

COLLABORATING THROUGH CHALLENGING TIMES

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020



TORONTO NORTH
SUPPORT SERVICES



LES SERVICES DE SOUTIEN
DE TORONTO NORD

MISSION

Our mission is to facilitate the recovery of individuals experiencing mental illness or homelessness by providing flexible community-based support and outreach services.

VISION

Toronto North Support Services is dedicated to ensuring that individuals with mental illness and those who are homeless receive the same opportunities and entitlements as all other members of society.

VALUES

Welcoming: Individuals experiencing mental illness or homelessness are welcomed and supported to access the array of services and supports that best meet their unique needs. Diversity in all its aspects (e.g., background/history, complexity of needs, language, age, customs, values, sexual orientation, gender, faith/beliefs) is welcomed and respected. Services are provided based on an anti-oppression and trauma-informed framework.

Hope for growth, development and recovery: All people experiencing mental illness or homelessness have the potential to grow, develop and recover in ways meaningful to them.

Individualization and flexibility of approach: Individuals experiencing mental illness or homelessness are all at different phases of recovery and should be able to access services and supports specific to their needs.

Self-determination and choice: Individuals exercise the right to self-determination through access to information, the making of choices and personal growth. People must have control over the decisions that affect their lives and be provided with the information and opportunity to make their own choices.

Mutual respect and responsibility: All people have the right to be treated with respect. TNSS believes in the value of mutually respectful relationships between and among service users, staff, volunteers, Board members and other community stakeholders.

Transparency and accountability: People deserve to understand how the agency works and to hold staff accountable for what they do. Toronto North strives to create an environment that promotes open, non-judgmental and respectful communication among all individuals connected with it.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR & ED

The end of the 2019-2020 year will forever be remembered by many of us as the moment that COVID-19 changed our lives. The small triumphs and challenges of the first 11 months of the year are difficult to bring to mind and seem somewhat trivial compared to the reality of the past few months. But as we write this, despite there still being no clear endpoint in sight, there is much about which to be optimistic and thankful. We will get past this and get back to mulling over such things as work flow processes and quality improvement plans.

In our last report we wrote about the Ministry of Health's direction in forming the new Ontario Health Teams. Since that time, the agency has actively participated in several, with a considerable commitment to the North York Toronto Health Partners. As an equal partner in this initiative, we have worked closely with other North York providers and families to envision what local health care should look like. North York General Hospital, by anybody's standard the 'big player' in the room, has been nothing if not generous, engaging and committed. An unexpected bonus of this work was the coordinated efforts through which the partners tackled COVID together.

Prior to this, an agency the size of TNSS would never have had access to the kind of expertise and resources that were made available to us through the OHT.

A good chunk of the year was spent readying ourselves once again for accreditation, and we are proud of our renewed three year award. Our clients, staff and board members came out to tell our story, and it was very well received.

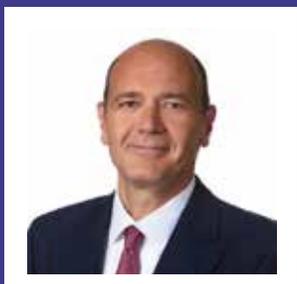
We continue to push the envelope in terms of engaging our clients in the workings of the organization. Our harm reduction and peer support work continue to evolve as we learn more from our clients and their families about what is effective in helping them to stand on their own. With the heightened focus on anti-racism we are not complacent about the importance of continued learning and growth in this area. This year, like most years, we provided agency wide training that was well received by our staff. But training can only go so far; we have to live our commitment to equity and anti-racism and it is an ongoing effort.

While it is true that we would never have wished for COVID, there will be lessons learned that will have lasting impact.

On March 16th 2020 for example, the 16 staff at The Access Point picked up their phones and headsets and took their work home. The ensuing weeks involved long days working out the complicated processes of trying to answer 3,600 calls a month from 16 living rooms across the greater Toronto area. Complex at the best of times, this work became so important during COVID when many more people felt isolated and anxious. The 'Mental Health and Addictions Hotline' that grew out of this work has provided timely support to hundreds of individuals who had never before reached out for this type of assistance.

Our staff are among the unsung heroes of the pandemic. They didn't miss a beat in trying to meet clients' needs while keeping everyone safe. We are, as always, awed by their commitment and grateful for their hard work. We also wish to acknowledge the important role of our volunteer board members, who generously give of their time so that we can do our work.

Our clients for the most part have stayed safe and we will do what we can to support them through these difficult times. Each one of them has made their own decision about their risk tolerance, and we are respectful of their choices. We will continue to provide phone, virtual, and in person support in whatever combination works for each of them.



Jamie Manson
Chair, Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Manson".



Susan Meikle
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Meikle".

2019-2020 BY THE NUMBERS

86



Staff members

28,127



Case management contacts

The Access Point

14,946



Applicant contacts

9,426



Service requests

1,783



People placed in service

85,939



Phone calls

32



French language outreach health and wellness group sessions

81



Social recreational groups

59



Clients helped off the street & into housing

109



Senior drop-in days

1,205



Clients provided with individual case management services

PROGRAMS

Our **Community Case Management Team** provides assistance to adults living in North York and North Toronto who are experiencing mental health issues. The program strives to assist individuals to make choices and changes in their lives that promote recovery.

“I’ve gratefully developed a therapeutic relationship with an ever-growing trust and appreciation of my case manager for their invaluable support. I’m just so thankful for their help and their humanity. The world needs more like them!”

J.D, Client

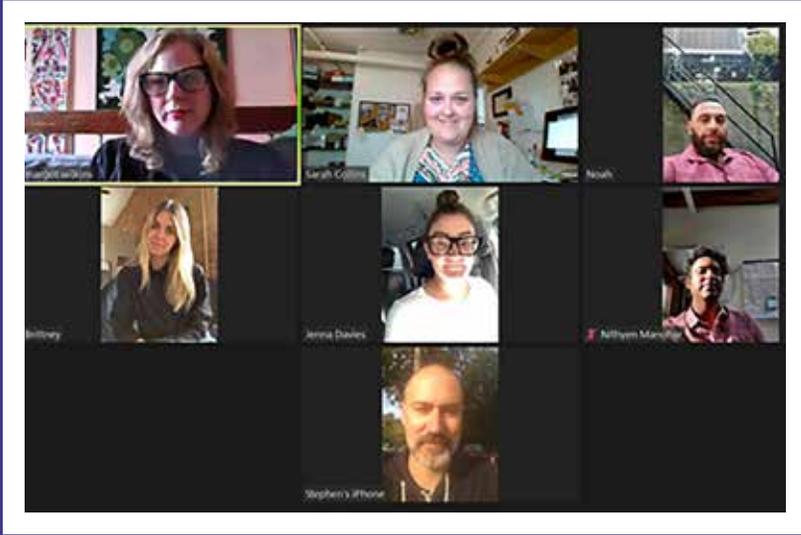


We provide Housing Supports to **three Supportive Housing initiatives** managed by our partners LOFT Community Services, Good Shepherd Non-Profit Homes and St. Clare’s Multifaith Housing Society, helping individuals with mental health needs to successfully maintain their housing.



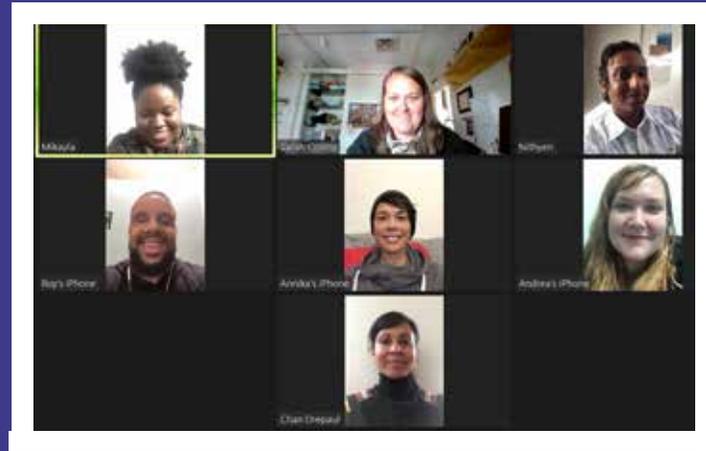
“I’ve had many wonderful workers who really care about me and my life. As the world focuses on covid, I still am heard, and my worker calls to see how I am. This organization has given me back my dignity and I am forever grateful.” Andrea, Client

The Multi-disciplinary Outreach Team (M-DOT) is a multi-organizational partnership that provides mobile psychiatric assessment, consultation, nursing and case management services to homeless individuals with complex health and mental health needs. Four organizations make up the M-DOT team, which is funded by the City of Toronto through a partnership with LOFT Community Services.



The Multi-disciplinary Access to Care and Housing (MATCH) Program is a team funded to provide follow-up to homeless or recently homeless individuals referred by two of our transitional programs, M-DOT and CATCH. The model was designed to provide a seamless transition from the referring program, and to assist clients with ongoing needs, so that they can establish themselves in the community.

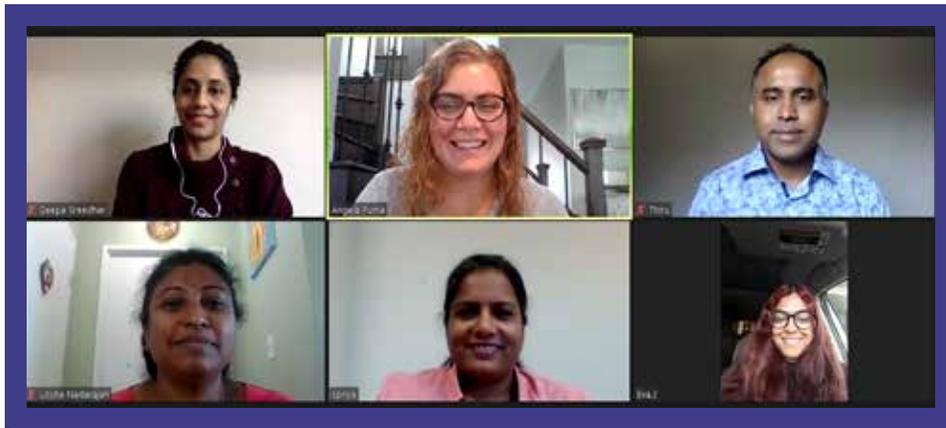
“I don’t have words to explain how to say thank you. The MATCH Team has given me a place to call my own where I am safe. The support I receive from the whole team is out of this world.”
Ravi, Client



As a partner in the **ARCS Program** and the **Baycrest Inter-professional Primary Care Team**, we provide community based mental health case management services to individuals living in the North York/ North Toronto area. These two innovative programs help to bridge the hospital community gap by offering alternatives to hospitalization.

PROGRAMS CONTINUED

Pathways for Tamil Speaking Seniors provides two weekly wellness and health promotion groups, and individualized case management for seniors who are experiencing age-related disabilities including depression, anxiety and dementia. The program also provides support and advice to family members and caregivers.



“This program helps me socialize and keeps me active physically and morally.”
S.S., Client

Our **French Language Outreach and Passages Case Management** provide community mental health services to French speakers, many of whom are newcomers to Canada. The outreach component is a mental health promotion/prevention approach designed to increase community knowledge and understanding and reduce stigma related to mental illness. Case Management provides one to one service in French for those needing individualized community support and connection to other resources.

Passages est un service d’accompagnement communautaire en santé mentale qui peut mettre les clients en contact avec des ressources et services aptes a répondre a leurs besoins.



“Passage has been Lifesaving for me. My Case Manager is one of the most efficient professionals with a heart of gold. She owns the power of kindness, respect & generosity. I am so blessed & grateful for Passage & the amazing work that gets done. Merci.” Client

The At Home Program is an intensive wrap-around service for individuals recovering from mental health and addiction challenges who experience homelessness. Through partnerships with Inner City Health Associates and Cota, the program uses a Housing First approach to assist individuals to find and keep affordable housing and work toward recovery.

“What really warms me up inside is that everyone I’ve encountered in this organization genuinely cares about the clients. It’s not “just a job” and in my experience, that is hard to come by, so again, thank you.” Client



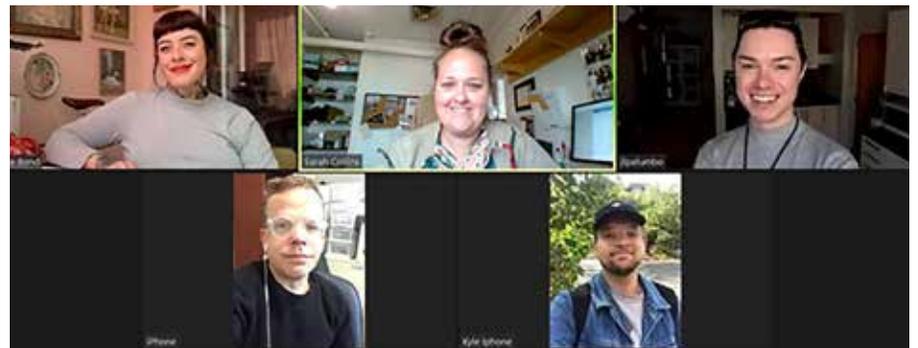
The Access Point provides information, intake and service matching for individuals seeking community mental health services in the City of Toronto. Funded by two LHINs, the program receives referrals and service requests from individuals, families and professionals, and matches applicant needs to over 175 different programs.



“I came here seeking some advice on a difficult matter. You were so very wonderful to help me that day. I felt completely safe and supported during our discussion. You are a wonderful person. Thank you so much.” Client

Coordinated Access to Care for the Homeless (CATCH) is a program of St. Michael’s Hospital and Inner City Health Associates. Toronto North Case Managers work with a team of family doctors and psychiatrists to help homeless individuals with complex needs gain access to housing and other services.

“My son’s Case Manager showed such quality service, was compassionate, caring and proactive. She was very effective and efficient in getting things done for my son. I am grateful for her kindness.”
Mother of Client



THE BUILDING OF AN ONTARIO HEALTH TEAM



In 2018 the current Ontario Government announced a plan for the major reorganization of how healthcare is provided in Ontario. They tasked all health care organizations to work together to create something called Ontario Health Teams. Hospitals, long-term care facilities, community agencies and home care programs would all be expected to work together with patients and families to better the care in their area; essentially, to function as one 'team'.

While we could debate all day whether people in Toronto have better access to care than in other areas, there is no doubt that that access is much, much more complicated! Over the past couple of years, hundreds of Toronto organizations have scrambled to figure out what tables they needed to be a part of, and who would be making decisions at those tables.

While it is still a work in progress, some areas are starting to envision how this approach could have real benefits for Ontarians.



This is one story of an evolving Ontario Health Team.

The **North York Toronto Health Partners** began working together in 2018, building on some existing relationships in the area surrounding North York General Hospital. The hospital provided a very capable Coordinator, and together we took on some projects to demonstrate how we could improve outcomes for small groups of clients/patients. Essentially, we started to get to know each other.

A 115 page application, submitted in the fall of 2019, put us on a shortlist of OHT's approved to keep moving forward. In December representatives from the Ministry of Health came knocking, and 45 people crammed into our biggest meeting room at RAILSIDE to tell the Ministry reps our story. We were starting to feel like a team.

In March, COVID hit, and it would have been very easy to slide back into our old way of doing things – each agency for themselves. Instead, we continued to meet, although virtually.

We focused on how we as partners could work together to help our clients and the community through this unprecedented health crisis.

Together we heard from communicable diseases experts, distributed personal protective equipment, produced videos related to health and wellness for staff, and set up a hotline for those concerned about their mental health. We shared resources to virtual care, ensured that testing was available in the right places and supported staff and clients in long-term care. Food security was a pressing issue for many community members, and agencies helped each other by redeploying staff to deliver Meals on Wheels and food hampers.

The coming year will no doubt prove as challenging as the last, but we are committed to facing it together. We have a long way to go before we realize the vision of a fully functioning Ontario Health Team, but we are out of the gate and not looking back.



PEER SUPPORT

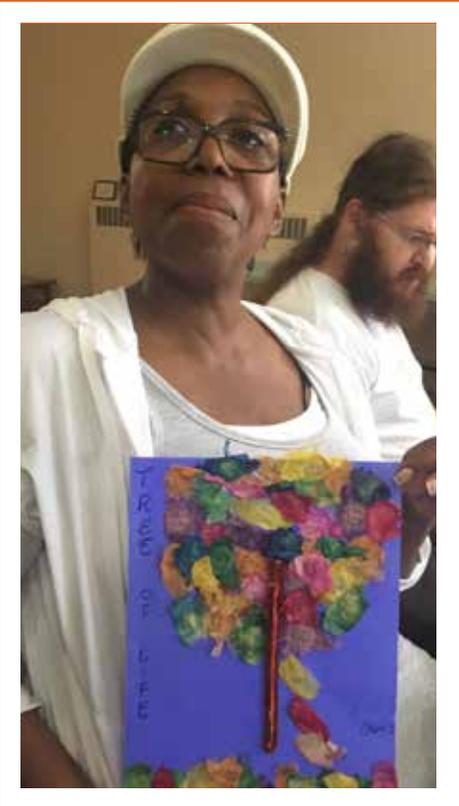
Recovery In a Supportive Environment

Peer Support staff provide TNSS with valuable insights into the perspective of lived mental health experiences. Once again this year we have benefitted greatly by their involvement in our programs across the agency. The collaborative efforts of our peer staff and clients contributed to the success of **RISE**, which this year celebrated its second anniversary.



“The facilitator went out of her way and helped me after a workshop with a separate sewing project I’m working on.”
Gennie, Client

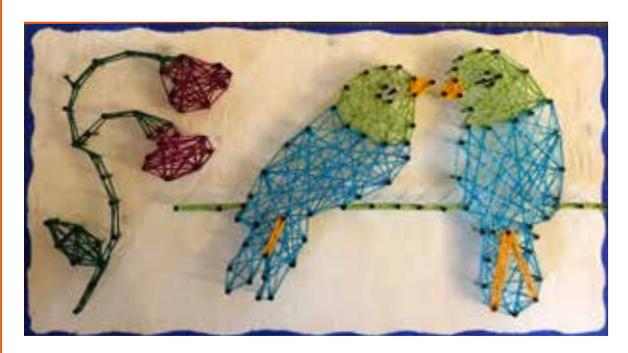
One-to-one mentorship offered clients the support of a trained Peer Supporter who can identify with the recovery journey.



“Just wanted to thank you for an incredible program yesterday. I think it’s the most fun I’ve had. The laughter did my heart and soul good.”
Liz, Client

Peer mentorship empowered clients by supporting their life goals and encouraging ongoing connection in the community. Participants also came together this year to enjoy an array of activities such as ping pong, Zumba, chair yoga, BBQ’s and numerous art therapy based sessions. Regular community outings such as bowling and movie groups were well attended right up to the beginning of COVID.

Thank you Peer Staff for the knowledge and compassion you provide to the clients and staff at TNSS!



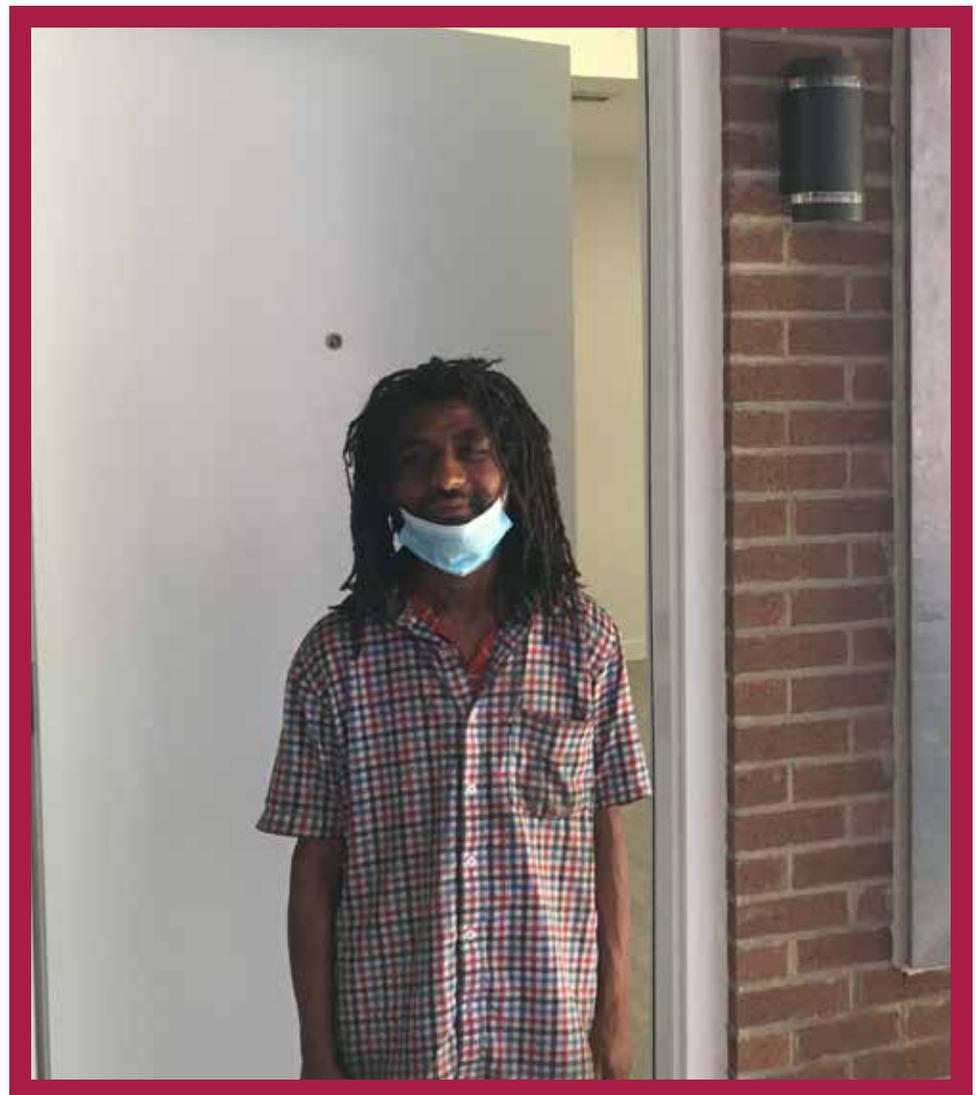
THE JOURNEY TO SAFE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

This is the story of one man's struggle to find the right housing.

In early 2016, the **MATCH** Program entered into a new partnership with **St. Clare's Multifaith Housing Society**. St. Clare's is a charitable organization that provides affordable mixed-income housing. They work in partnership with 17 agencies to assist homeless and hard to house individuals and families obtain and maintain stable, safe, and affordable housing.

St. Clare's builds and manages the housing and relies on partnering agencies to identify potential tenants amongst their clients and support them to maintain successful tenancies. St. Clare's is dedicated to creating safe inclusive communities in downtown Toronto.

St. Clare's



Mr. G was living on the street in 2017. He was struggling with issues related to mental illness, substance use as well as involvement with the criminal justice system. Mr. G. had come from the Sudan at the age of 13 and had been separated from his family since that time. He had been homeless on and off since 2004.

Mr. G. was referred to M-DOT, and the team worked with him to assess his needs, access shelter, obtain identification and connect him to health and mental health services. They were then able to assist him to secure housing in the Scarborough area. Mr. G moved into his new independent apartment in June 2017 and was then referred to our MATCH Program for open ended follow-up.

While working with MATCH, Mr. G opened a bank account, filed his taxes, and was connected to resources in his new community. When he needed to move because of safety concerns related to the dealers in the building, his MATCH Case Manager helped him find a transitional housing program. While Mr. G was there he continued to work on his recovery.

In 2019, St. Clare's announced that they would be building an addition onto one of their current buildings. This was just the type of option that Mr. G had been waiting for. It was downtown in a familiar area and provided on-site support. After a few setbacks related to construction, Mr. G moved into his own newly built apartment in July of this year.

Although a man of few words, he was jumping up and down the day he moved in.

He now cooks in his own kitchen and watches movies in his own living room. He continues to work on his goals with his MATCH Case Manager and although there are bumps in the road, he is happy to have a safe place to go home to each night.

The MATCH and St. Clare's partnership has been instrumental in providing access to affordable, safe, supportive housing, not only for Mr. G, but for many of the clients of the M-DOT, CATCH and MATCH teams.



SERVICE RECOGNITION

Celebrating Five Years:



Abdul Hanif

Abdul joined the Community Case Management Team when he started in 2015, and has provided compassionate and skilled case management over these past five years. Active in Health and Safety, **Abdul** is known for his caring and dedicated approach to his work. He is a lifelong learner, seemingly always taking courses to better his skills and be more effective with a broader array of client needs. He has pursued a certificate in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and recently took a French course despite having a number of languages at his disposal. **Abdul** is always willing to present a complex client situation so that he and his colleagues can discuss and learn from it. One client recently said of him: "I appreciate his support; he goes above and beyond."

Abdul likes the quiet of the office at the end of the day and is often the guy who locks up after everyone else has gone home. He jokes that there is no quiet at home, so we are happy to provide him a little respite from his many other responsibilities.

Congrats **Abdul**, and keep up the amazing work.



Arif Nizami

Arif joined the agency as our second ever Manager of Human Resources in 2015, and has since put his stamp on all things related to staff and students. Although his primary responsibility remains the Human Resources role, in 2017 he became the agency lead for our first accreditation survey, and in 2018 he took on some administrative responsibilities related to our offices sites and payroll. **Arif** leads the Health and Safety Committee, the Accreditation Committee and plays an active role on the management team.

Arif is known for his calm non-judgemental demeanor, making him accessible and approachable for staff. He is a valued resource to the managers with a myriad of HR related questions and complexities. A steady presence in the office, he is a go-to for any and all forms of crisis management, whether it's a power failure, a broken piece of equipment or a high stress client situation. In his role as HR Manager he has led numerous staff appreciation events, and never fails to lend a hand during client events. Described by one of his colleagues as "a true renaissance man", he is as comfortable sharing recipes as he is baseball scores.

Thanks **Arif** for the many things you do.



Neelam Sharma

Neelam joined TNSS in 2015 as a Service Navigator at The Access Point and clients have been benefiting from her skills ever since.

Neelam doesn't hesitate to support new initiatives or to volunteer for a committee such as Health and Safety. She is passionate about supporting clients through their journey and this has made her an excellent lead for clients in the Scarborough area. **Neelam's** skills and experience make her a 'go to' person on the team and in particular, she has played a role training and supporting new staff and students. Her warm and positive coaching skills were appreciated by this student: "I was so nervous, but **Neelam's** words of assurance and comfort stood out to me – I wrote them down on the first page of my notebook."

Neelam is always ready to take another call, see another client or pick up that last minute assessment. She is known for her outstanding cooking skills and can always be counted on to organize the next potluck.

Thank you **Neelam** for all you do and congratulations on five great years!

Celebrating Ten Years:



Oscar Romero

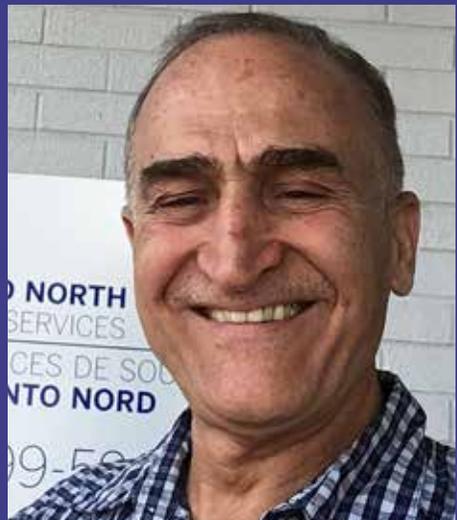
Oscar started ten years ago as a Follow up Support Worker and then moved to the Mental Health and Justice team in 2012. **Oscar** has seen many changes and participated in countless initiatives over his years at Toronto North, always going with the flow. He is one of those staff members who can be tapped on the shoulder for almost any committee or initiative, and he will give it his best. Over the years, he has contributed to Social Rec, Youth at Heart, Accreditation, Rapid Response and the Community of Practice. When COVID hit, he was out there delivering Meals on Wheels, picking up food bank boxes and most recently, helping to support one of the social distancing hotels. **Oscar** speaks Spanish and is our go-to for that as well.

Oscar's colleagues recognize him as the quiet guy who knows the basketball scores and is always there to listen. One of his clients recently said of him: "**Oscar** is a good support for me and I appreciate the help from him." A colleague described him this way: "If I were Batman, I would want **Oscar** to be Robin."

Thank you **Oscar** for your many contributions over ten years.

SERVICE RECOGNITION

Celebrating Fifteen Years:



Yazdan Khani

Yazdan has been with the agency for 15 years now, having spent the entire time working on the Community Case Management program out of the Railside office. His genuine caring and concern for his many many clients past and present is obvious when speaking to him. He is a tenacious advocate for them, never giving up until he gets what he wants for them.

Yazdan is a strong believer in the power of people coming together to share a game or an activity and support each other. He helped to create the bowling group for clients many years ago and still likes to go and throw a few strikes, checking in with everyone to see how they are. **Yazdan** speaks Farsi and has assisted many Farsi speaking clients who may be navigating a new country as well as a mental health issue. He is a strong team member and is generous with his offers to assist others. He joined the Rapid Response project in 2017 and participated actively in the Community of Practice.

Yazdan's colleagues marvel at his energy level and positive outlook on life: "Every time I walk into the office or log into a Zoom meeting, I see Yazan's smile and I can feel his joy and goodness." Recently a client said this of him: "**Yazdan** sticks to what he says and always follows through. I feel blessed to have a worker like him."

Yazdan, congratulations on 15 years of truly dedicated service.



IN MEMORY OF OUR CLIENTS WHO PASSED AWAY THIS YEAR

Daniel G
Darlene C
Cory M
Jonathan B
Adria G
Rajeswaryammal P
Natasha J

George T
Ernest Z
Alfred P
Sellathurai S
Rathika K
Elizabeth H

Ebenezer Y
Jason B
Debbie B
Natasha C
Clint W
Brandon W



OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jamie Manson, Chair
Charlene McDonald, Vice Chair
Jane Holden, Treasurer
Brenda Abrams, Past Chair
Wesley Chan
Richard Doan
Jaskaran Kalra
Matthew Lombardi
Nancy Mulroney
Chris Nithiananthan
Helena Staruszkiewicz



OUR ADMIN TEAM



OUR STAFF & CONTRACTORS

Our staff are our most important resource and we thank them for their commitment and dedication.

Hamid Akbari
Mary Allert
Mona A-Zamisa
Hassan Backy
Houshang Bekzadeh
Taryl Bengershon
Arianna Bhagwansingh
Sarah Bogach
Nicole Bond
Darryl Borden
Teresa Bugelli
Raymond Clark
Sarah Collins
Noah Coones
Tara-Lee Corriveau
Roy Dattilo-Best
Jenna Davies
Denise Deng
Phillip Doherty
Chan Drepaul
Holly Du
Melissa Durigon
Alison Forlemu
John Grisbrook
B'onje Habanyama-Alleyne
Nasser Hanarah
Abdul Hanif
Nilanka Herath
Jennifer Hogan

Maryam Hooshmandi
Sharaayne Humphrey
Kimbra Iket
Leigh-Ann Iskra
Evengeline Jeyapal
Mikayla Johnson
Avonelle Josephs
Sarah Jayne Kendall
Yazdan Khani
Rene Kiobge
Sinthu Kunananthan
Coreen Kayla Landau
Amy Li
Karen Mann
Neeha Matin
Catherine McCormick
Susan Meikle
Ligia Mendes
Meagan Minott
Marta Miscichowska
Abigail Morali
Tammy Moreau
Ussha Nadarajah
Justine Neira Ariza
David Ng
Andrea Nichol
Arif Nizami
Foluke Oladiran
Annika Ollner

Ebele Onwuachi
Denise Otoo
Jean-Luc Palumbo
Brittney Parkes
Angela Puma
Shakila Rahimi
Priya Rajendran
Samah Rayhan
Diana Raymond-Watts
Farah Riaz
Oscar Romero
Gregory Rosebrugh
Kyle Rubin
Stephanie Samoila
Lavanya Savarimuthu
Neelam Sharma
Shanaaz Sheriff
Ryan Siegmund
Ava Smith-Ellis
Cheryl Spencer
Deepa Sreedhar
Jason Steiner
Tamany Stewart
Jodi Tennant
Pratheep Thurainayagam
Nzinga Walker
Margot Wilkins
Yakabue Yangongo

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We also wish to acknowledge the important role played by those whose services were contracted or seconded to us this year:

Administration

Shawn Jamieson, Tech-Ease
Elvis Lopez, ETK Solutions

At Home

Dr. Julie Henderson, Inner City Health Associates

MATCH

Dr. Angela Ho, Inner City Health Associates

CATCH

Jason Kuhar, St. Michaels Hospital

M-DOT

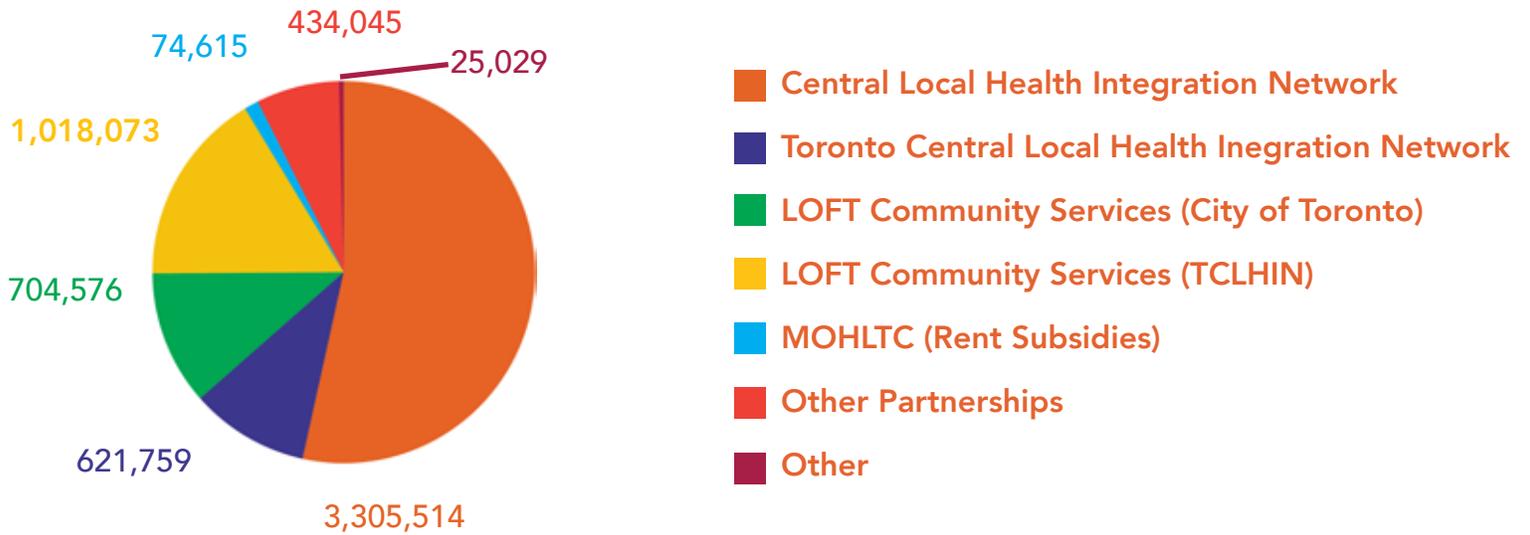
Stephen Allin, Fred Victor Centre
Dr. Michaela Beder, Inner City Health Associates
Serena Coy, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
Zara Fischer-Harrison, South Riverdale Community Health Centre
Dr. Deborah Pink, Inner City Health Associates

The Access Point

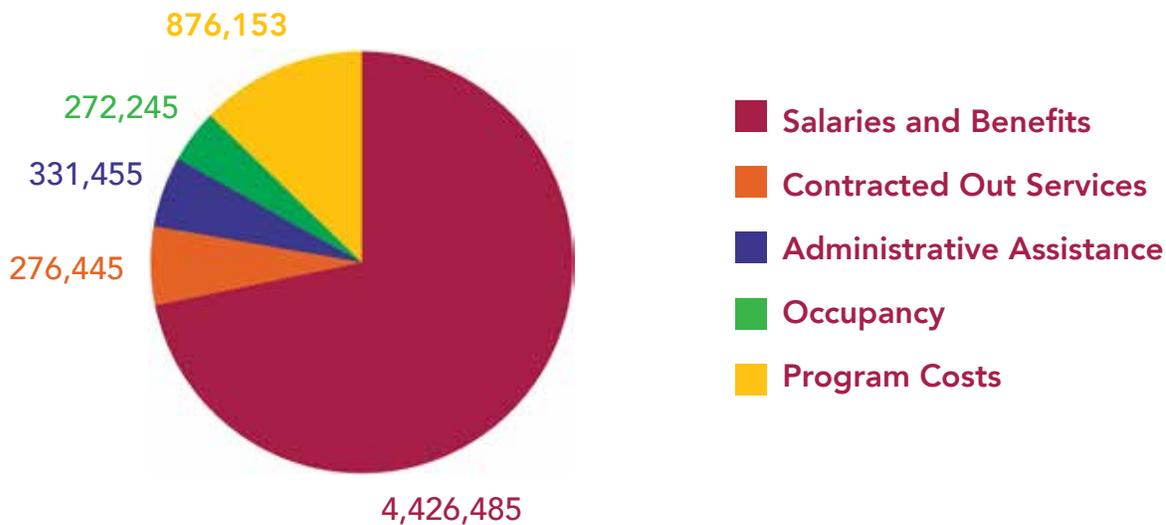
Lisa Davies-Complin, LOFT
Nellie Rahman, LOFT

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Revenue 2019-2020



Expenses 2019-2020



ACCREDITATION 2020

Accreditation by a recognized external surveying body is now an expectation of funders such as Ontario Health. The process of accreditation applies internationally recognized standards in health and human services to determine whether an organization is committed to providing quality services. Toronto North Support Services was first accredited by CARF Canada in 2017.

In March 2020, we undertook our second accreditation survey, and we were pleased to achieve a three-year accreditation once again. This recognition speaks to our commitment to service delivery, continuous performance improvement, responsiveness to feedback and accountability to the community. We were specifically recognized for our commitment to persons served and to the recovery process.

Toronto North Support Services is accredited through to April 30, 2023.



