

How does it feel to see the latest Matthew House open to refugees in the National Capital Region?

What a wonderful blessing it is to see Matthew House Ottawa filled with refugees this holiday season.

Thinking back you can probably imagine our surprise and excitement when a friend from Bethany Baptist Church called one wintry day in February 2009. She asked if we would like to use the Centre Pointe House as a refugee shelter like the ones in Toronto, Ft. Erie and Windsor. We were amazed at how the Lord was working within the church and among so many others who have a heart for people in need of refuge. A lot of hard work and faithful decisions have taken place since that initial conversation. And now Matthew House Ottawa has become the latest oasis for the persecuted.

Each time this has happened, we have seen how God has called ‘a champion’, a passionate person with a deep sense of call to plant and grow the other houses. We thought to ourselves, who will be the Anne Woolger-Bell, the Christine Walsh or the Shirley McNair for Matthew House Ottawa? With no one identified we sat down with Steve and Laura Kuhn and asked them to join the cause. Their response – ‘We’re in!’ And so the movement grew.

As Bethany BC continued their preparations to make anew their property resource for God’s use, we began to pray and share the Matthew House vision with others. Each time we met with folks and shared the vision (to grow a new shelter for refugee claimants in the NCR) the response was the same, how might I help? And when do we start?

God was working among his faithful family preparing each one for the task ahead. Not one champion but many champions with a heart and call for those who are marginalized and neglected who want to “welcome the stranger” as Jesus said in Matthew 25:31ff has been the result. Support has come from near and far, young and old. There is a dedicated Board of Directors who are building a strong Christian organization. The Matthew House Ministry Team are committed and faithful volunteers who work daily to help relieve the suffering of those God is bringing to their awareness. And we will never forget the example of the troop of mostly retired guys from local churches and Habitat for Humanity that with the help of local businesses refurbished the 112 year old farm house into what we humbly like to say is ‘the most beautiful refugee shelter in Canada!’

The Lord has been so good to us allowing us to witness the birth of what is now the 6th Matthew House during our 12 years in Canada. MHO is hosting its first generation of guests now. They come from places far away; Ethiopia, Namibia, and Nigeria. The Matthew House family is growing. How do we feel? A lot like proud parents...or maybe it would be better to say, like a proud Big Brother and Big Sister.

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