



When lacking a canvas, Tony takes to the walls with his paint to create gorgeous abstract landscapes.

The power of creating: residents heal through art

Walk down King Street on Saturday night and you probably hear Terry busking with his blues harp or guitar. At fourteen, Terry picked up a guitar for the first time. Not long after, he also picked up a drug habit. Both have been with him since. While the drugs landed him in jail and on the street, the blues kept him strong enough to move forward. “When you’re wired to drugs, you do crazy things. But, I like music more than I like drugs,” Terry shares. When desperate to score another hit, Terry often resorted to stealing. The one thing he never stole – musical instruments.

His neighbour, Tony, painted his bedroom walls in dark blues, pastel purples, and strong oranges. They blend together to create a landscape that is both geometric and indistinct, raw in its shapes and textures. “Painting helps me sort out my mixed-up thoughts,” Tony says as he arranges one of his pieces on his bed to be photographed. He used rich turquoises to create a scene that resembles a waterfall and can also be viewed upside down. Incredibly, Tony only picked up a paint-brush ten years ago when he was in an art program at the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health. Previously homeless, Tony has lived with Homes First for six years. While he now has a room to paint in (and on), it is still hard for him to get the materials. Tony finds almost everything in his home on the street, including his paints, brushes and canvasses. This

coming cheque-day, he is planning on investing in a canvas to start a new painting. Music and art are often the driving forces behind our residents’ resilience. While everyone has taken a different path to Homes First, each person who walks through our door has known struggle. Many are still fighting their demons and use art as a tool for combat.

continued on page 6

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|---|
| Feeling human again through film | 2 |
| Gurneet Dhami – helping residents lead healthier lives | 3 |
| What a new garage means to 30 women. | 4 |
| Justin Baily – the art of community housing | 5 |
| Fran Perkins – giving hours, flowers, and expertise | 6 |
| Tie One On | 7 |
| 40 Homes for Dinner | 8 |

Feeling human again through film: a peer-led project on social stigma and harm reduction

The creation of art comes in all forms, but some media are more accessible than others. Filmmaking is not a form that our residents often get to use. But thanks to funding from Public Health, Homes First residents had the unique chance to learn about filmmaking and came together to produce a touching and honest documentary. *Between the Lines* was developed, directed, and shot by residents who explored the social stigma drug users face and how harm reduction services are helping them. While many residents use art as a form of expression and therapy, this project introduced a new way to exercise their creativity and share a deeply personal part of their life with others.

“It’s expanded our thinking. It’s given us a sense of who we are. It’s allowed us to express ourselves when we had trouble doing that before,” explained David, a participant and regular user. “It helps us feel human again, because we get to give back and tell our stories.”



Residents take to the street to film

By having ownership of this project, participants not only became strong peer leaders, but they gained the skills and knowledge required to seek future volunteer and paid opportunities. After the film launch in June, many participants have explored joining Queen West Community Health Centre’s on-the-job training program and other employment support programs.

Perhaps most importantly, it’s helped create a community for those often forced to live on the outskirts of society. As participant Mark aptly put, “It opened my eyes to the fact that I am not alone.” Watch it at www.homesfirst.on.ca/community-engagement.



Residents get hands-on lessons about filmmaking



A film-screening was held at Strachan House where each resident received a certificate of appreciation

Gurneet Dhami – helping residents lead healthier lives



Volunteer Gurneet shares how to eat healthier with resident Avonel

Living in poverty can often lead to an impoverished diet, but Gurneet Dhami knows this doesn't have to be. Gurneet holds nutrition workshops every Monday evening to support residents in making smart food choices at Meegwetch Place. Home to an eclectic group ranging from young families to single seniors, Meegwetch residents all have one thing in common – they face a daily struggle to put healthy food on the table.

Gurneet is a third year student at Ryerson studying food and nutrition. Gurneet initially started volunteering to fulfill her high school credits, but it quickly became a central part of her life. While volunteering at a local women's

shelter, she started looking for more ways to get involved in her community. When she heard about our need for a volunteer to run a nutrition program, it felt like a perfect fit.

From talking with many of our residents, Gurneet's learned firsthand that affordability and a lack of accessible resources are big barriers to having a balanced diet. She's embraced the challenge of finding budget friendly and easy to prepare recipes for our residents. Gurneet runs two-hour workshops, covering basic nutrition advice and teaching how to cook practical dishes. While giving back to her community, Gurneet has also had the opportunity to gain program experience and develop new relationships with our clients. And she's not the only one who has benefited from this volunteer experience. With Gurneet's help and expertise, our residents lead healthier lives without breaking the bank.

Volunteer Opportunities

Looking for a way to get involved and to give back to your community? We'd love to have you on our team!

Call 416-395-0907 or email volunteer@homesfirst.on.ca

CLOTHING ROOM ATTENDANT

We are looking for organized individuals who can run one of our clothing donation rooms. The Clothing Room Attendant provides support with the collection of donated clothing. They are responsible for organizing and distributing clothing items to tenants of Homes First. Hours are usually Monday through Friday, 9:00AM-5:00PM. This position requires a minimum commitment of 2-4 hours a week.

FASHION SHOW ASSISTANT

Do you have a passion for fashion? A flare for hair? We are looking for organized, enthusiastic individuals to assist us with our upcoming fashion show. There are several positions available from set designers, costume design, hair and makeup, set up and much more! We're looking for people who can come to Strachan House (Wellington and Strachan) for 1-2 hours once a week from now until October 22. Contact us for more details.

ZIPCAR MEMBERS WANTED!

Do you have a Zipcar membership? We are looking for 10 responsible drivers to assist us for 40 Homes for Dinner on November 7th. Volunteers commit to approximately 2 hours. Zipcars will be provided, please contact us for more details.



Residents enjoy the new rooftop patio, previously rendered unusable due to the garage's poor condition.

What a new garage means to 30 women...

For most, a garage is a place to store your car, winter gear, and gardening tools. For the women at Savards, a garage is much more than that – it's a means to a healthier life, both mentally and physically.

For many years, the garage at Savards was unusable; its floors became a skating rink during the winter, a marsh in the summer, and it had no power. We dreamed of renovating the garage and using it for storage in order to free up the limited and valuable shelter space to better accommodate the women who live with us. Thanks to the Sprott Foundation, this dream is now a reality.

For the 30 women at Savards, a new garage means they now have the space to participate in a wide variety of programs and services. Health care professionals can conduct their visits in private. Residents have an area to do crafts, play board games, and hold

movie nights. Soon, the women will have access to computers and resources to help them write resumes, job search and complete online training. We've also created a safe clean rooftop patio for the women to relax and enjoy shelter functions.

A new garage means socializing at shelter BBQs and celebrations. It means finding employment. It means having an outlet for stress during a troubling time. It means building confidence through new programs.

A new garage means a happier and healthier life for the 30 women who call Savards home.



Help us grow our programs by donating board games and craft supplies. Email donate@homesfirst.on.ca or call 416-395-0203.

Justin Baily – the art of community housing



A poster Justin created for the Fall resident fashion show.

A woman with heavy black eye makeup comes into the office at Strachan House asking Justin Baily, a relief community housing worker, for matches and her mail. A few minutes later, a six-foot-seven towering man, affectionately nicknamed Bear, bursts through the door exclaiming he just won the lottery. Moments after he leaves, a fastidious older gentleman enters claiming someone moved the couch and demands Justin search the video footage to find out “who done it”.

It's a wonder anyone can work with so many interruptions, but it's exactly this hectic and ever-changing environment that Justin loves most about his job. Justin's quiet composure starkly contrasts Strachan House's electric atmosphere, but perhaps illuminates how he's been able to excel at Homes First over the past five years.

Beneath the calm exterior, lies an artist in wait. Justin started drawing at the age of four and hasn't

stopped. He sketches, draws comics, and paints in any and every media. He's also a musician dabbling with many different instruments, his mainstays being guitar and saxophone. While parental dissuasion led him to give up his dream of pursuing art academically, he's always managed to find a creative outlet.

This past Fall, his talents were discovered by a coworker who happened upon a desktop background he drew on the computer. He was seconded to the resident fashion show planning committee and created an outstanding poster.

Justin is excited to lend his talents to the team and is always looking for ways to support residents artistically. We look forward to providing him, and our residents, with more creative opportunities in the future.



Justin balances a hectic work day with a calm attitude.

Fran Perkins – giving hours, flowers, and expertise

With her fiery red hair and a personality to match, it's not hard to believe that Fran Perkins was once named the Toronto Sun's mover and shaker woman of the month. Full of life, passion and goodwill, Fran dedicated her accomplished career in public health to bettering our society. With a firm belief that having a home is the first determinant of a person's health, she's worked to improve access to housing since the early 1980s. Over her career, she's led Toronto's Healthy City Office, served on 14 Board of Directors, and, when she retired, spent 12 years working as an international health nurse, travelling across South America, Africa, and Eastern Europe.



Despite her demanding schedule, Fran believes that donating your time is an important and meaningful way to give back. When Fran is not attending Homes First's events or chairing our Board of Directors meetings, she's bringing turkeys to our Scarborough Shelter or throwing a garden party to help raise money. While she just stepped down as our Chair, she's excited to

continue working on our portfolio committee, helping lead our hunt for a new location for our Scarborough shelter, and being a host at this year's 40 Homes for Dinner.

We are ever grateful to Fran and our many donors who continue to support the work we do.



Tony proudly displays his latest painting



Terry wails on his guitar

continued from cover

Art and music programs support our residents and many are a joint effort between our staff and volunteers. In memory of Sheryl-Anne Noonan (aka Wanda), Homes First will launch Wanda's Arts Award in the Spring of 2015. The award will be given to Homes First residents who demonstrate a commitment to the creation of art or music. Wanda, a great artist and Strachan House resident, passed away a few years ago.

Please let us know if you would like to contribute and help us grow this bursary program by contacting donate@homesfirst.on.ca or 416-395-0203.



Debra Anderson holds up a signed Calgary Flames jersey and Leonard Cohen's self-portrait.

Tie One On

Thank you for tying one on and helping us raise \$35,000 this past May!

Tie One On brought together over 200 guests for an evening of entertainment and a spectacular auction of ties and scarves from well-known Canadians and Hollywood celebrities, like Peter Mansbridge and Julianne Moore. The evening, hosted by CBC's Mary Wiens, offered a fun night out with folks taking home the tie or scarf of their favourite actor, politician, athlete, author, and journalist!

Didn't snag Charlize Theron's scarf or Chris Hadfield's tie? There's always next year! Let us know whose tie would you buy by sending an email to info@homesfirst.on.ca.



Guests bid on celebrity ties and scarves.

Thank you to our 2014 sponsors!



THE HOXTON



Fall Wish List

The leaves have turned and winter is coming! This Fall our residents are in need of:

Thanksgiving dinner:

- ◇ Turkey
- ◇ Ham
- ◇ Basting trays
- ◇ Nice napkins
- ◇ Vegetables
- ◇ Pies
- ◇ Gravy
- ◇ Cranberries
- ◇ Cakes

Each new resident receives a bin with the basics needed to furnish their new home.

Home Starter Kits:

- ◇ New pillows
- ◇ Single bed sheets
- ◇ New towels
- ◇ Environmentally-friendly cleaning products
- ◇ Sponges, scrubs, J-cloths
- ◇ Mops and brooms
- ◇ Sturdy laundry basket

Things we always need:

- ◇ Toiletries
- ◇ Prizes for programs (gifts cards, chocolates)
- ◇ Puzzles and board games
- ◇ Hats, mitts, gloves, scarves
- ◇ New socks
- ◇ Winter boots
- ◇ Winter coats

To donate your stuff, email donate@homesfirst.on.ca

To prepare a meal or volunteer, email volunteer@homesfirst.on.ca



40 Homes for Dinner

Guess who is coming to dinner?

You are! But where? You could be dining with a comedian, a TV personality, an MPP, or an architect! Your ticket ensures you a four-course dinner, but you won't know where you're headed until the night of the dinner party. All ticket holders gather on Friday, November 7th at 6:30 pm at 55 Bloor St W, William Ashley's for a cocktail reception. Here you receive an envelope with the name and address of your host. Then we all depart for wonderful food and new friends.

Tickets are available until October 31st, but with limited seating, it's first-come, first-served! Get your ticket today!

To order tickets: www.homesfordinner.com or 416-395-0203

Presenting Partners:



Everyone needs a home

homesfirst.on.ca



Administrative Office

90 Shuter Street, 2nd Floor
Toronto, ON M5B 2K6
P: 416-214-1870
admin@homesfirst.on.ca

Donations

P: 416-395-0203
donate@homesfirst.on.ca

For information on housing applications & central waiting list

P: 416-395-0913
me.escobar@homesfirst.on.ca

Volunteers

P: 416-395-0912
volunteer@homesfirst.on.ca

Charitable Registration # 86584 3932 RR0001