

It Takes A Village



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Message From Our CEO



Human beings are social animals who depend on each other in countless ways. As infants we are helpless and completely reliant on others. We grow and develop, and learn about the world around us through our interactions with other people. Throughout our lives, our connection with others is key to our very survival.

We often hear our clients say they view LOFT as their “family”. We place tremendous value on this sense of community and the mutual support that we see within our programs. A staff team comes together to support a particularly high-needs client. Our clients support each other. Everywhere we look at LOFT, we see people depending on and helping one another.

It takes a village, not only to raise a child, but to keep us all happy and healthy.

Our clients’ stories always emphasise the importance of teamwork and feeling accepted. The relationships between clients and staff are critical. Staff also build relationships with other service providers on behalf of their clients. And every program has its own set of partnerships that support their work and their clients.

And of course, we depend very much on our donors who help make this work possible. And on our great volunteers who donate their time and talent in a variety of ways.

Now, with Spring just around the corner, and a new year of programming upon us, please accept our sincerest thanks for all you do for us, for your wonderful support, and for allowing us to depend on you.

Terry McCullum

E-NEWSLETTER NOW AVAILABLE!

Would you like to receive our newsletter in electronic format instead?

Head to our website, www.loftcs.org, and let us know via the Newsletter Signup option on the front page.

Guaranteeing the Future

JOAN MARION HARDING
September 13, 1932 – September 1, 2013

Joan Harding was a long-time supporter of LOFT and an active member of St. John the Baptist Norway Anglican Church, participating in the Altar Guild. It was no surprise then that she wanted to ensure the legacy she left behind would help not only her church but many people, and have a lasting impact too. And it was no surprise she chose to do so by dividing her estate among organizations that were most important to her in life, including both her church and LOFT.

Her legacy gift to LOFT was her investment in assuring that even more people in need will get the help they need now, and into the future. Joan’s generosity and thoughtfulness ensures that LOFT will be able to continue filling the gaps for people who are vulnerable and marginalized, and for this we are so grateful.

For more information on charitable bequests, please contact Director of Development, *Jane Corbett* at 416-979-1994 ext. 227, jcorbett@loftcs.org or go to our website at www.loftcs.org.

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New Youth Treatment Program

This Spring, LOFT is launching an innovative new service in partnership with Sick Kids and CAMH, to provide the city's first evening and weekend treatment program for transitional age youth. The program will target 18 to 26 year olds who are moving from the children's mental health system to the adult system.

In *Connections*, we have often written about the terrible gaps that exist when it comes to mental health and addiction services for young people.

Youth tend to be inherently optimistic. No matter what they have been through; trauma, abuse, abandonment, they believe their lives can improve. This positivity propels them forward. Yet, so often the system fails them. They fall through the gaps and are lost.



The Community Evening and Weekend Treatment team: CAMH, Sick Kids & LOFT.

This Spring, we are very excited about the launch of our new Evening and Weekend Treatment Program. Research indicates that young people are particularly vulnerable in the early evening hours and on weekends. Yet, the youth have told us there are no youth-oriented programs available at those times. This new program will start to fill that gap.

It is innovative in a number of ways. Developed in partnership with the Hospital for Sick Children and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, it is also helping to bridge another major system gap between hospital and community based services, with the partners sharing expertise and best practices.

The program is being launched as a pilot project funded by the Ministry of Health through the Toronto Central LHIN. It will be conducted with groups of 10 to 20 participants who have made a serious commitment to recovery. This is not a "drop-in". It is a recovery-oriented program using ACT, the Acceptance Commitment Therapy Model, a cutting-edge curriculum developed by Sick Kids.

Sick Kids is providing ACT training for staff members of each of the three partner organizations as well as representatives from about 20 other agencies. They are also conducting a full-day intensive training for the LOFT staff members who will be running the pilot project.

LOFT is providing both project leadership and its extensive experience working with young people with complex challenges. The first group is ready to roll, and a second group will start up shortly. The whole project will be monitored by all the partners and adjusted as necessary to ensure the best possible impact. CAMH is lending its expertise to the development and design of program evaluation tools.

In the words of Heather McDonald, LOFT Director of Youth and Adult Services, "With minimal funding and only two staff, the pilot project will be a drop in the bucket, but it will provide us with evidence-based best practices, and the ultimate impact will be Mighty!"

You're Invited...Save the Dates!

Make sure you Save the Date for the events below and put them in your calendar. We already have these great events lined up for 2014 and we hope to see you there! Additional details for these events will follow as we draw closer to the dates.

TUESDAY, JUNE 24
Annual General Meeting at St. Lawrence Hall

SUNDAY, JUNE 29
LOFT takes part in the Toronto Pride Parade

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19
Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon, Half Marathon and 5K

MONDAY, DECEMBER 1
24th Annual Home for the Holidays Christmas Concert at St. James Cathedral

Lost and Found: Jim's Story

How you can change and brighten a life forever

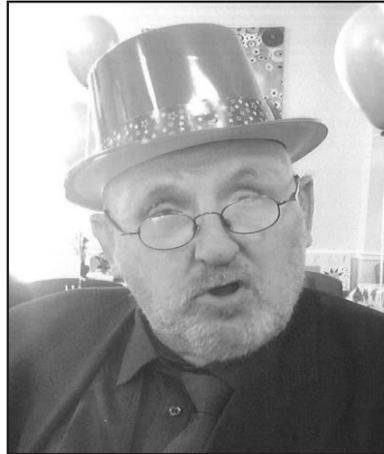
Jim could have ended up in the shelter system. Instead, while he was in a hospital a staff member told him about LOFT John Gibson House. That was how Jim found his "new family".

Jim has a number of challenges, including major visual impairment, yet he's never been defined by them. He's lived a full life, gone to school, worked at the CNIB, and was married for a time. He's enthusiastic about life's pleasures, including music and eating in restaurants.

Jim lived for about six years at John Gibson House, a high support residence for vulnerable and at-risk older adults and seniors with complex challenges including mental health, addiction and homelessness. He then "graduated" to LOFT St. Anne's Place, which provides assisted living for seniors who have

similar complex challenges but are able to live more independently.

For the first time in years, Jim has his own space, independence and a sense of family. He can come and go as he pleases,



Jim looking festive in his St. Patrick's Day hat!

socialize, or remain alone in his unit if he wishes. In Jim's words, "This is my family. And, like family, I know that LOFT will always be there for me." Truth is, it is our family of donors who help make this happen.

To show his appreciation, and give something back to LOFT, Jim volunteered to tell his story to the audience at our Annual Christmas Benefit Concert this past December.

You can change the story of a life. Reach out and help another person like Jim, by renewing your support for LOFT in 2014! Read more of Jim's story and learn how LOFT helps Jim and others at www.loftcs.org. You can also donate online by clicking on the **Donate Now** button.

Gordon's Story

As LOFT programs develop their expertise in serving clients with increasingly complex challenges, teamwork and advocacy have never been more important. McEwan Housing and Support Services Program Director Kay Roesslein shares the story of one of their clients who, without LOFT, might have had nowhere else to turn.

Gordon has severe cognitive impairment, an acquired brain injury and addiction to numerous substances. Because his drug use causes seizures, he has cycled through the city's emergency departments. Finally he was referred to McEwan Housing and Support Services. We were able to find him supportive housing with a partner agency but he refused to groom himself, or to take his HIV or mental health medications.

His stay ended when he assaulted a staff member and was jailed for three months. By this time he had been barred from a number of service organizations, his care needs had become very

complex, and no one knew what to do with him.

We decided to try again and when he was released from jail, we asked that he be sent directly to our high support house. There was no permanent room available so he was given a respite bed. No one believed he would remain there long.

To our surprise, he stayed for two weeks during which time he began to groom himself and stuck with his medication regimen. After two weeks, he left to "party", suffered a seizure and ended up in Emergency. Surprisingly, he asked to return to McEwan. He has now been at McEwan for almost six months.

Our staff have had to work extremely hard advocating on his behalf and coordinating his services. He had burnt all his bridges, so we had to find him a new general practice doctor, a new HIV specialist, and new psychiatric support. We have also been able to arrange for additional personal support for the activities of daily living. His substance abuse has dropped to a fraction of what it was and his physical and mental health have both improved. McEwan staff are now hopeful that he will stay with us long-term and continue to improve.

Below: Valentine's Day decorations

at John Gibson House.

Lamour = LOVE in French

Hinigugma = BELOVED/DEAREST in Bisaya



Home for the Holidays Kick Starts the Season of Giving

Thank you to everyone who made the 23rd Annual Home for the Holidays Christmas Concert possible! Together we raised **\$83,555!**

LOFT supporters filled the pews of St. James Cathedral on Monday, December 2, 2013 and were treated to songs by a variety of talented artists. Kelly Walker was a dynamic emcee and also led the audience in carolling with Tim Elia at the organ. Juan Chioran and Marcus Nance impressed with their powerful voices. We were lucky to have Barbara Fulton, Claire Lautier, Steve Ross, and Stephanie Martin in the show. The audience received a real treat with the Canadian Men's Chorus. LOFT was also happy to welcome back Christmas Concert alums Billy Newton-Davis and Jean Edwards! Of course the

show would not be possible without the hard work of the Ryerson Theatre School students who did an excellent job!

This year two clients, Jim and Paige, took to the stage to tell their stories of Recovery. Thank you for your bravery in sharing your stories!

A very special Thank You to: St. James' Cathedral for allowing us to use their beautiful space once again, to RP Dynamics and Jack A. Frost for providing all the sound and lighting equipment, and to our friends at Goldman Sachs, our wonderful Lead Sponsor. To all our sponsors and supporters and to every single person who purchased a ticket or made a donation, thank you for supporting LOFT!

Save the date for this year's Concert: Monday, December 1, 2014!

THANK YOU TO OUR 2013 CONCERT SPONSORS!

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Nicolas Nasr & Elegant Move Systems
Michael Hudson Photography
Peter Hideg & Advantage Electric
Cathy Inkster-Tarrant and Berely Jarabata
St. James Guild of Change Ringers
St. James Cathedral



Above: The performers gather for the finale, "Go Tell It On The Mountain."



Above: Claire Lautier



Below: Marcus Nance



LIKE Us on **facebook** ! Every LIKE = \$1

We are so excited to announce that a generous donor has stepped up and will give LOFT \$1 for every **LIKE** we have on our Facebook page, up to a maximum of \$1000!

Please **LIKE** our Facebook page and help LOFT reach 1000 LIKES!

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- 1) Please **LIKE** our page www.facebook.com/LOFTCS or scan the QR code below.
- 2) Please spread the word and **SHARE** this with your friends!

We have until April 30th to spread the word and get 1000 LIKES.

An extra \$1000 means more people can leave the street and get the help and support they need to turn their lives around.

Please do your part in helping people who are homeless.
Remember to **SHARE** and **LIKE** us! www.facebook.com/LOFTCS



Are you interested in being a speaker?

The LOFT Speakers Bureau needs your help!

In our last newsletter, we put in a notice looking for Speakers for the LOFT Speakers Bureau and some of you stepped up! We are excited to announce we have several new speakers on board. Two of these speakers have already done a speaking engagement and enjoyed it. Thank you Maridene and Randal!

We are always looking for new speakers to help educate others on the work that LOFT does. Many of our speaking engagements are at churches, so we are particularly looking for people who can be available on Sunday mornings. If this sounds like something you are interested in getting involved with, please let us know!

We provide a complete orientation, speaking scripts and support materials. You have the opportunity to learn more about LOFT, meet new people and help us spread the word about our work.

If you are interested in becoming a speaker or in having a LOFT representative speak with your group, please contact Volunteer Speakers Bureau Coordinator *Paul Kight* at 416-979-1994 ext. 250.

• WANTED • NEWSLETTER VOLUNTEERS

The newsletter you are currently reading was brought to you in part by a volunteer! We rely on our awesome team of volunteers to stuff envelopes and assemble every mailing we send out. Our volunteers save us from having to pay thousands of dollars a year for mail house services.

LOFT has 8-10 mailings a year. Each mailing takes half a day on a weekday morning at our administrative office in downtown Toronto. We are just a few short blocks from the King Subway Station. You will receive a phone call for each mailing and you can volunteer for as many, or as few, as you like.

You would work alongside other volunteers and would make a huge difference in helping us keep costs low.

If you would like to help, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator *Ted Krawchuk* at 416-979-1994 ext. 244 or *Amy Tran* at ext. 233.