



## LOFT is like family: Pauline Charlebois

For many, the holidays are a time of joy and good cheer, but they can also bring about mixed feelings—something Pauline Charlebois knows well. "I'm looking forward to the holiday season because it's so festive, and LOFT has many activities around that time," says the 78-year-old College View resident who lives with bipolar disorder. "but I don't have a lot of family support, and this is especially difficult around the holiday season, as it's the time of year we all think about being with family."

When she was growing up, Pauline says her parents treated her poorly (she suspects it was tied to her bipolar disorder), so she left school after Grade 10 and set out on her own. Her relationships with her family improved with time, but never fully recovered from the challenges of her early years. While she keeps in touch with her 6 brothers and sisters (and her 11 nieces and nephews), they've never been especially close.

Despite her mental health challenges, life was pretty good for many years. Pauline worked as a receptionist, and then became a typist for the air force. But she had a desire to help people, so she took a job as an occupational therapy

assistant, and later became a nurse's aid (similar to a personal support worker), assisting people in need of home care.

Around the time she turned 50, Pauline's life began to unravel. She went through an especially difficult period with her mental health, leaving her unable to work so her social worker helped her find a home in community housing at College View.

For the last 28 years, Pauline has lived at College View, an affordable housing apartment building run by Toronto Community Housing (TCH). In 1999, LOFT began offering support services to older adults and seniors in the building who were dealing with complex challenges, such as mental illness, addiction, chronic physical health issues, social isolation and more. The timing couldn't have been better for Pauline, who was beginning to need more assistance and support in order to live independently.

When she had hip replacement surgery a few years ago, she appreciated the extra support she got from LOFT—and it motivated her to get well so she wouldn't need to be too dependent on others. Today, she's grateful for the general assistance she gets from LOFT staff, who shop for her weekly and help her get to and from appointments. Her mental health is now stable and well-managed thanks, in part, to the support she's received from LOFT.

Pauline also enjoys the communal meals at College View, and is a fan of LOFT's social events, especially those involving bingo. While she values her alone time (she's a big reader), she's found a special sort of belonging thanks to LOFT's support.

"I consider LOFT my family," she says.

### COLLEGE VIEW 20TH ANNIVERSARY

LOFT has been providing residents of College View for 20 years, here are some photos of the celebration.



### OUR HOLIDAY WISH LIST

'Tis the season of giving, and we need your help to make this holiday season even brighter for the youth, adults and seniors in our programs.

We're currently accepting Holiday Wish List donations of new items to meet the needs and wishes of our clients. At LOFT, we serve people who experience low income and often came to us homeless, so our needs range from basic necessities like toiletries and clothing, to small items that make daily life more joyful, such as puzzles and art supplies.

When you donate items to LOFT's Holiday Wish List, they go directly to people in need, and bring a great deal of comfort, joy and dignity.

Here's what we need this holiday season:

- Housewares
- Cleaning products
- Toiletries
- Clothing (indoor and outdoor)
- Gift cards
- Puzzles and board games
- Art/craft supplies



**VISIT [LOFTCS.ORG/WISHLIST](https://loftcs.org/wishlist) TO SEE OUR FULL HOLIDAY WISH LIST**

Your support of our Holiday Wish List is greatly appreciated! To make a donation, please contact [fundraising@loftcs.org](mailto:fundraising@loftcs.org) so we can provide you with a drop-off location. We truly appreciate your continued support of LOFT!

**2019 DONATION DEADLINE IS APPROACHING**



December 31 is your last chance to make a charitable donation to receive a tax receipt for 2019! Visit [loftcs.org](https://loftcs.org) to donate online, or call us at 416-979-1994 ext. 2033 to donate by phone. **Thank you for your continued support of LOFT!**