

YOUR SUPPORT KEEPS THE ROAD TO RECOVERY CLEAR

## A Decade of Living with Dignity

When we first met Jeff ten years ago, he was struggling. Chronic poverty, substance use and serious health issues had led to a diminished life. A better reality was possible, but it would take comprehensive care and unwavering support.

Jeff's journey to health began when he took control of his substance use at CAMH. Drug-free for the first time in years, he had the energy to focus on his physical and mental well-being. Partnering with a LOFT care team at Wilkinson Housing and Support Services helped that process gain real momentum.

### OUR CONTINUUM OF CARE

With safe housing in place, Jeff worked with his LOFT team to tap into additional supports. His intense physical recovery included multiple extended stays in hospital, as well as two surgeries. The first rebuilt his entire digestive tract, while the second corrected complications that had led to a swollen abdomen. His care team stepped in when they saw how isolated he had become during his recovery.



Jeff enjoying some fresh air outside of Wilkinson last month.

They were able to connect Jeff with the right support at the right time, including a specialized physiotherapist willing to accept a patient on ODSP.

*Living independently and drug-free for more than a decade, Jeff is a true LOFT success story - thanks to you!*

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## THERE WHEN WE'RE NEEDED

Health, hope and a caring community are more important now than ever. COVID is keeping us all so isolated, and Jeff has felt that loneliness deeply. "Before COVID, I visited my friends once a week to

talk. I miss that," he says. His team is there for him as much as possible. "The staff is very kind to me," Jeff explains. "Hasan, my support worker, has been with me when I needed him most." 🗣️

### YOUR GIFTS ARE LIFTING UP THE FRONT LINE

## Coming Up for Air

**H**uman resources specialist Wura Aromolaran has worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to support LOFT's front-line teams. Here, she explains how she is learning to manage her own mental health in the face of COVID.



"Working at LOFT has changed how I provide HR services, especially during the pandemic. Like many of us, our staff members have faced challenges. They deserve the same kind of sensitive, nuanced support that they provide to our clients. We approach things from a human perspective, going the extra mile to understand people's stories and behaviour. The better our team members feel, the better they're able to do their jobs.

"When COVID hit, there was suddenly so much to do. We had to stay on top of things in order to act quickly as the pandemic evolved. It affected our staff, and it affected our clients. It was definitely challenging.

*COVID continues to challenge us but with Wura's help - and yours! - our staff are working with clients to overcome isolation, food insecurity and more.*

## BUILDING RESILIENCE TO PROVIDE RESULTS

"At one point, my body told me that I had to slow down. I wasn't managing my own stress, and I needed to come up for air. You don't think you're going through a lot mentally or emotionally, but your body knows.

"I had to make a change. I have learned to provide my best during the day, leaving things behind me when the workday ends. At home, I am able to recharge, reset, and come back refreshed. I didn't put an emphasis on that in the beginning. It has definitely been a learning experience from a mental health perspective. 🗣️

## Hope for the Holidays

**L**OFT is family for many of our clients, so putting holiday celebrations on hold during the pandemic wasn't an option. We made merry by coming together safely whenever possible, celebrating the strength of our community.

### ST. GEORGE HOUSE

Clients at this high-support housing program donned paper crowns, sang carols and enjoyed a festive meal. It was a cheerful day for residents whose complex challenges require a greater level of support.

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### MCEWAN HOUSING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Program staff did their best to channel Santa while delivering holiday care packages. Clients were moved by our staff's efforts to spread happiness while staying physically distanced.



### PELHAM PARK GARDENS

Staff from LOFT's supported housing team delivered meals and a heaping helping of holiday cheer to residents at this program for older, at-risk adults. 🍷



## YOUR COMPASSION FUELS COMMUNITY CHANGE



Behind the scenes at Koerner Hall during pre-taping of our Home for the Holidays Virtual Concert.

# An Update from Heather McDonald, CEO



If the last year has proven anything, it's that we have so much to be grateful for.

As always, my thank-you list is topped by our incredible staff members. They have sacrificed so much, including isolating from their families in order to continue our work in hospitals and 24/7 sites. Their dedication also made it possible for us to continue the tradition of our Home for the Holidays Concert by taking it online, turning it into a joyous virtual event.

### STAFF AND CLIENT SAFETY

We continue to collaborate with Ontario's Ministry of Health in an effort to prioritize our front-line staff and clients for COVID vaccinations. We have supported broader community well-being by facilitating flu vaccinations and COVID response. More recently, we collaborated with other health partners to build COVID vaccine education. We can't tell you how excited we are to be a part of this important, life-saving effort.



LOFT's Mental Health and Justice Initiative team organized a COVID testing clinic on Jan. 21st.



Board Chair James Anok visits a LOFT program to thank staff for their hard work.

It has been your support that makes our work possible. For that, I am truly grateful. These have been tough times, but they have been made easier through your kindness. Your messages of hope and donations of homemade gowns, cloth masks, meals and financial support have been incredibly encouraging. Your compassion fuels us as we work for our community.

Thank you for always being there for us. 🍷



## The Power of Partnership

Collaboration has long been at the heart of LOFT's success. When Grace Toronto Church reached out to us about working together, we knew it was an opportunity to make an incredible impact.

The vision was truly inspirational. The goal was to transform a property into Tabitha House, a home providing housing security for young women with mental health and addiction challenges. LOFT's decades-long experience creating and administering supportive housing would be the foundation on which it was built.

Planning got underway in early 2020, with an ideal property found and the partnership roles established. Then COVID struck, and our initiative was put on hold.

*This beautiful new home - built through partnership and community - gives me so much hope for the future!*

### WORKING TOGETHER LEADS TO WARM WELCOMES

They say timing is everything, and dreams can become reality. When circumstances allowed our project team to regroup in the fall, the property was still available. LOFT was able to secure City of Toronto funding for rent and staff. Grace Toronto Church provided the rest of the funds and began transforming Tabitha House into an inviting home. With careful thought going into every detail, from design to adding comfy furniture and Christmas decorations, they truly went above and beyond. They even stocked the pantry, allowing our clients to gain new skills in the kitchen. Together, we were thrilled to welcome Tabitha House's first residents home on Christmas Eve! 🎄

### A Model Collaboration

Our successful partnership with Grace Church Toronto is an exciting roadmap for future projects. It brings together LOFT's supportive housing expertise and likeminded people who want to create warm, peaceful spaces for those experiencing housing insecurity through donations and volunteerism. Grace Toronto Church volunteers are looking forward to offering mentoring and friendship to our clients.

### STEP INSIDE TABITHA HOUSE!

Take a virtual tour at:  
[www.loftcs.org/tabitha](http://www.loftcs.org/tabitha)



A gift to LOFT is a gift to  
empower your community.

📞 Call: 416-979-1994 ext. 2033 or 🖥️ visit: [loftcs.org](http://loftcs.org)

**LOFT**

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