

Impact Report 2020 - 2021









Services and Programs

Despite the hardships and barriers brought about by the pandemic in 2020-2021, The Neighbourhood Group Community Services helped **41,856 vulnerable people** in priority Toronto neighbourhoods through virtual and on-site services.



Child Care

10 provincially-licensed child care centres provided safe and enriching care for up to **1,000 children**, ages newborn to 12 years. Child care centres include:

- Bellevue
- Canoe Landing
- Harbourfront
- King Edward
- Lord Lansdowne
- Ontario
- · Our Lady of Lourdes
- Waterfront
- Winchester
- Yonge & Sheppard

• Children & Youth Services

Drop-in, academic and employment support, mental health, arts, recreational, mentorship, advocacy and justice programs helped **2,004 children** and youth transition through the teen years. Programs include:

- After School Programs
- Extra Judicial Sanctions/Measures
- Game Changers Restorative Justice
- Integrated Model of Care

- Kensington Art Academy
- Newcomer Youth Drop-in
- Summer Camps
- Youth Arcade Drop-in
- Youth Awoken
- Youth Outreach Workers
- Youth Recreation & Leadership
- Weekend Youth Club

Community Development

Bringing community members together through counselling, education, support and advocacy helped **2,492 people** address issues affecting them and their neighbourhoods.

Programs include:

- Community Dining
- Community Gardens
- Teesdale Food Bank
- Community Safety, Crisis
 Response and Intervention
- Community Development & Social Action
- Easy-Access Voicemail
- Financial Advocacy and Literacy
- SmartCash

• Conflict Resolution & Training

Community and workplace mediation, conflict management, public workshops, consulting and training helped **1,670 people** resolve conflicts, and prevented future conflict from escalating. Programs include:

- Community Mediation
- Workplace Mediation and Training
- Mediation & Conflict Resolution Training

• **Employment Services**

Programs, workshops, training, resource centres, individual counselling and job development helped **2,448 job seekers**, **newcomers**, **at-risk youth and people with mental health issues** prepare for and find employment. Programs include:

- Canada Ontario Job Grant
- Connections
- Employment Service
- Moving Forward
- New Knowledge, New Steps
- Opportunity Knocks
- PEPTalks
- Youth Job Connection
- Youth Works

Housing & Housing Development

Supportive housing, eviction prevention, case management and wraparound services helped **388 people** maintain residences and their independence.

- · Art Manuel House
- Cecelia Murphy Building
- · Community Link House
- · Dovercourt Place
- Jean Dudley House
- · L.L. Odette Place
- · Macey Place
- Norm Houghton Complex
- O'Connor House

Independent Living & Seniors

Personal Support Workers, nutritious food, recreational services and general assistance helped **9,424 seniors and adults** living with physical and/or mental health challenges live independently and with dignity. Programs include:

- · Adult Day Programs
- Cantonese, Korean and Mandarin programs
- Client Intervention and Assistance
- Community Personal Care Worker Program
- Congregate Dining
- Friendly Visiting
- High Intensity Support in the Home

- Home at Last
- Meals on Wheels
- Seniors Active Living Centres
- Stroke Survivors
- Transportation and Toronto RIDE

Newcomer Services

English classes, workshops and settlement support helped **4,243 newcomers** successfully adapt to new life in Canada. Programs include:

- Beginners Computer Skills Program
- English Conversation Circles
- Healthy Lifestyle Workshops
- LINC & ESL English Classes
- Perinatal Settlement Support Services
- Rainbow Connect
- Women's Program

• Trustee Hub

Mentoring, financial and administrative assistance helped **43 community groups** fulfill their mandates to improve social and economic justice. Some groups include:

- Afghan Youth Engagement and Development Initiative
- Direct Your Life
- Inspirations Studio
- · Rise in STEM
- · Sis to Sis
- · Youth United

Urban Health & Homelessness Services

Holistic case management, harm reduction and poverty reduction services improved the mental and physical health of **13,305 people** who are living below the poverty line, including people who are homeless or marginally-housed, and those who have mental health and substance use issues. Programs include:

- · Corner Drop-in
- Corner Drop-in Employment Program
- HIV & AIDS Prevention
- Kensington Market Overdose Prevention Site & Harm Reduction Services
- Partners for Access and Identification (PAID)
- Peer Leadership Centre
- · Safe Seniors Supportive Housing
- Street Survivors
- Toronto Community Addiction Team (TCAT)
- Vulnerable Seniors Housing Support

In 2020-2021, we helped **41,856** vulnerable people in Toronto communities



Leadership Report

This year, our neighbours, staff, peer leaders, donors, Board members, volunteers and friends have all faced a true test and prevailed. With our vision of an equitable and vibrant community, we have maintained life-saving services for seniors, children and people who are homeless, while creating new emergency and permanent initiatives around hunger, unemployment, mental health, shelter, supportive housing, health care and child care. We also introduced important new virtual services, such as on-line job fairs and peer crisis helplines.

With this service transformation comes reflection.

It has been humbling to see the pandemic spotlight the geographic and racial inequities in our community, inequities that neighbourhood houses were founded to challenge and change. The Neighbourhood Group believes in changing the systems that perpetuate inequity.

We will continue to improve our effort to become a more equitable organization as an employer, service provider and advocate. To that end, our Board of Directors is proud to highlight community safety and alternatives to policing as our top advocacy issue for the year.

Please enjoy the examples of resilience...first-hand stories of Brendalee, Rob, Marai and so many more. Thank you for joining us in this essential community-building work all over our city.



Our Mission

The Neighbourhood Group Community Services serves people at every stage of their lives, promotes independence and dignity, and engages the skills and talents of our neighbours to build a vibrant community.



Bill SinclairPresident and Chief
Executive Officer



Samira Viswanathan *Co-Chair Board of Directors*



Sonia Yung Co-Chair Board of Directors



Liane Regendanz: A life of compassion, community & opportunity

It is with overwhelming sadness that we write of the passing of Liane Regendanz, former Executive Director of St. Stephen's Community House. Liane's impact on St. Stephen's and all the people who came through our doors was profound.

For more than 30 years, Liane was integral to St. Stephen's, and the surrounding community. She strove for equity and opportunity, first as manager of the Youth Employment Centre, then for 18 years as Executive Director.

Liane's leadership and passion for social justice spurred incredible innovation and growth including:

- The Augusta Centre Capital Campaign to renovate 260 Augusta Avenue for our Urban Health, Youth and Newcomer programs, as well as the development of the onsite L.L. Odette Centre supportive housing
- Opening of the Senior's Activity Centre, Waterfront Child Care Centre,
 North York Newcomer Centre and North York Conflict Resolution office

She was a pioneer of youth employment initiatives and innovative youth programming, the moving force behind L.L. Odette Supportive Housing, and a real community activist, serving as past Chair of Toronto Neighbourhood Centres. On June 9, the City of Toronto issued a condolence motion and held a moment of silence in memory of Liane.

Liane's impact on the people who worked with her was just as great, and not just as a mentor. Her tireless energy inspired all of us to go the extra mile. Liane's warmth and compassion helped her connect with the people we serve, and demonstrated to everyone that we are all equal.

Oliva Chow once described Liane as a force of nature: Liane was driven to improve the lives of the city's most vulnerable people. As a testament to her dedication and passion, in 2012 Liane was the first recipient of the Frances Lankin Award, given to a person who made significant contributions to the Toronto non-profit sector. When she retired in 2015, a fund for youth was named in her honour: Liane's Fund for Youth Opportunity.

In her retirement, Liane lived life to the fullest, fueling her passions and seeing the world. That world, and the world of all those she touched, is forever lessened without her.













Courting awareness

Through mediation, Lawrence gained an understanding of the harm caused by his actions

When the police came to Lawrence's door for the third time, his worry was about the humiliation he would face after being arrested and charged. His thoughts didn't stray to the harm he had done to Marcy or her family. That changed after the Crown Attorney referred the case to our Community Mediation team.

Since 2012, the Crown Attorney offices across Toronto have saved time and resources by diverting cases through our mediation service. But it's a win for more than the legal system: Crown Attorneys understand that people gain more effective, and long-lasting solutions than the court can provide. Through mediation, participants gain a free, confidential, and mutually-agreed upon resolution that avoids the court.

They also improve their understanding of the effect their actions may have on others. For Lawrence, this resonated deeply.

"Because of mediation, I've increased my awareness of how I need to be sensitive to other people's feelings, and how my actions could affect, or even harm, other people. I'm committed to respecting people's personal boundaries.

"When determining how to act in the future, I'll ask myself how my behavior could be perceived by someone who I don't know. This will help me avoid causing discomfort or fear of any kind."



Yonge & Sheppard Child Care Centre

Warmth, compassion and care

Sarah found the perfect child care at our Yonge & Sheppard Centre

Toronto is the fastest growing city in North America. But ensuring quality child care grows at the same rate is a problem. At The Neighbourhood Group, we strive to keep pace with the growing need. In the last few years, we opened three additional child care locations: Canoe Landing, Our Lady of Lourdes, and our latest, at the Yonge & Sheppard Centre. Quality child care is essential for developmental growth of children, parents' peace of mind, and for the economy by maintaining the workforce.

Our vibrant Yonge & Sheppard Child Care Centre serves the rapid expansion in Willowdale. Helping parents with infants, toddlers and preschoolers, the Centre is conveniently located on the subway line, making it easy for working parents who commute. But for Sarah, it's the staff that are key.

"My four-year-old daughter, Charlee, has attended Yonge & Sheppard since it opened, and it's been wonderful on all fronts. The dedicated staff and director have been amazing. They are warm, compassionate and very hard working. You can tell they genuinely care for each and every child, which is extremely important to a parent.

"During COVID-19, the Centre has been diligently following the regulations and guidelines from Toronto Public Health. As a parent of a high-risk child, that makes me feel comfortable sending her five days a week.

"The Yonge & Sheppard Child Care Centre is hands down the best child care in the area. I'd recommend it to any family who is looking for wonderful child care!"



Our ten provincially-licensed child care centres help up to 1,000 children thrive with early childhood education and play-based learning





Necessity is the mother of all invention

Newly-developed modular supportive housing helps people like Megan successfully transition from homelessness to supportive housing

Constructed as part of Toronto's HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan, the 100 units of modular supportive housing on Macey Ave. and Dovercourt Rd. help people successfully transition from homelessness to supportive housing. Together, Cota Health and The Neighbourhood Group provide 24-hour holistic, on-site support, including harm reduction, crisis counselling, financial trusteeship, and referrals for health care, income support and employment opportunities.

Megan knows just how far that support can go.

"Hi, my name is Megan and I am a single 37-year-old female. I have been addicted to drugs on and off for over 15 years, 10 years of which being opioid abuse. I have been through detox treatment and got onto suboxone. I have self-medicated a lot. Once overcoming opioids, I moved on to cocaine and found myself lost. I have had a lot of trauma and abuse in my past relationships. I have depression and anxiety as well.

"I had applied for housing through Access Point at The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. Seven years later, at a very low point in my life with nowhere to turn, I got a call from my Toronto Community Addiction Team worker with the opportunity to come live in The Neighbourhood Group's modular housing. I was quite scared to move here because it was something new and different. In my past I've had a history of being sober and clean, but since

moving here, I've been able to be clean and keep up with my sobriety. I'm starting a new chapter in my life being able rebuild relationships with family and friends, and beginning the healing I need.

"Having the stability of a roof over my head has saved me, and I've come to realize that I am in a safe space where it helps me think of the things I would like to do. While living in modular housing, I have blossomed and been able to set some goals for myself which include, living fully independently, finding a good job, and being a good daughter, wife and person altogether. With the support of the staff and everyone being so welcoming and giving me so much help, respect and no judgement, I have the opportunity to be able to give back to my community, remain sober, take part in The Neighbourhood Group's Peer Program, and just continue to keep my life on track.

"It's amazing to see all of the hard work the staff have done to make everyone in this building feel so welcome, and the opportunities that they have given all of us to have another chance at changing our lives for the better. I'm very thankful for the opportunity I have here and I'm very grateful for the chance to change my life. I couldn't have done it without all the beautiful people within The Neighbourhood Group. I am able to have the right mindset and with all the support of my team, I know I will be successful in having what I want for myself."





Following the Rainbow

Brendalee fled her homeland because of LGBTQ+ persecution

"I'm a proud Black lesbian woman from the Bahamas. My partner and I came to Canada because we were afraid of being outed and the violence we would face. The Bahamas is very religious and doesn't tolerate LGBTQ+ relationships. Here in Canada, I became an LGBTQ+ refugee and newcomer advocate after going through a challenging refugee process myself.

"I started volunteering at different LGBTQ+ and newcomer organizations, and presented at universities, radio shows and at 2SLGBTQ+ conferences. Along the way, I met one of my mentors, Ranjith Kulatilake, who was running a program called Rainbow Connect. That's where I really found my path."

Operating in an inclusive, safe space, Rainbow Connect helps LGBTQ+ immigrants and refugees who are struggling to adapt to their new life in Canada. The wide array of programs, including employment services, settlement support, social chats, referrals and advocacy, eases the transition.

"I started volunteering at Rainbow Connect, and was excited to start Peer to Peer Chit Chat, a bi-weekly chat group. At the same time, I started working at the Corner Drop-in as a screener, and later, as a full-time Community Support Worker.

"The Neighbourhood Group recognizes the potential and strengths of marginalized people and helps them thrive. I'm delighted to be part of that."



Nearly 300 LGBTQ+ newcomers adapted to their new lives in Canada through Rainbow Connect





Peer health

Peer workers like Yara improve the health of emergency room patients...and themselves

"My mental health was deteriorating. I had been arrested a few days before the first COVID-19 lockdown and I was isolated at home, using substances more frequently. What changed for me was the job I got at one of the COVID recovery hotels. I worked there during the summer, then staff asked if I'd be interested in working in the Toronto Western Hospital emergency department because they knew I wanted to become a nurse. I accepted right away."

Peer workers have become an essential cog in the Toronto Western Hospital emergency room. They build a rapport with patients through shared lived experiences of homelessness, substance use and physical or mental health issues. Their natural empathy helps validate patients' concerns and makes it easier for hospital staff to provide effective treatment. More than that, peer workers advocate for patients with hospital staff, social workers, community members and partner organizations to ensure wraparound support is available.

"This job has humbled me and I take pride in the work. It has given me a full-time stable job. The routine helps me the most with my mental health and substance use. Since I started, I've learned to cope with my emotions without substances or harmful behaviours. Working here allows peers to share our stories and give hope to vulnerable people that need it. We help people see that there's a way out of this dangerous cycle and we're proof.

"I am so grateful for everyone who has helped me get to where I am today, I couldn't have done it without them."





Unlocking potential

Youth Outreach Workers like Stacy help young people access opportunities for personal growth

Linda was at her wits' end. A young mother with a one-year old daughter, Linda was struggling with motherhood, the pandemic, and the loss of her father. She reached out to The Neighbourhood Group for support, and found the help she needed.

Provincial Youth Outreach Workers (YOWs) help young people like Linda. By working with schools, community housing, hospitals, primary and mental health care facilities and settlement services, YOWs help youth and their families access critical community supports, and engage young people in meaningful opportunities for change.

One of our newest YOWs, Stacy, knows very well what growing up without support can be like. "I was raised in the Taylor-Massey community. It has always been pretty rough there and I saw the heartbreaking effect that life without resources and experiences had on some of my childhood friends. My mom worked hard to put me in after-school programs and summer camp. When I saw the work she did at Neighbourhood Link, I knew I wanted to help people like she did.

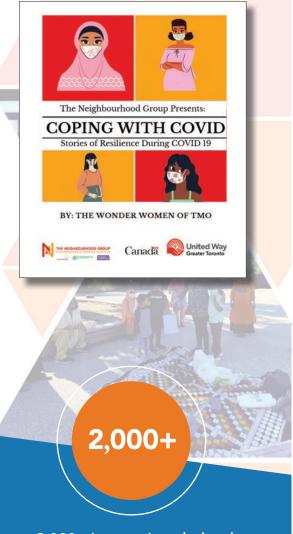
"As a YOW, I can help young people access the resources and experiences that many of my peers couldn't. What guides me is the belief that young people are full of potential. I look at how far Linda has come, the sense of purpose she now has despite her challenges, and I know that with the right supports, opportunities and guidance, young people are capable of anything."



100% of youth surveyed in the program would refer friends to Youth Outreach Workers







2,000+ interactions helped newcomer women access food security, isolation, education, primary and mental healthcare





'Yes I can!'

Ruma overcame pandemic-strengthened barriers through the Coping with COVID project

Life during COVID-19 has been a struggle. For newcomer women living under the poverty line in the Taylor-Massey Oakridge neighbourhood, the pandemic exacerbated the daunting socio-economic barriers they already faced. Thanks to funding from the United Way, that struggle was lessened: Together, we learned about Coping with COVID.

Focusing on issues magnified by the pandemic, staff in the Coping with COVID project offered additional support, workshops, celebrations, advocacy, and referrals to counter language barriers and social services that functioned with severely reduced hours.

We also published stories of happiness, struggle, and loss from some of these amazing women in *Coping With COVID:* Stories of Resilience During COVID-19. Here's an excerpt from Ruma:

"I came to Canada in 2019 to get treatment for my son Partha who suffers from epilepsy. COVID started soon after. I felt so isolated with only me and my son, and no where to go or other people to talk to.

"I saw The Neighbourhood Group's Coping with COVID flyer and joined right away. I eagerly wait for the sessions where we talk and learn so many things. The conversation circle helps me speak with confidence and I've learned how to eat healthy for diabetes. We do yoga and anxiety management to reduce stress, and I now know where to go for a COVID test or vaccination, and how to get financial support during COVID.

"The program has also helped Partha. He's met friends and is even volunteering here. He's showing his courage and confidence. He's turned, 'How can I?' into 'Yes I can!"



Connecting to work, others and myself

The Youth Job Connection employment program helps people like Marai prepare for and find work

COVID-19 has been terrible for employment. In a recent survey of unemployed people:

- 77% said COVID-19 made finding a job harder
- 62% believed COVID-19 was the reason they were still out of work
- 65% were looking for a job in a different field
- 71% were very stressed trying to find employment during the pandemic

To help young people find work during COVID-19, the Youth Job Connection employment program has provided virtual mentorship and training, and up to six months paid work experience. The program also offers financial support for transportation, work clothing, equipment and supplies – critical aid when trying to cope without income.

Marai turned to the Youth Job Connection in March 2020 after losing her full-time job due to COVID-19 cutbacks. After completing the program, she was hired at a warehouse distribution centre, and now as a full-time Traffic Controller at a security company. The stability from work helped her find a place to live that she proudly calls home.

But for Marai, getting a job was only one benefit of the program.

"I didn't realize it when I started, but Youth Job Connection helped me stand on both feet. But not just for finding work. Making friends and networking isn't easy when you are too busy paying off debt and taking care of your family. Meeting people my age group with different backgrounds made me humble and reconnect with myself. Thanks to The Neighbourhood Group for this opportunity and hearing me."



80% of participants in the Youth Job Connection found work or went on to further their education and training





A collision course with death

Rob veered away from harmful substance use and toward a life of helping others at the Kensington Market Overdose Prevention Site

Toronto was already in the midst of an opioid crisis. COVID-19 made it worse.

Overdose deaths are up a staggering 79% since the start of the pandemic. And one out of every six people who die are homeless, making locations like the Kensington Market Overdose Prevention Site (KMOPS) more essential than ever.

At its core, KMOPS saves lives by preventing overdoses. But the value to people who use substances goes far beyond that. By making people feel comfortable and safe, they are more open to other services that improve their health: harm reduction, primary healthcare, housing and employment assistance, and mental health counselling. Better health goes hand-in-hand with increased confidence and self-worth. Rob is proof of that.

"I was on a collision course with death. Not going to lie, I got a second chance because I overdosed. That made me want to work at a safe injection site and tell the world that a piece of fentanyl the size of a grain of sugar can kill you. And that's what I'm doing today as a peer worker at KMOPS. I feel that if I can help just one person stay alive, or not get HIV, I've done my job.

"I could talk all day about the things that are better in my life now. The boost to my self-esteem for helping others is the most wonderful thing and I'm truly living my dream working here. I love what I do!"



Zero overdose deaths at our overdose prevention site since it opened in 2019







Food security with a smile

Seniors like Jennette rely on special services like the Food Hamper program

"The Neighbourhood Group is the best for helping seniors and for me because I can't pay much for services. Staff have done so much for me. They helped me with taxes and getting Meals on Wheels. They found someone to do my cleaning and got my machine for breathing for free. When my husband was sick, my support worker stayed with him so I could go to the grocery store. She found a walker and a hospital bed for him.

"The pandemic is hard for seniors. But staff are very friendly. When they come in with a smile, it makes me happy because somebody remembers me. This is important for seniors. This may sound like a little thing, but it is a big thing for us. And during the pandemic, they've been giving wonderful food hampers every week."

The Food Hamper program improves food security among vulnerable seniors, and accommodates special dietary or religious needs. The program also distributes hygiene hampers, and special hampers during holidays. The benefit of each \$40 hamper goes beyond the food within: Letters from community members are tucked inside to help reduce recipients' isolation during COVID-19.

"I like the hamper because I have the yogurt, cheese and bread for my breakfast. Every time I eat, I remember everything the staff have done for me, and think 'Thank you God for sending me these angels.""



Food hampers were part of the 10,000+ meals distributed every month to improve food security among low-income people in our community





Alone no more

The High Intensity Support in the Home program helps seniors like Bentham maintain independence

For most people, getting older means a loss of independence. For those with physical and mental health issues, even the simplest tasks become next to impossible. The High Intensity Support in the Home program (HISH) is changing that.

The goal of the program is simple: to provide extra support for people who want to remain in their own home. HISH helps people who are waiting to enter a long-term care home and patients who can only leave a hospital if they have extra support at home. The benefit to the health care system is also simple: It saves money by reducing the number of hospital emergency room visits and stays. During COVID-19, this increased capacity is critical to admit people struggling with the virus.

For seniors like Bentham, the additional help at home is essential.

"I suffer from depression and it felt like nobody wanted to come into my apartment and talk to me. I was lonely. After I was discharged from the hospital, I was referred to the High Intensity (Support) Program. Because I have diabetes and trouble walking, staff come in every day to give me my insulin, clean my home, and help with laundry and other things that I can't do anymore. But they spend time talking with me and I know they truly care."

"Life is much better now with the Personal Support Workers. I don't feel lonely any more."



Nearly 90% of people supported by the program reported improved quality of life and reduction in stress





Vaccinations at your front door

Our mobile COVID-19 clinic improves the vaccination rate among supportive housing residents

With the rush to get COVID-19 vaccines, finding a place to get the shot is tough. For seniors who don't have internet access, or even their own transportation, getting vaccinated becomes a major problem. The solution? Bring the clinic to them.

At our Cecilia Murphy supportive housing apartments, we did just that. Working with East Toronto Health Partners, we held our first mobile vaccination clinic in March 2021, helping seniors and people with physical disabilities get their first shot. Together with doctors and nurses, our staff helped administer doses to nearly 100% of residents. To make it easier, some of the team even went door-to-door.

In late June, we held our second clinic at Cecilia Murphy with similar success. While anyone who missed out in March could get their first dose, most of the residents there were happy to get their second. Just ask Tootsie and Sieudah.

"We want to protect ourselves – we get the flu shot every year and we really miss seeing our children and grandchildren. Besides, we didn't have any side effects from the first dose so we were confident we'd be ok with the second. And we were!"

Even beyond the health benefits, the clinic gave residents a chance to get out and chat with other people, a rare occurrence during the pandemic. With the success of the clinics, social outings for residents will soon be back to stay.



Nearly 100% vaccination rate for Cecilia Murphy residents at the first mobile clinic

















336

336 women from Bengali, Tamil, Mandarin, Swahili and Somali communities gain support and a network to help them with immigration, family, school system and referrals.





My new mother

Safia Hirsi, Women's Program Coordinator, shares a story of how the Program helps people by first building trust

"Darya moved to Canada with her son eight years ago. Recently, they weren't able to manage the rent and an eviction notice followed. She contacted me for help, and fortunately her ODSP worker was able to arrange payments directly to Toronto Community Housing, allowing her to stay in her home. That was the start of our close relationship. And from then, she started calling me her daughter.

"During the pandemic, I've been able to help Darya with her medications, and arranging for food delivery during Ramadan. Recently, I found out she was in the hospital after a fall. Darya was scared, alone, was struggling with language barriers with the nursing staff, and had not eaten as she had not been given Halal food.

"When Humisha, one of the participants in the Women's Program, heard that Darya had not eaten, she worked tirelessly to deliver tea and Halal snacks to her, despite an initial refusal to allow it. Humisha told me she learned in our Program to advocate for herself and for others. And it worked. The nurse also shared that Darya wasn't taking the hospital medications because she wanted to take the ones she was used to. I explained the hospital policy to Darya and reassured her that the medicine was safe, and thankfully, she started taking it.

"I also arranged with the nurses for Daya to be given Halal food and for her social worker and doctor to ensure she has the proper support when she returns home. That includes having a Personal Support Worker, safety features to be included in her home and access to transportation throughout her recovery.

"Darya now knows she is not alone. She knows someone will be there to answer when she calls and will support her through the difficult moments of her life."



B-11...N-19...O-56...Bingo!

Carol re-engaged with her neighbours during **Balcony Bingo**

The fear and anxiety of contracting COVID-19 places an extra burden on our mental health during the pandemic. For seniors like Carol, the isolation is yet another weight.

"Before the pandemic I was very active in our building, participating in many of the programs offered. When everything shut down, I was lonely and felt very isolated. It was so guiet in the halls and the recreation room was empty and dark. It was a very weird feeling."

To alleviate the distress, our Seniors' Programs team introduced Balcony Bingo and balcony concerts at our 11 Coatsworth supportive housing building. Weekly games were run on both sides of the building so everyone had a chance to join the fun and win prizes. The joy was felt by residents and staff alike!

But Balcony Bingo was more than just an entertaining way to spend the afternoon: It was a gateway to connect with residents who were isolated and lonely. It also allowed staff to provide help with other issues. For Carol, no extra incentive was needed.

"When the Balcony Bingo started, it was so nice to have something to look forward to. Everyone would come onto their balconies and say hello and the staff were waving and saying good afternoon to everyone. There was energy and life again in the building! It was a lot of fun and really helped with keeping me social and connected to the people I missed so much."



by the pandemic





Personal Support Workers deserve more than our thanks

The #EqualityCare campaign promoted fair wages for homecare workers

Personal Support Workers (PSWs) are essential front-line workers. They care for some of the most vulnerable people in our community and keep them safe at home. Yet, PSWs in homecare get paid almost 25% less than those who do equal work in hospitals and long-term care homes. Because of this, #EqualityCare was formed.

A campaign to promote fairness for PSWs in homecare, the #EqualityCare campaign started at a grassroots level with PSWs driving the agenda, generating the messages and advocating on behalf of their thousands of peers. Connie Ndlovu, PSW and president of CUPE Local 7797, was one of the first to speak out. "Homecare workers make some of the lowest wages in government-funded jobs. Most PSWs in homecare are women of colour who live in poverty. The pandemic has exposed this broken healthcare system."

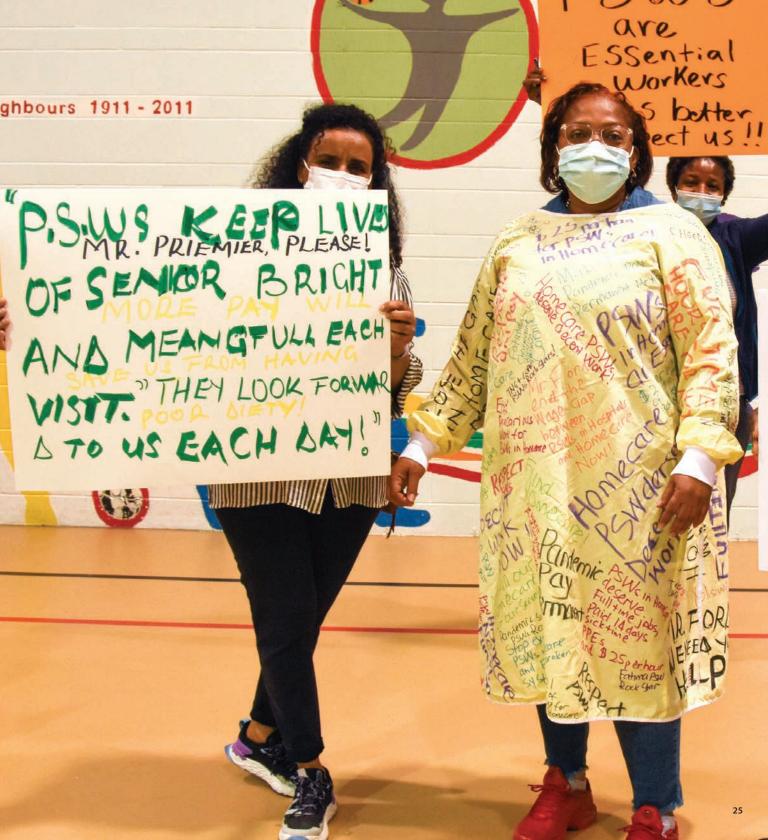
With the backing of CUPE and The Neighbourhood Group, the message on the campaign's website, petition and letters to the Provincial Government was heard far and wide. Media outlets like the CBC, Globe and Mail and Toronto Star gave prominent coverage to the plight of these deserving PSWs, not only for the wage disparity, but also for the lack of benefits and the precarious nature of their homecare work.

To date, the Province has not adjusted the system. But the more everyone speaks out, the closer we get to effecting change for these essential workers.



More 2200 people signed our #EqualityCare petition to the Premier







Part of the family

Meals on Wheels' volunteers deliver more than just a meal to seniors like Claire

Mobility is one of the most significant issues for seniors when it comes to healthy eating. Whether it's going to the grocery store or preparing dinner, that loss of independence compounds the struggles seniors face. Just ask Claire.

"I'm close to 80 years old and due to my hip and other health issues, I can't manage on my own. For the past three years, I've been getting Meals on Wheels and I completely depend on it. After coming back from dialysis, I'm very tired and not able to cook. I have peace of mind knowing that fresh, healthy food will be there for me.

"I wasn't sure if the service would continue during COVID-19. To my pleasant surprise, there hasn't been any interruption. The volunteers are so careful and wear masks and gloves. I've been so fortunate to continue to have food delivered to my home by these warm volunteers. It isn't like pizza delivery where they hand over the food after getting their money. The volunteers are kind and care for seniors like us. I don't have any family or friends here and the volunteers are like my family."





Patience, compassion & talent

Kim is forever grateful for the care Personal Support Workers gave her father

"My Dad recently passed away and was bedridden for the last five years of his life. Luckily, my Mom was able to care for him at home thanks to the dedicated assistance that she received from Dad's Personal Support Workers. They came twice a day, every day, and worked so hard, doing very physically demanding and intimate work that most people would not be able to handle. They cared for Dad with such tenderness and the visits were so uplifting for both my parents, who were largely stuck at home.

"I've often thought, 'No matter how much the PSWs are getting paid, it's not enough.' Dad's PSWs were so dedicated, travelling across the city to get to their clients' homes. And the people skills they need to work with folks who are often disabled or in pain? The workers have patience, compassion, and talent!

"Especially now, when so many people are terrified to leave their homes for fear of contracting COVID-19, these brave souls are still out there, going from house to house, doing what needs to be done because they know their clients need them. They are in a position of trust, and they take that seriously.

"We will be forever grateful for the kind and compassionate care that Dad received.
Thank you all, for taking care of David."



Seniors and adults with illness or disability live safely and with dignity in their own homes thanks to the dedication and kindness of our 225 Personal Support Workers





Shining brightly

Mrs. Quan Wing Yee gained more than she expected in the Pui Hong Chinese Senior program

Between work and family, Mrs. Quan Wing Yee was always busy. But retirement left a void in her life. "I felt I had nothing to do all day long. My home was close to the Pui Hong Chinese Seniors program, so I started to attend and it's changed my life."

Celebrating its 30th Anniversary in December 2020, Pui Hong helps seniors improve their mental and physical health right from the start. Whether it's assistance with applications and referrals, Chinese and Canadian holiday celebrations, exercise like Tai Chi and line dancing, or simply the opportunity to socialize and connect with others, Pui Hong offers something for everyone. For Mrs. Quan, Wing Yee, the fun activities and wonderful people were the only motivation she needed.

"I don't sing Cantonese opera or Chinese period songs like some of the other seniors but I really enjoy seeing them perform. I do the morning exercises and play games, and my favourite is the day trips. One of the staff encouraged me to volunteer in the kitchen preparing lunch for the other members. I enjoy cooking a delicious Chinese lunch for non-Chinese seniors. They really look forward to this. I never imagined I would learn more about cooking from the other volunteers. Volunteering gives me a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction.

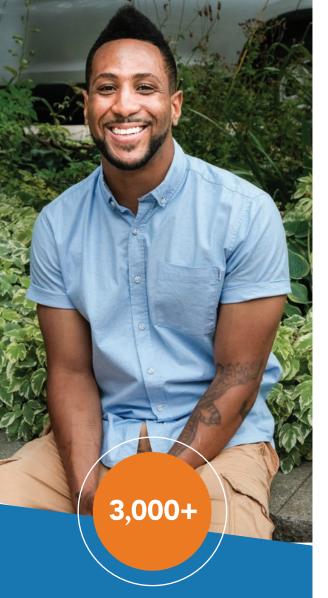
"Pui Hong has become another home for me and the staff are like family. I am very happy I can contribute to this family so that my life can still shine brightly."



400 Chinese seniors improve their mental and physical health through case management, exercise, and culturally-relevant group activities







3,000+ hours spent annually helping people remain in their own homes





Every step of the way

Jordan got his life back on track through Street Survivors

Depression. Post-traumatic stress. Substance use. Homelessness. Jordan suffered from it all.

"I was in and out of shelters or living on the street since I was 16, and suffering from drug use. I felt hopeless because each time I'd try to change, I kept failing. Thankfully, I got connected with Street Survivors at The Neighbourhood Group."

Street Survivors helps people who are homeless or marginally-housed by giving assistance with government and housing applications, referrals for physical and medical healthcare or legal services, offering transportation, and even providing simple things like a list of local food banks. The program is mobile, ensuring that participants have everything they need at the ready.

For Jordan, the journey from the street started in small increments, first by getting help with his medical appointments and prescriptions. By reaching that level of trust with staff, he was comfortable taking the next steps through harm reduction and relapse prevention programs.

"Staff helped me get through my difficulties, then got me a safe place to live. They followed up with visits to make sure I was ok and even gave me grocery gift cards."

Today, Jordan has been clean for more than two years and works at the Alpha House recovery centre mentoring young people. His next goal? To build on his lived experience by getting a post-secondary degree and become a counsellor for people who use substances.

"It's been a long journey but Street Survivors has been there every step of the way."



Peace and purpose

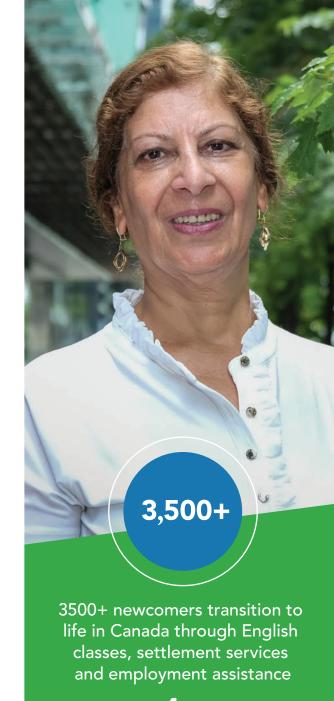
Shahin adapted to life in Canada through the services at our Newcomer Centre

"When I first arrived in Canada, I was depressed spending my time every day just staying at home alone. Back in Iran, I was very busy with work, taking care of my family and being with friends. But here, I lost all of it. I almost went back to Iran after one month."

Shahin's story is similar to many newcomers. The struggle to adapt and isolation can be overwhelming. But staff at our Newcomer Centre change that. Whether its virtual English classes or events, referrals or help with employment or healthcare, the assistance helps people with the difficult transition to life in Canada.

"I went to the Newcomer Centre as soon as I saw the LINC English class sign. The staff spoke to me in Farsi, helped me register for the classes and gave me good information about living here. I felt at peace for the first time in Canada. The classes are like school and very friendly too. At the Centre, I also join workshops, the Newcomers Café and Farsi chat programs. I volunteer at events, and invite other people I know to come.

"Today, my English keeps improving. Recently I felt confident enough to call my son-in-law and speak to him in English. He was so surprised! I am very happy I can do things like go to my doctor or do my shopping independently. Coming to the Newcomer Centre gave me a chance to learn and make friends. It helped me stay in Canada."







Job satisfaction isn't a myth

Billy found their career through the Opportunity Knocks employment program

"I was working as a cook to put myself through university. After I graduated with a design degree, I felt lost in a freelance job market that is infamous for exploiting emerging artists and designers. So I kept working as a line cook and didn't have time or energy to do anything else. Luckily I joined Opportunity Knocks."

Opportunity Knocks helps young people who need assistance overcoming barriers to find work or further their careers. The program provides a personal career assessment, training in leadership development, conflict resolution and first aid, Customer Service Excellence certification, and a twelve-week job placement. For Billy, getting back on track started with the assessment.

"The program allowed me to take stock of what I wanted to do with my life, and helped me explore career options where I could use my skills and passion for art and social change, all while getting paid.

I was able to get my foot in the door at a non-profit organization during the work placement, gain experience and build my resume.

"After working short contracts with different organizations, I now have a full-time permanent position at MABELLEarts as an administrative and communications lead, and help facilitate creative workshops for seniors. I'm finally experiencing the elusive thing known as "job satisfaction" and feel like I'm where I'm supposed to be."



96% of at-risk youth in Opportunity Knocks completed the training and job placements to further their employment goals







Going the extra mile

Enhanced services during COVID-19 helped our supportive housing residents cope during the pandemic

For seniors, the danger of COVID-19 can not be overstated. The physical harm caused by the disease is devastating as has been the impact on services and isolation. At The Neighbourhood Group's six supportive housing residences, finding ways to increase services beyond onsite personal care has been crucial. Increased outreach and check-ins were the starting point to reduce residents' loneliness. Additional visits to drop off homemade meals and flowers, virtual chats, casework and workshops, and balcony concerts and games were just a few of the other efforts made to help residents cope with mental and social hazards caused by the pandemic.

Joan -

"I am so grateful for the PSW services. They are so kind and helpful. The pandemic has been lonely for me but the PSWs always brighten my day."

John -

"I've been living in this housing for 13 years and am very happy with the services, especially during COVID. The staff treats me well".





Calling the game

Francisco's phone call to Enhanced Game Changers saved his life

When a spray of gunshots injured his sister, Franciso knew he had to stop the violence pervading his life. A quick call to our Enhanced Game Changers team was the start.

The Enhanced Game Changers program helps racialized youth who live with the constant threat of violence: street, family, sexual or cyber. Peer youth workers on the team work beyond 9:00 to 5:00, responding to immediate outbreaks of violence with conflict coaching, de-escalation, emergency planning, trauma counselling and referrals to legal support when necessary. And the work doesn't stop there: the team provides workshops, referrals for mental and physical health issues, and employment assistance. The support goes beyond any single incident and focuses on addressing the root causes of the cycle of violence.

In 2020, the Enhanced Game Changers program expanded services in Oakwood Village by establishing a working relationship with the Oakwood Collegiate high school. The private, youth-friendly space is managed by Enhanced Game Changers staff with lived experience of the systemic violence in the area, and the location improves response time and access for youth in the school, and in the community.

That access saved Francisco. His late night call brought the Enhanced Game Changers team to his side. They spoke throughout the night, providing immediate support for his family, and for himself the next day when police arrested him for his part in the violence. The team supported him through the legal process, offered referrals for trauma counselling, and today, provides ongoing support to help him navigate his way out of a life of violence.





92% of the youth in our programs have experienced violence at home or in their community





Small but powerful

Microgrants help grassroots charitable organizations fulfill their mandates during COVID-19

For many small, grassroots charitable organizations, fulfilling their mandates with limited funding and administrative expertise is challenging. COVID-19 has turned those challenges into serious threats. Microgrants are an innovative way to sustain these essential organizations.

Funded by the City of Toronto, the Microgrants project was developed to address gaps in emergency services and funding inequities for organizations that improve the lives of vulnerable people in our community. Microgrant recipients addressed the critical nutrition, hygiene, mental health and COVID-19 safety issues facing the people they serve.

The Neighbourhood Group was proud to act as mentor and administrator for the following organizations:

- Black Women in Motion
- Building Roots
- Equitable Action For Change
- Haven Toronto

- Healing As One
- S.E.A.S Centre
- Spadina/Fort York "Community Care"
- St. Luke's United Church/Cabbagetown B.I.A. "Allen Gardens Celebrates"
- Youth Gravity

Recipient Spotlight: Equitable Action For Change: https://www.equitablenow.ca/about

To reduce the extremely high COVID-19 infection rate among people who use substances, Equitable Action For Change provided hygiene and protective supplies to people in this group who identify as Black and 2SLGBTQ+. The impressive package of supplies included:

- 1000+ face masks and shields
- 10,000+ condoms
- Feminine hygiene products
- Wipes, gloves and hand sanitizer
- Toothpaste, toothbrushes and mouthwash
- Harm Reduction Care bags



Grassroots organizations received funding and administrative support to help them improve the lives of 1600+ marginalized people in our community























From money management to independence

Chantelle sees just how much the Voluntary Trustee program can help people find stability

Hunger. Unemployment. Housing insecurity. Substance use. These are just a few of the barriers faced by people on the street. Factor in the minimal benefits that people on social assistance receive and it's almost impossible to break the cycle of poverty. That's where Trustee Case Managers like Chantelle come in.

"It's hard for people on government support to pay their bills or have enough for food. We help people navigate systems for things like securing safe housing or finding a doctor, all while working with them to budget for the essentials like rent, and in some cases, have a portion of their benefits automatically transferred to pay their bills. This stability allows people to focus on other things. You can see major life skills happening.

"One of my clients had depression and anxiety. He literally told me he never knew where his next meal was coming from. The first time I saw him in the Corner Drop-in, I could see the relief in his face. He just came for the immediate services, like meals, showers and laundry, but as he quickly became comfortable, he joined the Voluntary Trustee program. Because of his improved financial situation, he found a secure place to live, and felt confident enough to find work as a landscaper.

"Watching people go from the street to safe housing, having a job...even grocery shopping on their own...it's amazing!"



98% of people in the Voluntary Trustee program are able to stay in their homes and maintain their independence





The Neighbourhood Group Foundation

The Neighbourhood Group Foundation supports the vital work of The Neighbourhood Group to address poverty and inequity by increasing awareness and donations. Together, we helped more than 40,000+vulnerable people across Toronto communities in 2020-2021.

By giving through The Neighbourhood Group Foundation, you invest in innovative solutions to some of the most pressing issues facing marginalized people in our city.

In past years, the Foundation has been instrumental in implementing new approaches to some of these issues, including supporting Syrian refugee families, reaching out to isolated youth, and exploring new models of financial literacy.



Leadership Message

Positive change does not just happen. Wonderful donors, volunteers and partners drive innovation and essential services to make neighbourhoods better. This year, The Neighbourhood Group Foundation continued to support initiatives the community needs more than ever, often well ahead of government investment. Our donors stepped in with emergency funds to fight hunger, homelessness, youth isolation, and the mental health crisis. This was also a year of renewal at the Foundation with new friends and volunteers stepping forward, and a new strategic plan for our future.

Bill Sinclair, *President and Chief Executive Officer, The Neighbourhood Group Community Services* **Kevin Fisher,** *Board Chair, The Neighbourhood Group Foundation*





Neighbourhood Link Homes

For the past 30 years,
Neighbourhood Link Homes
and The Neighbourhood Group
Community Services (TNG)
have maintained a unique
partnership managing affordable
supportive housing. Properties
are owned by Neighbourhood
Link Homes, with management
and support provided by
The Neighbourhood Group.

Together, we manage supportive housing units for more than 500 people, including 100 units of modular supportive housing for people who are homeless. Dedicated staff and volunteers provide access to personal care, congregate dining, social and recreation programs, and daily check-ins with residents.



Leadership Message

We are so thankful to all of our tenants and staff who pulled together this year to keep all our housing locations clean, repaired, safe and without any pandemic outbreaks. Our staff ensured residents were fully vaccinated! We know this took enormous effort, care, diligence and self-sacrifice. Despite the hardships this year, there were many happy memories as we discovered safer ways to celebrate and be together, like balcony bingo and concerts, telephone check-ins, and food and personal care hamper delivery. Our team also did the impossible: opening 100 new units of modular supportive housing in weeks, not years, and during the pandemic.

Welcome to our new tenants at Macey Place and Dovercourt Place!

Bill Sinclair, *President and Chief Executive Officer, The Neighbourhood Group Community Services* **Bob Gore,** *Board Chair, Neighbourhood Link Homes*

Board of Directors

Thank you to our Board of Directors. Their dedication, compassion and commitment help us provide the maximum impact on the lives of the people we serve. The Board is responsible for the overall health of The Neighbourhood Group and is charged with defining the goals of the organization, establishing the strategic plan and setting governance policies.



Samira Viswanathan *Co-Chair*



Sonia Yung *Co-Chair*



Marguerite Rea Vice-Chair



Vinny Bhathal Treasurer



Jennifer Rae Secretary



Katherine Chau



Philip Fernandez



Bob Gore



Jennifer Hartviksen



Josh Kleiman



Craig Knowles



Amana Manori



Shannon McCauley



Frank Pagliarello



Rebecca Stulberg



Sapna Thakker

A special thank you to departing Board members from The Neighbourhood Group: Alphonse Barikage, Cathy Hennessey, Mary Christie, Sarah Doyle, Tim Hughes and Sarah Hurrle. These dedicated Board Members have been very active volunteers. All six chaired Board Committees and three were Past Chairs of the pre-merger Boards.

Volunteers

Thank you to our dedicated volunteers!

In spite of COVID-19, over 700 of our essential volunteers delivered more than 23,000 hours of critical support to our community! Whether it's delivering Meals on Wheels or food hampers, helping at our Corner Drop-in and Food Bank, preparing meals at Community Dinner, giving time as a Board member, delivering services virtually like community mediation, community outreach, tutoring, mentoring, income tax clinics, yoga and seniors social programs and stepping up to do letter writing and phone calls to isolated seniors, our volunteers make a huge difference in the lives of vulnerable people.

Our volunteers provided more than 23,000 hours of essential support in 2020-2021













Volunteer Spotlight

The Neighbourhood Group's tutoring program is a vital program for at-risk youth with difficulty accessing academic support. During the pandemic, dedicated volunteers like Alexis have provided virtual tutoring to help youth reach their full academic potential. Alexis keeps young people engaged while offering support in many subjects.

"I started tutoring because I remember how it felt to struggle in school, and I wanted to help others who have that same problem. I have the opportunity to give back to my community and I am super grateful for that."



Donor Roster 2020 -21

Thank you for your generosity!

As visionary donors, partners and funders, you bring opportunity and possibility to life. During the pandemic, your gifts were life-altering for thousands of vulnerable people across Toronto.

We are proud to be a United Way Greater Toronto Anchor Agency! Thank you to all our staff and supporters who donate to United Way Greater Toronto. We are also grateful to the many businesses and non-profits we work with annually through job and community service placements and joint initiatives.

Champions: \$100,000 - \$499,999

Estate of Neil MacVicar Scheinberg Relief Fund

Excellent Neighbours: \$50,000 - \$99,999

Brookfield Partners
Foundation & Brookfield
Asset Management Inc. Jack Cockwell
Sonia Yung
Emerald Foundation Rochelle Rubinstein

Dedicated Neighbours: \$10,000 - \$49,999

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Friendly Neighbours: \$1,000 - \$9,999

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Allan W. & Nadia Hawkins

Douglas Hay

Judy Healy

In loving memory of

Randy Heasman -

Asha Heasman

Hanna Heger

Manuel Henriques

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Grace Ho

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We apologize for any errors or omissions in our Donor Roster and respect the wishes of donors requesting anonymity. Please direct any inquiries to 416.691.7407 x246

Ann Turner

The Neighbourhood Group Community Services

Statement of Current Operating Funds For the Year Ended March 31, 2021

	2020-21	2019-20	3%
REVENUES			4%
Fees			6%
Toronto Central Community Care Access Centre	\$ 4,728,792	\$ 5,311,076	7%
Fees from users	2,938,311	4,137,065	1%
City of Toronto	2,226,429	3,355,426	
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Grants			
Province of Ontario	19,143,228	16,615,389	78%
City of Toronto	6,825,151	5,964,710	
Government of Canada	6,306,696	3,645,637	
United Way	1,735,240	1,843,120	Revenue
Officed Way	1,733,240	1,043,120	rieverrae
			78% Government
Other	2 201 040	624.205	7% Partner Agencies
Partner agencies	3,281,948	634,395	6% Fees
Donations and fundraising events	1,473,873	1,603,536	4% United Way
Trustee funds	1,180,198	297,112	3% Donations
Investment	208,951	120,625	2% Trustee Funds
	50,048,817	43,528,091	
	30,046,617	45,326,091	•••••
EXPENDITURES			
Wages	30,950,255	27,408,395	5%
Benefits	6,121,931	5,536,116	6%
Program expenses	4,006,673	2,342,921	8%
Occupancy costs	2,471,857	2,233,952	
Purchased services	1,810,280	1,449,138	
Office and general	1,002,436	737,753	
Employer wage subsidy and participant support	864,692	1,465,256	
Food services	806,642	698,400	
Amortization	685,103	516,022	85%
Travel	352,831	437,719	
Promotion and publicity	238,273	255,419	
			Evnandituras
	49,310,973	43,081,091	Expenditures
Excess of revenues over expenditures for the year	737,844	447,000	85% Direct Program Costs
Fund balance, beginning of year	9,399,118	8,952,118	6% Administration
Fund balance, end of year	\$ 10,136,962	\$ 9,399,118	5% Building Costs
i unu palance, enu oi year			4% Purchased Services







Charitable Registrration: 106887284RR0002

@NeighbourhdGrpTheNeighbourhoodGroup

Neighbourhood Link Support Services: 3036 Danforth Avenue | Toronto, ON M4C 1N2 | 416.691.7407

Central Neighbourhood House: 349 Ontario Street | Toronto, ON M5A 2V8 | 416.925.4363

St. Stephen's Community House: 91 Bellevue Avenue | Toronto, ON M5T 2N8 | 416.925.2103







