



BLUEDOOR

IMPACT
REPORT
2020

*Giving Hope
A Home*

Letter from CEO and Board Chair

Where to begin?

2020 brought incredible challenges for the York Region community, across Canada, and around the world.

While a “blue door” has always symbolized a “safe home”, never has the need for a safe place to call home been more important than in the last year. Essential workers fought through fear each day to provide lifesaving services. Community leaders rallied together to strategize ways to cope in this new normal.

From the start of the pandemic, **the message shared loud and clear was “stay home, stay safe”.**

This was an impossible task for the estimated 1,500 people who experience homelessness in York Region on any given night, with no safe and affordable place

to call home. For people without a home, capacity in emergency housing was limited due to new safety precautions, landlords stopped showing their properties, drop-in centers closed limiting access to service, and access to public washrooms became a major issue.

It was and continues to be a terrifying time to experience homelessness.

Acting quickly during the first week of the pandemic Blue Door led daily calls where close to a hundred service providers in York Region provided updates and strategies to continue protecting the community's most vulnerable. In addition, Blue Door rapidly converted Leeder Place into 15 self-contained rooms to be the only Isolation Site in York Region, for people experiencing homelessness during the pandemic.

MISSION

To support people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness to attain and retain affordable housing.

VISION

A Region where everyone has safe, affordable, and supportive housing.

Your support has allowed Blue Door to adjust during an ever-changing pandemic to ensure people always have a door to turn to for help. You donated lifesaving masks, sanitizer, and wipes. And your support helped create new ways to provide food and emergency housing safely.

But your generosity did more than address urgent needs, you gave so many the precious gift of a "home".

Through the launch of Construct – A Social Enterprise by Blue Door, your support is lifting people out of poverty and into well-paying careers in the trades. Your donations provide virtual visits with a physician and psychotherapist to improve individuals' mental and physical health. Your passion for helping the community opened the doors to three new supportive housing programs for seniors, families, and 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

You housed over 200 people through the 200 Doors campaign.

At a time when now more than ever a home is essential to survive, **you have given people the good health, stable career, and support needed to rapidly find and retain a home.**


You are truly Giving Hope A Home.

Thank you for bringing hope to a challenging and unpredictable year. 2020 presented mountains to climb, but with your continued support we have the tools, the support, and the connections to keep climbing.

Together in 2021, by prioritizing our strategic pillars of housing, health, and employment we will keep climbing towards our goal of ending homelessness in York Region.



Michael Braithwaite
Chief Executive Officer

Marianne Marando
Chair, Board of Directors



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

**HOUSING, HOUSING STABILITY
AND HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION**

HEALTH

EMPLOYMENT

**ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY
AND EXCELLENCE**

Guided by four strategic priorities, each Blue Door program is designed to provide supports and services that lift men, women, children, and youth out of poverty and homelessness.



Porter Place for Men – 30 People Nightly

Porter Place is the only emergency housing program for single men experiencing homelessness in York Region.

Leeder Place for Families – 15 Families Nightly

Leeder Place is the only emergency housing program for families facing homelessness in York Region.

Kevin's Place for Male Youth – 12 People Nightly

Located in Newmarket, Kevin's Place provides a supportive environment for male youth ages 16 to 26.



Navigating COVID-19 in Emergency Housing

ISOLATION SITE • In March 2020, Blue Door rapidly converted Leeder Place into 15 self-contained rooms. Staffed with nurses and Client Service Workers, the Isolation Site supports people experiencing homelessness who have COVID-19 symptoms, are waiting on test results, or who tested positive for COVID-19 and need a safe place to self-isolate and recover.

In partnership with public health and York Region, Blue Door continues to offer an Isolation Site in York Region for people experiencing homelessness.

LEEDER PLACE • With the conversion of Leeder Place into the Isolation Site, families were moved to a local Newmarket hotel. The hotel rooms offered families and children a safe and risk-free environment to isolate during the pandemic.

PORTER AND KEVIN'S PLACE • Emergency housing was never designed to keep people two meters apart. To keep everyone safe, communal kitchens were closed, and meals were delivered to individuals' bedrooms. For Kevin's Place, formerly a residential property where every room held bunk beds, the youth were temporarily moved to Porter Place to maintain physical distancing.

24,000+

Nights of safety

73,000+

Meals provided

702

Wraparound support sessions

LEARNING TO COPE AND HEAL



Dia* struggled with her mental health for years. Upon arriving at Leeder Place in early 2020, she was reunited with her young son, Danyal, after The Children's Aid Society assumed temporary care.

Initially, Dia was very distant with staff and showed little interest in engaging. She was struggling to adjust.

Then COVID-19 hit.

Dia now had to navigate caring for her son in emergency housing with the stress of a mounting global pandemic.

Blue Door staff at Leeder Place moved her and Danyal, along with other families, to the safety of a local Newmarket hotel, constantly working to establish a trusting relationship with Dia.

During her time at the hotel, Dia suffered two mental health episodes, where she visited the hospital. Blue Door staff ensured Danyal's safety and supervision while Dia was being cared for. Upon returning, Dia started opening up and trusting staff, and was asking for additional supports to help her and her son cope.

As a result, Danyal was able to attend summer day camp.

Transportation support allowed Dia and Danyal to visit the doctor, who eventually diagnosed Danyal with autism. Dia began virtually attending autism and parenting programs, where she learned new strategies to support Danyal's development.

In November of 2020 with the support of staff, Dia found a suitable apartment for her and Danyal that was close to his school and local doctors in York Region.

Dia was transitioned to the Canadian Mental Health Association's Case Management Program, where she receives regular check-ins and supports for her mental health. Dia continues to attend parenting classes and is excited to provide a safe and stable home for her and her son.

Dia and Danyal remain housed in York Region today.

**Names, dates and photos have been changed to ensure confidentiality and respect of privacy.*

Housing in a Community Setting

The goal of community supportive/transitional housing is to help people address complex issues while being housed in a community setting and provides the time and resources needed to overcome barriers and find a place to call home.



LOW RENTAL SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Provides individuals and families who need longer-term assistance with case management, housing, nutrition support, and goal setting resources.

Abode: 3 Houses – Provides families with intended stays of up to one year.

Forward: 1 House (3 People) – Offers seniors supportive housing for six months to one year.

INNclusion: 1 House (4 Youth) - The first of its kind in York Region, INNclusion provides 2SLGBTQ+ youth with supportive housing for up to one year.



HOUSING SUPPORTS

Retention Support: Helps individuals achieve longer-term housing stability by providing follow-up aftercare support and resources to navigate potential issues that could lead to eviction.

Housing to Health: A Housing First program that provides people experiencing chronic and episodic homelessness with wraparound supports to improve their quality of life and increase the likelihood of long-term housing retention. Housing to Health is a proud partnership between Blue Door, The Krasman Centre, and LOFT Crosslinks Housing and Support Services.

9

Individuals supported through Blue Door Community Housing Programs

73

Families and individuals who received housing retention support

46

Individuals supported through the Housing to Health program in 2020



Dedicated community leaders and members helped to source and secure the home for 2SLGBTQ+ youth

HAVING A PLACE TO CALL HOME



"My kids and I had to move into a hotel on August 14, 2020. I remember the exact date. We'd been living with my dad and when he sold his house, we thought we'd be able to move in with my mother-in-law. Eventually, we realized we weren't going to be able to move in at all.

I was getting so frustrated because I had a plan and during COVID-19, it just fell through.

We'd been stuck at the hotel for 11 weeks. It was tough. We only had a microwave and a fridge.

We needed more space—my daughter is 14 and my son just turned 10, and we were all crammed into one room with one bathroom. And by the end, my bank account was practically empty.

I'm a frontline worker, I work at a grocery store, and I had saved up quite a bit of money, but the hotel just killed my savings. I was on my last few dollars.

My daughter mentioned our situation to one of her teachers, and they connected me to Blue Door. At first, I was kind of nervous.

I wasn't used to having help, and I felt like, 'am I useless?'

But Emily, from Blue Door was very calm and patient with me.

I told Emily that my credit wasn't great, but if they could help me get a place, I could start paying rent. Within a week, Blue Door had found us an apartment in a nice neighborhood in Newmarket. It has two bedrooms, two bathrooms—it's so nice, and we all finally have some space.

But it wasn't just the apartment that Blue Door helped with. I happened to mention to Emily that I was going to buy some blow-up mattresses because our beds had been damaged where we stored them. Within two hours brand-new beds were scheduled for delivery.

Blue Door sent over gift cards to help with groceries and connected my daughter to a peer support group. I've even been connected with Legal Aid to try to get full custody of my kids.

But the biggest thing is having a place. **We would have definitely ended up on the streets if not for Blue Door.**

I like to do everything by myself, but this experience showed me it's okay to reach out and ask for help once in a while."

- Dave*

**Names, dates and photos have been changed to ensure confidentiality and respect of privacy.*



Program Partners:



CONSTRUCT

A Social Enterprise by BLUE DOOR

As an employment social enterprise, Construct provides rapid eight-week in-class skills training, on-the-job work experience, and wraparound supports to **help vulnerable individuals secure long-term, well-paying careers in the construction trades.** By sourcing and bidding on jobs within our community Construct turns job sites into on-the-job learning experiences helping to propel trainees out of homelessness and poverty. ConstructGTA.ca

100% Of graduated trainees were directly linked to employment

“We are all learning a lot and this program gives us a great opportunity to find a career path, helping us get our foot in the door.”

- Raine, Construct Participant

28
Jobs completed
by Construct

13
Trainees graduated
from the Construct
program in 2020

720
Meals
provided

TIME, AND A CHANCE



Things always seemed to go wrong for Lou*. It started when he was young when Lou started struggling with addiction.

He lost his health card. He had no identification and no bank account.

At 58, Lou had a history of housing instability, having used emergency housing several times throughout his life.

But the pandemic in 2020 proved to be an even bigger challenge.

Applying for work became more difficult and accessing treatment programs, even harder.

Finding treatment and a stable place to stay was not something Lou could achieve on his own. For support, Lou came to Blue Door's Porter Place where staff helped him to first secure his identification and health card so that he could access healthcare.

Staff also helped Lou apply for a drug addiction treatment program and transitional housing options for when he finished treatment. This was perfect for Lou, he needed time and assistance to address his struggles, prioritize his health, and get back on his feet and into housing. However, he quickly found out that the

wait time to enter the treatment program was five months.

Lou was stuck. Emergency housing has intended stays of 30 days. With a five month wait time for treatment and no place to stay, he was going to be back out on the streets.

Blue Door staff rallied around him and recommended he try Forward, a new supportive housing program by Blue Door for seniors that allows for longer stays from six months to one year to help people just like Lou who need a little bit more time.

After meeting with the Supportive Housing Worker, Lou moved into a room at Forward. While waiting for treatment Lou continued to receive support - help finding a new family doctor, applying for disability income, and virtually psychotherapy sessions. **Through these supports, Lou's commitment to beating his addiction grew stronger each day.**

Finally, a spot at the treatment program opened up. Lou packed up his things and is now working with professionals to address and learn new ways to cope with addictions.

**Names, dates and photos have been changed to ensure confidentiality and respect of privacy.*

Innovation through Conversation and Collaboration



Over 45,000 listens in 2020 and counting!

ON THE WAY HOME • A weekly Canadian national podcast produced by Blue Door and the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness. Formerly known as “Out of the Blue”, “On the Way Home” invites guests from Canada and abroad in the field of housing and homelessness to share innovative solutions as well as gaps and challenges faced around the world.

OnTheWayHome.ca

200DOORS

233 Individuals Housed

200 DOORS • A collaborative campaign between nine York Region agencies to help vulnerable populations currently living in emergency housing, shelters, or unsafe situations secure housing. The 200 Doors campaign matches landlords with reliable tenants to ensure a positive, stress-free, win-win outcome. 200Doors.ca

Partnerships

Blue Door established intermediary partnerships with two local non-profits providing essential supports for those experiencing homelessness. For these growing non-profits, Blue Door offers guidance, support, and the opportunity to innovate by learning from one another.



AMPLE LABS • A tech non-profit empowering people facing homelessness through technology. Ample Labs has developed “The Chalmers App” which provides a 24/7 chatbot to connect people to nearby services including food, emergency housing, medical care, and more.



HUMMINGBIRD HUB • A non-profit providing a home to community-based organizations, initiatives, and support networks. Through the provision of rental space, Hummingbird Hub gives initiatives and support groups the physical space and programming support to continue.

A NEW PERSPECTIVE



"When I was experiencing challenges due to my depression, Blue Door's Housing to Health program helped me with everything.

This program helped me gain confidence and provided me with so much support.

I remember being so frustrated after I had been discharged from the hospital. I didn't know if I wanted to stay in York Region. **I was ready to collect my belongings, head to Toronto, and live on the streets.**

My worker from Blue Door at the time, came to visit me. Her dedication and support made me take the time to think about my actions.

I decided to ride it out, see where the Housing to Health program could take me. Maybe I didn't have to return to being homeless and doing drugs.

Now, I have a home I love, a family doctor, and I'm taking my meds.

I would call myself a success story.

Not everyone is going to succeed right away because they might not be ready. But the important part is the supports are there at Blue Door, ready to save lives."

- Anthony*

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Mosaic Interfaith OUT OF THE COLD

A PROGRAM BY BLUE DOOR

In the summer of 2020, Blue Door and Mosaic Interfaith Out of the Cold began working towards an amalgamation. This important step allows both organizations to improve and better serve people in York Region who are experiencing homelessness.



WORKING SMARTER, TOGETHER

Goals of the Amalgamation:

- To provide a more comprehensive response to persons experiencing homelessness,
- To provide an opportunity to work smarter together,
- Enable greater use of technology, innovation, branding and the presence for effective advocacy,
- To create new opportunities for funding and fundraising, to allow for transformation in the homelessness sector and finally,
- To honour and sustain the service legacy of both organizations.

Mosaic Interfaith Out of the Cold provides lifesaving services and supports to people experiencing homelessness in York Region. Mosaic Interfaith Out of the Cold is a coalition of over 50 interfaith communities in York Region. Emergency housing sites are operated by 13 host communities.

Blue Door and Mosaic Interfaith Out of the Cold are excited to have officially amalgamated on May 1st, 2021.

Both organizations look forward to better supporting our community's most vulnerable, by providing them with "one door" to housing, health, and employment supports.

500+

Individuals
supported by the
program each year

13

Host sites provide daily
support to individuals
facing poverty and
homelessness

coldest *night

OF THE YEAR

\$37,000+
RAISED

100+
WALKERS

40+
VOLUNTEERS



February 22nd, 2020

2020 marked Blue Door's inaugural Coldest Night of the Year fundraising walk. Over 100 walkers stepped out into the cold on February 22nd, 2020 in East Gwillimbury, Ontario to raise funds for our community's most vulnerable. An inspired group of staff, volunteers, friends, family, community members and local leaders raised over \$37,000!

This event served as a reminder, when community members do not have a safe place to stay in the winter, every night, is the coldest night of the year.



Your support fundraising helped...



A family who was new to Canada, find housing through Leeder Place



A youth access peer support to cope with his mental health



Hundreds of vulnerable individuals get connected to food, nutrition, counselling, addictions and medical care supports



A man in his 60's access training to do his taxes



REVENUES

- Government 81%
- United Way Greater Toronto 10%
- Donations 9%



EXPENSES

- Emergency Housing 76%
- Housing to Health 7%
- Construct 5%
- Second Stage Housing 7%
- Support Programs 1%
- Fundraising 1%
- Admin 3%

THANK YOU

We would like to thank the following generous leadership donors and grant funders for their significant financial or in-kind contribution of \$1,000 or more in 2020.

- 100 Women Who Care Stouffville
- 105.9 The Region
- Aubrey & Marla Dan Foundation
- BMO Financial Group
- Bell Let's Talk
- Bingo World and Gaming Newmarket
- Breakfast Club of Canada
- Cambria Design Build Ltd.
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
- Canada Post Community Foundation
- Cisco
- Community Foundations of Canada
- Corina Murphy
- Country Toy Tea
- Cricket Home Comfort
- DAREarts Foundation Inc. for Children
- Deerfield 3 GP Inc.
- Donner Canadian Foundation
- Dr. J.M. Denison Secondary School
- Dymon Group of Companies
- Eileen Tessier
- Elliott-Ferraro Family Foundation
- Employment and Social Development Canada – Reaching Home Strategy
- Enbridge: Regular and Volunteer Grant Programs Fund, held at Vancouver Foundation
- Gibson Group Inc.
- Government of Canada - Youth Employment and Skills Strategy
- Government of Canada's Emergency Community Support Fund
- Government of Canada – Canada Summer Job
- Government of Ontario
- Grant Bowler
- Hockey Helps the Homeless
- Ilia Energy
- Inter-World Paper Overseas Limited
- John Howard Society of York Region
- Johnson & Johnson Inc.
- KFC, Newmarket
- Kylemore
- LiUNA Local 506 Training Centre
- LifeCorps
- Little Caesars, Newmarket
- Longo's Green Lane
- LoyaltyOne
- Marianne and Robert Bahlieda
- Maxxian
- Mr. & Mrs. John Vissers
- Mr. Martin Dunstan
- Mr. Pierre Senecal
- Mr. Wasim Jarrah
- Ms. Beth Lawrence
- Ms. Julianne Ralph
- Ms. Rachel Stevens
- Multilingual Community Interpreter Services (ON)
- National Housing Strategy under the NHS Solutions Labs
- NewRoads Automotive Group
- Ontario REALTORS Care® Foundation
- O'Malley's Catering
- P. and L. Odette Charitable Foundation
- Paul Gaynor
- Paul Meredith
- RBC Foundation
- The Regional Municipality of York
- Resource Thrift Shop - Bradford
- Robins Appleby Charitable Foundation
- Ron and Erika Van Noort
- Salaam Foundation
- Second Harvest
- Serta Simmons Bedding, LLC
- Sharon Hope United Church
- ShiftLink
- Sinclair-Cockburn Financial Services Inc.
- Skilled Trades College of Canada Inc.
- St. Elizabeth Seton Parish
- St. John Chrysostom Parish
- St. Matthew's United Church Women
- Syncreon
- TELUS Friendly Future Foundation
- The Corporation of the City of Vaughan
- The Dunin Foundation
- The Home Depot Canada Foundation
- The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation
- The McLean Foundation
- The Renoir Residents' Council
- The Shoe Company
- The Tenaquip Foundation
- Toronto Regional Real Estate Board
- Trillium Automobile Dealers Foundation
- Truckstop.com Canada Ltd.
- United Way of Greater Toronto
- United Way of Greater Toronto's Toronto Enterprise Fund
- Vaughan Food Bank
- Vince's Market
- Whole Foods Market, Leaside
- Wyse Meter Solutions
- York Region Food Network
- Zehrs - Bradford
- Zita Burns

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tracy Porter (Board Chair), Marianne Marando (Board Vice-Chair), Martin Dunstan (Treasurer), Alana Kanapka (Secretary), Catherine Sigmar, Julie Ralph, Al Jones, Caroline Hunter, Christine Walterhouse, Gregory Lawrence

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers dedicate their time and passion to lifting people out of poverty and homelessness. Thank you for persevering through this challenging year alongside us.

GIVING HOPE A HOME.

2020, the year that changed everything.

But we have hope.

Since 1982 Blue Door has provided lifesaving supports to men, women, children, and families who are at risk of or facing homelessness in York Region. We know we are just at the beginning, there is so much we can achieve together.

We are determined to reach the day when homelessness in York Region no longer exists. A day when everyone has access to safe, affordable housing.

With your support, that day will come.

BLUEDOOR

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We greatly value the generous support of:

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