

“Unwavering” What Does It Mean?



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Message From Our CEO



Over the past few months, we have been asking people what they think it is that makes LOFT unique – what are the things about LOFT that really set it apart. I'll speak about this topic more in future issues, but want to start with something cited by a number of people – the unwavering nature of our commitment to those we serve.

In this issue of Connections we take a look at what that “unwavering” characteristic means to our work, and how it manifests itself. This strikes at the very core of our values.

There are a lot of things going on at LOFT these days, and we want to bring you up to date on at least some of these activities. Of course the Holiday Season approaches and our Volunteer Committee is already fully at work preparing for this year's fundraising concert. This December 6th will mark LOFT's 20th Annual Concert – can you believe it!

As I write this, we are experiencing the first truly cold weather of the season, which means we are coming closer to the end of the year. That makes it seem most appropriate that I end this message with an expression of sincere thanks to all the donors who have supported the work of LOFT in 2010.

So, from all of us here at LOFT: staff, clients and board members, to You and Yours, our wish for a Very Happy Holiday Season and a Joyous New Year.

Sincerely,

Terry McCullum, M.S.W., M.A.
CEO

“Unwavering” What Does

It Means: Sticking with People

What do we mean when we say that LOFT is “unwavering” in its work? There are several meanings, but the most obvious is found in answer to the question, “How long can a client stay?” “How long will you stick with them?”

The simple answer is “As long as they need us.” Of course, the reality is more complex. But the point is that LOFT does not put a time limit on service. It is always the goal to provide every client with the supports they need to fulfill their individual personal potential.

Each person is unique, and each client must follow his or her own individual path to recovery. That may mean we work with a person for three months, or it may mean three years.

*...at LOFT
we stick with our
clients as long as
they need us.*

“Unwavering” also means that LOFT does not close the door on a client because they are not immediately successful, or because they experience a slip or a relapse. None of us is perfect. We all have our good moments and our bad moments, and just because someone has a bad moment, that does not mean we should give up on them.

Whether, like most of our Youth clients, their path to recovery will take them out of our programs and on to become self-sustaining, contributing community members, or whether, like most of our Senior clients, their issues prevent them from living completely independently, at LOFT we stick with our clients as long as they need us.

That's one way LOFT is “unwavering.”

“Unwavering” What Does It Mean?

It Means: Believing in People’s Abilities

Just as LOFT makes a commitment to our clients, clients also make an equally unwavering commitment to themselves, their abilities, their journeys of recovery, and to getting involved in their LOFT program. Client advisory groups and planning groups are common in our programs.

A couple of years ago, a group of young women at Ingles House were instrumental in the development of a new house for young women recovering from addiction and wanting to live in an abstinent environment; the first of its kind at LOFT and unique in Toronto.

At Wilkinson Housing and Support Services, a group of staff and clients are playing a consultative role in the hiring of new program staff. The clients who make up the Wilkinson Core Group plan and present a series of activities and social opportunities for the benefit of all Wilkinson clients. At SOS (Street Outreach Services) there is a Peer Advisory Group helping to ensure that street youth have a formal voice.



At Crosslinks Housing and Support Services in York Region, there is a very active creative writing group and a client speakers group called “Reaching out For the Homeless”.

These are a few examples of channeling our belief in people’s abilities to make them partners in LOFT’s provision of “unwavering” service and support.



It Means: Being Available In Times of Crisis

Part of LOFT’s promise of unwavering care means being available when people need help.

The recent terrible fire at the big Toronto Community Housing Corporation apartment building on Wellesley Street left something like 1,200 hundred people temporarily without a place to live for an extended period while structural engineers work to identify any safety hazards that might have resulted from the fire, and make repairs.

Although LOFT does not run any programs in that building, or have any formal partnership there, it was home to some of our community support clients who, like all the other residents of the building, were left without a place to live.

We were able, fairly quickly, to find alternate housing for all LOFT clients affected. But more than that, we were also able to provide support for Wellesley Street residents who were not our clients. LOFT Seniors Programs in particular have accepted a number of former Wellesley Street residents.

Sometimes, “unwavering” means being flexible and responsive in times of crisis.

The Marathon That Keeps on Giving

The Marathon That Keeps on Giving
On September 26th, LOFT participated in the Charity Challenge at the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon, Half-Marathon and 5K. The goal was to strengthen relationships between all our programs, and to raise funds for some of their special needs.



Kay Roesslein, Program Director at McEwan Housing & Support Services, chaired the race committee. Following are some excerpts from her thank you letter to participating staff.

"There is much I want to share, and many I wish to thank.

- The personal achievements were outstanding, and both collectively and individually empowering. Many participants were proud and enthused by their own accomplishments, whether in the cheering section or completing the 5 K.



- It was especially significant that staff and clients participated together, on a level playing field, with no differentiation – that's so "LOFT"!

- An additional sense of achievement came with fundraising. Many of us are accustomed to giving, but asking is a greater challenge. But ask we did, and – wow – did we receive! (This was my personal challenge. With my daughter in tow, we circled the neighbourhood and dog park inviting sponsorship. So many willingly contributed, and so many soon learned even more about LOFT, and extended their sincere appreciation for the work LOFT does. Awesome!)

- The Cheering Section was the brightest, biggest and most vocal one there! Repeatedly, I heard from walkers and runners alike how you boosted morale, and kept us all fortified with your energy!



- The scrumptious celebratory BBQ afterwards gave an opportunity to exchange our adventures and successesand start planning for next year.

Truly, that many have already begun to plan for next year is the real proof of the success of the event. With our pre-existing skills and our newly acquired talents, plus lessons learned, the vision continues to grow.

Run/walk with us next year on October 16, 2011!

Thank you one and all!"

To see photos of the race, go to www.loftcs.org and click on What's New.

2010 Race Results

Total amount raised:
\$29,051.71

Number of runners/walkers - 126:

- Marathon - 2
- Half-marathon - 13
- 5k - 111

Number of volunteers - 41

Total staff, clients, family & friends - 167

Number of donors sponsoring runners/walkers - 681

Team Raising the Largest Amount:

Richmond Street (administrative office) - \$5,945.71

Largest Team:

McEwan Housing & Support Services - 23

Consolation Prize:

Wilkinson Housing & Support Services - 2nd largest team - 16;
2nd largest amount - \$4,275.00

Team raising the most/member:

Etobicoke Group Residence - 2 team members - \$1,465.00 or \$837.50 each

Top3 Fundraisers:

- 1) Amanda DaCosta, Wilkinson Program Director - \$2,710.00
- 2) Jim Nason, LOFT Director of Operations - \$2,205.00
- 3) Lisa Davies, Etobicoke Group Residence - \$1,204.37

33 individuals who raised \$200 or more had their names entered into a draw for "fabulous" prizes.

LOFT thanks our race sponsors:



20th ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT
Home for the Holidays

Monday, December 6, 2010 at 7:30 pm
 at St. James' Cathedral

Please indicate which level of ticket you require:

Benefactor Level \$500 quantity: _____
 (includes 2 tickets in preferred seating, a tax receipt for \$440
 and two invitations to the post-concert reception at the Albany Club)

Patron Level \$100 each quantity: _____
 (includes 1 ticket, a tax receipt for \$70)

General Level \$30 each quantity: _____

If ordering patron or benefactor tickets, please print your name as you would like to be listed in our program:

I cannot attend however, I want to make a donation of \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ PC: _____

Daytime Phone Number: _____

Payment Method: Cheque VISA MasterCard

Card Number: _____

Exp. Date: _____

Card Holder's Name: _____

Signature: _____

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Please mail order form to:

LOFT Community Services
 301-205 Richmond St. West
 Toronto, ON M5V 1V3

or order tickets by phone:
 416 979 1994, ext. 233
 or by fax: 416 979 3028

This Christmas Concert sells out every year,
 don't bed!

Sponsored by:



David and Stephanie Keeley



Don and Gretchen Ross

Media Sponsor:



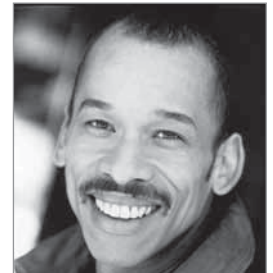
Print Sponsor:



Don Fraser and Connor, Clark & Lunn PRIVATE CAPITAL LTD.



Karen Kain, Honourary Patron



Billy Newton Davis



Mark DuBois



Jean Edwards

Please join us at LOFTS' 20th Annual Christmas Concert for a memorable evening of cheer and goodwill. Artistic Director, Kelly Walker will have assembled a star-studded cast of prominent Canadian performers who have generously donated their time and talent to help raise money to support LOFT's efforts.

The Concert will be held on Monday, December 6, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. at St. James' Cathedral, Church and King Streets, in Toronto.

This year we hope to pass our goal of \$100,000 to support the homeless and those who are at risk of becoming homeless in our community through your support and the generous contributions of corporate sponsors.

It Means: Being A Catalyst for Change

Being "unwavering" sometimes means taking the lead for change and social justice, especially for those who are left most vulnerable by their circumstances.

Take, for example, our work with Seniors. A decade ago, LOFT took action to address the plight of at-risk and especially vulnerable seniors.

While there was support for people dealing with the physical challenges of aging, and for those experiencing Alzheimer or other age-related dementias, there was very little support for seniors with mental health and addiction issues, especially if they were poor and homeless and lacking family support.

When we first began serving this group of at-risk seniors, no one else was doing it, but we persevered. There was no specialized funding available for this work, so we used charitable dollars to supplement our regular funding to create a program that would be responsive to this complex set of needs. And it worked.

Over time we began to accept more and more of these hard-to-serve seniors, including some who, according to conventional wisdom, needed nursing home care, or even hospitalization. Our programs were clearly improving the quality of life of older adults and seniors, but costing far less than nursing homes or hospitals. It was also clear that even as our programs grew – from 65 to 175 to 360 to 610 clients – we were not coming close to meeting the existing need. And as our society ages, the need will only grow.

So we began to spread the word, advocating for expanded services and changes to the government funding model. LOFT staff sought opportunities to speak to small community groups and large conferences in order to talk about this work and how we do it, and to encourage others to become involved.

It took almost ten years for the government to really recognize the needs of these seniors and to formulate new strategies and funding programs. But change is finally happening, and LOFT is in the forefront of advocacy for some of the most forgotten in our community.

There is more to be done, and with the help of our donors, we are continuing to take leaps of faith to work both toward improving and developing our own programs, and toward change in the health-care system overall.

Look for LOFT on the new
Toronto Community Foundation Community
Knowledge Centre, at
www.ckc.tcf.ca

LOFT AGM

The 2010 LOFT Annual General Meeting took place on June 22nd at the historic St. Lawrence Hall at the corner of King and Jarvis in Toronto's downtown.

Staff, board members, donors, colleagues and clients came together to celebrate the successes of the 2009/10 year. The biggest development at LOFT in 2009/10 was the opening of the tremendously successful Crosslinks Seniors Housing and Support Services, serving at-risk seniors in the Jane and Finch neighbourhood.

Crosslinks Seniors staff, clients and service partners from Jane and Finch told the story of this new program in a presentation they entitled: "Joy and Community in Jane/Finch".

LOFT Needs Your HELP

Please consider making a donation in order to help those in need.

Donations can be made online at www.loftcs.org by phone or mail:

LOFT Community Services
205 Richmond St. West
Suite 301
Toronto, ON M5V 1V3
Phone: 416-979-1994
Fax: 416-979-3028

The Gift That Keeps On Giving

Have you thought about including LOFT in your Will? A Bequest to LOFT's investment fund will generate a steady stream of income for years to come.

For more information contact the Development Office:

416-979-1994, ext. 227
or email: jcorbett@loftcs.org

Adopt-A-Senior

Every Holiday Season a group of volunteers get together to ensure that vulnerable seniors participating in LOFT programs will be assured of a visit from Santa and a gift of their own for Christmas.

The volunteers do all the work of shopping and wrapping, and they canvass friends, family and associates to raise the money they need to purchase the gifts. They then host a Party at each program where Santa himself presents the gifts.



For as little as \$20 you can help Roza, Shiva, Effie and their intrepid group of volunteers to help LOFT seniors have a Happy Holiday Season. Call Irene at 416-979-1994, ext 222 or go to www.loftcs.org and click on the Donate Now button.