



WOODGREEN COMMUNITY SERVICES



Creating Innovative Solutions

ANNUAL REPORT 2004/2005

Because everyone deserves the essentials of life

WoodGreen - Tackling Social Issues with Innovative Solutions

Toronto is a wonderful metropolis - rich in diversity and opportunity. But like many big urban centres it also has its share of social issues that threaten the health and welfare of the many individuals and families that live here. Here are some of the troubling statistics driving WoodGreen's many services:

- Over 30,000 people are living on the streets
- More than 170,000 people are out of work
- Nearly one in three children lives below the poverty line
- Roughly one in four seniors lives alone - many suffering from physical, mental or health challenges

WoodGreen believes that *everyone deserves the essentials of life* and we are leading the way in tackling these critical issues.

Because of the depth and breadth of WoodGreen's programs - we currently serve 37,000 clients at 15 locations throughout Toronto's East end - we are able to address these complex societal issues through innovative and integrated solutions. As evidenced by the many stories in this Annual Report, WoodGreen takes a holistic approach to helping clients. We make it easier for individuals and families to access all the support they need by bringing together a number of services into one program. One example of this successful approach is WoodGreen's new Homeward Bound program. The program brings together employment training, housing and child care supports to help low-income women and their children who have been homeless become completely self-reliant within three years with a guaranteed job.

The Toronto Homemaking Services partnership is another significant initiative in which WoodGreen plays a key role, as we work to ensure that frail and isolated seniors living alone are accessing the many services they require to live independently. And after only a few years of operation, the Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre - a new model which combines kindergarten, child care and parenting supports in one comprehensive program - is being heralded as the way of the future for young families.

We couldn't have this kind of impact without the ongoing involvement and dedication of our amazing board, staff and over 1,500 volunteers who are at the heart of WoodGreen. And we are also thankful for the private and public sector support that provides a strong foundation in which to explore our new ideas and services.

As we look forward, we see so many more opportunities to help our community make positive, permanent changes in the lives of individuals and families. We see a better Toronto.



Brian Smith
President



Jan Goddard
Chair, Board of Directors

*Because everyone deserves
the essentials of life*

A special note to readers:

While we are fortunate to be featuring some of WoodGreen's wonderful clients in this Annual Report, none of the photos depict the actual clients whose stories are told throughout these pages.

WoodGreen Community Services Board of Directors

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Helping low income families to become more self-sufficient through education and employment



Issue:

Over 4,500 children experience shelter life every year in Toronto.

Solution:

Homeward Bound helps mother-led families make a complete transition from shelters to economic self-sufficiency.

For 27-year-old Nickesha Ricketts, going back to school has been tough, but not nearly as tough as her life was when she enrolled in WoodGreen's Homeward Bound program a year ago. Back then, Nickesha was forced to spend two months living in a shelter with her two young daughters, unable to find an apartment she could afford. Today she is completing her second semester of the Network and Technical Support program at Seneca College, and her daughters are thriving.

Nickesha is one of thirty-two women who are part of Homeward Bound - an innovative new WoodGreen program designed to help low-income women with a history of homelessness, and their children, to become completely self-supporting within three years. Offering a total solution to the barriers these women face, Homeward Bound provides housing support, employment training, on-site child care, one-on-one counselling and a guaranteed, full-time job at the end of the program.

Year one has been tremendously successful. With all participants having completed their International Computer Driving Licence certificate - a respected computer literacy program - 26 are now enrolled in one of five certificate programs at Seneca College. According to Jocelyn Piercy, Co-Dean, Faculty of

Technology at Seneca College, WoodGreen has done "an amazing job with helping these women find their own passions and interests, and then supporting them to follow their chosen path."

Jacqueline Whittingham, Director of Homeward Bound, says that having all the supports in one place has also been key to the program's success. "These women have been through a great deal," says Jacqueline. "They need lots of emotional support, help dealing with parenting issues, assistance getting connected to the resources they require and encouragement to keep going."

For Nickesha having the ongoing support of staff amounts to one thing - she is able to focus on her studies. "This program will make me more marketable and allow me to provide for my family," says Nickesha. "It is one of the best things that has ever happened to me."

Bringing together a unique mix of private and public sector partners, Homeward Bound has been made possible through the generous support of Ed and Fran Clark, The Counselling Foundation of Canada, The Ontario Trillium Foundation, United Way of Greater Toronto, East York Rotary Club, Sun Life Financial, Paliare Roland Rosenburg Rothstein LLP and all 3 levels of government.

Taking the lead with an integrated approach to early learning

Issue:

Ontario families are demanding improved early learning and child care services to ensure children get the best start possible in the crucial first six years of life.

Solution:

WoodGreen and partners are piloting a new model of early learning and care that is a flexible and affordable solution designed specifically to meet family needs.

At a time when both the federal and provincial governments are looking for a more flexible and integrated approach to early learning and child care, WoodGreen is leading the way. The Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre is being heralded as the way of the future and “the most integrated model in the country,” according to Charles Pascal, Executive Director of the Atkinson Foundation, which is the core project funder. Other key partners include the City of Toronto and the Toronto District School Board.

Offering a seamless system for families with young children, Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre is one of five Toronto First Duty Projects which combine kindergarten, child care and parenting supports in one comprehensive program. Families can choose from a half-day or full-day program and from a variety of parenting programs - according to their needs. And with financial support from the Toronto First Duty funding partners, the program is both affordable and accessible to all families.

The City of Toronto says that preliminary findings indicate the program is showing great promise. It appears that parents from the Toronto First Duty sites seem to be more engaged in their children’s early learning than their counterparts in

other schools. When using standardized testing, the quality of the program also appears to be higher. Pam Musson, Program Manager of Toronto Children’s Services says she anticipates that an economic analysis will soon show that this integrated service delivery model is more cost effective too.

As a result, the City of Toronto and the Atkinson Foundation are providing funding to expand the Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre to include children starting at age two and a half, and a broader range of programs and operating hours.

“We are positioning children for success,” says Elaine Levy, Director of Child Care Services at WoodGreen. “With children involved in positive early learning experiences in an integrated environment early on, their transition into school is smoother and developmental gaps are addressed sooner.”

For Penny Morris, Program Coordinator at Bruce/WoodGreen the proof is evident in seeing children thrive in the program. “We see children who are doing well academically, can get into routines more quickly, are better prepared for group situations and who are gaining confidence all the time,” says Penny.

Finding better solutions for the city's homeless

Issue:

71,000 households are now on Toronto's municipal waiting list for affordable social housing.

Solution:

WoodGreen is playing a key role in the City of Toronto's Next Steps Program by helping individuals find housing and integrate into the community.

With the homeless population growing fast, WoodGreen Community Services is working to create a better solution for the 30,000 people living on the streets of Toronto. Recently, in partnership with the City of Toronto and the Toronto Community Housing Corporation, WoodGreen played an integral role in supporting the ex-residents of Tent City through the emergency homelessness rent supplement pilot project. Specifically, WoodGreen helped individuals to find appropriate housing, and provided them with extensive supports (including access to health and harm reduction services) so they could transition smoothly from Tent City to their own apartments.

A recent report evaluating the pilot project shows that the financial impact of this innovative approach is significant. Providing individuals with rent supplements and housing support costs 28% less than housing those same individuals in hostels or shelters. And that's not the only benefit. This unique housing alternative also helps individuals who have been chronically homeless to make positive changes in their lives.

Among those interviewed, 89% of the households were still housed more than 18 months after the start of the pilot program - a very positive result given that these individuals had been homeless an average of eight and a half years at the start of the program. A whopping 70%

of individuals had reduced their drug and alcohol use, 23% were volunteering in the community, 16% had returned to school, and 11% were actively seeking employment.

Joyce Brown, a research consultant and one of the writers of the report, calls the rent supplement project a "critical solution to the homelessness issue," adding that "there is currently no other quick way to get people housed and to keep them housed." She says that the WoodGreen support has been essential to the success of the project, including helping the participants deal with paperwork, negotiate with landlords on tenant issues, work through personal issues and connect with different services in the community.

As a result of the project's success, the City of Toronto has expanded its funding to provide rent supplements this year for 200 more individuals who have spent at least 50% of their time in shelters or hostels. WoodGreen will again play a key role in this new Next Steps Program working with the individuals for up to a year to ensure they find housing and are properly integrated into the community.

"WoodGreen is unique in their approach to homelessness," says Joyce Brown. "They really understand the broader context and causes of homelessness, so they are able to come up with good solutions for their clients."



*a place to
call home*

Bringing support services right to clients' homes



*living
independently*

Issue:

Approximately one in four Toronto seniors lives alone - many suffering from physical, mental or health challenges, and in need of personal support.

Ninety-three-year-old Margaret loves the feeling of independence she gets from living on her own. Like many seniors though, Margaret couldn't do it without the support of Toronto Homemaking Services (THS). Struggling with heart problems, diabetes and severe arthritis, Margaret welcomes THS personal support workers into her home each week to help her with showering and dressing, as well as light housekeeping and laundry.

and transportation programs, as well as regular dining events with other seniors.

Adding Central Neighbourhood House to the THS partnership (in 2005) is helping to strengthen all three agencies and their ability to meet the needs of the many seniors and individuals with disabilities who live between Bathurst and Victoria Park, and from Bloor/Danforth to Lake Ontario. Together they will serve an estimated 700 clients in the coming year.

Solution:

WoodGreen has partnered with other Toronto agencies to create Toronto Homemaking Services, providing personal support that enables 700 seniors to live independently.

A creative partnership between WoodGreen and Neighbourhood Link/Senior Link - and more recently, Central Neighbourhood House - THS is a not-for-profit personal support and homemaking service available to clients in Toronto. THS offers clients the advantage of really knowing the community in which they live. This means that not only does THS provide support with daily life - whether it's holding a client's hand, helping with bathing, tidying up, or preparing a hot meal - but it also connects clients with other important community resources. For Margaret this means that she also gets access to WoodGreen's Meals on Wheels

According to Jane Piccolotto, WoodGreen's Director of Community Care and Wellness for Seniors, this new structure will also allow for better sharing of ideas among the partners. As well, there will be more varied training programs for staff so they can improve on their skills and techniques. All of this translates to enhanced services for clients. "In this case, bigger is better," says Jane. "Joining together ensures that we are benefiting from each other's expertise and sharing ways to continually improve on how we support each other and our clients."

Reaching out to unemployed youth in creative new ways

Issue:

Close to 20,000 youth in Toronto are unemployed.

Solution:

WoodGreen is forging innovative partnerships to help more unemployed youth find meaningful work.

When Darcy George found out about WoodGreen's Youth Arts program, she knew immediately it was for her. Feeling burned out from years of dead-end retail jobs, she was hoping to find employment that fit with her artistic interests and talents. Through the Youth Arts Program, she and 11 other youth worked with Batik artist David Kabula and then had the opportunity to do a three-week field placement in an arts-related organization.

After her placement at Arts Starts, Darcy was hired on full time and now helps to organize summer and after-school arts and drama programs for children. Darcy says that she has finally found employment that suits who she is. "I like working in a cooperative team environment focusing on something meaningful," says Darcy. "Thanks to the WoodGreen program, I make a difference through my work everyday. It's wonderful."

The Youth Arts Program is just one example of how WoodGreen's Youth Job Centre is finding innovative ways to connect with youth who are unemployed. With close to 20,000 youth out of work in Toronto alone, many of these youth find themselves without a sense of purpose. Studies show that youth unemployment has been linked to an increase in anti-social behaviours such as drug and alcohol abuse, as well as involvement in criminal activities.

WoodGreen works to help youth see the opportunity to create a different kind of future - a future where they are successfully employed and contributing members of society.

Partnering with the Toronto Community Housing Corporation in St. Jamestown and the Christian Resource Centre in Regent Park, WoodGreen has set up satellite locations within these communities where employment counselling, job development and summer jobs services for youth are offered on site. And WoodGreen is also reaching unemployed youth through Wellesley Community Centre. Graduates of the Youth Job Centre Apprenticeship Program attend sports clinics and other youth programming to get their counterparts interested in using WoodGreen's employment resources.

According to Sipho Kwaku, Director of Employment and Immigrant Services at WoodGreen, this approach is really working. Last year alone, the Youth Job Centre helped 1,500 youth find jobs. "We're having much better success in reaching youth when we go to where they live and hang out," says Sipho. "Our goal is to direct them towards meaningful career opportunities, so they can start to build a life for themselves that they can feel good about."



connecting with unemployed youth

People are the heart of WoodGreen

VOLUNTEERS MAKE THEIR MARK



WoodGreen volunteers participate in the United Way Walk

WoodGreen has introduced a new volunteer initiative which offers young adults living with a developmental disability the opportunity to learn new skills while making a meaningful contribution. Many of these young adults have completed their schooling, but are unable to get jobs. Through the Access Ability program, these volunteers are trained and assisted to carry out specific job responsibilities within a service area of WoodGreen. Duties might include putting food trays together for the child care centre, helping with seniors' recreational programs or performing general office duties.

Launched as a pilot project, the program has been a tremendous success with the four volunteers having gained valuable work

experience, an increased comfort level in dealing with people and improved self-confidence. And it's not just the volunteers who are benefiting. Althea Benjamin, manager of WoodGreen's Youth Job Centre, says that having a volunteer in place has helped her staff manage the many details of the summer jobs service program. "With 2000 clients and employers to keep track of, we rely on Stella's organizational skills," says Althea. "Whether she's filing or scheduling appointments, she's very conscientious. She's become a valuable part of our team."

Last year, more than 1,500 volunteers worked alongside WoodGreen staff to help deliver our many essential programs and services. We are thankful to each and every one for their many contributions.

CELEBRATING STAFF DEDICATION



Carmen Vaughan-Burnett

Every year our dedicated 350+ staff members go above and beyond to support and care for the more than 37,000 individuals and families in need who come through our doors. Carmen Vaughan-Burnett stands out as a wonderful example of this dedication. A role model and mentor to her fellow staff, Carmen began as a child care worker at WoodGreen's Win Harris Centre in 1974. Demonstrating a passion for early childhood education and a keen ability to relate to young children, Carmen went on to open WoodGreen's first infant/toddler program in 1980. Within ten years, she opened a new location, Woodfield Child Care, where she still works as a manager today.

According to Elaine Levy, Director of Child Care Services, Carmen has touched hundreds of lives, including several generations. Some current WoodGreen parents were in Carmen's care when they were children themselves! "Carmen leads by example," says Elaine. "She never says 'can't' or 'won't'; instead she says 'how'. If a diaper needs changing, she changes it. If someone needs a hug, she opens her arms. And she does it with love, laughter and joy."

With her two daughters at her side, Carmen was recently honoured for her 30 years of service at a special staff recognition event. Congratulations Carmen... and thank you!

WoodGreen Financial/Program Highlights

WHERE OUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT GOES



WOODGREEN STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

Year Ended March 31

	2005 \$	2004 \$
Revenue		
Government Grants & Fees		
Canada	1,366,860	1,335,024
Ontario	6,406,108	6,322,981
Toronto	4,879,623	3,738,874
Fees for Service Individuals	1,079,640	951,010
United Way	620,623	632,681
Investments	36,969	58,301
Fundraising & Productive Enterprises	798,427	412,277
Amortization of Deferred Capital Contributions	116,191	119,559
Service Contracts & Other	1,124,534	1,267,288
Total	16,428,975	14,837,995
Expenses		
Salaries & Benefits	12,225,266	11,241,724
Purchase of Services	535,940	331,725
Building Occupancy	867,021	902,023
Programs	440,609	389,943
Training Subsidies	886,675	644,637
Food Services	400,680	362,113
Office and General	293,339	298,851
Transportation	186,501	180,333
Recruitment & Education	113,036	57,867
Promotion & Publicity	181,985	157,180
Amortization of Capital Assets	270,490	239,336
Total	16,401,542	14,805,732
Operating Surplus	27,433	32,263

SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2004/05

- Approximately **600** individuals provided with affordable housing and support
- **2,400+** households assisted to access and/or maintain stable housing
- **292** individuals and families with mental health or developmental challenges supported to live independently
- **510** children served through 5 child care sites
- **85** children enjoyed KinderRAC summer day camp
- **4,000** seniors served by our Community Care and Wellness program
- **6,000** newcomers provided assistance in settling and finding jobs in Toronto
- **27,085** visits made to our adult Employment Resource Centres
- **2,734** youth accessed services at our Youth Job Centre
- **32** mother-led families transitioned out of shelter life into Homeward Bound
- **150** local families participated in the Virtues Project offered through Pape Neighbourhood House
- **1,569** volunteers contributed to our program operations

Thank you to our donors

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