

Phyllis Ortiz, Founder

Phyllis Brunton Ortiz has been a Canadian missionary with Baptist Women of Ontario and Quebec since March 1, 1994. She founded the Oasis Dufferin Community Centre, located at Dufferin Street Baptist Church. Born in an Ottawa hospital, Phyllis grew up near the Ottawa Valley towns of Vernon and Osgoode and graduated from Ottawa Teachers' College. She accepted Christ at a Youth for Christ rally when she was 18, and was baptized at Bethany Baptist Church, Toronto, while working toward her Bachelor of Religious Education at Ontario Bible College (now Tyn-dale). From 1970-1975 she served as Canadian Baptist missionary in Bolivia, where she met and married Dr. Sigfrido Ortiz. She taught in the American co-operative schools in Cochabamba and La Paz from 1976-1987. In Bolivia she completed a Master of Arts in social sciences from Azusa Pacific University, California. The Ortiz family moved to Canada in 1987 when Sigfrido became pastor of the Hispanic congregation at Dufferin St. Baptist Church. Although the English congregation disbanded in 1993, the Hispanic congregation has continued to meet and grow under his ministry.



E-mail:
p_ortiz@rogers.com

While serving on the Outreach Committee of Baptist Women in the early 1990's Phyllis found herself asking, "How can we more effectively minister to the people on our doorstep?" She felt the Lord was giving her the vision of a Christian community centre that would help meet the material, social, spiritual, and emotional needs of immigrants and refugees. The Oasis Dufferin Community Centre opened its doors to needy Spanish-speaking people in January 1994.

Today, people from many countries and linguistic backgrounds come to Oasis for the Wednesday food bank, cashier, bank teller, and computer training; referrals for help with legal and refugee problems; and counselling on a variety of spiritual and personal issues. Some come to Christ through the witness of Oasis staff and volunteers; others grow in faith through the centre's small groups and Bible studies.

Phyllis describes the Oasis Dufferin Community Centre as a Christ-focused community for people, mostly immigrants, who have no community.