

CONNECTIONS

YOUR SUMMER 2021 COMMUNITY UPDATE

LOFT CLIENTS DISCOVER THE HEALING POWER OF MUSIC

Merriam Music Lessons Spark Joy

Alan Merriam, the president and CEO of Merriam Music, made his first gift to LOFT six years ago. Since then, his investments have helped us to meet increased demands on our programs, ensuring that our clients maintain access to basic needs, like food, as well as life-changing LOFT support.

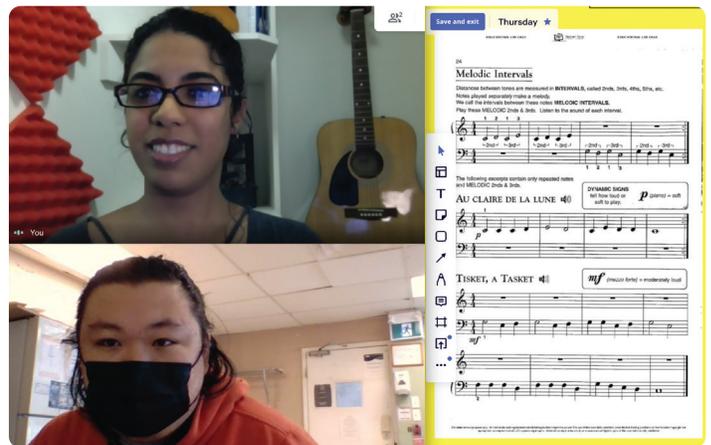
MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES FOR THOSE AT RISK

Our collaboration with Alan and his team at Merriam Music is growing again, this time through an exciting pilot project that brings the healing power of music directly to clients in our Mental Health and Justice Initiative (MHJI). Challenged by serious mental illness and past involvement with the criminal justice system, these clients are some of our most vulnerable.

Once a week for 12 weeks, Merriam Music teachers meet clients for a virtual lesson, passing on new skills and showing them how to use music to calm anxiety, improve mood and boost concentration.

NEW TUNES ARE LIFTING SPIRITS

To ensure the program's success, Merriam Music made



Anthony, an MHJI client, and his Merriam Music teacher can be seen in this split-screen shot of his weekly virtual music lesson.

the permanent donation of a piano to the MHJI site.

The piano made an instant impact. "I can't tell you the joy that has been felt throughout the entire program since the piano arrived," explains Cyrene Rainville, program director at MHJI. "The music provides a lightness, filling our space with energy and positivity."

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We're so grateful that our clients have this opportunity to learn, engage and feel connected after so many months of isolation.

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FROM SONGS TO SUCCESS

What's really special about this new pilot project is the way it can be personalized to each client. Whether they select a more traditional lesson framework, an

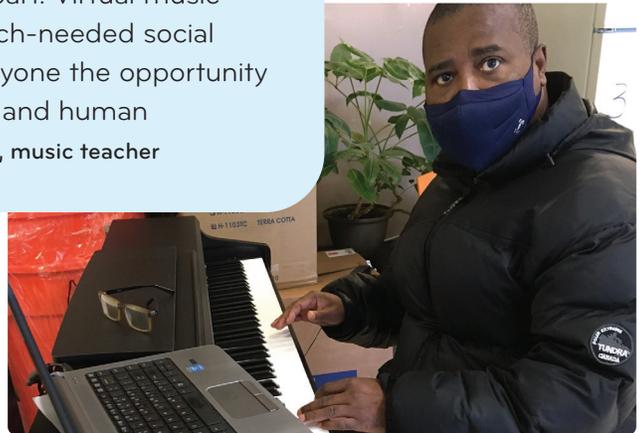
introduction to music production, or are just looking to deepen their music appreciation and find personal healing, there is a virtual option that ensures everyone achieves a deep sense of accomplishment. ©

"In times when the world yearns for company, prays for hope and is learning about what truly matters in life, we are very fortunate to have the magic of technology to unleash the power of music in our students' hearts. It is extremely heartwarming."

- Yolande, music teacher

"While quarantine protects us, it also pushes us further apart. Virtual music lessons create a much-needed social bridge, allowing everyone the opportunity to partake in artistic and human connection." - Noemi, music teacher

Laptop at the ready, George logs on for his private music lesson.



STRIKING A GOOD WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Diane Can't Wait Until We're Together



After more than a year of working from home to help stop the spread

of COVID-19, Diane Tsai is keen to

get back to the office and see her coworkers again. "We've all been missing that connection," explains our long-time Payroll and Benefits Administrator.

Knowing that hundreds of LOFT employees have been counting on her for seamless delivery of critical services during the pandemic, Diane has been going above and beyond to meet their needs. "These are uncertain times. It is important that all employees get their pay accurately and promptly," she says.

HELPING HERSELF TO HELP OTHERS

"Sitting all day at a desk, I found my legs were going numb," she explains. "I realized that my body was not in its normal state."

To bring more balance to her days, she's started going for walks, doing yoga and indulging her love of cooking. "I watch videos on YouTube and cook all the things I haven't tried before."

Focusing on her own needs has made it possible for Diane to stay one step ahead of the pandemic with her work. Whether it's ensuring redeployed front-line staff receive their Pandemic Premiums, or navigating updates to legislation, Diane and our financial team are making it possible for us to be there for our clients. ©

Thanks to you, and LOFT staff like Diane, we're "all hands on deck" for our clients during the pandemic!



An Update from Heather McDonald, CEO

CAMH REINTEGRATION PROGRAM

When medical issues lead to hospital stays, heading home for recovery should be a positive experience. For many in our community, however, complex mental and physical health challenges, combined with low income or struggles with poverty, demand considerable support. There is often no place for some patients to go. Many end up remaining in hospital for years, if not decades, putting incredible strain on the system's resources.

LOFT has long been a leader in providing clients with a safe, supportive middle ground between hospital and home through our transitional housing programs. Organizations like the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), rely on a successful partnership with LOFT. A home with LOFT not only costs a fraction of a prolonged hospital stay, but it helps clients get one step closer to resuming rich and rewarding lives in the community.

Our newest project together – The Path Home – is an important expansion of this partnership.

OPENING DOORS MEANS FREEING UP HOSPITAL BEDS

When the pandemic put immense pressure on in-patient beds at CAMH, their team turned to LOFT. They knew that LOFT would be able to convert their former emergency department into a transitional program that feels like a home.

Rooms were quickly updated and made accessible, common spaces were created, and two spacious new dining areas – with meals provided by LOFT's John Gibson House – ensured residents reliable access to nutritious food.

With its doors open, **The Path Home** is able to provide respite care for up to 30 low-income seniors and older adults who no longer require hospitalization. In partnership with CAMH and the Village Family Health Team, LOFT offers 24/7 personal support, specialized mental health care management and nursing. 🍷



LOFT staff had only weeks to make the new space – one floor within the 12-floor building – feel like home for residents.

I hope you can feel the positive energy we are experiencing through this powerful work. It's a great way to address a critical gap in the system.

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR AGM

Our Virtual Annual General Meeting will give you valuable insight into our programs and progress. Now, more than ever, we want to express our appreciation for the personal sacrifices, compassion, and hard work that has been demonstrated by our community throughout these difficult times.

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JUNE
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REGISTER TODAY AT:
www.loftcs.org/AGM2021 or
call 416-979-1994 #2033

MARIA MOVES IN!



Maria is so pleased to have a safe space to call home.

Meet One of Our First Residents

After nearly four years of in-patient treatment at CAMH, Maria was at a crossroads. "I didn't have a job, a home or a family to go back to," she explains. The Path Home became the supportive next step in Maria's recovery journey. There, she receives 24-hour care from our on-site nurses and home visits from her physicians. Maria is already gaining back her independence, and is especially proud to be able to do her own laundry again. She is looking forward to the future. "I'm really enjoying living here," says Maria. "LOFT staff will help me with everything I need until I can be independent again."

LIFETIME DONOR RECOGNITION

Celebrating our Donors

We are honoured that so many of you, our donors, have been providing invaluable support to our community for decades. Your commitment has helped us build a responsive, resilient organization, and we are humbled that you have chosen to stand with us for so long.

We are deeply grateful for your ongoing trust. We wish

we could include everyone on this list, but – thankfully – there are too many of you to mention. Below, please find the names of active monthly donors who have been giving to LOFT for more than 25 years.

To see a complete list celebrating all of our lifetime donors, please visit

www.loftcs.org/ourdonors.

- K. Valerie Allan
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- Margaret Rodrigues
- David & Maritza Smith*
- Margaret Smith
- Marilyn Wiley

*denotes LOFT staff

LOFT is grateful for all gifts - large or small. Together, we can be stronger for our community.

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

Call: 416-979-1994 ext.# 2033 or visit: loftcs.org



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