

CONNECTIONS

LOFT COMMUNITY SERVICES NEWSLETTER • VOLUME 28 • SPRING 2009

Working Together...

WORKS!

Jackie Richardson and Kelly Walker after the Christmas Concert

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LOFT
LEAP OF FAITH
TOGETHER
Community Services

Bringing **Hope** and **Recovery** Home

Message From Our CEO



The days are getting longer and the sun is higher in the sky and, although it doesn't always feel like it is getting warmer, we know that Spring is coming. It is too bad the economic forecast is not as bright.

Economic downturns are especially challenging in the social services sector. The demand for our services increases just as governments tighten their belts. These are certainly difficult times, and we will all have to weather them as best we can. We are fortunate indeed to have such loyal and supportive donors.

In hard times, communities tend to pull together, so in this issue of Connections we are highlighting just a few of the ways in which LOFT pulls together with clients, volunteers, donors and other service agencies for the good of our clients.

The annual Christmas Concert is a wonderful story of collaboration: the Cathedral, Ryerson Theatre School, our sponsors, the artists, the audience. Remove any one of these elements and the endeavour would fail.

Some partnerships, like the new Coordinated Access project, exist behind the scenes. Others, like the efforts of Cushman & Wakefield, LePage and their colleagues in the commercial real estate world, are more high profile.

The single element that energizes all these partnerships is the wish to do good in the world, and to contribute to the quality of the lives of some of the most vulnerable and marginalized people in our communities.

Working together works. We see it every day at LOFT. And we certainly see it in the support of you, our donors, in joining with us to serve our clients.

Sincerely,

Terry McCullum, CEO

Youth Network Launches Screening Tool

The term "Concurrent Disorders" is used when an individual has both a mental illness and an addiction. It has been felt that the incidence of concurrent disorders among youth has been commonly under-reported, at least in part because there has not been an easy means of assessment.

Currently, LOFT is participating in an initiative to implement a short addictions and mental health screening tool at its youth programs. A 6-month pilot project has been designed and undertaken by ten agencies serving youth in the housing, hospital, support and outreach sectors.

LOFT hopes the project will help determine the prevalence of these concurrent disorders among youth by ensuring we ask consistent, proven effective questions to every client.

Information from this pilot project will be released in July 2009 and will help service providers work together to ensure that any gaps in service are filled. "Once we find out more about the complex needs of the youth we serve, we will be better equipped as an agency and a sector to answer their needs", said Heather McDonald, the Director of Adult and Youth Services at LOFT Community Services.



Working Together Works

"No man is an island..." wrote the English poet John Donne in a phrase we have been repeating for nearly 400 years. At LOFT we would add that organizations should not be islands either. In fact a quick count comes up with more than 200 formal and informal partnerships involving LOFT programs.

Partnerships have been part of LOFT's culture since the very beginning. After all, we came into existence as Anglican Houses when our two original housing programs, Beverley Lodge and Ingles House, joined together.

Today, our programs partner with government agencies, community organizations and health care professionals, to name a few, in order to ensure our clients have access to the resources and services they need on their journey to recovery.

LOFT Street Outreach Services partners with the SHOUT Clinic to provide a free weekly medical clinic to SOS's young clients.

Our John Gibson House program and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health are partnering on a project to help seniors with mental health challenges to move from CAMH and local hospitals, back into the community.

McEwan Housing and Support Services has just opened an office in the PWA (People With AIDS) Foundation headquarters. The goal is to give PWA clients living with HIV/AIDS more direct access to the housing and mental health and substance abuse supports provided by LOFT.

Our recently opened Crosslinks Seniors Housing and Support Services has major partnership with Downsview Services to Seniors and the Jane/Finch Family and Community Centre.

The Crosslinks Street Outreach Van, based in Newmarket, has become the hub of a network of 15 partners focussed on providing comprehensive and coordinated services to the homeless of York Region.

The very exciting Coordinated Access project, of which LOFT is the lead agency, is a joint undertaking by 30 organizations across the city, seeking to provide a single point of access to over 4,000 housing units in order to make it easier for the homeless with mental health and addiction challenges to find housing.

These are just a few of the many, many ways in which LOFT works together with others to ensure the best possible support for our clients.



Stepping Stone Project

John Gibson House, a LOFT program housing older adults and seniors with serious mental health issues, has joined with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health to implement a new program called Stepping Stone.

Through Stepping Stone, seniors who have been hospitalized for psychiatric care at CAMH or local hospitals will move to John Gibson House, where they will receive a high level of support enabling them to regain their independence. After six months, these transitional residents will be ready to move to housing with a lower level of support, or even to live independently in the community.

John Gibson House will devote twelve places to the project, enabling up to twenty-four seniors a year to move from hospital, back into the community. It is hoped that this type of transitional housing will contribute to solving the shortage of chronic care hospital beds, by offering an alternative level of care for some.



LOFT senior staff members "pulling together".

Keith's Story

Dear Reader,

First I wish to thank those staff at LOFT Community Services who suggested that I make a contribution to this publication. As a tenant of St. George House I am on common ground with all of my fellow tenants. We have all faced the challenges of dealing with mental illness. Fortunately, most of my symptoms are suppressed by the medication that I take. However, the emphasis of what I wish to convey is not about medication but supports.

After graduating from York University I applied to the University of Toronto Law School. My application, supported by Professor Thomas Hockin at York, was successful. When I decided law school was not a good fit for me, Professor Hockin supported me again by recommending me to the Premier's Office at the outset of Premier Davis' tenure. Dr. James Fleck reported directly to the Premier and was supported by Malcolm Rowan who I reported to. In the Premier's Office I worked on challenging projects in support of the Premier. Throughout this period I was fully supported by both Malcolm and Mary Louise Gaby. The importance of supports was driven home to me at this early stage of my career. Later, when I left the Ontario Government and went into the private sector I once again benefited from major support from prominent accounting and law firms.

For me there is a lesson in all of this. No matter what the risk or the adversity they can be overcome. In this regard LOFT Community Services had provided me with tremendous supports over the past two years. Last summer occupational therapy students assisted me through a goal setting exercise. Also, St. George House has provided me with access to a computer for the purpose of a novel that I am writing. When there have been specific problems the staff have supported me by listening and taking action. In summary, one can characterize LOFT Community Services as a very supportive agency. I am sure that many of my fellow tenants feel the same way.

Keith Bottin

LEAP OF FAITH
TOGETHER.

A Crosslinks Senior

The new Crosslinks Seniors program in the Jane and Finch neighbourhood is now 100 days old and the reception they have received from their clients and from the community has been overwhelmingly warm and welcoming. We are pleased to share a letter received by a Community Support Worker from one of her clients.

Thanks Samantha

As Karma would have it, as circumstances would, you asked me questions & I answered to them.

You were calm & settle.

Your stature & dignity impress me.

You gave a purpose to live without drugs.

I mentioned about yoga. You said you could help me for that.

Henceforth I believe in you thoroughly.

If there is human in this world, you are the one as per your profession.

You are the one, getting me out of medicines into yoga.

Samantha, my sincere thanks to you for making a normal being out of me.

Dear Samantha, thanks, thanks & thanks.

Christmas Concert Another Success!

In spite of the difficult economic times, LOFT supporters really came through for us on December 8, 2008, when "Home for the Holidays", our Annual Christmas Concert, raised more than \$100,000 for the third consecutive year.

It was a truly enjoyable evening of musical variety and virtuosity. Much of the credit goes to LOFT's great friend Kelly Walker who served both as Artistic Director, recruiting and supporting the performers, and as the MC. He appears on our front cover with blues diva Jackie Richardson.

The evening opened with the beautiful voice of cabaret singer Patricia O'Callaghan, followed by Stonefox – a spirited foursome based at Ryerson University – and Ensemble Vivant, often called Canada's Chamber Music Treasure. Cathedral Music Director Andrew Agar accompanied the audience in the Christmas carols.

Andrew brought along a surprise guest, 12-year-old Tanika Mohn whose lovely voice suggests big things ahead for her. The audience also provided a warm welcome for Samira Jackson, currently a LOFT client while she finishes school, hoping for a singing career. Following these two young women, at the beginning of their respective singing careers, were two of Canada's senior artists.

The audience was thoroughly charmed by actor/singer/musical theatre performer Brent Carver, and the rafters of St. James Cathedral rang to the great voice of Jackie Richardson.

As always, LOFT offers very special thanks to our tireless team of volunteers, to the Ryerson University Theatre Team for their first-class technical support, RP Dynamics and Jack A. Frost Ltd., who provided the sound and lighting equipment, St. James Cathedral, and the performers who provide their time and talent.

The cathedral bells rang, the lights were lit, the singers sang, but none of it would have been possible without the true stars of the show, our generous sponsors and all our wonderful audience and supporters who made the evening a success.

Thank you for helping LOFT help to ensure that as many people as possible have a "Home for the Holidays" and all the year through.



Jackie Richardson



Brent Carver



Bill & Cathy Graham, Terry McCullum



Tim Hodgson, CEO, Goldman Sachs, Karen Kain, Honourary Patron, Don Darroch, CEO, Canadian Commercial Capital



Terry McCullum, CEO, Bob Hutchison, Partner, Borden Ladner Gervais, Jane Corbett, LOFT Development Director

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The Jason George

Margaret E. Fleck Living Room

As was reported in the previous issue of Connections, in September, 2008, LOFT received over \$400,000 as beneficiary of a gala dinner in honour of Dr. James Fleck. This contribution has been earmarked to help with the expansion of our supportive housing programs for seniors.

On December 23rd, we celebrated the gift and acknowledged the donors by naming the main floor lounge at St. Anne's Place in honour of Jim's wife.

The Margaret E. Fleck Living Room, as it is now called, is truly the heart and hearth of the program; a warm and welcoming gathering place for the St. Anne's community.



Jim and Margaret Fleck cutting the cake with CEO, Terry McCullum and former and current St. Anne's Directors, Suzanne Saulnier and Tony Crosbie.

Adopt-A-Senior

Adopt-A-Senior is a splendid example of how working together works. It begins with an extraordinary group of volunteers, at the centre of whom are two effervescent young professional women, who describe themselves as the "connectors", Shiva Khalilnia and Roza Kolonjari.

Their goal is to ensure that every single older adult and senior client of LOFT feels like a valued member of their community. They do this by raising the funds, and contributing the elbow-grease, to provide all our seniors programs with Christmas parties and dinners at Thanksgiving and Easter. The icing on this cake comes in the form of Christmas presents, one for each client, bought specially for them, wrapped, with the clients name on the tag.

LOFT now has almost 600 older adult and senior clients, so this is no small venture. Roza and Shiva and their friends all reach out to their own networks of friends and associates and involved more than 150 people in 2008.

This year, the group welcomed two new partners. Sons and Daughters film production house took over all the costs of a holiday party and gifts for 130 seniors in our new Jane and Finch program, and Jennifer Sykes and the Toronto offices of Steam Films "adopted" all the clients in St. Anne's Place and a portion of the Dunn Avenue group as well.

Roza and Shiva and their group are now looking for other ways to support LOFT seniors and attract even more partners to this worthwhile project.

...007 EVENT

It is a tradition at real estate giant Cushman & Wakefield, LePage that when a new James Bond film comes out, they purchase a matinee and invite their colleagues in the industry to see the movie and give something back to the community where they all do business.

This past November, "Quantum of Solace" was the film of choice, and LOFT was the lucky beneficiary. Everyone who attended was invited to make a contribution. The amount could be large or small (large was encouraged!), but every contribution was to end in a "7" in honour of "007". They had a full house.

Cushman & Wakefield, LePage and Senior Managing Director Jamie Ziegel underwrote all the costs, including the popcorn, so LOFT could be presented with a cheque for \$35,007.00!

A few weeks earlier, Jamie and a group from Cushman had toured some LOFT seniors' programs and were impressed by the passion and commitment of the staff. At their request, a portion of their gift was used to provide Holiday lunches to all LOFT staff to thank them for the work they do.



Terry McCullum and Jamie Ziegel

LOFT'S NEW WEBSITE IS LIVE!

www.loftcs.org

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