



## Community Impact Programs

Item 5

July 5, 2021

Tenant Services Committee

**Report:** TSC:2021-46

**To:** Tenant Services Committee (“TSC”)

**From:** Acting Chief Operating Officer

**Date:** June 23, 2021

### **PURPOSE:**

This purpose of this report is to provide the TSC with an update on community programs that have been implemented at TCHC in Q1 2021, with a special focus on the Healthy Aging Program.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that the TSC receive this report for information.

### **BACKGROUND**

Toronto Community Housing (“TCHC”) has made an ongoing commitment to our tenants to provide quality programs and services. In addition to delivering ongoing quality programming and support through our Tenant Engagement System and Community Action Plans, TCHC works to develop and implement innovative tenant programs. In order to deliver effective and responsive programming, innovation is key. These programs are often delivered through third party partnerships, directly delivered by TCHC or a combination of service delivery. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has allowed TCHC to reimagine how to empower tenants and deliver tenant programs.

## **PARTNERSHIPS AND SPONSORS:**

To provide programs for tenants, TCHC works with community partners through use of space partnerships, referral agreements, and community level service delivery. As outlined in TCHC's Collaboration Strategy, "TCHC collaborations will be tenant facing, and have relevant and measurable indicators that show whether the collaboration is meeting the stated goals. Partners will be held accountable for meeting agreed upon goals. TCHC will strive to ensure that costs associated with the collaboration are weighed against the benefit for tenants and the corporation."

TCHC works with partners, tenants and staff to establish clear objectives and outcomes of their initiatives. Collaborations are documented and agreed upon by both parties. Partners are expected to maintain consistent reporting and communication with TCHC to ensure they are meeting project deliverables. For Q1 2021, TCHC partnered with tenants and community members to provide a range of COVID modified programs and services.

## **UPDATE:**

**KickStart:** The Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment ("MLSE") KickStart program teaches soccer skills to children aged 6-12, while providing them with valuable self-esteem, fair play and leadership lessons. It is the first soccer program of its kind at TCHC. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the KickStart program was implemented virtually this year. To increase the sense of togetherness, tenants were encouraged to participate in various challenges and to share pictures of themselves participating in those challenges throughout the program. The sharing of those moments created opportunities for shared laughs and learnings.

Location	Number of Participants
East Region, West Region and Central Region	134

**GEM Program:** The GEM program allows youth girls, ages 13-15, to develop a passion for fitness and a healthier lifestyle. The program focuses on both physical activity and female-led mentorship. The group explored topics such as body image and healthy eating while learning and practicing cardio, strength and yoga workouts. Mental health and wellbeing within the TCHC

community was a favourite topic amongst participants. The importance of this topic prompted participants to conduct their own acts of kindness within their respective communities. Program participants also received fitness related merchandise from MLSE to support their wellness journey.

Location	Number of Participants
East Region	15

**Yardi Tech for Success Gift Basket Giveaway:** The Yardi Tech for Success program provided technology kits to 20 families, four of which are from the Rapid Rehousing program, to support them in accessing education and programming. The kits consisted of a laptop, mouse, headphones, laptop bag, and school supplies so that youth could be successful in an online learning environment. Through this initiative, TCHC was able to support:

- 32 children between grades 1-8
- 11 youth between grades 9-12

In addition, tenants also received a guide with free educational resources, such as community agencies offering support, games, worksheets, literacy, free tutoring services, etc. These are all accessible online and community services are broken down by regions.

Location	Number of Participants
East Region, West Region and Central Region	43 youth from 20 families

**April Break Virtual Camp Hosted by NERDs:** The Virtual Camp allowed youth participants, between the ages of 10-13, to engage their creative skills while learning about revitalization. They imagined and designed their new community with guidance from their teen mentors – Revite NERDs. The project activities included: create your own community safety mascot, design your own community park, design your community, and design your community logo.

Location	Number of Participants
West Region	25

**HIGHLIGHTS:**

**Healthy Aging Program:** The Healthy Aging Program provides older adults a dependable source of social interaction through games, storytelling, assisting with technology, small resource help (e.g. food assistance), and just simple conversation. The program was conceived after the TCHC staff noticed that a lot of tenants were getting interaction via food banks and wellness checks, which became their main form of social interaction, as a result of being isolated during the COVID-19 lockdown. TCHC staff realized how valuable the simple act of being able to connect would be to these individuals so they worked hard to make it happen. The Healthy Aging Program is centered on daily/weekly wellness phone calls, storytelling, resource sharing, food delivery, and so much more. The program started with 20 individuals connecting with and supporting each other while being isolated during the COVID-19 lockdown, and has grown to 120 individuals.

Location	Number of Participants
East Region	120

**NEXT STEPS:**

The range of programs implemented in Q1 2021 allowed tenants to stay connected to each other, focus on improving their wellbeing and give back to their communities; these are all critical components of ensuring mental health, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. TCHC and its partners look forward to continuing to support as many tenants as possible to stay healthy during this challenging time. To this end, staff from both the Active Living and CED teams along with our partners are busy gearing up for a summer of program implementation that will ensure that hundreds of TCHC tenants will be able to access summer employment or recreational activities throughout the summer.

**SIGNATURE:**

*“John P. Angkaw”*

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John P. Angkaw  
Acting Chief Operating Officer

**ATTACHMENT:**

1. Healthy Aging Program Presentation

**STAFF CONTACT:**

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# Healthy Aging Program

Gail Johnson, Manager, Community Safety and Support

Ryan James , Active Living Program Supervisor

28 June 2021





# Health Aging Program, 2016-2018

The Healthy Aging Program provided a safe space for tenants to :

- ✓ foster new relationships;
- ✓ learn new skills;
- ✓ experience new adventures; and
- ✓ develop self-confidence.

The main focus of this program was to provide a space for socialization and prevent isolation and anti-social behaviours.

There were over 200 tenants in 12 buildings across the city who gathered twice per week to socialize, share their skills, practice self-care, and get support





# The onset of Covid-19 put the Health Aging Program Community Impact program on pause

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Community Impact team team put their skills to use, helping with :
  - ✓ Door knocking for wellness checks; and
  - ✓ Outreach for building elections.
- In the communities there was an increasing need for food bank support and the Community Impact team became an important support for tenants; and
- As they helped at the food banks, it became obvious that the older adults were becoming increasingly isolated and depressed...from this, the new Healthy Aging Program was born.





The idea of just simply “connecting” came to mind; a conversation, regularly with a trusted and familiar voice

- The 2 Senior Program Leaders began calling program participants;
- Within 2 weeks, the 40 participants grew to 120 participants;
- Tenants received calls weekly or bi-weekly, depending on their need;
- The content of the calls is up to the tenant; it could be a quick check-in or a lengthier conversation about health or personal matters or working through problems or just chatting. In some cases,
  - a number of tenants asked for help booking a vaccination appointment; and
  - a number of tenants requested to obtain support for food security.
- The program has now started connecting older adults together on conference calls.



# Healthy Aging Program Today





# Ms. Ke Ruizhen, 120 Townhaven

*“First I appreciate that TCH has been taking the efforts to care for the older adults in my building. Due to the quarantine caused by COVID -19 , we have been isolated in our rooms, being left feeling bored and helpless. Sadly, what we could do is just wait for death, passively. Ms Cathy Zhao's phone calls have changed our life for the better, and has improved our confidence, we are happier. She has not only speaks with us daily, but also helped to release our mental stresses.*

*With her phone call, we could sense the love and care. With her help, we could expect to solve the daily problems in a clear and effective way, we could also expect to receive interpretation and referring services. We look forward to TCH developing more entertainment activities such as pot luck, dancing, one day tour, workshops, that would support having an active and quality life.”*



# Chinese Older Adults from 65 Greencrest (11 Signatures collected)

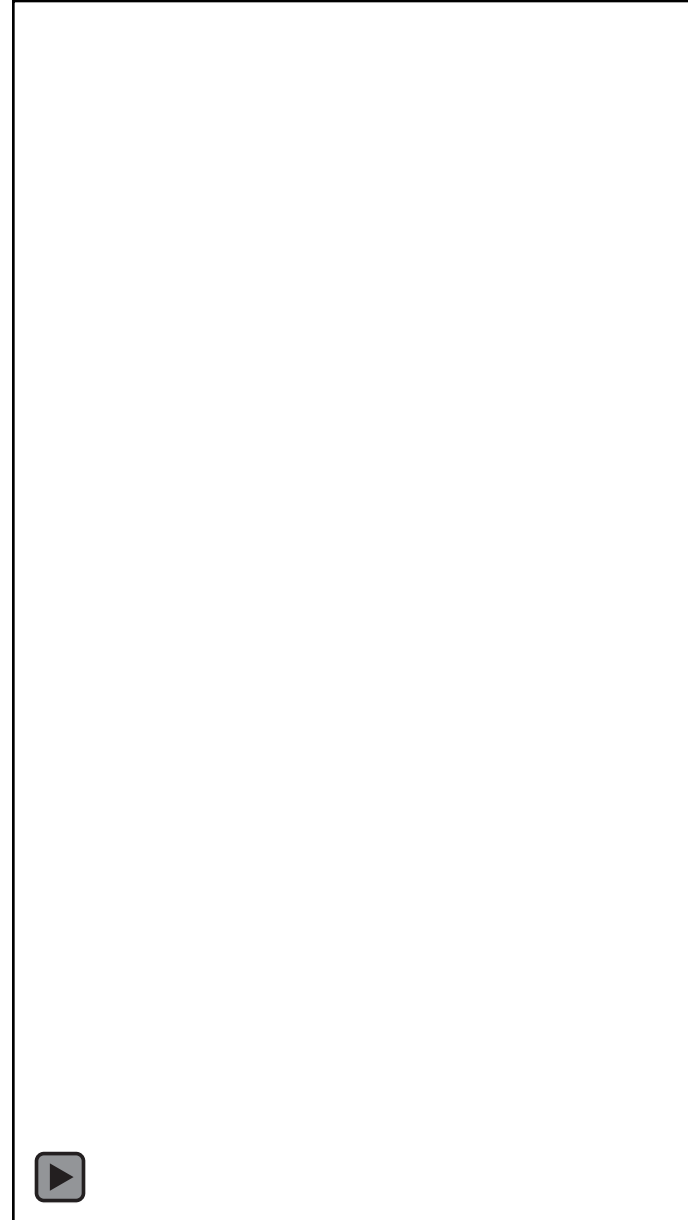
*“Due to the quarantine caused by COVID -19 , we have encountered many difficult times and situations. However, Ms. Cathy Zhao has helped us to overcome them with a kind and careful heart. She has registered and delivered us food from the food bank, she has called us to go down stairs to receive cooked food from the meal program, helped us book our vaccination shots online upon our requests and helped to do the translations when necessary.*

*Due to the language barrier, we cannot express enough gratitude for Ms. Cathy Zhao and the Healthy Aging Program. We believe that it is very important to have this role that she played to help us continually while providing more services, such as document translation and connecting us to community resources. We want to say thank you again for all help and care provided by Ms. Cathy Zhao.”*



# Video: Esther Persaud (3330 Danforth )

# Video: Ms. Chang





# Video: Olivine Green



# And Finally...

