

St. Matthew's Bracondale House

Donor Report 2020



Published June 2021

THANK YOU

A message of thanks from our Executive Director

This past year was dramatic for everyone. The pandemic brought about unprecedented challenges creating much fear and uncertainty around the world. This was especially the case for the more vulnerable populations and the organizations serving them.

I am proud of the work done by our staff and volunteers who rose to the challenge and adapted to continue offering programs and services to our residents and community members. This invaluable work would not have been possible were it not for the continued support and commitment of our donors, funders and partners. It was your support that positioned Bracondale to respond so effectively.

Though rife with challenges, 2020 was a year of much growth and development for Bracondale. The pandemic made a strong case for the necessity of programs and services like the ones we offer. Many of our seniors faced traumatic experiences of isolation and counted on our programs to keep them mentally engaged, physically fit, and socially connected. Unable to leave their apartments, they relied on our health and social support services, like our meal deliveries, grocery shopping, and personal care services. The importance of this work was undeniable.

The pandemic was also a catalyst for innovation. We had to find creative solutions to better serve the needs of our seniors. This led to the creation of programs like the *SAS Virtual Program* and the *Zoom Family Video Calls*. We were fortunate to receive funding through the United Way of Greater Toronto to procure new iPads and other necessary technology to make these programs possible. The greater reliance on computers and communication devices also meant that we had to augment our tech support and education, which led to an

overall increase in tech literacy amongst our seniors. Looking to the future, we are building on the work started in 2020 and are investing in new projects like our SAS Virtual Lecture Series and the Bracondale Garden Project.

We are especially grateful to the individuals and businesses who continued to donate despite so much economic uncertainty. The pandemic put a stop to many of our fundraising events and their absence was felt. At the height of the first wave, the City of Toronto had to cancel The Toronto Challenge, our largest fundraising event of the year. In 2019, Bracondale raised over \$12,000 in pledges from businesses and individuals through the Toronto Challenge. The funds and community spirit raised by events like these were sorely missed. Fortunately, our *Christmas Appeal* was a great success confirming the strength of our community. We were particularly struck by the generosity shown by so many Community Members from SAS who wanted to demonstrate their appreciation for the programs and ensure their continuation.

The support and commitment of our donors, funders and partners plays an integral role in sustaining our wonderful community. Everyday, I see the difference your support makes in the lives of seniors. I see it in the fine work being done by our dedicated staff and volunteers, and expressions of gratitude of our seniors. The impact you make is inspiring and humbling. With your generous support Bracondale will continue to provide programs and services that enable seniors to live healthy and vibrant lives, living independently while embraced by the warmth of our supportive community.

Susan DesLauriers

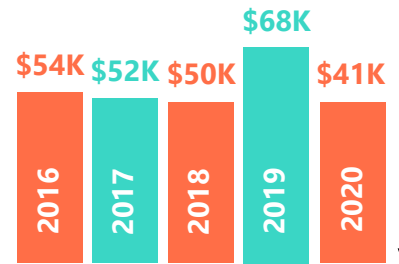
Executive Director

St. Matthew's Bracondale House

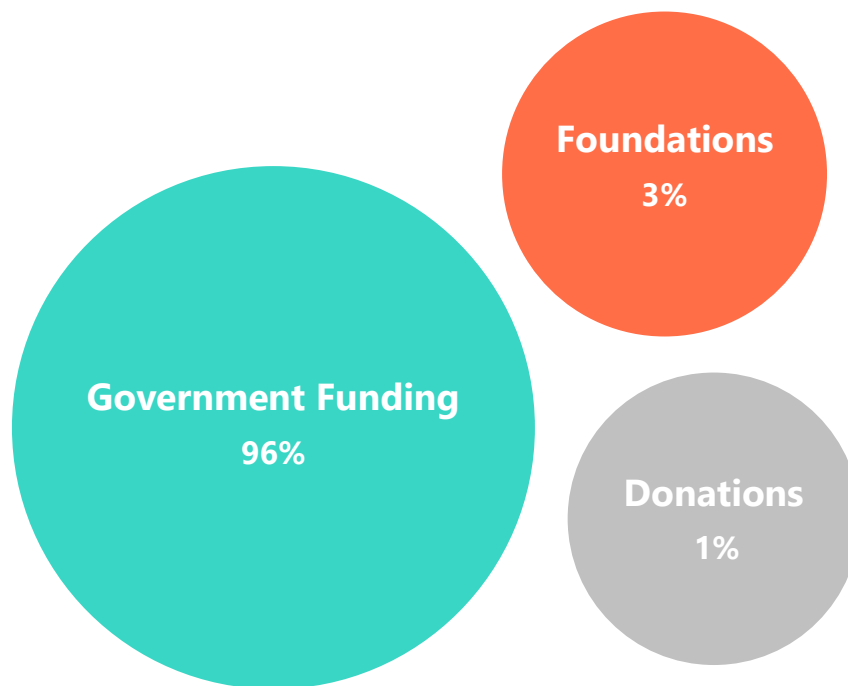
Funding Sources

\$1,124,996

Total funding
for 2020



Last five years
of fundraising



128 donors

\$10,700 in donations

Foundation Grants

Foundation grants strengthen our organization and help make the creation of new innovative programs and services possible.

\$30,545 in grants

\$5,000	D.H. Gordon Foundation
\$5,000	The Nikita Foundation
\$4,000	The Norman & Margaret Jewison Foundation
\$1,000	United Church of Canada Mission Support Grant
\$15,545	United Way of Greater Toronto

Government Funding

Government of Canada

Canada Summer Jobs



Government of Ontario

Ontario Health:
Toronto Region



Ministry for Seniors
& Accessibility



City of Toronto

Community Service
Partnership Program



Shelter Housing &
Support Administration

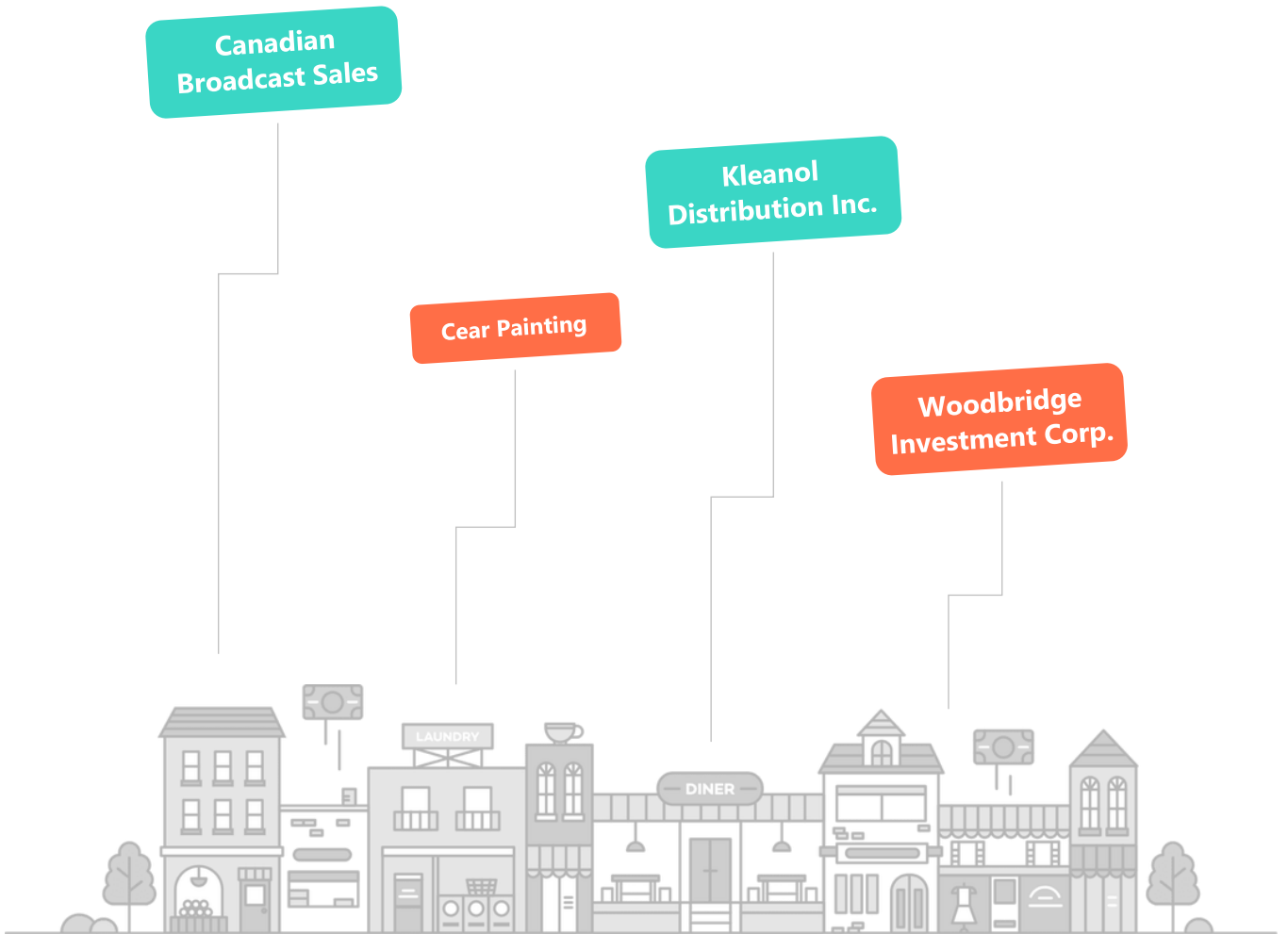


AdvantAge Ontario
Dr. Claudio Borgono (Family Doctor)
Canadian Hearing Services
Christie Pharmacy
CRA (Income Tax Clinics)
Ontario Community Support Association
Ontario Health
Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association
St. Matthew's United Church
Wychwood Presbyterian Church

Our Partners

Our **partners** play an important role in making Bracondale the vital community hub that it is. We value their contributions and all the years they have worked with us to help improve the lives of our seniors.

OUR DONORS



BUSINESS DONORS

Individual DONORS

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Olga Alzate
Subbaraman Anantha
Lynette Assness
Christopher Bee
Gheza Benjung
Ivan & Larisa Bogatyrev
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Doreen Vanini
Lori Walters
Miriam Watkins
Judy Watt-Watson
Gillian Watts
Margaret Welsh
Robert Wepler
Jean Williams
Kathleen Williams
Pearline Wisdom
Elizabeth Young

Tenant Snapshot

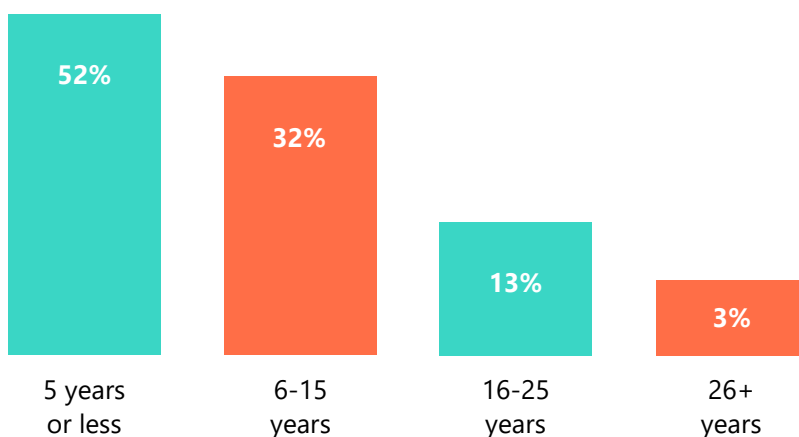
Our **tenants** are seniors who want to retain their independence while living in a supportive community.
75% are low-income seniors.

“

We really enjoy living at Bracondale. Thank you for all the services and activities for us and the seniors here. It really is a big family atmosphere thanks to the hard work and dedication of all of you.

Quong Pham
Bracondale Resident

”



LENGTH OF TIME AT BRACONDAL



Median Income

Seniors: **\$19,361** Families: **\$20,441**

6,642 Lunches



2,595 Dinners



9,237 Meals Served



20,395 Attendance Days

22 Meals Per Day

40 New Referrals

Congregate Dining

Our **Congregate Dining** program is an affordable alternative to home cooking open to residents and community members. Our program boasts over 45 different menu items and is a great way to meet other seniors and enjoy a tasty meal.

WE'VE GONE FRESH!

We've committed to making all our meals from scratch using fresh ingredients. No more precooked frozen meals.

“

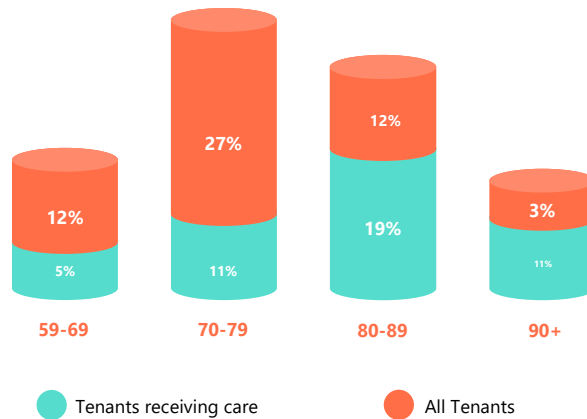
The Supportive Housing Program is a big relief for me.

— *Rosetta Spring*
Bracondale Resident

”

Supportive Housing

Our **Supportive Housing Services** help our seniors feel safe and supported while still being able to live independently in their own homes.



AGE OF TENANTS RECEIVING CARE

70 Clients Served



23,880 Resident Days

A **resident day** is when a client receives one or more supportive housing services in the same calendar day.

Supportive Housing Services

- 24-hour emergency response and security checks
- Medication reminders
- Assistance with personal care:
 - Showers
 - Dressing
 - Grooming
- Referral to community services
- Assistance with navigating the health care system
- Light meal preparation
- Meal delivery
- Laundry
- Grocery Shopping

Program Impact

Immediate Impact

- Retain independence while receiving support services
- Age in place
- Maintain quality of life
- Remain socially connected reducing social isolation
- Access to referrals and information about services in the community

Long-Term Impact

- Prolong independent living
- Age with respect and dignity

Meet Lyn

In the years I waited for my apartment at Bracondale I was not sure that I could be happy living in a small apartment, however, after moving here 18 months ago I am thrilled to have been able to get into this building. I am well settled here and have found that the friendly manner I have been welcomed in has made living here peaceful and charming.

The Supportive Housing Services extended to the residents are wonderful and done in a very caring and understanding manner. During COVID we have been given much support and assistance with our groceries being ordered and delivered, the ability to order meals from the kitchen for lunch or dinner.

Our PSW's are quite amazing and caring, have a wonderful attitude, and assist wherever needed. The day-to-day social interactions with everyone have made COVID restrictions easier to bare—even though social distances are still being adhered to. Before retiring I was sceptical about moving but Bracondale has made my transition very easy and I'm sorry I didn't move here before.



SENIOR ADULT SERVICES

ACTIVE LIVING CENTRE

Our active living centre offers a variety of recreational and social programs. Membership extends beyond our residents and is open to Community Members for a fee. Community Members come from all over Toronto.

There is an invaluable social component to our SAS program. In addition to offering recreational and fitness classes to seniors, SAS provides seniors with the opportunity to socialize and forge new friendships. Since joining Bracondale in 2019, the program has been instrumental in our organization's mission to combat social isolation and foster a sense of community that extends to seniors living throughout the city. In 2020, this vital role was felt more strongly than ever.

In March, the COVID-19 pandemic put all of our in-person programs on indefinite hold. Safety was our number one priority, but our members greatly missed their classes and the regular opportunity to socialize with their friends. With everyone observing the mandated social distancing measures, the experience of social isolation drastically increased for everyone. Stuck at home, people were feeling the need to socialize more than ever.

In June, we launched the SAS Virtual Program in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Classes were offered using the Zoom meetings platform. This allowed our seniors to continue to stay healthy and socially connected from the safety of their homes. The program began with a modest 50 individuals. It quickly grew over the summer and by year's end we had over 100 participants.

Launching the virtual program was a challenge for everyone involved: staff, instructors, and of course our members. Many of our seniors had a very limited working knowledge of the required technology and needed regular assistance and training sessions. This turned the two-person SAS team into an on-demand tech support team. In addition to this, SAS also loaned out exercise equipment to make it easier for our members to workout from home. Since the largest number of participants are Community Members,

the launch involved a considerable amount of socially distanced tech training visits and equipment deliveries, in addition to many hours of telephone support.

In September, we were awarded a COVID relief grant from the United Way of Greater Toronto to improve our digital infrastructure. This funding allowed us to procure a fleet of 12 iPads and other relevant equipment to make participation in the virtual program more accessible. Residents could also borrow the iPads for the day to download eBooks from the Toronto Public Library, play games, FaceTime with family, read news, surf the web, or binge on YouTube. The iPads have been an important asset to the program.

Looking back on the year, we are proud to say that the SAS Virtual Program has truly been a success. Though it can't compare to our in-person programs, it has been a blessing. We are regularly reminded by our members of the positive impact this program has on their day-to-day living during the pandemic. The program continues to grow and our membership is now on par with our best pre-pandemic numbers. The unanimously positive response has been a catalyst for expansion and innovation and we are now offering several educational lecture series and two new classes in 2021.

2020 was an extremely difficult year, especially for seniors. Yet, from this tumultuous year filled with so much uncertainty, SAS's brave and adventurous seniors learned a little something more about computers, iPads, and Smartphones. And as we found ways to make the most of life under very limiting social restrictions, we also came to appreciate the strength and value of our community.

Brian Maxwell

SAS Program Coordinator

Betty Jerez

SAS Program Supervisor

Meet Gert



I've been attending SAS for the past ten years, and my enthusiasm for the benefits they've afforded me is enormous. The SAS programs are extremely important to my well-being both with respect to my osteoporosis issues and as a counter to the social isolation imposed by the current situation. The unparalleled professionalism and leadership (including a sense of humour and an infinite capacity for patience) displayed by every member of the team are key to SAS's continued success. The transition from in-person instruction to on-line presentation, so necessary in these COVID-constrained times, was smooth and has allowed me to continue with my health routine and remain connected with friends. The sense of community afforded by SAS and its highly structured and intelligently focused programs of this nature cannot possibly be over-estimated.

SAS VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

- Tai Chi
- Watercolour Art
- Gentle Yoga
- Gentle Chair Yoga
- Stretch & Relax
- People & Current Events
- Functional Fitness
- Dancercise
- Gentle Fitness
- Osteoporosis Fitness
- BeFit! (Aerobics)
- Pilates
- Friday Hispanic Seniors Club
- Holiday Telephone Chat Room
- Educational Lecture Series
- Telephone Reassurance
- Virtual Lecture Series

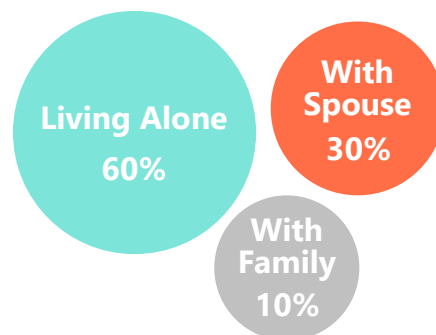


+200 MEMBERS
IN 2020

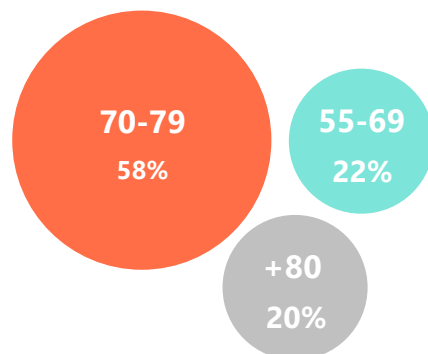


+1,000 PROGRAMS
HOURS IN 2020

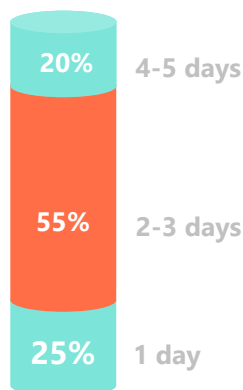
LIVING ARRANGEMENTS



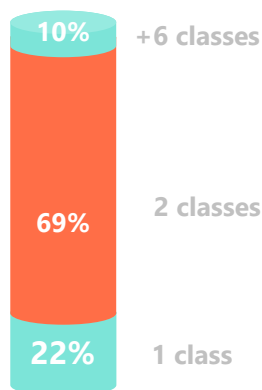
AGE RANGE



ATTENDANCE PER WEEK



CLASSES PER WEEK



iPad Loan Program



The pandemic forced everyone to be more reliant on communication technology to connect with loved ones and engage in rewarding and entertaining activities. As a result of this, our existing *iPad Loan Program* experienced a significant growth in popularity amongst our seniors.

More of our seniors borrowed iPads to surf the web, participate in our *SAS Virtual Program*, video call friends and family, stream movies and videos, read eBooks, play games, read news, or simply just surf the web.

Many of our seniors are low-income and do not have access to the required devices to participate in the digital sphere and experience

all that it has to offer. Our *iPad Loan Program* is instrumental in our endeavour to keep our seniors connected and engaged with the world outside of their apartments, while also addressing the *digital divide* amongst our more low-income senior population.

Last September, the United Way of Greater Toronto awarded us with the *Emergency Community Support Fund* to improve our digital infrastructure. This funding allowed us to procure a fleet of 12 iPads and other relevant equipment to make participation in programs more accessible. The iPads have been an important asset to the program, one which our seniors deeply appreciate and will enjoy for years.

Zoom Family Video Calls

One of the great ways we are keeping our residents connected is through our *Family Video Calls* program. Using our iPads, tenants can meet with family and friends for a video call on Zoom.

Many of the family and loved ones of our seniors live outside of the city or abroad. During the pandemic, their sense of separation from them was exacerbated. Even for those whose

families live in the city, lockdowns and social distancing measures prevented them from visiting. The social isolation our seniors experienced was profoundly challenging and has put a strain on their mental health.

Through the *Family Video Calls* program, our seniors can reconnect with family, seeing and hearing them in real-time.

Thanks to Bracondale's Family Video Calls program, I got to talk to my son and see and hear my newborn baby grandson.

I was so happy to have been able to do so. I'm so grateful to Bracondale staff for helping arrange my video call with my son in Germany.

— Jean





Bracondale

Garden Project

In the summer of 2020, an enthusiastic group of resident volunteers worked in a small section of our courtyard planting flowers, herbs and vegetables. The small gardening club was a way for our seniors to safely enjoy the outdoors during the pandemic, and was a much needed respite after having spent so much time stuck indoors on their own.

The benefits of our small gardening club were many. Our gardeners were able to relieve stress and anxiety, and the satisfying work gave them a lift in morale, making them feel empowered and self-sufficient. It also gave them a chance to socialize, something many of our seniors have not been able to freely enjoy during the pandemic. Practicing social distancing, they could work as a team, planning, planting and tilling the soil together. The fresh produce they cultivated was given to residents for free and was also used in our congregate dining program. Our team of gardeners made the courtyard a truly beautiful space where seniors and families could safely visit each other and enjoy the outdoors.

The success of our small garden club revealed an untapped potential for community building. In response to this success, a garden committee comprised of staff and resident volunteers was formed. They quickly began brainstorming a project for the courtyard and drew up a proposal seeking the necessary additional funding. In addition to further developing the existing garden infrastructure, the committee proposed allocating space in the courtyard for an additional gardening zone where a raised vegetable garden could be constructed. This way more of our seniors could enjoy gardening,

and could also collaborate with tenants from the family building. Our community gardeners would be able to grow even more fresh healthy produce for themselves and for our congregate dining meal program. An educational component was also added into the program whereby our gardeners could learn first hand about gardening and healthy eating using the home-grown fresh produce they've planted.

In January of 2021, Bracondale received a special *Senior Active Living Centre Program Grant* from the Ontario Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility. A portion of funds from this grant were put towards the redevelopment of the courtyard gardens. Construction began in the spring.

Our seniors and family tenants are excited and inspired by the prospect of renewing and expanding the garden spaces in our courtyard. Together, seniors and family building tenants will experience the many joys of gardening, strengthening community relationships and fostering a sense of generational interdependence.

The COVID-19 pandemic has produced a stressful atmosphere of fear and uncertainty which has been especially traumatic for many of our seniors. We are grateful we could use our garden for activities that help improve the lives of our seniors and build a stronger sense of community. A garden is a living, breathing thing, and ours is a generous and nurturing member of our community. Its legacy will outlast the cloud of this pandemic giving back to the people of Bracondale for many years to come.

Let's hear from

some of our

gardeners



As a retired agronomist, I am so happy I can continue pursuing my life-long passion by volunteering in our vegetable garden and giving back to my community.

— Jorge

There is something very rewarding and soothing about working with the earth, getting your hands dirty, and watching plants grow.

— Gabriele

A Time

For Giving

Christmas Activities

December is always such a special time here at Bracondale. Though the pandemic created many obstacles for us to celebrate the holidays together, we were determined to spread the holiday cheer by offering holiday themed activities our seniors could enjoy from the safety of their apartments.

In the days leading up to Christmas, our staff and volunteers baked cookies for our residents and delivered them to their apartments. We also offered a special ham or turkey Christmas Dinner on Fridays as part of our congregate dining program.

On Christmas Eve, a generous group of resident volunteers played Santa and distributed small gift bags with masks and chocolates to all of our residents. This small gesture was deeply appreciated by our seniors and went a long way for our more isolated residents.

With the cancellation of our much beloved Christmas Party, and the cloud of the pandemic overhead, we felt the need for a little "something special" to add to the Christmas eggnog, an activity that would heat things up and bring a bit of excitement. The answer was "When Christmas Comes a Knock'n." Residents were invited to decorate the outside of their apartment doors. The competition encouraged tenants to express themselves and share in the holiday spirit with their neighbours. The best three designs were awarded gift cards. The tenants really stepped up to the challenge and put up some very creative Christmas decorations.

Annual Christmas Appeal

Every year we are humbled by the response we receive from our Christmas Appeal. Local businesses, Bracondale residents, and individuals from the community come forward to show their support with a donation as we bring our year of fundraising to a close.

This year, in particular, we were especially moved by the many individual donors from the community. Many of them were Community Members from our active living centre, SAS. Despite these uncertain times, they wanted to demonstrate their appreciation for the work being done to continue offering quality programming during the pandemic.

CBS Community Christmas Gift Bags

In December we collaborated with Canadian Broadcast Services to deliver gift bags to isolated low-income seniors living at Bracondale and out in the community. The gift bags included winter hats, mittens and scarves, self-care bath and body products, chocolates and cookies, and a very cute decorative Christmas Snowman doll.

The holidays can be very lonely for individuals who do not have friends or family to spend them with. Having experienced so much anxiety and loneliness this year, these seniors were deeply moved by this small gesture of kindness and generosity. This is a long-standing tradition SAS brought to Bracondale and we are proud to continue this deeply appreciated community work.

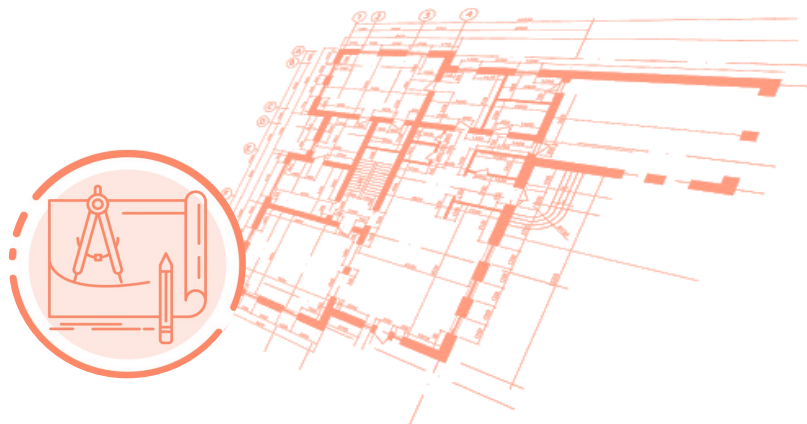


CANADA-ONTARIO COMMUNITY HOUSING INITIATIVE

In the fall of 2020, the City of Toronto put out a call for proposals for the repair and renovation of social housing. Funding was made possible by the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI), a joint federal and provincial government initiative to renew community housing in the province.

As a provider of social housing, Bracondale put forth a proposal to improve the indoor air quality in the basement recreation space, replace the Make Up Air Unit, and make repairs to four bi-level area drains in the courtyard which will protect the underground parking garage for another 15 to 20 years from major leaks. After a review of over 100 requested proposals for funding, Bracondale was selected to receive \$643,000.00 in funding. Work on these projects began in the Spring of 2021.

The renovation project is great news for our programs and community work. Our recreation room is one of the busiest spaces at Bracondale. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the space was used almost every day of the week. Though spacious, the rec-room is located in the basement, does not have windows, and the existing wall mounted air-conditioning units and ceiling fans are antiquated. Our Senior Adult Services Active Living Centre programs are held there, as are community bible study groups and weekend faith services, special events, and on some evenings, it is rented out to community groups. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted a real need for more effective air circulation and we are grateful to receive the required funding to properly address this need.



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