



Immigrant and Refugee
Community Organization of Manitoba

Annual Report

2025 - 2026





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Vision and Mission

Vision Statement

A Community of Belonging

Mission Statement

IRCOM strives to empower newcomer families to integrate into the wider community through affordable transitional housing, programs, and services.

IRCOM acknowledges that the land we are on is Treaty 1 territory, the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Anishininewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline and Nehethowuk Nations – and the homeland of the Red River Métis. The water that IRCOM uses comes from Shoal Lake First Nation #40, an Anishnaabe First Nation in Treaty 3 territory. The electricity that IRCOM uses comes from Treaty 5, the homeland of the Inineu peoples. IRCOM affirms that we are all treaty people and that we are committed to truth and reconciliation.



Executive Director's Message



In very uncertain times, IRCOM is heading bravely into strategic planning to determine our path forward over the next three years. In recent months, it has been such a privilege to meet with and listen to our staff team, leadership, Tenant Leaders, Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, agency partners, donors, funders and supporters. What I heard was affirming and inspiring, alongside thoughtful feedback to guide our future. Every group spoke of IRCOM as a place of safety, trust, and belonging. Our tenants shared, “IRCOM is like our mom’s home,” and “It is safe here.” The role IRCOM plays in creating safety and belonging, clearly resonated in every conversation I had.

External partners emphasized the uniqueness of IRCOM’s model and confirmed our positive reputation in the community. Staff reflected with pride on IRCOM’s unique, holistic model which offers housing paired with holistic supports for the whole family. At IRCOM, every member of the family is served, “from babies to adults.” The diversity and lived experience of our staff was identified as a core strength, fostering empathy, cultural understanding and meaningful connection.

Indigenous Knowledge Keepers spoke about the strength of relationship IRCOM brings to bridge building work. They highlighted humility, accountability, and trust as essential, and encouraged us to step confidently into leadership and partnership, walking forward together in a good way.

People were also honest about challenges: funding uncertainty, aging infrastructure, staff workload, and growing needs among families. We take this feedback seriously. Strategic planning is about listening carefully and making thoughtful choices so IRCOM can remain strong, responsive, and sustainable.

Despite an increasingly difficult climate for refugees and immigrants, I remain deeply hopeful. Tenants reminded us, “If you help the children, you help the whole family,” and others shared a desire to give back: “Tenants can help make this place better.” That spirit of shared responsibility and care is at the heart of IRCOM and will shine through, when we develop our new strategic plan.

Thank you to all the wonderful people and organizations that help make IRCOM a special and impactful place. Thank you to our tenants, staff, board members, partners, funders, donors, practicum students and volunteers. Together, we continue to build a true community of belonging.

Shereen Denetto, Executive Director

Message from the Board



Dear Friends, Supporters, and Community Members,

As we reflect on another impactful year, it is with immense pride and gratitude that I share IRCOM's remarkable achievements. This year has showcased our community's resilience, dedication, and collaborative spirit, marked by several milestones.

Our youth boys' and girls' soccer teams excelled once again, demonstrating exceptional leadership and teamwork. Their successes underscore the power of perseverance and shared vision, inspiring us all.

The Building Bridges program made significant strides, fostering reconciliation by connecting Indigenous Peoples and newcomers through land-based education, cultural sharing, and experiential learning. This initiative has strengthened relationships and deepened our commitment to inclusivity and mutual respect, thanks to the dedication of our team, partners, and community.

These accomplishments would not have been possible without the exceptional leadership of Shereen, our Executive Director, whose vision and commitment have guided us toward success. Her leadership team's expertise has been invaluable in driving our mission forward.

I extend heartfelt thanks to our staff and volunteers, whose passion and hard work form the backbone of our organization. Your efforts have made a tangible difference in the lives of the families and communities we serve. To our generous sponsors, your support has enabled us to expand our programs and reach more individuals in need. Your contributions are integral to our impact. Finally, I recognize our selfless and passionate Board of Directors. Your advocacy, guidance, and dedication have been instrumental in our success. Your commitment to our mission is truly inspiring.

As we look ahead, we remain steadfast in our commitment to innovation, collaboration, and advocacy. Together, we will continue to break down barriers, celebrate diversity, and create a brighter future for all.

Miigwetch, Thank you!

Beyen Embafrash, Board President

IRCOM Highlights



Two hard-working, resilient, and determined tenant families reached an incredible milestone this year - **purchasing their own homes after their three year stay at IRCOM.**

They are part of a broader story of impact, with 48 families moving from transitional housing into permanent homes with IRCOM's support.



IRCOM's work **bridging newcomer and Indigenous communities** is gaining national attention. This year, it was featured in a case study developed with Indigenous partners by Eupraxia Training - that is now inspiring similar efforts across Canada.



What a year for IRCOM youth soccer! **Our incredible teams brought home five championships** – a phenomenal achievement that speaks to their talent, determination, and teamwork. We are so proud of our youth and the confidence and leadership they continue to grow, both on and off the field.



IRCOM is proud to share that Executive Director **Shereen Denetto was named an Honouree for the Community Spark Award** at the inaugural Manitoba Mosaic Awards. This provincial recognition reflects the collective impact and community-building work of IRCOM, as well as Shereen's leadership and contributions to strengthening the newcomer-serving sector across Manitoba.

Year at a Glance

Our Community



141
families called
IRCOM home



24
Languages Spoken



147
preschoolers

182
children

309
youth

924
adults



43
Countries Represented



1562
people served in total

Strengthening Financial Wellbeing



\$8,560,450
in benefits
directly to families



918
tax returns filed



16 families
grew their own food
saving \$115/month in groceries



\$16,800
in annual rent savings
per family

Learning, Growth and Achievement



226
Grade 7-12 students
received daily
homework help



70%
of Grade 12 students
graduated



9
received \$7000 in post
secondary scholarships
and bursaries



46
adult students progressed
from their first words to
full conversations

Azmara's Story: Building a Future, One Opportunity at a Time

When Azmara and her family arrived in Canada in 2022 as refugees, they came with hope - but very little else.

At IRCOM, they found more than housing. They found a community and a pathway to rebuild their lives.

Upon arriving at IRCOM, Azmara embraced every opportunity. She participated in Community Resource Program workshops and parenting programs, while her children were supported through childcare and after-school programs. IRCOM's whole-family approach created stability; her children built confidence and friendships, while Azmara developed skills and a sense of direction.

Azmara describes IRCOM as being “like a college,” a place where she gained knowledge, life experience,

and confidence. Through the Volunteer Program, she received training, built relationships across cultures, and stepped into a Tenant Leader role, supporting newer tenants on their journeys. Beyond programs, the family became deeply connected to community life through summer outings, cultural events, and Powwow celebrations. These experiences were especially meaningful to Azmara, who felt honoured to learn about Indigenous history, traditions, and connection to the land.

Wraparound supports further helped the family build financial stability. Through Money Management Training, Azmara learned to budget, save, and plan ahead, even setting up RESPs for her children. Through the Greening Program, she joined a community of gardeners while reducing her family food costs.

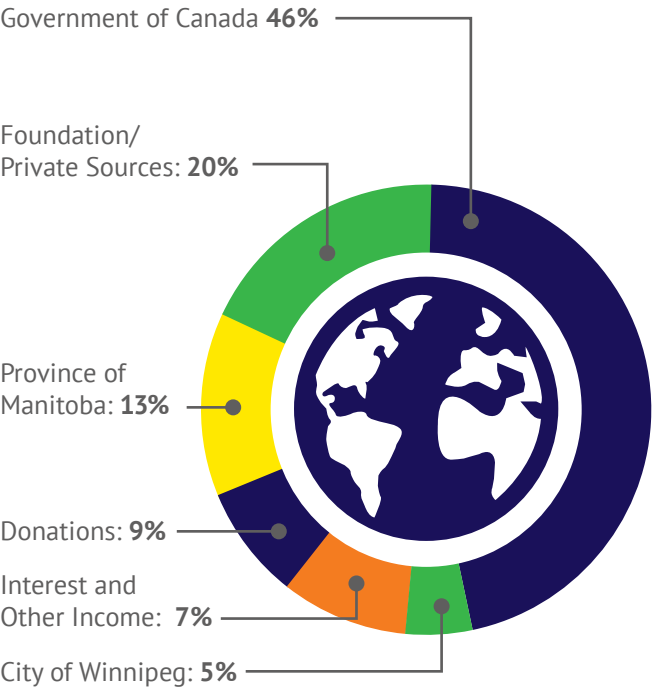


In just three years, the results were extraordinary. In 2025, Azmara and her family moved out of IRCOM housing into a home of their own - a remarkable accomplishment in today's economy.

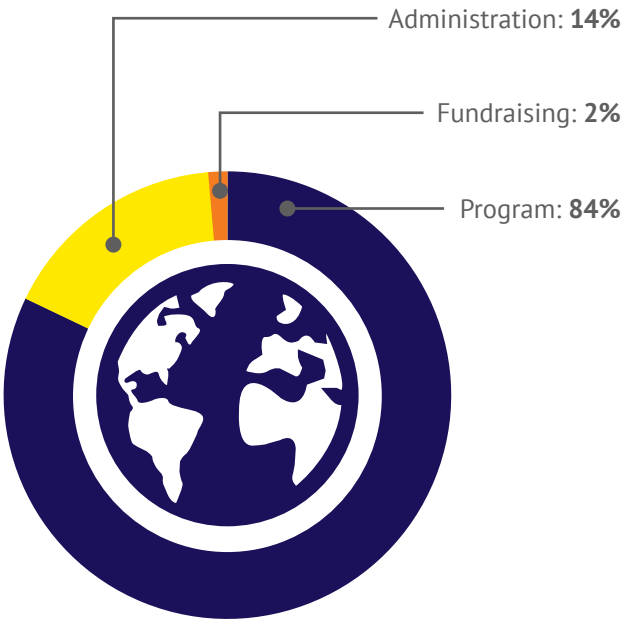
Reflecting on her journey, Azmara shares that IRCOM helped make her dreams possible. Today, she encourages others to embrace every opportunity. Her story shows what's possible when safe housing is combined with holistic, wraparound support for the whole family.

2025 -26 Financials

INCOME (\$3,805,518)



EXPENDITURES (\$3,805,406)



Net income (\$112)

These figures are based on IRCOM's audited financial statements for 2025-26.
A copy of our annual audited financial statements is available upon request.

One-Year Strategic Priorities

On Thursday May 8, 2025, a “1-Year Priority Setting Session” was held with Board members and staff, in lieu of a full strategic planning process. While it was time to renew IRCOM’s Strategic Plan, the Board of Directors decided that setting short-term priorities would provide guidance while waiting for greater stability in the funding, political, and social landscape.

Objective 1:

To successfully hire two newly funded leadership positions in the areas of Finance and Fundraising so that they can help stabilize and grow IRCOM’s funding.

Building a Funding Pipeline That Grows



Objective 2:

To make Common Ground more sustainable through greater reliance on partnerships, while also seeking funding.



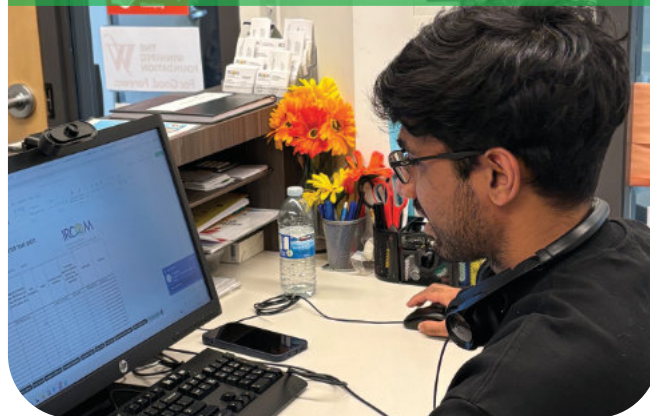
Objective 3:

Guidelines regarding what it means to work at IRCOM and to define IRCOM's work culture.



Objective 4:

To ensure consistent, complete and accurate use of CARMIS, a proprietary data management software, by all staff.



This year's priorities were good ones. We were able to achieve all objectives – we hired our finance and fundraising leads, we secured funding for Common Ground (and strengthened our partnerships), we developed our first Code of Conduct, and we made significant strides in strengthening our data entry and management. This year's priorities served as an excellent bridge to our upcoming strategic planning.



IRCOM's Anti-Racism Statement: IRCOM condemns racism, violence, and injustice against Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC). IRCOM stands in solidarity with our communities against systemic racism in Winnipeg and around the world. IRCOM commits to taking action by looking inward and addressing racism, discrimination, and systemic biases in its own operations. IRCOM encourages staff, partners, funders, and our many supporters to engage in active listening, dialogue, and learning from BIPOC communities' experiences of social and economic exclusion. IRCOM calls upon all individuals to work collectively for justice and to build relationships stemmed in mutual respect and cross-cultural understanding.

Our Journey with IRCOM

The **After School Program** feels just like home! My little brother goes to the Children's program He loves trying all the fun science experiments, and loves making crafts. Every day, he's getting better at reading English! My sister and I go to Homework program most nights. We like it because it helps us with schoolwork and we get to spend time with friends - we feel like we belong! Summer is the best, we get to volunteer, have barbeques, visits museums and parks, and learn about the land from Indigenous teachers. I have made a lot of friends here!

The **Facilities and Tenancies** were the very first people we met at IRCOM, and they made us feel so welcome! Our suite was recently renovated, it feels so comfortable and safe, and we really appreciate our building caretakers- they can fix anything! We are a big family of eight and are grateful IRCOM provided us with a very affordable, four-bedroom apartment. Staff invite us to programs and introduce us to our neighbours and are teaching us about our lease and how to be responsible tenants. Now we have confidence our family will find a good home when it is time for us to move.



Our family had been in Canada less than 6 months when we applied to live at IRCOM



The **Community Resource Program**

staff and interpreter met with us in our home as soon as we moved in. They helped us make a settlement plan – everything is new, but we were able to share our goals and dreams, and every day we get help reach those goals. A life skills worker helped us with daily life - like shopping for groceries or catching the bus. A social worker is helping us find a specialist for our son and helping us understand how the health care system works. Workshops like “Dressing for Winter” and weekly groups like “Women’s Hi-Tea” and “Men’s Roundtable” help us learn about life in Canada. They even take care of our children while we attend programs!

**Settlement
and
integration**

**Wrap-
around
holistic
services**

The **Greening Program**

is a chance for my family and our neighbours to grow food together. This year my family got our first garden plot thanks to IRCOM getting new garden towers. Our whole family participates and it's a joy to be able to share my gardening skills with my children and neighbours. Saving money on groceries also really helps our household budget!

Asset and Capacity Building Programs

taught us everything about money in Canada! A staff who speaks my language helped me apply for benefits and file my taxes. I have also been able to pay off most of my Immigration Loan, meaning I can save more money for my education. I joined the matched savings program to help me save for courses and look forward to building a future for my family here.



The **Volunteer & Community Services Program**

helped me learn about the Canadian workplace. I started volunteering as a tenant leader – which gives me a meaningful role to help the IRCOM community. Now that my English skills are stronger, I am also volunteering in class to help others practice English. I see volunteering as the first step towards employment in Canada.



Community
development,
capacity
building,
empowerment



The **Child Care Program and the ECD Hub** offer safe spaces for our children. I lost my husband so I'm raising my children alone. Both my sons both attend childcare while I go to English classes or attend an evening workshop. I would not be able to attend without this help. My children are learning English in the childcare program, and I am learning in school, so we can practice together at home. I was so lucky to attend workshops on parenting and understanding our children – it's not easy raising them in a new culture, but this program really helps!



The **Newcomer Literacy Initiative**

helps me learn English with other newcomers. The teachers really listen to me, and I like going to half-day classes with IRCOM. My teacher makes it fun, and we use lots of games to help us remember. I am getting more comfortable speaking English. Now I can do things like call the doctor, talk to my child's school, or get directions.



Common Ground, Stronger Voices

I did not know a lot about Canada before I came here. I definitely did not learn about the peoples who lived here originally. When the Common Ground program came to my English class, an Indigenous elder shared her traditional ways of healing and medicine. I saw a lot of similarities with my culture! I wanted to learn more. I signed up for field trips – my favourite was the powwow. My whole family went. The drums were so powerful and the dancers in traditional clothing – amazing! It reminded me of my culture back home. We are all unique but similar!

Nurturing
Indigenous -
Newcomer
Relations

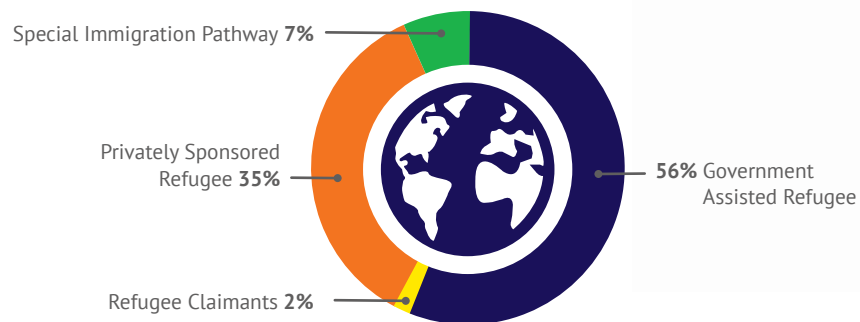
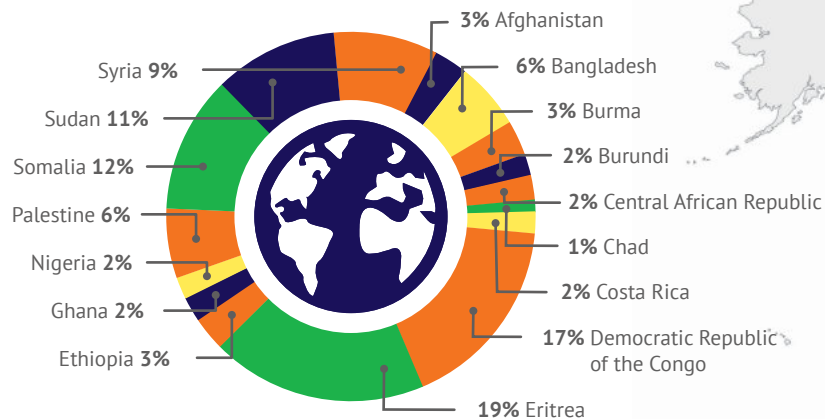
Addressing the Gaps Research Project

I was super excited when they asked me to join the Youth Leadership Group with the Addressing the Gaps healthy relationships program. I get to share my knowledge and experience with the team. It helps me feel like someone is listening to me and I am hopeful that the program will help more youth learn about healthy relationships and preventing violence. Staff delivering the program truly care about us youth and giving us a voice.



Welcome to

Ellen House

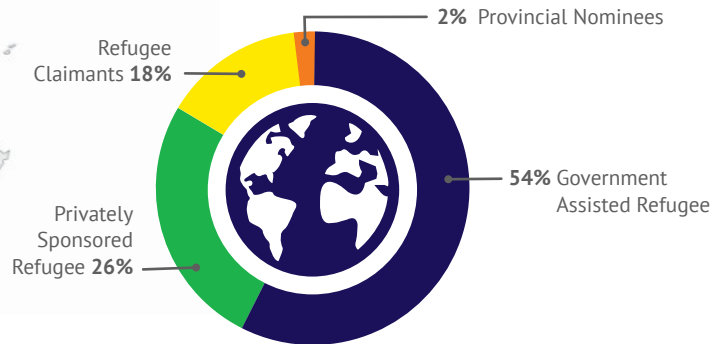
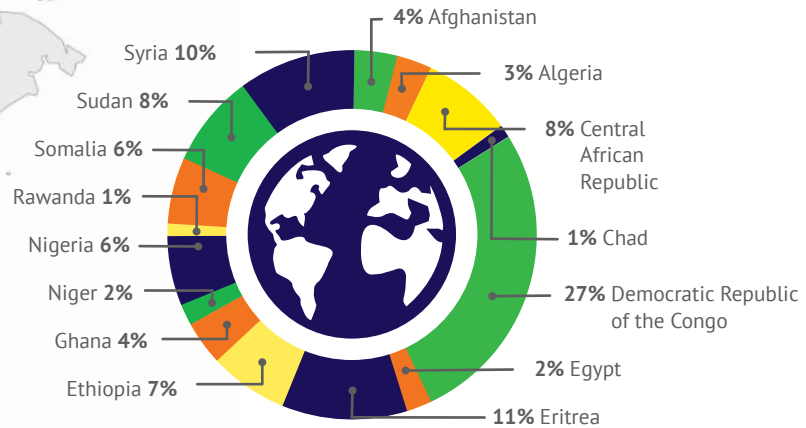


All charts based on tenant demographics for March 2026

IRCOM House!



Isabel House





Facilities and Tenancy Services

IRCOM housing is often the **first point of connection for families**, creating a strong foundation from which all other settlement services and holistic supports can grow. Each day, **our Facilities and Tenancy Services team support more than 550 people across 110 social housing units** at our Ellen and Isabel locations, providing not just housing, but a place where families can rebuild with dignity and confidence.

This year, we welcomed **25 families into our Ellen homes** and **16 families into Isabel**, nearly **160 new individuals** beginning their settlement journey with IRCOM. With support from Manitoba Housing, **eight** units were transformed into refreshed, like-new homes, demonstrating our commitment to high-quality, welcoming spaces. We are especially proud to offer homes that accommodate large families of up to nine people, meeting a critical and unmet need.

We also celebrated **48 families** as they moved on from IRCOM housing, stepping into greater independence and new opportunities.

Our communities remain vibrant and diverse. At Ellen, families from 17 countries speak 15 languages, while at Isabel, families represent 14 countries and speak 13 languages. This is why IRCOM is often called a “mini-United Nations” – we are a true reflection of multiculturalism in Canada.



Before



After



“*We also just want to take a moment to say a huge thank you. IRCOM has been so much more than just a place to live—it's been a community that has supported us in so many ways. We're incredibly grateful for everything, from the kindness of the staff to the sense of belonging we've felt here. This place has truly made a difference in our lives, and we'll always appreciate the time we spent here.”* Hamza



After School Programs (ASP)

Our **After School Programs (ASP)** create a welcoming, inclusive space where children and youth build meaningful relationships while receiving holistic support in their settlement journeys. The rapid growth of our programs speaks to their impact - this year we connected with **309 youth** and **182 children**, nearly doubling our reach.

This year also marked the launch of two exciting partnerships that enriched our programming. **Wise Kid-Netic Energy delivered hands-on science sessions twice a week**, sparking curiosity and a love of learning in our children's program. At the same time, our collaboration with **University of Manitoba's James Burns Leadership Institute brought mentorship opportunities** through the President's Student Leadership Program, empowering youth to grow as confident, capable leaders. We are also proud to welcome a highly experienced Homework and Education for Youth (HEY) Teacher and Liaison, strengthening the academic support available to participants.

Our **soccer program had a record-breaking year**, with teams bringing home **five championships** including two indoor, two outdoor, and the Golden Boy Tournament. These achievements reflect not only athletic skill, but the confidence, teamwork, and resilience our youth continue to develop.

Together, these milestones highlight a year of growth, connection, and opportunity driven by the strength of our community and the young people at its heart.



“ At After School Program, I feel like I [am] at home. I get lots of support with my homework, go to different places and try new things with people who are like me. It makes me feel safe and like I belong.” Program Participant



Newcomer Literacy Initiative

For many newcomers, arriving in Canada means starting over, often with little knowledge of English. Our **Newcomer Literacy Initiative** (NLI) provides a **welcoming first step, offering beginner English classes** that build confidence through real-life learning. Classroom lessons cover areas like going to the doctor, or navigating a grocery store, helping students gain **practical English they can use every day**.

This year marked powerful progress for our students. **Fourteen students advanced from Foundations to CLB 1, and 20 moved from CLB 2 to CLB 3** – milestones that signal growing confidence, independence, and connection. In total, we supported **46 learners**, each with access to on-site childcare just steps from the classroom. This **wraparound support** allows parents to fully engage in learning, knowing their children are safe and cared for in a nurturing environment.

At the National Language Literacy Summit, our team joined a national community of practice to help drive the future of English language literacy. Through two days of collaboration with peers across the country, we contributed to strengthening and advancing how literacy programs are delivered.

NLI is more than a classroom. It's a place where confidence grows, skills take root, and new beginnings come to life.



“ Before I came to English class, I couldn't even greet someone in English. Now I can greet someone, and I know how to reply too.” NLI Student



Child Care Program

Our **Child Care Program (CCP)** removes critical barriers **so families can fully engage in the supports they need to thrive**. By providing free, high-quality care, parents can participate in programs like our Newcomer Literacy Initiative, Community Resource Program, and Asset & Capacity Building programs with confidence, knowing their children are safe and supported. This is especially impactful for households led by one parent, expanding access to opportunities.

This year, **we delivered over 693 childminding sessions and 1,684 hours of care, supporting 147 preschoolers** in a warm, child-led environment that sparks curiosity, connection, and joy. With extended hours from **9am to 9pm**, CCP offers flexibility families need to access services that meet their goals. For many children, it is their first experience with childcare outside the home, building confidence and easing the transition to daycare and school.

Children especially loved our lively dance parties as well as shared playground days that brought families together from our Ellen and Bannatyne locations together - strengthening community across locations and creating lasting connections.



“ *I don't know what I would do to learn English without my child being loved at daycare.”* Parent



Asset and Capacity Building Programs

With the rising cost of living, **financial stability is more than essential, it's transformative.** With support from the Empower Manitoba Network, IRCOM empowers newcomer families with the knowledge, tools, and opportunities to build secure financial futures. Through a wraparound model that includes financial literacy workshops, matched savings programs, and access to important benefits, **we support the entire newcomer community.**

This year, **our impact continued to grow.** Thirty participants advanced through the Immigration Loan Repayment Program, 20 built long-term assets through the Individual Development Account Program, and 80 saved for essential needs like dental care, education, and technology through the Saving Circle Program.

We also helped **918 people file their taxes**, returning over \$8 million in refunds and secured benefits. An additional **328 benefit applications** were completed - more than double last year - while **44** individuals received financial support to obtain critical **ID**. Through ongoing workshops on financial literacy and scam prevention, we continue to equip our community with confidence and knowledge to stay informed, protected, and financially empowered.



“ Because of IRCOM’s ACBP program, I learned about the financial system in Canada. Now I know how to protect myself, and I will never be scammed again. Thank you, IRCOM!” Program Participant



Early Childhood Development Hub

The Early Childhood DevelopmentHub (ECD Hub) is offered in partnership with Freight House Early Learning & Care and offers high-quality, licensed childcare that draw from the Abecedarian Approach, an evidence-based model proven to enhance socio-emotional development among vulnerable children. Through this holistic model, **the Hub supports the healthy growth of young children and promotes school readiness** by nurturing early learning, socialization, and development in a safe, inclusive, and culturally responsive environment.

This year, the ECD Hub provided 23 fully free **licensed daycare spots for preschool children**, enabling parents to pursue employment and educational opportunities with confidence. In addition, **2 emergency respite spaces** provided short-term childcare, a critical support for families dealing with emergencies.

Through programs like **Positive Discipline, Wiggle-Giggle and Munch, Healthy Relationships, Healthy Living and Self-Care, and Cultural Adaptations**, parents are welcomed into supportive spaces where they can build confidence, strengthen their well-being, and connect with others on similar journeys. These programs nurture not only parenting skills, but also a sense of belonging and community. Over the past year, **71 parenting sessions were delivered, with 12 to 28 parents attending each session**, an encouraging reflection of strong engagement and the meaningful impact these gatherings have within our community.



“ I love IRCOM Programs... I admire the supportive staff and feel like I have a family here. IRCOM is my support system in Canada and I feel less alone, these programs are beneficial to me and I enjoy attending as much as I can.”
Asma Ali



Community Resource Program

It was a **year of meaningful impact for the Community Resource Program** which supports tenants to set and achieve their settlement goals by providing accessible, responsive, and holistic services – from case management and life skills education to referrals, crisis prevention and community outings and events. Interpretation and childcare services further reduce barriers, ensuring more families can fully participate in programs.

Over the past year, the team delivered **2,024 home visits, 7,034 drop-in services, and 603 life skills assessments**, alongside a range of outings, group programming, referrals, and opportunities to build strong community connections. We hosted **42 workshops** on topics such as family sponsorship, housing transitions, winter preparedness, driver licensing, and healthcare. The majority of IRCOM tenants participated!

Among the families we served, **51 received intensive support for complex needs, and 24 children with disabilities and medical needs received supports and one-on-one care**, ensuring access to critical and specialized services. We also supported **173 tenants to access on-site healthcare** through vaccine clinics offered in partnership with the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority.

A special thank you to our tenants, who actively contributed to community well-being through tenant leadership groups, community consultations, neighbourhood cleanups, and participation in neighbourhood watch initiatives.



“When we first came, everything was new and overwhelming for our family. IRCOM supported us in ways that helped us feel stable and confident. Our children are happier, doing better in school, and we feel part of a community.”
CRP Participant



Truth & Reconciliation: Common Ground Program

Common Ground, Stronger Voices represents more than a decade of **building bridges between newcomer and Indigenous communities** – work grounded in a deep and ongoing commitment to truth and reconciliation. Guided by Indigenous leadership, knowledge and partnership, this initiative creates space for newcomers and staff to learn from, with and alongside Indigenous communities. Through these relationships, Indigenous voices and perspectives are meaningfully woven into the IRCOM community.

Despite limited funding this year, the program continued to have strong reach and engaged families in **20 Indigenous-led activities**. One highlight was partnering with **11 organizations to bring 650 newcomers to the Manito Ahbee Powwow!** We are grateful for trusted partnerships including the Building Bridges Project, the Freight House Leadership Circle as well as our role in supporting the Truth and Reconciliation Day event in Central Park.

We also shared this work nationally as part of the Canadian Council for Refugees consultation, co-facilitating a workshop titled “Building Common Ground with Indigenous partners from across the country” Through this, we continue to model the importance of newcomer-serving organizations advancing reconciliation by following Indigenous leadership and building authentic, accountable partnerships.



“ *[I learned] that we may all come from different parts of the world but some of us may share similar stories and culture and that we are to stand in solidarity regardless of our race and ethnicity.”* Program Participant



Greening Program

The **Greening Program** is growing more than food – it's growing connection, culture and resilience. The program continues to create meaningful opportunities for tenants to cultivate fresh, nutritious foods while reconnecting with cultural traditions. Our growers are planting familiar crops, sharing knowledge across generations and adapting practices to a new climate, all while discovering new foods along the way.

This year marked an exciting expansion. What began with 16 garden spaces at our Ellen site grew to include **20 new garden towers** made possible through a new and exciting partnership. In total, **33 families, representing approximately 165 individuals, took part**, increasing access to healthy food while strengthening community ties.

Together, growers harvested **nearly 210 pounds of fresh produce!** In a time of rising food costs, this translated into real relief, saving **families saving an estimated \$115 per month on groceries** for the harvest season. Participation more than doubled this year, with 110 additional pounds of food grown compared to last year.

But the true impact goes beyond the harvest. The Greening Program brings people together – creating space for neighbours to connect, for families to learn and grow side by side, and for knowledge to flow across cultures and through generations. It fosters pride, belonging and a strong sense of community – one garden at a time.





Volunteer and Community Services Program

Community is at the heart of IRCOM, and our volunteers bring that vision to life everyday. Our **Volunteer & Community Services Program** has volunteers **supporting programs from 9am to 9pm!** This year, **174 dedicated volunteers** and **21 practicum students** contributed **5151 hours**, valued at over \$84,000 worth of their time and talent. Our amazing volunteers are strengthening our programs and deepening community connection.

This program connects **both community members and tenants through meaningful volunteer opportunities to contribute and grow.** For many tenants, volunteering is a **powerful first step toward entering the Canadian workforce.** They build skills and confidence that support their journey toward future employment and we are proud to be part of that journey.

We are very committed to celebrating those who give their time and energy so generously. This year, we hosted **three appreciation events** to recognize their enormous contributions and impact. We were also excited to collaborate with the Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations, Regional Connections, and Volunteer Manitoba to host our **first shared professional development event for volunteer coordinators.** This inspiring day built expertise, strengthened sector partnership and set the foundation for future learning and collaboration.

Together, our volunteers are helping build a stronger, more enriched and connected community.



“When I first came, I didn't know where to start. Volunteering helped me feel connected and capable. I never thought I would be working in childcare, but now I love it and want to keep learning more., and my colleague volunteers. As a teacher by profession, I had a good time all the class interacting with learners.” K, Tenant & Former Volunteer



Research and Evaluation at IRCOM

This year, IRCOM took a major step forward with the **Addressing the Gaps project – an innovative, culturally and community informed initiative supporting newcomer and racialized refugee youth to build healthy relationships and prevent teen dating violence.** With Dr. Maisha Syeda's new curriculum, a new partnership that also included the Thunder Bay District Health Unit, and Gode Katembo, **began implementing this new workshop series** grounded in lived experience and community insight. From the outset, youth and partner organizations helped guide the work, ensuring it is relevant, responsive, and rooted in real-world youth experiences and perspectives.

We are excited to now be delivering the first 7-session curriculum. In collaboration with N.E.E.D.S, Sports Without Boundaries, and Resilia Community Wellness Centre, six cohorts of youth have already participated, engaging in powerful conversations, building skills, and gaining tools to navigate relationships with confidence and care.

Ongoing feedback remains central to this work. Youth participants and community organizations continue to shape and strengthen the program, ensuring it evolves in responsive and impactful ways. We are especially **grateful to the Youth Leadership Group**, whose members serve as dedicated advisors to the project.

Promoting healthy relationships is essential for all youth, but especially for newcomer youth who may be navigating new social norms, cultural expectations, and barriers to support, making culturally responsive programs like this critical to building confidence, connection, and safety.



“When working with youth, it's always about connection before content... you have to focus on building connection with them first.” Gode Katembo, Consultant on Engaging Men and Boys in Gender-Based Violence

Board of Directors

Executive Committee:

Beyen Embafrash
President

Diana (Dee) dela Cruz
Vice-President

Joan Presto
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Left to right, directors shown: Surafel Kuchem, Correy Myco, Jennifer Monteburno, Ivy Mannil, Beyen Embafrash, Maryam Razzaq, Diana dela Cruz

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Jennifer Monteburno

Laura Marquez
Maryam Razzaq

Surafel Kuchem
Thomas Miles (ex officio)

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Beyen Embafrash
(Chair)
Diana (Dee) dela Cruz

Ivy Mannil
Joan Presto

Good-bye!

With heartfelt thanks, we recognize **Beyen Embafrash**, for his many years of dedicated service to IRCOM, including the past two years as **Board President**.

Beyen always showed up for IRCOM at IRCOM events, in relationship with tenants and youth, and in seeking connections and resources to strengthen our community. Beyen, we thank you for your generosity, leadership, and deep commitment to newcomer families and IRCOM. You have made a lasting impact!

Hello!

We welcome back **Ivy Mannil**, who has had a longstanding connection with our IRCOM community, going back 7+ years including being our president in 2022-2023.



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IRCOM Thanks Our Amazing Volunteers and Students!

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Our sincere thanks go to every donor.
Those listed above are just a few among many who make this work possible.

We are deeply grateful...

Because of you IRCOM's work is possible.

Your generosity and commitment create real, lasting impact - helping our newest Canadians adapt and settle well, build skills, find jobs, start businesses, and create new beginnings, all while strengthening our economy and communities.

We are deeply grateful for your trust and partnership. Your support makes a meaningful difference.

IRCOM is a registered charity (128429537 RR 0001). Donations can be made directly or through trusted partners such as CanadaHelps, United Way Winnipeg, The Winnipeg Foundation, Benevity, and Abundance Canada.

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We wish to extend our deep appreciation to Cultural Advisor **Strong Eagle John Houle** and Knowledge Keepers **Clayton Sandy** and **Joe Thompson** for their guidance and partnership in helping IRCOM move forward on our journey of truth and reconciliation.



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Immigrant and Refugee
Community Organization of Manitoba

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IRCOM House Isabel
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