

Toronto Seniors  
Housing Corporation

# Seniors Speak

Fall 2024



# Welcome to the Fall Issue

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## Message from the CEO

### Dear Tenants,

As we approach the end of the year, I wanted to take a moment to extend my heartfelt thanks to each of you. Your stories and photos shared for Seniors Speak have enriched our community, and your feedback throughout the year has been invaluable in guiding our improvements.



We continue to look for new and better ways to support you. As you will read in this issue, we have included some safety and fraud tips, an update on Community Connect+, inspiring tenant stories, photos from the summer BBQs, and much more.

I am delighted to see that there were over 40 tenant-led events held this summer using the Community Activities Fund, with over 4,400 tenants attending. Over sixty events are planned for the rest of the year. This is an incredible achievement for the first year of the Community Activities Fund. These social events could not have happened without the willingness of so many of you to step up and support your communities – thank you. Get ready for the next round of Annual Building Planning Meetings coming in the first three months of 2025. These meetings give you the chance to provide input on what social and recreational activities happen in your building.

I invite you to read about the progress we have made together in this issue. Your contributions continue to make a difference. (Please have a look at the short video we made for National Seniors Day to show our appreciation - [bit.ly/4eWCxKd](https://bit.ly/4eWCxKd))

**Wishing you a safe and healthy fall and upcoming holiday season,**

Tom Hunter

Chief Executive Officer



**Tom Hunter**

**Chief Executive Officer**



# Building community one good deed at a time



**Looking out for others comes naturally to Ed Menezes.** He knows firsthand what it is like to feel isolated and lost having once been homeless.

“I used to be a runner,” he says, running from jobs, relationships, and residences. A series of life events left him homeless, coping with alcohol and recreational drugs, and battling mental health challenges. Eventually, he was able to navigate the housing system which led him to living at Toronto Seniors Housing.

Today, Ed is settled where he is and happy helping tenants. He just celebrated nine years of sobriety. “I’m happy with everything I do not have,” he says. He is now at peace with his life, but it took some time and sacrifices. “I’ve lost a lot of friends who are still in that vicious cycle,” he explains.





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to me”

Ed’s life has truly turned around. Now, he wakes up every day and walks over to McDonald’s before 9 a.m. to enjoy his morning coffee. Then he’s back to the building, attending to tenants and helping them out with whatever they may need. This positive routine has helped him find a new way to live, happily and purposefully. He’s an active tenant volunteer at Woods Manor, where he lives in Etobicoke. “This community means a lot to me,” he says.

“I grew up not far from this building. I sit outside and talk to tenants and whoever comes by. I get questions like ‘can you help me with this?’” Earlier this year, Ed received the LAMP Award of Merit for ‘going the extra mile’ in his community as a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC) Ambassador (<https://norcambassadors.ca/>).

Ed’s acceptance and openness has offered a beacon of hope to others. Having navigated various life changes to get to where he is now, Ed is now able to connect others, looking to turn their life around, with community supports. “The system really helped me,” Ed says. He’s looking forward to continuing to help his community find positive solutions to get out and get more involved.

# Community Connect+ and Community Activities Fund update



The Community Connect+ Implementation Table meets every six weeks to create, plan, and move forward on key activities to strengthen TSHC's tenant engagement approach. The membership includes five tenant volunteers and two staff. Together they defined and proposed the Tenant Volunteer Code of Conduct. They are now working on defining roles and responsibilities for tenant circles and tenant volunteers. This small but dedicated team is also advising on a volunteer learning and development program and activities to support volunteers. We are grateful for their ongoing efforts and invaluable contributions.

Community Connect+ is supported by the Community Activities Fund (CAF) for tenant-led activities. This is the first year for both Community Connect+ and CAF. Tenants are using CAF to host movie nights, games, crafts, and other social events. At the end of September, over \$125,000 was spent on tenant-led events across TSHC. From April to early September, staff supported 44 tenant-led events that saw over 4,400 tenants coming out and getting to know their neighbours. There are now 58 tenant circles that plan and deliver programs in their buildings.

Thank you to all the tenant volunteers for all that they do!



# Senior Tenants Advisory Committee

## update



Members of the Senior Tenants Advisory Committee (STAC) have been very busy guiding the work of TSHC over the summer.

- They gave valuable input on the draft Tenant Volunteer Code of Conduct which was finalized September 30 and will go into effect in the first quarter of 2025.
- They approved their updated Terms of Reference which was co-designed between them and staff.
- STAC also provided input on the draft Human Rights Policy which was approved by the TSHC Board on October 24.
- They provided initial input on the Translation and Interpretation Policy, which will be updated next year.
- They also received a one-year update on the Quality Improvement Projects (QIPs) in September. They were generally pleased with the progress TSHC is making in addressing tenants' concerns. You can track progress on the QIPs on the Strategic Directions Roadmap ([bit.ly/4hdOwF7](https://bit.ly/4hdOwF7))

Before the end of the year, STAC will hear more about the remaining 2024 tenant-led events funded by the Community Activities Fund, TSHC's Partnership Table, and provide input on the 2024/25 STAC recruitment process.

Recruitment for new STAC members will take place between the beginning of December and the end of January. Keep an eye out for posters in your building with details on how to apply.



We continue to rely on and appreciate STAC's support as they represent many tenant voices.

# Toronto Public Library's Digital Literacy Program welcomes new graduates



In June 2022, we partnered with Toronto Public Library (TPL) to boost seniors' digital literacy skills. Community librarians provided regular onsite training and digital literacy programs to seniors in the community rooms of several buildings to help increase digital literacy and social connectedness and reduce loneliness.

The North East Region welcomed its newest group of program graduates this summer at Tam O'Shanter Towers. They were very excited to benefit from the Program and to have training in their building. They enjoyed interacting with other tenants and the community librarians.



## Here is what we learned:



**63%** had no previous internet or computer training

**85%** were comfortable using a computer after training

**80%** enjoyed group training

**70%** would keep in touch with each other after the training

One of the graduates shared her excitement about learning how to use the camera on the Google Translate mobile app on her phone. She can now communicate easier in her native language and read labels at grocery stores.

We look forward to continuing this partnership with TPL and giving more tenants a chance to participate.

Learn more about the **Digital Literacy Program** here:

[bit.ly/3MhT710](https://bit.ly/3MhT710) 



# Be aware of scams: **Work together to stay safe**

It is important to be aware of different types of scams **so you can protect yourself!**

**Phone calls or texts:** They might claim you have won a prize, tell you a family member needs financial help or there is a problem with your bank account.

**Emails or social media messages:** These might seem urgent and say you need to click a link or confirm your information.

**Letters in the mail:** They could look official, like they are from a bank or government agency, asking for your personal details.

**In person:** Someone might offer you a deal that seems too good to be true.

Here are two examples:

**Family Scam:** A scammer calls you, pretending to be a relative in trouble and needing money right away. Do not send money without confirming with your family!



**Phishing Email:** You get an email claiming to be from your bank, asking you to verify your account information by clicking on a link. Do not click on it!

Remember, do not give out personal information over the phone or email unless you are sure who you are talking to. Always verify information with a trusted source.

If you think you have been a victim, report it to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (**1-888-495-8501 - antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca**).



# Your community





at a glance!



# From administrator to author: Meet Linda Williams

Linda Williams has called Janet Magee Manor home for the past 12 years. Raised in Ottawa, Linda moved to Toronto in 1979 after living and working in the United Kingdom, as well as Victoria, British Columbia. She worked in an administrative role in the University of Toronto's Nursing Faculty into the late 1990s, before turning to focus on her creative work full-time.

"It's funny," she says reflecting on her past. "I've always wanted to figure out what I wanted to do, and then

as I got older and more and more into my creativity, that became my career."

And quite a career it has been for someone who started in her 50s. Linda, or LJ Williams as readers may know her, has successfully written and self-published a trilogy. Her debut book, *Salvaging the Heart: Chromium Angel*, is available on Amazon.



"I've always wanted to figure out what I wanted to do, and then as I got older and **more and more into my creativity, that became my career.**"



A lifelong writer, Linda began with poetry as a child. Her creative pursuits are driven by a desire for self-expression. “I’m very curious,” she explains. “I like to learn something different all the time.” Many of her character inspirations come from daily life, including the cover of *Salvaging the Heart*, a visual created from a memory strolling down country roads as a child.

Beyond writing, Linda also dabbles in jewelry making, often showcasing her creations and hosting beadworking workshops in her building. Her advice to fellow tenants is to “seize opportunities to learn something new,” and to pursue what truly pleases them. Having spent much of her life focusing on doing what was expected of her rather than following her passion, she now values the freedom to create. She looks forward to publishing the latest book that she recently finished writing.

Her creative journey is a good example of her belief in following your heart for a fulfilling life.

“seize  
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# Tailgating and piggybacking



You can help keep your community safe. Know the risks associated with **'tailgating'** and **'piggybacking.'**

Tailgating happens when someone follows you in unexpectedly after you open the door. Piggybacking is when you open and hold the door for others to enter. While this may seem nice, you may not know if they are allowed to be in the building. Both actions can have serious safety and security results.

## Keep your community safe



- Always make sure the door closes completely behind you.
- Do not hold the door open for strangers.
- If you notice someone you do not recognize trying to get in the building, report it immediately.
- Do not buzz visitors into the building who are not there to visit you or someone in your household.
- Never lend out your fob or keys.
- Only use the initial of your first name on the lobby directory, doorbell, mailbox, and phone directory to protect your privacy.

Please report any suspicious activity to Toronto Seniors Housing staff immediately or contact the Community Safety Unit at 416-921-2323. In an emergency, **always call 911.**

**Thank you for helping to keep your community safe!**

# Tips for managing conflicts



Living in an apartment in Toronto provides the chance to be around neighbours with many different cultures, experiences, and lifestyles. Sometimes, these differences can lead to conflicts. We partnered with Humber College's Alternative Dispute Resolution Program to bring you the following tips for managing conflicts:

**Here are some tips to help you manage and resolve conflicts:**



## **Talk openly:**

Calmly share how you feel without blaming others. Use "I" statements to express your feelings. For example, say "I am feeling stressed", instead of "You are making me stressed".



## **Listen actively:**

Let the other person share their view. Listening to understand their point of view can help solve the problem.



## **Find common ground:**

Look for solutions that work for both of you. Focus on what you both agree on.



## **Be respectful:**

Stay polite, even when you disagree. Avoid personal insults and stick to the issue.



## **Get help if needed:**

If you can't resolve the issue on your own, you can contact your Seniors Services Coordinator who may have resources to help or can assist you with a referral to mediation services.



## **Be willing to forgive:**

Sometimes letting go of small issues can help keep the peace. Forgiving others helps create a better living environment for all.

# Who to contact and when



**Tenant Support Centre** 416-945-0800

[support@TorontoSeniorsHousing.ca](mailto:support@TorontoSeniorsHousing.ca)

Call or email for everyday and after-hours maintenance and repair requests, questions about your rent or lease, or to make a complaint.

**Community Safety Unit (CSU)** 416-921-2323

**Call to report:**

- security issues
- loitering or trespassing
- noise disturbances
- a parking violation on our property

**For an emergency, always call 911.**



## Your building staff

Available Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Their contact information is posted on the blue bulletin board in your building.

**Seniors Services Coordinator (SSC):** Helps you with any non-maintenance-related service requests or questions, such as rent reviews and referrals to support.

## Maintenance Team

Responsible for repairs in your home, common areas, as well as cleaning and other duties. The team includes:

- **Superintendent:** Leads the team; your first point of contact for any maintenance-related service requests.
- **Custodial Maintenance Person (CMP)**
- **Cleaner/Custodian**



## Your regional staff

- **Regional Operations Manager (ROM):** Oversees regional staff
- **Community Housing Supervisor (CHS):** Supervises the maintenance team
- **Tenant Engagement and Services Supervisor (TESS):** Supervises the tenant support staff, including SSCs

## Community Services Coordinator (CSC):

Works with tenants and community partners to plan and deliver programs and activities in your building and region.

## Emergency and non-emergency community contacts

### **211** [211ontario.ca/contact](https://211ontario.ca/contact)

Information and referral helpline to community, social, government, and non-emergency health services

### **311** [Toronto.ca/311](https://toronto.ca/311)

Information on City services and programs

### **411** [Canada411.ca](https://canada411.ca)

Local directory assistance

### **711** [crtc.gc.ca/eng/phone/acces/mrsrt.htm](https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/phone/acces/mrsrt.htm)

Message Relay Service (MRS) - allows persons with a hearing or speech disability to use the telephone system via a text telephone (TTY) or other device to call persons with or without such disabilities

### **811** [health811.ontario.ca](https://health811.ontario.ca)

Non-Urgent Health Care Telephone Triage Services, formerly Telehealth

### **911** [tps.ca/contact/9-1-1-emergency/](https://tps.ca/contact/9-1-1-emergency/)

Call in case of emergency, such as a fire, a crime in progress, or a life-threatening emergency

# A tribute to Maureen Clohessy



It is with heavy hearts that we share the news about the passing of our former Tenant Board Director, Maureen Clohessy, in early October. Maureen touched the lives of many with her spirit, intelligence, and kindness.

Maureen was fierce, strong, smart, and kind. She was never afraid to speak her mind, ask tough questions, and seek clarity. We were fortunate to have her guidance on the TSHC Board, the Quality and Tenant Engagement Committee, and various other internal committees, including as an original member of the Senior Tenants Advisory Committee. She dedicated her time to advocating for tenants, listening to their concerns, and learning from their experiences.

Our heartfelt condolences go to those near and dear in her life. Her smile, grace, and good humour will be missed by all those she touched.

**We will forever remember Maureen as a compassionate champion and valued member of our TSHC community.**





## Seniors Speak is available in many languages

Call **416-945-0800** to request this document in an alternate language or format.

இந்த ஆவணத்தை வேறு மொழி அல்லது வடிவத்தில் கோர **416-945-0800** ஐ அழைக்கவும்.

Llame al **416-945-0800** para solicitar este documento en otros idiomas o formatos.

Καλέστε το **416-945-0800** για να ζητήσετε αυτό το έγγραφο σε εναλλακτική γλώσσα ή μορφή.

Для запроса этого документа на другом языке или в альтернативном формате позвоните по телефону **416-945-0800**.

Для запиту цього документа іншою мовою або в альтернативному форматі зателефонуйте за номером **416-945-0800**.

다른 언어 또는 형식으로 된 버전은 **416-945-0800** 으로 요청하십시오.

请拨打 **416-945-0800**，以其他语言或格式索取此文档。

Xin gọi **416-945-0800** để yêu cầu có tài liệu này bằng một ngôn ngữ hay bằng một dạng thức thay thế khác.

برای درخواست این اطلاعات به زبان یا فرمت دیگر، با شماره **416-945-0800** تماس بگیرید.

Zadzwoń pod numer **416-945-0800**, aby poprosić o ten dokument w innym języku lub formacie.

Appelez le **416-945-0800** pour demander ce document dans une autre langue ou un autre format

वैकल्पिक भाषा अथवा फॉर्मेटमा आ दस्तावेजनी विनंती करवा माटे **416-945-0800** पर कॉल करो

Ligue para **416-945-0800** para solicitar este documento em um idioma ou formato alternativo

# Stay **connected!**



To stay connected and updated with the news and events of Toronto Seniors Housing, make sure to follow us on social media. You can find us on Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), and LinkedIn. You can also learn more on our website at [TorontoSeniorsHousing.ca](https://torontoseniorshousing.ca).

Want to be featured in an upcoming newsletter? Prefer to get Seniors Speak in your email inbox? Contact us at [SeniorsSpeak@torontoseniorshousing.ca](mailto:SeniorsSpeak@torontoseniorshousing.ca).

## Get in touch

You can call these numbers 24 hours a day, seven days a week, or reach us via email at [support@torontoseniorshousing.ca](mailto:support@torontoseniorshousing.ca).

**Tenant Support Centre:** 416-945-0800

**Community Safety Unit:** 416-921-2323

**Crime Stoppers:** 416-222-8477

## Acknowledgements

Toronto Seniors Housing values the diversity of our city and the tenants we support. We also acknowledge the history, both positive and negative, that has led to this rich variety of people living together in Toronto.

Please visit [torontoseniorshousing.ca/acknowledgements/](https://torontoseniorshousing.ca/acknowledgements/) for Toronto Seniors Housing's Land and African Ancestral Acknowledgements.

