



Seniors Speak

Summer 2026



Welcome to the Summer Issue

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Have something to share in an
upcoming issue of **Seniors Speak**?



We are always looking for new voices to share with the community. Whether you've got a recipe, a poem, or a short reflection to share, feel free to reach out at SeniorsSpeak@TorontoSeniorsHousing.ca.

Message from the CEO

Dear **Tenants**,

I hope you are enjoying a bright and cheerful summer. This is a wonderful time to relax, connect with neighbours, and spend time outdoors.

Many Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation (TSHC) buildings have **community gardens**, and summertime means we get to enjoy them at their best. The hard work and care from so many of you truly shows. In fact, it inspired this issue's special garden photo spread (see pages 8-9), as well as a profile of one of our community's expert gardeners (see pages 10-11).

As always, we continue working to make TSHC stronger and better. In this issue, you can read about new initiatives to help tenants stay connected through **free community room Wi-Fi and cable TV** (page 16), as well as an article about our community partner **Dancing With Parkinson's** (page 17). Programs like these help make TSHC buildings friendlier places where people can feel supported and access the services they need to live well.

Thank you to everyone who joined our **Strategic Directions** consultations this spring. Your ideas guide our plans and make sure tenant voices lead the way.

Happy reading!

Tom Hunter
Chief Executive Officer



The teacher who **never stopped learning**



How can a love of learning change your life? Just ask Edna Luque. Edna's passion for learning and teaching has taken her on an amazing journey from humble beginnings in rural Panama to Canada and even to earning her PhD.

Growing up on a farm in her native Panama, Edna was raised by grandparents who couldn't read or write but believed fiercely in the power of education. She held onto that message. By her early teens, Edna was working in a beauty salon to pay for food and housing while going to school. After graduating she became a teacher, beginning a lifelong journey of learning and helping others learn.

Her teaching career took her to a school for deaf children. She had never worked with deaf students before, but she adapted quickly. Soon, she became the teacher others turned to when children struggled. "There were children who entered the school who were not deaf, but they had behavioural issues. They always sent them to me because I was firm and good," Edna says.



"I want to take advantage of life as much as possible."

As Edna and her colleagues later learned, many of those students turned out to have Asperger's syndrome—and they left a lasting mark on her life. She supported them not only in school but at home, helping families build routines and confidence. To this day, when she visits Panama, she stays with the families of her past students. The connection never faded.

Political unrest forced Edna to leave Panama in the 1980s. She arrived in Canada not knowing English and took a job as a waitress to support her family. "I had been a school principal, so to come here and be a waitress was difficult. But I would do anything for my children," she says.

She eventually became a Spanish teacher here in Canada until retirement, but her passion for learning continued. In her 60s, after years of hard work, Edna earned a PhD degree and wrote her doctoral thesis on Asperger's, creating a teaching program now used in schools by Panama's Ministry of Education. She truly is a teacher through and through.

Today, at 80, Edna fills her days with purpose. She teaches Spanish to other tenants, paints, reads about health and nutrition, experiments with fermented foods, and plays guitar. Edna puts it best: "I want to take advantage of life as much as possible."



Community Connect+ update



Thanks to the tireless efforts of Tenant Volunteers, Community Services Coordinators (CSCs), and community partners across the city, tenants have been enjoying some fabulous programs and events in their buildings. Here are just a few:

- **3174 Bathurst Street** put on a joyful Spring Fling event for Seniors Month in June.
- **12 Thorncliffe Park Drive** tenants enjoy activities almost daily: breakfasts, bingo, games nights, and more.
- **80 Danforth Avenue** hosted a classical music performance by a group from the **Glenn Gould School**.
- Summer barbecues across all four regions!



Regional Tenant Volunteer Meetings

In May, 167 Tenant Volunteers participated in the Spring Regional Meetings. Volunteers heard presentations from each other, TSHC staff, and City of Toronto representatives. They also provided feedback on TSHC's Strategic Directions and summer barbecue planning.



Tenant Volunteer Handbook

This spring, TSHC published a new **Tenant Volunteer Handbook**. The handbook shares information about the volunteer role as well as important policies and resources. It is meant to help current volunteers as well as tenants interested in becoming volunteers. The 2026 version is a test. TSHC will collect feedback from tenants and staff and create a final version in 2027/2028.

Read the Tenant Volunteer Handbook at:

www.TorontoSeniorsHousing.ca/Tenant-Volunteer-Handbook

Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation (TSHC)

Tenant Volunteer Handbook



Senior Tenants Advisory Committee (STAC) update

STAC held two meetings to discuss key projects in the works at TSHC. STAC members reviewed the results of the Tenant Experience Survey that TSHC ran over the winter (look for more information about these results in an upcoming issue of Seniors Speak). Taking information from the survey results, STAC and staff discussed what is going well at TSHC and where there are opportunities for improvement. They also spoke about what makes the biggest difference, positive or negative, in a tenant's experience of living at TSHC, and how to best focus on those things. STAC also consulted on TSHC's accessibility policy and Tenant Volunteer development program, among other topics.

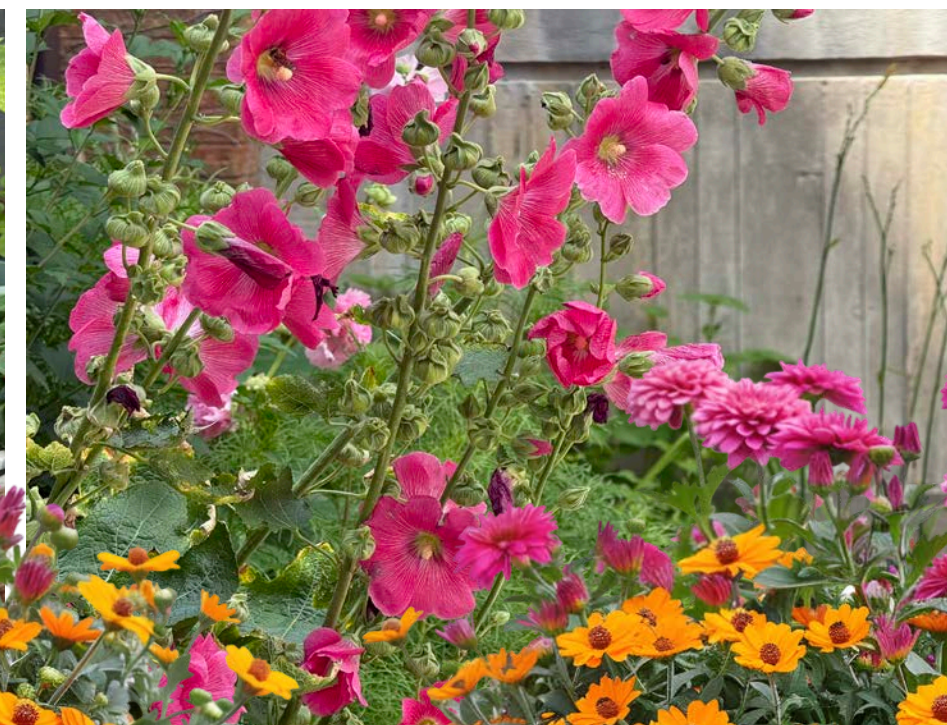
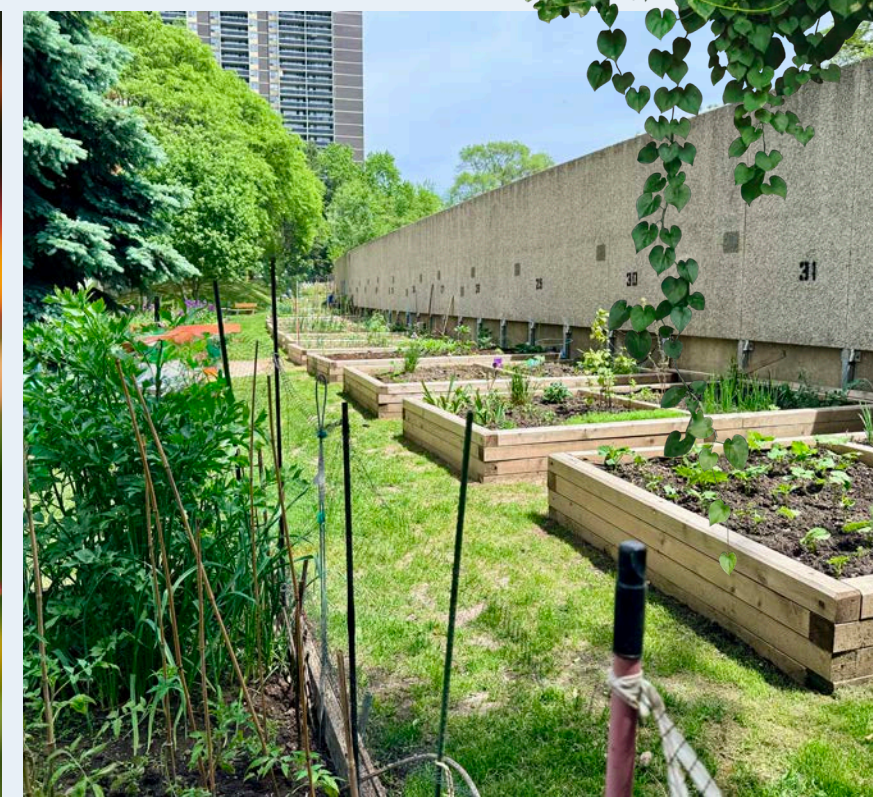


Community in bloom: A garden photo spread



Community gardens are a special part of life at TSHC.

Tenants put great care and hard work into growing flowers, herbs, vegetables, and other plants, helping their buildings feel welcoming and alive. These gardens bring people together, brighten shared spaces, and show off the skills of TSHC's talented tenants. We hope you enjoy these photos of just a few of the many incredible gardens at TSHC buildings across the city.



A green thumb and an open heart



Motilall Bachan is known around his west-end TSHC building for his steady presence in the community garden. Affectionately called Bachan (pronounced “like Jackie Chan,” he says), he brings to his community a deep gardening knowledge passed down from older generations.

Bachan grew up in what was then British Guiana, now Guyana, with his parents and five sisters. When he was only about seven years old, his father passed away. By age nine, Bachan left school to help his mother support the family. He held many jobs over the years —farming, fishing, carpentry — and learned the value of hard work.

Even through the hard times, Bachan had a relationship with the land around him. His family had a large farm and grew plants like sugarcane, banana, cassava, plantain, and avocado. He also spent every day as a child with his grandparents, who taught him how to grow vegetables without the use of chemicals or fertilizer. Bachan learned by watching his grandfather. “I see what he do, I do the same,” he says.

**“Being busy
is one of
the best
exercises in
the world.”**



Those early lessons stayed with him. For more than a decade now, Bachan has been sharing his passion for gardening in his TSHC community. It’s a year-round activity – he grows seedlings on his windowsill in the winter and moves them to the outdoor garden in the warmer months. He grows familiar foods like parsley, celery, and green onion, along with less common plants like bitter melon and okra. He knows a lot about the healing uses of plants, too, knowledge also passed down through his grandparents.

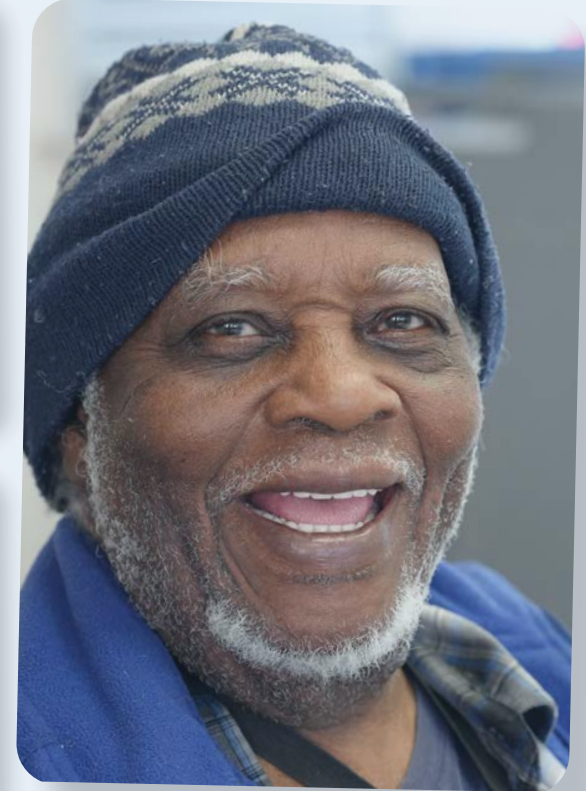
Fresh food is one of Bachan’s greatest joys. Growing your own food, he says, is healthier and can be a way to offset the high cost of living nowadays.

He also loves sharing what he grows. If someone stops to admire his vegetables, he often hands them one to take home. “When you give somebody fresh food, you know how happy they look? The ‘thank you’ and the ‘God bless’ you get?” he says.

As a bonus, gardening keeps Bachan active. “Being busy is one of the best exercises in the world. You don’t have to go to a gym for that,” he says.

At the end of the day, though, it’s all about passion. “You feel proud of yourself,” he says. “I love to do what I’m doing, man.”





Your community

at a glance!



Teamwork makes the dream work

Maria, Constance, and Zahra are known in their North East Region building as a team that gets things done. They work together with one goal: to help their neighbours stay active and connected. Their teamwork shows how a multicultural community can support one another every day.

The three women first met when their Community Services Coordinator (CSC) asked for volunteers to help plan events. Since then, the trio of Tenant Volunteers have taken on a full schedule. Each year, they organize three to four tea socials, a summer barbecue, and a Christmas meal for their building, with support from TSHC's Community Activities Fund (CAF).

Each of the three comes from a different part of the world—Maria is from Uruguay, Constance from Hong Kong, and Zahra from Iran. Their building is home to many cultures, including a large group of Chinese tenants. Constance plays a unique role because she speaks Mandarin and understands other Chinese dialects. She often translates documents and phone calls for others. Though it can be a lot, Constance says she's happy to assist. "It feels natural," she says. "I ask myself, can you help? Yes? That's all."



Even when tenants don't share a language, they find ways to connect. "Even if language is a barrier—and it is—it doesn't matter. You communicate by body language," Maria says. "A smile always opens doors."

The building is active from morning until night. Zahra describes how each afternoon, tenants come to the rec room to play spirited games of billiards, ping pong, and rummy. "Sometimes they're so happy it seems like they are 14 years old, not 90," she laughs. There are also group activities run by tenants or community partners such as Tai Chi, weekly Bible study, choir practice, and chair yoga.

Through their volunteer efforts, the trio is also breaking stereotypes about seniors. They're tech savvy—they use their WhatsApp group chat to stay organized, and other tenants use WeChat to share information too.

They're also busy. "People ask me, are you lonely in your unit? I say, lonely? I'm busy!" says Constance. "Even if I'm by myself in the unit, I'm busy." Event planning takes a lot of work.

So what inspires them to keep going? "We try to be together, to bring people together," says Maria. "It's like we are a family. I'm glad to be here."

"It's like we are a family. I'm glad to be here."



Tenants get connected with free Wi-Fi and cable TV



Tenants are getting better ways to stay connected with **two new free services** being added to a number of TSHC building community rooms.

City of Toronto Wi-Fi



Free Wi-Fi is now available in a number of buildings' community rooms. To connect:

- Go to your community room
- Open your device's Wi-Fi settings
- Choose the **CityOfToronto** network
- Accept the terms and conditions



You can use the Wi-Fi to check email, browse the internet, or talk with family and friends. This free service is provided in partnership with and funded by the City of Toronto for TSHC tenants and their guests. Check if your building is participating in this program at:

www.TorontoSeniorsHousing.ca/Free-Wifi



Rogers cable TV



TSHC and Rogers have partnered to install free basic cable on TVs located in community rooms, so tenants and guests can enjoy TV together at no cost. Installation has already begun at some buildings and will continue throughout the year.

Note: Free Wi-Fi and cable TV are available only in community rooms, not individual units.

Did you know? Connected for Success is a Rogers program that offers low cost internet, mobile, and TV plans for TSHC tenants. Tenants can call **1-866-689-0758** or visit **www.ConnectedForSuccess.ca** to check if they qualify.

Dancing With Parkinson's partnership brings tenants movement and joy

TSHC works with more than 60 partner organizations to bring programs and services to our buildings. Here, we're spotlighting Dancing With Parkinson's (DWP).



DWP is a program that helps seniors and people living with Parkinson's disease enjoy moving to music in a safe and fun way. The goal is simple: help people feel better in their bodies, lift their spirits, and build friendships through dance.

DWP began running programming at TSHC in January 2023. Today, they offer weekly classes in five TSHC buildings in the downtown and southern Etobicoke areas.

Classes use a hybrid model. A trained facilitator sets up a big screen and an iPad so tenants can join a live online dance class together. Once a month, a DWP instructor also visits in person to teach and connect with tenants. After class, snacks are offered so people can stay, chat, and get to know each other.

Tenants say the program helps them stay active and feel less lonely. One tenant shared, "This is what keeps me going. I know I have somewhere to be, and people waiting for me."



We're grateful to DWP for their important work and to the tenants who participate each week in this wonderful program. To learn more about DWP's free programming, visit DancingWithParkinsons.com.

Annual Report Highlights from **the year**

01 Community Connect+ Building Tenant Engagement

The Community Connect+ tenant engagement approach is an important component in Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation’s (TSHC’s) goal of strengthening tenant voices and building stronger, healthier senior tenant communities.



02 Keeping tenants in their homes

98.33% occupancy rate	96.86% of households in good standing
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03 Collaborating for change

TSHC and Seniors Services and Long-Term Care (SSLTC) continued to bring City programs and services to tenants to support aging at home, launching several new pilot initiatives while maintaining key existing programs, focusing on:

- Nutrition
- Food security
- Elder abuse
- Fraud prevention
- Digital literacy
- Fitness
- Fall prevention
- Fire prevention
- ConnectTO Wi-Fi

04 Maintaining TSHC Buildings

TSHC works closely with Toronto Community Housing Corporation’s (TCHC’s) Facilities Management to deliver capital projects that improve living conditions for tenants.



Projects Include:

- Accessibility upgrades
- In-suite renovations and repairs
- Upgrades to electrical, heating, and plumbing systems
- Water conservation initiatives
- Exterior envelope work, such as windows, roofs, and structural
- Whole building retrofits to improve building envelope, structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing
- General site improvements, such as parking and landscaping
- Security measures, such as cameras and access control
- Laundry room upgrades

Read more
You can read the full 2025 Annual Report at [TorontoSeniorsHousing.ca/2025-annual-report](https://torontoseniorshousing.ca/2025-annual-report)



R-PATH Reports: New Accessibility Build Standards



The 2026 edition of the illustrated Toronto Community Housing Corporation Accessibility Build Standards (TCHC ABS) is out! This document guides how your home and community are made accessible. This helps you stay in your home longer, have a better quality of life, and fully participate in your community.

The original ABS was published in 2015. The **Responsible Personal Accessibility in Toronto Housing (R-PATH)** Committee worked with staff from the Design & Engineering and Development departments to create standards for accessible design.

The Standards are used in all new buildings in both Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) and Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation (TSHC). These standards are also used in accessibility projects in existing buildings, making common spaces and units more functional and usable.

The provincial build standards, called the Ontario Building Code (OBC), do include accessibility features, but they are a minimum. They are often not enough for currently used mobility devices. The TCHC Accessibility Build Standards go above and beyond the provincial OBC.

The ABS are based on R-PATH's feedback about the lived experience of people with disabilities and research on current mobility products. Because of these Standards, TCHC and TSHC accessibility projects have higher levels of accessibility than many other residential buildings.

Do you want to learn more about the ABS? You can read or download the PDF on the TSHC website at:

[TorontoSeniorsHousing.ca/Build-Standards](https://torontoseniorshousing.ca/build-standards)



The Responsible Personal Accessibility in Toronto Housing (R-PATH) Committee is a tenant-led group, celebrating 13 years this summer! The committee's goal is to improve quality of life for people with physical disabilities and to support TSHC and TCHC in being leaders in accessible housing.

If you are interested in joining R-PATH and want to help make positive changes, please see the application information and form on our website at [TorontoSeniorsHousing.ca/RPATH/](https://torontoseniorshousing.ca/rpath/).

Did you know? R-PATH has authored "Accessibility Is for You", a booklet on the process involved in getting your unit modified. You can get a copy from your Seniors Services Coordinator, or online at:

[TorontoSeniorsHousing.ca/AccessibilityIsForYou](https://torontoseniorshousing.ca/accessibilityisforyou)



Corporate updates



Pension clinics bring benefits closer to tenants

This past spring, TSHC hosted nine pension clinics across our buildings, helping tenants understand their pensions, benefits, and financial supports available to us all as we age. In total, 175 tenants took part.

Representatives from the Office of the Commissioner of Housing Equity (OCHE), the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), and Service Canada were on hand with one-on-one support to help tenants make informed decisions about their future. The clinics were available in multiple languages to ensure no one was left out.

Thanks to OCHE, ODSP, and Service Canada for their partnership.

Electric Mobility Device (E-Device) Policy

In April 2026, TSHC approved a new Electric Mobility Device (E-Device) Policy. This policy follows Toronto Community Housing Corporation rules to help keep buildings safe. It explains which **E-Devices** are allowed, and how they must be used, charged, and stored.

Assistive mobility devices, like mobility scooters used for accessibility, continue to be permitted in most cases. To reduce fire risk, only use the manufacturer's charging cables to charge devices. Plug into outlets directly and monitor devices until charging is complete.

To learn more, visit:

[TorontoSeniorsHousing.ca/electric-mobility-device-e-device-policy/](https://www.torontoseniorshousing.ca/electric-mobility-device-e-device-policy/)

Municipal elections are coming!

Get ready to vote in the Toronto Municipal Election on Monday, October 26, 10 am – 8 pm!

Learn about the candidates running for your Mayor, Councillor, and school trustee at [www.Toronto.ca/Elections](https://www.toronto.ca/Elections)



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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Ligue para **416-945-0800** para solicitar este documento em um idioma ou formato alternativo

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 and LinkedIn. You can also learn more on our website at 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 by 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.

