

The Canadian Red Cross Society

The Canadian Red Cross Society had a strong presence at Pier 21. It maintained a nursery adjacent to the Social Service room, where the majority of the volunteer organizations operated. Many newcomers to Canada can recall the kindness and caring of the Red Cross volunteers. In their grey uniforms, they would seek out the tired and the weary and invite them into the nursery for some much needed rest and relaxation. The nursery had cribs for babies to nap in, cots for mothers to rest on, small tables for children to colour on, plenty of coffeepots and even bathtubs for clean up. While the parents rested, one of the many Red Cross volunteers would wash, change or feed the children and either settle them in for a nap or keep them amused until it was time for their train to depart. Often the other organizations would direct immigrants to the Red Cross nursery, which quickly became a haven to those wishing a break from the long journey. The nursery was staffed by up to 20 volunteers at a time who operated it around the clock. Red Cross workers, like the many other volunteers of Pier 21, did not limit themselves to only nursery duties as they also dealt with lost baggage, fielding questions about Canada and its customs and explaining Immigration forms and proceedings.

