

Making a Difference



The Rotary Club of Toronto | Marketing & Communications Special Edition

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ROTARY CLUB OF TORONTO CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

The Fiduciary Responsibilities of Board Members



One of the most important responsibilities of board members who are appointed to a Foundation Board is to ensure that the Foundation's fiduciary responsibilities are met. A fiduciary relationship is one in which one side places the utmost trust and confidence in the other to manage and protect the assets. Fiduciary responsibilities include oversight of annual audits, internal controls, investment performance, tax and regulatory filings, and ensuring that decisions are made for the good of the Foundation.

The management aspect of Foundation fiduciary responsibilities has two components:

1. Investment oversight requires that the board approve investment policies, review investment performance and employ appropriate asset management.
2. Fiscal oversight requires that the board develop the Foundation budget, monitor financial performance, oversee annual independent audits, and ensure that internal controls are in place.

As board members, we have a duty of care to the Foundation to provide good stewardship.

- by **Luzita Kennedy**,
Research & Appeals Chair

The Rotary Club of Toronto Supports the Strachan House Food Program Providing Access to Regular Healthy Meals for 83 Homes First Residents - by Kathleen Ellis, Marketing & Communications Specialist, Homes First Foundation



Food is important to everyone and provides the source of energy we need to survive. For those living on the streets of Toronto, it can be a challenge just to find a meal. Access to nutritious, quality food is a luxury that many can't afford to even think about. For Homes First, the first step is to provide the chronically homeless with a roof over their head, but without access to healthy, nutritious food, many residents are still living hungry and unhealthily. Over the past two years, Homes First, with the generous support of The Rotary Club of Toronto, Tippet Foundation and the T.R. Meighen Family Foundation, has been changing these circumstances for its 83 residents of the Strachan House by providing daily access to three nutritious meals plus snacks.

The Strachan House Food Program began in September of 2016 and has now been running for 19 months with a total of 134,640 meals served. Appropriate access to food reduces anger, stress and anxiety. Regular healthy meals aid in harm reduction, health promotion and healing. With The Rotary Club of Toronto's commitment, Homes First was able to purchase the food necessary to increase the production of healthy meals and successfully hire and maintain employment of a fully qualified cook to run a majority of the program. Almost every resident that was interviewed about the program expressed gratitude towards this service provision. One resident exclaimed, "We don't know what we would do without this food, not a lot of us cook!" Many residents felt that it has greatly impacted their lives and they have had a continued ability to use their finances on other items like clothes and health care essentials and receiving three meals a day, since the program began in 2016, has increased their overall well-being.

The Strachan House Food Program brings people together. With regular meals being served, it has become a time for positive interaction. Now that everyone has access to food, residents have become healthier, happier and there is a general increase in participation in other programming. The Strachan House Food Program continually impacts residents' connection to the community, counteracting feelings of social isolation. The most common response from staff is that residents' responsiveness/friendliness has increased due to increased daily interaction around meal times.

Without food, residents are drawn to the streets to panhandle and beg surrounding community members. This roadblock leads them down a path that takes them out of their homes. Their overall physical and mental health suffers and has a butterfly effect on the necessary skills it takes to have a home. Toronto's chronically homeless population do not have many housing options that meet their complex needs, with many looking to Strachan as a place to call home. Strachan House encompasses what it means to be innovative and non-traditional in style. In the beginning it was seen as a unique transitional program, however over time it has evolved into a longer-term facility, housing literally the most vulnerable people in society. Without Strachan, their only choice would be sleeping under a bridge or a traditional emergency shelter, with overburdened and overpopulated dorm style beds.

It is a crucial time to be providing this food program and Homes First is so grateful for the support of The Rotary Club of Toronto. For more information about Homes First contact: Shirlene Curtis CFRE, Executive Director, Homes First Foundation at shirlene.curtis@homesfirst.on.ca.

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Community Service Committee Update



Our committee's mission statement is as follows: "The Committee is responsible for supporting programs for the purpose of improving the quality of life for disadvantaged segments of the population in our urban community. This may include those groups who are most vulnerable to the economic, social & environmental challenges of an urban environment – the homeless, single-parent families, recent immigrants and the poor."

As our mission is very broad, at the beginning of the Rotary year, we discuss our committee's focus for the next 12 months. There was unanimous agreement that it would again be food security. In one of the richest cities in the world, food insecurity remains one of the most compelling social injustice problems of our generation and it is the root cause for many other social, health, education, and employment problems for both adults and children.

Employing Mother Teresa's philosophy: "Never worry about numbers. Help one person at a time and always start with the person nearest you", we undertake projects where a small amount of resources can have significant impact. This year, we have supported the food program at Progress Place, donated to the lunch program and pantry at PAL, partnered with the InSC and YSC on the VIBE Arts project, and supported the Out-of-the-Cold program at St. Andrew's Church. We're currently reviewing a number of requests for support and pursuing sweat equity projects. Our committee work, which has taken us out to several organizations where we have met those on the front-lines doing such great work and also those who are the beneficiaries receiving life-changing help, is profoundly impactful.

Committee Members:

- Marcy Berg (Incoming Chair)
- John Farrell (Board Liaison)
- John Lloyd
- John Joseph Mastandrea
- Jonathan Wu

– by **Karen Scott,**

Community Service Committee Chair

Marketing & Communications Committee Chair &
"Making A Difference" Issue Editor: Heather Gordon

The Rotary Club of Toronto Supporting the Mind, Body and Soul at Progress Place – by Criss Habal-Brosek, Executive Director, Progress Place

We are so grateful to the Rotary Club of Toronto for donating \$3,500.00 to Progress Place, a community based mental health recovery centre to support the healthy meals program – keeping a healthy body, mind and soul. Progress Place is dedicated to improving the lives of people living with mental illness. We offer programs and services, which provide opportunities for recovery through friendship, employment, education, housing and recreation in a welcoming and accessible environment of support, respect and dignity. We are located at 576 Church St. just north of Wellesley St. Please book a tour, as we would love to show you around.



Progress Place was very appreciative of the generous donation received from the Rotary Club of Toronto as this support is helping us to expand and sustain our health and wellness initiative. Adults living with mental illness tend to live 25 years less than the general population. Isn't this a startling and tragic statistic? Progress Place is doing their best to reverse this statistic by offering three healthy meals a day 365 days per year to over 1,000 members attending Progress Place. Healthy food is more costly and our members are living on fixed marginal incomes. Our goal is to provide food security for members by making food available, affordable and accessible. We strive to offer a hot, healthy alternative for people attending our program and/or wishing to take a meal home. Members have reported that having healthy, affordable food available has had a significant impact on their recovery influencing them as a whole person, their body, mind and soul. Last year we served over 35,000 healthy meals and we hope to increase this number to 40,000 this year. Having access to a healthy meals has a huge impact on overall health and we have seen that people tend to make healthy choices when not feeling hungry. More members are participating in the mini gym and exercise opportunities available at Progress Place along with the many workshops offered on diabetes, healthy heart and smoking cessation support to quit smoking.



If you have any questions or comments please feel free to email Criss Habal-Brosek, Executive Director of Progress Place, chabal@progressplace.org.

Again, many thanks for being our partner in recovery!

PAL's Pantry Thanks The Rotary Club of Toronto

– by **Joyce Barnes,** PAL's PANTRY Liaison to The Rotary Club of Toronto

My name is Joyce Barnes and I reside at The Performing Arts Lodge (PAL), a charity whose mandate is to provide affordable housing and support services to the aging, disabled and struggling young members of the Performing Arts and affiliated industries in Canada. PAL has been supporting the Professional Arts community for 25 years. Our PAL Toronto base is in the historic St. Lawrence Market area, but we reach out to the wider community through our dedicated volunteers.

PAL's Pantry was started 3 years ago with the intent to feed our residents in need and more importantly was to help them socialize, as we discovered that there was a great need for an open PANTRY (Food Bank) and well as provide opportunities to combat isolation amongst our residents. Many of our residents have no pension because in the ARTS you don't have a pension plan. If you are under 65 and you are not well or have no work it means no money and no food.

PAL is so grateful to The Rotary Club of Toronto for your financial contribution but most of all for your support and friendship. Due to your help, we are able to hold a number of social events including: Dinner and a Movie events; Showtime events with volunteer entertainers, pianists, singers and comedians; The Celebrity Club open every Friday night with entertainment and food; as well as Sunday afternoon wine and cheese events. It is so lovely to see everyone enjoying these events, the food and the companionship. In addition, 18 months ago PAL hired a chef to cook lunch 5 days a week for our residents. Members of the performing arts community at large can also come and have a 3 course meal for \$5.00. All of these initiatives would not be possible without the support of The Rotary Club of Toronto.

Thank you to The Rotary Club of Toronto for your friendship, generosity and understanding. We owe you a great debt of gratitude.



The Rotary Club of Toronto - Community Services Committee Cheque Presentation to PAL's Joyce Barnes, March 2018.



The Rotary Club of Toronto

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