

**Toronto Seniors
Housing Corporation**



Seniors Speak

Spring 2023

Welcome to the Spring Issue

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Celebrating one year together!



Toronto Seniors Housing is very proud to be marking our first year anniversary! I thank you for your continued commitment and support to Toronto Seniors Housing as we “planted our roots” over the past year. We could not have come this far without your help.

Here’s to many more years ahead!

Tom Hunter, Chief Executive Officer





PUTTING DOWN
ROOTS

June celebrations



June marks the start of summer and many important days and celebrations. June is Seniors Month, the start of Pride season and National Indigenous History Month. The City has an events calendar on their website that you can visit any time to see what activities are happening:

toronto.ca/explore-enjoy/festivals-events/



You can also call 311 or visit your local library to find out more about what is going on in the city!

Seniors Month

June is Seniors Month in Ontario. We recognize our amazing tenants and the contributions that they have made in our communities across the city. Our progress would not be possible without your guidance, efforts, and support. Thank you!



In support of Seniors Month, the City of Toronto is hosting a Toronto Challenge Run/Walk to celebrate 30 years of supporting seniors. Presented by Hunt's Healthcare, the event takes place on Sunday, June 11, at Nathan Phillips Square (Toronto City Hall). Funds raised will benefit residents of the City's long-term care homes. It will also assist community agencies that support seniors and vulnerable people across Toronto. For more information visit www.toronto.ca/challenge.

For more information on how the province is recognizing the contributions of seniors during the month, visit ontario.ca/page/celebrating-seniors-ontario.



Senior Tenants Advisory Committee update

Members of the Senior Tenants Advisory Committee (STAC) continue to bring their voices to many topics at Toronto Seniors Housing.

Over the last few months, STAC members:

- gave their thoughts on how we will measure our goals
- met with the City's Rapid Rehousing Program team to share their thoughts and learn more about the program
- met several staff teams, including the new Engagement Community Services Coordinators and the Communications team
- guided us on how to better speak with tenants about tenancy issues that may cause them distress

They also gave ideas on how to best reach tenants as we seek input on a new tenant engagement model. Along with other tenants, many STAC members also provided their thoughts and ideas on many other topics. They guided us on policies and projects that aim to help improve quality of life for tenants.

We continue to focus on listening to tenants. Posters will be going up in early June to ask for your thoughts on a new tenant engagement model. If you would like to have your voice heard, please contact your Seniors Services Coordinator, your Engagement Community Services Coordinator, or email **communities@torontoseniorshousing.ca**.

If you want to learn more about the Senior Tenants Advisory Committee, please email **STAC@torontoseniorshousing.ca**

100 Years of blessings



A century ago, Maria DeSouza was born in Goa, India. Since then, she has lived through the Great Depression and World War II, seen the first moon landing, and the rise of the age of the internet.

Now, she is also marking another milestone: for the past 30 years, Maria has lived independently at Cliffwood Manor.

She was scared at first to leave her family, who she had been living with, and move into her Toronto Seniors Housing unit at the age of 70. But slowly, she began to enjoy her independence. Now, she can't be away from home for long. "I love my home," she says. "I always want to return here."

**"I love my home,
I always want to
return here."**



At 100 years old, Maria has seen a lot, including many of her neighbours come and go. She is keenly aware of how fleeting life can be, and credits her Roman Catholic faith for her long life. "I don't know how I made it, but I made it by the grace of God," she says.

She is not only living, but thriving with a full list of creative hobbies that keep her busy, including cooking, sewing, knitting, crocheting, and painting. She only learned how to paint in her 80s! When her grandchildren gave her an iPad, she wasn't sure if she needed it, but quickly learned how to use it.

“have fun, be strong, and educate yourself. You can do anything.”

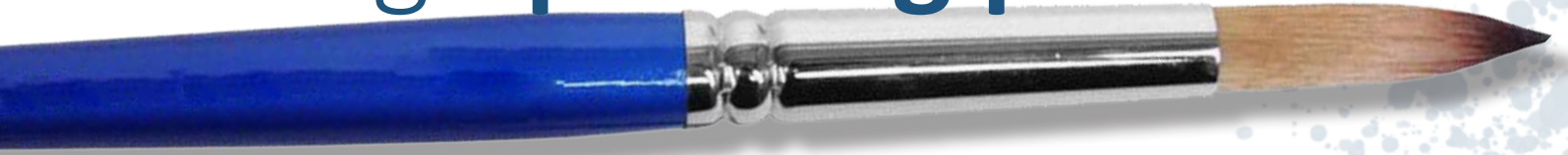


Adapting to change is something Maria is used to, having lived through many historic changes in her lifetime.

When asked what advice she would give her younger self, Maria pauses for a moment before saying, “have fun, be strong, and educate yourself. You can do anything.” Courage and hope are not lost on her. Today, with 15 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren, Maria still has a lot to look forward to.



A chance to continue playing through **painting practise**



Among the many titles Jacob de Jong has held over the years as a retired lawyer and businessman, he can now add a new one: painter.

Growing up in a large Dutch-Canadian family who were all artistically talented, one might say he was destined to paint. His great-great-grandfather, whose self-portrait hangs in the apartment entryway, was an accomplished artist. As for Jacob, he dabbled in freehand drawing as a teenager, but did not begin to paint until he moved into TCHC six years ago. He had a worn wooden table and mismatched chairs which “looked boring”. So he walked across the street to the dollar store, bought some cheap paints, and painted the furniture various colours and shades. He found the project deeply satisfying and fun. Things took off from there.

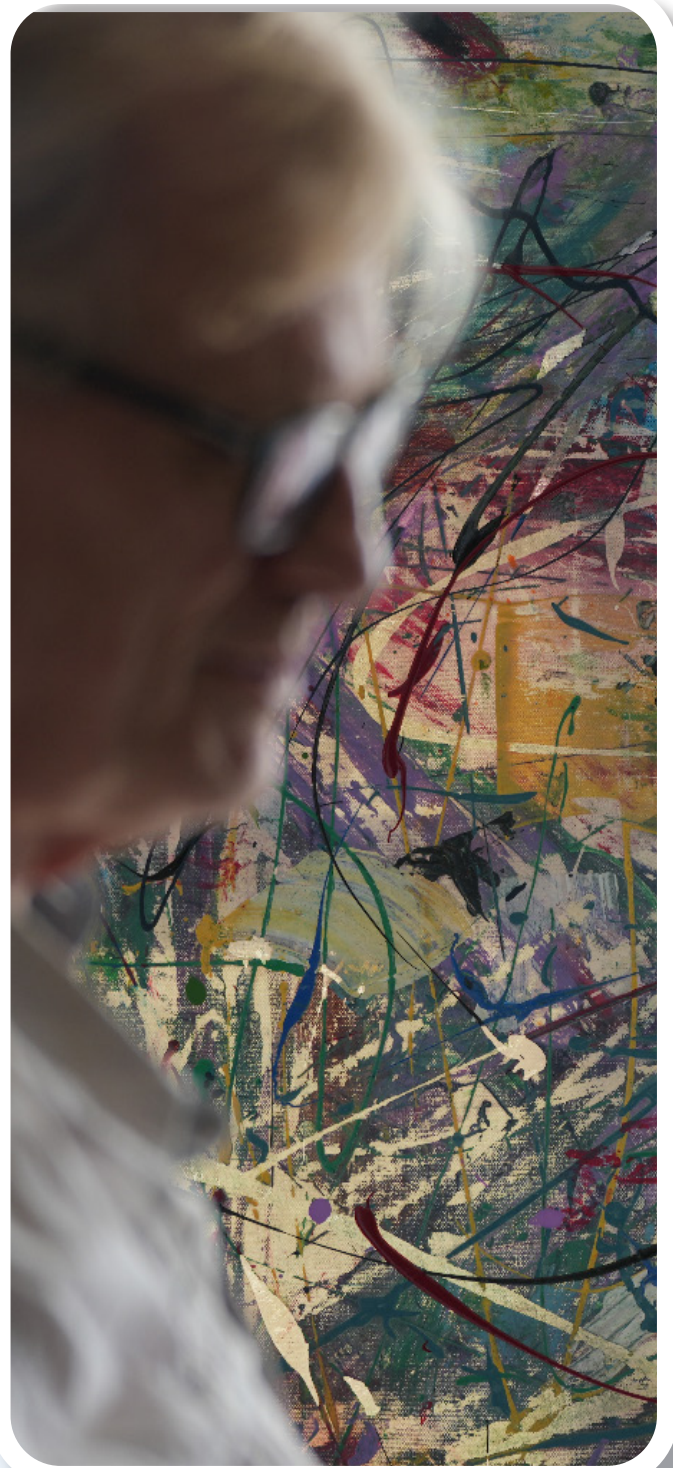
Jacob mostly paints acrylic on canvas, but also uses oils, pencil and graphite on other surfaces ranging from lamps to doorframes. “The whole apartment is my studio,” says Jacob. This is evident from the paintings and photographs hanging on the walls, a battered easel, vintage furniture thoughtfully arranged (and probably rearranged many times), and colours harmoniously mismatched in a way only an artist can pull off. He even uses the floor to paint some of his larger canvasses.

Asked about his influences, Jacob says “I’ve always been a fan of Dutch art, so I started from there.” Each of his paintings are unique, and each has a personal story, which makes giving them away difficult. “The emotion and personal history of the painting leaves with the work.”

“The emotion and personal history of the painting **leaves with the work.**”

Jacob believes every person’s interpretation of any of his work is as valid as his own. Hanging above his masterfully painted table is a large canvas titled Cafe No.2. Jacob sees this painting as two people on facing benches in a difficult conversation. A colourful painting with pastel swatches of yellow, green, red, and blue hanging over the living room couch he sees as a bed of new flowers. But Jacob believes it is what each observer thinks and feels that gives a painting its meaning. In the same way, none of his paintings bear his signature. “My identity isn’t necessary...when you see it, it becomes a whole new piece of art, so your viewpoint is as good as mine.” Not every work has to have meaning though, Jacob says. “Sometimes it’s just what it appears to be - pretty colours on canvas.”

Jacob continues to create from a place of gratitude and pride: proud that Torontonians have created Toronto Seniors Housing and grateful that being its tenant has allowed him and others to pursue their hobbies and passions. “I am quite pleased.”



CEO Listening Tour



In June 2022, a Listening Tour was designed for the Chief Executive Officer, Tom Hunter, to connect with tenants and staff to hear their concerns, desires and needs for the new corporation. Tom has now completed the tour, visiting with over 2,300 tenants from all 83 buildings. To better support these conversations, Toronto Seniors Housing brought in 65 interpreters. Thank you to the many tenants and staff who helped make these events a success.

Issues remain largely the same across the buildings, with tenants identifying **these priority items:**

- Pests, including bed bugs, cockroach infestations, and pigeons on balconies
- Unwanted and uninvited visitors who may cause issues for tenants
- Improve security
- Improve translation and interpretation to allow more tenants to participate
- Improve or replace aging equipment
- More small and large group activities for tenants



The feedback from the Listening Tour events has already resulted in actions, including:

- Three projects to address managing pests, improving safety and security as well as staff and tenants relations.
- A tenant survey is planned for later in 2023 to gather better information about tenant languages and other needs to improve support for you.
- A specialized pest management team was created and new projects have started to improve the process.
- We continue to speak to tenants about how to make our policies better focused on your needs. We are getting some great input. Thanks to those helping us out.

Feedback from the Listening Tour was also used to help us create our goals. These goals will help us focus, measure and report on our work over the next 12 to 18 months.

Continuing to connect with tenants is a priority for Toronto Seniors Housing. Tom will return to touring buildings to meet with tenants beginning in late May. He hopes to visit one building per week whenever possible. Keep an eye out for posters in your building.



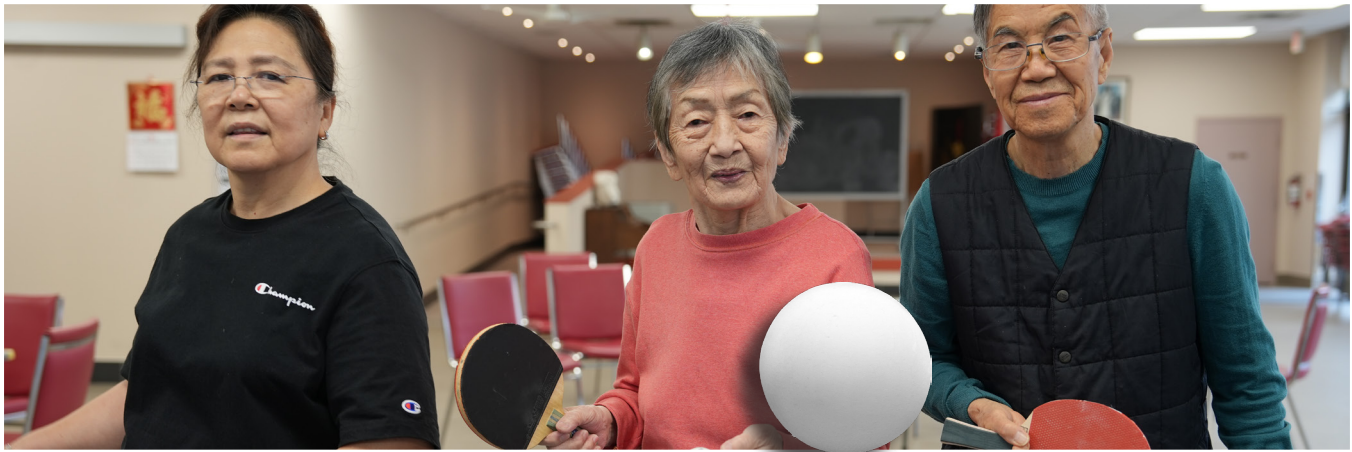
Tenants at Cliffwood Manor find community and health at ping pong



When you enter the ground floor recreation room at Cliffwood Manor, it's hard to miss the two blue ping pong tables. If you happen to drop by in the morning, then it's hard not to miss the unsuspecting group of highly-skilled ping pong players playing: senior tenants.

“The ping pong club was here long before I started,” says Seniors Services Coordinator Theodora Li. Tenants have been meeting from Monday to Saturday at 8:30 a.m. every morning for six years to play ping pong. In a building where 75 per cent of the units are single occupancy, getting together to play has helped fight the social isolation that many seniors may have as they live alone. Ping pong has not only brought tenants together to improve their mental and physical health, but also their quality of life. So it wasn't surprising to learn that this is one of the Toronto Seniors Housing buildings that is home to several tenants who are 100 years old or more!

For Mei Chen and Wen Juan Xu, they were longtime neighbours on the same floor, but it wasn't until they started coming to ping pong that they met. Now, they are inseparable friends. "We're very happy to have a daily time to meet with each other and play," says Wen Juan Xu. "It's a harmonious community where everyone truly respects each other," chimes in Mei Chen, like best friends who finish each other's sentences.



Friends Jack Lim and Jiang Guan Zhen also agree. "I'm recovering really well since moving here," says Jian Guan Zhen, who moved into the building two years ago after battling severe health issues. "I have more freedom living here, I'm happy every day."

It's obvious hearing from the tenants that they're all very happy living here. With the new arrival of a second ping pong table, we look forward to being invited to a ping pong tournament at Cliffwood Manor in the near future.



Your community





at a glance



You asked, **we answered**



How do I transfer to a different unit or building?

If you would like to transfer to a different unit or Toronto Seniors Housing building, then you will need to submit a new application to the centralized waiting list at the City (Access to Housing). More information can be found at bit.ly/3AZPzV9. Some tenants may qualify for a transfer within Toronto Seniors Housing under a priority category. Those tenants would not have to go on the centralized waiting list. If you want more details about this, speak with your Seniors Services Coordinator or go to our website: torontoseniorshousing.ca/request-a-transfer/



How many days can I go away on vacation?

If all members of a household are away from their unit for more than 90 days in a row, or for more than 90 days in total during a 12-month period, then they will no longer be eligible for RGI. There are a few exceptions. Speak with your Seniors Services Coordinator for more information.



If I need help, can I have a family member live with me?

Yes. A tenant can ask to have a family member added as a caregiver on their lease. They will need to follow up with their Seniors Services Coordinator to get and complete a Caregiver Verification Form. The change in who is living in your unit must be reported within 30 days of the family member moving in.



Am I allowed to sublet my unit or use it for short-term rentals?

No. Tenants are not allowed to sublet their unit or use it for short-term rentals. This includes parking spaces. This is a violation of the Toronto Seniors Housing lease agreement, and tenants can lose their RGI subsidy.



What local food programs can I access in my community?

Sai Dham Food Bank has made their 24/7 foodbank services available to tenants across our buildings. Their services are there for those who may have financial or mobility needs. You can reach them through their intake line at **437-988-4422**.

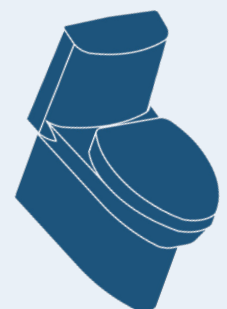
The Red Cross also operates a Mobile Food Bank for tenants who have mobility needs or are unable to leave home through their intake line at **416-236-3180**. Meals on Wheels is a paid food delivery option that delivers affordable meals to seniors' homes across Ontario. For a list of local food banks and community food programs in your community, please visit bit.ly/44x55Fy.



Our goal over the next year is to improve our community programs, including food security programs, across our four regions to help tenants access services. If you are interested in more information about how to get programs like these into your building, please email communities@torontoseniorshousing.ca or contact your Seniors Services Coordinator.

Will low-flush toilets be installed in Toronto Seniors Housing buildings?

Yes. This a multi-year project. Toronto Community Housing owns the buildings operated by Toronto Seniors Housing. Together, we are always looking at water conservation projects to invest in to help reduce water waste in our buildings, including installing low-flush toilets. We will keep you updated on when they will be installed in your building.



Keeping your home clean and safe!



There's no place like home. For our tenants, aging in place means living at home for as long as possible. Having a safe and clean home contributes to a tenant's freedom and creates a safe, comfortable, and familiar place. Below is a home safety checklist that you can use as a guide.

Making Your Home Safer

- Avoid stretching electrical cords across a room
- Avoid plugging too many electronics in power bars
- Always use ashtrays to dispose of cigarettes
- Wear non-slip indoor shoes to prevent slips and falls and use anti-slip mats in the tub or shower
- Arrange furniture to create wide paths for walking
- Install night-lights in the bathroom and hallways and keep a flashlight by your bed

Avoiding Pests!

- Keep corners and hard to reach spots clean
- Before buying a second-hand item, check for bed bugs
- Throw out or store food and drinks away after you are finished
- Clean floors regularly to remove food crumbs and wipe up spills right away





Seniors Speak is available in many languages

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

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Toronto Seniors Housing



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Want to be featured in an upcoming newsletter? Prefer to get Seniors Speak in your email inbox? Contact us at 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.

Tenant Support Centre: 416-945-0800

Community Safety Unit: 416-921-2323

Crime Stoppers: 416-222-8477

