

Creating Access



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Message From Our CEO



Welcome to the Summer 2014 Issue of Connections. And more importantly, welcome to Summer!

As this newsletter goes to press, we are preparing for the Annual General Meeting in late June, and looking back over the past year.

One thing that becomes clear in looking back, is the increasing speed at which things are changing; in the world at large, and in the needs of our community.

As an organization with a mandate to serve some of those who are most in need, we must engage in a continuous process of adaptation and innovation to ensure that our services are effective. This process happens on multiple levels, but is probably most visible in the number of new programs and initiatives that have been launched over the past year.

It seems that lately, every issue of Connections has included a story about a new program being launched or a new service added. This issue is no exception, and this is certainly not the last you will hear of new and exciting developments at LOFT.

Every time we are able to do something new, or something more, for our clients, you are there with us. It is because of the generous support of our donors that we are able to remain flexible and responsive.

We are sincerely grateful for your support and for the compassionate interest you show for our clients.

I hope you find this Summer issue interesting. And I hope you can sit outside and enjoy the warm weather while you read it.



Terry McCullum

\$25,000 Awarded to Transitional Age Youth Program

We are pleased to report that our Transitional Age Youth Program (TAY) has been recognized with a national award. The Eva's Initiatives Award to End Youth Homelessness is a \$25,000 award presented annually to four organizations providing community-based services designed to go beyond basic needs and break the cycle of homelessness for youth. The award is sponsored by Virgin Unite and the Sprout Foundation.

We are already very proud of the TAY program, but it is wonderful to hear it from someone else. It is a real tribute to the passion and hard work of the TAY staff, and to the inspiration we all receive from the TAY clients.

The TAY program currently serves about 200 youth a year with a range of supports including case management, system navigation, access to housing, life skills development, and goal setting for things like employment and education.

The award ceremony took place last month at LOFT's new TAY Service Hub near Bloor and Christie with representatives from Eva's Initiatives, Virgin Unite, TAY staff and clients present.

The other three award winners are Kingston Home Base Housing, Canadian Mental Health Association-Kelowna District and Spectre de Rue.

We also took the opportunity to officially launch our new Community Evening and Weekend Treatment Program. Research shows that young people with mental health and addiction issues are most vulnerable during early evening and weekend hours. Yet, there were no youth-oriented support groups available during these times. This new program, a partnership with CAMH and Sick Kids, will help fill that gap for at least 130 youth a year.

To learn more about the award, go to www.loftcs.org.

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Transitional Age Youth Program Demonstrates Best Practices

The characteristics that make the Transitional Age Youth Program so effective underlie all of LOFT's work.

In his keynote address at a recent Ontario Addictions and Mental Health Conference, Dr. Ken Minkoff, an internationally recognized expert on concurrent disorders, described a set of principles that research shows will lead to success in serving people with complex challenges. "Concurrent disorders" is the term used when an

individual is experiencing both a mental health issue and an addiction.

It was encouraging, although not really a surprise, that Dr. Minkoff's principles are among those already in place in the Transitional Age Youth Program and everywhere at LOFT. Here they are:

1. **Complexity is the expectation**

If we shy away from people with complex issues, the folks most in need of help just fall through the cracks. LOFT says "Your challenges are never too complex."

2. **Services are empathic, hopeful, integrated and strength-based.**

A life filled with obstacles and challenges doesn't always leave much room for hope, yet hope is the essential ingredient of recovery. LOFT says "You are an awesome person. We believe you can do this."

3. **All people with complex needs are not the same.**

We do not choose our clients to fit our programs. Instead, we ensure our programs and services are flexible enough to respond to the unique needs of each individual client. LOFT says "Come as you are."

4. **For people with complexity, all the co-occurring conditions are 'primary'.**

If we deal with only one issue, substance abuse for example, without also addressing that person's homelessness and mental health issues, it simply won't work. LOFT says "Whatever it is you are dealing with, you have come to the right place."

5. **Parallel processes of hopeful progress for multiple conditions.**

Recovery involves the whole person, so services must be comprehensive and must "wrap around" the whole individual with all their challenges and issues. LOFT says "Take it one step at a time. We are here for you and we will take this journey together."

6. **Individuals are adequately supported and rewarded.**

Sometimes it is hard for people to see their own progress, especially when the challenges are numerous. LOFT says "Wow! It's great you were able to do that. Now let's talk about how we can support you so you can do more of that."



LOFT Director of Development Jane Corbett and TAY Peer Mentors Mike, Paige and Noelle.



TAY Coordinator Julia Vanderheul and Eva's Initiatives Director of National Initiatives Melanie Redman.



Julia Vanderheul, Melanie Redman, Peer Mentors Mike, Noelle & Paige and TAY Staff Patty & (in the back) Matt.

LOFT is One of Three Featured Charities in the 2014 Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon

LOFT Community Services, Giant Steps and The Asthma Society have been chosen as the three Featured Charities in this year's Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon (STWM).

LOFT Community Services was chosen to be a Featured Charity in this year's Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon, Half Marathon and 5K! For the past 4 years LOFT has been an "Official Charity." This means runners can choose to run and fundraise with us but this is the first time we have been selected as a "Featured Charity".

Featured Charity status means we will have a much larger presence on marketing material distributed by Canada Running Series/Scotiabank in the offline and online community and we will be present in booths at the Health and Fitness Expo and in the post-race party area on Race Day.

With this increased exposure, we have already attracted new runners to Team LOFT and hope to hit our goal of 200 walkers/runners crossing the finish line on October 19! To date we have raised \$1,745 of our \$60,000 goal!



Adrian and Will making sure their medals are real!

To learn more about the race or about how you can get involved as either a walker/runner or donor, please contact Amy at atran@loftcs.org or 416-979-1994 ext. 233.

New Community Reintegration Housing Unique in York Region

On any given day in York Region 16% of hospital beds, or almost one in five, is being occupied by a person who doesn't need to be there.

Some of these people are working their way "through the system"; they've had a hip replacement and are waiting to move into a rehab facility, or they are a senior waiting to get into a nursing home. Eventually they will move on and their bed will open up for someone else.

For some people, however, "moving on" is not so easy. Sometimes a person has been in hospital for so long that they have lost their self-confidence, or forgotten essential life skills. Sometimes, they simply have no place to move on to; no home or no family able to support them. When people are living with mental health and addiction issues, the challenges are even greater.

LOFT community reintegration services have been developed in response to this exact need. Since 2009, we have been helping vulnerable seniors safely make the transition from hospital back into a place of their own. We help clients learn or relearn basic life skills, regain their self-confidence and find an affordable and supported place to live with dignity and postpone or prevent entirely the need for institutional care.

Now we are able to provide the same type of service for younger people as well. LOFT/Crosslinks Housing and Support Services, based in Newmarket, has opened a reintegration program for people 16 and older who are experiencing

mental health and addiction issues. Located in a lovely century home on a tree lined street in Stouffville, the program serves 10 clients at a time. It provides a calm and supportive environment where residents work with staff to reclaim their independence and get back on their feet.

The Stouffville Reintegration Program is a first for York Region and a great opportunity for LOFT to put its experience to work in a new way for the benefit of the people most in need.



It is with great sadness that we announce the recent passing of Jim Leonard.

In the past few months, we have been telling you about Jim and his story. He sat on stage and bravely told his story to the audience at LOFT's Christmas Concert this past December and has been the "poster-boy" of our 2014 Spring Appeal. You would have seen his face in photos floating around our website and our Facebook page.

While we are sad to announce his passing, we are happy he was able to find a home with us during his last years – first at LOFT's John Gibson House and then at LOFT's St. Anne's Place.

Jim will be fondly remembered by all of us.

Marjorie Georgina Putt 1906 - 2013

Marjorie Putt made an annual donation to LOFT every year for as far back as our records go – 30 years or more. When she passed away last August, just a few weeks shy of her 107th birthday, it might be supposed that her support died with her. Not so!

She left a wonderful legacy. After providing for her friends and relatives, she divided the remainder of her estate among four organizations that were important to her: Christ Church Deer Park, Moorelands, the Anglican Diocese of Toronto, and LOFT Community Services. It is truly an honour to LOFT to be remembered in this way.

We believe that gifts made by will are a special kind of donation, and we give them special treatment. Bequests like Miss Putt's go into the LOFT investment fund. This fund and the interest income it earns make it possible for LOFT to do the things that set us apart; to be innovative, to take risks and to focus our attention of the people most in need.

This means that Miss Putt's gift will have an impact on people in need for many years to come.

For more information on charitable bequests, please contact Director of Development, Jane Corbett at 416-979-1994 ext. 227, jcorbett@loftcs.org.

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

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