

# Seniors Speak Newsletter

Welcome to the first Toronto Seniors  
Housing issue of Seniors Speak

**Inside, you will find updates on what we've been working  
on since Toronto Seniors Housing launched on June 1.**

Also in this issue, you will read stories about our tenants and communities as we  
move towards creating a newsletter that is more focused on tenants. We hope to  
continue sharing more of these stories in future newsletters.

As always, we welcome your thoughts on these newsletters. Please let us know what  
you think and what content you would like to see in the future by emailing us at  
[SeniorsSpeak@torontoseniorshousing.ca](mailto:SeniorsSpeak@torontoseniorshousing.ca).

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## Balcony seats to live concerts

At the height of the pandemic, the whole world seemed to have shut down. The city faced many regulations, including a stay-at-home order, which left many, particularly seniors, feeling isolated and alone.

During this time, the Bernard Betel Centre decided to bring live concerts to tenant buildings. Established in 1965 as the Centre for Creative Living, the multi-service centre has always focused on offering an array of on and off-site educational, wellness and community outreach programs and services to seniors, newcomers and Holocaust survivors.

### **“the concerts became common ground for communal entertainment”**

The Centre served hot meals while tenants sang and danced to the live performances below. Musicians would play two 30-minute sets, one on each side of the building, to be visible and audible to all tenants. Without having to worry about social distancing, the concerts became common ground for communal entertainment.

What started as a one-time event at 4455 Bathurst Street has now expanded to other Toronto Seniors Housing buildings and is still ongoing today. Tenants now join the festivities on the ground after COVID-19 restrictions lifted, with some even bringing bubbles to spread more joy.

We want to thank the Bernard Betel Centre for organizing the balcony concerts, and helping our tenants live vibrant lives.





## Listening Tour update

When Tom Hunter took on the role of Chief Executive Officer, one of his top priorities was to visit Toronto Seniors Housing's 83 buildings and meet with tenants to deeply listen and identify areas for improvement.

As a result, the Listening Tour kicked off in June. Since then, Tom has joined tenants at 30 buildings across the city, actively listening and learning about their experiences and taking feedback. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has participated in these events.



Meeting with frontline staff and tenants is giving us a deeper understanding of what's happening on the ground and where we need to do more to support our tenants. Many important issues raised at the Listening Tour events are also consistent with what we've been hearing from the Senior Tenants Advisory Committee (STAC) and tenant leaders. Plans have already begun to address some of them.

These events have also been an opportunity to bring staff and tenants together following the COVID-19 pandemic to mingle and connect with one another. We have been sharing photos from the events, which can be found on our social media channels.

Listening Tour events will continue into 2023. To find out when the Listening Tour is coming to your building, please contact: [communications@torontoseniorshousing.ca](mailto:communications@torontoseniorshousing.ca).

## Where there's a will, there's Jasmine

**Jasmine Schuchardt lives life to the fullest. The tenant of Griggs Manor is too busy to be home, with an active schedule that includes sailing and curling – just to name a few. Her life is even more inspiring when you come to learn that Jasmine is totally blind.**

For Jasmine, there's no holding back. "I'm a believer in trying new things," she says. "You never learn out; there's always something new to learn." And that's the attitude that has grounded Jasmine as she's explored new activities and adventures.

At 13, Jasmine learned how to sail from her younger brother who taught her to trust the waters by feeling the winds. "I always credit Mario for introducing me to sailing," she says. "He was very progressive at a time when blind sailing didn't exist. He would tell me, 'I don't care if you're blind, you can sail a boat!'" From there, Jasmine joined the Island Yacht Club's blind sailing program where she learned various skills to better navigate the waters.

Once the Blind Sailing Association of Canada (BSAC) started up in 2002, Jasmine joined the following year and has been with them ever since. On many summer days, you can find her at the Queens Quay Marina with the BSAC crew, which is made up of a sighted crew and blind sailors who alternate roles on the boat. For a self-proclaimed introvert, there's no better place that Jasmine would rather be than on a sailboat soaking up the tranquility of the ocean waters alongside a supportive crew she trusts.





When she's not sailing, she's curling. "That's my winter activity," she jokes. A neighbour introduced her to blind curling a couple of years ago, and she was hooked. Curling for the blind and visually impaired is essentially the same as the sport played by sighted people. The difference is that each team has a sighted guide to assist players in their rock delivery.



A well-travelled adventurer who's been around the world, Jasmine finds comfort where she is these days at home in Etobicoke. "I knew the moment that I came to view this place that it was where I needed to be," she says. And she was right as she celebrates entering a decade of living independently and comfortably in her bachelor unit. "It's my safe place – my happy place," she exclaims.

Whether she's grounded at home, on the water or on the rink, Jasmine is never too far away from dipping her toes in the water to try something new.

## An update on health and wellness initiative

In Spring 2022, Health Commons\* talked to senior tenants living across Toronto Seniors Housing buildings about their health and wellness, and what should be done to improve quality of life and aging well at home. They asked:

**“What services and supports do seniors need and prefer, and what is the best way to offer those services and supports?”**

They heard about the need for a variety of urgent and ongoing services. They also heard that services alone are not the answer – senior tenants want an active role in designing, delivering and evaluating activities in their buildings, and this is good for their health and wellness.



The final report, summarizing what senior tenants had to say about health and wellness, was reviewed by the Toronto Seniors Housing Board of Directors in September and is now available online:  
[www.healthcommons.ca/project/seniors-health-and-wellness](http://www.healthcommons.ca/project/seniors-health-and-wellness)

*\* This project was designed and implemented by Health Commons Solutions Lab*



## Senior Tenants Advisory Committee

The Senior Tenants Advisory Committee (STAC) continues to add the tenant voice to many topics and projects. This summer, members contributed to a report on tenant engagement that went to the Toronto Seniors Housing Board and that will act as a foundational piece in developing a senior tenant engagement model.

STAC members were also among the 87 tenants that contributed to the Health Commons report on the Health and Wellness Initiative, developing a tenant-focused approach to providing services and supports. The report went to the Quality and Tenant Engagement Committee and the Toronto Seniors Housing Board in September.



STAC members will also be contributing to additional and ongoing topics including:

- Further consultations on the design of a tenant engagement system
- Quality of the Integrated Service Model (ISM)
- Effective use of notice boards
- The roles of the Seniors Services Coordinators and Community Services Coordinators
- Updating Tenant Action Funds and Use of Space policies
- Prioritizing the updating of other tenant-facing policies

**If you want more information or would like to be contacted by a member of STAC, please email [STAC@torontoseniorshousing.ca](mailto:STAC@torontoseniorshousing.ca). Members welcome senior tenants' input.**



## Community garden in full bloom

It can be challenging to find an escape into nature when living in Toronto. That is why it is so important to have community gardens.

Situated in many of our buildings, these natural gardens provide vibrant outdoor spaces for tenants to gather and immerse themselves in nature without venturing far from home.

The community garden at 801 Mount Pleasant Road is a great example of how tenants are making their communities better, providing a flourishing, lush green space for tenants to enjoy. The small garden, located at the back of the building along the fence that surrounds the parking lot, is home to flowers and vegetables. Although small, several mighty plants emerge from this bed of earth. You can find zucchini, cucumbers, squash and tomatoes nestled throughout the garden. Several potted plants have also been added to the upper patio of the building to brighten up the outdoor common area.



Tenants Ok-Bong Lee and Jian Huan Zhang have been taking care of the garden for nearly a decade, investing their time and resources to maintain the green space. Many tenants have been inspired by their efforts to start urban gardening on their balconies.

Thank you Ok-Bong Lee and Jian Huan Zhang for all your hard work and contributions!





# Your community at a glance





# Your community at a glance







### When can I use the common room in my building?

Most common rooms are now open for tenant use from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. In a few buildings, rooms are only open during times when staff are on site. We are working to have electronic fob access installed to extend hours of use, and in cases where a room may be closed, a notice explaining this will be posted (e.g., for renovation). Programming continues to resume in buildings and there will soon be calendars posted with scheduled activities. Tenants are free to use the common rooms when there are no events booked by tenants or agencies.

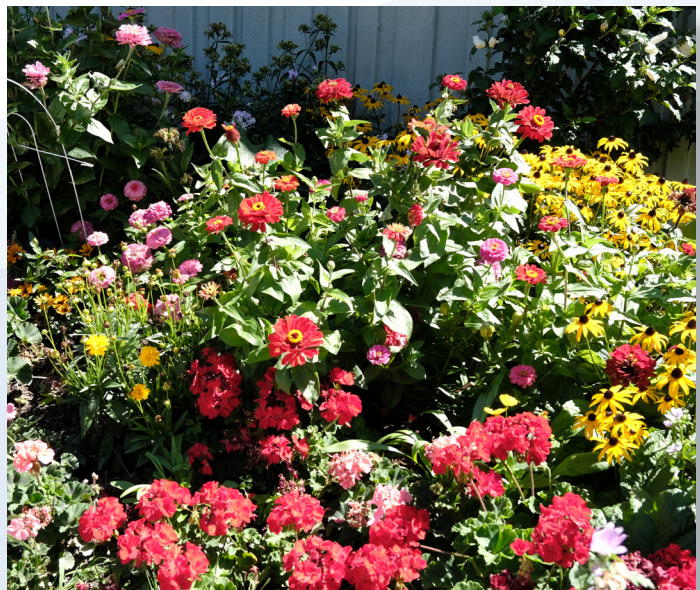


If you want to book a common room in your building for a one-time event or regular ongoing activity, please complete a Use of Space application. The application is on our website and your Seniors Services Coordinator (SSC) can help you fill it out.

If you are having trouble getting access to your common room please contact your Superintendent, SSC or call the Tenant Support Centre at 416-945-0800. Contact information for staff is posted in each building.

### What are Tenant Action Funds and how do I access them?

Tenant Action Funds are money available to tenants and tenant groups to fund projects and activities that are identified by tenants. All Toronto Seniors Housing tenants can apply. To apply, connect with your Seniors Services Coordinator (SSC) to help you complete an Application Form.



## You asked, we answered



### **What is the maximum amount of funding that can be received for a project or initiative through the Tenant Action Funds?**

Tenants can receive a maximum of \$1,000 for a single project or initiative. Tenants can submit funding requests for multiple projects each year.

### **Is there a deadline to apply?**

Tenant Action Fund applications can be submitted any time but may take up to a month for processing and approval. For events taking place in December 2022, it is recommended that you complete your application by October 30 to provide enough time for processing.

### **What does a Seniors Services Coordinator do and when should I go to them?**

A Seniors Services Coordinator (SSC) works in your building and is there to help support you to have a successful tenancy. Your building's SSC can be contacted to support you with the following:

- General information about your tenancy
- Unit condition concerns, such as clutter, cleanliness and pests
- Questions about your lease, subsidy, housing or transfers in general, reporting changes to income, and accessibility services
- Referrals to supports, such as food, cleaning or health services
- Annual rent reviews
- Parking requests
- Accessing income supports, such as pensions when turning 65
- General information about resources in your area
- Arrears issues
- Identifying opportunities to participate in your building and community, such as recreational activities, services, volunteering, and other engagement
- Complaints about noise or anti-social behavior

Your SSC's name, contact information and office hours are posted on their office door; please ask your Superintendent if you do not know where the SSC office is located in your building.





### **Who do I contact if I have a maintenance request?**

For unit and building maintenance requests, such as pest control, repairs and more, please contact your Superintendent, or the Tenant Support Centre at 416-945-0800 or [support@torontoseniorshousing.ca](mailto:support@torontoseniorshousing.ca).

### **What is the Complex Tenancies Team?**

We've established a Complex Tenancies Team to support senior tenants struggling with a variety of unit conditions, well-being and support issues that are adversely affecting their tenancy. These include unit cleanliness, hoarding, pest infestations, arrears and associated issues. Integrated team meetings are held where staff identify tenants who may need the support of the Complex Tenancies Team. The Complex Tenancies Team will do everything it can to help people who are experiencing severe challenges in keeping their homes. This can mean bringing together different community partners or other services that may be able to help.

### **When are flu shot clinics coming to my building?**

We will be starting vaccination clinics in October, including COVID-19 vaccines and the annual influenza (flu) shot. Watch your bulletin boards for more information about when these will be at your place.



### **What is the process for unit transfers?**

If you are interested in transferring to another building (whether in the Toronto Seniors Housing portfolio or back to Toronto Community Housing), you will need to submit a new application through Access to Housing at the City of Toronto.

You may be eligible for a faster transfer under a priority transfer category to another building within the Toronto Seniors Housing portfolio. These priority categories remain the same as they were with Toronto Community Housing and have very specific eligibility criteria. For more information and to find out if you are eligible, contact your Seniors Services Coordinator.

# Seniors' supports and services

## Seniors Canada

Information about federal government services and benefits for seniors, home safety, fraud prevention, benefits for caregiving, and more.

Phone: 1-800-622-6232

Website: [www.canada.ca/seniors](http://www.canada.ca/seniors)

## Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP)

This is a provincially-funded program providing basic dental care for eligible seniors age 65+ with a low income. This program is delivered through Toronto Public Health dental clinics, or Community Health Centres.

For more information, visit [www.ontario.ca](http://www.ontario.ca) and search “dental seniors”, or call 416-916-0204.

## Directory of Services for Seniors and Caregivers

A 211 - City of Toronto resource to help seniors and caregivers find the services they need in health, housing, food, pets, recreation, caregivers, legal, and many more areas. Translation details are available inside the directory.

Visit [211central.ca/directory-of-services-for-seniors-caregivers-in-toronto/](http://211central.ca/directory-of-services-for-seniors-caregivers-in-toronto/) for the full directory. For questions, contact [seniors@toronto.ca](mailto:seniors@toronto.ca).

## Seniors guide to staying cyber safe

Instances of cyber criminals masquerading as healthcare organizations or Government of Canada representatives have been increasing – and in many cases, they're targeting seniors. Here are some ways that you can prepare to stay cyber safe: [bit.ly/3UueSav](https://bit.ly/3UueSav).



## Seniors Speak is available in many languages

Call **416-945-0800** to request this document in an alternate language or format.

இந்த ஆவணத்தை வேறு மொழி அல்லது வடிவத்தில் கோர **416-945-0800** ஐ அழைக்கவும்.

Llame al **416-945-0800** para solicitar este documento en otros idiomas o formatos.

Καλέστε το **416-945-0800** για να ζητήσετε αυτό το έγγραφο σε εναλλακτική γλώσσα ή μορφή.

Для запроса этого документа на другом языке или в альтернативном формате позвоните по телефону **416-945-0800**.

Для запиту цього документа іншою мовою або в альтернативному форматі зателефонуйте за номером **416-945-0800**.

다른 언어 또는 형식으로 된 버전은 **416-945-0800** 으로 요청하십시오.

请拨打 **416-945-0800**，以其他语言或格式索取此文档。

Xin gọi **416-945-0800** để yêu cầu có tài liệu này bằng một ngôn ngữ hay bằng một dạng thức thay thế khác.

برای درخواست این اطلاعات به زبان یا فرمت دیگر، با شماره **416-945-0800** تماس بگیرید.

Zadzwoń pod numer **416-945-0800**, aby poprosić o ten dokument w innym języku lub formacie.

## Stay connected!



To stay connected and updated with the news and events of Toronto Seniors Housing, make sure to follow us on social media. You can find us on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. You can also learn more on our website at [TorontoSeniorsHousing.ca](http://TorontoSeniorsHousing.ca).

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Welcome to

# Toronto Seniors Housing



## Get in touch

Want to be featured in an upcoming newsletter? Prefer to get Seniors Speak in your email inbox? Contact us at [SeniorsSpeak@torontoseniorshousing.ca](mailto:SeniorsSpeak@torontoseniorshousing.ca).

You can call these numbers 24 hours a day, seven days a week, or reach us via email at [support@torontoseniorshousing.ca](mailto:support@torontoseniorshousing.ca).

**Tenant Support Centre: 416-945-0800**

**Community Safety Unit: 416-921-2323**

**Crime Stoppers: 416-222-8477**

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