



A NEW LOOK, BUT THE SAME CARING SUPPORT!

We're excited to announce LOFT's new look to valued supporters like you.

You may notice the bold new design and colours that convey LOFT's sense of determination and strength in the life-changing services we provide to clients. Now, more than ever, we are being called on to be there for the increased mental health and supportive housing needs of our community. We need help to meet that growing demand and believe that our new look will invite new partnerships.

We want everyone to know that LOFT continues to provide the same support and services you've come to know and count on – services that promote recovery and independence for people with complex challenges. We support those experiencing mental health difficulties, dementia, substance use, physical health challenges, and homelessness. Our wide array of services helps us to meet each person's unique needs, allowing them to thrive in their community.

LOFT wants our clients to feel they've come to the right place. We hope that this sense of vitality and belonging comes across in the new look.

At LOFT we know that every person deserves to be seen. Our new logo will help us to be recognized more broadly, enabling us to provide for those who are so often overlooked.

Your support is what makes LOFT what it is today – **a place of hope!**

Remembering Dave – a brother, an uncle, and a valued LOFT client



When you talk to Janis Leonard about her brother Dave, she describes his childhood as one full of smiles, sports and fishing with grandpa. It wasn't until his teen years that Dave started hearing voices in his head.

Dave didn't understand what was happening to him. Confused and scared, and fearing the stigma that can accompany mental illness, he tried to hide his symptoms. He started to draw away from his family and retreat into himself.

As his symptoms worsened and Dave experienced paranoid delusions, he turned to alcohol to cope. Janis remembers those days as a hard time for her family. They didn't understand what he was going through, and worried that Dave might disappear from their lives.

Thankfully, someone gave Janis' father a pamphlet for LOFT's Crosslinks program. LOFT was able to help Dave, allowing him to find a home. With a place of his own came a sense of independence and dignity. Following his diagnosis of schizophrenia, Dave was able to begin treatment and regain his confidence.

Janis couldn't believe how much LOFT stepped in with support. She and her husband David are grateful for everything LOFT provided for her brother.

“With a place of his own came a sense of independence and dignity.”

At LOFT, we support our clients and their families. Janis learned she wasn't the only one caring for Dave – LOFT was there with her. She also realized that caring for him meant allowing him to live his life however he chose to. She didn't have to be there to judge him or fix him; she just had to be there as his sister and let him experience being a brother and an uncle. That lifted a huge burden off her shoulders and changed their relationship dramatically.

LOFT was in Dave's life for 30 years before he passed away. He is fondly remembered by staff and clients alike.

From India to Canada, LOFT's finance manager follows **his heart**

If you've met LOFT's finance manager, Khurshand Bhatena, you won't be surprised to learn that he has a long history of helping vulnerable people. In India, he spent his weekends volunteering to teach in underprivileged areas, where the teens he tutored lacked access to proper books and other school supports. Khurshand also volunteered with organizations distributing food to people living in severe poverty in South Bombay.

After twenty-nine years in India, where he worked in manufacturing, consulting, and accounting, Khurshand came to Canada. At LOFT's office he deals with financial reporting and budgeting and assists with accounting and payroll. He appreciates the people-centric approach at LOFT, as well as the collaborative environment in which his team works toward a common goal. In his free time, Khurshand enjoys hiking, traveling, and cooking new foods, like Italian and Thai.



Through his involvement in the Indian community, Khurshand is able to recognize gaps in social education, welfare, and mental health facilities. Harnessing his experience as a volunteer, he has worked with friends to start a non-profit called SOUL: Serving Our Unconditional Love. SOUL helps to bridge gaps in developing communities, addressing education, food, housing, and health through sponsorship that provides services directly to those in need. With his love of teaching and experience in finance, Khurshand's long-term goal is to build a school to help the underserved.

We know that Khurshand will continue to make a life-changing impact in people's lives, at LOFT and beyond.

“He appreciates the people-centric approach at LOFT, as well as the collaborative environment in which his team works toward a common goal.”

SAVE THE DATE!

We will be holding our
Annual General Meeting (AGM)
on September 26th, 2023.

If you have any questions,
please email fundraising@loftcs.org
or call 416-979-1994 ext. 2033#.

An update from **Heather McDonald,** **CEO**

If I were asked to name one common thread among the updates I'm bringing to you, I'd call it "New Beginnings".

While LOFT's rebranding has brought a new look and feel to our logo, we proudly maintain the same commitment to our clients and to the services we provide.

We have also established exciting new connections.

In our effort to bring meaningful frontline support to the TTC's public spaces, LOFT has expanded our Toronto's Multi-Disciplinary Outreach Team (M-DOT). We have assigned a team of mental health outreach workers, including a nurse, to the city's transit system. This year-long pilot project focuses on mental health and homelessness, giving vulnerable people in the transit system access to the long-term support they need.

In Bradford West Gwillimbury, the Town has enthusiastically supported LOFT's vision to build new housing. They are donating a Town's .35-hectare property at 31 Frederick Street to LOFT for the construction of the new Bradford House. With 100 self-contained units planned for the new home, there will be room for 60 more residents than at the current Barrie Street building.



The land donation better positions LOFT to receive government and provincial funding. Council has endorsed LOFT's efforts to secure a Rapid Housing Initiative grant from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. If the application is successful, LOFT may not need a mortgage on the building. This could lead to even more affordable and improved housing opportunities on the current Barrie Street property.

Local support for our services has been wonderful, and LOFT looks forward to making an accessible building where even more health services can be brought to the community.

As LOFT continues to grow, I'm proud to report that we are focused on consolidating and integrating new services, as well as adding new committed staff to support our growth.

We have a lot to look forward to!



Denise and Brian, residents at Bradford House ►

⦿ A GIFT TO LOFT IS A GIFT TO EMPOWER YOUR COMMUNITY

CALL: 416-979-1994 EXT. 2033#
OR VISIT: [LOFTCS.ORG](https://loftcs.org)

LOFT COMMUNITY SERVICES
15 TORONTO STREET, 9TH FLOOR
TORONTO, ON M5C 2E3

An incredible story of surviving and thriving, with some vital help along the way



Maria Cristaline moved to Toronto from Montreal in her twenties, leaving behind a childhood of abuse and trauma. “I grew up without any guardianship from my family,” says Maria. “I just knew I had to get away from that situation, even if I didn’t have any money, a job, or know anyone in Toronto.”

Without family or resources, the first six years in Toronto were extremely hard for Maria. She was in and out of women’s shelters and relied heavily on food banks and other forms of support. Maria’s determination helped her get to college, but her time at school wasn’t free of challenges. Depression stemming from her past trauma created issues with housing. With an income too low to live on, she relied on The 416 for food and vital support.

Drop-in centres, like LOFT’s The 416 Community Support for Women, provide nutritious meals and resources for women facing the difficulties of homelessness, mental health issues, and substance use challenges. Maria remembers arriving at The 416 one day after lunch was served, and kindly being offered food. “From that moment until I graduated from college, I went there as much as I could. I was extremely grateful. They inspired me to really push myself to grow into my best self.”

Maria went on to stable employment, returning to school in her late thirties to study at Toronto Metropolitan University. Today she enjoys having a great job, her own apartment, and wonderful friends. She’s also choosing to give back, making her second gift-in-kind donation to LOFT. “I want to show my appreciation for the support. I wouldn’t have been able to achieve my personal success if LOFT’s 416 wasn’t there. I wanted to live my life to the fullest,” says Maria, “and I’m grateful to have met amazing people who believed in me and supported me.”

“I wanted to live my life to the fullest, and I’m grateful to have met amazing people who believed in me and supported me.”