

CONNECTIONS

DIXON HALL NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES NEWS



DECEMBER 2015

DIXON **HALL**
neighbourhood services

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Kaarina at Music for Life 2015 with headliner Amanda Mitchell

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A Fond Farewell to Kaarina

It is with a sad heart that we say farewell to Kaarina Luoma, our beloved Associate Executive Director at Dixon Hall Neighbourhood Services.

Throughout her 27+ years in the not-for-profit sector, Kaarina has celebrated many great accomplishments.

She's well known as a great collaborator, relationship-builder and a major contributor to many fruitful partnerships such as the Community Navigation Access Program (CNAP), Toronto RIDE, Congregate Dining with the AIDS Committee of Toronto and Meals on Wheels with the Toronto People with AIDS Foundation. Kaarina was also one of the original members of the Senior Pride Network.

Kaarina is an inspirational leader who always leads by example. What truly sets her apart is that she treats everyone the same no matter who they are or what they do. She treats everyone with dignity and respect.

Her tireless dedication to improving the lives of those we serve is a true sign of her leadership.



Kaarina with former Mid-Toronto Community Services' Board Chair Adam Fair

She successfully led Mid-Toronto Community Services through a voluntary integration with Dixon Hall in order to better meet the needs of frail, isolated seniors in our community and to strengthen the capacity of our organization.

Kaarina, you've had a positive and profound impact on all of us. You'll be greatly missed but we know you won't be far away. We wish you all the best in this next exciting chapter.

Onwards and upwards!



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Program Feature: New & Enhanced Programs for the Homeless & Recently Housed

With the holiday season upon us and the impending cold at our doorsteps, the time has arrived to reflect on the past year and start reviewing the lay of the land for the coming year.

Out of the Cold started up again in early November with beds filled every night despite being one of the warmest Novembers and early Decembers on record.

Our 'permanent' shelters, Heyworth House and Schoolhouse are both also filled to capacity and will remain so throughout the winter.

Together with the City, we're working hard at implementing effective and affordable housing strategies. The process has been slow, but there is hope.

Our new Mayor, the Honourable John Tory, has launched an Open Door program in an effort to fast track affordable housing initiatives. The program looks to prioritize affordable housing and free up excess lands to build new houses.

While the program is a step in the right direction, those who work on the front line are concerned about when these changes will take place since we're already stretched in our ability to meet the needs of our City's homeless.

In the meantime, our Housing, Homelessness Services department has launched several innovative and creative programs to make sure no one gets left out in the cold this winter.

Fear not! Budget challenges combined with growing needs have not deterred us.

Here are just a few of our critical programs:

Our **Monday Night Harm Reduction Drop-In** offers a safe space where people can get peer support, nutritious food, information and referrals.

We are proud to be able to offer **enhanced food programs and supports for individuals who**

are recently housed to help them maintain housing. The newly housed are always welcome to drop by Heyworth House to pick up a bagged lunch or visit Schoolhouse for access to food delivered to our shelter by the Second Harvest food rescue program.

Our staff are hard at work training extensively to be able to effectively meet the unique needs of the **LGBTQ2 community**. Please stay tuned for updates on a new youth shelter in the works for LGBTQ2 youth in 2016!

We're extremely grateful for the donations provided by DHNS' supporters year after year. Thank you for helping us continue to be able to offer essential programs for some of our City's most marginalized populations.

To learn more about the programs offered by our Housing, Homelessness Services department, please visit our website at www.dixonhall.org/hhs/.



Housing, Homelessness Services Director David Reycraft receives Certificate of Thanks for our endorsement of the Closing the Housing Gap campaign.

A New Dixon Hall Youth Centre in Regent Park



Campaign Chair, the Honourable Bob Rae with our Children & Youth team.



30 years of history is changing with the dramatic revitalization of Regent Park.

New housing and state-of-the-art facilities are being built, green spaces are being created and the community is transforming.

But real social problems such as gangs, violence and poverty remain.

Throughout this time, youth who live in the area have not been sheltered from these insurmountable challenges. Yet our Youth Workers have been there to mentor and support them – oftentimes when no one else will.

All of this great work was done out of a ground floor apartment in a Toronto Community Housing building.

With the redevelopment of Regent Park, that apartment was demolished and our youth are temporarily being housed in a portable.

The time to begin anew is now upon us.

We've been given the wonderful opportunity by Toronto Community Housing Corporation and the City of Toronto, to build a new Youth Centre on land located at Wyatt and Nicholas Avenues, beside the new

Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment sports field.

The Daniels Corporation, a key partner, is making a significant contribution by building at cost and donating their construction management fees.

This is an exciting time for the young people who rely on our vital programs and support.

The new Youth Centre will be a place where they can feel safe, a sense of belonging and make friends.

To be able to provide this much needed space, we must raise \$3 million. Together with the Honourable Bob Rae leading a dedicated group of supporters, we will be publicly launching our campaign for the new Dixon Hall Youth Centre in 2016.

To learn more about our New Youth Centre and how you can help, please visit our website at www.dixonhall.org/youthcentre/ or contact Bill Hallett, Campaign Director at 416.956.4949 ext. 216 or bill.hallett@dixonhall.org.

600+

AT-RISK YOUTH ARE MENTORED & ENGAGED IN EMPLOYMENT TRAINING, SPORTS, CAMPS, LEADERSHIP AND OTHER PROGRAMS EACH YEAR

the NEW CENTRE will serve

150 MORE YOUTH EACH YEAR

>70% OF YOUTH WHO ARE FIRST-TIME OFFENDERS STAY ON A POSITIVE PATH ONCE ENGAGED IN DIXON HALL PROGRAMS



In 2014,

20 youth who dropped out of school or were on welfare got a job after graduating from our Youth Employment Program



Volunteer Feature: Nicholas Graham Accomplishes the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Level Award

We are so honoured to call volunteer extraordinaire, Nicholas Graham one of our own!

Nicholas recently completed the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Level Award, the world's leading achievement award for young people.

A warm and inspiring young man, Nicholas started volunteering in our Meals on Wheels program when he was in grade six.

Over the years, he's dedicated countless hours delivering meals to frail and elderly seniors and spending time with seniors in our Adult Day Program.

"It is with great humility that I deliver the meals to clients or do activities with the ones affected by Alzheimer disease. It is with fondness that I join forces with such a great group of volunteers, as well as cheerful, upbeat and inspiring staff," says Nicholas.

Nicholas is just one example of the many volunteers we have who go above and beyond every day to bring happiness and cheer into the lives of people in need.

We are so grateful to Nicholas and all of our volunteers for their hard work and dedication in helping us deliver top quality programming.



To learn more about our Volunteer Program, please visit our website at www.dixonhall.org/volunteer/.

Matching Gift Challenge 2015: 1 GIFT = 2x the IMPACT

We are extremely lucky again this year to be able to offer another Matching Gift Challenge!

Thanks to the tremendous generosity of several of our Board Members and key supporters who have pledged their personal support, we have a matching gift pool of \$25,000.

This means that up until December 31, 2015, every gift donated will be matched dollar for dollar.

The goal is to inspire our wonderful supporters to take advantage of this opportunity by increasing their support of one or more of our critical programs, like Meals on Wheels, Out of the Cold and Mentoring for At-Risk Youth.

A gift of \$250 will provide a frail and isolated senior with an entire month's worth of nutritious meals delivered daily by a caring volunteer.

This will ensure that no one who is sick or elderly and who relies on us will go hungry or risk injury by going out into the cold this winter in search of food.

To give today and double the difference you make, you can either make a secure online donation at www.dixonhall.org/donate/ or mail in the giving coupon on the back of this newsletter using the prepaid envelope attached.



Thank you to all of our wonderful donors for taking advantage of our Matching Gift Challenge!



Music for Life 2015: Another Success!

MUSIC FOR LIFE



Our Music School Choir preparing for their fabulous performance.

Dixon Hall Music School would like to sincerely thank everyone who so generously supported Music for Life 2015.

On December 2nd, 300 people enjoyed an evening of spectacular performances by headliner, Country singer/songwriter Jessica Mitchell and our very own talented past and present Music School students.

An astounding \$180,000 was raised, with all proceeds supporting our Music School so that we can continue to unlock a world of music for more than 300 deserving youth annually from Regent Park and surrounding neighbourhoods.

A special thank you goes to all of our sponsor organizations for your tremendous support.



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N. James Swan Memorial Scholarship Fund

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Michael MacMillan
and Cathy Spoel



Our Kind Donors

For Donations Received January 1, 2015 to December 15, 2015

We'd like to extend our warmest gratitude to all of our donors for your meaningful gifts.

It's not possible to list everyone here but please know that we greatly appreciate your support. The work we do for our community would not be possible without your kindness and generosity. Every gift counts!

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Members of our Monthly Giving Club support us each month through automatic credit card or direct debit payments. **We are truly grateful for their continuous support.**

To join our monthly giving program, just complete the coupon on the back of this newsletter and send it back in the postage paid envelope provided.

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NL_Dec15

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One Time Donation \$25 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____

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