

Toronto Seniors
Housing Corporation

Seniors Speak



Spring 2024 Issue

Welcome to the Spring Issue



Table of Contents



Community Letter	2-3
Helping seniors across the city	4-5
Thank you for participating in the Tenant Experience Survey	6
Repositioning Strategic Directions	7
Lifelong activist and community changemaker	8-9
Your community at a glance.....	10-11
Cybersecurity Awareness	12
It's never too late to try something new	13
An update on Annual Building Planning meetings	14
Definitions	15
Collaborating for positive change	16-17
Senior Tenants Advisory Committee (STAC) update	18
Seniors Speak is available in many languages	19
Stay connected!	20

Community Letter

Dear Tenants,

I am delighted to be back at Toronto Seniors Housing and have the opportunity to speak with you again.

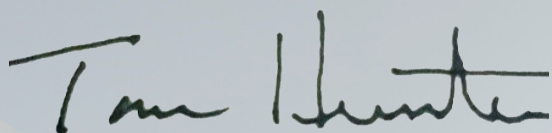
The results of our first Tenant Experience Survey have been collected, and I am happy to provide an update in this issue. These results, along with your continued input, will form the basis for future improvements that we make. Thank you to everyone who participated and took the time to complete the survey.

In February, the City of Toronto's 2024 budget was approved. I'm happy to share that the adopted Budget will continue to protect and fund affordable housing.

As we continue to focus on affordable housing, many recommendations and actions that came out of the Quality Improvement Projects last year are now part of our Strategic Directions. Our new way of working together with tenants (Community Connect+) is well underway. Annual Building Planning meetings have wrapped up and the next step will be to fund building priorities identified by tenants.

I want to acknowledge National Volunteer Week that just passed, and the upcoming important days and celebrations: Seniors Month, the start of Pride season, and National Indigenous History Month, among many other days of significance celebrated by tenants and staff. I believe the diversity of our tenant population is what truly strengthens our community.

I look forward to seeing many of you in the coming weeks and hearing how you are doing. Until then, be well.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Hunter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tom" and last name "Hunter" clearly distinguishable.

Tom Hunter
Chief Executive Officer



Helping seniors across the city

Among the many active tenant volunteers in Toronto Seniors Housing buildings is Carole Garraway. If you are a resident in one of the Griggs Manor buildings in South Etobicoke, then you may have seen Carole around. The “Friends at Griggs” social committee that she and her friend and neighbour, Gene Beatty, created has brought many tenants together to enjoy leisure and learning activities in the community.

“What we were really trying to do is to get tenants in the two buildings together,” explains Carole. Griggs Manor 1 and Griggs Manor 2 (Royal York and Cavell) are Toronto Seniors Housing buildings with a connecting corridor allowing tenants to move between the two buildings. What started as a passion project last summer has evolved into a committee with nine members and many other tenant volunteers who help host various programs throughout the year. This includes: exercise classes three times a week; bingo, games, and crafts weekly; a monthly movie night; weekly pool; and piano lessons. All programs are tenant-led and free to attend.



“What we were really trying to do is to **get tenants in the two buildings together**”

A music educator back home in Guyana, Carole participated in every aspect of music, including teaching at various levels, conducting choirs, and playing at churches. She still teaches piano lessons to students, in-person and online, and offers free piano lessons to tenants at Griggs. “I’ve never worked a day in my life,” says Carole joyfully. “I love what I do.” It shows.

Carole has the presence of someone who is calm and collected, like some of the piano music she plays. These traits have naturally served her well in helping her community, as well as her late father’s seniors’ community in North York, and her commitment working with Seniors for Seniors. For eight years and counting, Carole has provided driving and drop-in companionship and home help to seniors. “I thought this was something I could do to contribute without needing to go back to school,” explains Carole.

Creating a welcoming place so tenants come out of their units, socialize, learn new skills, and improve their quality of life is work that Carole is happy to wake up every day and do.

“I’ve never worked a day in my life. I love what I do.”



Thank you for participating in the

Tenant Experience Survey!

Tenants were invited to participate in a Tenant Experience Survey in December and January to share their feedback on living at Toronto Seniors Housing. About a quarter of our community shared their thoughts and feelings, including expressing them in their native languages.

The survey results were collected and are being reviewed. This data will shape how we continue to serve and engage with tenants in their buildings and communities. We are currently reviewing your responses and will be sharing with you a summary of the findings in the summer – stay tuned!



Strategic Directions Update

Last year we approved our Interim Strategic Directions, Key Performance Indicators, and Roadmap that outline the key activities, milestones, and measures which will guide our progress over the next several years. We want to share with tenants an important update to our strategic approach.

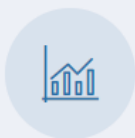
After careful review and approval at the February 22 Board Meeting, we are moving away from the name Interim Strategic Directions 2023-2024 to the name Strategic Directions 2023-2025.

While the basic elements of our Strategic Directions remain unchanged – Vision, Mandate, Commitment, Strategic Objectives, and Enablers – we have changed our Roadmap timeline.

This shift reflects our commitment to making sure the projects and activities outlined in the Strategic Directions have the time and resources needed to be successfully developed, delivered, and sustained.

In 2025, we will do a full review of our Strategic Directions to make sure it continues to serve our needs for the future.

Our updated Strategic Directions 2023-2025 document, Key Performance Indicators, and Roadmap are available on our website at: torontoseniorshousing.ca/strategic-directions/



Strategic Directions

Click the button below to view the interactive document or [download an accessible copy here.](#)



Key Performance Indicators

Click the button below to view the interactive document or [download an accessible copy here.](#)



Roadmap

Click the button below to view the interactive document or [download an accessible copy here.](#)

Lifelong activist and community changemaker

Pauline Dalby stands out in a crowd of tenants at Leonardo Court (College and Bathurst). She's tall, bubbly, and full of ideas she's eager to share with us.

A resident of Leonardo Court since 2017, it took Pauline a few years to get involved in her community. An opportunity to participate in the Quality Improvement Projects in 2023 was the start of her journey to realizing that she could make a difference in her building. Today, Pauline is responsible for managing the tenant bulletin board and working with neighbours to introduce programming in her building like movie night, bingo, and exercise classes.

Pauline knows a thing or two about rallying people together to make things happen. As a trained journalist, Pauline spent her career working for the Toronto Star, The Globe and Mail, The Brampton Times, and then at Queen's Park. She has interviewed many Canadian politicians and worked on campaigns to bring famous world leaders to Canada, including Desmond Tutu in 1986.

"I've always been an activist," she says, taking after her mother who was a Social Rehabilitation Officer in Hackney, England. Weaving in and out of different crowds is something that comes naturally to Pauline. It's helped her get to know tenants and communicate with them, despite language barriers.





When Pauline was laid off from her job at age 50, after Conrad Black acquired Ken Thomson's newspaper empire, she was faced with the perfect storm: unemployed, with only three years of her mortgage paid off, and a recent diagnosis of chronic pain/fibromyalgia. She was forced to sell her home and live off her savings until Toronto Seniors Housing gave her a second chance at stability.

"I think COVID-19 brought this home for many people," she explains. "Most middle-aged people, unless you are wealthy, are one major life event away from disaster. You are left behind if you cannot adapt and catch up quickly enough."

"That is the secret to life. Do not be daunted – what is the point?"

Pauline does not take life for granted. "You make it up as you go, day-to-day, and hope you have got the right answers," she jokes. She embraces what each day brings and tries to make the most of it. "That is the secret to life. Do not be daunted – what is the point?" she says. "You are going to go to your grave regretting that you did not do things? No way! It is one day at a time but make each day count, and I try to."



Your community
at a glance!





Cybersecurity Awareness

As people spend more time online, it's becoming even more important to stay safe when using your computer or phone. Instances of cyber criminals pretending to be government representatives or healthcare organizations and targeting seniors to get access to personal information are increasing.

Protect yourself by following these steps:

- Look for changes in our email or web address - [torontoseniorshousing.ca](mailto:support@torontoseniorshousing.ca) – such as extra spaces, characters, and spelling mistakes.
- Be wary of emails from people you do not know claiming to be from TSHC.
- Do not click on links or open attachments from unknown senders.
- Check the sender's name matches the sender's email address.
- Watch for emails that cause you to rush or make quick decisions.
- Use Block, Spam, or Junk to stop unwanted emails.



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If you have questions, please contact the Tenant Support Centre at support@torontoseniorshousing.ca or 416-945-0800.

It's never too late to try **something new**

The following story was submitted by Christina Luta, a tenant volunteer at The Overlea (East York).

In 2013, I decided to get involved in my community after my late husband's passing. I worked with Robert Rayner, who was a tenant representative at the time, and learned a lot from him.

I advocated for many changes in our building including fresh plants, automatic garbage doors, and a redesigned garden space. The Overlea Baby Boomers Club was also founded during this time. I was the lead coordinator of the club. Together, we encouraged tenants, especially those who were living alone and in isolation, to take part in activities and programs that we provided on a weekly basis. These included Shibashi, Zumba, Go Fit classes, breakfasts, and movie and bingo nights.

Part of this club are the Baby Boomer Dancers (Lydia Rosales, Priscilla Kojo, Magda Mangila, Ella Hollohan, Nalini Bassett, and me). We love to perform. As we say, "it's never too late!" On March 8 (International Women's Day), The Neighbourhood Organization (TNO) invited us to perform. We had the honour of performing a dance that we choreographed for the Honourable Rob Oliphant, TNO's CEO Ahmed Hussein, MPP Stephanie Bowman, and TSHC staff.



An update on Annual Building Planning meetings



Last year, we introduced Community Connect+, 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). Tenants in each building were invited to participate in an Annual Building Planning Process from January to March to decide how funds will be used in their buildings for the year. These meetings also provided an opportunity for tenants to express their interest in becoming tenant volunteers and support Community Connect+.

A total of 68 Annual Building Planning meetings were held with over 1,500 tenants participating. Approximately 400 tenants expressed interest in becoming a tenant volunteer, including interest from many previous tenant representatives. Tenants identified digital literacy opportunities, onsite health services, fitness activities, summer and winter community celebrations, and monthly social and recreational activities as some of the programs and activities that they wanted to prioritize in their buildings.

As a next step, our Community Services Coordinators will work with tenant volunteers to submit Community Activities Fund applications for the priorities identified by each building.

Thank you to everyone who participated in these meetings.



Definitions



Tenant Volunteer:

A tenant who is interested in working with other tenants to identify community needs, support community events and social activities, and help improve community participation and engagement in their buildings.

Tenant Circles

Tenant volunteers in each building, who are committed to working together to support community events and social activities and help improve community participation and engagement in their buildings.

Community Connect+:

Our new approach for tenants, staff, service providers, and community partners to work together to increase social activities, health, and volunteering in your community. Learn more at torontoseniorshousing.ca/community-connect-plus/.

Community Activities Fund (CAF):

Provides financial resources to fund tenant-led activities and events in tenant communities. Funding priorities are identified by tenants. Learn more at torontoseniorshousing.ca/caf/.

Community Services Coordinator (CSC):

TSHC staff member who is there to help with community planning, tenant- and agency-led programs, community partnerships, implementing CAF, tenant engagement activities, and gather tenant feedback on how to improve TSHC programs and services. There is one CSC for each region.

Collaborating for positive change

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. We rely on community organizations that provide health, wellness, and social service support to tenants so that they can continue to live vibrant and independent lives. We want to share a few ways we have partnered with community organizations to support mental health and well-being in buildings.

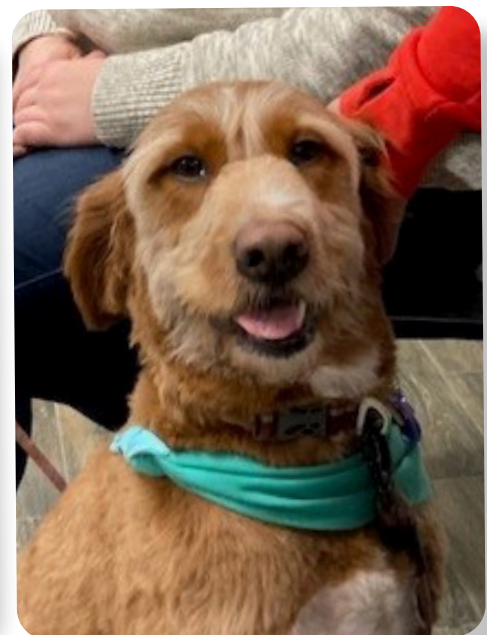
Dog Therapy



We partnered with One Health Partners to introduce dog therapy sessions for tenants in the South East Region. The trial session was a great success with overwhelmingly positive feedback. Several tenants who attended had not participated in any social events in years, and others self-identified as ‘shut-ins’. We will be looking to expand this program in 2024.

One Health Partners operates with a vision of a world that cares for the interconnected health and well-being of people, animals, and the planet.

Learn more at onehealthpartners.org/

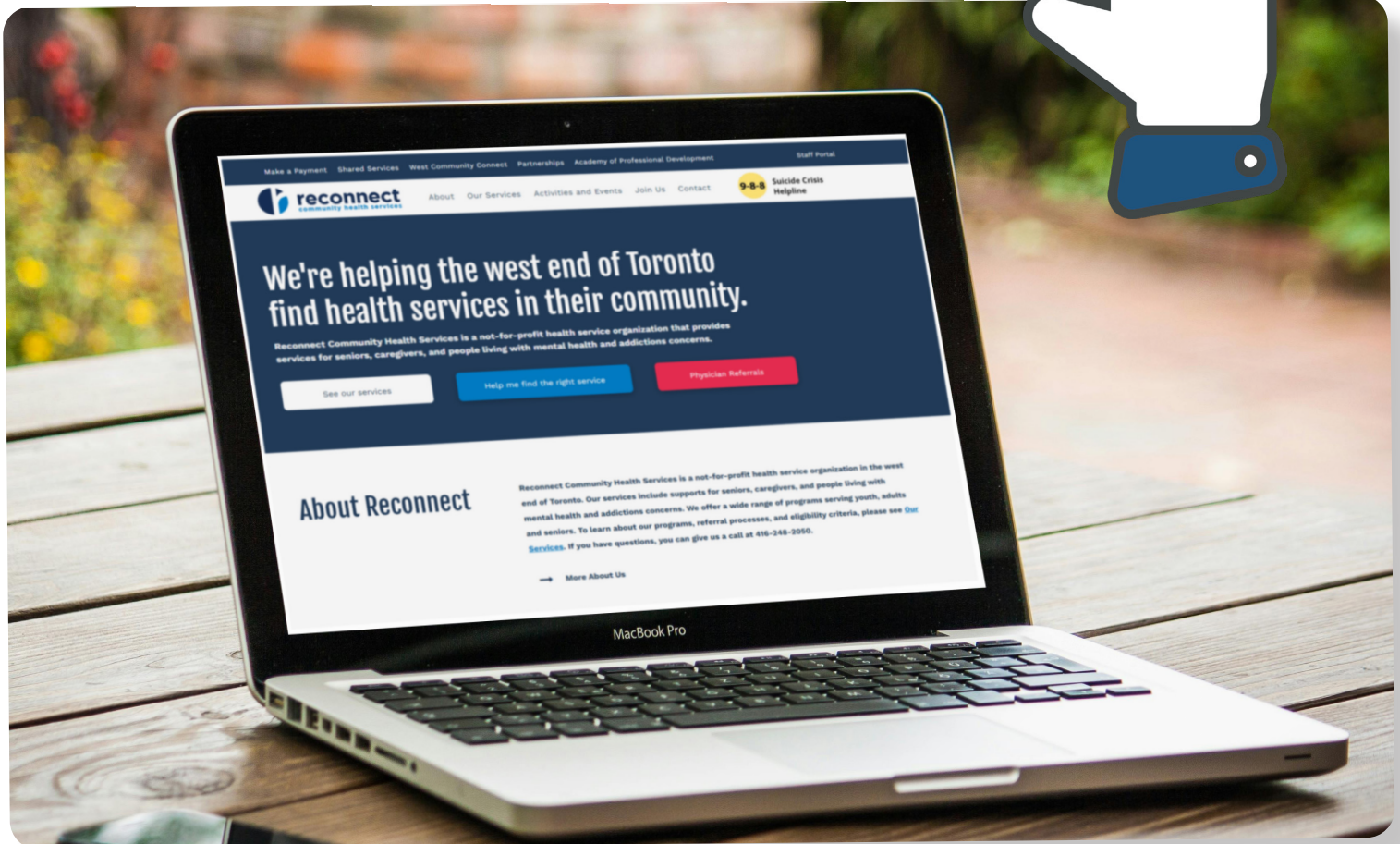


Reconnect Expansion



Reconnect Community Health Services has been a valued health and social support partner primarily operating in the North West region. We worked with their team to expand community programming and health services into the South West region, along with additional buildings in the North West region to offer tenants access to social recreation and wellness programming. This included access to in-home services in four new buildings.

Learn more at
reconnect.on.ca



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:

- Reviewed and provided input on the STAC Terms of Reference, the Use of Space Policy, and guidelines to support tenant activities.
- Provided feedback on the Interim Complaints Procedure developed to handle unresolved service requests.
- Endorsed ideas for volunteer recognition and Seniors Month.

Thank you to our Tenant Volunteers!

April marked National Volunteer Week (April 14-20). This year's theme, Every Moment Matters, highlights how much we value your time, talents, and efforts in supporting us to create vibrant communities. We are deeply grateful for your contributions. We look forward to working closely with you over the coming year. Thank you!





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.

