

Toronto Seniors
Housing Corporation

Seniors Speak

Winter 2024 Issue



Welcome to the Winter Issue

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A message from CEO Jill Bada



Dear Tenants,

Happy new year to everyone. I hope your start to 2024 has been in good health and spirits.

We started the year launching Community Connect+ and the Community Activities Fund to work together with tenants to promote social activities, health and wellness, and participation in our communities. I'm happy to announce that building meetings are underway to find out what types of activities and programs tenants want, and how they want to participate in supporting their communities.

We welcome your feedback at the regional tenant circles. These will take place three times this year. Contact your Community Services Coordinator (CSC) to find out when the next one will be taking place in your region.

Over the upcoming year, I look forward to continuing and expanding on the work that we started last year. Specifically, to bring community programs into buildings, improve community safety and security, and reduce social isolation.

I want to thank you for your continued commitment in making our buildings and communities vibrant places to live. I look forward to working together to create more connected communities.

Jill Bada
Interim Chief Executive Officer



February marks Black History Month, a time to celebrate the achievements and history of Black Canadians. In this issue, we are sharing two stories of Black tenants who have paved the way to make space for generations after them.

Raising Black Canadian hockey superstars

Our first story is about Kathy Terrill, the tenant representative at Byng Towers. When Kathy moved to Canada from Guyana in 1971, she didn't know what to expect. But she knew one thing: she was going to do the best she could to give her daughter and two sons the best life she could.

Hockey was a way for Kathy to keep her two sons distracted and out of trouble while they lived with her parents in a neighbourhood with a lot of gun violence and drug dealers. Kathy put her children in as many extra-curricular activities as she could afford working multiple jobs as a single mother. Her oldest son, Kahlil, started playing hockey at age 5, and paved the way for her youngest son, Leonard.

It was not easy being Black and playing a sport that is still mostly played by White men. Kathy, who is multiracial and passes as White but self-identifies as a Black woman, saw it firsthand sitting in the stands cheering on her boys at games. "I would have to sit in the arena and watch as people called my son a nasty word and questioned if I was their mother," she says. "It's hard, but you just have to be a parent and console them."



Her patience and hard work paid off. Kahlil went on to become the first Black assistant coach in the East Coast Hockey League. Leonard became the first Black coach in the Southern Pacific Hockey League. What's more, her grandson was the first member of the Terrill family to get drafted into the National Hockey League (NHL) in 2018. Akil Thomas plays for the Los Angeles Kings. Kathy travels often to watch her grandson play and visit her sons in the US.

Trailblazers run in the family. Kathy's mother was also a top field hockey player in Guyana.

Despite the distance, Kathy is still the person everyone turns to in her family. "I'm so proud of them," Kathy says beaming. "I raised them to be good kids and they're still good kids."

"I raised them to be good kids and they're still good kids."



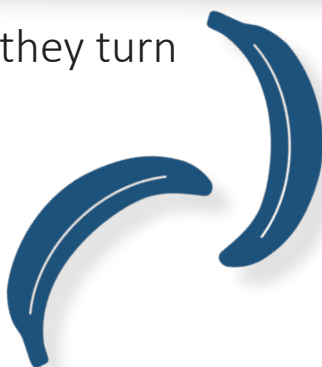
Fried plantains

Plantains are one of the foods eaten by Africans. They are used in dishes across Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Caribbean. Plantains look like bananas, except they're larger, and less sweet than bananas. In grocery stores, you can find plantains in the produce section, sometimes labelled "cooking bananas" or "plantain bananas".

Fried plantains are a common snack and side dish that is sweet and delicious, and well-loved amongst many people across the world.

How to fry plantains:

1. Peel the plantains. To do this, slice off the ends, then cut through the skin and peel the skin back.
2. Slice them on the diagonal into 1/2-inch-thick pieces.
3. Sprinkle the plantain pieces with salt. You can also salt them after you fry them.
4. Heat vegetable (or any neutral) oil in a frying pan on medium-low heat.
5. When the oil is hot, add the plantain pieces to the oil. They burn fast so cook them low and slow.
6. Cook them for about seven minutes on either side until they turn golden brown.
7. Remove the plantains and pat off any excess oil.
8. Serve warm and enjoy!



Responsible Personal Accessibility in Toronto Housing (R-PATH) Committee reports:

Accessibility Is for You

Are you having a hard time functioning in your home because of a disability or medical need? You may qualify to have your unit modified.

To learn more, pick up a copy of the Accessibility Is for You package. This is a guide written by the R-PATH Committee about the Accessibility Program for tenants in Toronto Seniors Housing.

The package gives you a step-by-step guide on how to get your unit modified. It tells you what to expect during the process and answers the seven (7) most common questions tenants have about this process.

You can pick up the Accessibility Is for You package from your building's Seniors Services Coordinator (SSC) or download it from our website at torontoseniorshousing.ca/accessibility-program/



Introducing a new way of working together

Community Connect+ is our new approach to working together with tenants, staff, service providers, and community partners to build stronger, healthier senior tenant communities.

Along with Community Connect+, we introduced a new Community Activities Fund (CAF) this year. This will help fund events, programs, and equipment purchases that support tenants' health and well-being. Below are some answers to questions tenants have been asking about the new approach and fund.

How do I get involved?

Tenants can find more information and look for opportunities to get involved through various communications, including posters in buildings, and the Community Connect+ web page:

torontoseniorshousing.ca/community-connect-plus/

TSHC Community Services Coordinators (CSCs) are your main point of contact if you are looking for information. Please get in touch with your regional CSC or contact communities@torontoseniorshousing.ca.



How does the Community Activities Fund work?

Every year, each building will receive funding based on the number of tenants living in the building. All tenants will be invited to participate in an Annual Building Planning Process to decide how funds will be used for the year.

With staff support, tenants will decide on the events, activities, and equipment they want to have at their building for the year. Once these preferences are set, the Community Services Coordinators (CSCs) will work with tenants to complete application forms as needed.

Adjustments can be made throughout the year, with help from the CSCs and agreement from tenants.



Can tenants change how they use funds throughout the year?

How funding is used will be decided by tenants through the Annual Building Planning Process. Community Services Coordinators (CSCs) will work with tenants to decide on how any remaining funds will be used.



Your community at a glance! 



Exploring **wildlife** photography in later life



The community room and gym at Janet Magee Manor have walls lined with wildlife photographs. Their breathtaking presence draws you in. The photographer behind these images is John Knight, a tenant in the building.

John got into photography in the 1960's when he bought his first Minolta SLR. Soon after, he stopped focusing on his photography as life got busier. John returned to photography after retiring while looking for something to do. Digital photography became a more affordable and accessible way to enjoy his old hobby again. In need of subjects to photograph with his new digital camera, John started visiting the Toronto Zoo.

Wildlife photography requires a great amount of patience to capture a fleeting moment in the lives of animals. John enjoyed learning about the animals from the zookeepers to anticipate their next move. It wasn't long before he was photographing animals like the great blue heron, Siberian tigers, the hawk, polar bears, and wolves at the zoo. "You feel a real kinship with the animals in their solitude," says John.

Today, he mostly photographs family, but looks forward to returning to the zoo again one day to reunite with the animals.



Check out some of John's work!



An update on Quality Improvement Projects



The Quality Improvement Projects (QIPs) were created to bring staff and tenants together to work to understand issues and come up with ideas to make things better at Toronto Seniors Housing.

Tenants and staff met to focus on three main issues: pest management, safety and security, and staff and tenant relations. The recommended actions from these meetings were put into our Interim Strategic Directions Roadmap. This Roadmap lays out Toronto Seniors Housing's plan to make improvements.

A Quality Improvement Project quarterly update was presented at the December 8, 2023, Board meeting. You can view the meeting materials on our website at: bit.ly/3vqPH0o.

The next Quality Improvement Project quarterly update will be given at the Quality and Tenant Engagement Committee meeting on Monday, February 5, 2024. You can find more information online at torontoseniorshousing.ca/about/board-committees/quality-tenant-engagement-committee/.

Holiday parties



There were community winter celebrations at over half of Toronto Seniors Housing buildings in December. This is about double the number of events held last year. Thank you to the many tenants who organized these events, with support from staff and service providers. It is wonderful to see tenants socializing again. We hope that the new Community Activities Fund and the Community Connect+ approach to participation help build on this success.

Tax benefits and credits for seniors



Anyone living in rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing must file taxes every year. The tax filing deadline for your 2023 tax return is Tuesday, April 30, 2024. We will be bringing back tax clinics this year to some of our buildings. You can also find information on free tax clinics at torontoseniorshousing.ca/taxinfo/.

When filing your taxes this year, you may be eligible for tax credits and benefits. Please get professional advice from a tax professional before filing taxes to know which tax credits and benefits you can claim.

The Ontario Trillium Benefit (OTB)

The Ontario Trillium Benefit is a tax-free payment that helps low- to moderate-income Ontario residents pay for energy costs, sales tax, and property tax. Most Toronto Seniors Housing buildings are exempt from municipal property taxes, which may impact a tenant's eligibility for the Ontario Trillium Benefit.

Check your building's property tax status by visiting torontoseniorshousing.ca/building-tax-status/ or calling the Tenant Support Centre at 416-945-0800 to confirm whether your building is tax exempt. Visit ontario.ca/page/ontario-trillium-benefit/ for more information on the Ontario Trillium Benefit.

Disability Tax Credit (DTC)

A senior suffering from a severe and prolonged impairment in physical or mental functions may fit the criteria for the Disability Tax Credit. Visit the Government of Canada website at bit.ly/2OF88aF to see if you are eligible.

A woman of many talents:

Meet Linda Robinson



If you are looking for inspiration to get out of bed every morning, then look no further than Linda Robinson.

Linda is a grandmother, founder of a charity, gospel singer, entrepreneur, and playwright. At the young age of 73, Linda will tell you – smiling – that she does not know how to “do old”.

When she first moved to Edwards Manor in 2014, she was determined to live independently and healthily. A decade later, Linda has done more in those years than many people do in their lifetime. For Linda, life is all about action.

A few years before moving to Etobicoke, Linda founded Send a Child to Camp, a nonprofit that helps disadvantaged children experience the joys of summer camp. Since it started, 60 children have benefited from the charity. Every year, Linda fundraises approximately \$2,000 to give about 5 children an opportunity to experience Camp Big Canoe. Linda works with her church, Parkdale United Church, to hold several events throughout the year to raise funds, including an annual BBQ, a crochet/knitting sale, and an annual concert.



She has stayed committed to her cause for 17 years because she believes children are the future. “We have to look after them and help them any way we can,” she explains. “And camp provides that.”

Linda is a proud sixth-generation Canadian who has spent much of her later life giving back to the community. “The things I do, I do it from the heart, because I want to do them,” Linda says. “There are so many people who have helped me along the way and I want to pass it forward.” When Linda isn’t involved in her fundraising efforts and the church, she’s busy finding new ways to connect her community with resources that they may have access to but do not know about. Her next act? Look out for Linda as she presents her play at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) this year.

“The things I do, I do it from the heart, because I want to do them.”



Senior Tenants Advisory Committee (STAC) update



Senior Tenants Advisory Committee (STAC) members continue to be active and engaged. Over the last three months, they have:

- Attended regional tenant leadership meetings. This included providing input on Community Room Guidelines and receiving updates related to the new Community Connect+ approach and the Community Activities Fund.
- Learned about TSHC's process for dealing with complaints.
- Provided input on the Seniors Tenant Experience Survey.
- Received updates related to our community programs and partnerships work. This included the North Toronto Neighbourhood Care Team model being implemented in the North East region and the Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC) Innovation Centre's tenant Ambassadors program in the South West.



Anne James, who was an active member of 9 Haldon's tenant community, recently passed away. She helped advocate for and organized community events for 9 Haldon after COVID-19 restrictions were lifted. Anne also participated in regional tenant leaders' meetings and brought together new volunteers to support programs and events at 9 Haldon Ave. We will miss Anne's gentle yet outgoing personality and will remember her fondly.



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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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, X (formerly known as Twitter), and LinkedIn. You can also learn more on our website at [TorontoSeniorsHousing.ca](https://torontoseniorshousing.ca).

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

Get in touch

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

Acknowledgements

Toronto Seniors Housing values the diversity of our city and the tenants we support. We also acknowledge the history, both positive and negative, that has led to this rich variety of people living together in Toronto.

Please visit torontoseniorshousing.ca/acknowledgements/ for Toronto Seniors Housing's Land and African Ancestral Acknowledgements.

