

# LOFT

## *Moving Forward*

LOFT Community Services

Report to the Community 10/11



## Welcome to LOFT

LOFT Community Services promotes recovery and independence for the most vulnerable, including those with mental health and physical and addiction challenges, the homeless, the abused and the abandoned. Our services provide permanent housing and support services and respond to the changing needs of our diverse communities.

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## LOFT Staff Long Service Recognition

LOFT is privileged to have an exceptionally committed and passionate staff. During 2010/11 we celebrated the following anniversaries.

### 30 Years

Paul Demaniw

### 15 Years

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### 10 Years

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# LOFT

*Dear Friends and Supporters,*



Nothing stands still these days. It seems the whole world is in a constant state of change. This is no less true here at LOFT. Every day is different as we respond to societal and demographic shifts, the changing needs of our diverse communities and the ebb and flow of the world around us.

The important thing is that we are constantly moving forward, seeking better ways to serve our clients and creating innovative responses to emerging community needs. Just 30 months ago LOFT was serving about 300 at-risk seniors, now that number has risen to over 700!

Fifteen months ago, homeless street people with HIV/AIDS who also have mental illness and addiction challenges were too often caught in an ongoing cycle of street-to-hospital-to-shelter-to-street. Now, more than 70 of these especially marginalized men and women have joined Health & Home, our new Service Coordination Project, and nearly 50 have found permanent housing.

As part of this process of change, every one of our programs goes through an annual process of review and assessment of its work to ensure services remain relevant and responsive to clients' and society's needs. This keeps us all moving forward.

At the same time, inspiring us every day by their energy and determination, our clients move forward with change, each in his or her own way, towards independence, recovery and new beginnings.

We are also moving forward in the way we represent ourselves publicly, with a new logo incorporating a human figure right into our name in the form of the 'T-dot' icon – a visual representation of LOFT's people-centred values.

LOFT is truly fortunate to have a staff of passionate individuals whose dedication keeps us moving. And of course, we are extremely grateful to all our donors and supporters who provide us with the resources to make this forward movement possible.

On behalf of everyone involved at LOFT, we thank all those whose contributions help keep us daily in motion.

Sincerely,

**Shayne Hutton**

Chair, LOFT Board of Directors

**Terry McCullum**

CEO, LOFT Community Services

*"I have a special  
name for the staff ....  
I call them  
my 'Little Angels'."*



## Promoting Healthier Communities

Healthy communities promote the individual health of their members, but not everyone has equal access to services. LOFT supports healthier communities by promoting and supporting the health of some of the most at-risk individuals: people with mental health or substance abuse issues, the physically challenged, the frail, the poor, the isolated, the homeless and the abused. LOFT is also playing a role in addressing the overcrowded and over-burdened health care system, by coordinating access to housing and services for those in need and by taking people directly from hospital into supportive housing freeing up hospital beds for the critically ill.



### HIGHLIGHTS

**Freeing hospital beds** – On any given day, between 451 and 629 Toronto hospital beds are taken up by seniors who are only there because they have nowhere else to go. Unable to live on their own, without family support or financial means, and with mental health or addiction issues that keep them out of nursing homes, they become trapped.

**102** – number of seniors who have safely left hospital since April 2009 and returned to the community with proper supports, thanks to LOFT.

**19,872** – reduction in the number of hospital days for all clients currently in LOFT adult and seniors programs in their first year as LOFT clients, compared to the period prior to joining LOFT (equivalent of 54.5 years).

**Innovative programming** – In June, 2009, LOFT launched a small Service Coordination Project (also called Health & Home) to support some of the city's most marginalized homeless men and women: those living on the street with HIV/AIDS in combination with mental illness and substance abuse issues. Without LOFT these individuals simply cycle between the shelter system and hospital emergency and inpatient departments. After the initial government grant expired, LOFT has been using charitable funds to keep it going.

**76** – number of clients to join the Service Coordination Project since it began offering services in June, 2009.

**48** – number of Service Coordination Project clients so far in permanent housing.

*About 10 months ago, Wendy became a client of the Service Coordination Project. She is now living at McEwan House, LOFT's high support shared home for men and women with HIV/AIDS who also have mental health or addiction issues and histories of homelessness, and her health is improving.*

## Wendy's Story

Wendy loves McEwan House!

About ten months ago, she was at Casey House HIV/AIDS Hospice, recovering from a broken leg. She was sitting outside in her wheelchair when a man came down the street. He sat down beside her and they started to talk. He was from the LOFT Service Coordination Project and his name was Marco.

He became Wendy's case worker. "If it hadn't been for Marco, I'd be dead". He came to see her every day with a large coffee – double-double. Wendy has schizophrenia as well as physical health challenges, which means she has a lot of medications to take every day, and she's not that crazy about swallowing all those huge pills. Every day Marco would offer Wendy a trade – "meds for coffee". Wendy would swallow her pills, and Marco would give her the coffee.

Before she met Marco, Wendy had bounced around from shelter to shelter. She had had pneumonia, heart failure... she had been hospitalized many times. She was thrown out of one shelter for aggressive behaviour. When she was ready to leave the Casey House Hospice, Marco took her to McEwan House.

She said "What is this place?" and Marco, Adam, Senny, Charles and other McEwan staff were all there saying "Welcome, Wendy! This is your new home!" Before she knew it the staff had carried her things upstairs. She felt at home very quickly.

Wendy says McEwan House is a beautiful setting with a beautiful and caring staff. When she needed 24-hour care and didn't know where to get it, McEwan gave it to her. She has gained weight, is feeling much better and now she hopes she will soon be ready to leave McEwan House and get a place of her own, where she can still be supported by the McEwan program.



# Filling The Gaps

One of the truly defining characteristics of LOFT is our long history of stepping outside conventionally defined parameters. Our role, and our goal, continues to be to reach out to those who fall through the cracks in the existing social safety net. When LOFT identifies a need where we feel we can make a valuable contribution, we bring together our own expertise, whatever government funding sources can apply and the charitable support of our donors, and we develop simple, practical yet highly innovative solutions to fill the gap.



## HIGHLIGHTS

**Addiction Housing** – LOFT has entered into a co-operative venture with Fife House, providing 32 new supportive housing units for people with HIV/AIDS who are also dealing with serious addictions. Fife House is providing the housing and LOFT is bringing to bear our extensive experience in supporting complex needs. Clients are being referred to this new housing by a variety of community agencies, including LOFT’s Service Coordination Project.

**Needy Seniors** – In December 2010, LOFT was asked to use its expertise in serving at-risk seniors to make an assessment of a group of seniors living in supportive housing in York Region. We found some very high need seniors living with few resources. The resulting report will now be used by the Central LHIN (Local Health Integration Network) to help channel services to this group of needy seniors.

**LOFT Client Profile** – The following are the top 6 issues as reported by clients joining LOFT adult and senior programs.

Adult Clients	Senior Clients
Housing – 532	Activities of Daily Living – 333
Mental Illness – 503	Mental Illness – 234
Financial – 380	Housing – 213
Addictions – 225	Financial – 81
Problems with Relationships – 261	Addictions – 60
Legal Issues - 195	Problems with Relationships – 53

Indication of the complexity of issues experienced by LOFT adult and senior clients.

Adult Clients	Senior Clients
Mental Illness + Addiction – 316	Mental Illness + Addiction – 69
Mental Illness + Developmental Issue – 43	Mental Illness + Development Issue - 21

# Esther's Story



I was a high school teacher in the Philippines for 12 years. I graduated when I was 18. I loved it! I was very strict. I told my students, 'Your parents work hard to support you. Your education is very important and it will be valuable to you.' I was a very popular teacher.

When I came to Canada I worked as a nanny and after two years I was able to sponsor my mom to join me. Two years after that, I applied for a job in the mail department at the Bank of Montreal. It was very hard work. We received training, but soon I found a better and faster way. My supervisors told me about an opening in securities trading and they gave me a reference. So I became a trader. I could hardly believe it.

I loved being a teacher, but this was even more challenging and wonderful. When you love your job you really put your heart and soul into it and you enjoy it. I was the only woman on the trading floor. They said I was tough. I don't think so, but I worked hard. I became head trader and continued until I retired.

After I retired and my daughters moved away, I lost my beloved mom. She had Alzheimer and I was her care-giver. That's when my problems started. I became depressed and stopped going out. One day they found me knocking on my neighbour's door asking 'Where is my mom?' In the hospital I found out that I also have early-stage Alzheimer and it would not be safe for me to go home again so I came to John Gibson House.

At first I thought, 'I don't belong here.' But then I saw that some of the residents reminded me of my mom. I said to myself 'Esther, in this house there are people who need you,' and I felt better right away.

So I just decided to get involved and help out wherever I can. I share my life and treat everyone like my family. When I was hospitalized recently, they said 'Esther, where were you? We missed you!'

One of the most wonderful experiences that ever happened to me is that these people care about me and I about them. I feel I have another new beginning. I am honoured to do this for the rest of my life.



## Everyone Matters & Everyone Can Change

When society marginalizes people it is, in a way, giving up on them – saying “nothing more can be done”. At LOFT we know that this is not true. Every person has the ability to grow and change and we feel it is essential that each client have control of his or her own life and the ability to make the choices they feel are best. LOFT staff members support each client individually as they set goals, identify and overcome obstacles, and chart their individual paths of recovery.



## HIGHLIGHTS

**1,140** - number of clients housed in the last fiscal year.

**516** - number of clients who received case management while in LOFT housing.

**670** - number of clients who received case management in non-LOFT housing.

**1,855** - number of clients who received outreach services.

**3,665** - total number of clients served.

**Transitional Age Youth** – LOFT has long played an important role in serving transitional age youth – young men and women between 16 and 24, who have become too old for children’s services, but not yet adults. This often meant they had no services. LOFT has focused its youth services on this extremely underserved age group with high-support group homes, nearly-independent living in our youth co-op houses and a range of support and counselling services.

**2** – number of new youth co-op houses opened by LOFT over the past year.

**73** – average number of transitional age youth living in LOFT housing at any given moment.

Examples of numbers served April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011:

**42** – young women in recovery from serious addiction.

**155** – men and women with HIV/AIDS in combination with mental health or addiction issues and histories of homelessness (not including Service Coordination Project clients).

**105** – men and women with mental health and addiction issues and histories of homelessness who are in conflict with the criminal justice system.

**1,451** – individuals served by LOFT’s York Region street outreach van.

Dave is a client of LOFT/Crosslinks Street Outreach and Services Network, operator of York Region's only street outreach van, serving nearly 1,500 clients a year.

## The Hill,

by Dave

Don't laugh at me  
This could be you  
Walking the dark road  
Walking in my shoes.

For I did not want  
To be this way  
Wrong place – Wrong time  
"NO" is what I could not say.

Now the road back  
Is 10 times as long;  
uphill all the way  
Always to remember  
I'm always falling down.

Then I pick myself up  
And up the hill I go again  
With my head bowed down  
And cutting through the wind.

Feeling a hand on me  
Pushing me back down  
I dig in deeper  
Trying not to lose track.

Then I fall again – not too far  
The dark road has light at the end  
But today I am still far, far away  
Trying not to quit

Keep moving I say!



*"When I came here,  
it was the first  
time in my life  
anyone celebrated  
my birthday."*

## Independence & Recovery

Our aim is to support each client in fulfilling their potential. For clients of LOFT Services for Youth, that probably means finishing school, getting employment, and becoming a self-sufficient member of society. For clients of LOFT Services for Seniors it means living safely and happily in the community for as long as possible. In all cases, it means encouraging opportunities that will empower every client to feel themselves to have hope and to be a welcome, valued and contributing member of their community.



### HIGHLIGHTS

**26** – number of clients of LOFT adult programs who returned to school in the past year as a result of gaining stability in their lives. One client said, “It was always my dream to go to university. I never thought it would be possible.”

Many LOFT clients, as they re-take control of their lives and recover their stability, want to become active in the life of their support programs, and to contribute to their community:

**5** – number of clients of LOFT’s Mental Health and Justice Initiative who have recently formed a volunteer committee to coordinate keeping their program site clean and neat.

**12** – number of participants in Wilkinson Housing and Support Services first Annual Dramatic Arts and Comedy Festival, November 23, 2010.

**300** – estimated number of current and former clients of McEwan Housing and Support Services who come together for social events several times a year as members of the McEwan General Residents Association.

**8** – number of clients in the Crosslinks Housing and Support Services Writing Group.

## Alex's Story

I was a daily user and drinker – cocaine, alcohol, anything really – I wasn't picky about substances. I was in severe, active addiction for three years. I have been sober for seven months, and I've been here at Ingles for four. I am 21 years old.

I grew up in a farming community and moved to Toronto for university. My high school boyfriend passed away and I had an eating disorder. It was not knowing how to cope, really.

I went back and forth, accepting that I had a problem, looking for treatment – then it would all blow up and I'd be in the hospital saying "How did I get here?" The black-outs got longer and the consequences got worse. I was escorting. Anything to get money – and also to validate my existence.

I got into an eating disorder program on condition that I deal with the addiction as well.

When you first come out of rehab you don't know what to do. You don't know how to live sober. Then Ingles came up and it's perfect. It's like a whole bunch of sisters. It is unbelievably supportive.

If you don't want to do it – you don't want to take care of yourself because you don't feel you are worthy – you need someone to help out. You can't go wrong with a bunch of girls who care about you.

When I think back four months, it's scary. When you are an addict, you are so lost.

I am planning to resume school in the Fall, toward a visual arts degree. It feels great to be working towards something I'm passionate about.

The important thing for people to know is that there is a community for everyone, especially for those not talked about: addictions, eating disorders – you have help. I used to think that everyone. "I used to think that everyone pretty much ran their own show. Now I know that's not true. This community of people saved me. It is important for everyone to have their community of people.

*Ingles House is one of LOFT's foundation programs and the only post-treatment residential program in the region for young women recovering from serious addiction.*

## Michelle's Story

I'm 24 years old and I've had eight years of addiction - heroine. I was using all through university. I didn't get the greatest marks. But I have a BA in Psychology and thank God I have it.

I was in rehab twice. The first time, when I came out I was completely overwhelmed and that's when I hit bottom. I didn't know what to do when I got out the second time. I didn't have any money and I didn't think there would be anything I could afford.

Ingles is like an amazing gift.

Here I have my own room in a nice place and people I can relate to. I am taking courses in Addictions Studies by correspondence from McMaster. I want to work in this field, to give something back.

When I came to Ingles it was a little uncomfortable at first, but then I got to know the girls and realized we all have things in common. I came in with nothing and nobody and I have made some really good friendships. I am sure we are going to keep in touch.

Living here is a major stress relief. I have a place to go and my own room, where I can exercise my independence while still feeling safe. I have seen a lot of changes in myself this time. I see positive thinking. I am turning around.

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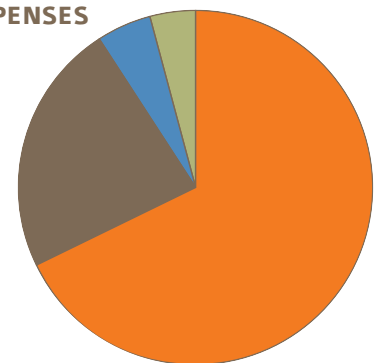
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Operating expenses for the Fiscal Year ended March 31, 2011

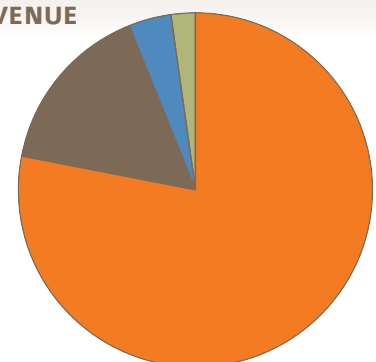
**\$20.5 Million**

**EXPENSES**



- 68% client support costs
- 23% housing costs
- 5% administrative overhead
- 4% client personal needs

**REVENUE**



- 79% government funding
- 16% resident contribution (rent)
- 5% charitable dollars
- 2% other income



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and goals, and a purpose  
for every day."*



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