





# A Place to Call Home at Last for Raymond



Raymond was a gentle and friendly 63-year-old man from a small farming community in Manitoba where he lived until he was almost 30. “We took care of the land, the garden and the chickens,” he remembered fondly.

When he was seven, his mother moved in with his new stepfather, a decision he called a “mistake”. His stepfather had a problem with alcohol, and his mother, who didn’t drink, began to drink too. Alcohol fueled fighting between the two of them, and also the beatings from his stepfather. “The days weren’t all bad,” he said ruefully. Raymond also incurred polio as a child, but fortunately recovered.

From a Cree background, Raymond’s mother ensured that he didn’t go to residential school but instead a regular day school. But that still didn’t protect Raymond against discrimination and abuse because of who he was.

After he left the farm, Raymond had a succession of jobs, including on a beef farm in Dauphin, sanding fiberglass rooves for buses in Winnipeg, and other jobs across the country. “I hitchhiked back in the days when it was safe to do,” he recalled with a smile.

Sadly, as he moved across Canada in search of new jobs, new homes and a new life, his own problem with alcohol ebbed and flowed. This affected not only his ability to keep a job, but also his relationships with his five sons, who live in different parts of Canada. “I don’t have a connection with them except my youngest,” he noted quietly with downcast eyes.

As Raymond grew older he developed heart problems as well as anxiety and panic attacks. After he came to Ottawa, he moved into the Oakes, a supportive treatment facility run by the Shepherds of Good Hope which has both a Managed Alcohol Program and an aging-at-home program. As his health declined further, he became unable to look after himself and moved into our Hospice, the oldest and largest within a homeless shelter in North America, in August 2020.

Hardship and tragedy continued to follow Raymond more recently: both his sisters passed away and his granddaughter perished in a fire. He found solace in his continued contact with his youngest son as well as his brother, who lives in Edmonton.

Raymond also found comfort and caring in the relationships he developed with Hospice staff. “It’s so quiet and peaceful here. There’s no pressure.” He has his own room and is provided 24-hour support. “The staff here are so accepting, likeable and helpful. Kevin helps me with my shower, and Pat runs errands for me to the corner store. I really appreciate it.”

Sadly, Raymond passed away on December 30. Through your kindness and caring, you gave Raymond the home he needed and deserved. Thank you so much for your support and compassion.



The Ottawa Mission is constantly evolving to meet the needs of the community. I have never met a more uplifting and generous group of people whose efforts to reach out and help those who are homeless, jobless, addicted, and dying know no bounds. They are truly doing God’s work, giving hope to those who are hopeless.

I’m so excited that the Food Service Training Program is getting a new facility at the former Rideau Bakery. I went to work at the Rideau Bakery immediately after graduating from the FSTP in 2006. It was there that I was able to explore and learn more about baking and Jewish culture. I also learned of the rich history behind the Rideau Bakery and the Kardish family. Theirs is a story of resilience. Their matriarch, Rivka lived and raised her family in Soviet-controlled Ukraine in the 1920s. She, too, had a heart for the poor, feeding many with what little she could scrape together of the bread she would bake and which the Red Army confiscated daily. She put

herself and her family at great risk to help others. She passed on her recipes and her amazing heart to her children, who came to Canada and continued her legacy, feeding the community and passing her recipes on to future generations.

These two institutions hold a special place in my heart. It seems so fitting that The Ottawa Mission has chosen this venue for its FSTP, where The Mission can continue to expand their outreach. That same location where four generations of Kardishes served their community with open arms.

Congratulations, Chef Ric. You and your team have taught myself and countless others so much, given so many opportunities and continue to do incredible things for the community. Thank you for sharing your passion, your extraordinary gifts and your own selfless heart. It is truly an honour to call you my Mentor.

Sincerely,  
Kathryn McKinley



## COOKING UP A NEW FUTURE FOR AMIR

Amir is a bright, enthusiastic 17-year old who graduated from The Mission’s Food Services Training program (FSTP) on November 12. He holds the record as the youngest student ever in the program.

Amir came to Canada from Iran three years ago with his parents and sister. He’s a student at Glebe Collegiate where he is completing his high school education. ESL classes are helping him get good grades and he is looking forward to graduation.

You can hear the excitement in Amir’s voice when he talks about what the FSTP means to him. “It is for me a great pleasure to work with the great Chef Ric,” Amir says with a smile. He’s a hard worker. Amir completed his high school requirements over the summer, and enrolled in a high school placement program as an FSTP student, which prepared him for work in a

commercial kitchen. Since 2004, the FSTP, the program has maintained a 90% success rate for students finding jobs in the industry, even during the pandemic.

“When I came here, it was in COVID and I couldn’t meet with my friends,” Amir says, “but when I came I met so many amazing people. And I’ve learned a lot of skills.”

Amir secured a part-time position at Skuish Cookies, which makes delicious treats. Covid19 resulted in him being laid off, however, when that is no longer a factor, he will happily go back.

Amir is very grateful for all the support he is receiving. “I’m not only working to learn, but I love to help people who come to The Mission for help.”

Thanks to you, Amir has cooked up a new future with newfound confidence.

## WORKING WITH OUR PARTNERS TO MEET THE NEED FOR HEALTHY FOOD AND A BRIGHTER FUTURE

As the pandemic has impacted our community, The Ottawa Mission has partnered with community food cupboards across our city to meet the need for healthy food in response to worsening food insecurity.

Our food truck project was launched at the beginning of September 2020 and the need for its services has grown since that time. We started the program to bring meals to people where they live to serve even more people in need.

The program began with five stops delivering about 100 meals at each stop. The food truck now has 18 locations rotating throughout Ottawa each week and delivers over 2,800 meals per week.

Last year, The Ottawa Mission served over 1,400 meals every day and a total of over 520,000 meals. The addition of the food truck has pushed this daily average number of meals served to more than 2,000, and will push our yearly total meal count to well over 600,000.

We're incredibly grateful to our partners, donors and sponsors for their generous support. We couldn't do this without your help.

Our supporters have also been instrumental in expanding our very successful Food Services Training Program. Since 2004, the FSTP has trained 179 students to work in this industry and has a success rate of 90% in terms of students securing positions.

The program has expanded to include more training opportunities such as catering and job placements. Over time, the FSTP has outgrown kitchen and our ability to keep up with the number of people that want to take part in the program. As a result, we've had to turn potential trainees away because we don't have the resources or space to train them.

To address these issues and help even more people in need, we're moving forward to increase the annual number of students trained at our new non-profit, offsite FSTP education center located within the former Rideau Bakery site. We'll increase the number of sessions per year from two to three to train more students per year. We will also add a store-front operation to serve healthy, nutritious meals at an affordable price for people that normally couldn't afford it.

We're profoundly grateful to have the generous support of many existing and new partners to realize this exciting new initiative, including the Aggarwal family, current owners of the former Rideau Bakery site, who have donated it for our use for seven years.

The Rideau Bakery provided delicious food and a sense of community and family to the people of Ottawa for almost 90 years before closing its doors in 2019. We're very proud to be able to continue this tradition while helping those in need to rebuild their lives.

A huge thank you to our supporters for your incredible generosity in providing both healthy food and brighter future for those we serve.





**Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY)** is a family-friendly walking fundraiser for the homeless. As a participant, you or your team (family, work, church or school) will experience a hint of the challenges faced by people who are homeless in the winter while raising money for people in need in our community.

Join us (virtually) on Saturday, February 20, 2021 and walk 2K or 5k to support The Ottawa Mission.

For more information, [cnoy.org/location/ottawadowntown](http://cnoy.org/location/ottawadowntown) or contact Jennifer Graves at [jgraves@ottawamission.com](mailto:jgraves@ottawamission.com), or 613-234-1155.



**JOIN OUR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS NETWORK TODAY!**

The Ottawa Mission Foundation's Young Professionals Network (YPN) is for those looking to expand their professional network while making a tangible impact on the life-changing work of The Ottawa Mission.

For more information on becoming a member of the YPN, please visit [OttawaMission.com/ypnonamission](http://OttawaMission.com/ypnonamission) or contact Jennifer Graves at 613-234-1155 or [jgraves@ottawamission.com](mailto:jgraves@ottawamission.com)



## **INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?**

**At The Mission, we have many volunteer opportunities. If you are interested, visit [ottawamission.com/volunteer](http://ottawamission.com/volunteer), or contact Jake Harding at [jharding@ottawamission.com](mailto:jharding@ottawamission.com) for more details.**

# A beautiful smile makes it all worthwhile: Why Linda volunteers

mission  
more than a she

"Give us this  
our daily



Linda is a kind and thoughtful person who has been volunteering in The Ottawa Mission's kitchen for the past 16 months. In this role, she's completed a variety of tasks, including buttering bread and cutting buns, making sandwiches, serving coffee in the morning to clients, wrapping cutlery for individual servings (a continuing Covid19 precaution), and serving beverages and desserts to clients at lunchtime. Linda volunteers once a week.

As a retired occupational therapist and a people person, a main draw of volunteering in The Mission's kitchen is the opportunity to interact with people such as other kitchen volunteers and Mission staff. "The Mission staff and volunteers are very friendly. I look forward to coming here for my shift," Linda notes.

Most rewarding of all for Linda is her interaction with the clients she serves. "Clients have gratitude and are very thankful for the help they receive. It seems counterintuitive since clients are homeless, but I've seen so many beautiful smiles on the faces of clients since I've started here."

Linda has also noticed the disproportionate burden of homelessness that people from racialized backgrounds bear as she serves clients. "They are overrepresented and disadvantaged," she notes.

In the spring of 2020, The Mission's Board of Directors developed and confirmed a statement on anti-Black racism. This statement notes that "Jesus made it clear that one of the reasons he was sent by God was to 'set the oppressed free' (Luke 4:18). In our commitment to transition those we serve to wholeness, here at the Ottawa Mission we are privileged to come alongside a wide diversity of people including an increasing number of Black individuals who benefit from our services." The Mission was one of the first agencies in Ottawa to issue such a statement. It builds on our commitment to unconditional acceptance and respect for all clients we serve regardless of background, which is reflective in many of our programs, for example, our country food feast and specialized counselling for Indigenous clients.

Your generosity ensures many smiles on the faces of our clients as well as a sense of dignity and belonging to all who turn to us for help. Through your donations and your volunteer engagement with clients, you provide warmth and inclusion. Thank you so much for your kindness and caring.



# “A Godsend”: A New Home and a New Life for Dean



Dean, a quiet and respectful man of 61 years, is originally from Brockville. He worked hard to maintain his sobriety for several years, but the burden of grief from losing five people who were very close to him in a very short time, including his mother and his brother, drove him to return to using alcohol to cope with his pain.

In late 2019, after he decided to give up drinking, he discovered a lack of services in Brockville, and made the decision to travel to Ottawa to seek help here. The first night he arrived, he had to sleep on a mat on our chapel floor given the chronic overcapacity of our shelter from 2018 to 2020 due to the lack of affordable housing in Ottawa.

Dean spent four months in an emergency shelter dorm room with seven other clients. He admits that living in close quarters with this many people in one place could be challenging. “I would sometimes think about leaving, but not until after lunch,” he notes with a smile, a testimony to how good Chef Ric’s meals are at The Mission.

Dean was admitted to an Addiction and Trauma Services (ATS) residential treatment bed within the Hope and Stabilization programs, where he stayed for almost 6 months. His praises the approach to addiction within the ATS suite of programs as “really good, and making all the difference”. Broader supports offered to Dean during his stay with us included helping him replace essential identification documents such as his birth certificate and health card that had been lost, helping him with his income taxes as well as access to public supports such as employment insurance and his Canada Pension Plan when he retires. The Mission also helped Dean secure a new apartment close to our shelter, which is great news.

“The people here have been just outstanding,” Dean says of the support that has been provided to him to help him stabilize and renew his life.

Dean also felt safe at The Mission as the Covid19 pandemic unfolded in Ottawa. “I felt as safe here as I would in a hospital,” he says. “The precautions they take are really good.” Dean also appreciates the efforts of Mission staff to find innovative ways to deliver essential programs to continue to support clients such as virtual SMART Recovery meetings for ATS clients, the resumption of Chaplaincy services, and other supports.

“This place has been a Godsend,” Dean notes with gratitude. “I know for a fact that I wouldn’t be sober — I couldn’t do it on my own.”

Your gift has given Dean a new home and new life. Thank you so much for your generous support.



For only \$3.47 you can provide a special meal at our Easter dinner on April 5<sup>th</sup> and help bring hope to someone in need.

**Please give today.**

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**ottawamission.com**

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