



NEIGHBOURHOOD
HOUSE

Annual Report 2024-2025 **ENABLING PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE**

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LEADERSHIP

Mission Statement

West Neighbourhood House enables less advantaged individuals, families and groups in the community to gain greater control over their lives and within their community.

Our Values

Our values guide us and will be revisited as we learn from both our successes and failures. None of these values stand alone - each needs to be understood in relation to the others.

Land

Right relations with Indigenous peoples.
Right relations with our environment.

Equity and social justice

Recognize and challenge inequity and injustice in the House and society.



Responsive practices and positive organizational culture

In all our interactions, practice compassion, trust, respect, equity, innovation, non-judgment, harm reduction, conflict resolution, finding common ground, accountability, inclusion, responsiveness, learning-unlearning, and transparency.

Neighbourhood-based, community-centered

Being "place-based", with the House as the "campfire of neighbourhood"; honouring the people who shape our neighbourhood and focusing on community development as well as individual service.

Our Board: (left to right)

Standing and Online: Zahra Ismail, Casper Sinnige, Sean Meagher (online), Walter Ng (online), Adrienne Lipsey (online), Isaiah John, Rachel Spence
Sitting: Prasad Rao (President), Maureen Fair (Executive Director), Zayna Khayat, Dorothy Charach
Missing: Maisie Cu, James Janeiro, Zaria Duncan (Associate Executive Director)

Co-creation, Collaboration

Meaningful inclusion of participants in program design, evaluation, advocacy, and change strategies; and working collaboratively and creatively with multiple partners inside and outside the sector.

Leadership Report

Progress on our Strategic Plan

The Annual Report is our opportunity and our obligation to inform our membership, the community we serve, and our supporters about West Neighbourhood House's accomplishments over the past year.

The following pages illustrate how the House's programs addressed the needs of diverse people coming to us. People of all ages are helped to survive, to stabilize their lives, to thrive in community with others, and to drive together for improved conditions for everyone in the community.

West Neighbourhood House's Strategic Plan remains a relevant guide for our work. We are making good progress thanks to the dedicated work of our staff, volunteers, and student placements with the strong support of many participants, donors and funders. In particular, we thank the volunteer Board of Directors for stepping up to be responsible leaders in our community, willing to hold ourselves accountable.

Finally, we thank the many diverse people in our community who work with us on their personal change and participate with us to make positive social change.

Thank you, Prasad!

The Board and staff of West Neighbourhood House warmly thank Prasad Rao as his term as President of the Board ends. In Prasad's tenure as a volunteer Board President, he was a positive and wise support to all, and especially appreciated by Maureen Fair, Executive Director.

Prasad's infectious enthusiasm for the House's community work and dedication is inspiring. Probably most valued of all, Prasad's thoughtful and philosophical stories lifted our spirits in difficult times and made us laugh in lighter moments. We are grateful that Prasad will continue volunteering with the House!



Mid-way Progress Report on Strategic Plan Indicators

Indicator 1: West NH meaningfully involves diverse community members in the ongoing co-design, data-gathering, and evaluation of programs, community development activities, and advocacy.

POSITIVE PROGRESS WITH MORE WORK TO BE DONE:

- There is somewhat uneven data-gathering and evaluation within programs as staff experiment with methods of engagement and face constraints from some funders.
- Several programs, such as Adult Literacy and Learning and the Seniors Members Council, have excellent participant involvement co-designing program activities and budgets.
- Examples of co-design and involvement in advocacy include seniors and newcomer youth creating their own advocacy posters about healthcare, immigration, housing, and the economy, which were displayed.

Indicator 2: West NH develops mechanisms towards Reconciliation in the development, design, and evaluation of programs, advocacy, and strategic initiatives.

POSITIVE PROGRESS WITH MORE WORK TO BE DONE:

- Laura McPhie, consultant, consulted extensively with different internal and external people to develop a comprehensive set of recommendations and coaching for West NH to move forward on righting relations with Indigenous peoples. These recommendations are being incorporated into staff and program workplans.
- We are learning from the Greenest City program about how to more appropriately and respectfully support local Indigenous people's work with us.

Indicator 3: West NH works in partnership with grassroots groups and small organizations to support responsiveness and initiative within the community, particularly for advocacy on systemic problems.

MIXED RESULTS TO DATE: ANALYSIS UNDERWAY:

- Over the past year, West NH supported 4 grassroots groups who are working in our community in addition to providing space for other volunteer-led groups such as Narcotics Anonymous (NA). We are in the process of clarifying the nature of these partnerships, respectful of different cultural practices, and complying with good accounting practices.
- Success: over the past year, West NH began providing rental space in our 248 Ossington site to our Toronto Community Crisis partner, Gerstein Crisis Centre, and to relatively small organizations who want to be part of a "hub-like" space: Hard Feelings (mental health counselling) and Balance for Blind Adults.

Indicator 4: West NH completes the Implementation Plan based on the Organizational Review about anti-Black racism. West NH continues to address diversity, equity and inclusion/belonging issues and opportunities, including more distributed leadership/authority.

POSITIVE PROGRESS WITH MORE WORK TO BE DONE:

- Success: all the elements of the Implementation Plan about anti-Black racism have been accomplished with some of the work ongoing.
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion deliberations and debates continue within the House and with partners as we strategize about preventing and addressing backlash.

Indicator 5: West NH continues to co-develop, test and use digital innovations in programming for participants and supports for community members.

POSITIVE PROGRESS WITH MORE TO BE DONE:

- Software continues to evolve in usefulness, including Artificial Intelligence (AI). West NH is experimenting carefully with AI, with checks and balances for privacy and security concerns.

Indicator 6: West NH gathers and uses data rigorously to understand and share the impacts of our work on people's lives.

POSITIVE PROGRESS WITH MORE WORK TO BE DONE:

- Data collection and data quality is uneven, but improvements continue.
- West NH continues to develop our Quality of Life data platform that measures health and well-being outcomes over time with program participants in the Financial Empowerment program. This evaluative tool eventually can be used to measure outcomes of other program interventions.

Indicator 7: West NH puts a "shovel in the ground" at 248 Ossington, creating a green, sustainable community asset that provides both affordable housing and new space for House programs and community use.

POSITIVE PROGRESS WITH MORE WORK TO BE DONE:

- Given funding shifts and unpredictable construction costs, there are still many more steps for the House to take before building affordable housing above a new community centre space. Nonetheless, our project team is proceeding with plans step by step, and if all goes well, construction could begin by 2027-2028.

Indicator 8: West NH significantly increases the community's awareness of our work, especially among new residents as well as businesses.

WORK IN PROGRESS:

- A pro bono team from Uncommon has been planning over 2024-2025 for the launch of a new campaign about our neighbourhood work in the summer of 2025.

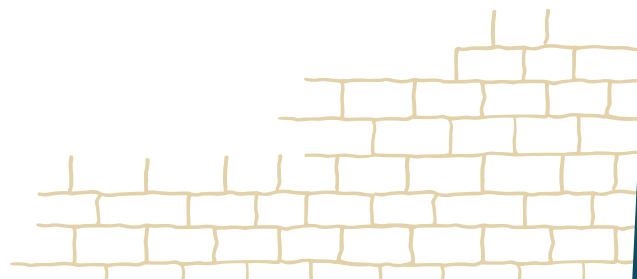
Indicator 9: West NH reduces its environmental impact and works with marginalized individuals in the community to prepare for climate change.

WORK IN PROGRESS:

- Thanks to Stan Meek, a generous donor, West NH has climate action staff getting underway for 2025-2026 work.
- West NH has more work to do regarding our own recycling and reducing waste.
- The Greenest City program engaged diverse local community members in community planning for climate change.

West Neighbourhood House's Strategic Plan continues to guide our activities and community work. Our progress is driven by the hard work of staff, volunteers, and students, along with the loyal support of many participants, donors, and funders.

We greatly appreciate the many diverse community members who collaborate with us on personal and social change, striving together to achieve positive change.



Reflections on the Heart of the House

It is difficult to fully describe what West Neighbourhood House is. Technically, West Neighbourhood House is:

- a non-profit corporation,
- a registered charity,
- a multi-service neighbourhood organization,
- a social services delivery agency, and
- a community centre.

However, to many people, the House is much more than these technical definitions. People coming through our doors (or participating in our online programs) describe a place of connection, like a campfire, where staff and volunteers provide a sense of security and vibrancy, like a heartbeat.

Describing West Neighbourhood House as the heartbeat of the neighbourhood resonates deeply with our leadership experience here. As the volunteer Board President (Prasad) and staff Executive Director (Maureen), we know the critical importance of the House in the lives of many diverse community members.

Like a heartbeat, the House is a reassuring, steady presence for many, and now for over 113 years.

We see the steady flow of people in and out of the House. Some bring their talents, some bring their problems to be solved, and some bring their compassion for others. All are circulating in the shared community we have at West Neighbourhood House, striving to achieve something better.

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who has contributed to our West Neighbourhood House community over the past year. Maureen notes with sadness that Prasad Rao's term as Board President has come to an end. She, along with the Board of Directors and staff acknowledge Prasad's great heart: his passion for the House's community work, his creativity, his boundless energy and warm humour. He will be greatly missed.

Prasad Rao *Maureen Fair*

Prasad Rao
Board President
(volunteer)

Maureen Fair
Executive Director
(staff)



HOUSING SUPPORTS

Providing Accessible Housing Solutions and Housing Stabilization

A Place to Call Home: Transforming Lives

The Meeting Place Case Manager and Intensive Case Management program work closely together to provide vital housing stabilization and ongoing support to people facing significant challenges. These supports extend beyond merely finding shelter—they encompass access to healthcare, dental care, employment opportunities, financial services, obtaining household services, and life skills development.

The ultimate goal? To help participants transition from homelessness to stable housing and equip them with the tools and skills needed to integrate into the community. Robert and Wayne are two participants who have benefited from this program.

Robert: Rebuilding with Dignity

After working three decades for a major supermarket chain, Robert's life changed dramatically following a serious back injury. Unable to work and without a support system, he found himself homeless, relying on various organizations to survive.

"I was homeless. One day, a security guard at one of the places I went to told me about the Meeting Place. I came in, talked to the staff, and they helped me get into a shelter," Robert recalls. At The Meeting Place, Robert accessed basic services—showers, laundry, warm meals, and emotional support. Recognizing his vulnerability, his Case Manager acted quickly to secure financial support through Ontario Works (OW), Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and referred him to the housing program.

With guidance and care, Robert eventually moved into his own apartment. "The building is very quiet. When I moved in, there was only a stove and a fridge. It's very nice, and I keep it clean," he says proudly. Staff also helped Robert settle in by connecting him to the Furniture Bank and assisted him with setting up his new bed. A donated television from a Board member added a touch of comfort. Robert was also connected to a family doctor, and he received support from the House's Financial Empowerment program to manage his taxes and benefits.

Robert now volunteers at The Meeting Place, giving back to the community that helped him rebuild. "I come early. I put the cereal out, sweep, mop, change the garbage. I like to do everything," he says with a smile. For Robert, it's not just about housing—it's about belonging. "We need more safe places. I want everyone to feel safe."

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We look at people as human beings first. We ask, 'How can we help?' And we always start by listening.

Priscilla Cecon
Case Manager



Wayne: Healing and Hope

Wayne's journey to stability also began at The Meeting Place. A few years ago, when he was sleeping in Alexandra Park, his doctor recommended that Wayne visit West Neighbourhood House. "I came in and met with Priscilla. Within two hours, they found me a shelter bed," he explains.

Shortly after, Wayne suffered a heart attack. Then came more devastating news: he was diagnosed with end-stage kidney failure. Yet even while hospitalized, the House stayed by his side.

"Lo and behold, I'm still in the hospital and Priscilla tells me they got me housing. She stood by me. West Neighbourhood House stood by me while I was ill," he shares.

Now, Wayne is enjoying the calm and security of his apartment. He's learning to cook, engaging in drawing, reading, and taking pleasure in the peace of his own home. A Personal Support Worker helps Wayne with errands and appointments, while the House continues to assist him with income supports, healthcare, and social connections.

Wayne also participates in classes at The Meeting Place, including More Than Words, which encourages open dialogue and emotional healing. "It's about life—how to move forward and make it good, productive," he emphasizes proudly.

Currently, Wayne is in rehabilitation, working hard to regain his mobility. He's using a walker and aims to walk 10,000 steps a day. "With the help of the House," he says, "I think I am now in a very good place".

From Surviving to Thriving

The journeys of Robert and Wayne show how integrated support—centered on dignity, trust, and persistence—can be life-changing. Housing is just the beginning. The real impact comes from helping people regain their independence, rediscover their value, and find their place in the community.

Meeting Place community members Robert (left) and Wayne (right)





HELPING NEWCOMERS THRIVE

Supporting Newcomers Through Life Transitions

Connecting Newcomers to Essential Services

The Mobile Settlement Services in Shelters program at the House offers vital support to immigrants and refugees who are homeless, living in shelters, or at risk of losing their housing.

Staff assist participants with legal aid, housing applications, career and education opportunities, language classes, and income support. The program is designed to help stabilize each individual's situation and provide long-term support until they have the tools and confidence needed to thrive in Canada.

Darioosh Salahshoor, a Settlement Worker with the program, regularly visits shelters to connect with newcomers who are often navigating complex and stressful transitions. "I just listen," he says. "Often relying on my past experience, I can understand the problem the person is having and explain to them why it's happening."

A significant part of his work involves helping refugees navigate Canada's legal system—a process that can take years. This includes helping them organize their personal narratives, submit key documents, and obtain Permanent Resident (PR) status.

"People want to change their lives by coming here, but documentation is often the barrier," Darioosh explains. "When you know how to navigate the system, you can help them move forward. They can change their lives."

Many of the people he works with have experienced severe trauma and displacement. "Some of it is very serious. And we need to deal with that. We need to connect them with the support they need," he adds. "I know that staff at the House are working from the heart."

Cases often involve multiple layers of need—from legal and emotional support to housing and job readiness. That's why the program regularly refers clients to other West NH programs like the Meeting Place. "When you refer clients within the House, it's better because you maintain that connection," says Darioosh. "That connection helps us support people longer, and better."

In one case, Darioosh recognized a man from Uganda in a city shelter. He had helped him earlier with volunteer work at the Meeting Place and enrollment in adult school for an English certificate. "He didn't have to pass a test because he had that certificate," Darioosh recalls. "Later, I found out he was hired as a shift manager at the same shelter. That made me so happy."

Through coordinated efforts between programs like Settlement and the Meeting Place, the man built a foundation for a new life—eventually helping bring his family to Canada as well.

This is just one of many stories showing the life-changing impact of mobile settlement services.



Read the full story online at:
<https://www.westnh.org/connectingnewcomers/>



Engaging Newcomer Youth and Building Community

The Newcomer Youth Program at the House offers a variety of activities for participants aged 13-30. Activities include cooking classes, health and wellness workshops, job search and interview support, homework help, university and college preparation, art workshops, as well as sports and recreation.

This program provides opportunities to build social connections between youth and the community while also helping participants acquire essential skills and knowledge to advance their academic, professional, and personal goals.

The program has developed partnerships with several schools, including Bishop Marrocco/Thomas Merton Catholic Secondary School (BMTM) and Downsview Secondary School, where it actively engages with Filipino student groups.

At BMTM, staff collaborate with teachers to host activities for the Filipino student group during lunch hour. This provides a space for students to connect with Filipino culture, socialize, and participate in various activities together.

At Downsview Secondary School, the Filipino club is a joint effort between the House, North York Community House (NYCH), and Support Enhance Access Service (SEAS) Centre. Activities for this youth group, provided in collaboration with our partners, cover topics such as post-secondary preparation, financial literacy, family reunification, and recreational activities.

One of the major events last year was the Wellness Forum, held during the summer at our 248 Ossington location. This event, organized in partnership with Kababayan Multicultural Centre and the YMCA, addressed the mental health challenges often faced by newcomer youth settling in Canada.

The forum featured a variety of sessions scheduled throughout the day, including a Q&A panel discussion, a yoga session, and interactions with pet therapy dogs. Additionally, it offered informational workshops designed to promote mental health resources and teach effective coping strategies.





Supporting Newcomers in Achieving their Professional Goals

The House's Employment Related Services program offers invaluable information and guidance to assist newcomers with their training, education, and employment needs.

As a staff member of this program, Gozde Dagdelen conducts workshops in shelters, focusing on the Canadian job market, education systems, and training programs.

A frequent challenge faced by newcomers relates to the recognition of foreign credentials and job experience by Canadian employers. Gozde explains, "In some cases, they had good careers back home, but here, they have to start from scratch. They are unlikely to get a job at the same level, because employers are usually looking for a Canadian degree."

Gozde's role involves tailoring resources to meet the specific needs of each client. "My job involves looking at the kind of resources available and I apply that to each client. I direct people to the kind of programs where they could get hands-on training. In some cases, the government will support the client during their education, especially for in-demand areas like healthcare. I create the plan for the client that could get them where they want to be," she explains.

Her assistance extends to helping clients understand relevant programs and their implications. "I help them understand the programs relevant to them. I talk about the labour market. I get to know about their background. I also ask about their future goals," Gozde shares.

This support often includes aiding newcomers with practical skills development, such as obtaining a driver's license or enrolling in English-language classes, which are crucial for gaining employment in Canada. "Schooling gives you the social environment, the possibility of networking and a purpose to work towards. It also gives them an opportunity to take in a new culture," she adds.

Gozde's work focuses on stabilizing people's lives, enabling them to build a foundation for a new life in Canada. "It gives people hope. Being a refugee means so many uncertainties. They wonder what is going to happen next. It also impacts their self-esteem and self-worth. It's important that they believe in themselves," she emphasizes.

Gozde shared a story about a client from Ukraine who was a doctor before the war.

"I had one case where the person was a doctor in Ukraine but was working in a factory. When the war started, he was in Germany doing some training and was able to come to Canada. Otherwise, young men are not allowed to leave the country. He started to talk about how difficult the job [in the factory] could be. His hands had become rough because of all the lifting and carrying. His skin was getting harder."

Gozde referred him to a program designed for internationally educated doctors. "He was able to start working as a doctor in Canada. It's always great to hear those stories. It's a great feeling."

COLLABORATIVE CARE

Ensuring Quality of Life for Seniors and Caregivers

From Hospital to Home -- the Impact of Community Care

West Neighbourhood House's Enhanced Community Supports for Alternate Level of Care (ALC) patients, facilitates the seamless transition of older patients from hospital to their homes within the community. This vital initiative is a collaborative effort between the Mid-West Toronto Ontario Health Team (OHT), University Health Network and St. Joseph's Health Centre.

ALC patients are individuals who no longer require acute hospital care but still need ongoing care and support. Providing enhanced community support helps prevent hospitalizations and reduce the need for extended stays among older adults.

An individualized care plan is created for each client, tailored to their specific physical and cognitive needs. Patients may need various supports when adjusting to their home environment, such as Personal Support Workers, Meals on Wheels, personalized care, transportation, and assistance with health appointments.

Marie's mother was discharged from the hospital after suffering a groin fracture. "After she got home from the hospital, we couldn't leave her alone because she was in a lot of pain. She couldn't move to do anything herself, and

we were afraid that she would fall again," Marie shares. Marie and her sister shared caregiving responsibilities, but the level of care required for their mother exceeded their capacity. Consequently, Marie contacted the House, which arranged for a Personal Support Worker (PSW) to provide in-home assistance for her mother.

Personal Support Workers help older adults and seniors with daily tasks, including grooming, dressing, toileting, cooking, and cleaning, based on the person's needs.

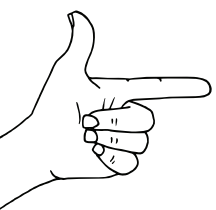
"She can't be up on her feet for more than, even a minute so it's dangerous for her to go to the fridge and put something in the microwave because she won't be holding on to the walker. So that's something that's, if I'm there, I do it. And when I'm not there, the PSW will do it in my place," Marie explains.

A PSW can also provide companionship and emotional support for a person. Marie mentioned the PSW who visits her mother and is highly regarded. "What matters is that she interacts kindly with my mother, making her feel valued," Marie says. Marie shares that her mother is very fond of her PSW. "What's super-important is that she is really sweet with my mother and my mother feels like she's interested in her [as a person]. She is always engaging my mother," Marie shares.

Providing care for a family member or friend can be very demanding and challenging. The House also offers educational workshops for family caregivers that promote self-care to reduce stress, prevent burnout, and sustain quality of life.



Family caregivers training & education



DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE HOUSE

Engaging, Belonging and Strengthening Community Together

A Typical Day at the House's 248 Ossington Location

We invite you to experience the welcoming environment of West Neighborhood House's 248 Ossington Avenue location, one of our seven community spaces. Here's what a typical day looks like:

It's a mild, sunny Thursday morning in late March, and a few degrees above zero. Like every weekday, our doors open to the public at 8:30 in the morning.

By 9:30 am, the House is already bustling with activity. Meals on Wheels staff and volunteers prepare and deliver over 120 meals to people's homes. Our narrow north/south hallway is filled with walkers making their way to the Adult Day Program and other Older Adult Centre (OAC) programs.

Although many programs at 248 Ossington focus on older adults, the hallway is also filled with strollers on their way to our EarlyON program, which welcomes upward of 35 children and 17 parents, grandparents and caregivers for a morning of sensory play, storytelling, sing-alongs, arts and crafts, and endless learning and laughter.

Weaving past the strollers and walkers, community members find support through our Immigrant and Refugee Services. Our comprehensive settlement services help with applying for identification and

immigration documents, securing housing or subsidized housing, and connecting individuals to legal aid and free immigration legal advice. Additionally, we facilitate access to healthcare services and community resources, ensuring newcomers have the necessary tools to feel welcomed and supported in their community.

Some older adults are on their way to the Adult Day Program, which hosts up to 25 participants who enjoy a day of structured activities tailored for individuals living with dementia and other challenges. Caregivers dropping off their loved ones are grateful for a few hours to attend to their needs.

Other older adults are on their way to the OAC which provides information, services, and programming for people 55 years and older. Beatriz Cruz, an Intake Worker with the OAC, is the first point of contact for many clients. Beatriz assists with inquiries about the OAC's programs and other House services, as well as other services in Toronto.

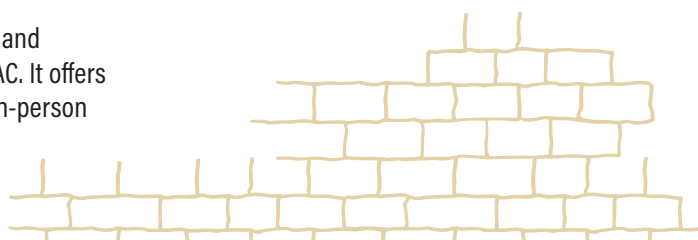
"When clients are interested in our services, I gather the necessary information to connect them with services like Meals on Wheels, Personal Support Workers, or different activities that benefit their health and well-being," Beatriz explains.

Thursday is a busy day in our West Active Living and Learning Centre (WALLC) program, part of the OAC. It offers activities for older adults, including virtual and in-person



sessions such as Yoga, Zumba, and fitness, special events, and educational and civic engagement opportunities. The WALLC program occupies the large room in the former church building at 248 Ossington notable for its high ceiling and stained-glass windows. On Thursdays, the drop-in takes place between 10 am and 4 pm, offering participants an opportunity to engage with their peers, share a meal, and enjoy each other's company.

In the morning, a group of women enjoy a meal prepared by participant volunteers with staff support. Later, seniors break out into different activities. Some take part in Zumba in the Stan Meek Community Hall located in the basement of the building. The Vietnamese-speaking Social Group also meets on Thursdays. Later in the afternoon, some seniors participate in Tai Chi and Qigong classes, which help older adults stay active, agile, and socially engaged. Some participants come simply to connect and socialize. One group is playing cards, while others chat and discuss upcoming events. One member, Margarida, who has been coming to the House for over a decade, is knitting a shawl.



Margarida shares that she started coming to the House to learn more about knitting, which she greatly enjoys. "I've made many handmade items for others, including my grandchildren. I always enjoyed knitting, but without the classes, I wouldn't be able to do as much as I can now."

Another participant, Maria Margarida, shares, "Without the House I'd be alone at home. I come here to de-stress because it's a very lively and friendly environment". She adds, "I like coming here and connecting with other people. It's good for me".

If you've attended the Seniors' Bazaar, BBQs, or other public events involving the WALLC program, you've likely met Estrela. As a participant, she also volunteers in many activities.

"I like serving food during programs, singing, helping organize special events, hosting the Bazaar, and assisting with summer BBQs in the courtyard. The other seniors

really enjoy it, and I love doing these things for them." Estrela, who has accessibility issues, received assistance from the staff in obtaining a walker. Estrela says, "Without the House, I'd feel alone. The House helps many people. If we need anything, we can always go to the staff, and they will find a way to help us. This is a community. We are all treated equally here." Estrela shares proudly.

While most programs wind down by 5 pm, the Newcomer Youth Program is just getting started. The program provides a variety of activities designed to develop skills, reduce social isolation, foster civic engagement, and enhance English-language skills, to help newcomer youth connect with others and be active members of the community.

Tonight, the staff is hosting the latest session of the Food with Friends series, where newcomer youth learn to make different meals from around the world. In honour of Pi Day, celebrated every March 14th, the youth are baking pies.



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The House extends its gratitude to our staff, community members, and partners who work together to create a more equitable and inclusive society where everyone can thrive.





SUPPORTING COMMUNITY

Working with Grassroots Groups and Building Community

Narcotics Anonymous: Rebuilding Lives Together

Our partnerships are integral to our mission to enable members of the community to gain greater control over their lives and within their community. Narcotics Anonymous (NA) has been a partner of West Neighbourhood House for over three decades. NA is a peer-led group that supports those who are experiencing or have experienced a problem with drug use.

Mario, one of the founders of the group, remains a dedicated member to this day. "There were only a few of us back then. We wanted to help the community," Mario recalls, reflecting on the group's humble beginnings in the neighbourhood. Over the years, the group has grown significantly, now meeting twice a week at our location at 248 Ossington Avenue.

"We decided that we were going to open a meeting, and we started to look around, and we approached the organization [then known as St. Christopher House]. They liked the idea, and we've been here over 30 years. We love being here. I think it's the perfect location. The organization is so good with the community, and we appreciate that. It's a win-win situation for all," Mario shares.

Initially, the group met in the kitchen at 248 Ossington. "In the first year, we were maybe 15-20 people, and then a year or two later, we added the Thursday night group. Now, we get 80-90 on Tuesday nights and maybe 40-50 on Thursday. We're one of the biggest groups in the Toronto area," Mario explains.

Narcotics Anonymous practices a 12-step model designed for people with various substance use disorders. Typically, each meeting begins with a series of readings, followed by attendees breaking out into smaller groups for more focused discussions.

"There's a therapeutic value of one addict helping another. That's how the fellowship works. We help each other out. We listen to one another. The older people have been around longer. They're the guides. We can't keep what we have unless we give it away. That's one of our sayings," Mario shares.

"Every one of us is a success story. Once a month, we'll have an open meeting, where we have a speaker and we encourage people to come, to hear us out. It's where sometimes people may bring their families. It's the last Tuesday of each month. It's open to the public and somebody shares their story. And they're all miracles," Mario adds.

"As part of our rules, each member respects each other's right to privacy," Mario emphasizes. He also talks about the importance of having a safe space to meet twice a week for the members to openly share each other's experiences.

"We can't imagine having these events at someone's house. It would be impossible. Where would we go? And how do we do that? We're an anonymous program. So, we can't just meet at the coffee shop and sit there and discuss our programs," Mario points out.

"We're very grateful. And, yes, facilities like yours are so needed and we'd love to see more of them. In another 100 years, we hope the community centre is still here to allow groups like us to come in and help the community," Mario concludes.

The House is proud to support Narcotics Anonymous and promote the well-being and inclusion of all community groups.

The Avengers Group

"I always knew that there's something I wanted to do to give back to the city. This is the city that raised me, so I really wanted to give back," Brian shares, a volunteer with the "Avengers" group.

For eight years, the Avengers have cooked and served warm meals for participants at the Meeting Place drop-in. Brian is the last of the original group organizers and is very passionate about their work with the community.

"The group was originally started by a woman who was not literally a Wonder Woman, but she was a super type-A for sure," Brian adds. Their group name is inspired by the popular comic book and movie franchise.

The Avengers began volunteering at another organization. Brian and the team decided to move when they heard about the kitchen renovations at the Meeting Place and eventually reached out to the House. Brian emphasizes having the support of the organization and the staff team has been important. "Staff have come and gone in my time here. I've always had a good relationship with them. I think it takes the right kind of person to work at the Meeting Place."

The group uses "Meetup" to connect people with similar interests. They have over 1,000 volunteers but usually bring eight to the Meeting Place on Saturdays. Brian has regular volunteers who assist with the Meeting Place drop-in meal on Saturdays, and he also likes to include new volunteers in the rotation.

"I always encourage the volunteers to get to know the members and hear their stories," Brian shares. Brian adds that his motivation to volunteer comes from his background and personal experiences. "I was born in Toronto, and where I first lived, there was quite a lot of homelessness. I saw it growing up."

He acquired his culinary skills from his father, who worked as a cook. "I learned to appreciate food, ingredients, and techniques. I don't know if he consciously taught me these things or if I learned from osmosis or by being near him."

"Eventually, this has extended to cooking for 60 to 100 people every other Saturday. So, it's fun. Cooking in large quantities is sometimes a challenge, but it's not just me who does the cooking, of course. I'm not the only one who comes with the recipes and menus, so I don't take credit for all of that," Brian emphasizes. Volunteers help plan the food served each week and contribute to the cost of ingredients. Brian notes that volunteers come from diverse backgrounds, reflecting Toronto's diversity. "It's great to lean on the various strengths that we have with our volunteers," Brian says proudly.

"Our group does what we can to try to make a nice hot meal and good food for people. We can't solve the housing issue ourselves, but we could do a little bit to make things better."

The House extends its appreciation to the Avengers group for their superhuman efforts to reduce food insecurity in our community.



Retirement and a New Phase

After retiring, Raymond found himself with some free time and decided to reconnect with the House. He recently began volunteering as a tutor in the Adult Literacy Program at West Neighbourhood House, teaching English-language skills.

"It's taken some adjustment, but it's not too different from teaching. Different subject matter. Different audience. In terms of the skills being used, it's pretty similar," he adds.

In addition, Raymond has been volunteering as a curling instructor and junior coach at the East York Curling Club since 2018. He also served on their Board of Directors. Staying engaged with the community is a priority for him in retirement.

"You finally got time again and you are kind of past a stage in your life where you're trying to accumulate stuff. Now, it's time to finally get out of that rat race and recover from all the stresses of working life, and you want to start being useful again. You have the option to choose what you want to do," Raymond shares contentedly.



Volunteer Comes Full Circle with the House

Raymond started with the House in 1984, volunteering to teach computer skills at a children's summer camp, which was among the first programs at our west-end location.

"They needed a computer person because computers were very new back then—and I was a computer guy," he recalls. Nervous at first, Raymond soon discovered he had a gift for working with kids. That summer launched several years of involvement, including after-school and camp programs that still exist today.

At the time, St. Christopher House (now West Neighbourhood House) was responding to the needs of a working-class, largely Portuguese community where children faced high dropout rates. Raymond saw how these programs exposed kids to new possibilities:

"They started seeing other sides of life, other than what they knew."

He was present for key milestones, including the move to 248 Ossington and the 75th anniversary celebrations in 1987. His early volunteer experience ultimately led him to a career as a math and computer science teacher.

"What I learned was that helping people is doing something constructive with your life."

Read Raymond's full story online at:
<https://www.westnh.org/literacyvolunteer/>





Thank you to our dynamic volunteers!

The House is very grateful to our **545 volunteers** who worked alongside the community and contributed **25,498 hours** to our programs. Your dedication and expertise is instrumental in fostering meaningful change in our neighbourhoods.

We would also like to extend our gratitude to our community partners, including United Way Greater Toronto's Days of Caring volunteers, BMO Day of Impact volunteers, Blankets for T.O. volunteers from York University, and the Fairwater Capital Corporation team, for their support and generosity.



PROGRAMS

How We Work with our Community

Children and Youth Programs

Parents

- Family drop-in program: parent and caregiver skill-building and support, social-recreational activities
- One-to-one support for families and caregivers
- Individual support for families who have experienced violence

Preschool-aged children

- Learning and social-recreational activities through play at drop-in centre

School-aged children

- After-school program: social-recreational activities, homework support
- School break and summer camps

Youth

- Newcomer Youth Program: skill development, mentorships, social-recreational activities, special events, youth-led community projects
- Youth after-school tutoring
- Youth leadership programs

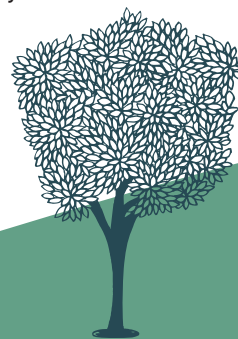
All Age Groups

- Recruit, screen and match volunteers and students to programs and projects
- Community Gardens, Good Food Market
- Climate change education and community development activities
- Leadership development and administrative supports for self-determining grassroots groups and mutual aid groups

- Social Medicine Housing Initiative in Parkdale
- Re-Thinking Community Safety Project
- Partner in Parkdale People's Economy Project
- Public education, research, community consultations, and advocacy

Adult Programs

- Women's Empowerment Program and transitional housing: outreach, case management, individual and group support for women who have experienced gender-based violence
- West Employment Services and Training: Employment coaching, skills development, career exploration, job search and retention support, connections with employers
- Financial Empowerment: individualized problem-solving, financial coaching, income tax clinics, public education, advocacy
- Immigrant and Refugee Services: settlement, employment related services, volunteer tutoring and mentoring, workshops, outreach, support to homeless/precariously housed newcomers and asylum seekers
- Adult Learning: individual tutoring, groups and small classes, academic upgrading including high school equivalency preparation, computer training and internet access
- The Meeting Place drop-in: basic needs (showers, laundry, telephones, computers, community kitchen), information and referral, mental health and addictions case management, Indigenous cultural and group supports, skill development and social recreation groups
- Intensive case management for housing stabilization
- Outdoor ecotherapy for healing in uncertain times
- Community space for Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings



Older Adults Programs

- Client and Family Services: intake, assessment and case management, crisis intervention, caregiver support and counselling, home visits
- Adult Day Program: supervised care in a group, in-home or on-line setting with multicultural activities and special events for frail individuals and those with Dementia or cognitive impairments
- Home Support: homemaking, personal care, respite care for caregivers
- Assisted Living and Supportive Housing: support for high-risk seniors with activities of daily living through homemaking, personal care, and response to emergencies 24/7
- Friendly Connections: regular monitoring, wellness checks, visiting, "social media club" online connections program
- Meals on Wheels: delivery of hot or frozen meals to homes, 6 days a week
- Transportation: member of Toronto Ride, provides rides for appointments, shopping, social activities and day programs
- Health Promotion: virtual programming, weekly workshops, health clinics, self-care groups, Health Action Theatre by Seniors (HATS) and arts studio
- West Active Living and Learning Centre (WALLC): leadership and community development, social and recreational activities, fitness, yoga and Zumba classes, intergenerational activities, and Portuguese Women 55+ social group
- Home at Last (HAL): in partnership with other agencies and hospitals, accompany seniors home upon hospital discharge and to follow up medical appointments
- Enhanced Community Supports for individuals transitioning from hospital to community-based care settings

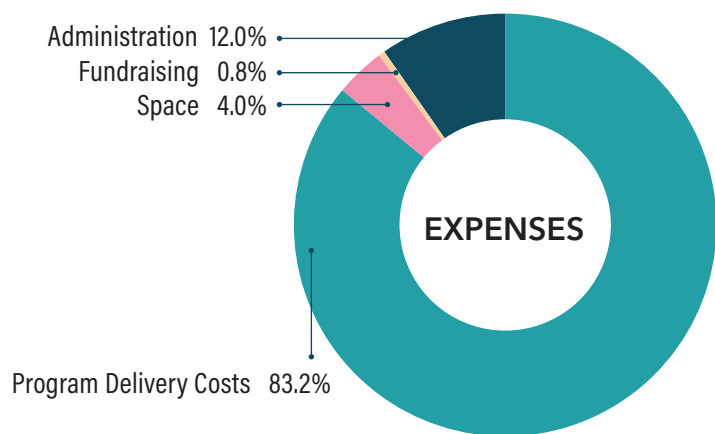
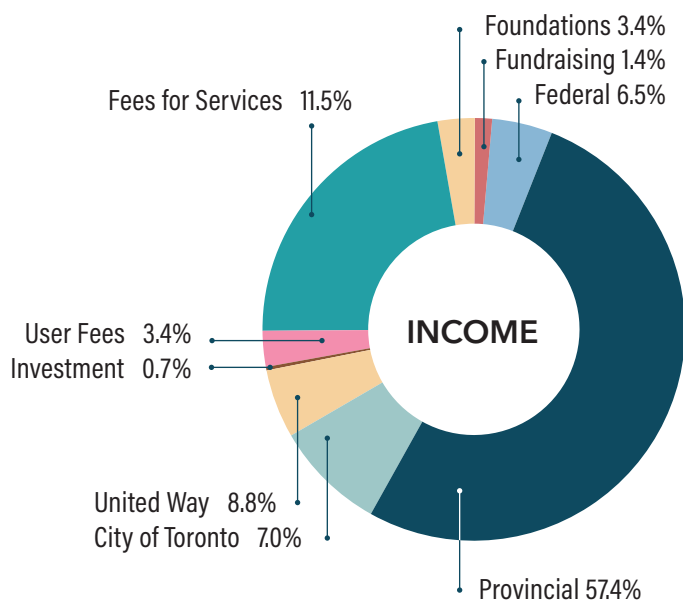


Welcoming & supporting new community members to Parkdale

By the Numbers

1,126	207	1,265
Pre-school children (0-6)	School-aged children (6-12)	Youth (13-24)
9,095	4,773	16,304
Adults (25-64)	Seniors (65+)	Total served

FINANCIALS



	Year Ended Mar. 31, 2025	Year Ended Mar. 31, 2024
Income		
Grants		
Federal	1,087,517	1,087,517
Provincial	9,583,478	9,901,746
City of Toronto	1,169,778	1,162,791
United Way	1,472,774	815,120
Foundations	563,835	529,965
Fundraising and Donations	226,815	216,216
Investment Income	114,169	120,485
	14,218,366	13,792,099
Fees		
User Fees	574,325	486,483
Fees for Services	1,914,482	1,235,623
Membership	0	0
Amortization of Capital Contributions	67,607	61,357
	16,774,780	15,575,562
Expenses		
Salaries and Benefits	12,410,700	11,656,822
Building Occupancy	669,375	684,432
Office Expenses	572,821	642,008
Recruitment and Education — Volunteers	27,224	22,849
Communication and Printing	11,020	14,964
Purchased Services	1,569,539	1,051,899
Staff Development	91,257	65,103
Staff Travel	87,041	87,041
Transportation	49,466	36,889
Food Services	432,507	518,596
Program Expenses	660,891	489,651
Fundraising Expenses	129,327	117,380
Depreciation Expense	77,575	64,225
	16,782,021	15,480,892
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses from operations	-7,241	95,170
Fair market value change in investments	276,238	277,830
Balance for the year	268,997	373,000

Note: Complete financial statements have been audited by Grant Thornton, Chartered Accountants and are available upon request.

DONORS AND FUNDERS



Leadership Donors

We thank the following individuals for their generous support. Their contributions to our community are deeply appreciated.

\$500 to \$999

Katherine Childs & Paul Hess
Norie C. Campbell
David Clarry
Susan Cole
Judy Gargaro
Sheila Gregory & Eugene Knapik
Stephanie Hodnett
Mr. S. Hurley
Michael Kaluzny
Vijay Khurana
Adrienne Lipsey

Philip Marion
Earl & Josephine Miller
Carlos & Odete Nascimento
Ms. Maria D.C.M. Nunes
Ms. Margaret Olson & Dr. Michel Hoffman
T. Pankewycz
Brent & Stephanie Poole
Patricia Quinn
Holly Stanczak
David Stonehouse
Martin Sykes
Tywen Thomas
Anonymous

\$1,000 to \$1,999

Andresa Andrade
Jill E. Black
Christine Campbell
(In honour of Rick Eagan)
Chander Chaddah
Wesley Dutcher-Walls
Hanny Elsayed
Charles & Robynne Eagan
and Family
Brad James
Chris Jones

Dr. Zayna Khayat
Dr. & Mrs. A. Lentini
Andrew Manning
Tom McCauley &
Sandra Cruickshanks
Diana McLachlan, Cale &
Joni Brillinger
Jane & Gordon Morwood
L. Nikolaou & B. Titus
Dr. Emily Paradis & Ms. Sarah Fowle
Will Falk
Anonymous

\$2,000 or more

Rona Abramovitch
Claude Breeze
E. Diokno
L. Eakin & D. Young
M. Fair & W. Shaw
J. David Hulchanski
Tom & Susan Main
Eileen McMahon &
Mark Scinocca Family
Stanley Meek

Estate of Bruce Monick
Peter Olteanu
(In Honour of Tony Seaward)
Prasad Rao
Estate of Charles F. Scott
Joe Sheehan
Simone Aurora Simmons
The Torbey Family
Margaret White
Anonymous





DONORS AND FUNDERS

A heartfelt
thank you to our
supporters!

West Neighbourhood House
extends its deepest gratitude to
all our funders and donors for
their support in 2024-2025.

Every contribution, no matter the
size, has a significant impact.
We are grateful to each of our
over 400 donors for their
generosity and commitment to
strengthening our community.

Government of Canada

Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation
Canada Revenue Agency
Employment & Social Development Canada
Canada Summer Jobs
New Horizons for Seniors
Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada
Settlement Directorate
Public Health Agency of Canada
Health Programs & Services

City of Toronto

Children's Services Division
Shelter, Support & Housing Administration Division
Social Development, Finance & Administration Division
Toronto Employment and Social Services Division

Other

DUCA Impact Lab's Escalator Loan Program
Prosper Canada
United Way of Greater Toronto

Province of Ontario

Ministry of Children, Community &
Social Services
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
Ontario Health

Ministry of Labour, Immigration,
Training and Skills Development
Employment Ontario
Literacy and Basic Skills
Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility
Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport

Associations/ Community Groups/ Sources of Donations

Art Gallery of Ontario	Kiwanis Club of Casa Loma
Benevity Community Impact Fund	Landscape Ontario Horticultural
CanadaHelps	Royal Ontario Museum
Epiphany & St. Mark Anglican Church	Miziwe Biik
Fixthe6ix Committee	Needlework Guild of Canada
Givins/Shaw Junior Public School,	Royal Ontario Museum
Givins/Shaw School Council	UHN Social Medicine Initiative
Hopologia	VHA Home HealthCare
Horticultural Societies of	West NH Older Adult Centre
Parkdale and Toronto	Members' Council
Kids Up Front	
Kingsway-Lambton United	
Church - Women (UCW)	

Foundations

Aston Family Foundation
CHUM Charitable Foundation
Echo Foundation
D. H. Gordon Foundation
Harry A. Newman Memorial Foundation
Kids Up Front Foundation
La Fondation Emmanuelle Gattuso
Newall Family Foundation Trust
Sonor Foundation
TD Friends of the
Environment Foundation
The Henry White Kinnear Foundation

The St. Christopher House
Community Endowment
The Toronto Star Fresh Air Fund
Toronto Foundation
Adult Education & Literacy Fund
Whole Kids Foundation

Corporations/Local Businesses

Argo Lumber
Campbell Craft Consulting Inc.
Hillsdale Investment Management Inc.
Ipsen Canada
Matrix360
Package Implementation Consultants Ltd.
Palais Royale Corporation
Paris Paris
Reuven International Ltd.
Rogers Computer Technology Inc.
Tamarack Limited
Uncommon Toronto Ltd.



We are very grateful and deeply touched by the late Charles F. Scott's generosity and legacy gift to our St. Christopher House Community Endowment. Charles' leadership as former House Board President and Endowment Board President, along with his sharp wit and philanthropy over the years, will be fondly remembered by many of us who had the honour of working with him.

OUR LOCATIONS:

Dundas/Ossington

1 248 Ossington Avenue

Meeting Place

2 588 Queen Street West

Parkdale Community Programs

3 1497 Queen Street West

Parkdale Assisted Living

Seniors Active Living Centres

4 20/25 West Lodge Avenue

5 Springhurst Manor, 1447 King Street West

Families and Capacity Building

6 1033 King Street West

Greenest City Program

7 220 Cowan Avenue



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We thank each individual for their efforts towards equity, justice, and social change. We appreciate everyone whose skills, kindness, and contributions have helped to build relationships, solve problems, and make positive change in our neighborhoods.

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