee. Rainbow Refugee also has a special relationship with IRCC to provide a limited number of settlement groups with three months of funding for ongoing costs at close to welfare rates as well as start-up money. We take advantage of this when possible.

We are grateful for the generous donation of time and effort of our board. They are tireless and committed in their support of the organization.

Together, our efforts are making a huge difference in the lives of a few people!