



OUR HOME ON NATIVE LAND

Homes First honours the land we live on, occupied since time immemorial by First Nations who were forcibly displaced from their homes. Our 9 shelters and 15 supportive housing sites sit on the traditional territories of the Huron-Wendat, Anishinabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and most recently, The Mississaugas of the Credit River First Nations. Many have returned to Tkaranto in search of services and shelter. They are among the 2,000+ individuals we house, including migrants, refugees, members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and other marginalized groups in search of safety.

Homes First is mindful that many of our residents were forcibly displaced from their homes either in present-day or generations past. We are dedicated to addressing homelessness and those most heavily impacted through our partnerships. These benefit Indigenous clients, as well as clients facing barriers due to their ethnicity, gender and gender expression, sexual orientation, visible and invisible disability and experiences of trauma.

The 46 treaties and other Indigenous agreements covering Ontario recognize the peaceful sharing and caring for the land and its resources. At Homes First, we also care for people. Creating healthier communities starts with acknowledging our past, and providing culturally-appropriate resources and support so our residents can build a better future.

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Dear Friends and Supporters,

Homes First's journey over the past year has been one of resilience, compassion, and unwavering commitment to our mission of ending chronic homelessness in the city of Toronto.

As we reflect upon 2023, we are filled with immense gratitude and admiration for your collective support of Homes First. Despite another period filled with new challenges, together, we continued forward.

Homes First's commitment to supporting Toronto's highest needs individuals is what sets us apart. We firmly believe that anyone can maintain housing with the appropriate supports available; the opportunity to help realize this belief is the motivation behind our actions. We confront barriers, finding opportunities amidst challenges.

This last year alone, we opened two new deeply supportive housing sites – one in the downtown core and the other in Scarborough. Altogether, we added 141 individual units to the city's scarce inventory. Central to this success, however, is our exceptional team of 842 strong. Their unwavering dedication to help each resident define and achieve their own version of success is nothing short of valiant.

Our expertise continues to be reflected in quality assurance evaluations by the city and our partners. However, our ultimate gauge of success remains the transformative stories shared by our residents.

Growth requires both stability and flexibility in equal measure. In the almost forty years of operation, Homes First has embarked upon an exhilarating journey of transformation, reevaluating every aspect of our agency to identify opportunities for further development. We vow to leave no stone unturned in the pursuit of establishing a city where everyone has a place to call home, a place where they thrive.

On the following pages, you will find a comprehensive overview of our achievements, challenges, and willful aspirations. Each section is a testament to the remarkable impact our agency has on the lives of our city's most vulnerable, complex needs neighbours.

We are honoured to be part of this mission, proud of what has been accomplished over these last four decades and inspired by the future of our work. Thank you for joining us in this journey and for sharing our vision of a Homefull Toronto.

From our home to yours,

Patricia Mueller, Chief Executive Officer Michael Heinrich, Chair of Board of Directors





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Homes First has been providing emergency shelter and supportive housing to the city's most vulnerable individuals for 40 years.

Homes First has maintained a Housing First ethos focused on providing comprehensive wrap-around services to our clients once their immediate need for housing is addressed.

We currently support over 2,200+ individuals, including seniors, adults and families each night. Our agency operates 24 properties in Toronto, ranging from emergency shelters and apartment buildings offering long-term supportive housing.

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.

OUR VISION

Everyone has a home.

The vast majority of people experiencing homelessness – even those with severe mental health and/or substance use challenges – can successfully stay housed and off the street with appropriate housing and supports.

"For the past month, Willowdale Welcome Centre and Homes First has become my sanctuary, providing me with a safe haven during a challenging time in my life. The staff here have been like guardian angels, their unwavering dedication filling me with gratitude and joy."

- Homes First Client



The number of individuals experiencing homelessness on any given night in Toronto. 1



2.53M

The approximate number of visits to food banks across
Canada. 4



46%

The percentage of Ontario renters that worry about potential eviction. 3



199,297+

The number of immigrants that arrived in Ontario in 2023. 2



\$28/HR

The minimum a Toronto renter needs to earn to afford a 1-bedroom unit (Ontario's minimum wage is \$16.55/hour). 3



65%

The percentage of low-income Ontario renters that would need to take on debt to pay rent if they lost their job and were still without work after 3 months. 3



The number of individuals on Toronto's Social Housing wait list. 1



798

The number of non-fatal suspected opioid overdoses in Toronto in 2023. 1



60%

The percentage of Ontario renters that reduced their food budget to affort rent. 3





At Homes First, we are dedicated to helping families find safe and affordable homes where they can thrive. Diana, 29, Ricardo, 32, and their daughters, Julieta and Paula, reside at the Homes First site, Wales, near Kensington Market. This young family migrated from Tulum, Mexico, three years ago, seeking a safer and more stable environment.

Tulum, once renowned for its beauty, had become dangerous, especially for women. Ricardo explained, "we wanted the best for our girls, a future where they could be happy and safe. Unfortunately, Tulum couldn't offer that. We attempted settling in other parts of Mexico, but it proved impossible."

Upon arriving in Canada in 2021, they embarked on an emotional rollercoaster. Immigration Canada warmly welcomed them, however, they faced a mixture of experiences at the family shelter where they found temporary refuge.

Diana and Ricardo feared their daughters would have a more difficult time adjusting to this new environment. While learning English posed a significant challenge for both parents, their daughters quickly mastered the language and seamlessly integrated into school. "Our daughters are constantly correcting our English," they chuckled, reflecting that their girls are thriving and content.

The settlement staff at the family shelter were very supportive, assisting them in finding resources and referring them to Homes First.

They applied for one of Homes First's selfcontained units and awaited next steps. The family previously faced numerous rejections from landlords not wanting tenants with children.

However, Diana and Ricardo share that they and their girls were met with compassion and support from Homes First staff from start to end. Shortly after viewing the unit, the family received the news they had long hoped for - they had a home in Canada with Homes First.

As they reminisce, their faces light up with broad smiles as they glance at their daughters. They recall feeling elated as the new place was spacious, with a yard and garden. Immediately after receiving the good news, they phoned their families in Mexico to share their joy.

The family has been tenants of Homes First at the Wales location since that memorable phone call back in 2022. Diana and Ricardo are still connected with the same Homes First Intensive Case Management workers they first met when coming to view what would become their new home. "[Paulina, Elizabeth and Miranda] supported us in navigating the social support system, learning the culture of being good tenants, and acquiring skills to help us settle in the new city. We feel profoundly grateful," they expressed.

Diana and Ricardo are committed to caring for their family, and supporting their daughters' activities close to home brings them immense joy. Their story underscores the significance of safe housing and community support in shaping a family's trajectory. By prioritizing these needs, we can empower more families like theirs to overcome generational barriers.





Individuals as supported nightly across our sites



Supportive housing sites across Toronto



Clients supported with eviction prevention



Supportive housing units added to our portfolio





Clients supported in securing permanent housing



The age of the oldest client housed

Toronto



On-site programs for

shelter residents

65% of our shelter clients are Refugee claimants.

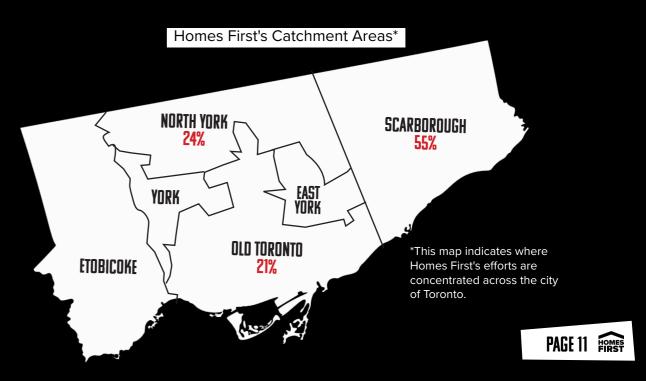
45% of our shelter clients self-identified as black.

of shelter clients experienced chronic homelessness (being without a home for 6 moths or more).

BB% of our clients in shelter were aged 25-64.

government of our emergency shelter sites have onsite health support.

Bb% of Homes First clients helped to secure permanent housing found residents within private market housing.





EMBRACING FREEDOM: A TALE OF LOVE ACROSS BORDERS

At Homes First, we are committed to supporting and celebrating the diverse communities that make up the city of Toronto. We would like to reflect on the remarkable journeys of 2SLGBQIA+ individuals who have sought refuge and acceptance in new lands. Raha, 26, and Janan, 32, proud Iranian women, embody resilience and love, having navigated significant challenges to live authentically.

They met seven and a half years ago at a girls' school in Iran. Their connection was immediate, but societal norms and safety concerns forced them to conceal their relationship, passing as friends. They faced immense pressure, choosing between their independence and family acceptance.

Their time in Iran was fraught with danger and secrecy. In search of freedom, they moved to Turkey, hoping for a better life. However, Raha and Janan encountered workplace harassment and societal hostility, posing significant threats to their safety and well-being. "We survived sexual harassment from one boss, who wanted sex in exchange for better working conditions."

Both women describe the process of moving to Canada as magical, like a dream come true. With the support of the Rainbow Railroad Organization, Raha and Janan's application was approved under the Humanitarian Act. They were referred to Homes First and the 519 Community Centre, eventually finding temporary refuge at the Pacewood shelter. This move marked a turning point, offering them safety and community support.

Raha and Janan embraced their new community, joining other shelter residents on outings to the movies, museums and galleries. This new sense of security enabled them both to seek out English classes, attend monthly shelter meetings and participate in various on-site programming. Pacewood's Intensive Case Management team and other Homes First staff also provided guidance and support to the couple in their search for an apartment. "We appreciate that Pacewood exists for queer people who cannot afford a home upon arrival from their countries of origin."

Although still facing discrimination and fear of reprisal from their families, Raha and Janan find solace in the safety and acceptance available in Canada. The ability for authentic expression is an exhilarating change for the two.

Despite the many adversities, Raha and Janan remain hopeful. Both are creative and aspire to garner vocational skills in art, photography and media communication.

They continually seek the same joy they first felt when arriving in Canada; Raha and Janan share that they are looking forward to the summer gardening, meeting new people, spending time outside exploring new trails and photographing this new city that they love.

Raha and Janan's story highlights the importance of safe housing and community support in building resilience. By focusing on these needs, we can help more individuals like them build bright futures.



2023: A YEAR IN REVIEW



Homes First operates approximately 25% of the shelter beds in Toronto, making us one of the city's largest shelter providers.

We opened a 24-hour supportive housing site in downtown Toronto. Our 224 Spadina location has 84 units, which currently serves residents from our former Strachan location, as well as members of Indigenous communities.





In partnership with the City of Toronto, we opened a 24-hour modular supportive housing site. Our Dundalk location has 57 units and supports residents facing complex mental health and substance use challenges.

We opened a temporary winter respite program at our 22 Metropolitan shelter site.
This program served 38 individuals of all genders with referrals coordinated by the City of Toronto.





We expanded our Follow Up Support Team to specialize in Critical Time Intervention and Mental Health supports for individuals transitioning from shelter into permanent housing.

We dedicated two of our existing shelters to serving adult refugees: 22 Metropolitan and Willowdale Welcome Centre (formally referred to as 5800 Yonge). Across our entire portfolio, we support over 800 refugees.



Construction of the Centralized Food Program (CFP) commercial kitchen was completed. An immense thanks to The Sprott Foundation for their generous donation, which will enable us to improve the food security for our most vulnerable residents.

"The Sprott Foundation believes in providing fresh, healthy food for all and we're so excited to be collaborating with Homes First in order to provide a variety of meals to people in the community. We're so proud to collaborate with Homes First.

Thank you for your great work."

- Juliana Sprott,

CEO of The Sprott Foundation





As Homes First commemorates another year of dedicated service, we take a moment to honour Jess Hiles, a pivotal figure in our organization's history. Jess' story embodies resilience, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to the mission of providing shelter and support for Toronto's most vulnerable.

Jess Hiles didn't start his journey at Homes
First with a grand plan or a clear career path.
In fact, his entry into the organization was
somewhat serendipitous, arising from necessity
and shared determination among a group
of individuals known as 'The Balcony Boys,'
confronting an uncertain future. As Jess recalls,
it all began with a gathering on his balcony, an
impromptu meeting of minds as a shelter he
was associated with faced closure. Little did he
know this gathering would set the stage for his
transformative journey at Homes First.

"It was about 3 or 4 paydays before it ended,"
Jess reminisces about the uncertain days
leading up to the shelter's closure. "We all knew
we were going to get on unemployment, but we
all wanted more."

Fueled by camaraderie and a shared desire to make a difference, Jess and The Balcony Boys approached Homes First with their innovative concept, eventually giving rise to the creation of Street City.

Street City, which opened its doors in 1989, wasn't merely another shelter; it represented a revolutionary approach to supportive housing models, offering individuals a sense of autonomy and security they hadn't previously experienced. Jess vividly recalls the genesis of the idea, likening it to the old motels on Lake Shore where one could rent a room for the night. "But rather than being in a dormitory with smelly feet," he chuckles, "we wanted people to have a space they could call their own."

The journey from the early days of Street City to Jess' current role as Property Management Administrator has been nothing short of remarkable. "I never dreamed in my wildest dreams that I would ever be in this position," he reflects with pride.

Over the course of his 35 years with Homes First, Jess has held a total of seven different positions, each contributing to his wealth of experience and deep-rooted commitment to the organization's mission. From his humble beginnings as a Shelter Worker in 1989 to his current role overseeing property management, Jess' journey is a testament to his adaptability, resilience, and dedication.

However, Jess' journey hasn't been without its trials. In 2003, he faced a health scare that changed the course of his career. "I had two strokes," he reveals, recounting the harrowing experience. "I didn't know what was happening at the time." Despite the challenges, Jess persevered, adapting to new roles within the organization and continuing to contribute his expertise.

Jess almost left Homes First during a period of transition, feeling disillusioned and uncertain about the organization's future. However, the arrival of Justin Ryan, the Director of Property Management Operation, a new leader with fresh perspectives and a genuine commitment to the cause, changed Jess' outlook.

"Justin brought a renewed sense of purpose and direction," Jess reflects, recalling how Justin's vision reinvigorated the team and reignited their passion for the mission.

Through it all, Jess' commitment to Homes First has remained strong. "I'll always be here for Homes First," he assures, reflecting on his enduring connection to the organization.

As Homes First looks ahead to the future, Jess remains hopeful yet grounded, mindful of the challenges that lie ahead. "We've grown so fast, based on need," he acknowledges. "It's good but it's a double-edged sword." Despite the uncertainties, Jess' faith in the organization's leadership and the dedication of its staff remains.

In celebrating Jess Hiles' 35 years of service, Homes First honours not only his remarkable contributions but also the spirit of resilience and compassion that defines our organization.

As we look to the future, we are grateful for Jess' enduring legacy at Homes First and the countless lives he has touched along the way. Here's to 35 years and more to come!



PRESENTING SPONSOR



VENUE

CATERER

EVENT PLANNERS





BASSETT EVENTS

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: Anthony Farnell

Homes For Dinner returned to in-person!

On November 18th, 2023, over 300 of our generous supporters gathered at the Globe and Mail Centre in the spirit of unity and generosity in creating a brighter future for all Torontonians. Homes for Dinner: Redesigned was our first in-person annual fundraiser since 2019 and the event's 10th anniversary! We look forward to hosting more events home to meaningful conversations and inspiring, triumphant stories of resilience!

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WE RAISED OVER \$230,000!



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At Homes First, our unwavering commitment to providing safe and dignified housing for those in need remains at the heart of everything we do. As we navigate the upcoming year, we are driven by a unified vision of a future where homelessness is eradicated, and every individual has a place to call home.

Standing at the forefront of the supportive housing sector, we strive to add more affordable, deeply supportive housing units to our portfolio to directly address the growing instability and limited inventory in the city of Toronto. We aim to set the benchmark for excellence in the sector by prioritizing the safety and dignity of our clients.

To do this, we are firstly dedicated to cultivating a resilient workforce equipped to meet the increasing demand for our services; we will continue to invest in comprehensive training and engagement opportunities, nurturing a team that is not only skilled but also deeply committed to our mission.

Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) is also central to achieving these strategic goals. EBP in action includes implementing life-saving measures like intramuscular naloxone and oxygen in response to overdoses, and embracing preventative follow-up methodologies like Critical Time Intervention. Additionally, initiatives such as our Centralized Food Program (CFP), anchored by our commercial kitchen, will help improve the food security of our most vulnerable tenants.

To ensure our programs are inclusive and actively work to dismantle systemic barriers, we embrace the updated Toronto Shelter Standards with an anti-Black racism lens. In collaboration with Black-led, community agencies and partners, we will continue to implement specialized supports and engage in meaningful community dialogue to foster a more equitable shelter system.

Furthermore, we embark on a strategic journey to elevate the visibility of our efforts, raising awareness among all changemakers. We believe that we are more than just a charity, but a catalyst for change. By forging dynamic partnerships with public, private and community entities alike, we aim to amplify our collective voice within the social sector.

As we embrace the challenges and opportunities ahead, Homes First remains resolute in our mission to end chronic homelessness in Toronto. Together with our dedicated teams and supportive community, we will continue to inspire, lead, and grow in pursuit of a more just and compassionate society.

From our home to yours, **Directors of Homes First**

DIRECTORS OF HOMES FIRST

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Justin Ryan, **Director of Property Management Operations**

Michael Potvin, Director of Client Services
Lacey Kerr, Assistant Director of Client Services
Necole Small, Assistant Director of Property
Management Operations



We want to thank our community of supporters and partners that made our work in 2023 possible.

INCREASE IN ALL FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

RAISED AT HOMES FOR DINNER

GUESTS ATTENDED FUNDRAISING EVETNS

\$1,000,000+ 2,300+

VOLUNTEERS ACROSS ALL ACTIVITIES























































HOMES FOR DINNER

Presenting Sponsor



In 2023. Fitzrovia returned to our annual signature event as Homes for Dinner's Presenting Sponsor.

TO DATE, FITZROVIA HAS DONATED \$34,000

We are excited to welcome Fitzrovia back as the Presenting Sponsor for Homes for Dinner – The Ruby Gala, celebrating 40 years of operation at Homes First!

"I'd like to express my appreciation for the incredible efforts of the Homes First team in tackling homelessness in our city. As a former board member, I am proud to say that the work that Homes First does is truly crucial especially considering that nearly 11,000 individuals experience homelessness on any given night... your support plays a vital role in helping Toronto's most vulnerable."

- Adrian Rocca, Founder & CEO of **Fitzrovia**



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Toronto Shelter Network

Toronto Public Library (Multiple Branches)

The Neighbourhood Group

Transforming Style

triOS College

Troid (Masjid al-Furqān)

Trustcare Pharamacy

Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre

West Neighbourhood House

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Willowdale Legal Services

The Wise Self

Women's Support Network of York Region

Woodgreen Community Services

Psychotherapy Clinic

The Works (Toronto Public Health)

Young Street Mission

YMCA

GIFTS IN KIND

Anonymous

Aga Khan Museum

American Express Global Business Travel

Ansaar Foundation Arash Ahmadi Arnold Wong

Art Gallery of Ontario

Avling

Basecamp Bloor Location

BATL Avling

Basecamp Bloor Location

BATL

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Maureen Hurley Megan Kotze Megan Mitchell

Meridian Credit Union Limited

Mervyn Abramowitz Michael Charnish Michael Edward Michael Heinrich Michael Henry Michael Kimelman Michael Lawrence Michael Moss

Mihaela Mihai Mike Kalles

Mikhail Andreev Mikhail Grosman

Mikhail Gueletine Mikhail Maximov

Milan E Kratochvil

Milliken Mills High School

Minh Tung Le Mitchell Glickman Mitchell Glickman Muhammad Asad Najib

Nancy Chapple Nathan Quinlan Nathan Sequeira Nikolai Chekhmatov Oluwatoyin Sofolahan

Patricia Mueller Patrick Harris Paulina Salamo Peter Liber Peter Tebbutt Pramod Chilukuri

Precious Ayolade

Prycila Barros De Cerqueira

Rachael Gilkes Raymond Lo Rebecca Minshall Rhema Stevenson Richard Badowski Richard Bishop Richard Roze Rippendeep Araich Rochelle Baum

Roda Contractor Rong Huang **Rosalind Bowers** Rosemary Gartner Rustam Fazlaev Sara Tsimerman Sarah Boulby Sarah Carr

Sarah Pineda Sascha Drewlo Sergey Mozhzhukhin

Serguei Morozov Shanker Sivanathan Sharon Chakkalackal

Shawn Winsor Sherri Barclay

Shiraz & Nurjehan Bharmal

Shun Ming Lau Simon Chamberlain

Slava Belkov

Sophia Hong Stephen Woo Steven Thorington Sufiya Mary Reid

Sunny Kin Sun Lam Susan Schiller

Suzanne Bond Tatiana Gurevich Terry Venturino Thea Caplan

Tim Wong Tommy Lin Troy Collin Tuyet Ngo

Vadim Kats

Tierney Smith

Vadim Sheikhman

Vickie Hansen-Richardson Vinay Mallikarjunaradhya

Vitaly Birbraer

Vitaly Libo

Vladislav Krimsky Vyacheslav Minevich Vytas Mickevicius Waleed Javaid Wana Shaswary Wendy Houlberg Werner Krebs Willem Hart Xianjun Wang Xingong Wu

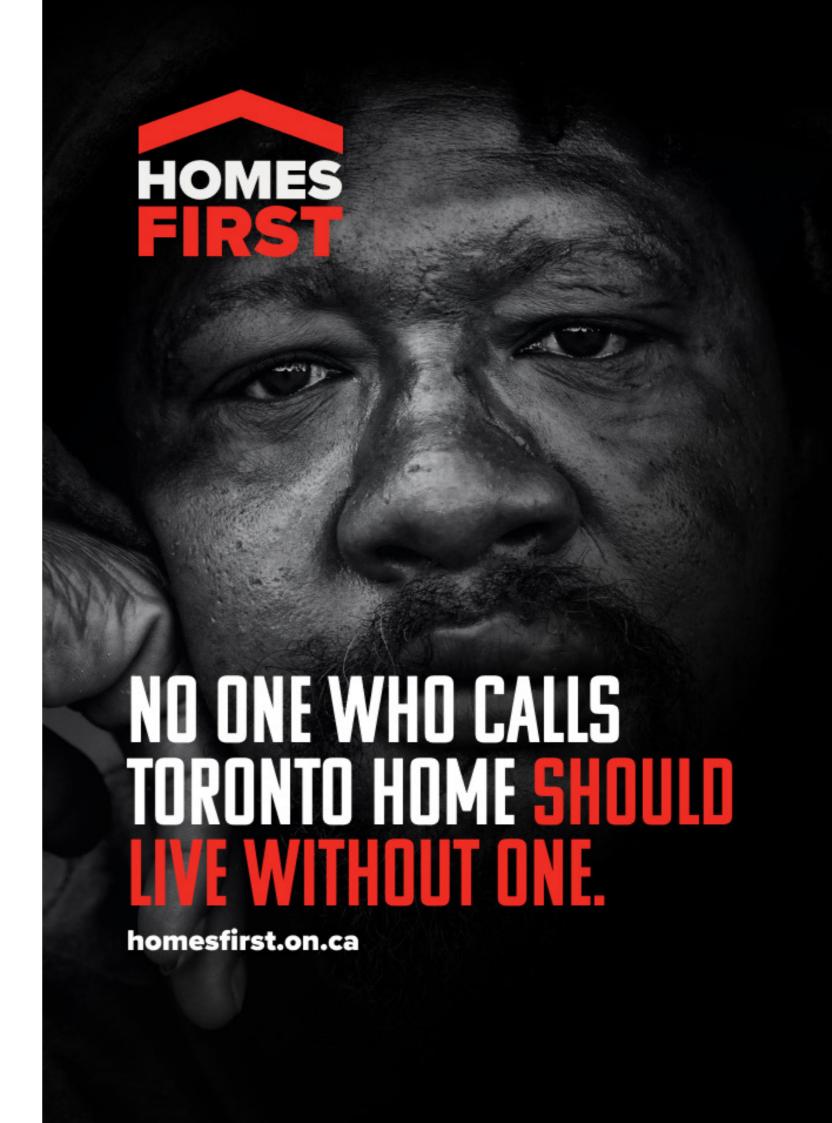
Yaroslav Pasichnyk Yelena Gulbandyan Yessica Cantu

Xuan Chen

Yevgenia Shliak

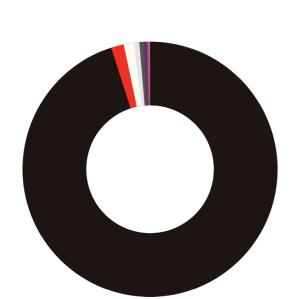
Your Dollar Store With More

Yujie Tona Yulia Yegachov Yury Vovchenko Yuxuan Shao Zahra Ismail Zhongji Dai Zhongxuan Xu





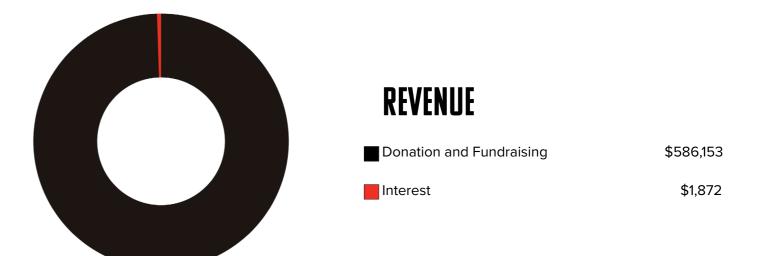


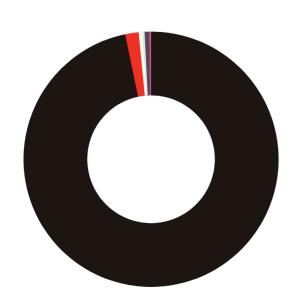


REVENUE

EXPENSES

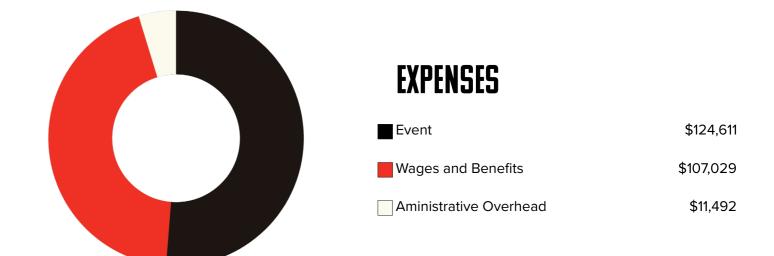
Government Funding - City of Toronto	\$63,856,879
Revenues from Tenants	\$1,483,974
Deferred Contributions	\$849,848
Government Funding MOHLTC	\$459,854
Management Fees	\$366,498
Interest, Signage & Other	\$116,089
United Way	\$52,295
Non-Rental Income	\$36,888
Amortization of Contributions	\$36,260





■ Administrative and Program \$55,300,644 ■ Maintenance \$9,083,189 ■ Amortization \$985,635 ■ Utilities \$754,852

Amortization	\$985,635
Utilities	\$754,852
Insurance and Bad Debts	\$379,852
Property Taxes	\$288,361
Allocation to Restricted Reserve Funds	\$260,930
Mortgage Interest	\$186,912
Amortization of Deferred Capital Contributions	\$19,596







Homes First is committed to breaking the cycle of homelessness by providing emergency shelter, supportive housing and wrap-around services for people with the fewest housing options. We operate 9 shelters across the city of Toronto.

BATHURST-LAKE SHORE SHELTER

545 Lake Shore Blvd West Toronto, M5V 1A3

DELTA HOTEL PROGRAM

2035 Kennedy Road Scarborough, M1T 3G2

KENNEDY SHELTER

702 Kennedy Road Scarborough, M1K 2B5

PLACER COURT

101 Placer Court North York, M2H 3H9

ST CLAIR SHELTER

3576 St. Clair Avenue East Scarborough, M1K 1M2

PACEWOOD

Downtown Toronto

LAWRENCE SHELTER

4117 Lawrence Avenue East Toronto, M1E 2S2

METRO REFUGEE

22 Metropolitan Road Scarborough, M1R 2T5

WILLOWDALE WELCOME CENTRE

5800 Yonge Street Toronto, M2M 3T3 We operate 15 supportive housing sites across the city of Toronto, serving single adults, couples, families and seniors.

SHUTER BUILDING/MAIN OFFICE

90 Shuter Street, Suite 206 Toronto, M5B 2K6

BELLEVUE HOUSE

87 Bellevue Avenue Toronto, M5T 2N8

BRANDON

57 Brandon Avenue Toronto, M6H 2C8

HURON

490 Huron Street Toronto, M5R 2R3

JARVIS

289 Jarvis Street Toronto, M5B 2C2

SHEILA MILLER

50 Earl Street Toronto, M4Y 1M3

SPADINA HOUSES

140 & 164 Spadina Road Toronto, M5R 2T8

PLEASANT MANOR

434 Gerrard Street East Toronto, M5A 2H2

NORTHCOTE

75 Northcote Avenue Toronto, M6J 3K2

WALES

29 Wales Avenue Toronto, M5T 1J3

VAUGHAN

175 Vaughan Road Toronto, M6C 2M4

DUNDALK HOUSE

39 Dundalk Drive Scarborough, M1P 2W5

MEEGWETCH

800 Adelaide Street West Toronto, M6K 3V6

224 SPADINA

224 Spadina Avenue Toronto, M5T 3B3





Everyone Needs A Home

Canadian Charitable Registration No: 865843932RR0001 90 Shuter Street, Suite 206, Toronto, ON M5B 2K6 Phone No: 416 214 1870 Email: info@homesfirst.ca

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