

THANK YOU FOR BEING A DIFFERENCE MAKER!

Learn more inside about the many ways your gifts are making a difference.



CAMPAIGN IMPACT REPORT



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Thank you to all our Difference Makers!

he Difference Makers Campaign, with a goal to raise \$20 million in support of poverty reduction, was the most ambitious campaign in WoodGreen's 85-year history.

Due to the generosity of our donors, we met – and exceeded – the goal. Thank you for your contribution, enabling this truly remarkable achievement!

I also wish to pay tribute to our Honorary Campaign Chair, Ed Clark, to Leo Salom, our Campaign Chair, and to the members of our Campaign Cabinet. Your dedication was instrumental in this accomplishment and I extend my deep appreciation to each of you.

With your generous *Difference Makers* gifts, we are expanding WoodGreen's affordable housing, and increasing programs and services to meet the needs of our ever-growing client base – to

safeguard the health and well-being of vulnerable individuals and families in our city.

Building on the momentum of the campaign, WoodGreen is poised to have an even greater impact in our community – addressing unmet needs, developing innovative solutions to complex social issues and creating real, sustainable change. Your generosity will help to build a more equitable city where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. Thank you.

The newsletter includes stories that illustrate just a few of the many ways your gifts are making a difference.

Bui Mackinnon

Bill MacKinnon



YOU DID IT! YOU MADE THE DIFFERENCE!

The Difference Makers Campaign raised more than \$20 million! Thanks to you!

We are thrilled to announce that – through your overwhelming outpouring of support over the past three years — we have successfully completed our \$20 million poverty-reduction campaign! Thank you to each of you who donated to *The Difference Makers Campaign*, and to the many volunteers who gave generously of your time and expertise. Our success is your success!

Your gifts are allowing us to bring much needed support to our community.

Thank you. It is you, our passionate supporters, who make this work possible.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, more than 1,600 donors came forward to help WoodGreen clients with generous gifts that, combined, surpassed the \$20 million campaign goal! Your commitment is already making a difference. Your gifts have allowed us to:

- grow from 807 to 1000 affordable housing units and from 12 to 20 properties during the campaign
- provide emergency food and household supplies during the pandemic to over 10,000 individuals and families
- create and operate COVID-19 testing and vaccination sites in high-risk neighbourhoods
- provide financial empowerment programs and free tax preparation clinics for people experiencing financial hardship
- provide employment help and job reskilling training for individuals in need of employment
- provide shelter and care for individuals without homes and help them transition to their own apartments
- support our personal support workers (PSWs) as they cared for frail seniors who couldn't leave their homes due to pandemic restrictions

- welcome newcomers from war-torn countries such as Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine – providing settlement help with housing, immediate needs, language programs and counselling
- support the development of innovative youth programs and walk-in counselling services
- increase our capacity within our senior's helpline and crisis response programs
- help tenants in our 20 housing sites secure and maintain affordable housing, and increase their financial stability
- expand and enhance our Homeward Bound program with the creation of an additional 22 spaces for mother-led families, and 34 apartments for recent graduates and their families, and help more than 50 resilient mothers and 200 children to build new lives during the campaign period.



A CHANCE FOR ONE GENERATION, SPELLS POSITIVE CHANGE FOR THE NEXT

For nearly two decades WoodGreen's innovative Homeward Bound program has empowered at-risk, single mothers to gain a college diploma, begin careers, and achieve economic self-sufficiency and stability for themselves and their families.

WoodGreen recently engaged in an in-depth exploration of the impact of the program on the children of Homeward Bound. As we spoke with past and current participants and their children the inextricable link between the well-being of the mother and that of her child quickly became clear.

Children are key drivers of their mothers' success in Homeward Bound; they want the best for their children. The mothers said their children's happiness helped

them succeed and the more they saw their children benefiting from the program and their new life situation, the harder the mothers worked. The children, in turn, saw the strength and resilience of their mothers and were themselves motivated to achieve. The children's success inspires their mothers to carry on – and the loop continues.

After living in crowed shelters, or couchsurfing with people who would take them in, the children were thrilled to have their own rooms at Homeward Bound. At the same time, the mothers said having private, affordable apartments meant they could finally parent on their own terms. The program offers a space – without the stressors of their previous situations – for strong mother-child relationships to flourish. Both mothers and children said the tutoring and the family counselling program helped the children and had a positive impact on their schooling and behaviour. And the nutrition and mental health supports improved the overall health of the participants and their children.

I could see a big difference...

My son didn't have many
friends before...The program
had molded him. If I didn't have
the program three years ago,
I don't know where I'll be now.

He motivated me to do better."

— Homeward Bound mom

THE CHANCE TO HELP CHANGE LIVES DRIVES DONOR SUPPORT

As children we learn that it is better to give than to receive. Yet many of our donors tell us they gain so much when they give to WoodGreen.

Our Homeward Bound program – the first of its kind in North America – is where many see the real impact of their philanthropy.

The major portion of the annual cost of Homeward Bound is supported by donors. We would like to take this opportunity to recognize some of our longstanding supporters including Honorary Campaign Chair, Ed Clark, Campaign Chair, Leo Salom, Carswell Family Foundation, Raymond Chang Foundation, TJX Canada and CIBC. Their continued generosity, and the generosity of many others, is changing lives.

At the core of Homeward Bound is the conviction that education can remove barriers and arm mothers with the knowledge and confidence to build better futures for their families.

Last year, 16 mothers completed their

two-year college programs thanks to scholarships generously provided by the Raymond Chang Foundation. We currently have 48 participants studying everything from early childhood education to business, IT to construction management. Ninety per cent of our mothers were accepted to the college program of their choice, underpinned by the significant investment of the Carswell Family Foundation. Of recent graduates, 100% are employed with an average starting salary of \$43,370.

"Homeward Bound has given us the courage to dare, the knowledge to excel and the belief that we can succeed," says graduating mother Saima Q. "You have instilled in us the self-confidence needed to reach for our dreams."

Ed Clark says it is he who is most grateful; for the opportunity to help bring about meaningful, generational change.

"We can't solve all the world's problems but we can make the world a better place for a group of deserving families."



the help of donor support, we have

successfully graduated 251 moms

and 385 children to date.

ONE HOME AND A SECOND CHANCE HELPS FAMILY STAY TOGETHER

hat am I going to do?" thought Lia Glykis, as the reality of her situation set in. It was June of 2021, the pandemic was raging, rents were skyrocketing, and the single mother had just lost her North Toronto home. After seven years her landlord suddenly decided he wanted to move back to Toronto so Lia needed to get out. Finding an affordable apartment is already difficult. Finding one with multiple bedrooms, almost impossible. Lia, 53, is a single mother who is both self-employed and the sole provider for three children aged 17, 18 and 20 as well as her granddaughter, age five.

"I thought there was no way I was going to be able to find a house in Toronto that would fit us all and for me to be able to afford it," said Lia. "I was freaking out." Lia was already struggling to pay \$2,150 a month in rent, plus utilities, but was now facing at least \$3,000 a month for a three-bedroom apartment.

Feeling desperate, Lia reached out to WoodGreen for help and was overjoyed when her housing support worker, Afua Agyemang, called with the news she had been praying for – WoodGreen had found a home for her and her family!

The four-bedroom, two-bathroom, downtown home is newly-renovated and was acquired by WoodGreen through a partnership with a Toronto developer, who has donated the use of the home for at least two years. Lia says it is "absolutely beautiful inside", but that's really just a bonus, "as long as the kids and me are together that's what matters."

"Without WoodGreen, I don't know where any of us would have ended up," says Lia. "I feel so lucky to have found them because they legitimately are doing something to help people."

Donor support is helping to give people, like Lia, a safe place to call home. Funds raised through the Difference Makers Campaign are helping WoodGreen to alleviate Toronto's housing crisis by removing barriers and creating a more equitable city where everyone has an opportunity to thrive and fulfil their potential.





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SPROTT FOUNDATION A visionary gift opens doors to stable housing

possible to create that change.

This is exactly what has happened following a generate \$1 Million densition to The Wood Green Foundation.

hen you believe in the possibilities of change, it is

This is exactly what has happened following a generous \$1 Million donation to The WoodGreen Foundation from The Sprott Foundation.

The goal was simple: develop an innovative way to tackle the root causes of homelessness in Toronto.

With this shared vision in mind, WoodGreen launched the Homelessness Prevention Program, a pilot project designed to prevent evictions and keep vulnerable individuals and families housed. The program has already demonstrated wonderful success.

The Sprott Foundation's gift to *The Difference Makers Campaign* allowed WoodGreen to fully integrate our housing and financial teams, as well as improve data systems to directly track client outcomes and measure the program's success.

Now, clients at high risk for homelessness are quickly flagged and referred to WoodGreen's Financial Empowerment team.

But how does this prevent homelessness?

Because to get stable housing, you need to have stable income. The first step to stable income is making sure our clients have filed their taxes through WoodGreen's free income tax clinic. By doing so, it allows them to access all of the benefits to which they are entitled, such as Old Age Security, Canada Pension, Ontario Disability Support and others.

The Sprott donation also helped WoodGreen create an Emergency Reserve Fund that provides crisis housing stability for clients, including those who have been evicted by their landlords in what is known as 'renovicted', a term used to describe an eviction that is carried out to renovate or repair rental unit.

We are happy to report there have been no evictions of WoodGreen tenants on financial grounds during the pandemic.

Ansley Dawson, Senior Manager of Financial Empowerment at WoodGreen, says the impact of The Sprott Foundation's gift is profound: "It is so satisfying to finally have the resources to demonstrate how intentionally-designed and easily accessible Financial Empowerment support can help people to afford stable housing and prevent their slipping through the cracks into homelessness."



THE DEEPLY PERSONAL DEDICATION OF **PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS**

s our senior population increases exponentially, and our health care model changes, we see an increase in the number of clients requiring home care, personal support and seniors' crisis intervention, and when the pandemic hit this was only exacerbated. However, as the world was shutting down, thanks to the generous support of our donors, WoodGreen was able to continue helping those who were most vulnerable and keeping them safe at home.

The pandemic shone a spotlight on the critical role of personal support workers (PSWs). These front-line staff members, who have long worked tirelessly without recognition, were suddenly (and rightfully) acknowledged as among the most vital workers in our community. The dedication of WoodGreen PSWs kept thousands of Toronto seniors safe in their own homes - and out of hospitals - as the virus spread.

"I made it to work every single day," says Amoy Toyloy, a PSW for 28 years, who disregarded her own fears about COVID-19 to help clients relying on her for physical care and more.

"PSWs are often the only person they see, day in and day out. They see no one else."

There is no question the role of a PSW can be physically challenging. And the patience and compassion required to provide intense human connection is truly a skill.

"When you visit for the first time it is the hardest," says Nina Cholakova, a PSW for eight years. Nina says clients living with Alzheimer's and other dementias can become confused about why she is in their home. She makes sure to take the time to develop a relationship, particularly with those seniors. During the pandemic, such connections proved to be critical to both clients and PSWs, some of whom now say it felt good to have a clear purpose in a time of confusion.

"You spend a lot of time with your clients, and sometimes you see them more than you see your own relatives," says Nina, a situation amplified by social distancing and lockdowns.

In an extraordinary time, we saw the extraordinary dedication of WoodGreen's PSWs to the clients for whom they risked their own safety - and showed them they were not alone.











PILOT PROJECT FINDS \$1.3 MILLION IN FUNDS OWED TO VULNERABLE SENIORS

anadians everywhere are feeling the effect of rising costs. This rapid inflation is hitting one group particularly hard — seniors living on a fixed low income. Add in the challenges of the pandemic and many seniors are now more concerned than ever about their financial stability and well-being.

Fortunately, the generosity of WoodGreen donors is helping our senior clients to become more optimistic about the future.

Thanks to a significant donation from the United Way Allan Slaight Seniors Fund, WoodGreen was able to create the Financial Foundations for Vulnerable Seniors pilot project.

From the outset this new project involved collaboration with WoodGreen's Toronto Seniors Helpline, which had noticed a significant increase in calls from seniors worried about their finances. Many were years behind in filing their taxes and worried about penalties. In its first year, this new pilot project

accessed \$1.33 million in refunds and benefits by filing taxes for vulnerable seniors.

We held financial literacy workshops, one-on-one counselling and served more than six hundred low-income seniors.

"I found WoodGreen's financial counsellor to be very supportive, caring, knowledgeable and efficient," said one 73-year-old client who has been receiving low-income budget counselling.

The program has seen early success and has built a solid foundation on which to continue into a second year of growth, where the hope is to hear much more client feedback such as was recently received.

"I want to express my gratitude to the financial counselling program at WoodGreen. I can now look forward to a better financial future because of the help received from this program."



WOMEN HELPING OTHER WOMEN ACHIEVE FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

WoodGreen's success would not be possible without the support of over 1000 volunteers. One of these Difference Makers is Saniya Bhutta.

Saniya spends a lot of time focused on numbers, but she says the most rewarding work she does cannot be measured.

Saniya volunteers at WoodGreen as a facilitator for a money management course. She works with women in our Homeward Bound program. The money management course is part of the fouryear intensive education and employment wrap-around program for single mothers.

"I am a huge champion of education as a tool for upward social mobility," says Saniya, "so the program itself aligns very closely with my personal values."

Saniva's course teaches sound financial management skills. She empowers participants with the knowledge they need to manage their personal finances, gain

financial stability and ultimately create a better life for themselves and their children.

"The most valuable aspect of my volunteer work is knowing that the program is changing lives," says Saniya. "By providing safe living arrangements, education, and employment opportunities [it] empowers women to achieve financial independence."

FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT

SUPPORTED BY SCOTIABANK, PROVIDES BRIGHTER FUTURES

The proverb 'give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime' can also be said when it comes to teaching people how to manage their personal finances. We are grateful to the many donors who invested in our Financial Empowerment programs. Programs supported through these donations are teaching clients the skills they need to lift themselves out of poverty and create new paths to opportunities going forward.

"I'm confident about the future and that feels so good." This client feedback sums up the very goal of the Scotiabank Family Finance Clinic.

Now in its third year, it is clear the free financial empowerment program for low income families is working. The one-onone counselling families receive helps them learn solid money management skills and create realistic financial goals.

To date, more than 80 per cent of our families have been single mothers parenting an average of two children. More than half of those families were living on less than \$1,600 a month. Almost none had ever had any kind of financial counselling before coming to the family finance clinic, which was created thanks to a generous investment by Scotiabank.

The clinic is also proving to be a gateway to other WoodGreen services, with more than 70 per cent of families connecting to other programs, including employment and newcomer support services.

The clinic has shifted from cohorts to allowing entry at any time of year. It has also begun a six-month financial check up after clients leave the program. Roughly two out of every three families had continued to stick to a budget, had increased their monthly income and had eliminated their debt entirely during that time.

Perhaps most encouraging is that 90 per cent of families said participating in the Scotiabank Family Finance Clinic has positively affected their children.

"The things I learned," said one client, "I will be teaching them as they get older so they can be wealthy and not make the mistakes I did."



WOODGREEN'S RITE OF PASSAGE GIVES BLACK YOUTH A CRUCIAL SENSE OF COMMUNITY

atthew Dailey was young, bored and looking for something to do. And while today he is still young, he now knows exactly what he wants to do. That's the difference a weekend can make.

"A friend had come into the neighbourhood and said he was going on a retreat," says Matthew, "A retreat sounded like fun." It was 2007 and the 20-year-old didn't often get out of his east Toronto neighbourhood of Parma Court.

A dozen youth from the area spent the weekend as one of the first groups to enter WoodGreen's Rites of Passage journey, a unique program for Black youth. Its Afrikan-oriented approach guides young people through a critical transition in life – supporting them to emerge into adulthood with a sense of purpose, responsibility, resiliency and a commitment to community.

Growing up with a single mother in a low-income home with no father-figure, Matthew says it was essentially the neighbourhood that raised him. "I thought that the neighbourhood was all there was to the world." Rites of Passage gave Matthew a new perspective on what it meant to be a Black man.

Matthew says the retreat was the first time he had learned anything about his Black culture beyond surface discussions in high school, which far too often seemed to focus on 400 years of slavery and not much else. "I learned there is so much more to our history than that," he says. "It made me really proud of who I am and where I'm from."

After the retreat, Matthew says there was an understanding among the group that they shared a unique bond. "We were inseparable," says Matthew who, 15 years since that retreat, is still in contact with almost all the participants. For the eight months following that incredible weekend, the group met every week for Rites of Passage.

"They fed us, they taught us about ourselves, they gave us an understanding of the world and how people perceive Afrikan people." He says it is crucial for Rites of Passage to focus on educating young people; getting the knowledge early teaches youth more respect for themselves and their community. Rites of Passage now has programs beginning in middle school, and continuing through high school and into early adulthood.

Matthew took that knowledge and broad worldview into postsecondary education and then a career as a chef, but his ties to



'It made me feel really proud of who I am.'

Rites of Passage and educating his Toronto community remained strong. So strong, in fact, that he now works for Rites of Passage, sharing the vital cultural lessons he himself learned.

"It's come back full circle," he says. "It's a part of my everyday knowledge now. I pass it on to others."

That includes his three-year-old daughter, Zendaya, affectionately known as the first 'Rites baby', as her mother is also a graduate of Rites of Passage. "Whatever I instill in Zendaya about her history and how to carry herself in the world, she takes it and teaches her child, and on it goes." He says Zendaya will "100 per cent" be doing Rites of Passage as soon as she is old enough.

Rites of Passage not only expanded Matthew's view beyond Parma Court, it took it to a global level. Alumni of the program have travelled to Ghana and England to learn about Black culture, history and community. Another trip is planned to Africa next year and is open to all alumni.

Matthew says Rites of Passage, gives young Black people in Toronto a crucial sense of community.

"I don't have anything left in terms of T-shirts or certificates, but I do have the knowledge and the relationships that I've built through Rites of Passage."

Rite of Passage is just one of the many vital youth programs, supported by our generous *Difference Maker* donors like the RBC Foundation, that is empowering young people to fulfil their potential.

SUCCESS BY DESIGN

When you invest in our youth, you are investing in the future. Below is an example of how one *Difference Maker* changed 10 lives.

A strong start can make all the difference to where you finish.

No one knows that better than gold medal sprinter Andre de Grasse.

The Canadian Olympian is giving other young Toronto men the chance to step into their professional lives with confidence and style.

De Grasse approached WoodGreen and Toronto fashion house, Indochino, with an idea: fit 10 young Black men with custom-designed suits to help kickstart their careers.

The men selected their fabrics and the suits were individually tailored.

"When you go to an interview, how you present yourself is important," said sipho kwaku, WoodGreen's Director of Diversity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Equity. "Andre has given these youth the chance for them to look their best and to make a positive impression."

And while clothes do not solely define the measure of a man, emerging from the fitting room, Jason Nugent walked taller.

"I feel important. Like I've got value," says the graduate of

WoodGreen's VFX Compositing program, a 23-week course that gives participants a competitive edge as they launch careers in digital tech.

Dressing for success sparked something inside Kalin Thompson-Spence, musician and VFX artist.

"When I put the suit on and looked in the mirror, I felt my back straighten," he said.

"The veneer and the culture that comes with a good suit, when you put that on, you embody it. You look at it and you feel stronger, you feel better, you feel more courageous. I feel like I'm ready to take over the world."

Sipho hopes that the young men will remember this moment, when Andre de Grasse reached back to help his community and that they will do the same when – not if – they succeed.

"A big thank you to Indochino and WoodGreen for the suit. It feels awesome," said another VFX graduate, Vincent Kazibwe, "I feel like a million dollars."





THANK YOU TO OUR DIFFERENCE MAKER CAMPAIGN DONORS!

Neighbours helping neighbours. This is what makes a city vibrant and strong. For more than eight decades, our donors have embodied this spirit of community through their compassion and their generosity and we are profoundly grateful.

Thank you for your trust in our work and your commitment to a healthier, more equitable city for all.

CUMULATIVE GIFTS TO THE DIFFERENCE MAKERS CAMPAIGN DECEMBER 1, 2018 - MARCH 31, 2022

\$ 1Million +

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WE'RE RAISING THE BAR for fundraising professionals everywhere

oodGreen is deeply rooted in and committed to the city of Toronto, but our programs and staff are truly world-class. This is nowhere more apparent than in two of our leaders at the WoodGreen Foundation; Executive Director, Teresa Vasilopoulos and Vice President of Development, Kathy Koch.

Both women were recently honoured by the Association for Fundraising Professionals for their incredible work in raising money for our non-profit organization.

Teresa was named the 2022 Outstanding Fundraising Professional by the Association of Fundraising Professionals Global (AFP) for her decades of work as a committed and prolific fundraiser. The AFP's New Fundraising Professional Award for 2022 went to WoodGreen's Kathy Koch. Kathy joined WoodGreen nearly four years ago and has helped share our success stories ever since. An accomplished professional, Koch has helped steer the development of national non-profit organizations in both the United States and Canada. She believes in using her skills and strengths to improve the lives of those in her community.

"WoodGreen does such incredible work in our city and once people learn about WoodGreen, then donating to, volunteering for or actively championing WoodGreen is a win for everyone."

"I wish everyone recognized that giving is something we can all do - so pick a cause and go donate \$5 right now - there is no amount too small. People can get intimidated by words like donor, philanthropy, planned giving, whatever, but at the end of the day, it's up to you to help create the world you want to live in."

Congratulations to both Teresa and Kathy!



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