



*35 Years of Caring for Our Communities*



Annual Report 2009-2010

## Front Cover:

Healthier Living Centre clients  
Shirley R (left) and Veronica V  
(Brian Clarke Photo, SNAP  
North York)

# Message from the Board Chair and Executive Director

## Renewal, Respect, Rewards

***As the 2009-10 year began at Downsview Services for Seniors, there was a palpable sense of renewal and re-energizing amongst the Board and the Staff. This was due in large part to this being the 35th anniversary of the agency and the inwardly focused question, "We have come a long way but are we the best we can be going into uncertain times in healthcare services?"***

The Board developed a stronger appreciation of their important role as stewards of the agency through Board development sessions on good governance, development of new committees, a Board retreat in December 2009 and approval of a new By-law. As part of their stewardship role, they developed a more robust understanding of our diverse stakeholder group and the importance of equitable access to services for our older citizens.

Our services and programs have a broad reach into the DSS area of north-west Toronto. A significant element of this 'reach' was the development of a partnership with LOFT Community Services, Humber River Regional Hospital and Toronto Community Housing Corporation, for an innovative model of supportive housing in a seniors' apartment building in the Jane-Finch area. This partnership has assisted DSS in gaining stronger linkages in the area of mental health and addictions and deeper understanding of and respect for vulnerable at-risk older adults and their challenges in maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Rewards came in many ways; intrinsically, through better study of our community impact and health outcomes. Extrinsically; through the innovative funding initiative Aging at Home, DSS opened the Valleyview Adult Day Program, in partnership with the Central Community Care Access Centre. This program, as well as the Interlude Program, which provides extended hours and overnight respite for clients, provides positive outcomes for clients, caregivers, DSS and the healthcare system.

As we look ahead to year 36, the only constant we can count on is change. Potential changes in provincial governance and funding guidelines are prompting Downsview to consider ways of collaborating with other agencies for better efficiencies and more service offerings. Whatever happens, DSS will continue reaching out across our community and cultural mosaic to help older adults maintain their just rewards: staying at home longer and living with exuberance and dignity. We care, and that makes all the difference.

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## Rinnovo, Rispetto, Riconoscimenti

***L'inizio dell'anno 2009-1010 al Centro di Servizi per Anziani Downsview (DSS) è stato caratterizzato da un profondo senso di rinnovo e ritrovata energia tra il Consiglio e il personale. Ciò si deve in gran parte, oltre al fatto che fosse il 35° anniversario dell'agenzia, a un interrogativo interno incentivante, "Abbiamo fatto già molta strada ma saremo in grado di affrontare al meglio i tempi incerti che coinvolgeranno i servizi sanitari?"***

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Il Consiglio ha sviluppato una più ampia rivalutazione del proprio ruolo fondamentale di amministratore dell'agenzia attraverso sessioni di valorizzazione del Consiglio, sviluppo di nuovi comitati, un ritiro del Consiglio nel dicembre 2009 e l'approvazione di una nuova ordinanza. Come parte della sua funzione amministrativa, ha sviluppato una comprensione maggiore dei nostri diversi gruppi di partecipanti e dell'importanza di un accesso equo ai servizi per i cittadini più anziani.

I servizi e i programmi sono ampiamente estesi nell'area DSS della Toronto nord-occidentale. Un elemento significativo di questa 'estensione' è stata l'incentivazione di una partnership con il LOFT Community Services, l'ospedale Humber River Regional Hospital e l'agenzia di case popolari Toronto Community Housing Company per un modello innovativo di alloggi di sostegno in una struttura condominiale riservata alle persone anziane situata nell'area Jane-Finch. Tale sviluppo ha aiutato DSS a creare dei legami più stretti nell'area della salute mentale e delle dipendenze e una comprensione e un rispetto più profondi nei confronti dei soggetti adulti anziani particolarmente a rischio e della loro sfida per mantenere uno stile di vita sano.

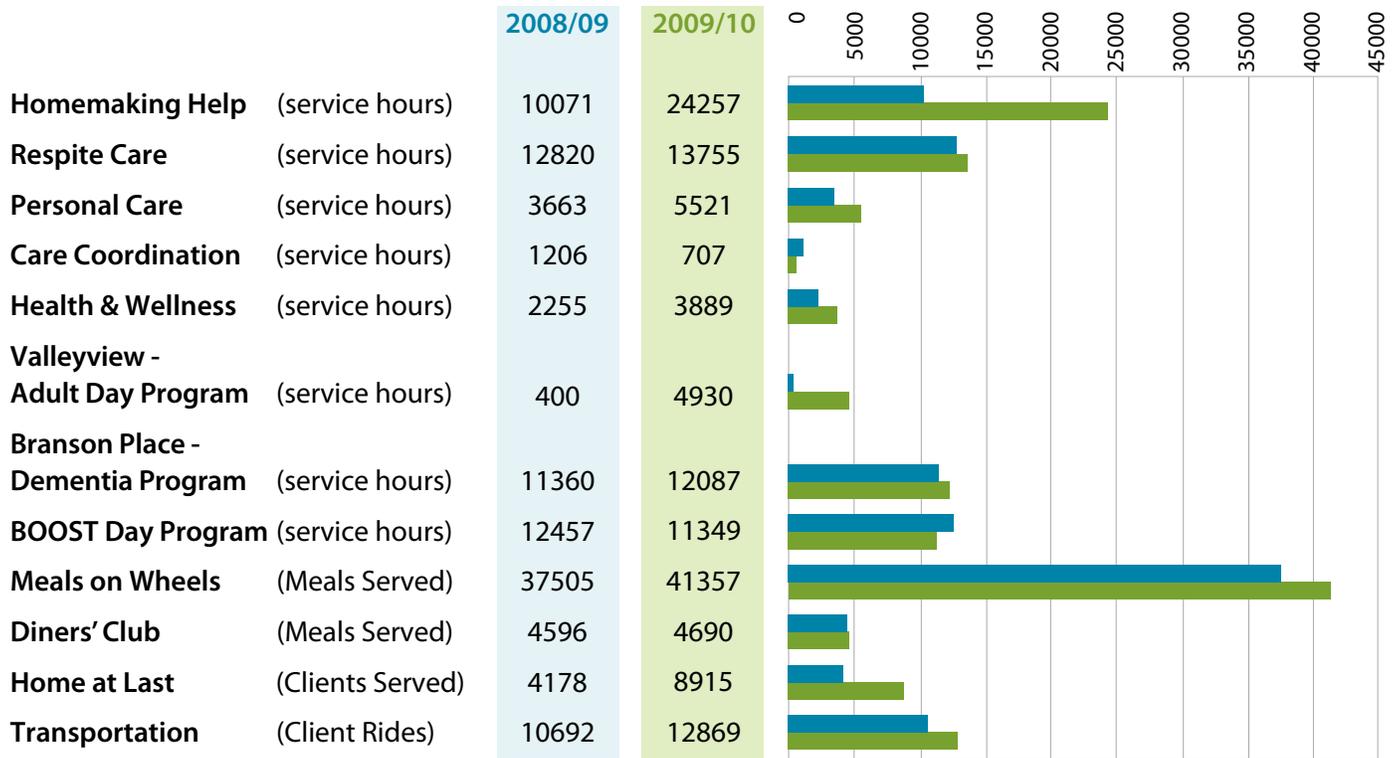
Anita Verma (Board Chair) and Joanne Jasper (Executive Director), (Enzo Elia photo)

I riconoscimenti sono avvenuti in diversi modi. A livello interno, attraverso uno studio migliore dell'impatto della nostra comunità sui risultati sanitari. Esternamente, attraverso l'innovativo programma di finanziamento "Invecchiare a casa" (Aging at Home). Il DSS ha aperto il programma "La giornata dell'adulto di Valleywood" (Valleyview Adult Day), in collaborazione con la sede centrale del Centro Comunitario di Accesso alle Cure (CCAC) nell'ambito dell'iniziativa – "Alternative comunitarie per la sistemazione a lungo termine" (Community Alternatives to Long Term Care Placement). Questo programma, così come il programma Interlude, fornendo orari prolungati e assistenza di sollievo notturno per gli assistiti, è una vera e propria ricompensa per gli assistiti stessi, le badanti, DSS e il sistema sanitario.

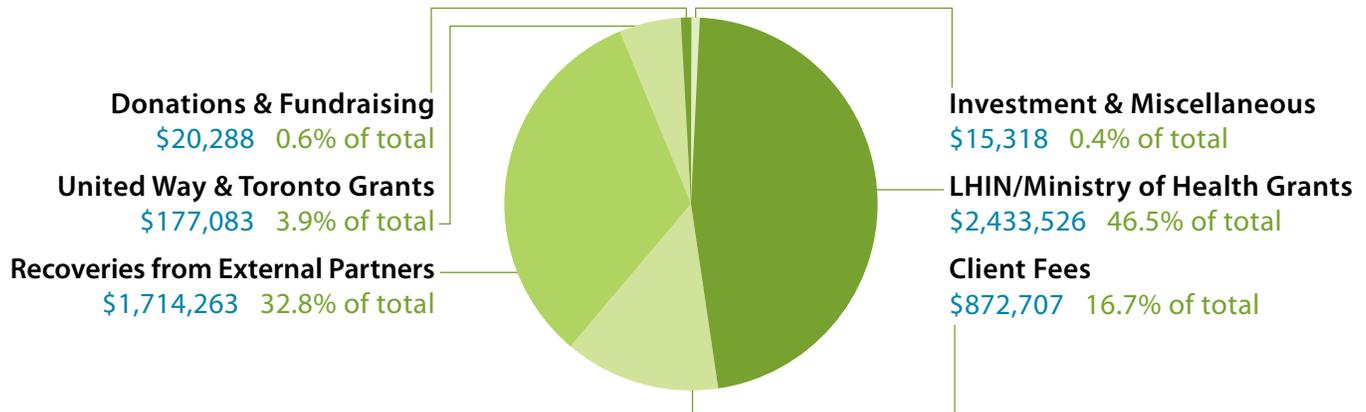
Osservando l'orizzonte del nostro prossimo 36° anniversario, l'unica costante su cui possiamo contare è il cambiamento. I potenziali cambiamenti nell'amministrazione provinciale e nelle linee guida per i finanziamenti stanno spingendo Downsview a considerare modi diversi di collaborazione con altre agenzie per garantire una maggior efficienza e più offerte di servizi. Qualsiasi cosa accada, DSS continuerà a tendere la mano alla comunità e al mosaico culturale per aiutare le persone anziane a conservare la loro ricompensa più importante: restare il più a lungo possibile a casa e vivere con esuberanza e dignità. Noi ce ne prendiamo cura ed è questo che ci rende differenti.



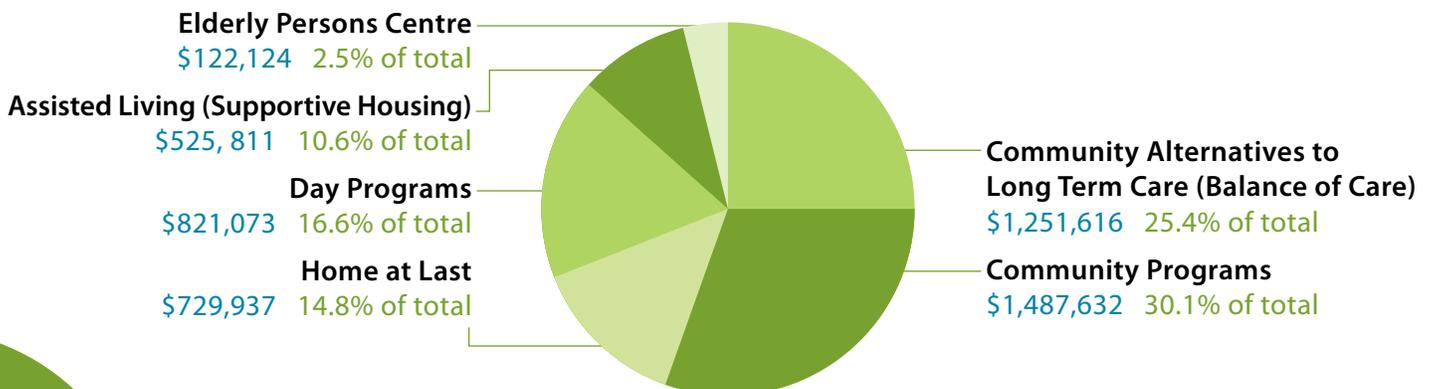
# Our Services



## Total Expenses by Program



## Total Revenue by Source



# Our Clients

## Enjoying Life to the Fullest



Cecilia G with a doggie gift she made

*After a lifetime of being serious and taking care of others, Cecilia G is now enjoying life more for herself. Her blue-green eyes sparkle as she talks about the fun she has at Downsview Services for Seniors. She is full of energy and life.*

Cecilia first came to Downsview seven years ago, after a very unhappy time in her life. She's a strong woman – raised on a farm with no amenities, and she raised six kids of her own. But when her husband passed away after 49 years of marriage, and the neighbours she'd known for years started dying or moving away, life became too difficult. She busied herself with some repairs to the house where they had spent their marriage, but when that was done, there was little to do but cry.

Cecilia eventually went to her doctor for help with depression, but he said that medication would interfere with the medication she was already taking. Concerned for her health, she went to Emergency and spent a few weeks in hospital. While she was there, a social worker talked to her.

"She said because I was a loner I should join a group," she recalls. That worker brought Cecilia to Downsview Services to have a look. She felt comfortable here and the social worker sent a cab so she could come back the next day. Soon she felt confident enough to start taking the bus. She's been coming ever since!

"I was a quiet, 'sit-in-the-corner' type then," she recalls. "I'm not like that now!"

Now she is busy – one or more of her children are usually around. At 79 years of age she still keeps the house she has lived in for 57 years. She makes crafts for fundraising sales, a skill she took up at "Downsview". She's cut back on the amount she does, since glaucoma makes it harder to see. But she's made many new friends, and has even found a new "twin" at Downsview, with whom she celebrates her birthday every year. Cecilia is enthusiastic about the exercise classes she takes every Tuesday and Thursday before dining with her friends. She enjoys the games and other afternoon activities. She eagerly signs up for the day trips as well.

**"This place saved my life,"** she says.

## Our Hero

*Tuesdays and Thursdays are the highlight of Philip M's week. Those are the days WheelTrans picks him up and brings him to the Diners' Club at the Healthier Living Centre of Downsview Services for Seniors. Here, he has a morning coffee with many of his friends, has some laughs around the lunch table and participates in periodic lunch and learn sessions. In the afternoon he enjoys games and more socializing.*

Philip first came to know about "The Club" when he stopped in one day to have a look. He's been a regular for the past five years. He's even been 'Santa' for several holiday parties.

Philip is a decorated WWII veteran. Born in England, he joined up when he was just 16 ("they were conscripting people at 17 so I figured I might as well just go"), and flew Catalina bombers for the Royal Air Force when he was stationed at Gibraltar. His brother joined up a few years ahead of him, and they met up by chance in an officers' club in Scotland. It was to be the last time he would see his brother alive.

Philip now lives in the veterans' home at Sunnybrook. He builds and collects model planes, which he generously gives away when his 'tarmac' becomes too full. He's a celebrity here at Downsview, especially on November 11th, when he proudly wears the medals he won for fighting in three campaigns. We salute him in recognition of **the true hero he is.**



Philip M (right) with volunteer Ron C



# Home at Last

## In the beginning, there was a need.

Edith was an elegant, beautiful and artistic member of the Downsview Diners' Club. In 2004, when Edith became ill and had to spend a few days in hospital, Downsview transportation was there to take her home at discharge time. They brought her to the Diners' Club, but she wouldn't leave the van because her hair hadn't been done and she needed a bath. Myrna Forsyth, Executive Director at the time, asked staff to have a Personal Support Worker (PSW) take Edith home, make her a cup of tea and help her settle in. When that was completed, Myrna said "Edith is home at last!" It was a great name for a new service, and it stuck.

But how to fund the new service? As luck would have it, the United Way made it known to DSS that they could provide \$2,500 in year-end funding for the new Home at Last program. In the early days, the program assisted a few clients each year. One such client was identified by DSS Care Coordinators Gabriella Pinchera and Stephanie Rossetto. The woman had been discharged from the hospital, was unable to walk and had no food in her fridge. Downsview authorized home support services for this woman until services from the Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) were available.

In January 2007, the new Executive Director, Joanne Jasper, met with colleagues in the Central West area to discuss a more robust version of the above program. It would provide a seamless transition from hospital to home. It would be a purposeful settling-in process that involved an environmental safety check and follow up by a care coordinator in



**The Home at Last Team**

*From Left: Catherine, Christine, Debbie, Gabriella, Susan, Laila, Bridgette.*

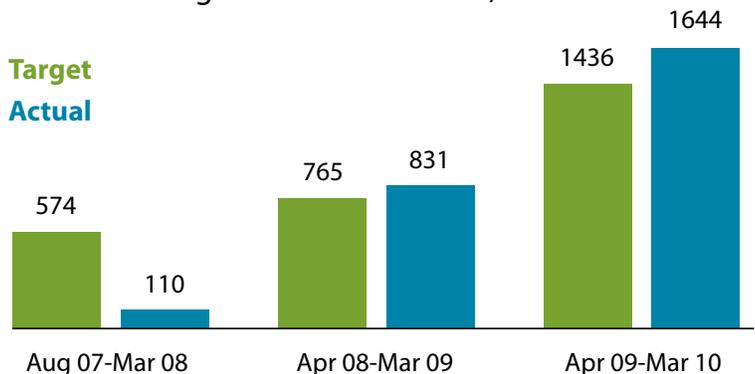
24 hours and again in 7 days. Together they envisioned what was to become the popular and fast-growing program that many now know as Home at Last (HAL).

Great programs don't happen in isolation. In October 2007, the Central Local Health Integration Network (CLHIN) championed the Home at Last program by providing pilot project funding. Social workers Joanne Leake and Stan Wolofsky at Humber River Regional Hospital enthusiastically provided referrals. This assisted DSS to get early wins in its early days. Soon thereafter, North York General Hospital and St. John's Rehab Hospital became Downsview's partners in the program. Today, Home at Last is a favourite of Geriatric Emergency Medicine nurses in our three area hospitals, as well as by hospital discharge planning staff.

And great programs don't stay put. HAL has been replicated across the province in 13 LHIN areas. Downsview staff participated in developing a provincial evaluation framework and operations manual for the programs. We continue to provide support for start-up and operational activities of other HAL programs when requested.

Downsview staff are often asked to showcase the Home at Last program in various forms to stakeholder groups including hospital staff, Central CCAC staff, and attendees at provincial and international conferences.

### **Referrals:** August 2007 – March 31, 2010



Ms. B, 67, lives alone in a basement apartment with no phone, no family support and no general practitioner. She has severe rheumatoid arthritis and paranoid delusions. HAL took her home from North York General Hospital on February 18, 2010.

On the first HAL followup visit, an ambulance was called as the client had been in bed for three days. While Ms. B was in hospital, HAL arranged for phone installation and purchased a phone for her. They also made a referral to the Community Care Access Centre for a Personal Support Worker (PSW) and an Occupational Therapist. A HAL case worker applied for subsidized housing for Ms. B, and helped her find a family doctor. While Ms. B was in St. John's Rehab, HAL staff arranged for a new bed to replace the unusable one in her home.

Feedback data from 227 followup surveys indicates that HAL vastly reduces anxiety for patients leaving the hospital. HAL connects clients with helpful community services and reassures hospital nurses and discharge staff that their patients will be taken care of when they leave. The end result is a reduction in Emergency Department Alternate Level of Care pressures.

**The following are two comments from hospital nurses who used Home at Last:**

*I cannot say enough about the Home at Last (HAL) program. As a Geriatric Emergency Management (GEM) nurse, the HAL program provides me with peace of mind knowing that the patient I have assessed in the Emergency Department will be supported after being discharged home. Many of the patients I work with are frail and live alone. HAL provides me with "eyes in the community", letting me know of any concerns with the home situation. The report that I receive from the PSW after discharge is very helpful. This information is added into the patient's file and adds to the hospital team's knowledge of this patient. This information is valuable to the hospital team should the patient return to the emergency department in the future.*

*Additionally, HAL's ability to refer the patient to added services such as case management, Meals on Wheels, PSW support, etc., provides me with the reassurance that all aspects of the patient's well being have been addressed. As a GEM nurse, I do my best to obtain information on the patient's living situation from various community partners. However, often this information is not complete or may not exist. HAL is a vital community partner that is able to fill in this important information gap. In addition, HAL staff are always courteous, helpful, and willing to "go that extra step" to ensure that our patients are well cared for and comfortable after their visit to the hospital. HAL is such a vital service to my work as a GEM nurse. I feel so very fortunate to work at Humber River Hospital where we are truly "blessed" to have the Home at Last service. I sincerely hope that this program will continue to receive funding and support from the government. Thank you to you and your staff for the wonderful work that you do with our seniors!*

**Sharon M, RN, MSc, BScN, GNC(C)**  
Geriatric Emergency Management Nurse  
Humber River Regional Hospital

**Another nurse writes:**

*"HAL has gone beyond what I could have ever hoped for with this program, especially with assisting Mrs. L to get to Sunnybrook Hospital for consultation and then home. As we all know, navigating the health care system can be very complicated and frustrating...for this lady I am not sure how she would have managed especially in her condition. I cannot thank you all enough for what you did for her and how well and smoothly everything was handled. In all my years of doing this job (and it's lots of years) **this is the best interagency cooperation I have ever been involved with...** what a pleasure. Thank you all again for making it all seem so easy..."*

# Who We Are

## Mission Statement

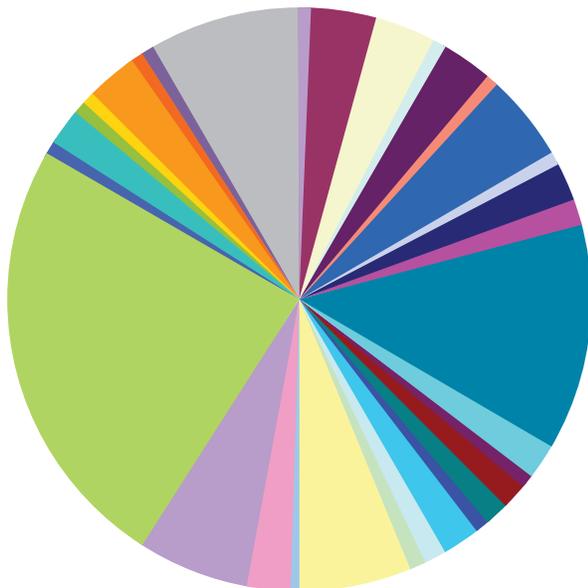
*Downsview Services for Seniors aspires to meet the needs of older adults and their caregivers in our diverse community.*

*Our goal is to provide equitable, accessible, high quality services to support and foster independent living.*

## Staff Statistics:

- **Total Employees:** 133 (107 Female, 26 Male)
- **Staff Status:** 76 Full-time, 57 Part-time
- **Staff Retention:** 4 years (average)
- **Skill Sets and Education:** PSW to Master's degree

## Staff Languages:



Adarniya 1	Igbo 3	Spanish 9
Amharic 5	Luganda 1	Tagalog 35
Arabic 5	Mandarin 2	Tamil 1
Bengali 1	Oromo 2	Tigrinya 3
Cantonese 4	Oromo pan 1	Turkish 1
Creole 1	Persian 3	Twi 1
French 7	Polish 2	Ukrainian 4
Greek 1	Punjabi 1	Urdu 1
Hebrew 3	Russian 9	Uzbek 1
Hindi 2	Slavic 1	Yoruba 12
Italian 18	Somali 3	



Customer Service Department



Client Intervention and Support



Staff Wellness Day



Staff and clients at the Toronto Challenge



## Board Members

(Enzo Elia photo)

**Front row, from left:** Ted Bruger (*Chair*), Patricia Hewitson, Marie Bova, Frances Chapkin, Anita Verma, Joanne Jasper (*Executive Director*), Alex Remedios, Haroon Gafur.

**Back row, from left:** Lorne Shapiro, Bob Sowards, Gavin McIntosh.

**Missing from photo:** Marissa Colalillo, Beverley McClelland, Gail Johnson.

## DSS Partners

- The Advent Group
- Alzheimer Society of Toronto
- Baycrest Hospital
- Better Living Health & Community Services
- Bernard Betel Centre
- Central CCAC
- CHATS
- Christian Horizons
- Circle of Care
- City of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation
- Community Living Toronto
- Driftwood Community Centre
- Etobicoke Services for Seniors
- George Brown College
- Humber College
- Humber River Regional Hospital
- Jamaican Canadian Association
- Kerry's Place
- The Learning Enrichment Foundation
- LOFT Community Services
- March of Dimes
- Meta Centre
- Medix
- Montage Support Services
- North York General Hospital
- North York Senior Centre
- Ontario Osteoporosis Society, Osteoporosis Canada
- Ryerson University
- Seneca College
- St. Clair West Services for Seniors
- St. Elizabeth Health Care
- St. John's Rehab Hospital
- The Hangar Downsview Park
- Toronto Community Housing Corporation
- Toronto Parks & Forestry
- Toronto Public Health
- Toronto District School Board
- Unison Health & Community Services
- University of Toronto
- United Way of Greater Toronto
- VHA Home Healthcare
- West Toronto Stroke Network
- Willis College
- York West Active Living Centre
- York University



**Inger H, founder of DSS with daughter, Elsebeth at the 35th Anniversary Celebration**

# Get Involved!

Our volunteers are of all ages. They come from all over the GTA!

Volunteers help out in Meals on Wheels, the Healthier Living Centre, Branson Place, BOOST, Valleyview and in our offices. In addition to regular volunteers, we also have student placements and corporate volunteers.

Student placements come from numerous disciplines: Personal Support Worker, Social Service Worker, Activation/Gerontology. They come from various accredited schools and programs: St. Stephen's Connections program, Learning Enrichment Foundation, Human Resources and Marketing, Humber College, Seneca College and George Brown College, and Toronto District School Board, Adult Learning Centre.



Meals on Wheels volunteer  
Bob S

## STATISTICS:

April 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010

Number of Volunteers: 332

Volunteer Hours: 29564

Number of student placements: 25

Number of Corporate Group Visits: 15

Number of Corporate Volunteers: 70

Days of Caring activities 21

Retention Rate 55%

Average length of stay 1.5 years

## Seven reasons to volunteer:

1. To give something back to others
2. To learn something about yourself
3. Because you have passion
4. To improve your resume
5. To feel good about yourself
6. To develop new skills
7. To have some fun

**Olga R** has always loved to take care of people.

Olga came to Canada in 1971 and worked as a nurse until a car accident forced her to quit. She carried on helping, offering visits to those stuck at home, and baking for neighbours on their own.

So when a social worker knocked on her apartment door looking for Meals on Wheels volunteers, of course she said yes. Eventually she started with us in our Meals on Wheels office.

Olga spends two days a week here, delivering meals or packing them for delivery. She loves the friendly atmosphere and the people, inside the agency and outside. Delivering meals to home bound people is fulfilling for her. She readily offers a few words of kindness and caring to clients and other volunteers.

DSS staff and volunteers are always happy to see Olga, especially on Wednesdays when she faithfully shows up with homemade cake for staff and volunteers. Despite a sore knee that may eventually need surgery, she hops on the bus every week with her bag of treats for us!

At DSS and in the community, Olga has a history of helping.

***She'll never stop if she has her way!***



## Volunteer Testimonials



Driver Tony I

*"I like volunteering at Downsview Services for Seniors because it is a friendly and supportive environment. It is also a place where I can get experience, and improve my confidence. "*

*"I have been with Meals on Wheels for almost a year now. I find it a pleasure to volunteer here. The staff is very nice and accommodating and is willing to work around my available hours. I would highly recommend to any of my friends that are looking for volunteer work, to work with Meals on Wheels."*

*"Downsview Services for Seniors (DSS) is a great place to volunteer. The staff is very friendly and makes everyone feel at home. I volunteer with the Meals on Wheels (MOW) program. This program is well organized. The supporting staff for MOW genuinely cares for all its clients, and treats all with respect, kindness and understanding. Volunteering at DSS is rewarding and has also provided me with a great sense of worth, as many of the DSS's clients depend on the MOW program. It is a great privilege to participate in this program, which provides the necessities of life for so many. I have also learnt much by interacting with other volunteers who have different life experiences."*

*"I find the volunteer program at the Downsview Services for Seniors a great, organized service, and I enjoy doing volunteer work. I help organize and prepare the Meals on Wheels for delivery and work alongside some great people. They are very dedicated, working straight from their heart -- helpful and all very cooperative. Best of all, it makes me feel good inside when I see the faces of the people we deliver the meals to. They are so happy that they are receiving a warm, healthy meal. At the same time, it makes them feel not alone and connected with the outside world. For me, this is a wonderful feeling which no money can buy. I thank you for this opportunity."*

*"I started with MOW, at Downsview 2 years ago to help out during the Christmas Holidays. I have continued to help whenever I can, given my workload. My experience with the team that runs the MOW program at Downsview Services for Seniors has been fantastic. I learn from my peers every route and enjoy knowing that we are helping those in need get a healthy meal delivered to their door – safe and sound. My regular partner on my assigned route is Ken B; Ken is clearly a saint and should be recognized for his support, loyalty, energy, leadership skills and of course his navigations skills which are off the charts. The volunteer coordinator has always remained flexible given my schedule and obviously cares deeply about the agency, the clients, her colleagues and all the volunteers. I'm proud to be associated with this agency and will continue to provide my volunteer services as long as they are needed."*

## Thank You, Volunteers!

Volunteerism and community participation is a central component in building the spirit of our community.

Volunteers have been helping out at Downsview Services for Seniors since we began with Meals on Wheels in 1974. Some of those volunteers are still delivering for us!! Our agency's volunteers support vital programs and services and contribute to making the community stronger, safer and healthier.

DSS volunteers give hope and friendship to those in need. They help when asked and, more importantly, even when they're not asked. You'll find volunteers delivering Meals on Wheels, having fun with clients at the Healthier Living Centre, Branson Place Day Program, BOOST Day Program and Valleyview Day Program. They assist with office duties, sit on our Board, help with special events and promoting our agency – the list is endless.

The clients we serve live a higher quality of life thanks to the tireless efforts of volunteers working throughout our community. It is with sincere appreciation that we say "thank you" to the volunteers who assist us and make Downsview Services for Seniors a much better agency.

# 35 years and Beyond

*Moving toward Health  
and Independence for Life*

## Our Service Area



- 1 Main Office, Healthier Living Centre, Branson Place Day Program
- 2 BOOST Day Program
- 3 Valleyview Day Program

## New in 2009!

The Interlude Program is an overnight on-site respite program designed to reach the clients currently attending DSS Adult Day Programs and their caregivers. The Central LHIN has provided funding for Downsview Services for Seniors, in partnership with St. Clair West Services for Seniors, to provide this service at Branson Place. Branson Place is a safe, home-like environment, where clients can participate in activities that reaffirm and give dignity to their days, while providing caregivers with regular periods of relief.



## The program offers:

- Overnight accommodation
- A secure, familiar and comfortable environment
- Supervised social and recreational activities
- Professional, nurturing and knowledgeable staff
- Home-style meals, nutritious snacks and special diets
- Medication assistance
- Assistance with personal care and feeding

Flexible and affordable transportation may be available upon request.



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