

Good afternoon, Elaine,

Global Gathering Place is incredibly grateful for the support of Mount Royal Mennonite Church and the \$5,000 funding we received from the “Spirit of MDS” fund. Please find below a brief accounting of how we have spent the funds as well as some additional description which should highlight how very needed these funds were and how we were able to apply them to meeting real and immediate needs.

Grocery Cards	\$ 1500
Bus Passes	\$ 500
Taxi	\$ 680
Emergency Housing	\$ 1120
wifi	\$ 400
ASL classes (2 months)	\$ 400
diapers	\$ 100
medication	\$ 300
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 5000</b>

\$900 in grocery cards disbursed to:

- Single woman who is deaf and visually impaired. She has no formal education and since arriving in Canada, is frequently overwhelmed and unable to budget her funds. We support her to access the many food and hamper services that exist in Saskatoon. However, there have been a few occasions when the need was immediate and great, and we stepped in to provide support in the form of a grocery card.
- Single man who is recently disabled (both legs were amputated) and in the process of making a refugee claim process. His disability and ongoing serious health issues are preventing him from working, and because of his vulnerable status in Canada, he has few resources until his claim is resolved and he has official ‘status’ in Canada.
- Single elderly refugee woman who lives alone and struggles with significant health needs. Serious health problems followed by an emergency surgery meant that she was unable to go out to do her own shopping and she was concerned as she also had no money in her bank account after paying her rent and utilities and damage deposit. We used a grocery card to go out and purchase groceries on her behalf, which we delivered to her home while she recovered from her surgery.
- Father who is currently in the midst of a family/marital crisis. His wife controls the finances and until we were able to contact Social Services to have their accounts separated so he could have access to his own funds, we provided him with grocery cards so that he could purchase some supplies – groceries but also other essentials as he had to leave his home without packing a bag. We also gave him mittens, a toque, skipants, a winter coat, and warm socks from the gifts that were collected as he showed up on our door on one of the coldest days (-40 windchill day) with no mitts, no toque, and only a light summer jacket.
- Single man who recently arrived as a refugee. He speaks no English and has no formal education and comes from a rural background. He is struggling with understanding and managing his finances and when we visited him, found his fridge and cupboards to be bare. We provided a gift

card and took him shopping as a stop-gap until we could connect him to other services and help him learn about how to budget his money.

- Refugee family of 5: after living in Canada for one year, this family needed to transition from Federal Support to Provincial Support through the Income Support program. Unfortunately, in their case, there was a transition between workers, and their entire file was lost. Income Support admitted their mistake but provided no options but to start from scratch, resulting in delays of over a month for this family's payments. In the meantime, we provided support in the form of grocery cards and advocated with their landlord to accept a delay in rent payment.
- Refugee family of 7: had several members contract COVID and they needed to isolate. Mom is illiterate and does not have the ability to organize online shopping. We used grocery cards to purchase groceries and deliver them to the family during their quarantine.
- Refugee family of 6: We discovered that even though they arrived in late autumn, when we met with them to begin Enhanced Lifeskills training in December, we discovered they had no winter clothes, boots, mitts, etc. and when we checked their bank account with them, we discovered they had no money either. We took them shopping to Village Green and were able to outfit the family without delay.
- Single mother of 4: Two children joined Mom in Saskatoon through the one-year window refugee reunification program just prior to Christmas. There was a real mess with finances when the children first arrived – with quarantining requirements, need to move to a larger apartment, need for childcare for younger children, etc., and finances were stretched to the breaking point. Grocery cards alleviated some of the stress.

- \$600 in grocery cards remaining for upcoming need

similar to what was disbursed in December and the first week of January as detailed above

- \$250 was used for transit passes

for 10 different clients. In most cases, the passes were to support clients access COVID-19 vaccination clinics. A few others received passes as they were at the end of their funds for the month and needed to be able to attend appointments city.

- \$250 in transit passes remaining for upcoming need
- \$392 in Taxis:
- \$223.25 to help a young refugee woman attend weekly medical appointments. She was 9-months pregnant and had an extremely high-risk pregnancy and a bus to her appointment would have required significantly more walking and waiting around than anyone was comfortable exposing her to. (She delivered a healthy baby early in January)
- \$110.75 to help a young refugee man who escaped severe trauma and is now experiencing severe mental health issues that make him unable to navigate buses on his own at this time. He has been in and out of hospital and has had an ambulance called for him on one occasion.
- \$58 for two refugees on two occasions for rides home from the hospital. In both cases, these individuals travelled to the hospital by ambulance.
- \$288 in Taxis upcoming (we've already used the services but haven't yet received the bill or we know they are needed next week):
  - For a refugee woman to take her son, who uses a wheelchair, to medical appointments

- For a refugee man to take his son, who we suspected had broken his leg, to and from emergency
- For the young refugee man detailed above to attend regular health appointments
- For the young refugee man detailed above to attend her baby's first health appointment
- \$1,120 in emergency support
  - To support a young woman who is a victim of domestic violence access emergency housing.
- \$400 for bi-weekly ASL classes

We have one client who is deaf and visually impaired. She can sign using only the most rudimentary signing, and mainly uses an invented sign language. She does not use Arabic sign language and has not yet learned American Sign Language (as used in Canada). She has never attended any formal education and can not read or write in any language. Helping her to be able to communicate her needs is a top priority. However, given her age and special circumstances, she requires a one-on-one learning environment.

- \$400 for wifi for vulnerable students

The pandemic has forced us to make many classes online. Teachers identify students in their classes who, because they lack technology, could not access classes without our support. We arrange to pay wifi and lend them a tablet so they can continue learning.

- \$100 in diapers

We keep a supply of diapers on-hand at the office. Very often mothers come to the office with babies who need a change but without a diaper bag with any supplies. We like to provide mom with a new diaper and send her home with a packet.

- \$300 for medication

Certain medications – especially medicated creams, pain medication, mineral and vitamin supplements, laxatives, blood pressure monitors, bed wetting interventions, etc. are not covered by Interim Federal Health. They can be very expensive for families on limited budgets and we were happy to be able to cover these costs for some of our newest Afghan arrivals

- This last cohort of Afghan arrivals came under special minister permits and for many families, there has been a significant delay (we're into the third month of delay now) in getting them Permanent Residency status. Although technically, they are covered by IFH (Interim Federal Health), in reality, the IFH has not been working for many individuals, and in no way that we can predict. For example, with a family of 5, one family member's IFH might not work. In these cases, we pay the prescription cost. IRCC (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada) has indicated that this is a widespread problem with the Afghan cohort but has offered no solution as yet.

I feel that this is not a typical report format but I hope it will serve your purposes. If you need something else from me, please let me know and again, thank you!

Sincerely,

Lori



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*We respectfully acknowledge that we operate on Treaty 6 Territory and Homeland of the Métis Nation.*