

**A World Within a Block.**



## **Annual Report 2020 – 2021**

**St. James Town Community Corner**





# Message from the Steering Committee

## 2020-2021 STATS

Number of new clients

**1,599**

Number of direct services

**422**

Number of referrals

**218**

Number of onsite appointments  
(started Mid-August)

**1,380**

Front area services

**1,924**

The past year has truly been like no other. The declaration, in March 2020, by the World Health Organization of a pandemic caused by COVID-19, set in motion a chain of events that affected everyone worldwide. It led to enormous changes in the day to day lives of every person and in the way every service organization would serve them. St. James Town was hit hard by the pandemic as the virus disproportionately affected people living in high-density low-income neighborhoods and who are often employed in the front-line essential service economy.

In times of crises our resilience and capacity to support each other are often tested. St. James Town rose to the challenges as residents and organizations worked together to address the needs of people most affected by this virus. In the next few pages, you will read about how The Corner has been a consistent source of support, rallying residents, funders and community partners to fill the gaps caused by the pandemic and its related restrictions, isolation and reduction in services.

The Corner's pandemic response included the coordination and implementation of COVID-19 testing sites and vaccination clinics in partnership with the Wellesley Community Centre, Michael Garron Hospital and Sherbourne Health. It also remained steadfast in its determination to provide face-to-face services to address mental health issues, housing crises, and food insecurity.

The growth of The Corner@240 addressed economic and environmental concerns through its reduce, reuse and repair initiatives and their bike repair program provided opportunities for youth to meet and learn a new skill.

Opposite: Catering collective member assembling a meal as part of Daily Meal Program





## A DIFFERENT KIND OF YEAR AT THE CORNER

The Corner had to change its operational focus due to COVID-19 this year...

- The Corner in partnership with residents and the St. James Town Service Providers' Network (SJTSNP) addressed community needs as isolation, rising unemployment, illness and grief deepened due to the pandemic.
- Private and public sector partnerships delivered food and grocery hampers to those facing food insecurity.
- Counselling and crisis supports were delivered both online and in-person.
- Various online programs addressed seniors' isolation and regular contacts with seniors for wellness checks were a staple of one-on-one support.
- Volunteers delivered after-school programs that were crucial to supporting youth and their families.
- The growth of The Corner@240 addressed economic and environmental concerns through its reduce, reuse and repair initiatives.
- The Corner@240 bike repair program provided opportunities for residents to meet, learn a new skill and sustain an inexpensive mode of transportation.
- The Corner hosted a Leadership Forum in November, 2020 attended by service providers, funders and community leaders.

Top Left: The Corner donations of board games for the community. Top right: A resident picks canned foods of their choice from the food bank at The Corner. Bottom right: Grocery hampers ready for distribution.



Services	Units of Services	Unique Clients
<b>Health Promotion Services</b>		
Flu Clinics	116	116
COVID-19 testing	909	875
<b>Regular Services</b>		
Meal services	11,198	251
Follow up calls and wellness check	3,063	1,250
Seniors wellness check	5,446	946
Activity package for seniors	170	36
<b>Weekly and Monthly Services</b>		
Food bank and grocery baskets registration and pick up	2,065	605
Pet food bank	349	113
<b>Needs based Services</b>		
Masks	214	170
Various services assistance (CERB, CRB, grocery shopping, etc)	217	138
<b>One time Services</b>		
Santa box	10	10
Tax clinic	76	76
<b>The Corner@240 Services</b>		
Daily repairs	1539	561
Tool rentals	138	115
Skill building	150+ residents trained in repair, bike maintenance, gardening, knitting and Informational Technology	
Waste diverted	Approx. 8 Tonnes	





St. James Town  
Community Corner

# The Corner@240

AN INNOVATIVE SPACE TO COLLABORATE AND INSPIRE CHANGE

240 WELLESLEY STREET EAST, #108, TORONTO, ON M4X 1G5 | STJAMESTOWN



**Councillor Krystin Wong-Tam with participants and fixers during a 'Earn a Bike' workshop at The Corner@240**

Other world events such as attacks on members of the Black, Asian and Muslim communities, and the discovery of residential school burial sites of Indigenous children heightened public awareness of racism. These events have sharpened The Corner's resolve to advance an inclusive, diverse and socially just St. James Town.

Going forward, The Corner will continue to develop our plan for The Corner 2.0 expansion of program space, services and model of operation. We will also be developing a strategic plan aimed at enhancing community ownership of programs. With the help of staff and volunteers and a new partnership with Focus Media Arts Centre we will increase our community outreach and visibility.

On a more somber note, the Steering Committee lost one of its founding members. Vickie Rennie died on July 22nd, 2020. She was a resident of St. James Town who brought leadership, passion and action to her community. Her passing is a loss that continues to be felt by us all.

We wish to extend our gratitude to all of the staff, ambassadors and volunteers who have worked tirelessly in extremely challenging circumstances. Their day-to-day leadership and dedication to addressing the needs of the St. James Town community have been outstanding. Without them our success would not be possible.

**Shirley Roberts**

Coordinator, The Corner Steering Committee







**CREW members from  
77 Howard collecting  
grocery kits for residents**

## **Introduction: The Corner's response during the pandemic**

The Corner has had to make some necessary changes during the pandemic. Through it all, The Corner has stood by the residents of St. James Town, finding innovative solutions to make sure people have continued access to crucial programs and services.

Health Access St. James Town and The Corner were able to provide the following essential services:

- Wellness checks for seniors and other vulnerable clients
- Delivering meals to homebound clients
- Delivering food boxes
- Providing individuals with pet food items
- Supporting clients on the phone with filling out forms and navigating government applications

The Corner@240 is a prime example of how we have adapted to changes to benefit St. James Town residents. As the cost of face masks sky-rocketed, The Corner@240 made 2500 masks which were distributed in the community. Some people, understandably, avoided taking public transportation in favour of cycling – so our bike clinic fixed and repaired bikes for residents. The pandemic has forced us to transition to e-learning and working from home, and as a result, reliable computer hardware has been critical. The Corner@240 fixed 150 computers and laptops. One resident was so impressed with the initiative, he described it by saying, “It’s like magic!”

## **Promoting Food Security in St. James Town**

### **THE MEAL PROGRAM**

Food insecurity is a major issue impacting some residents in the St. James Town community. In response to this need, others in the community have rallied together in a show of unity to address the problem. The Meal Program is primarily for vulnerable seniors, and people that are homebound with no support and cannot cook healthy meals for themselves.

The Meal Program was created by the St. James Town community with the help of its partner organizations. The catering collective is called “Flavours from Our Neighbours”; it involves the combined efforts of The Neighbourhood Organization, Progress Place, Sherbourne Health and The Corner.



**“Flavours from our Neighbours” prepared hot meals daily for home-bound residents in the neighbourhood**

The volunteers who make the delicious meals, ensure that they take all the appropriate precautions like wearing masks and gloves, proper hand hygiene, and making sure to keep a required physical distance while cooking.

### **STRENGTH IN PARTNERSHIPS**

Collaboration with our community partners has never been more crucial than during the pandemic. Partnerships with Progress Place, Sherbourne Health, and The Neighborhood Organization have been the driving force of what makes The Corner so responsive to the needs of the community over the years. The Corner is committed to nurturing and growing these alliances and partnering with new ones such as Operation Ramzieh – an Ottawa-based non-profit organization that provides grocery delivery to vulnerable seniors and others who face difficulty acquiring food during the pandemic. Restaurateur Abbis Mahmoud is the backbone behind this largely volunteer-run initiative.

### **NEIGHBOURS HELPING NEIGHBOURS**

CREW (Community Resilience to Extreme Weather) was set up in response to the 2013 ice storm which caused a number of blackouts throughout Toronto. But during the pandemic, the non-profit organization has partnered





#### **Volunteers ready and set to deliver meals to residents at their homes**

with The Corner to deliver food to people in need. Some residents of 77 Howard Street in St. James Town were recruited to work with CREW on a COVID-19 food delivery program. The small group of previously trained volunteers became valuable assets that were already aware of several isolated residents who would benefit from food boxes.

#### **FLAVOURS FROM OUR NEIGHBOURS**

The St. James Town Catering Collective – Flavours from our Neighbours was active through the pandemic cooking delicious and nutritious meals for some of the neighbourhood's most vulnerable residents. The initiative also was able to serve as an avenue for income generation for the members of the catering collective.







# Programs and Services

A community volunteer  
fixing a sewing machine  
at The Corner@240

## SENIORS STAYING ACTIVE AND CONNECTED

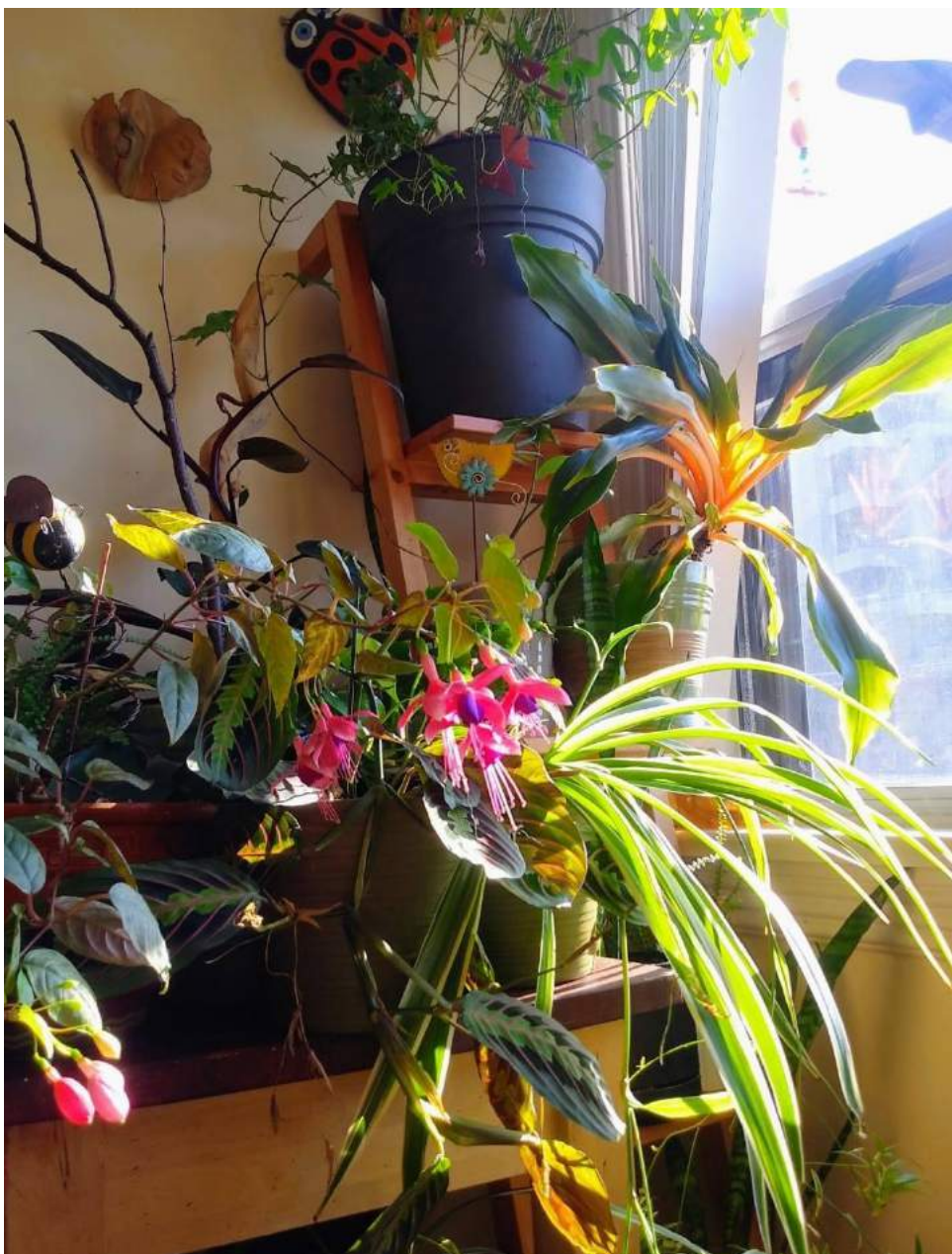
Thirty-six seniors joined us virtually to celebrate Seniors Month on June 26, 2020. A musician was brought in to entertain folks with “oldies but goodies” music. The songs were picked by each of the seniors and included music from the 50’s, 60’s, and 70’s. The social gathering – albeit via Zoom – was enjoyed by all.

250 individual seniors were outreached twice a month primarily for wellness checks, but also to provide community resources. New intakes were completed with referrals from partner agencies. Activity packages were provided weekly. A number of workshops were facilitated by Sherbourne Health, for example Staying Safe and Hydrated in the summer, The Flu Season and Education on the COVID virus etc. Other community agencies provided workshops on elder abuse, fraud and scams, power of attorney and wills. Intergenerational programs were also introduced on zoom that were enjoyed by the seniors.

The Seniors Program re-opened from September to December and it felt like a breath of fresh air for the seniors, reconnecting to the program, meeting their peers, taking part in activities and having fun. We were able to provide tablets, coach them on usage, install apps, and do trial runs on Zoom. Several seniors took part in a Leadership Program and received certificates of participation. Gift and grocery cards were given out prior to the holidays. We are happy to say the seniors are handling the pandemic well. They have adapted to the restrictions and are taking care of their mental and physical health.

## TAX CLINIC

The Neighbourhood Organization (TNO), The Corner, Health Access St. James Town, the Sri Lankan Accountants Association of Canada and a volunteer group from The Community Volunteer Income Tax Program provided an online tax clinic for the St. James Town community. Amid growing COVID-19 concerns, the tax clinic was offered to more than 60 vulnerable residents who did not have access to a computer or other means to complete their taxes. This would not have been possible without the help and expertise of Shawn Sarvaa, CPA/CGA and his team, and Amanda Chen who led the volunteer led tax clinic.



St. James Town resident Lidia's indoor garden

## **BALCONY GARDENING**

St. James Town balcony gardening workshops are online sessions that teach community residents how to grow and harvest plants and food in their backyard or on their balcony. As the majority of St. James Town residents live in high-rise apartments, these classes have been particularly useful. The initiative also caught the attention of a CBC journalist. The Corner's Nyanthi Wijesuriya joined Matt Galloway on The Current on May 18, 2020 to discuss the importance of growing your own food in a vertical community.





Online Repair workshop in partnership with Repair Café Toronto

### **REPAIR & REUSE**

The Corner@240 continues to be available for residents during the pandemic. The Corner@240 is offering online consultation for repairs and troubleshooting for computers and laptops. People can also bring in their broken items to the Repair Drop-in where our fixers will repair home appliances, electronics, watches, bikes, computers, jewellery, small furniture, and clothes. Residents also have the option to join virtual repair workshops and knitting classes.

The year saw more than 1200 items being fixed or refurbished at The Corner@240 and as result diverted more than 8 tonnes of waste from landfills.

Several donations were received from residents and service providers alike. Donations included bikes, furniture, laptops and computers, tools, appliances and seeds. The items were repurposed or refurbished and donated back to the community.



Fixers and resident volunteers at the Bike Clinic at The Corner@240

## BIKE CLINIC

The Corner@240 ran a bike clinic for residents of St. James Town throughout the year. It was a much needed service given the pandemic and the lack of physical activity. The Corner was able to repair/service more than 800 bikes during the spring and summer alone, thanks to resident volunteers like Sritharan Sinnathurai who organised and ran the clinic.

## CANADIAN WASTE REDUCTION WEEK (OCTOBER 19 – 25)

The Corner@240 along with the St. James Town community, celebrated the Canadian Waste Reduction Week with various activities stretched over a week:

**IT Junk Wars** – a laptop repair and troubleshooting workshop where young people participated in learning how to fix laptops.

**Trash to Treasure** – an arts and crafts competition using recycled waste.

**Electronic Troubleshooting** – residents learned how to fix an electronic or home appliance.

**Three Bins** – an interactive game designed to sensitize and educate residents in appropriate waste disposal.

**Earn a Bike** – young people were trained in bike repair and maintenance, and at the end of the process, they got to keep the bike.





The Interactive Science program designed to inspire children.

### **AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

This year, we offered two successful online after-school programs: Fun with Numbers and Interactive Science. Fun with Numbers has 2 groups which include kindergarten to grade 1 and the older group which is grade 2 to grade 4. The Interactive Science program is for children in grades 2 to 4. They met with our volunteer facilitators who created lessons that were fun and creative. The volunteers helped them with math and science skills.

Each week the children tackled a new theme or topic using games, worksheets and songs. This allowed for an interactive and exciting hour of socializing and learning. Although times were tough, we worked together to create community spaces both online and offline at The Corner for our community's children.

### **PET FOOD BANK**

The Pet Food bank for residents in partnership with Toronto Humane Society has been in place for a few years now. This year, the service was expanded to more residents of St. James Town due to additional financial stress that residents face during COVID-19. The Pet Food Bank takes place on a monthly basis.

### **BRINGING DIVERSITY INTO FOCUS**

FOCUS Media Arts Centre was established in 1990 to empower marginalized individuals and under-represented communities by giving them a voice through the use of participatory-based media practices. The Corner has partnered with FOCUS to share our residents' unique stories, experiences and perspectives on relevant matters and issues that are important to them. Many of these collaborations- such as videos- are featured in The Corner's monthly newsletter.



Chris O'Neil, former Head - Google Canada with residents during a session of SJT Pathways

## Zoom, Zoom, Zoom— Caring, Connecting and Celebrating SJT PATHWAYS

As part of a youth engagement initiative, four online information sessions were conducted with industry leaders from a range of sectors. All the sessions were well attended and since the events were online, it drew participants from across GTA including outside Canada. The aim was to help young people connect with industry leaders and to learn about various pathways to different career options. Some of the guest speakers included former head of Google Canada, the Executive Director of Lionsgate Studios, a Wall Street investor, and a Chief Medical Officer.

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Community ambassadors, students, and staff organized this year's Black History Month virtual event on February 26, 2021. We started with motivational speaker, Aimee, who shared her lived experience as a Black woman. She talked about her involvement in supporting the betterment of the Black community and her journey in pursuit of her passions.

Another Black community leader, Sureya, spoke about her participation in many community development projects in Regent Park including the Regent Park Catering Collective, which has provided income-generating opportunities for more than 65 Regent Park residents. She also shared her experiences working with women who have lost their sons to gun violence.

Our performers, Tamsir, Matuzolele, and Reneka gave us amazing performances and a taste of Black heritage. We wrapped up the event with raffle prize activities.





An online event commemorating International Womens' Day

### **INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

On March 8, 2021, The Corner community partners held a virtual event, *Stories of Resilience During COVID-19*, which showcased community leaders in St. James Town and Regent Park who have been working behind the scenes to respond to COVID-19.

The event included a tribute to the late local advocacy champion Vickie Rennie, an interview with the leader of the Green Party of Canada – Annamie Paul, and a panel discussion of community leaders including Dr. Warda Iqbal from Sherbourne Health who has been leading the COVID-19 testing initiative in St. James Town, and Deepika Anandkumar of Flavours from Our Neighbours – the St. James Town catering collective that has been providing meals to vulnerable seniors and residents during the pandemic.

Over 118 people came together to talk about the changes and struggles the COVID-19 pandemic has had in our lives, and also enjoyed artistic performances from young people, Bollywood-inspired dances and poetry and spoken word performers.

Central Neighbourhood House, The Neighbourhood Group and Sherbourne Health co-led the planning committee which included The Neighbourhood Organization, Times Change Women's Employment Services, Elizabeth Fry Society and St. Michael's Family Health Team.







**Top:**  
Resident receives COVID-19 immunization shot

**Middle:**  
Residents waiting to get their vaccine appointments

**Bottom:**  
Volunteers and ambassadors heading out into the community for an outreach informing residents about programs and services available during the pandemic.

## **ONLINE SOCIAL GROUP**

We started an Online Social Group program for St. James Town residents as a platform to socialize with other residents during the pandemic. Participants met once a week, using the video-communication service Google Meets. They connected with others, made new friends, learned new things, and shared their hobbies. The group was very diverse – most of the participants were new to Canada and a few were long term residents. Participants expressed that this program helped them reduce social isolation and loneliness during the COVID-19 pandemic. This platform also became a space for newcomers to learn more about the community and about resources available to them. It also gave long-time residents an opportunity to share their experiences and offer advice to newcomers.

## **Preventing the Spread of the Virus**

### **COVID-19 TESTING AT ST. JAMES TOWN**

The Corner, in partnership with Sherbourne Health, offered low barrier COVID-19 testing once a week from October of 2020 at The Corner@200. The clinics were also used as an opportunity to promote Infection Prevention and Control measures within the community and to provide education and information on the COVID-19 vaccine.

### **VACCINE CLINIC**

In March 2021, a vaccination clinic to prevent the spread of COVID-19 through immunization, opened up at the Wellesley Community Centre for residents of St. James Town. The clinic is a partnership with Sherbourne Health and The Corner.

### **COVID-19 RESOURCES, OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

The Community Engagement Subcommittee of the St. James Town Service Providers' Network (SJTSPN) created a brochure for COVID safety tips and helpful resources for St. James Town. On July 17 2020, in partnership with New Common, door-to-door outreach was organised where the brochure and face masks were dropped off in each apartment unit of 275 Bleecker Street. The resource booklet was also shared with SJTSPN, building managements or landlords across St. James Town and on our social media.

Seven COVID-19 Testing Promoters were recruited from the community to help with planning, outreach and engagement for COVID testing. They

## Vickie Rennie



### **REMEMBERING VICKIE RENNIE: A GRASSROOTS TRAILBLAZER (1957-2020)**

Vickie Rennie was a no-nonsense woman. She had a keen sense of what was right and wrong and had little patience for barriers or bureaucratic stonewalling when it came to making things right. A proud resident of the St. James Town community for 50 years, she assumed leadership in several initiatives that supported her neighbourhood.

In 1992, she started the Bleecker-Wellesley Activity Network working with a raft of volunteers to provide meals and general support services to seniors. Funding for this network was mostly generated through donations and partnerships that Vickie sourced mainly through her indomitable spirit. Formal funding recognition was finally achieved in 2005.

In 2007, Vickie became a founding member of the The Corner. She was instrumental in ensuring that the design of the space was wheelchair accessible and that programs and services were prioritized for St. James Town residents. She remained on the governance Steering Committee advocating for strong leadership representation from St. James Town until her death.





**Verga Felix, one of the many essential workers who serve St. James Town**

were trained by Toronto Public Health on COVID education and prevention. Promoters conducted phone-based outreach, put posters and signs up in the neighbourhood and worked as greeters during the testing clinics.

Other multilingual resources, from how to wear a mask, to COVID-19 vaccine FAQs have been provided to residents and clients throughout the year during community outreach efforts. A dedicated page on the website hosted up-to-date information on COVID-19.

### **VOLUNTEERS' SPOTLIGHT**

As a community, we wouldn't be where we are without all of the volunteers who selflessly donate their time to help make the lives of others better. The Corner would not be the success story that it has become, without them.

Volunteers for Flavours from Our Neighbours, The New Common, the 77 Howard Street Crew, "Community Fixers" from The Corner@240, and the youth volunteers from Peacebuilders Canada – we shine a bright light on all of them for their generous gifts of time this past year.

### **ESSENTIAL WORKERS**

The global pandemic has shown us just how interconnected we really are – and how much society depends on its essential and frontline workers. The Corner has honoured these unsung heroes on our social media sites, our website and monthly newsletter to show our appreciation. We also engaged in the good-old-fashioned act of handing out thank you cards to some of these courageous people in our St. James Town neighbourhood. Some of our heroes that we showcased include maintenance and grocery workers; doctors and nurses and other healthcare workers.



A St. James Town Story of Pride; Anna Maria and her partner Deisy Jasmine

### **A ST. JAMES TOWN STORY OF PRIDE**

St. James Town residents, Anna Maria and her partner Deisy Jasmin, are active members in the community. Prior to settling in St. James Town, Toronto, they spent years living in constant fear of threats and violence due to their sexual orientation, in their country of origin, Colombia.

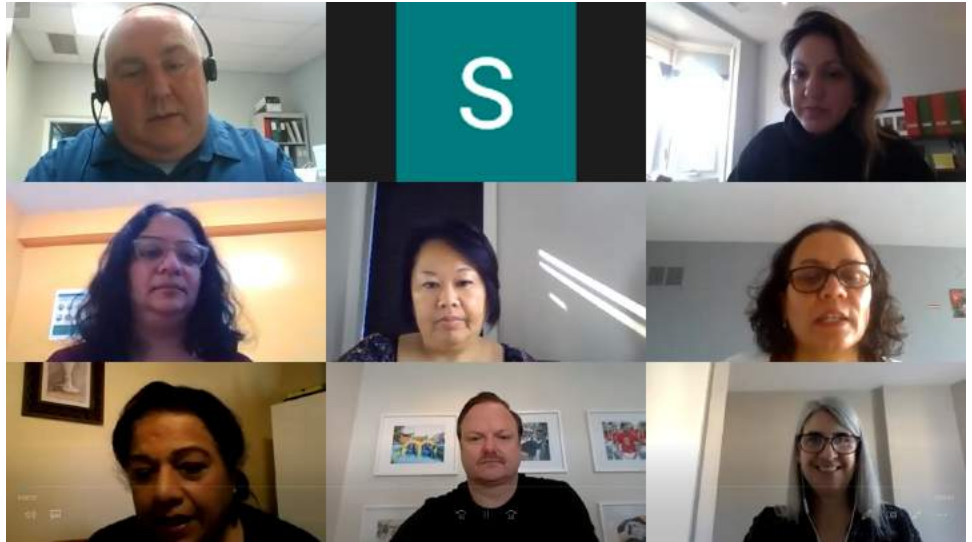
Years before meeting each other, both had struggled with their families' non-acceptance of their sexual orientation. In Toronto, both have found respect, support, belonging, and acceptance of their full personhood. They both have a message for young people coming to terms with their identity: "You are not alone. There's a lot of support available to ask for help. The process is difficult but not impossible."

### **COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR PROGRAM**

This year due to the COVID-19 restrictions we offered our annual St. James Town Community Ambassador training online. There were 26 passionate community residents who applied for this leadership and community development program. Of the 21 people interviewed, 12 were recruited for the program. The group is diverse reflecting 13 different spoken languages, residents from different buildings, mix of newcomers and long-time residents; and also professionals from different backgrounds from environmental science, finance, graphic design, and social work.

As part of the training practicum part, the Ambassadors were then involved in online Spring Gathering community conversations and leading the above-mentioned projects.





Service providers and community leaders during a breakout session at the 2nd St. James Town Leadership Forum

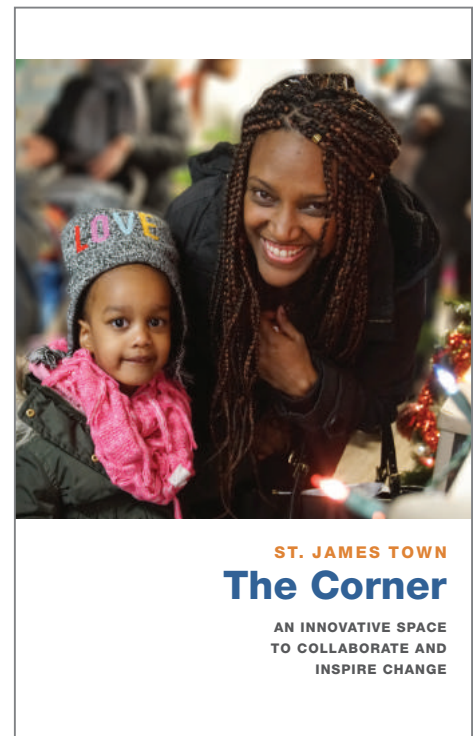
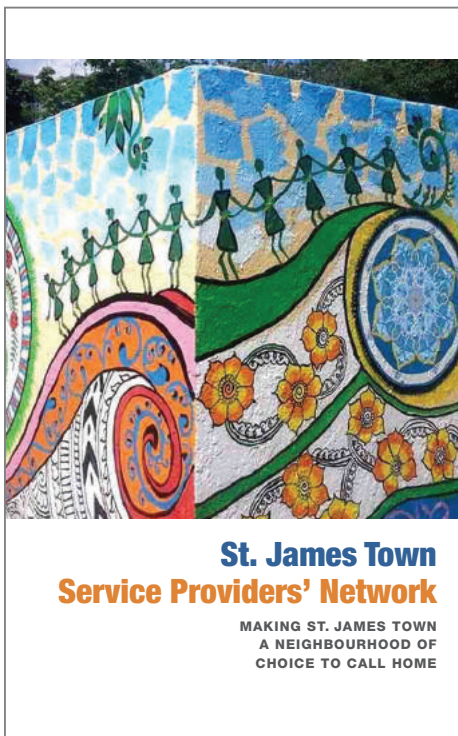
## Reflections: Looking Back to Look Forward

### THE CORNER 2.0

Launched in the Fall of 2020, The Corner 2.0 is the result of two years of soul searching through past and present challenges facing St. James Town. Based on research with The Corner staff and volunteers, as well as residents and service providers, The Corner 2.0 offers insights and design principles to drive every facet of our plans to grow and strengthen The Corner's role as the central point of care and connection within the St. James Town Service Providers' Network. Equal parts growth strategy and communication strategy, The Corner 2.0 provides a foundation on which we will learn from our past to build better relationships, experiences and services in the future. This initiative launched with two reports, one a review of The Corner overall, and another focusing on the innovative work unfolding at our new The Corner@240 site. Our next step is to translate our research into action, by building models for specific service sectors, including healthcare and environmental sustainability, to offer guidance in building new partnerships with people and organizations across St. James Town and beyond.

### LEADERSHIP FORUM

More than 80 people participated in the 2020 St. James Town Service Providers' Network's (SJTSPN) Leadership Forum in November, to re-imagine what collaboration should look like within the SJTSPN. Hosted



Family of brochures about The Corner and SJTSPN operations

by The Corner, the event was attended by members from several community health, housing and social service organizations, as well as volunteers and residents. This included The Neighbourhood Organization (TNO), Toronto Community Housing (TCH), Sherbourne Health, Renaissance, Progress Place, The Neighbourhood Group (TNG) and SickKids Centre for Community Health. The event was also attended by representatives from the provincial and federal governments, school boards and Fred Victor, among others. Ultimately, participants agreed that new ways of collaboration based inclusion of the diverse voices not yet heard – from newcomers and emerging identity groups to long-underserved Indigenous communities must be part of the process.

## THE SJTSPN

This year, the St. James Town Service Providers' Network (SJTSPN) partners came together more than ever to share resources in response to COVID-19; bi-weekly COVID-19 resource emails were sent out for the first 8 months of the pandemic. The Community Engagement Subcommittee collaborated on an outreach initiative to get COVID-19 resource brochures to vulnerable residents of St. James Town, and to start a temporary food bank. Much educational information was shared across the network about adapting programs and outreach strategies to online and a telephone-based system, due to the pandemic.



The SJTSPN also had a lot of conversations about anti-Black racism, defunding the police, and crisis response strategies. The network completed a final draft of its neighbourhood-wide crisis response protocol which now includes pandemics, and successfully submitted a funding proposal to the City of Toronto's Crisis Response Fund. The SJTSPN, along with The Corner's steering committee, posted a statement on anti-racism and solidarity with Black Lives Matter, Asian, Indigenous and Muslim communities. A session was implemented by Neighbourhood Legal Services and the Workers Action Centre on employment regulations with regard to COVID-19. It has been a very busy year for the network as a whole, with deeper connections and many more new best practices shared amongst the partners.

### **THE ST. JAMES TOWN PRESS**

In 2018, The Corner launched a monthly on-line newsletter "From The Corner". As a medium for communicating with the St. James Town community and its stakeholders – it is a platform for diverse voices, recognizing the accomplishments of residents, and providing a focus on emerging issues.

Initially the newsletter primarily covered what was happening at The Corner. Over time, it has expanded to include storytelling, interviews, and commentary about a range of issues affecting all communities regarding health, safety and the environment. Video links are often added to promote accessibility.

Over the past year, our newsletter provided up-to-date pandemic information, including COVID-19 testing, access to vaccinations and resources for food, housing and mental health support. Our stories and commentaries flagged issues of racism and its impact on the well-being of BIPOC communities. Statements of support in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, addressing anti-Black racism and racism against Asian communities were front and centre in our publications. Interviews with community residents provided thoughtful insights into the lived experiences of racism and their responses to it.

Interviews with political leaders, volunteers and staff highlighted the strength and commitment of community change makers. The newsletter brought



#### The Corner team retreat

Marci Ien, MP for Toronto Centre to our pages in print and through live video. Annamie Paul, leader of the Green Party of Canada also shared her perspective as the first Black Canadian and the first Jewish woman to be elected leader of a federal party in Canada. City Councillor, Kristyn Wong-Tam, responded to questions about defunding the police and how it could bring more programs and services to St. James Town while also improving neighbourhood safety.

Our newsletter ensures that the day-to-day leadership our volunteers, community entrepreneurs and service partners bring to St. James Town is well documented. Readers learn about the many ways that residents and service partners work together to bring information, resources and practical support to the neighbourhood.

The production of the newsletter is guided by a team of staff, media consultants, community partners and supporters who volunteer their time



researching, writing and editing articles. The recent addition of art, drawings and poetry from local residents provide an inspiring glimpse into the creative resources in the St. James Town community. The newsletter now has a new name: “St. James Town Press”.

## **Staff Engagement**

On September 10, 2020, The Corner organized a staff get-together. In light of the pandemic restrictions, the program was organised outdoors at Woodbine Beach. The staff from The Corner, volunteers, Community Ambassadors and members of Catering Collective participated in the event. We planned a whole day event with fun activities, games, and food. This provided us with the opportunity to get to know each other more and learn about each other's' interests. It was a much needed break for the staff as they got to spend quality time with their teammates outside the work environment.

## **Communications Team**

During the year the communications team, comprising mostly of volunteers, did some incredible work. Several years of pending annual reports, support for the SJTSPN Leadership Forum, drafting information flyers and brochures for COVID-19 testing and the Wellesley Community Centre vaccination clinics are just some of the team's achievements. The team was also involved in website revamp, technical support and consultations with partners in improving their communication strategies.

Given the pandemic and how the nature of outreach has changed, communications and digital outreach played a crucial role over the last year. Special thanks to Steven Boyle (Designer), Shainu Rajan (UI/XI designer), Cameron Murray (Anthropologist), Hannah Goodbrand (Editor/Copy writer), Georgina Alford (Editor/Copy writer), Sachintha Fernando (Video and photo editor), Armin Baig (Web developer) and Darrel Jenya (Design and social media) for their unwavering support.

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## FUNDERS

TCLN – Toronto Central Local Health  
Integration Network  
Ontario Trillium Foundation  
Toronto Employment and Social Services

Tower Renewal Office  
City of Toronto  
United Way Partners

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## SERVICE PARTNERS

Central Neighborhood House  
Fred Victor  
Hospice Toronto  
Progress Place  
Sherbourne Health  
Sickkids  
The Humane Society  
The Neighborhood Organization  
Toronto Public Health  
Unispere Canada  
University of Toronto

Yonge Street Mission  
St. James Town Arts  
Creating Caring Community  
Woodgreen  
FOCUS Media Arts  
New Common  
Flavours From Our Neighbours  
Volunteer Toronto  
Repair Café Toronto  
Toronto Tool Library

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## STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Amna Shah  
Lovlyn D'Souza Pereira  
Tanvir Kaukab  
Vickie Rennie  
Chelladurai Yogarajah  
Criss Habal-Brosek  
Nalini Pandalangat

Ravi Subramaniam  
Shirley Roberts  
Veronica MacDonald  
Wilma Sinnathurai  
Theo Nazary  
Darrel Jenya  
Sibghat Usmani



**ACCESSIBLE | COMMUNITY DRIVEN | EQUITABLE | DIVERSE**

### St. James Town Community Corner (The Corner)

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