

Pine Villa is a transitional supportive housing hub where Sunnybrook Hospital, SPRINT Seniors Care and LOFT work in partnership to support seniors transitioning back to the community from Sunnybrook and other Toronto hospitals. Specifically, Pine Villa assists seniors who have complex challenges related to physical health, addiction, mental health, behaviours and/or dementia. Some of these seniors were homeless before they entered hospital and like Mike, welcome the opportunity to change their lives.

## Mike – A Homeless Veteran Turns His Life Around

For more than seven years I was living on the streets looking at other people who got to go home. I couldn't do that.

I'll start my story at 17 when I joined the armed forces. I can say I was there - in Iran, Iraq - but I can't talk about what I did. It was basically Black Ops. I was decorated; I progressed to the rank of Sergeant Major.

Thirteen years later I was back in the public. I tried my hand at everything; went from job to job to job. I never did like any of them, but I stayed more than a year at each.

My last position, I was 20 years superintendent of a building. When the owner sold, the new people gave me 24-hours eviction notice because I was living rent-free.

Then, like I say, I was homeless. I just drifted from place to place.

I had an interesting childhood. But happy? No! My father took off when I was five. Nobody ever bothered telling me the story. My mother was the backbone of the family. That's wheremost of the feeling of love towards a home comes from.

I was never that interested in school. It was just something



### What is a Home by Mike

*A home is a roof to keep out the rain  
Four walls to keep out the wind,  
Floors to keep out the cold  
Yes, but it is more than that.*

*A home is the laugh of a little baby  
The song of a Mother, the strength of a Father*

*And the warmth of a Living heart  
Light from happy eyes, kindness, loyalty,  
companionship.*

*A home is the first school for young ones  
Where they learn what is right, and what is  
wrong,*

*What is good, and what is kind  
Where they go for comfort when hurt or sick.*

*Its where joy is shared and sorrows are eased,  
Where Fathers and Mothers are respected  
Where the simplest food is good enough for  
Kings*

*Because it is earned  
Where money is not as important as loving  
kindness.*

**"That is what a Home is."**

that was required to be done. You do it to the best of your ability and then move on. I did well; I was bounced up two grades.

For me it was never drugs. I still like my alcohol, but three years ago I gave up hard liquor. I realized when I was drinking hard liquor I hurt people. The last time was when I hurt a lady friend. So I poured out my bottles. Said that's the end of that. Cold turkey. I've never gone back.

I still like my beer. But I am also able understand when I've had enough and stop.

I came here [to Pine Villa] straight from Sunnybrook, where they took out a good portion of my leg. I had "flesh eating disease". I said okay they're giving me another chance and I'm gonna do it.

One thing about LOFT. They've got a beautiful heart. LOFT is the greatest thing since sliced bread and I am sure they are going to have nothing but success in the years to come.

The 6 months I've been here has given me a whole new insight. I can tell you, if I was on the street nothing would have changed. Here I am actually changing the direction of my life.

# HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

## 28th Annual Christmas Concert

Monday, December 10, 2018

7:30pm, St. James Cathedral

(corner of King and Church St., downtown Toronto)

**ORDER TICKETS ONLINE AND CHOOSE YOUR SEATS: [WWW.LOFTCS.ORG](http://WWW.LOFTCS.ORG)**

MICAH BARNES



\*2018

JEANNIE WYSE



\*2018

BILLY NEWTON-DAVIS



\*2017

### Ticket Prices:

#### **BENEFACTOR - \$250**

1 ticket, \$210 tax receipt and invitation to the post-concert reception

#### **PATRON - \$100**

1 ticket, \$60 tax receipt

#### **GENERAL - \$40**

1 ticket

YES, I want to support the work of LOFT by purchasing concert tickets:

Benefactor # \_\_\_\_\_ tickets at \$250 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Patron # \_\_\_\_\_ tickets at \$100 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

General # \_\_\_\_\_ tickets at \$40 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I cannot attend, please accept my donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Prov: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Email me my tickets

*\*If ordering Patron or Benefactor tickets, please print name as you would like it to be listed in our program: \_\_\_\_\_*

PAYMENT METHOD:  CHEQUE ENCLOSED

MASTERCARD

VISA

AMERICAN EXPRESS

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Holder signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp: \_\_\_\_\_

Seating is reserved by ticket level and number; doors will open at 7:00pm.  
We apologize that some seats have obstructed sight lines so order early for the best seats.

Charitable registration #: 13058 6605 RR0001

**Order tickets online or via mail, fax, phone or email:**

LOFT Community Services

15 Toronto Street, 9th Floor • Toronto, ON • M5C 2E3

**ORDER TICKETS ONLINE AND CHOOSE YOUR SEATS: [WWW.LOFTCS.ORG](http://WWW.LOFTCS.ORG)**

T: 416-979-1994 ext. #2033 or #2022 F: 416-979-3028 E: [sxara@loftcs.org](mailto:sxara@loftcs.org)

Sponsor:



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**LOFT CEO Heather McDonald congratulates Debra Walko, our Senior Director for Complex Care and Seniors Services.**

Debra is one of six recipients from across Ontario named to the honour roll for the 2018 Minister's Medal Awards Honouring Excellence in Health Quality and Safety.

Debra was nominated for her 30 years of effort in transforming the health care system, championing the right for seniors who deal with mental health, addiction and responsive behaviours, to live with dignity and independence.

*"Toronto Central LHIN and the people we serve are fortunate to have a champion like Debra Walko as partner, advocate and leader for community support services."* - Susan Fitzpatrick, CEO, Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network.

### Food Bank Program Volunteers Wanted

LOFT's 416 Community Support for Women is looking for compassionate and empathetic volunteers to help with our Food Bank Program.

Shifts are available:

Tuesdays 10:00 am to 12:00 pm

Thursdays 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Thursdays 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Volunteers help unload and sort food donations, clean and stock shelves and hand out food hampers. You must be able to commit to 1 shift a week for 6 months and lift a maximum of 25 lbs.

Please contact Alex Branson: [abranson@loftcs.org](mailto:abranson@loftcs.org), or call 416-928-3334 ext. 224

### Last chance to make your 2018 charitable donation!

December 31st is your last chance to donate in the 2018 year! Go to [www.loftcs.org](http://www.loftcs.org) to make your donation online or call 416-979-1994 ext. #2033, #2022 or #2032 to make your donation over the phone.