

# OPERATION MANNA



## *A Brief History*

In order to properly tell the story of Operation Manna, we must first take a quick look at how Diaconal Ministries Canada got its start. Diaconal Ministries Canada was formally constituted in 2001, after a group of leaders from various Canadian Diaconal Conferences came together and dreamed about merging their Conferences to form an “umbrella” organization that would oversee the training of deacons right across Canada. (To read the full history of Diaconal Ministries Canada, [click here](#).)

Up until 2001, World Renew (CRWRC at the time) had worked very closely with diaconates on both sides of the border, having direct conversations with deacons and speaking heavily into the work they were doing. In 1964, the All Ontario Diaconal Conference (AODC) began to assist CRWRC with food and aid in Korea. At the time, the offering was named “Operation Manna”, which resonated with the primarily Dutch demographic in the CRC at that time. *(In March of 1945, as WW2 was drawing to a close, the number of people who had starved to death in The Netherlands was around twenty thousand (or more) and so the Dutch government asked the Allies for help. After weeks of negotiating with the Germans, the Allies were granted permission to drop food from planes to Dutch civilians. On April 29<sup>th</sup> the Royal Air Force dropped the first load of supplies and food parcels in what was called “Operation Manna”.)*

This international partnership with CRWRC spread to other countries and continued until 1996. As it grew, the recipients of the offering also began to vary, with Salem Christian Mental Health Association, now known as Shalem Mental Health Network, receiving support in 1965 and 1967. During 1989-1990, ownership and oversight of the Operation Manna program still lied with CRWRC. At this time, the AODC would request funding from the Operation Manna program, with approval for funding coming from the US Board of CRWRC, since it was a bi-national, joint venture.

It was during the late ‘80’s and early ‘90’s that a more diverse group of para-church organizations serving their communities across Canada began receiving support from Operation Manna and this has continued until today.

When the Operation Manna Program became an official program of Diaconal Ministries Canada, it’s purpose was to “engage Christian Reformed Churches in community ministries

that seek to bring about **sustainable** change in individuals and communities experiencing significant needs.” Because of this, many of the early Operation Manna partners are still growing and thriving today! Check out [Indwell](#), formerly called Homestead Christian Care, who was an OM Partner in 2001 and 2005, and who continues to impact communities by providing (truly) affordable housing and more. [Beginnings Family Services](#) was an OM partner back in 1989 and it has grown to four locations across Ontario! In 2004, we partnered with [The ARK](#) in Halifax, NS, a ministry that continues to serve street-involved and homeless youth. [Manitoba House](#) in Winnipeg, MB, was a former partner from 2002 and still today they provide safe and fun programs, plus nutritious meals, to neighbourhood kids ages 5-12. And this is only a few of our honourable mentions!

*We hope this background information was helpful!*

