

A Roof, an Anchor and the Tools to Succeed

How Connie went from living in fear and subject to abuse in a shelter to being safely and happily housed.



I was adopted at 9 months old by a well-to-do, but nonetheless abusive family. For the next 5 years, I lived through the terrors of World War II in Europe: starvation, rations, sirens and the constant fear of bombs.

I became an alcoholic at the age of 11 to get away from the “demons” in my head: those terrifying memories that I could not erase... I wanted to pursue schooling but my mother saw in me another talent which I was pressed toward: modelling. I burned with anger inside all the time. I often thought about ways to die to get away from my family.

I pressed forward, settled in my new home in Canada, built a successful career in fashion and even retired early. Then I made a decision that utterly backfired and left me completely penniless. I lost everything, my home, my friends - and even my mind. I ended up in the psych department of a hospital and then at a women’s shelter where I was stabbed twice and feared for my life every day.

I had recognized that I was in need. My good friend Brian said “go with it”, so I did, and I joined AA. There, I found faith in God and recovered faith in myself.

Meanwhile, Anna, the social worker I was working with, had been fighting tirelessly to find a safe place for me to live and continue my recovery journey. She heard that LOFT was accepting applications from women’s shelters at their St Anne’s Place location. I applied and got in right away.

I have experienced unconditional love and unwavering support at LOFT. I know I’m never alone. Everybody vanished in my times of need but LOFT has always been there for me. They were there for me when I was diagnosed with a tumour, through my radiation and have helped me with my osteoarthritis.

Without LOFT I would probably have been out in some lane somewhere out on the street. I probably would not have lasted long and the police would likely have found me dead on the street.

LOFT provided a roof over my head and AA provided an anchor. These are the tools I needed to succeed.

I’ve learned a lot about humanity since coming to LOFT and changed a great deal. I’ve learned to accept people whoever they are, wherever they’re at. Now I delight in helping other tenants by accompanying them to doctor’s appointments and helping them with grocery shopping.

I’ve just received my Medallion, celebrating 30 years sober, with my friend Brian standing by my side.

I would like to say thank you to LOFT donors. Your generosity makes a great difference to people like me and many others.

LOFT



Did you know??? For as little as \$13.69 a month (only .45 cents per day!) you can provide a safe place to live & offer a brighter future for people like Connie? By giving every month, you’ll not only provide warm meals, supportive housing & personal care, you’ll be there for a person at LOFT every single day. Keep an eye out in your email inbox for info about our new **Everyday Hero monthly giving program** coming soon. **Don’t receive emails from LOFT** but want to stay in the loop on new programs and stories of change? **Sign up today at loftcs.org** (click on “Newsletter Sign-up” button).

A Unique Way to DOUBLE the Value and Impact of a Donation

How one person's donation of \$50,000 inspired others and became nearly \$100,000 in just two months.

This past Fall, a generous donor agreed to match all gifts raised online - DOLLAR for DOLLAR - up to \$50,000 (a first for LOFT!). In response, the LOFT Development team put together two Online Campaigns: one for Giving Tuesday (Nov 28) aimed at raising funds to provide 300 at-risk youth with life transforming mental health support; the other to provide the "joy of the holiday season" (festive meals, celebrations and gifts) to as many LOFT clients as possible.

Are you wondering what the result was? We are thrilled to report that thanks to the generosity of hundreds of LOFT supporters, combined with the match from our anonymous donor, we were able to raise a total of \$99,014. These donations were put to work right away, providing memorable holiday celebrations to hundreds of LOFT clients in December as well as providing supportive housing, counselling, and more, to 300 youth living with complex mental health

challenges. Thank you to everyone who participated, including our Anonymous Donor. These donations made such a difference to the people who benefitted from them! (Below are just two examples)

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a matching donor to support a future fundraising campaign, please contact Jane Corbett jcorbett@loftcs.org or 416-979-1994 ext. 227.

Right: Youth Client Ginny, pictured in the backyard of her LOFT home shortly before heading to University to become a Mental Health Worker.

Funds from LOFT supporters provided her with supportive housing, counselling and advocacy while she recovered from a mental health challenge.

Far Right: Seniors clients enjoying a meal and festive cheer at one of our Annual Holiday celebrations.



Meet the Board of Directors: KATHERINE ROOS

Years on the Board: 3

Katherine is a consultant who is passionate about building inclusive business communities that support innovative tech startups, healthy mainstreet businesses and economically marginalized communities. In her career she has held senior roles with both public and private sector organizations including OCAD University, the City of Toronto and Toronto Business Development Centre.



lot of changes and LOFT is well prepared for the future. Most importantly, I'm glad to have this opportunity to give back to some of Ontario's most vulnerable citizens.

2) What is one thing you think everyone should know about LOFT?

LOFT and its staff are incredibly well respected by some of the best health care executives and organizations in Canada. LOFT touches many lives and makes an impact on thousands of families every year. But most people don't realize how many

1) Why did you choose to join the LOFT Board?

Mental health has always been a priority issue for me due to family experiences. When I learned how innovative LOFT is, I jumped at the chance to join the board. This is an exciting time for LOFT. Ontario's health care system is undergoing a

hospitals, primary caregivers and municipalities reach out to LOFT when they are searching for best practices or need help with particularly complex cases.

Unprecedented Expansion of LOFT Seniors Services

LOFT's unique combination of services becomes available to literally hundreds more vulnerable seniors.

This Spring LOFT Seniors Services is in the process of introducing or expanding eight programs. They stretch across our service area from Toronto to Simcoe County and, for the first time, will reach as far north as Barrie.

All these new and expanded services are responding in one way or another to the issue of Alternate Level of Care, or ALC, hospital patients. These are patients who no longer need hospital level care, but remain in hospital. According to a Health Quality Ontario report in 2016, on any given day in Ontario, close to 4,000 hospital beds, (almost 14% of all hospital beds) are occupied by ALC patients.

Some are waiting to transfer to another service, like a rehab facility or a nursing home. Others are waiting until they can arrange for home care. However, some are simply stuck because mental health or behavioural issues make them ineligible for nursing homes and they have no other options available. These are the people LOFT can, and does, help.

In 2008 we established The Stepping Stone Program to provide specialized intensive supports to enable 30 ALC seniors a year to safely transition out of hospital and into an appropriate assisted living program. Some of the first Stepping Stone clients had "lived" in hospital for 20 years or longer.

The expertise gained through Stepping Stone has led to hospital transitions being supported in a number of LOFT programs. And now, LOFT helps 400 ALC patients a year to move out of hospital and regain their dignity and independence.



Behavioural Support Services (BSS), started in 2012, approaches the ALC issue from the other end, reducing the number of seniors with behavioural issues who are hospitalized in the first place. By identifying the cause of these behaviours and developing strategies to alleviate or manage them, BSS works with seniors and their care givers to prevent people from being hospitalized unnecessarily.

Through this time, our staff teams have developed a unique set of expert skills. We are able to combine our expertise in psychogeriatric case management and seniors' crisis support, with our experience in behavioural support and ALC transitions, backed up by specialized personal support services and assisted living programs and facilities. This adds up to a comprehensive, wrap-around service that is both respectful of and responsive to each client's individual needs. It is also the combination of services that led to this current growth spurt, including two new programs.

At the northern edge of our ever-expanding service area, we are partnering with Barrie's Royal Victoria Hospital, the team of health care providers at North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services and the County of Simcoe. Together we are providing a new specialized assisted living program called Simcoe Terrace to support ALC transitions and seniors with other complex care needs.

Pine Villa is another new, and very important partnership, this time with Sunnybrook Hospital and Sprint Senior Care. As you receive this newsletter, the first of our 36 new clients will be moving into Pine Villa, a former retirement home in the Eglinton and Bathurst area. Once again, we will be able to employ our unique combination of services to support seniors living with mental health and addiction issues or responsive behaviours, coming out of hospitals all across Toronto.

Home for the Holidays Christmas Concert A Success

Over \$70,000 raised at our annual benefit concert on Monday, December 4, 2017



Top: Kevin Barrett & Patricia Cano
Right: Billy Newton-Davis

The Bells of Old York pealed out in greeting to concert goers as they arrived at the St. James Cathedral. Dedicated to Terry McCullum, LOFT's CEO for 35 years and recently retired, the 27th Annual Christmas Concert raised over \$70,000!

An audience of 600 took their seats under the stained glass windows and were treated to a mix of jazz, opera, pop and carols. For the second year, Artistic Director Micah Barnes pulled together a spectacular show filled with a talented array of artists.

Hosted by Kelly Walker, the tone was set from the beginning as the Hogtown Brass Quintet opened with some Christmas tunes. Bravura contributed strong operatic voices and member George Masswohl returned later in the evening for a commanding solo act. From CBC's *Over the Rainbow*, AJ Bridel dazzled the audience and the multilingual Patricia Cano sang songs in both Spanish and French. No stranger to the concert, the always

effervescent Billy Newton-Davis returned this year to give a beautiful performance. Jeremiah Sparks led the lively Shaw Festival Gospel Choir to close the concert with a bang. Jeannie Wyse led on the piano and Tim Elia on the organ.

LOFT clients, Ginny and Shawn, bravely got on stage and spoke about their journeys of recovery. Ginny is now pursuing her university degree in Mental Health and Addictions and Shawn was recently chosen as a Difference Maker by CAMH. Read their stories on our website loftcs.org.

This concert is made possible by sponsors, donors, volunteers and students from Ryerson School of Performance who provided technical support and stage management. We thank everyone involved!

Save the date for this year's concert on Monday, December 3, 2018!

For more photos, please visit loftcs.org.

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Recognition for a New Program

We are excited to announce that, in December, one of LOFT's newest programs received the 2017 City of Toronto Access, Equity and Human Rights Pride Award for LGBTQ and Two-Spirit Issues.



BLOOM is a unique program that opened in June of 2017 to address a pressing need for supportive housing for transgender individuals with mental health and addiction issues and histories of homelessness. This recognition came when the program was only five months old.

The City of Toronto established the Access, Equity and Human Rights Awards to “recognize people who, or programs that have made a difference in Toronto by reducing discrimination and barriers to equality. The Awards are community-driven, with nominations coming from Toronto residents, and the five recipients selected by a panel of community individuals with expertise and knowledge of issues pertinent to the awards.”

The LOFT Staff Team behind BLOOM: Front: Kay Roesslein - Program Director - McEwan Housing and Support Services, Jake Farr- BLOOM Peer Coordinator, Back: Julia Vanderheul - Program Director - Transitional Age Youth Program, Marco Villa - Program Director - Wilkinson Housing and Support Services, Devon Serket - Peer Educator - Transitional Age Youth Program.

A Little Thought Goes A Long Way at Christmas...

Greeting Cards from LOFT donors encourage clients during the Holiday Season

The Holiday Season is often the most difficult time of the year for people who are living with complex Mental Health challenges, and dealing with loneliness, broken families, depression, etc.

So, this Fall we came up with something new to make the Holidays a little brighter: we asked our generous supporters to sign and return a Holiday Greeting Card with their Annual Donation. The cards would be given to our clients as an encouragement at Christmas. Many donors sent in cards and, to our amazement, several people even wrote kind, inspirational notes *INSIDE* the card to lift the spirits of the people we serve. On behalf of the clients who received a Holiday Greeting Card, thank you to each person (you know who you are!) who took the time to send one back.



Ingles Clients standing in front of a wall filled with some of the Holiday Greeting Cards sent back by LOFT Supporters.

Difference Maker: Shawn Pendenque

*Our own Shawn Pendenque named one of
Canada's 150 Difference Makers.*



*Difference Maker Shawn Pendenque,
LOFT Community Support Worker –
Peer Specialty.*

To celebrate Canada 150 in 2017, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health set out to identify 150 individuals across Canada who have made a difference in mental health. We are so proud that Shawn is one of them.

If you attended our fundraising concert in December, you heard Shawn tell his story. If not, you can read Shawn's story on our website at www.loftcs.org. Go to Support LOFT and click on What Does Your Money Do? Look under the ADULTS heading for Shawn's Story.

Donating Online Is Easy

Go to the LOFT website 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?

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

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Adopt-A-Senior Fast Facts

700 — Wish lists Collected
— Gifts Given
— Happy Recipients!

Led by a team of volunteers, eleven Team Leaders take on the task of providing specialized gifts every year to LOFT seniors. Want to get involved? Email atran@loftcs.org.



Consider including LOFT in your Will.



For more information, or to receive a free estate planning brochure, call 416-979-1994 ext. 227, or email jcorbett@loftcs.org.