

Adam's Story

Finding Hope and Resilience Through OMRA

Adam, a newcomer from Sudan, arrived in Ottawa almost two years ago through the Government-Assisted Refugee Program. At 43 years old, with no formal education and little to no English, he faced the daunting challenge of starting over in a new country.

After one year of settlement and financial support under the RAP program, Adam transitioned to Ontario Works. Although it helped cover his basic needs, he found himself struggling – financially,



emotionally, and mentally. He was deeply distressed, malnourished, and depressed, constantly worrying about his mother and 10 siblings who had fled the war in Sudan. With limited English and no stable income, he felt hopeless about sup-

porting his family or building a future in Canada.

That's when OMRA stepped in. Through OMRA's rent subsidy program, Adam was able to afford his housing and focus on his English studies without the constant fear of losing his home. He began attending classes regularly and joined OMRA's tutoring sessions run by dedicated volunteers.

After nine months of support, Adam's progress has been remarkable. He found a part-time job as a cleaner in a restaurant that allows him to earn an income while continuing his education. His confidence has grown – he smiles more often, shares stories from his homeland, their beautiful culture, and even brings Sudanese coffee & tea, blended with cardamom, ginger, and cane sugar, to share with others as a gesture of warmth and community.

Adam says: "OMRA gave me the tools and support I needed and welcomed me with open arms. Without OMRA's help, I don't think I could have made it this far. Now, I can earn a little, give a little, and stay hopeful that one day I'll be reunited with my family."

Today, Adam is not just surviving – he's rebuilding his life, one step at a time, with renewed hope and a sense of belonging.

Get Ready to Run-raise!

SAVE THE DATE: OMRA's Fourth Annual Tamarack Race Weekend Fundraiser is coming soon, May 23-24! Come and join us for FUN, Friendship and Fundraising for TEAM OMRA. Our goal this year is \$30,000.

Many of you run (or walk & talk) in the 2 km race on Saturday, May 23, at 3pm. However, others may like the challenge of the 5k, 10k, the half-marathon, or the full marathon. The good news is everyone can be part of Team OMRA and support OMRA's rent subsidies.

During registration you will be asked if you want to raise funds for a charity: select OMRA from the list, and this will prompt the system to create a fundraising page link for you

AFTER you've checked out. Set-up your page immediately and you'll be set!

You can sign up now at: www.runottawa.ca
OMRA email contact: keelydavison@omraottawa.org

The Heart of OMRA: Our Volunteers

Behind every success story at OMRA, there is a volunteer who is willing to devote time and effort to making a newcomer's life better.

Today, OMRA is proud to have approximately 20 dedicated volunteers who play an essential role in helping refugees and newcomers build new lives in Ottawa. These individuals, primarily from the established community, generously offer their time, skills, and compassion to bridge gaps and create meaningful opportunities for those starting over.

Together, our volunteers contribute more than 200 hours every month. That is not just time – it is mentorship, encouragement, guidance, and hope.

They support our clients in many ways:

- Practicing English and French
- Navigating employment opportunities
- Understanding daily life in Canada
- Supporting students to excel in school and post-secondary programs
- Providing encouragement and cultural connection

A Growing Community at the Elmvalle Acres Library

As shared in our previous newsletter, OMRA proudly signed a partnership agreement with the Elmvalle Acres Library to host our tutoring sessions. What began as a small initiative quickly grew into something beautiful.

The program has been so successful that the library featured

it on their website. Since then, newcomers from Mexico, Senegal, Eritrea, Libya, China, and many other communities have joined our sessions and continue to



attend regularly.

These gatherings are not just lessons. They are conversations. They are cultural exchanges. They are shared laughter and shared stories. Our volunteers do not simply teach – they listen, they connect, and they build relationships. Together, we celebrate our differences and discover how much we truly have in common.

The Need is Growing

Due to the ongoing housing crisis and the increasing number of newcomers arriving in Ottawa, OMRA continues to welcome new clients each month. With this growth comes a rising demand for tutoring and integration support.

Our group tutoring program has expanded significantly – and we need more volunteers to sustain this momentum. Even a few hours per month can make a lasting difference.

Join Us

If you are interested in becoming part of this meaningful work, we would love to hear from you.

We are currently seeking volunteers for the following roles:

- Language Tutor Volunteer (English or French)
- Employment Support Volunteer
- Cultural Buddy Volunteer
- School Subject Tutor Volunteer

Schedules are flexible. Tutoring can be conducted in person or virtually, depending on your availability and preference.

To learn more, please contact our Client Services Manager, Amena Khavari at amenakhavari@omraottawa.org.

At OMRA, we believe integration is not a one-sided journey. It is a shared experience built on kindness, trust, and community.

To our volunteers – thank you. You are not just supporting newcomers. You are helping build a stronger, more connected Ottawa.

A Legacy Gift is a Gift that Lasts

Legacy giving is a powerful way to create lasting impact beyond one's lifetime. Also known as planned giving, it allows individuals to support causes they care about through their wills, trusts, or other estate plans. This form of philanthropy is a meaningful expression of values, ensuring that your commitment to positive change endures for generations.



What is legacy giving?

Legacy giving involves making a gift to a charity as part of your estate planning. Unlike immediate donations, these gifts take effect after your lifetime. They can take many forms,

such as bequests in a will or living trust, or life insurance policies.

Each option offers flexibility to match your financial situation and philanthropic goals.

Why consider legacy giving?

Legacy gifts provide a unique opportunity to support causes close to your heart without affecting your current finances. They help organizations like OMRA plan for the future with greater confidence, knowing they will receive vital resources to sustain their work.

For donors, legacy giving can also offer tax advantages. In many regions in Canada charitable bequests can reduce estate taxes, that can maximize the value passed on to your loved ones and for chosen charities.

By including a charity in your estate plans, you become part of a community of forward-thinking supporters who

help shape a better world.

How to get started

- **Reflect on your values:** Identify the causes that inspire you most.
- **Consult professionals:** Work with your financial advisor and estate planner to explore giving options.
- **Communicate your wishes:** Inform your chosen charities and loved ones about your legacy plans.
- **Document your gift:** Update your will or trust to include your charitable bequest.

A gift that lasts

Legacy giving is a way to help future generations. It is an act of hope and generosity that transcends time, helping build a sustainable and compassionate future.

If you're inspired to learn more, please contact us and we can work with you and your financial advisor to create a plan that is both inspiring and effective.

The OMRA Board is Recruiting

OMRA is looking for new members for our board. If you are passionate about supporting vulnerable newcomers, we have a place for you! The OMRA board is a working one, requiring hands-on participation and engagement. Experience in the sector would be an asset, plus having financial, governance, mental health, and/or social work backgrounds.

Please contact Maria Rigby (rigby.omra@gmail.com) if you are interested in joining this dynamic group. More information on our organization is available on our website, OMRAottawa.org.

OMRA AGM: Save the Date

Please mark your calendars and join us at our **Annual General Meeting**. There will be time half an hour ahead of the meeting to visit with one another and to have some refreshments and treats. Your participation and interest in OMRA is very important. More information will be provided closer to the date.

Monday, June 15, 2026
6:30-9:00 PM
Ottawa Mennonite Church
1830 Kilborn Avenue, Ottawa