



# OMRA

## SHELTER (ALTERNATIVES) CORPORATION

AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING CORPORATION

Website: <https://omraottawa.org>

### ***Learning from Today and Hoping for Tomorrow***

**December, 2021** - Another year of Covid dominating and shaping the lives of all Canadians! As we approach the holiday season, Hannukah for our Jewish friends, Christmas joy for Christians and relaxing family time for our secular friends, we want to celebrate our OMRA families and acknowledge their struggles, hopes, and successes.

**Hope in the Midst of Darkness and Insecurity** - Seven courageous women, mostly single mothers, have completed the Personal Support Worker (PSW) program and are seeking employment. Their perseverance despite language barriers, discrimination, and family concerns fills me with humility and admiration.

**Hope in Movement toward Independence and Integration** - Several OMRA families have been able to leave the rent subsidy program and have achieved another level of integration and productivity in Canadian society.

**Hope in the Faces of the Newcomer Families** – During 2021, we welcomed fourteen new families into the portable rent subsidy program. Below is a snapshot of the stories of a few of them. (Details have been changed to protect the individuals' identities).

- *For the first time in the history of OMRA, a volunteer has offered temporary room and board to OMRA's latest single woman who was on the verge of homelessness.*
- *A courageous female journalist from Myanmar found refuge here after living in fear and danger for five years.*
- *A young woman from Afghanistan had to flee, leaving her entire family behind. She is working hard to learn English, get a job and bring her family here.*
- *A 20-year-old Guatemalan woman with a 6-year-old son suffered sexual violence in her country. She is just a child herself, but is working hard to settle in Canada and give a better, safer life to her child.*



**Hope in the Tireless Energy of our Volunteers** – As you know, OMRA is run entirely by volunteers and the only fundraiser we have is the grocery card program.

BUT OMRA families have so many needs, besides a monthly rent subsidy. Moving into housing, most times with only mattresses and a table, is often their reality. OMRA volunteers provide a warm welcome, deliver furniture and provide advice and friendship as we can.

**Hope in the Generosity of our Supporters** - Because of your kind donations, OMRA Shelter Corporation is able to provide over \$100,000.00/year in monthly rent subsidies to approximately 25 families. Because the need is so great, we want to expand our program in 2022. *Please consider giving a tax-deductible donation of what you can*, through one of our two partner churches. Send e-transfers to [donate@ottawamennonite.ca](mailto:donate@ottawamennonite.ca) or cheques to Ottawa Mennonite Church designating OMRA as the recipient in the information line. If you prefer to use a credit card, go to Glebe St. James United Church website, <https://www.glebestjames.ca>, find “donate”, select an amount and in the box provided, and stipulate that your donation is for OMRA Refugee Housing.

Thank you again for all your kind support of the OMRA families and our monthly rent subsidy program.

*Maria Rigby, President; on behalf of the OMRA Shelter Corporation Board members*