
A SPECIAL THANKS TO BETTY & ADOLFO

Twenty-three years ago, Betty and Adolfo Puricelli, along with their three children, arrived in Toronto to provide a ministry to the many Spanish-speaking newcomers in the city. Adolfo recommended that the programme be holistic and person-centred to help displaced persons deal with the trauma and losses they had experienced, both in escaping their war-torn Latin American homelands, and in adapting to their new country.

A couple of years later, the ministry had multiplied into two independent, but related ministries. First, the Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto (known as the New Life Centre) was established as a charitable, non-profit refugee and immigrant settlement agency, with board representation from local Mennonite churches, the greater Mennonite Conference and the Mennonite Central Committee. Funding grew to include both government and Mennonite-related sources. The Puricelli's original vision was that those newcomers who expressed an interest in a faith community would be directed to a local church. However, some of these newcomers requested that an Anabaptist Spanish-speaking faith community be formed under the pastoral care of Betty and Adolfo. This faith community has now become the Toronto Mennonite New Life Church.

From operating from the Puricelli's rented house in the early years, these two ministries have grown and now both are owner-partners of the 1774 Queen Street East building together with the Toronto United Mennonite Church.

Late in 2005, Betty and Adolfo announced their decision to retire from the Mennonite New Life Centre as soon as the Board could hire a new Executive Director. Betty's retirement occurred in early spring and she has spent the last four months in her homeland of Argentina. Adolfo retired in early summer, also returning to Argentina to celebrate their youngest daughter's wedding. Upon his return, he generously provided transition support to our new Executive Director Tanya Chute Molina. But retirement doesn't come without strings, as both Betty and Adolfo continue in their pastoral roles with the New Life Church.

What an incredible legacy has been created! The Mennonite New Life Centre has an excellent reputation as a caring, holistic, person-centre social service agency as a result of the vision, direction and leadership of Betty and Adolfo. They have led the organization in providing services beyond what is expected in a newcomers settlement centre. It is their creativity, vision and their caring approach to all, combined with ongoing financial support from churches, which has allowed the New Life Centre to go beyond government funded services and to develop its reputation.

Betty and Adolfo, we offer you our sincere thanks for building a ministry that really does make a difference in providing support and services to newcomers. We acknowledge the many personal and family sacrifices you have made and thank you for your trust, confidence and support as the New Life Centre moves into its post-founder generation. We wish you all the best in your retirement.

“Board of New Life Centre”
