

The Maytree Foundation

Annual Report 1999

Message from the Chairman and the President

The strong commitment of The Maytree Foundation to newcomers and low-income people in Canada continued in 1999. The Foundation's direct grants to organizations serving these two groups of people, and its support of efforts to educate the public and decision makers on meeting their needs, confirmed our dedication to social progress in Canada.

In the Refugee and Immigrant Program, led by Ratna Omidvar, the various activities begun last year developed further. Refugees in limbo continued to be a focus, as we sought to help policy makers understand the negative outcomes of current policy, which place long delays in front of this group of keen and motivated future citizens. Maytree also established a scholarship program for refugees in limbo, who do not have access to student loans for their university and college education. We continued to focus on the economic participation of newcomers, through support of employment training and mentoring. We have also supported efforts to eliminate unreasonable barriers to entering the trades and professions. The Foundation continued to focus on organizational capacity building, through leadership training and management upgrading. We have promoted dialogue on such matters as the devolution of immigrant settlement funding to the cities, where the knowledge and experience in settlement is the greatest.

The Maytree Foundation remains a principal funder of The Caledon Institute of Social Policy. Under the leadership of President Ken Battle and Vice-president Sherri Torjman, Caledon continues to produce the most sound and coherent commentary on social policy in Canada. Caledon, as in past years, has responded to invitations to advise leaders nationally and in the provinces. As always, Caledon starts with an analysis of the data before arriving at conclusions, a process becoming increasingly unique in such public interest organizations.

At the end of 1999, Maytree welcomed Mary Gordon and Heather McFarlane. Mary is well known for her pioneering and innovative work introducing parenting programs in Toronto schools. After many years at the Toronto school board, Mary has come to the Foundation to develop the Roots of Empathy program, which originated with the Foundation, more widely. As we develop the program, we will be consulting extensively to find the best model to take Roots of Empathy to scale, inside schools and without, inside Canada and abroad. We look forward to reporting to you next year on how that growth has occurred. Mary remains attached to the Toronto District School Board, but her main office is at the Foundation.

We continue with our public discourse activities, under such programs as Values in Contemporary Society, Ideas That Matter, and the Toronto Vital Signs project. Without advocating a position, we look for opportunities to stimulate, support, and inform how we talk about the important issues which affect our society. Mary Rowe continues to be a vital presence at the Foundation in support of these activities.

We welcomed Brian Conway to The Maytree Foundation this year. Brian works with the Refugee and Immigrant Program and contributes to the general activities of the Foundation. We also have welcomed the increased participation of Colin Robertson, the Treasurer of The Maytree Foundation, who provides excellent advice and counsel. We also thank Andrew Brouwer and Violeta Li for their continued commitment to the Foundation's Refugee and Immigrant Program.

The Maytree Foundation's Vision

The Maytree Foundation is a Canadian charitable foundation established in 1982. Maytree believes that there are three fundamental sets of issues which threaten political and social stability: wealth disparities between and within nations; mass migration of people because of war, oppression and environmental disasters; and the degradation of the environment.

Of these, Maytree is active in funding projects which address wealth disparity and migration. We view our society's toleration of poverty as a fundamental threat to stability both in the world at large and in Canada in particular. Systemic poverty is an unjustifiable burden to millions of people, and bears paralyzing costs to society. It perpetuates a vicious cycle by limiting opportunity and repressing the human spirit. The correlation between poverty and most serious social problems is a stunning

indictment of society's continuing tolerance of poverty.

Maytree grants aim to combat poverty by creating opportunities for people to break the poverty cycle. We view migration as an opportunity if we recognize the strengths of the immigrants. We believe that newcomers offer tremendous benefits to the Canadian society and economy. Therefore, programs which facilitate their settlement enrich Canada. Further, we believe that urbanization is a powerful force. Programs which support the strengthening of communities are supported by The Maytree Foundation.

As its resources are few relative to the magnitude of the needs, Maytree looks for ways to maximize the impact of its grants. It focuses on empowering individuals, funding innovative projects, supporting effective leaders and finding ways to achieve change through its grants.

Refugee and Immigrant Program

The Maytree Foundation's Refugee and Immigrant Program focuses its energies on those social problems facing immigrants and refugees where our resources might make the most meaningful impact. We focus on two critical priorities that can either facilitate or hinder the effective settlement of immigrants and refugees:

- The permanent protection in Canada, through landing, for Convention refugees
- Opportunities for work, preferably in the field of previous experience and education, for immigrants

The Foundation adopted these priorities in 1998. Our most immediate challenge in 1999 was to provide a framework for action which would foster social change. Our goals were fairly ambitious – we wanted to accelerate the settlement process for individuals, we wanted to educate the public about the benefit of doing so and we wanted to change some of the institutional and legislative frameworks which impede these processes. We put forward, therefore, a three-pronged, mutually reinforcing framework resting on three distinct but interactive pillars - direct service, public education and community capacity building.

In our portfolio of service grants to community-based organizations, we seek to fund local, practical solutions to old and new challenges of settlement – with the objective of gaining valuable insights on improvement and innovation in direct service that will inform the entire sector. In the public education program, we support programs and initiatives that build broader awareness of the impact of national, provincial and institutional policies on immigrants and refugees. In the capacity-building program, we seek to release and enhance the capacity of immigrant and refugee communities to take control of their own future.

In addition to our granting programs, the Foundation engages in a number of initiatives that add value and strategic support to our granting programs. Primary amongst these is our ongoing relationship with the Caledon Institute of Social Policy. This partnership resulted in the publication of three additional papers on critical issues in immigration and refugee policy, highlighting problems and proposing practical solutions.

Of particular note is the evolution of our own learning with reference to building the voice of our communities. In 1998 we developed a new approach to leadership training which could lead in the future to a major initiative in identifying and nurturing newcomer change agents, from a cross-section of society who represent a diversity of communities, opinions and interests. We also know that there is real potential for building the voice of newcomers in citizen-led decision-making structures. In 1999, we completed the planning for an "Agencies, Boards and Commissions" project focusing, in the first instance, on amplifying the voice of newcomers within the institutions governing public education. In both these initiatives, we are mindful of the importance of providing newcomers with a voice in their, and our, future. We are also pleased to report that we have worked with, and will continue to work with, the Toronto Community Foundation and the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation in such leadership initiatives.

We are still very far away from our goal of removing those societal conditions that impede the progress of settlement. In moving forward, we intend to keep our eye squarely on this goal and work proactively with our community of organizations, newcomers and partner foundations.

**Ratna Omidvar, Executive Director
Refugee and Immigrant Program**

Maytree Foundation Refugee and Immigrant Program Grants

The following is a list of payments made to grantees in the granting year ending November 30, 1999.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Canadian Council for Refugees, Montreal.

- \$30,146 of a total grant of \$152,550 for a capacity building program to enable the Council's member delegates -- many of whom are refugees themselves -- to become effective spokespersons.

Canadian Council for Refugees, Montreal

- \$5,145.87 to expand its funding base and continue to function independently from government.

Coalition for Access to Professional Engineering, Toronto.

- \$27,000 of a total grant of \$29,700 to work in collaboration with the Professional Engineers of Ontario and develop and put in place an arm's-length appeals process and a new associate status for qualified newcomer engineers.

Council of Agencies Serving South Asians and South Asian Family Support Services, Toronto.

- \$50,000 of a total grant of \$55,700 to build a community coalition of foreign-trained doctors who will analyze regulatory processes and barriers and develop solutions for access to the health care field.

Ethiopian Association of Toronto

- \$1,500 of a total grant of \$3,215 to review the organization's personnel policies.

FCJ Hamilton House Refugee Project, Toronto.

- \$45,000 of a total grant of \$50,000 to train staff from settlement, housing and other relevant agencies regarding the inland refugee determination process and to disseminate the program through training and a website.

Institute in Management and Community Development.

- \$21,400 of a total grant of \$24,000 to pilot-test a leadership-training program for immigrants and refugees. The objective of the program is to identify and support the development of potential leaders who are catalysts for social change.

Local Agencies Serving Immigrants, Ottawa.

- \$18,000 of a total grant of \$25,000 to a joint initiative of five Ottawa-based agencies, to build strategic links with employers and gain their support in the placement of qualified immigrants in suitable jobs.

New Canadians' Centre, Windsor and Essex County YMCA.

- \$10,000 of a total grant of \$12,682 to develop a strategy for "Labour Market Access for Foreign Trained Tradespeople" in conjunction with local employers and unions and foreign-trained tradespeople.

Umugenzi for Refugees, Toronto

- \$12,500 to develop a financial and operational plan for the Rukundo Club program which engages newcomers in the volunteer sector.

Vigil, Toronto.

- \$45,000 of a total grant of \$49,765 to provide services to selected people whose Convention refugee claim has been rejected by the Immigration and Refugee Board, but who would be at risk if returned to their country of origin.

Windsor Women Working With Immigrant Women.

- \$2,000 to provide training to enhance the advocacy skills of foreign-trained doctors, engineers and other professionals.

DIRECT SERVICE

African Community Services of Peel, Mississauga.

- \$30,000 of a total grant of \$50,000 to assist young Convention refugees "in limbo." Working with institutions and youth, this project will promote continued attachment to education.

Arab Community Centre, Toronto.

- \$32,725 of a total grant of \$87,268 to assist Convention refugees in limbo and facilitate their landing process.

Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture, Toronto.

- \$50,000 of a total grant of \$150,000 to develop and implement counseling strategies that facilitate the settlement and landing of Convention refugees in limbo.

Canadian Multilingual Literacy Centre, Toronto.

- \$22,500 of a total grant of \$140,000 to support a strategy to link unemployed immigrants to employment by utilizing existing skills training and employment resources.

Centre for Advancement in Work and Living, Toronto.

- \$46,289 of a total grant of \$94,412 to implement a mentoring program for foreign-trained professionals in the information technology industry.
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India Rainbow Centre, Mississauga

- \$7,486 to test the feasibility of English language training by telephone.

New Experiences for Latin American Refugee Women, Toronto.

- \$21,426 to help refugee and immigrant women gain their first Canadian work experience thus overcoming a significant barrier to employment.

Regroupement des Jeunes Filles Francophones de Toronto.

- \$30,000 of a total grant of \$50,145 to develop a model for leveraging employment services at Collège des Grands Lacs for young unemployed African Francophone women.

Rexdale Microskills Community Development Centre, Toronto.

- \$45,000 of a total grant of \$90,000 to set up, deliver and evaluate an information-technology training program for immigrant and racial minority women.

Somali Immigrant Aid Organization, Toronto.

- \$50,000 of a total grant of \$150,000 to provide business counseling with the aim of improving the success rate of existing Somali businesses in Toronto.

St. Christopher House and Working Women Community Centre, Toronto.

- \$36,200 of a total grant of \$160,795 to develop and implement a program to improve career opportunities for young Portuguese-Canadian women.

Woodgreen Community Centre, Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care and Kababayan Community Centre, Toronto.

- \$16,500 of a total grant of \$20,000 to develop an approach for linking the skills of foreign-trained nurses with employment opportunities in long term care.

EDUCATION

Canadian Council for Refugees, Montreal.

- \$15,750 to raise public awareness about refugee and immigration policy and to counter negative myths about refugees and immigrants.

Centre for Excellence in Research on Settlement and Immigration, Toronto.

- \$7,000 of a total grant of \$8,460 to develop the "Strangers Become Us" educational materials for use by grade eight geography classes in Ontario's schools.

Citizens for Public Justice, Toronto.

- \$32,250 of a total grant of \$49,100 for a joint public education program with the Coalition Against the Head Tax, the Coalition for a Just Immigration and Refugee Policy, and the Southern Ontario Sanctuary Coalition.

Refugee Rights Week Organizing Committee, Toronto.

- \$3,000 to support Refugee Rights Week and to raise public awareness around legal limbo and other refugee issues.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Romero House, Toronto.

- \$16,000 of a total grant of \$18,170 to determine, evaluate, disseminate and take action on strategic interventions to prevent homelessness in the refugee community.

Maytree Education Access Program for Convention Refugee Students in Limbo, Toronto and Ottawa.

- \$51,655 to award scholarships to Convention refugee students in limbo.

Maytree Service Fellowship Toronto.

- \$17,850 to award scholarships to students participating in York University's Steps to the Arts program. These are students who face barriers to education and whose circumstances may prevent them from achieving their academic potential.

The Maytree Foundation Access Program for Convention Refugee Students in Limbo

In 1999, The Maytree Foundation launched a scholarship program for young outstanding Convention refugees "in limbo" who are barred from access to student loans. The Foundation has offered eleven full scholarships and a small number of awards to students in Toronto and Ottawa to enable them to acquire post-secondary education. All have had an excellent history of contributing to the community by doing volunteer work and all have sound

employment records. The students are connected with an advocate who works with them to help facilitate their landing. In addition to helping the individual students, the scholarship program provides Maytree with insights into the impact of government policies and enables us to put a human face to our broader public education efforts. We are particularly pleased that the Laidlaw Foundation has made a financial contribution to this program.

Caledon Institute of Social Policy

The Caledon Institute was founded by Maytree in 1992, in collaboration with Ken Battle. Caledon is an expression of our faith in the role of effective public policy in a healthy and cohesive Canada.

The Caledon Institute has made important contributions to social policy in Canada. Caledon has played an influential role in the reform of child benefits, public pensions, programs for Canadians with disabilities, tax policy and federal social transfer payments to the provinces. With its capacity to write about complex issues in clear and accessible language, Caledon has been instrumental in stimulating public interest in and understanding of social policy. Caledon's innovative real leaders and community stories series have provided a national voice for community leaders and social entrepreneurs. In addition to writing Caledon commentaries and reports, staff delivered several papers on various social policy issues to conferences and seminars that are being published in journals and books in Canada and abroad.

During the past year, Caledon embarked on several initiatives. On the international front, Caledon was selected by Germany's Bertelsmann Foundation as Canadian lead (in partnership with the Centre for the Study of Living Standards) in a multi-country three-year pilot project that will monitor major developments in social and labour policy in advanced industrialized nations. Caledon also hosted and arranged a weeklong series of meetings for two visitors from a community resource centre in the Ukraine. They are interested in forming a collaborative arrangement with Caledon and other Canadian organizations to learn more about partnerships among the voluntary, private and government sectors.

Caledon is collaborating with the Refugee and Immigrant program of The Maytree Foundation on a new refugee and immigrant series. We published several reports including *What's in a Name: Identity Documents and Convention Refugees; Immigrants Need Not Apply; and Refugees in Legal Limbo*.

The Minister of Finance asked Caledon to develop ideas for his upcoming 2000 budget. In response, Caledon expanded its work on the reform of child benefits and taxation policy with *How to Do a Children's Budget and a Tax Cut Budget in 2000*. Endorsed in a *Globe and Mail* editorial, the study was the first of several reports aimed at influencing the federal budget and contributing to the development of a National Children's Agenda for Canada, an initiative launched jointly by the federal and provincial governments. Staff wrote a memorandum to the Minister of Finance on the coming 2000 Budget that led to a meeting with senior officials and then the Minister himself.

Caledon is expanding its scope to labour market issues, which are so critical for anti-poverty policy and social policy generally. We published a book of individually authored papers entitled *Employment Policy*

Options. Each chapter presents a unique perspective on possible measures to reduce unemployment and underemployment. A companion report entitled *Good Work: Getting it and Keeping It* was prepared as a synopsis of the key arguments and proposals in the book. *Aboriginal People in Canada's Labour Market* took Caledon into new territory both in terms of labour market and Aboriginal issues.

Caledon also maintained its involvement in the newly created Task Force on Employment of the Region of Ottawa-Carleton, whose work is founded on a report commissioned from Caledon. We also continue to participate in the Canada Community Economic Development Network and on the advisory group of the Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program (CEDTAP). We have been asked to co-host, in conjunction with Carleton University, a workshop on community economic development as part of a national meeting of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

Caledon continued its partnership with a community-based poverty reduction initiative in Waterloo Region. We have produced several papers for this project including *Community-Based Poverty Reduction; Strategies for a Caring Community: The Role of Local Government; More Money in the Pocket; and Are Outcomes the Best Outcome?*

We keep working on a wide range of disability policy issues. As part of our work on the upcoming 'children's budget,' we have put forward several options with respect to improving services and tax-related measures for families that have children with disabilities. Work also continued on Caledon's Toronto-based *Speaking Out* project on the impact of public changes on a group of Ontario families. The project, which has entered its third and final year, released a report on the impact of health system changes.

Caledon published reports and commentaries on a variety of social and economic issues, including: the 1999 federal budget, fiscal policy and the national debt, employment policy options, labour market obstacles created by major social programs, poverty trends, immigrant and refugee issues, the voluntary sector, customized training, the Aboriginal labour market, indexation and the tax/transfer system, and the importance of mentoring of young people. While the four-year Social Partnerships Project drew to an end this year, many of the initiatives it launched will continue as an integral part of Caledon's work, including the *community stories* and *real leaders* series of publications which reported on a wide variety of innovative community-based projects and the social entrepreneurs who create and drive them.

Ken Battle, President
Sherri Torjman, Vice-President
Michael Mendelson, Senior Scholar

Maytree Foundation Refugee and Immigrant Program Publications

The Maytree Foundation, in conjunction with The Caledon Institute of Social Policy, has published a series of papers exploring problems in Canada's refugee and immigration policies and proposing practical solutions. The following papers were produced during 1999. These papers are available at The Maytree Foundation's website at www.maytree.com.

- **Immigrants Need Not Apply.** The paper describes the difficulties facing immigrant professionals and tradespeople seeking accreditation and employment in their field of expertise, and outlines the social and economic costs of not recognizing their foreign qualifications. The paper sets the context for a series of solution-oriented papers planned for 2000 and 2001.
- **Protection with a Price Tag: The Head Tax for Refugees and Their Families Must Go.** In 1995, Ottawa imposed a \$975 right of landing fee, or Head Tax, on immigrants and refugees. This came on top of a \$500 processing fee introduced the year before. The commentary argues that the fee is an unreasonable barrier for refugees and their families and should be abolished for them.
- **What's In A Name? Identity Documents and Convention Refugees.** The government says there are 13,000 Convention refugees living in legal limbo in Canada today. The vast majority of the refugees in limbo are there because they are unable to satisfy civil servants that they are who they say they are. This paper proposes policy options to resolve their status.

The Roots of Empathy

In the Fall of 1996, The Maytree Foundation supported the development and piloting of a program through the Parenting Office of the Toronto Board of Education. Roots of Empathy helps educate children for their future role as parents. This innovative classroom program is designed to foster the development of empathy, to reduce aggression, and to teach human development.

This program revolves around a class of students from kindergarten through grade eight, monitoring the growth and development of an infant and witnessing the loving, responsive relationship between the infant and the parent. The Roots of Empathy instructor visits the class three

times each month, once with the family (infant and parent). In sessions before and after the family visits, human development and empathy instruction are linked to the class curriculum. Teachers report emotional and social gains in students as they learn to see and feel things the way others see and feel them. Roots of Empathy addresses the affective side of learning, teaching a literacy of feelings.

In 1999, 29 programs reached 700 students across the Toronto District School Board. An evaluation is underway, with results expected in 2000. A CD-ROM is available.

The Maytree Foundation in 1999

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