



## INSIDE MATTHEW HOUSE

An update for the supporters, friends & volunteers of Matthew House Toronto



*Colombian former resident Andres, second from right.*

### Olympic Dreams

On a cold evening in February 2010, our Matthew House residents gathered around the dining room table for the weekly house meeting. Hoping to provide an encouraging focus, each resident was asked to imagine returning in 10 years to share what they had accomplished. What were their dreams for the future? Two people hoped to start their own businesses, another to secure a job in his chosen profession. Marta, a mom from Colombia, also shared the dream of her 11-year-old son, Andres, who was too engrossed in watching the Winter Olympics on television to join the conversation at the table. No one took it seriously when she said that Andres' dream was to win a gold medal for Canada in speed skating.

However Andres has pursued his Olympic dream with determination since then. He recalls, "the Canadian speed skaters' triumphs at the Vancouver Olympics really did inspire me. I used to do inline skating in Colombia but it is not an Olympic sport yet. When I saw the ice skaters, I thought to myself, that is what I could do—speed skate for Canada!"

Today Andres is a member of the Toronto Speed Skating club and a serious competitor in both speed skating (ice) and inline skating (land): at last summer's national championship for inline skating, he won the bronze medal in the junior division and on ice he is among the top five fastest regionally, ready to move on to the provincial level of competition. He is an amazingly focused and accomplished young athlete with serious aspirations to compete at the highest levels. This summer he will be volunteering at the Pan Am games. Based on the intensity of his focus, we would not be surprised to see Andres on the podium for Canada someday, a dream that first took shape at Matthew House.



## Thank you!

Thank you to everyone who joined us on February 22 for our first Winterfest event in Trinity Bellwoods Park. We had a lot of fun skating, snowshoeing, building snow men and making maple taffy on snow. Many people contributed by donating skates, snowshoes and treats as well as coming to help show our residents how to enjoy a Canadian winter. Our aspiring Olympic athlete, Andres from Colombia, treated us to a demonstration of his speed skating skills. What a source of inspiration for others who were ice skating for the first time!

## Did You Know?

In 2014 Matthew House helped 72 refugee claimants from 22 different countries. We gave them a welcoming place to stay, assistance with refugee claims, emotional support and help in finding permanent lodgings.

## Get involved!



### Save the date

On Wednesday, June 10 at Hot Docs Cinema we will be holding a movie night fundraiser—a great way to introduce friends to the work of Matthew House. Stay tuned for more details and information about purchasing tickets.



### Lace up your running shoes

With warmer weather just around the corner, it's time to start training! The Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon, Half marathon and 5 km will be on Sunday, October 18. You can walk or run with Team Matthew House and be a part of our biggest fundraiser of the year. Check our website for details.



### Volunteer

If you would like to find out more about helping out at Matthew House, please visit our website and click on the Participate tab. You can also sign up to receive electronic newsletters in the future!

#### Please make all cheques payable to:

Matthew House Refugee Reception Services Toronto  
981 Dundas Street West  
Toronto, ON, M6J 1W4  
(416) 364-8287

[www.matthewhouse.ca](http://www.matthewhouse.ca)  
Charitable No. 89115 2944 RR001

**"I was a stranger and you welcomed me..." Matthew 25:35**