

## 260 Wellesley St East: Community Summary

On Tuesday January 22, 2019, 260 Wellesley experienced a situation that caused the hydro, water, and heating to be shut down for the entire building. Power and water was restored between Friday January 25-Saturday, January 26<sup>th</sup>.

On Tuesday January 22<sup>nd</sup>

- Local leadership was provided through The Corner/HASJT
- The Corner/HASJT management and staff checked in on vulnerable tenants, identified through the Health Access database.
- The Management at The Corner connected with the Office of Emergency Management and Councillor Kristyn Wong Tam's office for communication
- The City opened the Wellesley Community Centre in the evening as a warming station

Wednesday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>

- The Corner/HASJT continued to support high-needs and homebound clients, and connected with security guards to bring food and water to tenants who were unable to come to the lobby
- The Red Cross and local leadership connected in order to support tenants who remained in the 260 building
- A residents' meeting was held at 8pm with the fire dept, the Mayor, councillor, MPP and the landlord's media spokesperson.

Thursday January 24<sup>th</sup>

- Continued connection with homebound tenants, through The Corner/HASJT, the Red Cross and Toronto Fire

Friday January 25<sup>th</sup>

- Power started to be restored in the latter part of the day

### Resident Leadership

Local residents played a significant role in supporting others:

- Deeksha, local ambassadors, chair of parent council and community member, accompanied The Corner/HASJT in visiting families. She also facilitated communication of resident concerns and questions with local leadership.
- Juliyata, a local volunteer, also joined in home visits, bringing coffee and water to homebound clients
- Local residents, part of a men's group, checked in on one another, bringing food and staying with those that were homebound and isolated
- Residents worked closely with local agencies and supported residents in 260 Wellesley.

## Case examples

On Jan 23<sup>RD</sup>, The Red Cross received a call from Barbados, from a niece, looking for her missing 85 year old uncle. The Red Cross alerted The Corner/HASJT and asked for assistance. The Corner/HASJT staff went to the building and connected with security and the fire dept until the man was found. The Corner/HASJT staff then called Barbados and enabled the man to speak with his niece to assure her of his safety.

On Jan 22<sup>nd</sup>, The Corner/HASJT went floor by floor to check in on vulnerable, homebound tenants. One tenant was 73 years old and was taking care of her 95 year old mother who had mobility issues and dementia. The tenants did not have a working cell phone, and could not use the stairs. The Corner/HASJT called the tenants' sister and brother, who were living in Scarborough, and facilitated the family's connection. The Corner/HASJT stayed connected with the tenants over the next four days, as the elderly tenants did not have access to the internet, but preferred phone updates. The Corner/HASJT will continue to support this family post-crisis.

## Summary

- Local leadership through the community hub (The Corner) and the service collaborative (Health Access St. James Town)
- Engagement of other partners and the St. James Town Service Providers' Network
- Immediate crisis response- supporting The City, The Canadian Red Cross in outreaching and registering clients, sharing regular communication through multiple channels (e-mails, whatsapp groups, social media, ambassadors). Connecting with Red Cross and Toronto Fire Dept. for vulnerable clients that were home bound.
- Utilizing local data base for HASJT to contact all residents who are clients on our database:
  - **# high need clients contacted and supported throughout crisis** (*people living with physical/mental health/substance use issues, homebound/immobile, seniors*) –**140**
  - **Most significant needs of displaced residents:** food, water, access to information, addressing social isolation, health care concerns, mobility issues

## Successes since last incident (650 Parliament challenges)

- Better communication between The City, the Red Cross and local leadership.

## Challenges

- Some players still unfamiliar with SJT and the local leadership: communication can be enhanced through better coordination
- The public perception and communication to the public was that the City and the Red Cross were handling everything, yet did not acknowledge local community strengths and leadership.
- Recognition of local agency leadership and support was not acknowledged publicly by The City, though The City's OEM worked closely with the management team at The Corner
- When the media announced that security persons were doing wellness checks, it was not properly communicated to the onsite staff. The Corner/HASJT had to show a newspaper article to security as they did not know it was their responsibility.

- When The Red Cross received phone calls about homebound tenants needing support, they did not have connection to the onsite team at 260 Wellesley. The Red Cross contacted The Corner/HASJT, who then facilitated communication between the tenants and the fire dept/onsite security.

## Recommendations

- Coordinating with a local agency and utilising local leadership and expertise is crucial to successful implementation of emergency plans or crisis response
- Investing in a local agency to assist in the crisis response plan – The staff at The Corner/HASJT worked overtime to address the crisis, additional support staff had to be brought in to cover at The Corner as staff were diverted to the crisis, Management worked overtime to coordinate the moving parts with Red Cross and The OEM at The City, and The Corner provided additional supports in terms of access to long distance calls, having food available for tenants needing it, etc.



