



**Collectif  
Bienvenue**

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**Welcome  
Collective**

**Annual  
Report**

2020-2021



## A letter from the Executive Director

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**We would like to thank** all of those who supported Welcome Collective in its last three years of operation. When Montréal was faced with a large influx of refugee claimants that its systems were unable to handle, so many of you responded in solidarity. Your generosity has helped us build a robust organization that supports hundreds of families a year. Because of the confidence that many of you had in our fledgling organization, we have grown, year after year, ensuring that the most disadvantaged newcomers have both the material and social support they need.

This year more than ever, Welcome Collective needed to draw on the support of the broader Montréal community to provide essential items and services to refugee claimant families. While the number of refugee claimants dropped because of Canada's closed borders, COVID-19 forced thousands of newcomer families living in Montréal into much more precarious situations.

Disadvantaged newcomers have been one of the hardest hit populations during the pandemic, struggling from lack of resources and connections, often in isolation, and with no social network. As food banks, stores, and schools closed, refugee claimants struggled to find food, con-

tinue their children's education, and find basic essentials. In response to this new and intensified precarity, Welcome Collective adapted its operations to address the most immediate needs in our communities, with a focus on food security.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also underscored the need for increased access to information for newcomers to help them navigate Montréal's legal, health, education, social and community services. Because of the difficulty of in-person meetings and decreased access to social service providers during the pandemic, the lack of access to information and resources became more dire. In response, Welcome Collective has begun development of the Welcome Guide, an online database that will function as a multilingual resource of essential information for newcomers.

This year, the Black Lives Matter movement prompted us to engage in some important reflections, leading to the creation of a [vision and values statement](#) that acknowledges the systems of oppression that lead people to leave their homes to arrive in Canada as refugee claimants. We have taken specific actions to align our organization with this vision, and will be continuing to build on this work.

## A letter from the Executive Director

Since our pilot project in December 2017, Welcome Collective has grown substantially both in the number of families we support per week, and in the number of services we provide the families that we support. The last three years of growth have been made possible through the dedicated network of support of volunteers, organizations, schools, foundations, corporations and more. Our team connects with donors and redistributes the tens of thousands of donations we have collected to over 1200 newly arrived families. We do all this with a net positive effect on the environment.

In all, this past year has capped an incredible period of learning, growth and change. More than ever, we feel Welcome Collective has lived up to its name; by galvanizing the greater collective force and resources of the community to support and welcome those of us who need it most.



## Our Mission

**To provide social and material support services to newly arrived refugee claimants in order to reduce stress and isolation and to facilitate their settlement in Montreal.**



## Who we are

Our programs aim to ease the transition for newly arrived refugee claimants in Montreal by providing essential items for their homes and connecting them to resources in their new neighbourhood. Our organizations started as a pilot project in December of 2017 in response to a substantial increase of refugee claimants arriving in Canada more broadly, and Montréal in particular. As a socially innovative organization, Welcome Collective has evolved in response to the needs of the population we serve. Our growth is guided by feedback and active participation from the individuals we work to support. Starting with one staff member in January of 2018, we have grown to a team of 11 full-time staff and three part-time staff, five of whom are refugee claimants.

Welcome Collective supports the most disadvantaged newcomers, such as single parents, pregnant women, mothers with newborns, large families with young children, people with physical and mental challenges, and the elderly.

We provide essential material goods such as furniture, winter clothing, kitchen items, computers and school supplies - indispensable tools for families settling into new homes to start their lives in Montréal. All of these items are generously donated to us from organizations, companies, and individuals in and around the city of Montréal.

We also assist newcomers by helping them access vital information and services. This service is uniquely responsive and may include a wide range of topics, for instance: how to prepare for winter, how to register children for school, or finding language classes or employment services. We make sure that every family has secure access to food, and that they are aware of the various resources and services that are available to them in their neighbourhoods.



## Our Programs

### Essential Goods Program

Our central service is to collect essential household items from a broad network of donors across the city and redistribute them to disadvantaged newcomers. Items typically include furniture, kitchen basics, winter clothing, mattresses, bedding and school supplies. Since the onset of the pandemic, we've also included computers, masks and sanitizer in this category.

#### Social Impact

In our **first three years**, we made over **2,010 deliveries** to **1277 families**. These included:

<b>1542</b> mattresses	<b>2,182</b> dining/ kitchen chairs
<b>160</b> cribs	<b>206</b> fridges
<b>543</b> dressers	<b>150</b> stoves
<b>566</b> sofas	<b>542</b> food deliveries
<b>560</b> dining/ kitchen tables	

In the year **2020-2021**, we made over **767 donation pick-ups** and **606 furniture deliveries** and **542 food deliveries**, which included the following:

<b>493</b> mattresses	<b>210</b> dining/kitchen tables
<b>66</b> baby cribs	<b>803</b> dining/kitchen chairs
<b>176</b> dressers	<b>88</b> fridges
<b>148</b> sofas	<b>61</b> stoves

In fiscal year 2020-21

**536**  
new families (**2144** individuals) supported

**542**  
Food deliveries

**95**  
95 tonnes of items for re-use

**571**  
potential number of tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> avoided (GHG impact)

#### Environmental Impact

Using a calculator developed for Welcome Collective by local environmental consulting group Maillon Vert, we are able to track the GHGs we save by distributing goods for re-use against how much we emit. During the 2020-21 fiscal year we distributed **95 tonnes of items for re-use**, which represents **a potential avoided GHG impact of 571 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>**. Over the same period, our activities, including all the driving required to pick up and deliver those items, generated 16 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. In other words, we saved a potential 35× the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> we emitted.

### Online Resource Centre Welcome Guide

Welcome Collective is working with community partners across Montréal (PRAIDA, CERDA, SHERPA etc) to develop an online resource centre that will host a collection of information, guides, lists and links relating to settlement and integration for refugee claimants. We are fortunate to be collaborating with Zendesk, as part of their Tech for Good program, for the technical development of the Welcome Guide. This tool will be managed by Welcome Collective, though its contents will be open to any and all refugee claimants and individuals/organizations who work to support them. The Welcome Guide will act as a digital

## Our Programs

space where claimants can find employment, language courses, childcare, housing, food banks, and legal aid, along with other social and community services that newcomers depend on while settling in Montréal.

### Launch date

We expect to launch the Welcome Guide at the end of summer 2021.

## Social support Welcome Groups

Welcome Groups are another central component of Welcome Collective. Having a local contact significantly reduces the stress, isolation, and difficulty faced by newcomers in their new and strange city.

Welcome Groups operate in Montréal neighbourhoods where large numbers of refugee claimants are settling. Once refugee claimants have moved into their apartments, volunteers from the neighbourhood group call and/or visit the family to help them settle into their new homes, become better oriented in their neighbourhoods, and connect to useful resources and services.

This year, the Welcome Groups had two focuses:

1. Checking in on families during the first wave of COVID-19 to make sure that they had adequate food supplies, access to information, and access to technology to continue their online education. Welcome Group volunteers called over 600 families, and connected 427 families to food banks and emergency food deliveries.
2. Supporting families through regular and ongoing communication to find resources in their neighbourhood, access information, and help source material necessities during COVID closures. We have 66 families participating in these networks that were referred to us this year.

We surveyed families that were supported by Welcome Groups, and we found that these structures have significantly facilitated their settlement in Montréal.



# Our Covid Response

From the outset of the pandemic, it was clear to all of us at Welcome Collective that we were going to have to shift our systems efficiently to provide emergency services to refugee claimants. While the pandemic hit many Montréalers hard, it had a disproportionate effect on disadvantaged populations who use social services and food banks.

In the first three months of the pandemic, Welcome Collective turned most of its attention to communications and food security, as a means of ensuring those most at risk had the bare essentials. Our swift response was made possible through an outpouring of donations from individuals and foundations across the city.

From mid-March through June, our volunteers called close to 600 families. These calls helped connect families to essential services - stable food sources, education support, COVID-19 information - as well as ensure to let them know that Welcome Collective was there to support them in any way we could during this difficult time.

## Hundreds of support calls made

In early March at the beginning of the first lockdown, Welcome Collective rallied a group of more than 20 volunteers to call refugee claimant families to ensure they were up to date with information regarding COVID-19 and to assess any immediate needs. These dedicated volunteers went above and beyond in their efforts to reach out to families and provide support during these confusing, isolated days.

**Calls made: over 600**

**Persons connected to a food bank: 427**

### Sharing Information

Within the first two weeks of the pandemic, Welcome Collective created a COVID-19 info page specifically geared towards refugee claimants. The webpage includes lists of open and accessible food banks—one of the few up-to-date lists in the city. Our webpage was used by many agencies around the city to refer clients to food banks, emergency contacts, and general health & safety information. In the crucial first three months of the pandemic, when so much was uncertain, **our COVID-19 resource pages received 2,645 views**. Welcome Collective's efforts to provide curated, centralized, and updated information to newcomers, volunteers, and other mutual-aid and community organizations was an important project for us. For newcomers, this gave them autonomy to seek out services on their own. For service providers and volunteers, this project helped identify the gaps in searching for services that were neighbourhood-specific.

Check it out : <https://www.welcomecollective.org/en/covid-19-info>

501

bottles of sanitizer delivered

2,645

views of our COVID-19 resource pages in the first three months

138

computers supplied to refugee claimant families

2,450

disposable masks delivered



## Our Covid Response

### Emergency food relief

The two main factors affecting access to food at the outset of the pandemic were food bank closures and increased isolation (especially for the elderly and those with health/mobility issues). In response to these circumstances, Welcome Collective communicated with hundreds of families, making sure they were aware of and connected to the closest food banks that were still in operation. Beyond that, Welcome Collective partnered with a number of food security organizations to develop an emergency food basket service, delivering groceries within 24 hours of initial contact.

#### Social Impact

- 525** food deliveries were made
- 242** families were helped to register for a foodbank
- 179** families received food deliveries
- 56** families received diapers
- 17** families received formula

### Distributing masks and sanitizer

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we distributed thousands of masks to refugee claimants and frontline organizations like food banks and shelters, including La Corbeille, Carrefour Saint-Michel, Abri d'Espoir, Lachine Multicultural Resource Centre, Concert'Action Lachine and Fondation de la Visite. Whether by donating from their pocket or taking the time to craft handmade masks, our donors have helped refugee claimant families stay safe during the pandemic.

In total, we've distributed:

- 501** bottles of sanitizer
- 2,450** disposable masks
- 605** reusable masks



## Our Covid Response

### Computers for children

When Montréal schools closed down, students turned to online learning tools to continue their education. However, this solution left out the many families without access to the relevant technology. With libraries and community centres closed, many refugee claimant families were unable to use the online educational resources supplied by the government and schools.

Welcome Collective found a solution by supplying computers to families with school-aged children. Working in conjunction with OPEQ (Ordinateurs pour les écoles du Québec), **we provided computers to 85 families in three months.** As the pandemic persisted and threatened interruption to the next school year, we continued to fundraise to purchase and distribute computers to more newcomer families. **In total we supplied 138 computers** to refugee claimant families from April 1st 2020 to the end of our fiscal year, February 28th 2021. This support has made it possible for children to continue their education online during COVID quarantines.

### All those who contributed to our pandemic relief efforts

Thank you Claude G. Théoret for running a campaign that raised over \$4,500 for masks for the community, and to Les Petites Mains, Katrin Leblond Design, MJ Raposo, Anna Weinberg, Emma Lawlor, Megon McCaul, Lisa L'Abeille, Marine Coeurdassier, Yael Margalit, Joanne Robertson, Joanne Yap, Lise St-Arneault and her friend Michèle for donating masks. Thank you Cathy Harris and her friends at Distilleries les Sazerac for donating buckets of hand sanitizer!

Because of their generosity and efforts, thousands of masks and plenty of sanitizer have been distributed to frontline organizations like food banks, shelters and community centres!

# Volunteers

From helping us deliver essential household items, to providing support to newcomers getting settled in their new homes and so much more, volunteers are essential to the work we do. They are the heart of our Collective.

## 2020 volunteers

### Covid Response

Isabelle Anouk  
Bourduas  
Jacinthe Poisson  
Johanne Harvey  
Julie Paquet  
Katerina Alessandra  
Kathrin Botkin  
Keren Binmaher  
Mary Armstrong  
Muhannad Saad  
Rachel Shugart  
Shirley Zhu  
Titiana

### Welcome Groups

Catherine Paquette  
Chloe Mancini  
Clara Barrington  
Craggs  
Clarissa Passos  
Dorothy Shaw  
Elizabeth Wright  
Ellie Kalutycz

Hanan Salama  
Isabelle Anouk  
Johanne Harvey  
Katerina Alessandra  
Kathrin Botkin  
Mary Armstrong  
Rachel Shugart  
Rosalind Barrington  
Craggs  
Shirley Zhu  
Veronique Bonin

### Storage Volunteers

Jim Demos  
Renan Macedo  
Nathan Deck  
Ivy Zelnicker  
Clara Little  
Tinka Piper  
Sachiko Kiyooka  
Noa Sorbara  
Asma Gran  
Diana Santos  
Julian Amezquita  
Acha Casongo  
Nhembo  
Catherine Paquette

As an organization started by volunteers, Welcome Collective would not be where it is today without the continued support, commitment and hard work of our incredible community. Find out more about our [volunteer opportunities](#) and how you can get involved.

Sidonie  
Nisha Verma  
Sarah  
Siyani  
Leika Narcisse

### Boustan Holidays Meal Delivery Volunteers

Isabelle Anouk  
Larry Deck  
Kristina Huneault  
Rani Cruz  
Michel Racine  
Philippe Beelanger  
Ryan Rosler  
Karen  
Martha Moore  
Sharon Braverman  
Anna Sheftel  
Jennifer Fishman  
Andie Zeliger  
Laurie Gelfand  
Iris King  
Chazz Yeargans  
Thomas Bélanger  
Miriam Bélanger  
Roger Sinha

### Truck Volunteers

Benoit Déry  
Daniel Ross  
Michel Racine  
Nicolas Huston  
Sasha Dyck  
Mark Doerksen  
Brett Howie  
Réal Vermette  
Philippe Bélanger  
Alexandre Brunet

### Winter Ambassadors

Leo and Flora Baron,  
and their mother  
Cara Leibovitz  
Fanon Kuyek  
Lily and Ali, Mila,  
Talisa, Solène, and  
Charlotte  
Marion and Charlotte,  
and their mother  
Jessica  
Stephanie Johnston

# Volunteers



## In Memoriam

Our beloved friend and important member of the Welcome Collective, [Marian-Ellen Andie Ring \(Andie\)](#), died May 4, 2020, from cancer complications. She was a force of nature. She designed and organized the storage space that houses Welcome Collective today. She guided, encouraged, and gave so much of herself and her time. She was the general mother figure of our ship, inviting those without families to cook with her, celebrate, and provided so many with a space to feel connected, accepted, and home. She meant the world to us at Welcome Collective and we miss her terribly.



# Partnerships

Welcome Collective is a truly descriptive name: we bring together a collective force of volunteers, organizations, corporations, schools, and community groups who under the common cause of supporting refugee claimants as they settle into their new neighbourhoods and homes. We work arm-in-arm with people from across the city

and beyond to collect items, build infrastructure, make deliveries, build web platforms, analyze data, provide essential services and information, and so much more. Simply put: we would be nothing without our partners. Thanks to all those who have helped us grow in this crucial year.

## List of Partnerships

### Services

LIDD  
 ThermaPro Solutions  
 Groupe Dayan  
 Analysis Group  
 Zendesk  
 Desjardins  
 Caserne, Cath  
 Laporte, Ingrid  
 Enriquez-Donissaint  
 Furniture Bank Network  
 Furniture Link  
 FAQDD & Maillon Vert  
 CDPQ Impact 20-35  
 Furniture Bank  
 Werkliv  
 Civic Tech Mtl  
 Lewis Handford  
 Material/products  
 Avironex (Boots)  
 Oppens (Coats)  
 App Group (Coats)  
 IKEA (Furniture and household goods)

Recyc-Matelas  
 Asset Science (Tablets)  
 Operation Bonne Mine (School supplies)  
 Karina Naim and Sportira (Masks)

### Schools/ organizations

Orchard House  
 St. Georges  
 Buissonniere  
 Étoile Filante  
 Collège Stanislas  
 Guy Drummond  
 Nouvelle Querbes  
 Mont-Royal  
 FACE  
 Selwyn House  
 Educare  
 UNHCR  
 Les YMCA du Québec  
 Oberoi Financial Group  
 McGill Spanish and Latin American Student Association (SLASA)

Samuel Center for Social Connectedness (SCSC)

### Special Projects

Diagonale Centre des arts et des fibres du Québec  
 Boustan  
 Katrin LeBlond  
 Ngozi Paul of Emancipation Arts  
 POP Montreal  
 Modo Yoga  
 McCord Museum  
 SAESEM  
 SUS Social Sustainability (McGill)

### Winter Baskets

Anna Weinberg  
 Cedar Park United Church  
 Emily Ingram  
 Fannie Lemay  
 Isabelle Deschamps

Joulia Elhami  
 Mandy's Gourmet Salads  
 Marie Pierre Lardeau  
 Nadine Medawar  
 The Oberoi Rising Dreams Foundation  
 Rachelle Claveau  
 Robyn Matthews  
 Sophie Deschamps



# Financial Donations

The scale and severity of the COVID-19 pandemic put major strains on our collective as well as on the individuals and families we seek to support. With resources running thin, there was concern that we may not be able to honor the foundational services we provide. However, thanks to an incredible surge in generosity from individuals and

groups across the city, we were able to not only fulfill our usual program goals, but we managed to increase capacity and meet the emerging needs resulting from the pandemic.

To all of you who contributed, we are forever grateful.

## 2020-2021 Funders

### Corporate donations

Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec

Fednav

Gestion Cabinet Woods

Groupe Brissette

Intact Financial Corporation

Katrin Leblond Design

Les Affûtés

Mandy's Gourmet Salads

Modo Yoga

Power Corporation

PWL Capital Inc.

Zendesk

Katrin Leblond Design

### Foundations and Charities

Brian Bronfman

Family Foundation

Centraide of

Greater Montreal Foundation

Claudine and Stephen

Bronfman Family Foundation

Fondation J. Armand

Bombardier

Fondation McCarthy

Tetrault

Mirella and Lino

Saputo Foundation

Prythula / Charpentier

Foundation

R. Howard Webster

Foundation

Reach Montreal

Baptist Church

Second Harvest Food

Support Committee

The Bluida

Foundationroller skates

The Hylcan Foundation

The J.W. McConnell

Family Foundation

The Jewish Community

Foundation of Montreal

The Niro Family

Foundation

Trottier Family

Foundation

Wener Family

Philanthropy Fund

### Individual Donors

#### \$5,000 +

Frederic Cotnoir

Kate Sorbara

Mason Poplaw

Nathalie Bissonnette

#### \$1,000–4 999+

Adam Allouba

Jessica Pathy

Lucy Riddell and

Katherine Nikidis

Marie Deschamps

Matthias Fretz

Myrill Solaski

#### \$250–999+

Alain N. Tardif

Alejandra Peláez Soni

Alix Duhaime-Ross

Anne Bauraind

Birgitte Rump

Catherine Lu

Chris Arsenault

Christin Tewfik

Colette Pilon et

Howard Bergman

Dan Horner

Emmanuel Grondin

Helene Beauchemin

Jennifer Boire

Judith Ritter

Marcia McKenzie

Mark Sorbara

Maxime Gobeil

Michel Racine

Modo Yoga

International

Myrill Solaski

Noelle Sorbara

Norma Monette

Nushin Nakhjavani

Patrick Lefebvre

Paul Gobeil

Sohrab Abizadeh

# Our Staff and Board of Directors

Thanks to this passionate group of individuals who come together every day to work to help refugee claimants feel welcomed and get settled. So many of us started here as volunteers, and then eventually became staff members and/or Board Members.

## Staff

**Aicha Tandula Luzonzo**

Logistics Coordinator

**Alaa M. S. Mohamedahmed**

Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator

**Charles Faubert**

Director of Logistics /

Director of Finance and Administration

**Diane Carru**

Director of Programs

**Elizabeth Ball**

Social Worker

**Fern Lou Fernandez**

Logistics and Resource Assistant

**Liberty Sithole**

Driver/Mover

**Marie Rose Elhoi Elenga**

Warehouse Coordinator

**Martha Oshiyoku**

Family Coordinator

**Noelle Sorbara**

Executive Director

**Rani Cruz**

Director of Strategic Development

**Ryan Rosler**

Logistics Captain

**Selma Mezdaoui**

Online Resource and Helpline Coordinator

**Thomas Bélanger**

Part-Time Mover

## Board of directors

**Claire Trottier**

Chair

**Valérie Gobeil**

Vice-Chair

**Maxime Gobeil**

Treasurer

**Niamh Leonard**

Secretary

**Philippe Belanger**

Ridwan Ali Abdi

Duha Elmardi

Tom Liacas

Prosper Mabvuvu

Fabienne Siche

Sarah Stapleton

Rebecca Wolfe

Mandy Wolfe

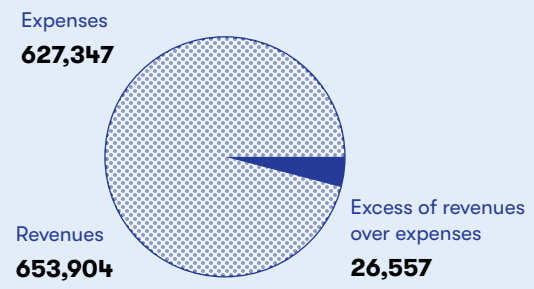
# Financials

For the initial twelve-month period ended February 28, 2021

Revenues	\$
Foundation grants	428,038
Donations	180,758
Government funding	34,193
Fundraiser events	3,674
Other	7,241
<b>653,904</b>	

Expenses	\$
Salaries, employee benefits and compensation fees	496,568
Storage & Logistics	78,862
Fundraising expenses	2,322
Supplemental programs	22,444
Professional fees	6,423
Marketing and communications	4,075
Overhead and other costs	11,172
Amortization	5,481
<b>627,347</b>	
<b>Excess of revenues over expenses</b>	<b>26,557</b>

Statement of Financial Position	\$
<b>As at February 28th, 2021</b>	
Current assets	192,541
Capital assets	19,484
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>212,025</b>
Total liabilities (all current)	106,626
Net assets	105,399
<b>212,025</b>	



# Thank you

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To the **families and individuals who bravely come from all over the world** to Canada to set up a new life—the courage and resilience you maintain brings awe to our team every day. Thank you for the wealth of knowledge and experience, strength and fortitude you bring with you. We feel honoured to support you in this process.

To the **volunteers and partners** who make up the collective team that supports newcomers on their journey, thank you. Your passion and inspiration are the bricks and mortar that have built this organization.

To the **Welcome Collective Staff** and to the community of social organizations that support the settlement of newcomers, thank you. Your work ensures that newcomers have what they need to start their lives with comfort and dignity.

To all of the **donors—both material and financial**, thank you. Without you, none of this would be possible. You are the fuel that runs this organization. Your confidence in us is inspiring and invigorating.

