



Blaine (third from left), meets with (from left to right) CEO Heather McDonald, Board Chair - James Anok, Board members - Carrie Hayward, Matthew Flynn and Ted Reeser.

CLIENT AND AWARD WINNER: BLAINE'S STORY

Blaine greets LOFT's Mental Health and Justice Initiative (MHJI) staff and tenants with his trademark stunning smile. It's been four years since Blaine has lived there himself, but he returns to volunteer, helping to manage site maintenance and supporting residents.

In 2006, struggling with homelessness and substance use, Blaine moved to MHJI from a downtown homeless shelter. **Thanks to supporters like you**, we were able to help Blaine. He'd had run-ins with the law in the past, but he settled into the residence quickly, and for the next eight years, his gentle, caring and likable nature made it easy for everyone to get along with him.

There were ups and downs over the years: Blaine battled periods of illness related to mental health issues and he suffered a major fall that required a great deal of recovery. But with help and support from LOFT, Blaine was able to gain control of both his health and his addictions, and eventually move into his own apartment.

Now living independently, Blaine has developed good routines and habits to retain control of his health. With support from LOFT staff, he is even

working on quitting smoking. A kind neighbour and superintendent check in on him every so often—something he really appreciates. Other than that, he no longer needs much in the way of formal support.

What's more, Blaine has become a role model at MHJI and mentors other residents who are learning to take control of their own lives. His approach is all about respect, "I value the respect LOFT gave me so it's important for me to give in return," he says. "It makes such a difference to someone who's struggling."

In November, Blaine was presented with the 2019 Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association's Tenant Achievement Award, which recognizes tenants who help make their non-profit housing community a better place to live.

Congratulations Blaine, we are very proud of your achievement!

The Mental Health and Justice Initiative provides supportive housing and intensive case management services for individuals with serious mental illness and involvement with the criminal justice system.



ONTARIO HEALTH TEAMS

We're happy to share that LOFT is part of five of 24 Ontario Health Teams (OHT) approved by the province to deliver coordinated, seamless care. These teams include:

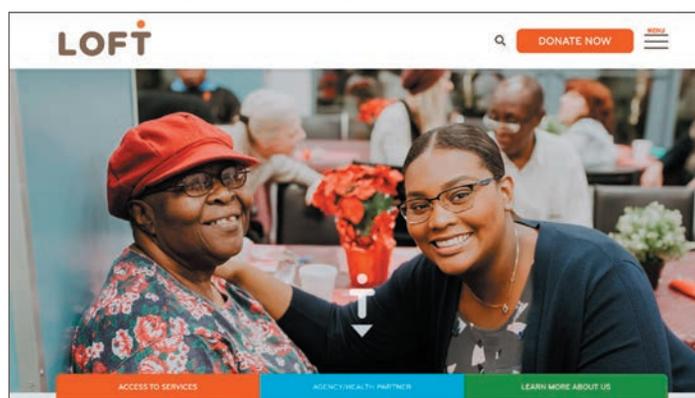
- Eastern York and Durham Region (Connecting Care Task Force)
- North Toronto
- North Western Toronto
- North York Toronto Health Partners
- Southlake Community

Visit: www.loftcs.org to find out more.

A NEW LOOK FOR OUR WEBSITE

After a lot of hard work, our newly redesigned website has launched! Featuring a fresh look and responsive design (so it works across all devices), the new site has more information on our services—so visitors can easily discover how we can help them, or simply learn more about what we do.

Check out the new site at loftcs.org, and if you have any questions or feedback, send us an email at fundraising@loftcs.org.



New Look loftcs.org



GET TO KNOW US: BERHANE ALEMU

Coordinator, Mount Dennis Hub

Berhane Alemu has a long standing passion for community social work. When he was in school, he pushed for a placement with LOFT. It wasn't long before he landed his first job with the organization. Eight years later, he couldn't feel more fulfilled by the work he does.

As the Coordinator of LOFT's Mount Dennis Hub, which provides on-site housing services for at-risk adults and seniors with challenges including mental illness, addiction, chronic physical health

issues, and social isolation. Berhane oversees day to day operations with a dedicated LOFT staff team, all while supporting up to eight clients of his own. More often than not, his day includes crisis intervention and emergency response for clients who are facing severe addiction and mental health issues. It's a difficult job, yet Berhane approaches it with empathy and grace.

Berhane is also a dedicated advocate for LOFT's clients. When he was working with another seniors' program, he worked with the city's ombudsman to recover a great deal of money owed to a client after his property was sold for back taxes. The client told him, "You are my angel, you saved my life—thank you!" He counts it as one of the most gratifying moments of his career.

With so much at stake when he's at work, Berhane appreciates the value of downtime. His personal time is all about his eight-year-old son, simply hanging out and reading books together.



BENEFIT CONCERT A BIG SUCCESS

On December 2, LOFT's 29th Annual Home for the Holidays Benefit Concert raised over \$82,000! This crucial fundraiser helps provide housing and support across Toronto, York Region and Simcoe County for youth, adults and seniors with complex mental health, physical health and addictions challenges.

The evening saw the community come together to enjoy the holiday season. Two LOFT clients, Andrew and Nora, courageously shared their stories, and musical performers included Samuel Chan, Alexis Gordon, Hogtown Brass Quintet, That Choir, Theresa Tova, Ton Beau String Quartet, and The Gospel Quintet featuring a family reunion of The Nylons.

Thank you to everyone who attended or contributed to the event, and to our generous sponsors, donors and volunteers.

Save the date for our 30th anniversary event on December 7, 2020



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SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Micah Barnes, Artistic Director
Our hosts Kelly Walker and
Tabby Johnson
Christopher Bracket, Stage Manager
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Director
Bill Corcoran, Stage Decorator Peter
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Cathy Inkster & Beryl Jarabata
St. James Guild of Change Ringers
Sanjay Sankat, Technical Coordinator

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2020SPCN

I would like to make a one time donation of:

\$25 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____

My personal cheque/money order payable to LOFT
Community Services is enclosed.

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By providing your email address you consent to receive regular updates, solicitations and other opportunities from LOFT.

Your contribution is tax deductible. A tax receipt will be issued shortly.

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VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT: ROBERT CARSON

Robert spends his working hours keeping LOFT's locations welcoming as part of LOFT Property Services' Social Enterprise Project. The project trains and hires skilled LOFT clients to do maintenance and gardening work.

Beyond his day job, Robert dedicates countless hours of his personal time as a longtime LOFT volunteer. Every Monday for the past three years, Robert works at our Second Harvest program to distribute healthy food to LOFT clients. He's also a peer mentor. "I learned from the very beginning with LOFT that everyone has their own story," he says. "I especially like working with youth programs because there's so much potential."

If you asked Robert why he volunteers, he'd say it's just in his nature. "I was brought up in a house where volunteering was valued, and I've been volunteering since I was 16 years old. I just love it," says Robert. "Helping people makes you feel good—it's great for your mental health."

The Social Enterprise Project program is only made possible through the generous support of donors, thank you!

VOLUNTEER WITH LOFT!

We couldn't do the work we do without help from people like you! There are a lot of ways you can volunteer with LOFT. Here are just a few of the volunteer opportunities we have right now:

- Lunch servers
- Dishwashers
- Food bank assistants
- Client activity volunteers (activities such as embroidery, knitting, arts & crafts)
- Event volunteers
- Photographers
- Copywriters
- Graphic designers
- Office support volunteers

Interested and available?

Email: volunteer@loftcs.org