

Curb Notes

The Power of Giving Back

Jessica Gowers, Communications & Public Relations Coordinator



Paola Dugand Barros

Paola's Story:

Paola, now a Case Worker at Mission Services of London's Men's Mission, came to Canada in May of 2011. Leaving her home in Venezuela, Paola came to London with her husband and two sons, only six and three years old at the time. They planned to stay at Mission Services of London's emergency shelter for families, Rotholme Family Shelter.

When Paola and her family arrived at the Canadian border as refugees, they met Paola's cousin who was already staying in Canada. Paola was immediately connected to a settlement organization which found her family housing within the week, diverting her from needing to stay in the shelter.

The settlement organization also connected Paola and her family to Mission Services of London's Mission Store. The Mission Store offers the Emergency Voucher Program for those in need of an emergency set of clothing, outerwear, and small household items.

"My sons' first ever winter jackets came from the Mission Store's Emergency Voucher Program."

"Coming from Venezuela where it's hot all the time, we never needed winter coats," Paola recalls.

"The Mission Store's program gave us everything. They gave us our bed sheets that covered our futon," Paola continues.

Paola and her husband also bought their sons' Christmas and birthday presents from the Mission Store. "My sons, they had to leave everything behind. Yet, because of the Mission Store, it was like they never missed anything. They had their toys and their clothes. The toys were new to them."

Paola, originally trained and working as a psychologist in Venezuela, was trying to find her professional fit in Canada. Paola started working at Mission Services of London through Rotholme Family Shelter. While working at Rotholme, Paola went back to school to become an Addictions Counsellor.

When the pandemic hit, Paola had the opportunity to work with the men served by Men's Mission. It was then that Paola had the idea that becoming a Case Worker would bring her back to her roots as a psychologist through one-on-one counselling.

"When you immigrate to a new country, it hurts your self-esteem. You don't think you are worth it. Working here, I was able

to gain the self-esteem that I lost," reflects Paola.

"Mission Services of London impacted my life. Just having the opportunity to work for this organization is a way for me to help other people achieve their goals, settle into the community, and provide the resources they need to succeed."

When asked if there was anything she'd like to end her story with, Paola said: "Just believe in yourself. If you find someone that is willing to support you and guide you, take the opportunity. You never know what you can achieve. Maybe, it will give you the opportunity to give back."



Staying at the Men's Mission *Seeking an Open Door*

Jessica Gowers

Communications & Public Relations Coordinator



Men's Mission, located at 459 York Street, is one of Mission Services of London's emergency shelters. Men's Mission offers 76 emergency shelter beds to men experiencing homelessness, and there are 35 transitional beds in the Roger Smith Wing.

Upon arrival to the shelter, men will speak to a Resident Care Worker to see if there is an open bed. Each man is offered three nutritious meals per day, and other necessities, such as clothing and hygiene items.

In Search of My New Place:

During their stay, participants will frequently meet with their Case Worker. Case Workers are conscientious when earning the trust of the men, leading with the belief that each participant knows what is best for themselves. Case Workers walk alongside the participants, allowing the men to guide how they need support.

Early in a participant's stay, his Case Worker will explore housing needs, preferences, and feasible options with him. Some options may include independent, affordable, or market-rate housing, living with roommates, moving in with family, live-in addiction treatment, long-term care homes, or palliative care homes.

Oftentimes, one of the first steps is applying for new identification documents. It can be difficult to keep track of personal items while experiencing homelessness, like one's birth certificate. Identification documents are needed for housing applications, banking, medical treatment, Driver's License renewals and updates, accessing one's social insurance number, and financial support applications.

Any of the participant's medical needs are also prioritized by his Case Worker early on. Men's Mission has a nursing station that is available to community healthcare partners. A Case Worker may invite a Personal Support Worker to come to the nursing station to provide care for a participant. The nursing station is used daily.

Support Network and Whole-Person Care:

If a participant is looking for a listening ear or someone to chat with, he can connect with any of the staff members at the Men's Mission. Participants can form connections with the maintenance team, the cooks, the Resource Centre staff, the Resident Care Workers, the Chaplain, the Program Supervisor, and the Director of Shelters. The heart of Men's Mission is to provide care for the men staying there.

Resident Care Workers (RCW) are the first faces participants see when they come through the doors and are on-site 24/7. They supply the men with emergency clothing, ensure they take their medications as prescribed, assist with meal lines, help men to access their belongings, and participate in recreational programming. RCWs are also trained to administer Naloxone and respond to crisis situations that can occur in shelters.



*Members of the Men's Mission Kitchen Team
(December, 2023)*

From Left to Right: Corey Carroll, *Full-Time Cook*; Danielle Rainville, *Full-Time Cook's Helper*; Len Devost, *Food Services Supervisor (Shelters)*; Chris St Laurent, *Full-Time Cook*; Zack Bourque, *Full-Time Cook's Helper*

Continued...

Scan Away Hunger 2023's Top Cashier

\$5,000 Raised by Karen from Compass Foods

Scan Away Hunger is Mission Services of London's annual campaign to fundraise to help offset meal costs at our sites. Across Men's Mission, Rotholme Family Shelter, and Quintin Warner House, Mission Services of London serves

approximately 500 meals per day, or 200,000 meals per year.



Shoppers at participating stores are able to add \$3.99 (or multiples thereof) to their bill at the cash register.

Karen, a cashier at Compass Foods, had the personal goal of raising \$2,000 amongst all the customers who came through her check out. She was shocked when she hit her goal and there were still a few weeks left until the fundraising campaign concluded (December 31, 2023).

Once she hit \$2,000, Karen adjusted her goal to \$3,000... then \$4,000... and finally, \$5,000.



Karen, Compass Foods



Karen, Compass Foods (L); Sionainn Pryce-Hynes, Development Officer - Events & Gifts-in-Kind, Mission Services of London (R)

Thank you so incredibly much to Karen for her faithful commitment to helping provide meals for vulnerable men, women, and children at Mission Services of London.

Mission Services of London's trauma-informed Chaplain, Harry Soedarmasto, is also available to the participants at their request. Chapel services are held on Wednesdays and Saturdays and attendance is strictly voluntary. While the men are welcome to talk to the Chaplain regarding their spiritual needs, many participants reach out to Harry for a variety of other reasons, including processing grief and loss.

The men have access to weekly formal Narcotics Anonymous meetings. The meetings are held in the chapel and are open to anyone staying at the Men's Mission.

Roger Smith Wing:

The Roger Smith Wing of Men's Mission has 35 transitional beds. Residents of the Roger Smith Wing can stay 364 days, although the majority exit much sooner than that. They continue to have access to case worker support and very purposely move toward stable housing as quickly as possible. While in the Roger Smith Wing, men may enroll in school, reconnect with family, and/or secure a job to help a smooth transition back into the community.

Show Your Support for Those Experiencing Homelessness: Register Now for Coldest Night of the Year!

Saturday, February 24, 2024 at 4:00 PM,
H.B. Beal Secondary School (525 Dundas Street, London, ON)

Register now or donate to a walker or team by visiting: <https://cnoy.org/location/london>

Attend as a walker, or create a team with your family, friends, neighbours, or coworkers. Funds raised from Coldest Night of the Year will help offer meals, emergency shelter, addiction treatment, and mental health programs to individuals and families that are receiving support from Mission Services of London.

coldest
*night
OF THE YEAR

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Impacting LIVES
through sites and programs:

Men's Mission
459 York Street
519-672-8500

Rotholme Family Shelter
42 Stanley Street
519-673-4114

Quintin Warner House
457 York Street
519-434-8041

**Community Mental
Health Programs**
4-797 York Street
519-439-7700 (Streetscape)

Mission Store
4-797 York Street
519-438-3056

**Mission Services of
London Foundation**
4-797 York Street
519-433-2807

Administration Office
4-797 York Street
519-433-2807

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Thank you to our
government funders:



Thank You for Coming Alongside Mission Services of London This Season!

Mission Services of London is amazed at the generosity of our donors and community. Over the holiday season, we were filled with gratitude from your acts of kindness. Thank you for blessing our vulnerable neighbours and Mission Services of London with your support.

