



# Annual Report 2019

*Everyone needs a home*

## Our Mission

Homes First develops and provides affordable, stable housing and support services to break the cycle of homelessness for people with the fewest housing options.

## Why?

Because everyone needs a home.

## Funding Support By:



**TIPPET FOUNDATION**



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Toronto Central Local Health  
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**T.R. MEIGHEN  
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FOUNDATION**

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Front cover photo: Vaughan

# Cost of Homelessness:

**\$2,000/month**

Average cost of a supportive housing unit (*Implementing the Toronto Modular Housing Initiative as an Urgent Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, 2020*)

**\$6,000/month**

Average cost of a Toronto shelter bed during the COVID-19 pandemic (*Implementing the Toronto Modular Housing Initiative as an Urgent Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, 2020*)

**\$6,000**

Cost of a standard hospital stay in Toronto (*Cost of a Standard Hospital Stay, Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2018*)

**\$9,550/month**

Average cost of a provincial jail cell (*Global News, 2018*)

## Compared to Homes First



Unit at Homes First's Strachan House, a program that serves people with the highest-needs: **\$2,129**



Housing Unit with Homes First: **\$1,545**

**"For the highest-need users, the housing-first model costs \$22,257, while the cost for those with more moderate needs is \$14,177 per year."**

*(The Globe and Mail, 2017)*

In 2019, Homes First provided the following value to communities:



**11,704**

referrals and connections



**542,200**

meals served



**362**

people in supportive housing



**174,397**

nights of emergency shelter



**41**

former CAMH patients now living at Homes First

Cost of 1 year per inpatient at CAMH without provincial health insurance: \$492,750

Cost of 1 year per client at Homes First: \$30,000

**Savings: \$18,972,750 per year**





Patricia Mueller  
*Society Chief Executive Officer*



Jeremy Roach  
*Society Chair*

## Letter from Homes First

2019 was another amazing year for Homes First. For the 15th year in a row, the Society has ended the year in a surplus position. We again experienced a great deal of growth in the Society's staffing and budget during the year.

As a result of our expertise in serving a very complex population and our successes in running excellent shelter programs, we were asked by the City of Toronto to open a 105 bed respite program at 354 George Street in January of 2018. This was meant to be a 5-month program; however, the city asked us to continue operating the program well beyond that initial closing date, and it remained open until June of 2019.

The George Street Respite served a heavily street-involved population made up of mostly men and couples. Most of the residents experienced chronic homelessness and dealt with profound addiction and mental health issues. As a result, harm reduction was a large part of our supports at this site.

Towards the end of 2018, we were invited by the City of Toronto to open and operate a 200 bed respite at the Queen Elizabeth Building, which opened November 15. We found that the population at Queen Elizabeth was very similar to that of the George Street Respite. Funding was secured through the LHIN to provide health supports at both respites. This funding allowed for a partnership with Inner City Family Health to provide Personal Support Workers, Social Workers, Nurses, and Chiropractors. An additional partnership with Inner City Health Associates provided Physician care on site once a week. The "QE Respite" operated until April of 2019.

At the final inspection of the Queen Elizabeth building, both Shelter, Support & Housing Administration (SSHA) and Exhibition staff attended and provided extremely positive feedback on the operations and management during the respite season, as well as the condition of the building upon exiting.

As we worked to close two successful respite programs, we were approached by the City of Toronto about opening a new shelter, to support the populations being served at the George Street and QE respites. So in April 2019, we opened the Bathurst-Lake Shore shelter, serving 50 couples and 100 single adults across two floors. Some of the first residents at Bathurst-Lake Shore shelter were residents of the respite programs.

In the Fall of 2019, the City approached Homes First to once again open a Winter response program, but this time one with a focus on refugees. The goal was to concentrate services into a program designed around the particular needs of refugees, which would also create additional space in the City's shelter system for non-refugees, many of which are clients dealing with issues of income instability, addictions, mental illness, etc.

Within three weeks, Homes First had transformed a 85,000 square-foot building (which had been



vacant for some time) into a 200-bed shelter, the Willowdale Welcome Centre.

The Willowdale Welcome Centre opened its doors in mid-November with a team of workers assisting in finding housing, establishing incomes, and navigating the refugee system, along with support from settlement organizations such as Red Cross First Contact. Primary health care provided through once-a-week visits from an Inner City Health Associates physician.

In 2019, the Property Department continued to serve our clients by ensuring all high priority work orders, all items that relate to the health and safety of our residents and staff, were completed within the time allotted achieving a 100% completion rate.

In addition, the Property Department completed a number of capital projects including the repair of Meegwetch’s retaining walls and accessibility ramps, the installation of air conditioning for Meegwetch’s community room, as well as the

replacement of concrete balconies and railings at the Meegwetch Townhomes.

We were also successful in securing a grant through the City of Toronto’s Small Capital Projects Non-Profit Transitional and Supportive Housing Renovations and/or Improvements for the replacement of the floors of Bellevue, a project we had been eager to undertake for a number of years.

Several projects continued in 2019, including the Assertive Follow-Up Support Program, as well as for Harm Reduction and Life Skill Workers, in addition to the Rooming House Project, a joint effort with Dixon Hall and Ecuhome.

The Community Development Program continued to grow in 2019, with 36 formalized community development partnerships, with hundreds of events and over 2400 event participants.

In addition, the Volunteer Program saw a great deal of growth. In 2019, we had 55 weekly programs run by

volunteers, almost double of the 27 weekly programs in 2018. We also saw the number of residents volunteering in-house and in the community grow from 117 in 2018, to 280 in 2019. In addition, the hours given by volunteers grew from 3579 to 7500, and the number of community members volunteering at Homes First grew from 416 to 925.

To meet the organization’s growing needs, the agency grew from approximately 200 employees to approximately 300.

In 2019, the Foundation held a gala-type fundraiser, “Come Home for Dinner” at Wychwood Barns. The M.C. was Helen Joy from CBC’s Murdock Mysteries. The event was a sold-out and by all reports, a good time was had by all.

Our Board, management team, and all of our staff look forward to a strong future where we increase and improve our portfolio and provide more options to more people for supportive home environments.

**Board of Directors** **Society**

Jeremy Roach, Chair  
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Jose Querubin, Treasurer  
Abiodun Ayinla

Warren Booth  
Mo Ettehadieh  
Gabriele Grach  
Barbara Haynes  
Mervyn Horn  
Merav Jacobson  
Shelagh O’Donnell

Paulina Salamo  
Jeff Shannon  
Kitty Tsang  
Alexis Van Halen  
Carla Whillier

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Bruce Palmer  
Nahid Zamir

# Milestones and

**Winding down two respites:** At the beginning of 2018, Homes First partnered with the City of Toronto to open a new respite on George St. This new respite opened to house those displaced by the closing of the temporary shelter space at the Moss Park Armoury. Originally meant to be open for only four months, Homes First continued to operate the George Street respite, serving over 100 people each day, until June 2019. Similarly, Homes First supported the City of Toronto in opening a second respite location in November 2018. This new respite was located in the Queen Elizabeth Building on the Exhibition Grounds, and served over 200 people each night until its closure in April 2019. After the opening of the Bathurst-Lake Shore shelter, many residents from both respites transferred there and continued to receive supports from dedicated Homes First staff.

**New Shelter:** In April of this year, as Homes First worked with the City of Toronto to wind down two respites, we also worked to open a new shelter. Located in the old Omni/Rogers building at the corner of Bathurst Street and Lake Shore Boulevard West, the Homes First Bathurst-Lake Shore shelter opened in April 2019, and served many of the same residents who were at two respites operated by Homes First. Originally serving 50 couples and 100 single adults on two separate floors, the shelter expanded in November 2019 to add 50 beds for single male adults on a third floor. Since its opening, Homes First has worked closely with the neighbourhood around the shelter to create positive partnerships and community, which has led to programs like a weekly peer-focused community clean



*The Willowdale Welcome Centre. Photo by Andrew Francis Wallace for the Toronto Star.*

up, community BBQs and regular Community Liaison Committee meetings, where stakeholders, neighbours and Homes First members can work together to solve community concerns.

**Site for Refugees:** In response to the growing number of refugees and asylum claimants in Toronto's shelter system, Homes First, with support from municipal and federal levels of government, opened the Willowdale Welcome Centre on November 15. Located in a former Toronto Hydro building at Yonge St. and Finch Ave. W., the Willowdale Welcome Centre is 200-bed shelter for both men and women who are newcomers to Canada. From its opening, staff have been working with residents to get them the support and information they need to build new lives in Canada. At the end of 2019, over 50 residents from the Willowdale Welcome Centre had found housing and moved out of the shelter, and over 25 found employment and started education programs.



# Accomplishments



## Community Engagement

**The Showcase is back:** After a 1-year hiatus due to logistical issues, the annual Homes First Showcase came back in 2019, and it was bigger and better than ever. Hosted for the first time at our new Bathurst-Lake Shore shelter, the event featured musical acts by many residents, spoken word poetry, and an impromptu group karaoke session. Held at the end of October, the event was Halloween themed and included a Halloween dance at the end of the event.

Overall, the night was a huge success and residents at Bathurst-Lake Shore shelter are

**Expanding the team:** As Homes First continues to grow, so does the roster of amazing staff members. This year, the Community Engagement Department added two new members to the team, working out of the new Bathurst-Lake Shore and Willowdale Welcome Centre shelters. With their great work, the Community Engagement department has been able to add a variety of new programming including job readiness, a Bible Study group, and programs focussed on mental and physical well-being.





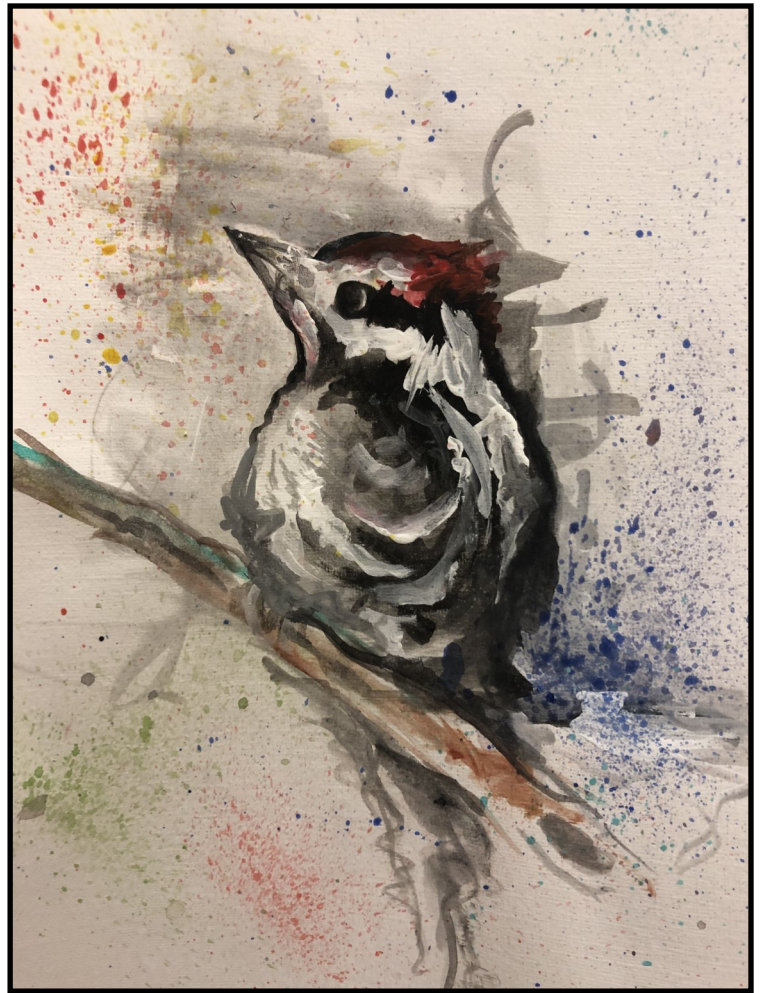
## James: 2019 Wanda's Arts Award Winner

James always dreamed of being an artist. His preferred mediums are drawing and painting, though he does do sculpture work occasionally. He attended university in Uganda, majoring in photography, painting and product design, but was unable to finish when his family couldn't afford his tuition anymore. After that, James tried to leave his artistic talents behind, but was unable to.

"Art has always been a part of me. I can't run away from it. Every time I feel down or I feel happy, I end up drawing, I end up sketching, I end up painting."

A quiet young man, James has become well-known at the St. Clair Shelter because of his art. He hadn't done any art for nearly two years, but began participating in weekly art classes after encouragement from the Life Skills Worker, Rachel. Now, he has other shelter users arguing about who gets to keep the small pieces he paints and draws in the class. The pictured work of flowers is something he created for one of the shelter residents for Mother's Day.

"These are people you hardly talk to but in this moment you're really connecting with them and it makes me feel special."



James came to Canada in March 2019, fleeing circumstances he felt too pained to talk about. Now that he's arrived, he hopes to finish his education, and use his art to inspire people.

"I remember my friends graduating and I was there and I couldn't do anything. Still [art] gives me strength in most of my days."

Since his interview for the Wanda's Arts Awards, James has moved out of the St. Clair shelter into stable housing, and is working. He hopes to start a career in the social services sector, to give back and support those who might be in the same situation he was.



## Volunteer Appreciation: Arnold, Teresa and North Toronto Chinese Baptist Church

Arriving as immigrants from Hong Kong almost 30 years ago, Arnold and Teresa Wong know a thing or two about navigating a new and foreign culture. Their place of worship, North Toronto Chinese Baptist Church, has proven to be a cornerstone for community cohesion and shared purpose, and it was Arnold and Teresa's pastor, Kwan Chan, who informed them (and two fellow congregants) about the recent opening of the Willowdale Welcome Centre – Homes First's new shelter serving over 200 refugees while they search for a permanent home in Canada.

"We just want to connect," says Arnold. "Ourselves being migrants, we understand the frustration, the loss of direction...."

The couple are quick to point out that while some of these hardships are related to pressing material needs, there can also be a spiritual dimension to a refugee's sense of discombobulation. For Christian newcomers, Teresa suggests, the most pressing questions of faith are not scholastic but very practical: "If they want to be true Christians, how can they do it in Toronto?"

"We serve these clients so that they know who they are, what they can look forward to, and how they can take themselves into a foreign culture," adds Arnold.

Since the end of January 2020, the couple have been hosting a drop-in Bible study at the Willowdale Welcome Centre every week, to help clients find answers to this daunting and complicated question. Each session begins with participants separating into four smaller groups, in which, as Arnold describes it, clients can "share their concerns with [us volunteers], their understanding of the Bible as it is presented each time, how they understand what the Bible is talking about, and how to apply its teachings to their current situation in Toronto."

When asked if the specific testaments of their own church presented an obstacle to communicating and connecting with very different spiritual traditions and contexts, Arnold is adamant: everyone who attends their weekly sessions, he points out, "all claim to be Christians. Even though they are from a whole spectrum of backgrounds, and their faith may not align with our church, that is not the issue. We are only talking about Jesus Christ ... everyone seems to agree that that is the right thing, this is what they need."



# Community Partners

Anishnawbe Health Toronto  
Arts Market  
Big on Bloor  
Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness  
Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture  
Centennial College  
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)  
Community Care Access Centre  
Dixon Hall  
Ecuhome  
Focus  
George Brown College  
Grace Church  
Humber College  
Inner City Health Association  
Journey Home Hospice  
Liberty Village Cares  
Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association

Parkdale-Queen West Community Health Centre  
Pilot Place  
Pride Toronto  
Project Comfort  
Regent Park Community Health Centre  
Robin Hood Army Canada  
Ryerson University  
Second Harvest  
South Riverdale Community Health Centre  
St. Elizabeth Health Care  
Street to Trail  
The Works  
Therapeutic Paws of Canada  
Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness  
Toronto Shelter Network  
University Health Network  
Volunteer Toronto  
Willowdale Interfaith Coalition

# Government Partners

City of Toronto, Shelter, Support, and Housing:  
Homelessness Initiatives & Prevention Services  
Housing Stability Services  
Canadian Mortgage Housing Corporation  
Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network  
Toronto Public Health

# Staff Recognition

<b>5 Years</b>	Tyrone Thomas
Helena Olenewa	Angie Corrigan
<b>10 Years</b>	Jasmine Thompson
Delores Chamber	<b>20 Years</b>
Erin Ellison	George England
Evangeline Imson	Abida Sherazee
Sylvia Chakravarty	<b>25 Years</b>
Ricardo Simoes	Paulina Berru
Steve Jennex	<b>30 Years</b>
Rowena Hill	Jess Hiles
Radeca Singh	



Jess Hiles receives his 30 year service award from CEO Patricia Mueller





## Thank You for supporting Come Home For Dinner 2019!

### Sponsors

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## 2019 HOME BUILDERS

By giving monthly, Home Builders support the critical programs and services that help residents lead healthy lives while gaining the skills and confidence needed to live in our community.

Seval Alkin

Daniel Basilio

Patricia Carlow

David D'Cruz

Vincent de Grandpre

Wendy Dix

George Farmakidis

Mark Frampton

Bob Gauthier

Kate Hatoum

Eve Joseph

Danny Kastner

Jason Kinnear

Martine Lokken

Alison Mackay

Keltie McLaren

Bruce Palmer

Jacqueline Roberts

Wendy Rothwell

Lynn E. Sibley

Michael Soncina

# Homes First Society

## Statement of Financial Position (as of December 31st)

	2019	2018
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	2,019,804	243,941
Accounts receivable	660,508	889,370
Government funding receivable	1,900,136	1,679,599
Prepays	141,954	144,724
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$4,722,402</b>	<b>\$2,957,634</b>
Property and equipment	5,697,034	9,244,624
Assets under capital lease	2,675,525	3,175,512
Restricted investments	2,518,664	2,125,979
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$15,613,625</b>	<b>\$17,503,749</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	3,396,086	2,090,880
Government remittances payable	287,825	39,592
Deferred contributions	210,513	518,503
Current portion of mortgages payable	1,841,581	3,341,378
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$5,736,005</b>	<b>\$5,990,353</b>
Deferred capital contributions	470,938	656,357
Restricted contributions	119,058	116,757
Mortgages payable	5,777,149	7,633,381
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>\$12,103,150</b>	<b>\$14,396,848</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Externally restricted net reserves	2,150,185	1,764,621
Internally restricted reserves	249,421	244,601
Unrestricted net assets	1,110,869	1,097,679
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$3,510,475</b>	<b>\$3,106,901</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$15,613,625</b>	<b>\$17,503,749</b>

## Statement of Operations

	2019	2018
<b>REVENUES</b>		
Government funding – City of Toronto	22,989,288	14,666,589
Revenues from tenants	1,350,497	1,311,541
Donations	171,593	240,074
Government funding – MOHLTC	453,214	352,203
CAMH – High Support Funding	302,251	278,327
United Way	204,312	201,891
Amortization of contributions	185,420	185,420
Management fees	116,089	116,089
Non-rental income	60,391	51,821
Other	129,392	12,806
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$25,962,447</b>	<b>\$17,416,761</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Administration & program expenses	17,244,758	10,463,422
Maintenance expenses	5,439,160	3,456,384
Mortgage principal & interest	1,395,777	1,436,271
Utility costs	802,650	774,303
Property taxes	307,633	318,905
Allocation to restricted reserve funds	432,538	243,443
Amortization	185,420	252,501
Insurance & bad debts	141,321	127,206
Property write-down to fair value	-	310,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$25,949,257</b>	<b>\$17,382,436</b>
<b>Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues over Expenditure</b>		<b>\$13,190</b>

## Homes First Foundation

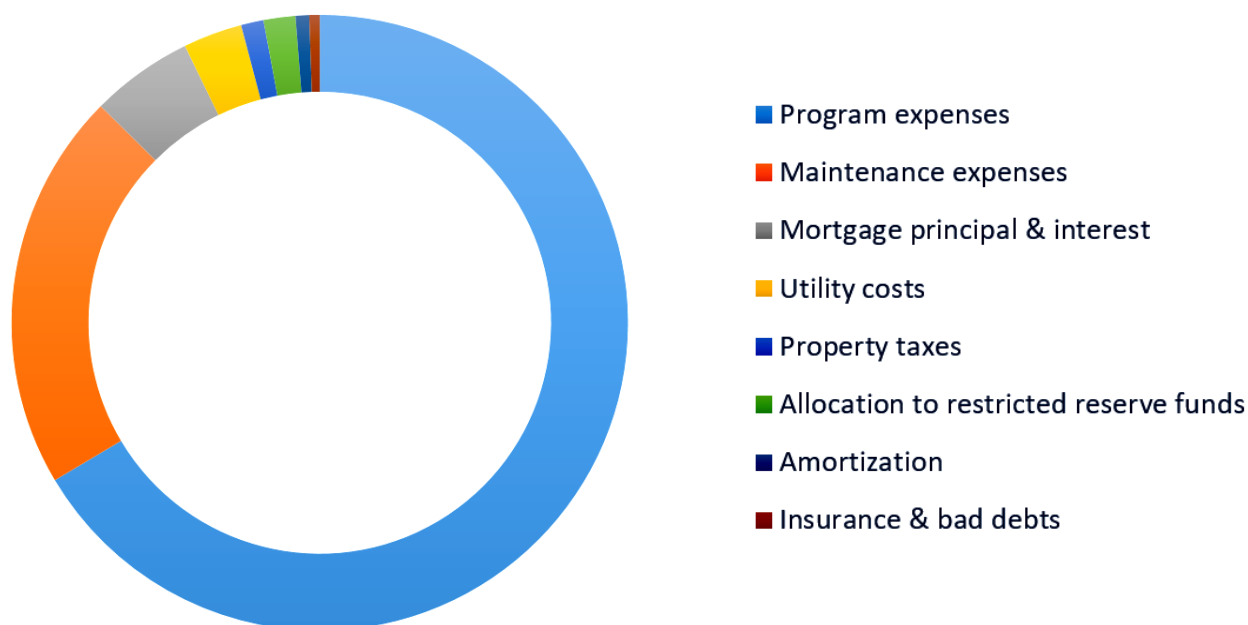
### Statement of Financial Position (as of December 31st)

	2019	2018
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current:</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	143,149	161,932
Term deposit	5,000	5,067
Grants receivable	9,434	545
Prepays	14,370	15,590
HST rebate receivable	12,761	5,924
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$193,643</b>	<b>\$189,058</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Current:</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	41,987	36,423
Due to Homes First Society	76,010	25,002
Deferred revenues	-	-
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$117,997</b>	<b>\$61,425</b>
<b>FUND BALANCES</b>		
Net assets	75,646	127,633
<b>Total Liabilities and Fund Balances</b>	<b>\$193,643</b>	<b>\$189,058</b>

### Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets

	2019	2018
<b>REVENUES</b>		
Donations and fundraising	563,482	566,697
Grants	22,641	30,809
Interest	626	816
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$586,749</b>	<b>\$598,322</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>		
Wages and benefits	307,009	244,476
Fundraising activities	125,248	79,032
Administrative overhead	86,340	49,496
Disbursement to Homes First Society	120,139	242,490
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$638,736</b>	<b>\$615,494</b>
<b>Excess of revenues over expenditures before other item</b>	<b>(\$51,987)</b>	<b>(\$17,172)</b>
<b>Net Assets, Beginning of Year</b>	<b>\$127,633</b>	<b>\$144,805</b>
<b>Net Assets, End of Year</b>	<b>\$75,646</b>	<b>\$127,633</b>

### Where the money goes:







*Everyone needs a home*

90 Shuter St., 2nd floor, Toronto, ON M5B 2K6

416-395-0902 [www.homesfirst.on.ca](http://www.homesfirst.on.ca)

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