

Celebrations



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TIMOTHY'S STORY

In 2009 LOFT launched a pilot project to support long-term street-homeless men and women with serious mental health and addiction challenges who were also HIV+. Timothy was one of the first people served and his story shows some of the chaos and complexity with which LOFT clients can be faced.

I had a lot of abuse from my father. When I was around four and a half, the house caught fire. I got my younger brother and sister out. I never laid eyes on my father after that night.

I don't remember my Mom very much. She was a professional singer and she toured with a big name country act. At least, that's what I'm told. I remember when she came home one time, she had a fur coat.

I was in 32 foster homes and 15 group homes. I had a lot of beatings, I was tied up. I tried to kill myself at 16 – and again at 17. I've had a lot of physical and emotional damage.

I've been across Canada about seventeen times. Whistler and Blackcomb, Lake Louise, Whitehorse and Yellowknife. I have an eye with a camera. Every year in Vancouver they give the street people cameras. I won a couple of times. I love fly fishing and tying flies.

I was an addict for a long time – I am an addict. I lived on the streets in Calgary in an old building, in a box.

I've asked for help, but every time I asked I seemed to get in trouble.

I've done jail time... a few times. This is the longest I've been out of jail in my adult life. Medication helps slow me down.

I was in a terrible place. LOFT helped me get housing and they are very good at finding the right people to connect with and get services. Basically, they refused to give up on me.

As for the future, yah, I can think about it now. I want to get settled enough that I could get a dog. I've always liked animals.

Dear Volunteers: We Can't Say Thank You Enough

We love our volunteers, they are the roots of our strong community. Without them, we could not have helped so many people in need.



We celebrated the precious gift of time we receive from our wonderful volunteers during our Volunteer Appreciation Event on May 2, 2016. Forty-five volunteers gathered in the dining room of LOFT's supportive residence St. Anne's Place. Delicious refreshments prepared by St. Anne's Food Services; home-made sweets prepared by a talented volunteer; opportunities to chat with staff, peers and board members; table prizes and certificates of recognition – all created the spirit of celebration. There were volunteers present with a spectrum of experiences and backgrounds, from students and recent graduates, to senior clients.

The volunteers were greeted by the Chair of LOFT's Board James Anok, CEO Terry McCullum and Director of

Development Jane Corbett. It was emphasized in the welcome speeches that our volunteers are the life blood of our organization. Volunteers are crucial in so many aspects of LOFT's work – from helping our programs continue high level services to assisting with administrative tasks.

On behalf of the Board, staff and our clients, we'd like to extend our sincerest thank you to all the amazing people who volunteered almost 13,000 hours of their time and talents last fiscal year and contributed to the successes of the people we serve.

If you are interested in volunteering at LOFT, please contact our Volunteer coordinator Ted Krawchuk at 416-979-1994 ext. 244 or Amy Tran at ext. 233.

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“What Is It That You Do?”

Even people who have known LOFT for many years sometimes feel that they don't really understand what it is that LOFT “actually does”. Is it housing? Is it addictions counselling, psychotherapy? What is it?

It is probably easiest to understand LOFT's work if you try to put yourself in the place of a LOFT client. You live with mental health and addiction issues, perhaps you have lost your housing, your physical health has deteriorated, you are poor, you are not currently receiving any form of social assistance and you have no family able to help you. What do you need?

You need so much that ‘Where to begin’ may be the better question. You need somewhere to live, social assistance so you can pay your rent. You need a primary health care provider and perhaps a specialist or two, as well as mental health support and help managing your addiction. If you are a new Canadian, you may have immigration or citizenship issues to deal with. Perhaps you are in conflict with the law. You have no clothing to wear. You would not know how to look after your home if you had one, or how to prepare your own meals.

It would literally be impossible for one agency to provide all the services needed by the 4,600 people LOFT serves each year. And anyway, LOFT aims to fill the gaps, not to duplicate the services that are available elsewhere.

Imagining yourself to be this client, picture all the services and expertise you need as people standing in a circle around you. Rather than forming part of the circle, LOFT is standing in the centre of the circle beside you. Your LOFT worker will be the constant; your “person”; there to help you navigate all the other services, to help you ensure you get the support you need.

Your LOFT worker will also be there to help with the day-to-day: life skills like cooking, cleaning, managing a budget; supportive counselling to help you get through the challenges and advocacy to make sure everyone involved remains aware of your needs and your goals.

So, what is it that LOFT does? LOFT fills the gaps, and one of the most important is the gap that can form around the client in the centre of the circle. This is our promise of **“unwavering support and hope for each person we serve.”**

President's Shield Award

LOFT is very pleased to announce that our CEO, Terry McCullum has been honoured by Addictions and Mental Health Ontario (AMHO) as the 2016 recipient of the President's Shield Award.

The award is presented to an individual who has demonstrated leadership in the field of mental health and addiction treatments by:

- Proactively identifying novel and creative ways to improve upon processes or service delivery;
- Implementing change in a positive manner and striving to ensure its success;
- Building strong relationships that support a high level of trust and credibility;
- Leading with behaviours reflecting equity, diversity and inclusion; and
- Providing outstanding contributions to the field of mental health and addictions.



Congratulations, Terry! We think you tick all the boxes!

AMHO is a recognized authority on mental health and addiction issues in Ontario. Representing 290 mental health and addictions service and support agencies across Ontario, AMHO is dedicated to advancing the quality of care and services accessible to individuals.

The award was presented at their 2016 Conference on Monday, May 30, 2016.

Happy 25th Anniversary, McEwan!

2016 marks the 25th Anniversary of LOFT McEwan Housing and Support Services – an excellent opportunity to celebrate its journey, its vibrant positive members, and its strong partnerships.

Over 150 clients, board members, staff, partners and community members celebrated the anniversary of at the “Home and Journey” event on May 10 at The 519 Community Centre.

The celebration included a piano piece by Daniel Awash, an awe-inspiring aboriginal smudging ceremony performed by Ed Bennett from the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network with the assistance of McEwan member Tonie Walsh, performances by steel drummer Avin Shahs; “World’s Oldest Drag Queen” Michelle DuBarry; renowned singer/songwriter Billy Newton-Davis; Burmese dancer and member Mar Mar, and spoken word artist Joseph Foley. Heather McDonald, LOFT Director of Adult and Youth Services led the song “Lean on Me”, and guests had the opportunity to sing along.

LOFT CEO Terry McCullum, Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network CEO Susan Fitzpatrick, and LOFT Director of Operations Jim Nason gave speeches about the leading role of McEwan Housing and Support Services in helping people living with HIV/AIDS, who have a mental health or addiction issue or both, and are homeless or at risk of becoming so. It was emphasized that McEwan has always been a leader in North

America in developing and sustaining comprehensive long-term care that makes a real difference in lives of its members.

Thank you to all guests, donors, volunteers, partners and the awesome program members who contributed to the success of McEwan over 25 years!



Duff, Maya and Tony with paintings from the silent auction in the background. All art was created by McEwan members.



Avin playing the steel drums.

Flow & Glow Yoga Event Raises over \$3,000 for LOFT

A group of Humber College event management students put on “Flow & Glow”, a Full Moon Yoga Party Fundraiser with proceeds from the event going to LOFT Community Services and the Humber College Scholarship Fund. Participants got to participate in a glow in the dark yoga class, and then attended a post-yoga dance party! Glow sticks, glow in the dark bracelets and glow in the dark paint made vivid appearances on all attendees.



The students raised over \$1,400 for LOFT and TD Financial donated an additional \$2,000 to top up the amount! Thank you to everyone who came and a big thank you to the students for putting on a fun and engaging event! Photos were taken by Humber student and volunteer photographer Amanda Snyder.

Mardi's Story: Finding a Voice, Building a Better Future

Mardi is a client of our Transitional Age Youth Program (TAY). LOFT not only helped her address her mental health and addiction challenges, it inspired her to grow, find her voice and pursue graduate studies in social work.

Mardi is a thoughtful young woman whose challenges go back to her childhood. Her mom was overwhelmed by mental health issues. And, as a result, they often stayed in shelters.

Luckily, Mardi excelled at school. But by the time she started university, she worried constantly about the future. Most of all, she was afraid of falling into the same vicious cycle as her mom. That's why she turned to substances. Eventually, Mardi knew she needed help and she found it at LOFT.

Within weeks, Mardi developed a trusting relationship with her caseworker who helped her access a psychiatrist, a social worker and a peer support group. Mardi's life has turned around so much that she feels inspired to "help others find their way." Mardi



is now a peer mentor to other young clients, and part of a housing outreach project supporting homeless youth. She is applying to a graduate program in social work and says that LOFT helped her "find her voice" acknowledging to herself that she did need help and was worth helping.

Transform a Life – Help People Like Mardi

You can turn around a life for a client like Mardi by donating to the LOFT Annual Appeal. Your donation can offer a lifeline to youth, adults and seniors facing complex mental health and addiction challenges. It can ensure they do not fall through the cracks of the service systems and access the services they need right away. You'll receive a tax receipt and recognition in our annual report. More importantly, you will change somebody's life from despair

to self-respect, greater independence and dignity.

To donate or read more about the story of Mardi and other people just like her, visit www.loftcs.org or call 416-979-1994 ext. 222.

MEET THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Joan Flanagan is a Registered Nurse who has worked in long-term care and medical/surgical units. She has also studied and taught piano and voice work with children and has been a live-in nanny. She has played leadership roles as Secretary of her high school Student Council and, while nursing, was President of the local union. Joan has also volunteered in a nursing home and with the Out of the Cold Program.

Number of years on the Board – 9

Why did you choose to join the LOFT Board?

I was interested in becoming more involved with an organization that

provides supportive services and safe housing; the types of services I use. When the opportunity to sit on the Board presented itself, and after a series of interviews with the



Board Membership Committee, we all agreed it would be beneficial. It was felt that I would be an asset to the Board because, as a service user, I could bring a first-hand perspective. I also felt it would help me better understand decisions that are made and the services that are provided by LOFT.

What is the thing you would most like people to know about LOFT?

LOFT is a caring, open-minded, progressive, non-judgmental organization that goes above and beyond to provide housing and support for people with mental health issues who are in need.

Are you interested in being a speaker?

The LOFT Speakers Bureau needs your help!

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.

You're invited to LOFT's Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, June 28, 2016
St. James Cathedral Centre,
Snell Hall
65 Church Street
(behind St. James Cathedral)

With a special presentation by
LOFT's Transitional Age Youth Program

•
Doors open at 7:00pm
Celebration begins at 7:30pm

•
Business Meeting at 6:30pm
(attendance optional)

•
Please RSVP by June 24, 2016 to Amy Tran
at atran@loftcs.org, or call
416-979-1994 ext. 233.

Donating Online Is Easy

Did you know you could donate online?

Just head over to the LOFT website at www.loftcs.org and click on the orange "Donate" button. Once your donation is complete, your tax receipt will be generated and emailed to you instantly.

E-NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE!

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

Go to www.loftcs.org and use the Newsletter Sign-up option on the front page.

Mailing Volunteers Wanted

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

LOFT has 8-10 mailings a year. Each mailing takes place on a weekday morning at our administrative office in downtown Toronto. You can volunteer for as many, or as few, as you like.

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.