Sojourn House provides Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing services to refugees coming from all parts of the world. We provide a safe environment for newcomer refugees who have undergone difficult and traumatic pre-migratory experiences, including exposure to war, torture, violence, targeted persecution, forced migration and family separation. We are dedicated to provide the best possible care, services and programs tailored to effectively address their particular needs. Sojourn House has served thousands of refugees over our 26 years of service. With decades of experience and one of the first refugee housing facilities in Toronto we take pride in being a leading organization in refugee care.

In 2014 we served people coming from 41 countries including:

- Afghanistan
- Algeria
- Azerbaijan
- Bangladesh
- Botswana
- Burundi
- Cameroon
- Colombia
- Congo
- Croatia
- Egypt
- Eritrea
- Ethiopia
- Ghana
- Greece
- Hungary
- India
- Iran
- Iraq
- Jamaica
- Kenya
- Morocco
- Nigeria
- North Korea
- Pakistan
- Republic of Yemen
- Rwanda
- Saudi Arabia
- Senegal
- Serbia
- Somalia
- South Korea
- St Lucia
- St Vincent
- Sudan
- Swaziland
- Sweden
- Syria
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- United Kingdom

In 2014 Annual Report www.sojournhouse.org
MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“All human beings, whatever their cultural or historical background, suffer when they are intimidated, imprisoned or tortured . . . We must, therefore, insist on a global consensus, not only on the need to respect human rights worldwide, but also on the definition of these rights . . . for it is the inherent nature of all human beings to yearn for freedom, equality and dignity, and they have an equal right to achieve that.”

Dalai Lama

And so they come... men, women, children, youth. They arrive at our doors with hope of a new life and bringing with them the spirit to persevere and the courage to begin again.

Throughout my 17 years at Sojourn House I have been privileged to meet some of the most wonderful and courageous people and yet deeply saddened to have heard the often tragic stories of their refugee journeys. Women who have been victims of the most heinous gender and sexual violence. Imprisonment and torture. Men (and women) who have had to leave behind spouses and children. Could you imagine leaving your family behind for what could be years before you are reunited? Imagine the pain and grief, the worry that they are safe. The sacrifice made to get to a country that will celebrate your diversity, that promotes cultural and religious inclusion and freedom of speech to prepare the way for a better life for your family.

Sojourn House plays a key role in welcoming and supporting newcomers upon their arrival or when they are struggling with the settlement process due to trauma and emotional health issues.

But what is Sojourn House? We are far more than a house. We are all of the diverse people that make up the staff who are the faces that greet each newcomer, who hear their pain and counsel and encourage them. Who give our residents the information they need to achieve their settlement goals. Who provide meals for them, who keep their new home clean and beautiful for them, who teach them what it means to live in this great country. Without them there is no Sojourn House. The majority of our staff were not born in Canada and have had the refugee or new immigrant experience. They understand the pain, anxiety and struggle to make it in a new country. This is who Sojourn House is and why we excel at the work that we do.

I would like to dedicate this annual report to the staff, student placements and volunteers who without them our residents would not have the support and encouragement to begin a new life in Canada.

Read on to hear about the great work that they do...
2014 was a stable year for Sojourn House, with new initiatives and growth on several fronts. The work of the board was made easier as a result of the tremendous support and excellent work done by the front line staff, managers and the Executive Director.

The board experienced a number of changes in its membership over the course of the year. We retired long standing member Ronny Yarrow who completed two full terms on the board. We also saw the unexpected departures of Laura Anderson and Vivek Satoskar who had to resign from the board for personal reasons. These departures brought new faces to the board and we welcomed Laura Mandelbaum, Monika Abdelkader and former Sojourn House resident Dawit Hailu.

With the assistance of an outside consultant, the board completed a performance review of the Executive Director, and was pleased with the outcome.

The board continued to draft and update organizational policies, several of which were in process at the year end. The board also began to compile all policies in order to create a new board orientation manual. Initiatives were taken to begin a strategic planning process, and undergo anti-oppression training, and conduct a board evaluation, all of which remained in process at the year end.

The organization’s funding remained stable and fundraising initiatives were all on track. We gratefully received funding from the Trillium Foundation to build a community kitchen in the 8th floor activity room. We plan to use this kitchen to develop more food and health related programming with residents in the future. Additional funding from the city of Toronto allowed us to undertake much needed renovations to bathrooms in 10 units in the shelter and transitional housing. Due to the addition of 8 new beds in the shelter program at the end of 2013, Sojourn House saw increased revenues. This new revenue stream was important as it provided a cushion for collective bargaining in 2015 where much needed salary increases were recognized for staff.

Sojourn House entered into a new partnership with Regent Park Health Centre who now provides a doctor on site ½ day/week. This resource complements our current partnership with Women’s College Hospital which continues to provide a nurse practitioner 1 day a week.

It is a privilege to act as President of the Board of Sojourn House and to be a part of an organization which provides vital services to newly arrived refugees in Toronto. I look forward being a part of the ongoing excellence in providing services from the staff, management team, and board of Sojourn House.
Donations made to Sojourn House help finance programs, projects, workshops and activities specific to meeting the needs of refugees. These programs make a significant impact in the refugee’s successful transition into the Canadian community. Donations made to Sojourn House in 2014 support the many essential programs and projects in Sojourn House including:

**Transitional Housing Program:** This is a two year supportive housing program offered to refugees experiencing settlement difficulties and are in need of longer term care. There is a total of 52 fully furnished apartment units for this program.

**Emergency Shelter Program:** Shelter, meals, settlement counselling, legal referrals and assistance to find permanent housing are provided.

**In-House Healthcare Clinic:** In partnership with Women’s College Hospital, residents can access healthcare services two days a week. With your help we have been able to purchase much needed medical equipment for the clinic as well as prescribed medicine for our residents.

**Youth Skills for Life Program:** This program offers a variety of workshops and activities designed for refugee youth. With the aim to help them gain and develop the skills needed to successfully transition into their new community.

**Afterschool Program:** This program is designed to help young children meet their new school’s academic demands. Volunteer tutors and your individual support are essential to this program. With your help we have been able to purchase necessary school supplies for the children’s success in school.

With your support, Sojourn House was able to care for 344 refugees in 2014!
The following individuals and organizations made contributions to Sojourn House in 2014.
To all our supporters, we express our sincere gratitude. With your assistance we have been able to care for those refugees who rely on our services!

Core funder
City of Toronto

Organizations
The School Sisters of Notre Dame
St. Marcellinus Secondary School

Foundations
The George Lunan Foundation
J.P Bickell Foundation
Ontario Trillium Foundation
Catherine Donnelly Foundation
Home Depot Foundation

Grants
Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade – Newcomer Settlement Program
City of Toronto - Homelessness Partnering Strategy
City of Toronto - Shelter Support and Housing Administration
City of Toronto - Hostal Services

Corporations
The Toronto-Dominion Bank
The Community Involvement Team of Toronto Hydro

Individuals
Katrina Tiongson
Reginald Kowalchuk
Thomas Merey
Marshall Swadron
Mercedes Perez
Dhivakar Balendra

Our Champions
Kevin Roher
Stephen Allen
Gloria Nafziger
Patricia E. Clark
Catherine Lang
Suzanne Robinson
Richard Sims
Blandford Gates
Marnie Kraguljac
Marlon Andrew Cunningham
David Walker - The Hugh Walker Memorial Fund
Fred and Bonnie Martin
Graham and Nancy Post
Jane Graham
Kenneth Allen
G. Bruce Sinclair
David Duefoe
Janis Alton
David Walsh
Teonest Kabanda
Eugena Agaraj
Ronny Yaron
Elizabeth Yamashita

In 2014 The Ontario Trillium Foundation enabled us to build a full kitchen for youth skills development and community programming!


**BOARD OF DIRECTORS TESTIMONIES**

**Jessica Roher**
Jessica will be graduating from Osgoode Hall Law School in 2015. Before attending law school, Jessica coordinated civic engagement and education programs at a United Way member agency in Scarborough. She also developed teaching resources as a consultant for Toronto Elections. Jessica has worked at the International Organization for Migration in Accra, Ghana where she conducted research on human trafficking and as a legal intern with IOM in Geneva, Switzerland. Jessica completed her Bachelor of Arts in International Development at the University of King’s College and her Masters of Science in Conflict Studies at the London School of Economics.

**Laura Mandelbaum**
As a board member at Sojourn House, I am able to aid in the protection of refugees by helping them access shelter and other essential services so they can access these most basic needs during a time of struggle in their lives. This affords me the opportunity to contribute to a key social justice in Canada while making a real difference. As an immigrant myself, I have worked in the public and nonprofit sector for over 5 years, including working for the New Immigrant Support Network at Sickkids Hospital, the Wellesley Institute, the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, and in my current role at Toronto Community Housing.

**Dawit Hailu**
Dawit is a former resident of Sojourn House. He has a background in economic and business development in the promotion of sustainable economic relations between Canada and Africa. He is also a noted advocate for refugees and immigrants’ rights in Canada. The Dennis Mock Student Leadership Award recipient, Dawit is a graduate of Ryerson and as well as hold an MA in Public & International Affairs from the University of Ottawa.

**Gloria Nafziger**
Twenty five years ago I unexpectedly landed in a job helping newly arrived refugees to find housing in Toronto and I am privileged to continue to work with refugees to this day. The people I have met have taught me far more about the world than any book or academic course ever could. Through these people I have vicariously travelled to all corners of the world, and accumulated a scrap book of horror stories, which is overlaid with stories of human resilience. I am fortunate now to work at Amnesty International, an organization which promotes the rights of refugees, and strives to stop the human rights violations which force refugees to flee for their lives. As a board member at Sojourn House I am able to contribute to ensuring that refugees remain protected in Canada and receive the vital assistance they need to begin a new life in Canada.

**Koorosh Eslami**
I am a former refugee from Iran who entered Canada in 1986 as a sole teenager and was under the care of Children’s Aid Society. I became a Canadian citizen in 1991 and I graduated from Ryerson University as an Industrial Engineer in 1996.

It is an honor to be a part of Sojourn’s board members. I understand the needs of new comers and their unusual circumstance. I always felt a need to make a small contribution as part of an organization that helps new refugees in their transition period. A difficult period. I am always reminded of the sincerity of the management and the board members when we meet to make sound and critical decision for the success of Sojourn House.
Sophia Weber

Over the last twelve years I spent time working with and supporting hospital boards. Three years ago, an opportunity arose to join Sojourn House’s board. I knew very little about refugees at the time. I knew I wanted to learn and that I needed to have my eyes opened, especially since many refugees also land at our doorstep at the hospital. The last three years on this board have been a wonderful experience. Sojourn House staff do amazing work, and I’ve enjoyed working with my colleagues on the board, some of which started out as refugees in Canada. Seeing how far they have come and how much they have accomplished, really re-affirmed for me the need to have and support programs such as those offered at Sojourn House.

Ibrahim Absiye

Refugee stories are normally associated with numerous kinds of losses: loss of people, property, profession, prestige, personal identity, etc, and I have witnessed many of them over the years. In my current job also, as the Executive Director of immigrant & refugee serving agency, I encounter people who went through similar experiences on a daily basis. It is this painful experience as well as my passion to serve and protect human capital that has attracted me to join the Board of Directors of Sojourn House, a refugee shelter that provides a safe place and creates an inclusive environment where refugees are supported and empowered to pursue a life in Canada. This is a mission that I identify with as long as I am to breath.

Monica Abdelkader

Monica has worked with refugees for 10 years in both London and Toronto, Ontario and Cairo, Egypt. She completed her Master of Health Policy, examining the changes to the Interim Federal Health program for refugees. Currently Monica is completing her PhD, focusing on concepts of refugee vulnerability, and is the Manager of Client Support Services at COSTI Immigrant Service which supports government-assisted refugees with case management services. She has been on the Executive Committees of the Canadian Council for Refugees and the Canadian Association for Refugee and Forced Migration Studies, where she continues to be actively engaged.

Rene Joergensen

Ten years ago I got married to a Canadian and choose to come here due to tightening immigration in my home country of Denmark. I expected to get my permanent residency quickly, but instead I got to spend five years in limbo waiting to get my papers. This experience of living in no-man’s land was an awakening experience that awoke compassion in me for those who come to Canada from much worse conditions. While working at Amnesty International, I was therefore happy to be offered the opportunity to volunteer on the board of Sojourn House and it’s been a pleasure for me to serve since 2013. I am now a Canadian and proud to do my part to help refugees and other new Canadians to this country.
SHELTER PROGRAM

Sojourn House has kept its doors open since its inception in 1989 in order to provide thousands of asylum seekers “another chance at life”. The Shelter Program has served as an important link for short-term housing and support services for refugees, refugee claimants and non-status individuals who aspire to make Canada their new home. To many asylum seekers, Sojourn House is the place where they spent their first night without fear of persecution.

The shelter staff assists our clients with their immediate needs, providing supportive counselling and guidance for the refugee determination process. However, our clients soon realize that finding a decent place to live is one of their biggest challenges. In particular housing separated youth (a 16-25 year old) is one of our biggest challenges. The separated youth in addition to dealing with many settlement issues, may require more emotional support as they cope with being separated from their families. Last year our Housing Stabilization Social Worker was at the forefront of housing 26 separated youth from 12 countries. Many of the separated youth were housed in our Transitional Housing program while others were housed in the community.

In 2014, the housing program transitioned 162 clients from shelter into housing; using a variety of housing resources such as private landlords, transitional housing and other forms of housing including supportive housing. One of our biggest challenges was to find housing for our clients with mental health issues due to lack of supportive housing stock in Toronto. Also the cost of renting a room in Toronto has been very expensive given the fact that all our clients’ income is initially from Ontario Works. Housing allowance for a single person is $375 and this amount is too low to enable anyone to secure a room. Our clients needed to use a portion of their food allowance in order to secure accommodation.

The Outreach Program supported the in-house health clinic to provide services to 344 clients. The program provided services to 187 clients with more than 1,000 contacts with the outreach worker. The services included follow-ups, referrals to other community agencies and support to exited clients with emotional, mental health and other health related issues and in particular, follow-ups with seniors with complex needs due to immigration complications, language barriers, physical and mental health issues. Other clients needed support with settlement related challenges such as completing forms, information, counselling and guidance.

As many newcomer refugees flee their homelands to Canada in search of a safer and better life, Sojourn House has been there to provide short-term housing and supportive services for them. We will continue to help those who need help to help themselves.
MELENA’S STORY

Melena fled Eritrea six months pregnant at the age of 22. She arrived at Sojourn House and lived in the Transitional Housing Program at Sojourn House for 2 years.

“When I left Sojourn House after the two year program I no longer felt like a newcomer. After I left I was really ready to integrate into the community.

While living in Sojourn House I took part of all the workshops, activities and events provided. There was so much to know and learn about this new country and to have someone to tell you how things work and where I can go for help was so helpful.

I received helpful advice regarding the daycare process, finding schools nearby, resources and an endless supply of information.

Sojourn House was a group of people supporting you, we became a family”.

Melena has now completed her studies in Culinary Nutrition. She actively volunteers at Sojourn House offering newcomers helpful advice, resources and information.
The Transitional Housing Program continues to offer much needed support to refugees who are experiencing settlement difficulties due to trauma related issues. We offer residents a two year subsidized supportive housing program in which they receive onsite support and guidance through their refugee, immigration and settlement process. The goal of the program is to prepare residents for their integration into Canadian society by providing one on one case management, information, referrals, counseling and connecting them with community resources and health practitioners; in order to help stabilize their mental and physical health to improve their quality of life.

In 2014, we had a lot of movement in the program. Out of the 52 units in Transitional Housing, 35 reached their two year stay and moved into the community. Many of the families, single mothers and separated youth living in these units secured housing out of the downtown area and are now connected to new community resources.

We often hear from former residents, especially if they have reunited with their family members. It gives us great satisfaction to hear that what they learnt while in the program has been valuable knowledge which they are now passing on to their family members who are new in Canada.

This year we welcomed 80 new people into the program. We continue to run a variety of workshops and information sessions to help residents gain the necessary knowledge to learn to navigate the Canadian system.
HANI’S JOURNEY

Leaving a difficult situation, Hani fled his home country in the Middle East alone at the age of 22. When he arrived to Canada he did not have a place to stay and bounced around hotels and shelters. Eventually he was able to find housing which he shared with a roommate. His roommate taking advantage of the fact that he was new in Canada stole from him and left him with no money to support himself. “It was difficult to enter society because I didn’t know the country, I didn’t know anything. The first three months were a nightmare”. Hani once again had to seek refuge at shelters. He sought out Sojourn House and he was taken into the Transitional Housing Program for one year and three months.

“I no longer felt safe in the community, I was overwhelmed by the thought of going out of Sojourn House alone. But with the support of the youth counselor at Sojourn House, I gained the confidence to go outside, I felt safe and secure with this support”

At Sojourn House there was always someone there for you. Having them made me feel safe, like our parents. They put me in the right direction and gave me the right advice about school and employment.

If it wasn’t for Sojourn House I could have ended up in the street with no job, no experience, no English.

After being at Sojourn House for one year and three months I was ready to be in the society. They gave me a good start. After leaving Sojourn House I felt confident to take care of myself and more so I gained skills to help other newcomers.

Today I am working towards completing my studies in accounting at George Brown College. I often volunteer my time at Sojourn House helping newcomers file their taxes and dressing up as Santa for the children during the holidays”. 
The Skills for Life program was created for youth ages 16-24 years old, who fled to Canada with no family or support. The youth social worker organizes weekly activities for the youth to attend. There were a total of 100 youth focused workshops during 2014 including life skills topics, immigration/settlement topics and social outings. Twice a month there are Life Skills workshops, the topics included kitchen fire safety, internet safety, how to apply to university or college, PR and Citizenship applications and resume writing.

The Youth Social Worker is available for the youth to meet on an individual basis for support with the refugee process, to speak about any issues they may face and acts as their support for school, Ontario Works and with health related issues.

The youth who live in the transitional housing program find the support they need to take control of their new lives. They are able to make new friends and create new support systems to help them succeed once they move on from Sojourn House and into the community.

In 2014 we served 33 youth living in the Transitional Housing. We had 12 new youth move into the transitional housing program this year and 11 youth moved out from the program to live independently in the community.

27 youth were studying during 2014 and of this 4 were studying at the college level 8 of the youth were able to find employment thanks to the support they received from the skills for life program. The youth social worker assisted 2 youth to apply to university and 2 youth to apply to college for fall of 2015.
THOUGHTS FROM OUR RESIDENTS

I came here as a refugee with nothing. I came from a country where there was a lot of pain, suffering and inequality. When I was a student studying nursing in the university, I saw how people suffered mentally and physically. The society that I lived in did little to help. In Canada I have also seen pain and suffering but what is different is that society here tries to help. I have seen people without health insurance or money and still receive help. In my country this would never happen. Moving to Canada changed my life in many ways. I have learned so much from my experiences. I did not think I could make it without my family because I was so close to them. I am proof that a person can survive very difficult things.

You opened the gates to Canada for me. I was like a new born and you taught me how to eat, speak and write. You showed me the way and brought joy to my life. May God bless you abundantly.

A day on Toronto Streets showed me that there is a place in the world called Canada, where hope and motherly warmth is restored to the despondent homeless from afar. This day has left an unforgettable mark. I will live the rest of my life to remember it. Thanks to Sojourn House.

People are lucky to have Sojourn House, it is easy to go the wrong way in a new place, Sojourn House led me the right way.

There are three attributes I will feel unfair to go without accrediting Sojourn House for: hospitable reception, professional counseling and expeditious execution of refugee resettlement.

I thank God because everything that I am and have right now, I owe it all to Him, and to the staff of Sojourn House. They have contributed to the successful person that I am today, and I am really grateful and indebted to them.

You are such wonderful people set aside to mend broken hearts, love and encourage people of different kind. May God bless you what you are doing really counts.
During 2014 served a total of 344 newcomer refugees.

- Provided 100 life skills workshops for youth
- 44 youth used our youth services
- 27 youth reconnected with schools
- Provided 344 residents with healthcare clinic services
- Provided 84,448 meals
- Found permanent housing in the community for 242 residents
- 4 youth started college
- Helped 8 youth find employment
SOJOURN HOUSE IN PICTURES

Thank you!

St. Marcellinus
### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2013</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Assets:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>$179,040</td>
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<td>Guaranteed Investment Certificates (Note 2)</td>
<td>$261,888</td>
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<td>Restricted Cash (Note 9)</td>
<td>$271,737</td>
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<td>Restricted Guaranteed Investment Certificates</td>
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<td>Total Current Assets</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL CURRENT AND FIXED ASSETS</strong></td>
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<th>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Liabilities:</td>
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<td>Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities</td>
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<td>Due to City of Toronto</td>
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<td>Current Portion of Long-Term Debt (Note 5)</td>
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<td>Deferred Revenue (Note 6)</td>
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<td>Long-Term Liabilities:</td>
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<td>Deferred Capital Grant (Note 7)</td>
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<td>Deferred Capital Donations</td>
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<td>Deferred City of Toronto</td>
<td>$222,300</td>
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<td>Long-Term Debt (Note 6)</td>
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<td>Total Long-Term Liabilities</td>
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<td>Restricted (Note 10)</td>
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<td>Invested in Capital Assets (Note 11)</td>
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<td>Unrestricted</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</strong></td>
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<td><strong>$12,130,026</strong></td>
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Full Audited Financial Statements Prepared by Cowperthwaite Mehta Chartered Accountants are available from Sojourn House.
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

REVENUE:
Government Funding (Note 12) $2,629,514 $2,412,198
Donations to General Operations and Other $344,396 $335,336
HST Recovered $27,204 $48,907
Total Revenues $3,001,114 $2,796,441

EXPENSES:
Programs $1,783,385 $1,577,865
Building $745,119 $787,631
Administration $161,717 $280,966
Total Expenses $2,690,221 $2,646,463

Excess of revenue over expenses before non-operating revenues and expenses $310,893 $149,978
Non-operating revenues and expenses:
SCPI capital grant recognized (Note 7) $89,000 $89,000
Investment income $17,683 $16,155
Amortization $(265,119) $(240,419)
Excess of revenue over expenses before donations to specific funds $152,457 $14,714
Donations to specific funds $(419) $(3,377)
Excess of Revenue over Expenses for the Year $152,038 $11,337

TOTAL EXPENSES

Programs - 66%  
Building - 28%  
Administrative - 6%

Salaries and benefits $1,606,819
Interest and bank charges $355,248
Utilities $205,721
Repairs and maintenance $141,060
Food $86,028
Refugee support $85,547
Office and general $68,945
Consultants $50,284
Minor capital expenditures $43,090
Telephone $21,271
Professional fees $21,217
Transportation $4,991

PROGRAMS EXPENSES

Salaries and Benefits - 90%  
Food - 5%  
Refugee Support - 4%  
Transportation - 1%

BUILDING EXPENSES

Interest and Bank Charges - 46%  
Utilities - 27%  
Repairs and Maintenance - 22%  
Minor Capital Expenditures - 5%

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

Consultants - 43%  
Office and General - 31%  
Professional Fees - 13%  
Telephone - 13%
Getting involved

Sojourn House believes in the power of the community, we believe in working together with partners, volunteers and friends to build an inclusive community where we can all thrive together. If you would like more information about how you can get involved with us contact Sojourn House at info@sojournhouse.org or call us at 416-864-0515 ext. 237.