



Acts of KINDNESS

Report to the Community

2020-2021



Taking a Leap of Faith Together

LOFT Community Services provides support and hope to people facing complex mental and physical health challenges, addictions, dementia, homelessness or risk of homelessness. LOFT stands for Leap of Faith Together and we're there where there are few others, reaching out in response to unmet needs. Our goal is to help clients live independently and with dignity, at home or with us.



Board of Directors

James Anok, *Chair*
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Debra Walko,
*Senior Director, Complex Care
and Seniors Services*



Board Retreat at our Pine Villa location



Rising to the Challenge of 2020

A Message from the CEO



Fifteen months ago, staying one step ahead of a fast-moving virus seemed like a tall order. As I look back on 2020 now, I can see that in many ways and with many hands, LOFT was able to do just that.

Our approach was to act, not react, whenever possible. An early commitment to safety protocols helped keep COVID-19 at bay across many of our sites. Partnering with supporters allowed us to get critical personal protective equipment to front-line employees who face unprecedented challenges to this day.

Staff members adapted quickly as every new need arose, redeploying and taking on more work at a moment's notice.

We shared our proven pandemic response and our "Caring for Carers" approach with **hundreds of other agencies across Ontario** to help boost their preparedness.

It was also a year of reckoning for racial and social justice, and we provided safe spaces for important discussions and feedback with our staff who are racialized.

Those are just a few of the successes your unwavering support made possible last year. We are grateful that you continue to be part of the LOFT community, and look forward to continuing our partnership throughout 2021.

Finally, I must extend my heartfelt thanks to Board Chair James Anok and former Vice Chair Michelle Henry. Both have served on LOFT's Board for the maximum of 10 years. James and Michelle helped guide LOFT through demanding circumstances, and we truly appreciate their efforts.

I'm pleased to announce that Mary Jo Smith will be taking over as Chair, and we welcome her wisdom and steady hand.



Heather McDonald, CEO

Leading the Way in a Brand-New World

A Message from the Board Chair



This past year has been one of continuous change. Throughout this period, events that could have been chaotic for our organization were tempered by the existence of strong leadership. This leadership, from all

levels at LOFT, allowed us to survive (and even thrive) as the pandemic unfolded in our communities.

Based on our past experience with SARS, LOFT's culture of learning had already developed and implemented plans that focused on one clear and overarching goal: keeping our clients and staff safe, and our services up and running. This commitment to everyone in the LOFT family, and the communities we operate in, enabled us to navigate through the complexities that the pandemic presented. We were prepared, and proactive.

A key example of this is that our staff and management teams had planned for extended lockdowns well in advance of the provincial mandate. **This saved lives.** We owe them a huge debt of gratitude for their dedication and the personal sacrifices that they made throughout the last year.

LOFT's strong and consistent leadership, at all levels of the organization, has also allowed us to reimagine almost everything we do. Connecting virtually was just one "new normal" that our tireless staff members quickly adopted. You'll hear more about their inspiring efforts throughout this report, but for now I would like to thank them for their remarkable commitment to LOFT's important work, and the clients in our care.

Continued on next page...

A Message from the Board Chair (continued)

On a personal note, my experience volunteering on the Board of LOFT over the past 10 years has undoubtedly been one of the most fulfilling experiences I've ever had. When I started at LOFT it was with the intent to "give back" to the community, little did I know how much more LOFT would give to me. I've been surrounded by an incredible leadership team at the Board table, and throughout the organization. I've had the pleasure of working with two amazing CEOs, and have had the privilege of meeting many front-line, office staff, and clients over the years. And I've seen what hope and faith can do to positively transform the lives of the people who need LOFT the most. Thanks to all of you for the opportunity to serve as a volunteer with this amazing organization.

Over the last 12 months and more, all of you have supported LOFT's critical work in a multitude of ways. Thank you. Working together truly makes the load lighter for all.

With my best wishes,



James Anok, Board Chair

Heroes Work Here!

In a year filled with upheaval, our staff members went above and beyond in new ways for our clients. Thank you to each and every one of you for your hard work and sacrifices – and congratulations to those celebrating LOFT anniversaries this year. You make everything possible!



40 years

Paul Demaniw

20 years

Darlene Coppens
Paulet Ricketts
Lorna Raposas
Leonard LeRoyb
Maria T. Anceriz

5 years

Karen Cohen
Kathy Taylor
Tsewang Choedon
Tsering Kyipa
Ling Ying (Crystal Zhang)
Zhang
Alice Chia Hui Liew
Stefania Pallotta
Antonio Gordinho
Sharon Reid
Jeni Vanessa Ramster
Jinghua Wang
Phillip Michael Hozer
Erin Demelis
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Ahmed Tamanna
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Jaclyn Fraser
Solmaz Ahmadzadeh
Dehghan
Johnathan Ellis
Sindy Forbes
Ainsworth Fuller
Pawel Orzech
Joanna Ramirez
Claire Barrett-Coppin
Caroline Bjerkelund
Sivajeevithan Balaskantha
Zhi Bing James Huang
Mardaina Daley
Kimberley Martin
Janice Wallace
Dalia Al-Khooly
Tsering Choden
Kidist Teklu

15 years

Laurel Baldwin
Lisa Davies
Margo McLaughlin
Louise Jablonski
Hamila Lotfi
Amy Nung Foon Wong
Mel Petyrna

10 years

Velvet Melanson
Sabine Neidhardt
Lindor Uygur
Ramsay McKay
Lloyd Brown
Kenniss Phung
Primrose Paul
Shaizad Merchant
Laura Pye
Eleanor Miller

Bravery and Sacrifice in the Face of COVID-19

Our staff members have always been exceptional people doing exceptional work, and they stepped up like never before during the pandemic.

When others were retreating from workplaces and sheltering safely at home, LOFT staff headed out on public transit to connect with clients, often in places with confirmed COVID-19 outbreaks, and long before vaccines were available.

Sonam Choden, a Personal Support Worker at John Gibson House, has felt the anxiety of the last 15 months deeply. "Work has been very challenging," she says. "I live with my two kids and husband in a one-bedroom apartment. I've had to try my best to stay as safe as possible for my family and my clients."

Remarkably, sacrifice became the norm for staff members. Many, like Sonam, willingly redeployed to different LOFT sites, even when it meant increased risk and longer hours. "I never said no to coming to work," Sonam says. "I have gone to outreach and to individual homes ... anywhere I was asked to go."

With clients isolated for their safety, staff members looked for new ways to provide critical support virtually, or did much-needed grocery runs to make sure clients always had nutritious food. No new need went unmet.

Without their regular routines, however, many clients experienced relapses in their recovery journeys. Others struggled with loneliness and deteriorating health. Watching these setbacks was hard for Sonam and her colleagues, but they just worked harder to build connections. "We tried to socialize with them and keep them in good spirits as much as possible."

The challenges of the last year have only strengthened Sonam's commitment to her clients and to LOFT's mission.



“ I enjoy my work because I believe it is my duty to take care of individuals in need. The world is interconnected, and society functions when one person helps another.”

Voices from the Frontlines

We continue to be humbled by our staff's dedication to our clients, no matter the risk. Here's what working through a pandemic has been like for some of them, in their own words.



We've never stopped during the pandemic. Our clients are often misunderstood, and we are all they have.

– Rhonda Sloane



What inspires me most is my team's dedication and their good heart. Rather than refusing to work during the pandemic, they showed a level of dedication that I could never have imagined.

– Nicole Downes



I'm a mom. I have a young child. Being away from home is hard, but supporting my clients can be extremely rewarding.

– Monique Chamberlain

It Takes a Village to Tackle a Global Pandemic

Coming together – in support and solidarity, to serve and to sustain – has always been the lifeblood of LOFT. Our success lies in the partnerships we're privileged to have with our many supporters. Here's a snapshot of what an awe-inspiring wave of collective effort looked like in action.

PPE Supplies Keep Everyone Protected

At the beginning of the pandemic, personal protective equipment was scarce and expensive. A number of partners recognized our need and made sure we had plenty of masks, gowns and sanitizer.

Echo Foundation

Echo Foundation – annual supporters of our seniors and Alternative Level of Care (ALC) programs – provided an additional \$50,000 in 2020 for PPE and enhanced cleaning protocols.

“Longtime supporter Echo Foundation was right there with us, anticipating our need for additional support. Words cannot express what that means to us. Our community remained safe during all waves of the pandemic.”

– *Mona Lee-Tam, Senior Director, Development and Communications*



The Rotman Family Foundation

The Rotman Family Foundation ordered \$10,000 in masks for our clients, many of whom face financial hardship, making safety – and peace of mind – more accessible for all.

“Thanks to generous donors such as The Rotman Family Foundation, we've been able to provide clients with free cloth masks – some with colour and flair!”

– *Kay Roeslein, Program Director, McEwan Housing and Support Services and BLOOM Housing & Supports*

Raising Spirits with Much-Needed Food

COVID-19 not only revealed entrenched issues with food insecurity, but worsened them. Help came from numerous supporters – large and small, new and long-established – who wanted to make sure hunger didn't become a second, silent pandemic.

“Food support – in any form – is a bright spot for clients. To have an unexpected extra meal or care package to help fill the cupboards is a blessing and a gift. The holiday meals let them know that someone cares enough to think about them.”

– *Cylene Rainville, Program Director*

Mental Health Support in a Challenging Time

COVID-19's psychological impacts may be hard to see, but they can be devastating. That's why we are so thankful that many partners reached out with support to address the mental health needs of both clients and our staff.

The Schulich Foundation

The Schulich Foundation's gift of \$100,000 provided virtual Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) for our Transitional Age Youth (TAY).

“DBT has supported me in reaching my goals and provided me with a strong foundation in my treatment plan. Attending the groups helped me make effective decisions, increased my coping skills, improved relationships and regulated intense emotions.”

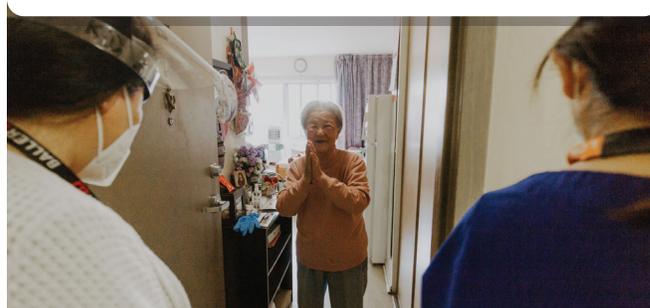
– TAY client

United Way Greater Toronto's Allan Slaight Seniors Fund

This generous \$1 million dollar gift over the next five years will help alleviate seniors' isolation. These funds will expand our Life Enrichment Program to better meet the physical, emotional and intellectual needs of this unique population.

“This evidence-based program has been vital to the overall health of our clients. We're thrilled to provide these programs to seniors in Toronto Community Housing in the city's northwest where supports like this don't currently exist.”

– Debra Walko, Senior Director, Complex Care and Seniors Services



Creativity Saves the Day

Here are just a few of the inspired – and inspiring – ways our community came together last year to make sure our at-risk clients knew they weren't facing a pandemic alone.

Protection with a Personal Touch

Dean and Judy Collinson led a group of dedicated craftspeople from Kingsway-Lambton Church who hand-sewed much-needed masks and fleece accessories and created personal care kits for clients.



Board Members Match

Our generous Board Members participated in a “Board Match” in which they matched all Giving Tuesday 2020 donations up to \$45,000. All the funds went towards ensuring low-income seniors received a warm holiday meal.

Tackling Food Insecurity

Determined to make sure no one went hungry, many generous LOFT community members donated food and meals.



Masks for All

King Bay Clothiers donated more than 1,600 cloth masks, while other supporters ensured we never went without life-saving PPE.

A Feast for MHJI

Maple Lodge Farms and CAMH came together and had meals provided to clients at our Mental Health and Justice Initiative.



Acts of Kindness

Personal care kits, gift cards, much-needed clothing, bedding and holiday cards: these are just a few of the ways supporters reached out and connected with clients.

Client Q&A: A life changed

How Laura's Getting Back on Track After the Pandemic



COVID-19's impacts are being felt much more deeply by women. Laura*, a client at our Ingles House program for young women with complex challenges, experienced this painful phenomenon first hand.



What was your life like before you connected with LOFT?



I was in a very scary situation. When I was 21, I experienced a forcible confinement trauma. As a result, I have permanent injuries and I started to drink to cope. Then I met someone and found myself in a financially abusive relationship. My living situation was dependent upon this person. I remember thinking, "Maybe it is okay all these bad things are happening to me. I can continue to work part-time and drink to cope with my hard life." But the cycle of substance and financial abuse never allowed me to fully recover.



At one point, you finished school and found a job. Can you tell us about that?



I graduated from university and I found my dream job at a museum in the city. While I was working, drinking wasn't a problem. Then the pandemic hit and I lost my job. I knew that I needed to stop drinking so I could go back to work. I didn't want that life anymore. I needed to pick myself up again and not let the violence I experienced shape the rest of my life. So I went to rehab and that's where I learned about LOFT.



Why was transitioning from rehab to LOFT so important for you?



When I finished rehab, I didn't think I could stay sober on my own. Although I have a supportive family, my social circle was not the best. I knew I needed professional support developing relationships and connecting with people.



How is LOFT supporting you as you work towards a more independent life?



LOFT helped me come up with attainable goals and a schedule for achieving them. I have PTSD, anxiety and social anxiety. They are not as prevalent in my life anymore, but I struggled with drinking as a way to cope with work and stress. I felt very hopeless. On my own, I would do too much and then relapse, but LOFT is helping me find a better balance.



Now that you've been at Ingles House for a few months, how are you feeling?



For the first time in five years, I feel hopeful about my future. LOFT helped me see that my past doesn't dictate my future. I'm so glad I found LOFT when I did.

**Laura's name was changed for privacy.*

2020 by the Numbers

LOFT's Impact in the Community



6,200
clients served



702
staff



1,733
housing units

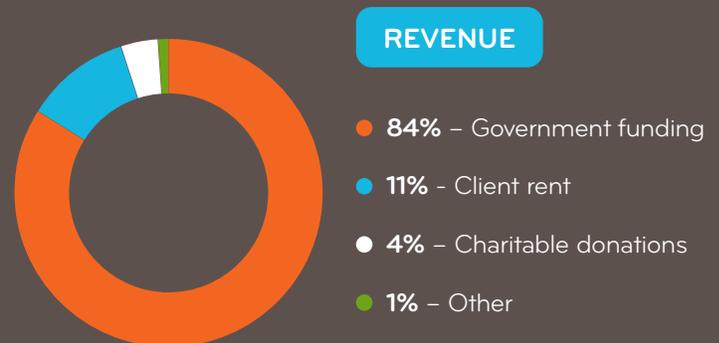
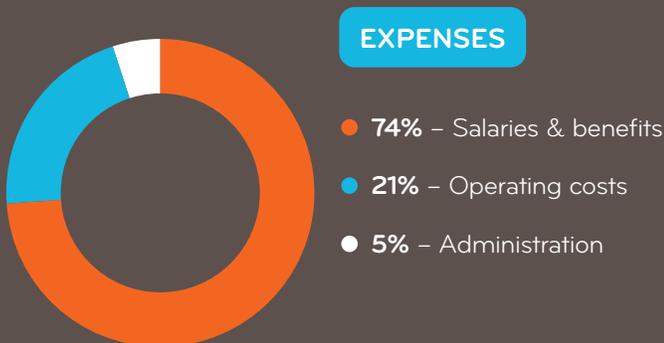


42,000
more client touchpoints due to COVID

LOFT Community Services Operating Fund

\$55.3 MILLION

Operating expenses for the Fiscal Year ended March 31, 2021



2020-2021 Major Donors (\$10,000+)

Thank you to everyone who supported our work this year. We are stronger because of you.

\$250,000+



**United Way
Greater Toronto**

United Way Greater Toronto's
Allan Slight Seniors Fund

\$100,000 – \$249,999



The Schulich Foundation

\$50,000 – \$99,999

**Bill & Karen
Barnett**



Alan Merriam

A. Doug McGregor



\$25,000 – \$49,999

The Bishop Kenneth
Maguire Trust of the
Anglican Foundation
of Canada



\$10,000 – \$24,999

Bell Let's Talk Fund
Connor, Clark & Lunn
Foundation †
Daily Bread Food Bank
Richard * & Darleen Falconer
The Home Depot Canada
Foundation
The Incorporated Synod
of the Diocese of Toronto
J. P. Bickell Foundation
Pherrill Fund of the Anglican
Diocese of Toronto
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Suzy Armanini
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Reverend Canon Alyson
Barnett-Cowan
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Brettany's Legacy: The
Brettany Biggs Fund
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Luzviminda Caceres*
John & Angela Caliendo
Cantor Fitzgerald Securities
Company †
Brian & Ellen Carr
David Cates
Carole Chabot & Derek Dodd
Marion & Hugh Chambers
Elizabeth & Phil Charal
J.S. Cheng & Partners Inc
CHUM Charitable Foundation
The Church of Saint Timothy
Clorox Canada
Paul Cockburn
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Professional Corporation
Carol Drummond
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The Fleck Family Foundation
Flex N Gate
Matthew Flynn*
The Food Bank of York Region
Don & Jane Fraser †
Freedom International
Brokerage Company †
G. Brandt Meat Packers Ltd.
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John Gillies
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Blake Goldring
The Honourable William C.
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Monique Guibert
Carrie Hayward *
Kenneth & Gwendolyn Hayward
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Maureen Hyland
Ted Hyland & Mary Corkery
Ins Choi Productions Inc.
J. Thomas L. James
Kumar Jayasuriya
Jo's Snowflake Fund at the
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Michael Kilgour
Lady Dicks, Season 1
Rebecca Lai
M. Olivia Lee
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Leap of Faith Circle (\$1,000+) continued

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Joe & Mary Frances Sheehan J
Andrew Slonetsky
Mary Jo Smith*
Starbucks Canada Charitable
Fund, held at the Vancouver
Foundation
Sheila E. Thompson
Toronto Dominion Centre
Unionville Presbyterian Church
Helen Uygur
Peter van der Velden
Jennifer Vella

Vision Prosperity Group
Judith Wagman
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Bruce H. Weppler
William and Betty Finch Fund
Ian Williams
Richard Worzel & Jacky
Simmons
Shenlor Young
David & Vianna Zekveld
Anonymous x 7

We are pleased to recognize our lifetime donors who have been the backbone of our work. Please visit loftcs.org/ourdonors.

We are grateful for every gift that we received this year. This list represents donors with total gifts made between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list. If an error has been made, please accept our apologies.

Looking Ahead with Hope and Gratitude

While an annual report offers the chance to reflect on the year that's been, it's also an opportunity to set our sights on better days ahead.

Yes, we will continue to deal with the pandemic's long-term effects – especially a widespread youth mental health crisis – for months to come. We strongly believe, however, that our strategic, community-driven approach to care will allow us to adapt to whatever awaits. To that end, we look forward to:

- ✓ Expanding on 2020's important anti-racism work
- ✓ Embracing even more collaborative work with Ontario Health Teams, a process that was refined throughout the challenges of the pandemic
- ✓ Meeting the growing demand for supportive housing, estimated to be 20,000 units over the next 10 years
- ✓ Embracing the potential of virtual care platforms, even after the pandemic ends
- ✓ Increasing our overall capacity for care



None of this will be possible without your continued support. Together, we are a formidable team – one that can achieve great things, no matter the obstacles.

We look forward to reporting back to you on our achievements in 2021. Until then, many thanks for always being there for us.



Together, we can
all live successfully
in our community.

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loftcs.org

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