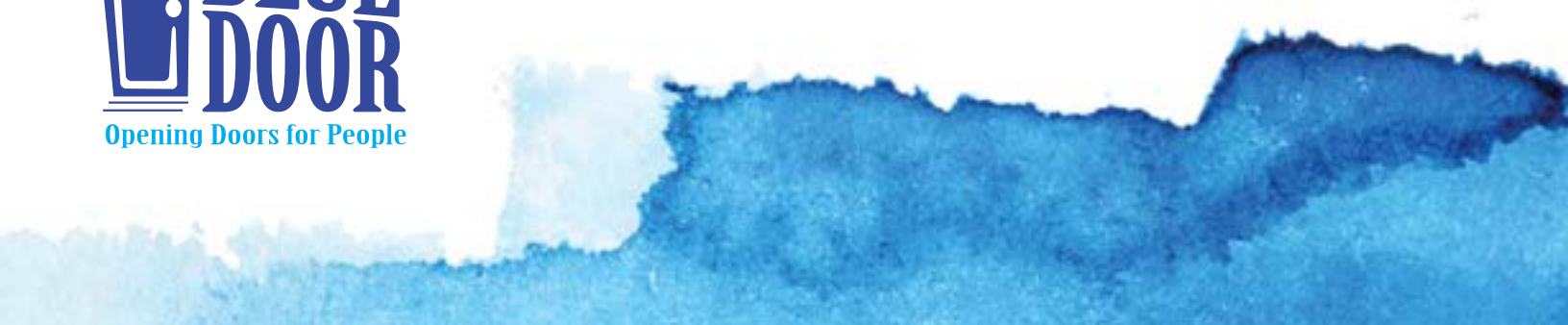




## 2018 ANNUAL REPORT



## Mission



To provide safe and supportive emergency shelter and services for people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless.

## Vision



A community where everyone has the right to a home.

## Values



Respect  
Diversity and Inclusion  
Client-Centred  
Leadership and Collaboration  
Accountability

Accessible formats of this document are available upon request.  
Please contact us toll free during business hours at 1-888-554-5525

\*Names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals and maintain confidentiality.



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# HELPING *People*

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## LETTER FROM THE CEO AND BOARD CHAIR

### Homelessness isn't a season.

In the fall and spring, the weather is often unpredictable, and with high levels of rain, those experiencing homelessness can never get dry. With the blistering hot sun in the summer, people without a place to call home where they can cool down can often find themselves dehydrated and in pressing need of medical attention. Finally with our long and cold winters, while many of us are complaining about brushing snow off our cars, hundreds of people without a home in York Region are cleaning it off their beds and doing their best to survive the frigid cold. No matter what the season, Blue Door's passionate and talented team is committed to providing life-changing and life-saving support to our Region's most vulnerable 365 days a year.

In York Region hundreds of families, youth and adults experience homelessness each year, and in an affluent Region like ours, we simply can't accept this.

For close to four decades, the amazing staff and volunteer team at Blue Door has been working hard to make sure

everyone in York Region has a safe and supportive place to call home. Operating 102 of the 160 emergency beds available, Blue Door is the largest emergency housing provider in York Region working to support our Region's most vulnerable with wrap-around supports and a goal of helping them to secure long term housing.

Last year Blue Door supported 602 households with accommodations and supports, and while we are proud of this accomplishment, we know there is much more to do in the journey to end homelessness. We know that although there will always be a need for emergency housing, a more significant effort needs to be made to prevent homelessness and to help keep people housed once appropriate housing is secured.

With that theme in mind, this year York Region chose Blue Door's Porter Place for an innovative "Diversion" program that prevents homelessness for people seeking shelter by helping them identify immediate alternate housing arrangements and, if necessary, connecting them with



services and financial assistance to help them return to permanent housing.

Understanding that there is not a “one size fits all” approach to ending homelessness, in 2018, the Blue Door team worked to ensure that individuals experiencing chronic homelessness were referred to appropriate prioritized housing supports. As a result, we witnessed many long-time clients move into Housing First Programs like Home Now and Housing to Health for more specialized supports. Blue Door’s client-centred approach led to 354 households to find permanent housing over the past year.

While we are proud of our work in the past year, we did not do it alone. Working with our many volunteers, community partners and funders we were able to make a difference in the lives of many. One of our amazing volunteers, Giuliana, came up with an innovative children’s program called the “Bunny Club” that she leads a few days per week, providing parents with much needed time to search for housing.

It’s been a wonderful year at Blue Door, and with our exciting new change in leadership at the CEO and Board level, we are embarking on innovative and new

opportunities as we launch a new strategic plan with a focus on progress and change in our tireless efforts to end homelessness. We pledge to work even harder and smarter in 2019 to make sure everyone has a safe, affordable and supportive place to call home.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Braithwaite'.

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**Michael Braithwaite**  
*Chief Executive Officer*



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tracy Porter'.

---

**Tracy Porter**  
*Chair of the Board of Directors*

# A SAFE *Place*

Housing to Health is a collaborative partnership with LOFT Crosslinks Housing and Support Services and the Krasman Centre that offers comprehensive services for those experiencing chronic and episodic homelessness. Staff help to house individuals while also providing a range of supports to improve the quality of life and increase the potential for successful long-term tenancies. It uses a Housing First approach that provides access to housing and wraparound supports.

The collaborative continually supports up to 30 individuals with case management and peer support. Participants continue to report positive outcomes from being involved in the program. These include; improved social participation, decrease in hospitalizations, and increased ability to live independently.



A stable housing environment is an important factor to a person's wellbeing.

H2H tenants have a safe place to call **HOME.**

The Housing First model implemented in other communities has shown to:



### **INCREASE HOUSING STABILITY**

*... which translates to more reliable rents for landlords.*



### **IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE & HEALTH**

*... by providing support service to the individual.*

### Working towards **stability**

Originally from Barrie, Janet was forced to begin couch surfing after a family breakdown that left her homeless. It would be a few months of uncertainty and instability before Janet was able to secure a bed at a women's shelter in York Region. Once there she worked with a Housing Worker and was able to secure a room in a rooming house. That same housing worker referred her to our Housing to Health program for continued support.

When we first began working with Janet she explained that she had lost many of her belongings and as a result was struggling without basic household items. The Housing to Health team was able to provide Janet with basic furniture including a mattress, dresser, microwave, dishes, and kitchen and cleaning supplies. To help with groceries and travel, Janet was also provided with vouchers and YRT bus tickets.

After several conversations, Janet revealed to staff that she struggled heavily with depression and hadn't seen a psychiatrist in a long time. She expressed feelings of guilt and shame because she couldn't provide for her children and give them a safe place to call home. The team set up weekly meetings with Janet to provide counselling and also connected her to a psychiatrist. Janet began opening up more and working hard to strategically manage her mental health and her housing.

Janet came to the Housing to Health team sometime later and expressed an interest in applying for work. One of the people in her house worked at Tim Hortons and she thought that working would be a good option for her and allow her to be off of social assistance. Our Peer Support worker helped her write her resume and prepare for the interview. Despite being nervous, Janet was successful in securing a position.

A year later, Janet had maintained her housing and her employment. Now she was ready to reach out to her family. She wanted to have her children visit her, so they could re-connect and see the progress she had made. Her youngest son began visiting regularly and even stayed the night. She was thrilled that she was able to provide a safe space for her child. Janet let the team know that she was finally feeling like a mother again.

After two years of housing stability and steady employment, Janet made the decision to move out of the rooming house and find an apartment of her own. She was able to secure an apartment and was overwhelmed on moving day. She would finally have privacy and the comfort of her own kitchen.

Over the last summer, Janet bought a car. With the help of our housing stability coordinator, she was able to budget her finances and manage her responsibilities. She continues to work, but now is passionate about giving back. Her goal is to become a Peer Support Worker, so she can help others the way she was helped. Janet will use her story to help others realize their full potential. She proved to herself that no matter the situation you are in, with a little help from others and strong determination you can change your reality.



# HOUSING *Families*

The Leeder Place Housing Retention Program supports families to maintain long-term housing stability.

## **LEEDER PLACE**

Leeder Place is the only emergency housing facility for families experiencing homelessness in York Region and can accommodate 60 individuals or 15 families. In 2018, Blue Door provided accommodation and supports to 128 families at Leeder Place, assisting 102 families into permanent housing.

Key circumstances where residents requested wraparound supports and resources included housing, mental health, skills enhancement/education, protection from intimate partner violence, settlement, and legal support.

Child and youth supports are offered to children at Leeder Place and include school assessments, breakfast club, homework club, field trips, school supplies, accompaniment to school appointments, monthly birthday parties, health information, and much more.

## **Bunny Club at Leeder**

This year saw the addition of our volunteer-led Bunny Club program at Leeder Place. Using the Framework for Ontario Early Childhood Settings, the program supports preschool-aged children staying at Leeder Place with activities that encourage healthy development of social, emotional, cognitive, gross motor, and fine motor skills.

The program has been a great success. While the preschool children are supported with programming, the families are able to dedicate this time towards housing stability. Between August and December, the program received 195 visits, averaging at least two children per day that the program was available.



## Keep moving forward

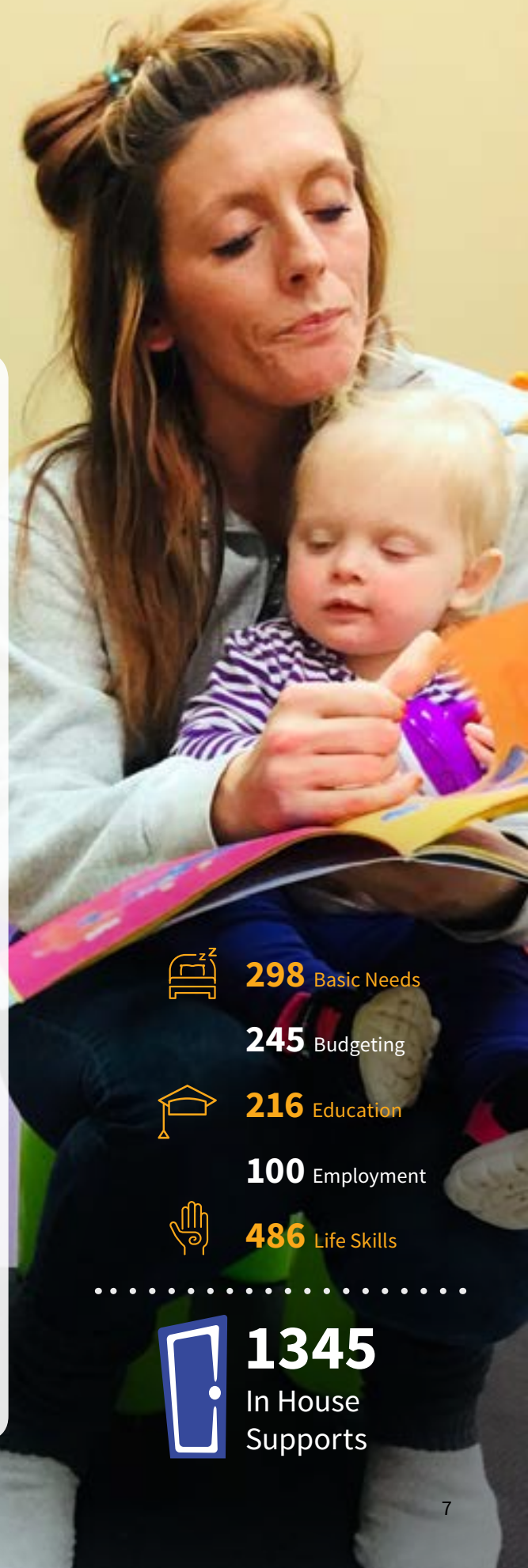
After losing their housing as a result of mental health struggles and substance abuse, Kelly and Colin found themselves at Blue Door in November of 2017. Combined with losing the place they called home, shortly after arriving at Leeder Place, Kelly and Colin's two young children (aged one and two at the time) were apprehended.

Kelly and Colin were desperate to make changes in their lives so that they could be reunited with their children. The changes started with small steps. First, staff helped Kelly and Colin to re-establish a connection with Addiction Services. This gave them access to weekly counselling, where they worked on tackling their addictions and finding strategies to better manage their mental health.

Over time, they began to realize that with help, they could gain some stability. Staff connected them with housing resources on a daily basis. With encouragement and persistence, they were approved for the Home Now program. This gave them a subsidy to help with cost and case-management supports, which provide ongoing assistance. On December 11th 2018, Kelly and Colin moved into their new place.

Kelly and Colin continue to meet with Addiction Services and a Krasman support worker on a weekly basis. Kelly has also found support through the Umbrella program, which helps young mothers struggling with substance abuse. They have even returned to Leeder Place to facilitate groups that create dream catchers for staff and clients. Each day is a choice to keep moving forward and maintain stability.

Most notably, Kelly and Colin have gained supervised access to their children. They continue to work hard to manage their addictions and mental health, in the hopes of eventually bringing their children home.



**298** Basic Needs

**245** Budgeting



**216** Education

**100** Employment



**486** Life Skills



**1345**  
In House  
Supports



# HOUSING *Men*

Porter Place begins piloting a diversion program, in partnership with York Region, to prevent homelessness.

## **PORTER PLACE**

Porter Place is the only emergency housing facility for men experiencing homelessness in York Region and can serve 30 individuals. Blue Door provided accommodation and supports to 328 individuals at Porter Place in 2018 and assisted 186 individuals into permanent and transitional housing for the same period.

Our Housing Retention Program has continued to support individuals moving into housing navigate potential issues that could lead to eviction by providing consistent follow-up supports and connections to community resources that further contribute to longer- term housing stability.

With the development of the York Region Community By Name List Table, the Porter team has worked diligently to ensure that individuals experiencing chronic homelessness are properly referred to prioritized housing supports. As a result, we have hence seen many long-time clients move into Housing First Programs like Home Now and Housing to Health for more specialized supports.

The highest service requests include housing procurement, counseling for substance use, mental health, financial stability, and general health.

## Making positive changes

*“He is thriving in his environment, where he works well with supports and receives the encouragement and advocacy that all individuals deserve”*

A 65 year old client came to Porter Place with some serious health concerns and a very limited income. Staff quickly found out that this client had no family left in Canada. Blue Door was his only place to go after losing his home.

He expressed to staff the need to live in supportive housing; he could no longer live on his own and greatly desired extra support. Finding housing can be an arduous process, but finding supportive housing for this client was compounded by the fact that he had never lived in York Region before. As a result of this, he was not eligible for supportive living.

This was discouraging for both the client and our staff. While continuing to advocate for supportive housing for this client, staff assisted him in his application for Old age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement to increase his monthly income. By boosting his income, the client was able to feel a greater sense of security and began working with the housing retention worker.

Through diligent advocacy from staff, eventually an exception was made for the client and he was accepted into LOFT supportive housing, one of our community partners. The client was very grateful and felt that he could now make positive and lasting changes to maintain his housing.

The client has remained at LOFT supportive housing. He is thriving in his environment, where he works well with supports and receives the encouragement and advocacy that all individuals deserve.

**80** Mental Health



**146** Addictions

**276** Housing Supports



**124** Health/Medical

**184** Financial

**10** Education



**50** Employment

**125** Legal



**135** Transportation



**916**  
Referral  
Supports



# HOUSING *Youth*

Kevin’s Place now offers a Housing Retention program to help youth achieve housing stability.

## **KEVIN’S PLACE**

Located in Newmarket, Blue Door’s emergency housing services for youth offers a supportive environment for up to 12 male youth at a time. Over the year, Blue Door provided accommodation and supports to 146 individuals at this location and successfully housed 66 youth into permanent housing.

This year we added an Intensive Case Management Program to complement our existing Housing and Housing Retention Supports. Together, our programs provide support for youth in housing placement, housing retention, and homelessness prevention.

We also piloted a three month Peer Mentorship Program which was a great success. Raymond joined our team over the summer and worked with youth using a peer recovery approach. Building relationships through common lived experience helped enhance our engagement with clients.

Our sports court was also upgraded, allowing the space to be better used as a multisport space.

Essential client supports range from housing procurement, financial stability, general health, substance use, and supportive counseling to address a variety of trauma.

## Resilience and **determination**

This past summer, a sixteen-year-old was dropped off at the shelter by his parents. This client had never been in a shelter or experienced homelessness before and was very afraid to be at Kevin's Place.

His family was experiencing conflict and as a result he was unable to stay there. He didn't have any family or friends to stay with and felt further afraid because he had no access to money.

With no-one else to turn to, this client accepted help from our staff. He quickly secured a job and enrolled in high school. After gaining some stability and creating a routine, he was eager to find a place of his own, where he could establish some independence.

Within two months, this client moved into a house with roommates. He was connected with counselling and family mediation to help improve his relationships with his family. With help from staff, this client was accepted into CAS care under the VYSA act. This ensures a secured income and continual support through CAS. This client continues to work with the housing retention worker to stay housed.

After being thrust into a situation where he had no experience, he showed immense resilience and determination. The ability to accept help and support is sometimes difficult, but this client was able to create meaningful relationships where he felt safe enough to accept help. Maintaining healthy relationships with his family and others continues to be important to this client in his quest for independence.

### Housing Supports



**126** Housing Support Plans



**111** Housing Appointments



**66** Youth Housed

# WRAP AROUND *Supports*

EMS health assessments

Eviction prevention

Addictions support (ASYR)

Interpreter services

Housing Startup

Employment Startup

Job skills training

Landlord/tenant mediation

Youth Speak Peer Workshops

Education support

Footcare Clinic

Streamline access intake

Asset mapping

Cooking on a low budget

Ontario Works Social Assistance

Blue Door offers a comprehensive set of services and supports to assist clients to transition from homelessness to home. These supports foster the creation of connections with organizations beyond our doors and provide ongoing support as clients are transitioned into the community.

Job search and  
employment  
recruitment

Mental health

Art  
Groups

Yoga and wellness

Street  
outreach  
and harm  
reduction

Music and  
leadership

Addictions counseling

Peer support

Public health programs:  
Tobacco Cessation, Healthy Babies  
Healthy Children, Sexual Health  
Counseling and Testing,  
Naloxone Training

*"People may forget what you said  
did. but people will never forg*

# *Word on the* **STREET**

**"Thank you from the  
bottom of our hearts!  
We will miss you all..."**

**"We just can't thank you all enough for  
all the amazing hope and support and  
love you all have shown us!"**

**"Things are looking  
up for my little  
family, and I am  
grateful!"**





*d. and people may forget what you  
get how you made them feel.”*

-Maya Angelou

“You all have touched us in a way I can’t even explain!”

.....  
“All around, we are doing much better. Thank you for helping us...”

.....  
“We appreciate your effort towards the education of our children and most importantly towards our accommodation.”

“Thank you for everything you have done for us. Wish you the best for all of you, bless you! *Adios Amigos!*”

Follow us to see what we are saying, what we are doing and how we are making people feel!



@BlueDoorShelter



Blue Door Shelters



# OUR Volunteers

Volunteers are the most critical resource community organizations have. The ability of people to work willingly together for the betterment of their community and themselves is a valuable resource. Blue Door receives tremendous support from individuals or groups of various corporations, local businesses and, community groups.

Blue Door is deeply appreciative of the many contributions our amazing volunteers have provided to our agency, the men, women, youth, and children we serve. Through the heartfelt generosity of our volunteers, they assist the agency and its clients with the following:

- Haircuts
- Donation Sorting
- Food Services
- Employment Assistance
- Gardening
- Story Time and Crafts
- Children’s Birthday Parties
- Newmarket Charitable Gaming Association
- Student Placements
- Financial Literacy

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2018

**Lynn Mahoney**  
*President*

**Tracy Porter**  
*Secretary*

**Marianne Marando**  
*Member*

**Lawrence Chi**  
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*Member*

**Susan Pearce**  
*Member*

**Martin Dunstan**  
*Treasurer*

**Liana Sidze**  
*Member*

A man with a goatee, wearing a grey suit jacket, white shirt, and grey bow tie, is looking off to the right. He is standing at an outdoor event with many people seated in the background. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting daytime.

## Never let your **fire** burn out

My name is Brendan Kraft. I am currently volunteering at Blue Door to give back to the organization that once helped my Mother and me when I was 17 years old. Before coming to Blue Door, I grew up living in nearly 15 different houses within various cities around Ontario such as Toronto, Scarborough, Ajax, Pickering, King City, Aurora, and Newmarket. I had been passed around multiple family members from a very young age including my Aunt, Father, Uncle, Grandmother, and Mother. I moved back with my mother at the age of 17 after nearly nine years of not living with her, and at the time she was in an abusive relationship living with an aggressive drug addict. Following two months living there, I convinced my mother to leave her boyfriend and wound up at Leeder Place. Blue Door gave me an opportunity to save money with my part-time job, and after three months my mother and I had saved enough for an apartment.

While working part-time to pay bills and going to high school full time, I finally graduated and began applying for higher paying jobs than the one I had. I managed to secure a position selling cars at a dealership at the age of 19. Following this, I chose to go to college where I began cutting hair, as a barber in my friend's basement, part-time for extra cash. Eventually, I moved back with my father and started paying rent while working at a barbershop that I would go on to manage. A couple of years later, I was offered an opportunity to work for an HR recruitment company through a family friend on a commission basis. So I started working at the barber shop on weekends and recruiting full time during the week. After one year at the company, I was the top-earning consultant for eight years in a row, until I chose to start my own recruitment company which I have operated for the past seven years working with some fun clients like Facebook, Walmart, Canadian Tire and Air Transat.

I was once given the following advice that I have lived by for over 15 years:

**“Take all of the bad things, sad things, angry things that you have felt in your life and use them as fuel to burn a fire of positive change in your life, and never let your fire burn out.”**

Currently, I live in Barrie, Ontario with my wife Tracey and we have four beautiful children. Now that my life has had a change of pace, I wanted to give back to a place that helped me and my mother nearly 20 years ago (Blue Door), lend a hand, and share my experiences with anyone that it may assist.

# ENGAGING WITH *Community*



## The value of research: Discovering causes and tackling the effects

Blue Door worked with several organizations and personnel to support the publication of *Leaving Home: Youth Homelessness in York Region*. This report focused on the barriers to secure housing that are present for youth in York Region. It highlighted the compounding issues that often contribute to homeless status, including financial instability, family conflict, mental health, and addictions. Blue Door was listed as one of the key community resources for housing support in York Region within the report. Education and increasing awareness is one of the first steps to tackling homelessness and we are happy to contribute to academic reports that break down stigmas and highlight current statistics.

“I **never knew** we had that much poverty in York Region”

- Student in York Region

“We have a better **understanding** of the program, and how it can help”

- Student in York Region

“The speech helped me realize that a high proportion of our population are having **problems with their housing** and minimum living spending”

- Student in York Region

## Breaking down barriers and educating our youth

Along with our daily efforts to provide housing resources and supports to our clients, we also care deeply about engaging with our community. Our team spoke with high school students this past November about the work we do at Blue Door. Engaging with young people in our community helps to increase education and understanding while dismantling barriers.



## Financial Snapshot

### REVENUES

	2018	2017
Government (Federal, Provincial, Municipal)	4,127,041	3,921,445
United Way	372,597	372,588
Donations/Fundraising	208,386	224,694

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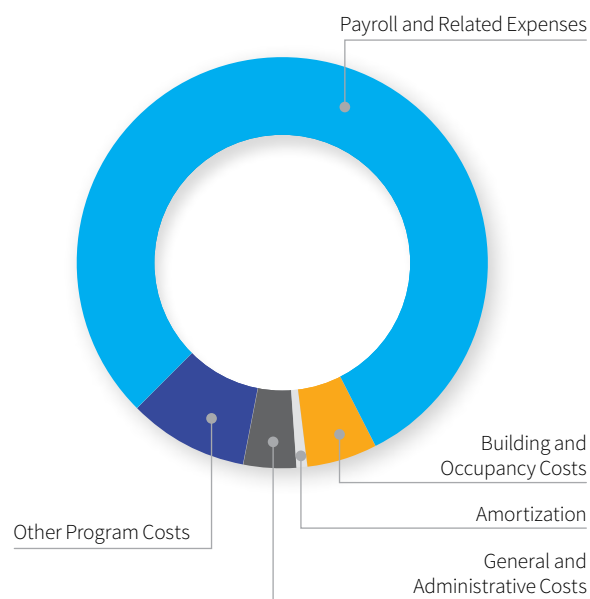
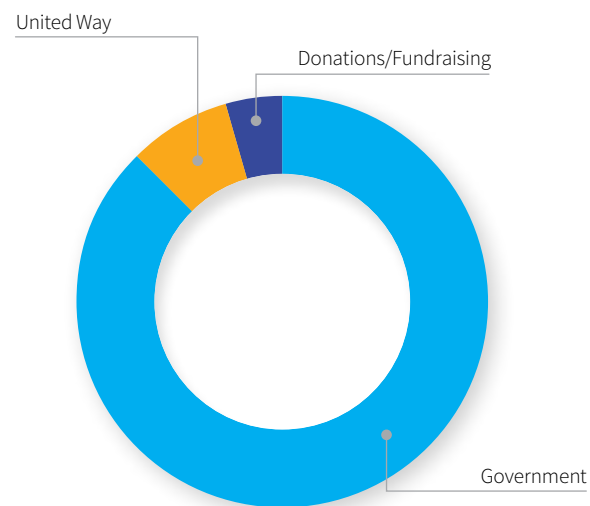
**Total Revenues** **4,708,024** **4,518,727**

### EXPENDITURES

	2018	2017
Payroll and Related Expenses	3,730,187	3,408,562
Building and Occupancy Costs	259,794	259,646
Amortization	41,462	43,257
General and Administrative Costs	186,636	196,883
Other Program Costs	438,715	494,218

---

**Total Expenses** **4,656,794** **4,402,566**



# Our Supporters

Acknowledging with sincere gratitude, the significant contributions made by the generous and proud supporters of Blue Door who contribute to everyday successes and growth. This list includes those who provided financial or in-kind support of \$1000 or more in 2018.

Bingo World Newmarket

Cambria Design Build Ltd.

Country Toy Tea

Green Shield Canada

H.O.P.E. club at ISNA High School

Inscape

John Howard Society of York Region

Johnson & Johnson

Little Caesars, Newmarket

Motorola Solutions Foundation

Music Aurora

O'Mally's Catering

Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy

Resource Thrift Shop, Bradford

Riverside Natural Foods Ltd.

Robert Bahlieda

Ron Van Noort

Royal Canadian Legion

St. Elizabeth Seton Parish

St. John Chrysostom Parish

The Dunin Foundation

The Home Depot Canada Foundation

The Renoir Resident's Council

The Tenaquip Foundation

Truckstop.com Canada Ltd.

Whole Foods, Leaside

Zehrs, Bradford

**THANK YOU!**



## Thank You

We greatly value the generous support of:





*imagine foto*  
photography by evelyn

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East Gwillimbury, ON, L9N 0C5

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