



From this . . .

Oasis staff and volunteer serving food bank guests before . . . and during the pandemic. Photos courtesy Erika Abele

. . . to this.

---

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DURING THE PANDEMIC

### An update from Oasis-Dufferin Community Centre, Toronto

*Did you know that Canadian Baptist Women of Ontario and Quebec was a founding supporter of the Oasis-Dufferin Community Centre (Oasis)? live magazine spoke at length with Erika Abele, director of women's programs at Oasis, who expressed gratitude for your support and spoke fondly of past executive directors who have personally encouraged her leadership over the years. In our conversation, Erika shared how Oasis has adapted some of its core ministries during COVID-19. Here are some highlights.*

#### **Food bank**

For those who had phones and ability, appointments were set up and with the help of ministry partners, Oasis began delivering food to several seniors and guests with disabilities.

With social distancing rules in effect, food drop-ins were now scheduled for three hours at a time. This was no small feat: Oasis' food bank serves 190 families a week and the socially-distanced line often extended for over a block.

Several needs surfaced among food bank guests— all taken care of by Oasis staff. New Canadians without coats received them. They held a

## CONNECT TO MISSION

drive for women's hygiene products and tucked pamphlets on domestic violence inside food bags. Weekly Tuesday night dinners switched to become take-out meals.

### Counselling

Counselling continued via phone and secure online appointments. Oasis' counselling outreach serves an already stressed population including refugees who have suffered trauma and COVID-19 has increased mental health challenges.

Erika has discovered that retention has actually been higher online—as fewer appointments were cancelled because of babysitting issues or needing public transportation. Erika plans to continue at least some sessions online, even after COVID.

As Erika notes, there is a mercy in God's timing. Just last year, she finished a masters degree in social work and additional specialized training for treating anxiety and depression. ■

---

## A WINDOW ON LATIN AMERICA

### A prayer for peace in Latin America

*We continue to pray for our prayer partners, the Latin American Baptist Women Union (UFBAL):*

*Argentina*

*Bolivia, Brazil*

*Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica*

*Cuba (Occidental), Cuba (Oriental)*

*Dominican Republic*

*Ecuador, El Salvador*

*Guatemala*

*Honduras*

*Mexico*

*Nicaragua*

*Panama, Paraguay, Peru*

*Uruguay*

*Venezuela*

*Hispanic Baptist women in New Jersey, New York and*

*Hispanic Baptist women of Texas.*

O GOD OF JUSTICE

We pray for safety, wisdom and peace of mind for migrants who are fleeing from intimidation, threats and violence in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala.

O GOD OF ABUNDANCE

We pray for creativity, resourcefulness and opportunity for migrants who are leaving their homes in Mexico because their lands and traditional ways of life can no longer sustain them.

O GOD OF HOSPITALITY

Give us a willingness to accompany our brothers and sisters, walking with them in their joys and struggles and committing ourselves to sharing your love, justice and shalom with all those we encounter.

Amen. ■

*Sourced from [mcccanada.ca/stories](https://mcccanada.ca/stories)*