

FUNDERS

TCLHIN – Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network	Tower Renewal Office
Ontario Trillium Foundation	City of Toronto
Toronto Employment and Social Services	United Way Partners

SERVICE PARTNERS

TNG – The Neighborhood Group	Yonge Street Mission
Fred Victor	St. James Town Arts
Hospice Toronto	Creating Caring Community
Progress Place	Woodgreen
Sherbourne Health	FOCUS Media Arts
SickKids	New Common
The Humane Society	Flavours From Our Neighbours
TNO – The Neighborhood Organization	Volunteer Toronto
Toronto Public Health	Repair Café Toronto
Unispere Canada	Toronto Tool Library
University of Toronto	

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Lovlyn D’Souza Pereira	Shirley Roberts
Tanvir Kaukab	Veronica MacDonald
Chelladurai Yogarajah	Wilma Sinnathurai
Criss Habal-Brosek	Theo Nazary
Nalini Pandalangat	Darrel Jenya
Nikhil Anish	Sibghat Usmani
Ravi Subramaniam	



Annual Report 2021 – 2022

St. James Town Community Corner



ACCESSIBLE | COMMUNITY DRIVEN | EQUITABLE | DIVERSE

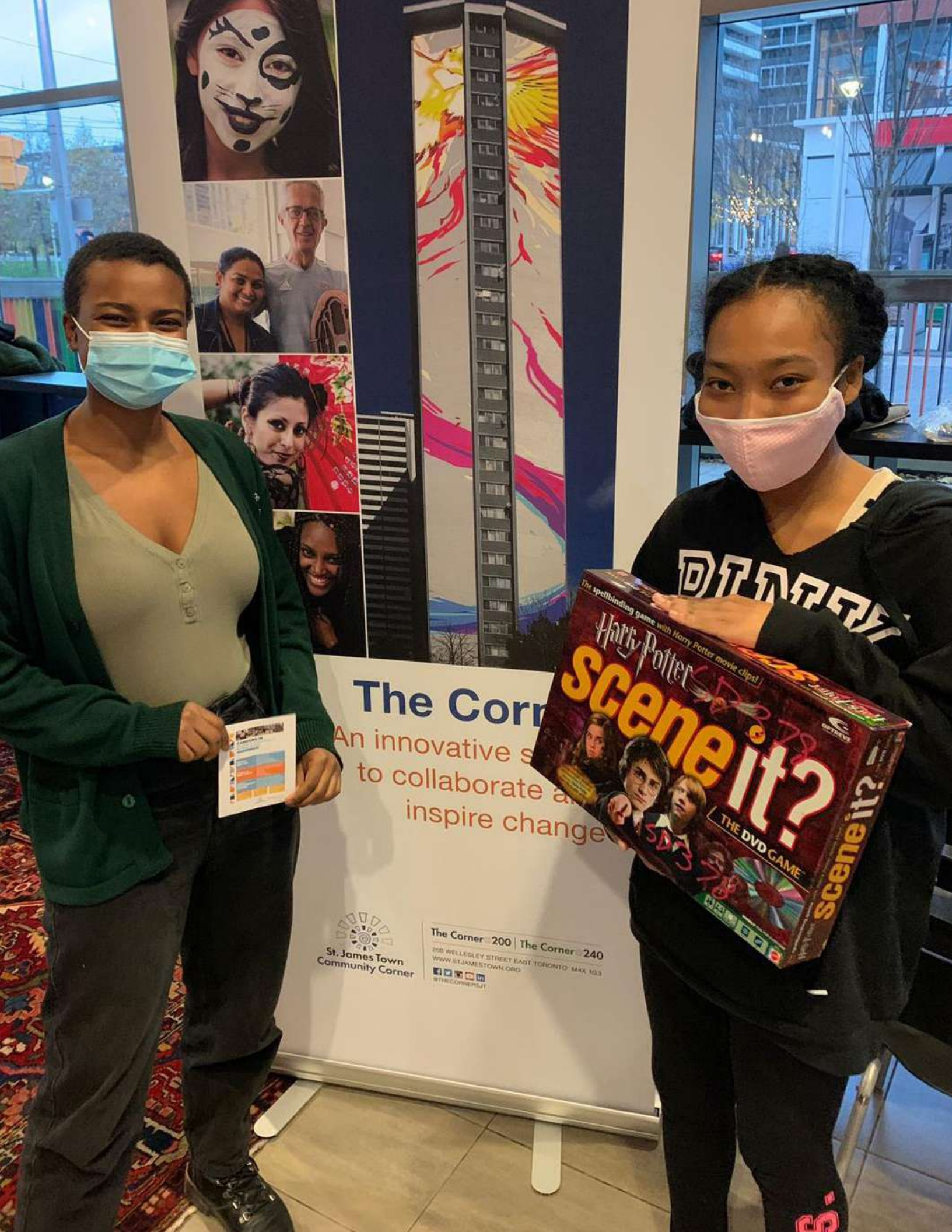
St. James Town Community Corner (The Corner)

105 – 200 Wellesley Street East, Toronto, ON M4X 1G3

[t] 416-964-6657 [e] info@stjamestown.org

WWW.STJAMESTOWN.ORG

@thecornersjt



Message from the Steering Committee

2021-2022 STATS

Front Area Services
(Computer, Internet,
Phone and Print)

31 236

Referrals

391

This year The Corner’s activities continued to be dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic shone a light on the barriers that St. James Town residents faced as they attempted to navigate loss of employment, financial and food insecurity, increased social isolation and barriers to accessing health and social services. It also shone a light on the importance of partnerships, community engagement, integrated health and social services delivered within a diversity, equity and inclusive lens. Thinking “outside the box” is what The Corner does best and we were up to the challenge.

The word pivot became a part of our everyday vocabulary and pivot, we did. Through its collaboration with Health Access St. James Town partners The Corner was able to coordinate vaccine drives, vaccine information dissemination in multiple languages and vaccination clinics at multiple sites and at various times of the day, improving access for all residents. Our community ambassador initiative was enhanced through recruitment from 2SLGBTQ+ as well as several ethnocultural communities and trained to disseminate accurate information so that everyone could make informed choices about their healthcare. Their tireless efforts significantly improved vaccination outcomes in St. James Town and became a model for implementation in the broader healthcare system.

Pandemic restrictions shifted throughout the year and The Corner shifted with them. We provided face to face, online and telephone access to services as necessary. Expansion of primary healthcare through nurse practitioner support became available at The Corner. Food support was provided to isolated residents and access to resources to assist with housing and mental health issues continued to be available. Every effort was made to ensure that residents would have access to resources despite pandemic restrictions.

Corner@240 continued to be an in-demand resource for its recycling, repair and reuse initiatives. Many of their programs became an opportunity for community residents to share their skills, support their community and enhance their sense of community connectedness. Initiatives,



like the Library of Things and the Digital Library have helped to bridge the gap between isolation and connection. The work of Corner@240 has been recognized and plans are underway for renovations to expand programming space.

In the fall of 2021, The Corner was proud to celebrate 10 years of service. Residents, funders, policy makers and service providers joined in this event to reflect on the collaborative spirit that make its success possible.

The Steering Committee is very grateful for the support of the many individuals, staff, volunteers and partners who have contributed to our achievements. Our responsiveness to the community is particularly made possible by our dedicated staff that consistently bring a can-do spirit to their work. We are excited and inspired by the possibilities that can be generated by our shared vision of a healthy and thriving St. James Town.

Shirley Roberts
Governance Coordinator



INTAKE AND HOLISTIC CARE

One-On-One Services

2 054

Senior Support

4 043

Primary Health Care

55

Housing Supports

149

Service Encounters

56 347

New Clients

1 374

Unique Clients

22 936

High Need Clients

69

Home Visits

76

Residents taking part in Honouring Memories and Planting Dreams Garden

Eyes on Diversity

CHAI & CHAT POP-UPS

Through Sherbourne Health’s funding from the Downtown East (DTE) consortium to work with two 2SLGBTQ Ambassadors, the Health Access team engaged 2SLGBTQ communities in vaccine uptake. Attendees were provided a welcoming space and warm chai to ensure a safe and comfortable space to explore a range of topics, including improving overall confidence in COVID-19 vaccines.

SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Settlement services returned to The Corner with a particular focus on settlement support for 2SLGBTQ+ Newcomers, Youth, Seniors, and speakers of Arabic, Spanish, Tamil, and Tagalog.

BACK TO SCHOOL: SCHOOL SUPPLIES FOR STUDENTS

This program was designed to help children under 18 years of age feel prepared and confident before the beginning of the school year. Toronto City Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, Toronto Community Housing Corporation, and the Medallion Cooperation collaborated to give young students backpacks, gift cards and a wide range of school materials. Approximately 200 students benefitted from this program.

GIVING BOOKS FOR LOCAL YOUTH

The children’s book bank on Gerrard Street partnered with The Corner to provide books for local youth. Outreach efforts focused on adult primary healthcare clients who come to The Corner with their kids. Corner@240 team also designed and built birdhouse book libraries. Residents can pick up or drop off books at their convenience.

PLANTING DREAMS: TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

The Honouring Memories and Planting Dreams Garden event took place in June, 2021. A total of six families engaged in planting a flower in honour of Residential School survivors and the memories of Indigenous children who lost their lives to the Residential School system. Residents were also introduced to some local calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). This is one of the ways that The Corner strives to recognize and acknowledge the unique histories, needs and experiences of Indigenous residents in St. James Town.



Regent Park Youth Fair

PRIDE PROGRAMS

Despite the pandemic and the limitations posed, a social media campaign was held to raise awareness about the history of Pride month and 2SLGBTQ+ community-led movements. Pop-up outreach events were held in June where Pride Swag bags, hygiene supplies & COVID-19 vaccine information were distributed. A Pride trivia and movie night took place on Zoom on June 23rd

2SLGBTQ+ DROP-IN GROUPS

A series of 2SLGBTQ Drop-in Group sessions were held in May and June, 2021 to assess the needs of the community. The drop-ins were a way for the community to meet and engage with each other and to have fun.



Back to School Backpack Giveaway

Intergenerational Connections

SUPPORTING OUR SENIORS

The SJT Seniors Program, in collaboration with Progress Place, returned to in-person programming in July. Now in its new home at 561 Sherbourne St, and supported by a collaboration with Medallion Corporation, this program runs three days per week. It's hard to express just how excited everyone was to get back to these in-person sessions

BUILDING INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

In November, an opportunity arose to connect isolated, non-English speaking seniors by hosting drop-in sessions that cater to the unique needs of specific cultural groups. Three youth ambassadors reached out to over 75 local seniors through 55 Bleecker, Allen Gardens, and The St James Town Market. The result was an innovative and technology-driven program, the St James Town Chinese Seniors WeChat. The WeChat has 14 active participants, and was pivotal in referring seniors to casework and other programs and services at The Corner. It also provided translation support and hosted a drop-in for Chinese seniors. We believe this could be a helpful test model for future intergenerational service innovations.



Celebrating The Corner's 10th Anniversary

Events Spotlight

PARTNERS ENGAGEMENT: IN-HOUSE PARTNERS MEET

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic halting in-person meetings, The Corner's in-house partners were not able to hold their regular quarterly check-ins. They chose instead to gather online after the first year of the pandemic to discuss opportunities and challenges for program and service delivery. The first quarterly meeting was held on April 8th with 23 partners sharing how the pandemic had impacted their programs and services. This was an important meeting for all to share the good, bad and uncertain impacts of the pandemic and build towards making improvements in the coming months and years.

REVITALIZATION PROJECTS & POP-UP IN THE PARK

Consultations for the St. James Town West Park Redesign Project began in the second week of July. Community Ambassadors created an outreach strategy and subsequently led revitalization efforts in the neighborhood. Fifty people participated in these in-person consultations, and included twenty children who engaged in a series of arts and crafts activities and seed planting activities.

OUR 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY!

The Corner celebrated 10 years of service in St. James Town in 2021. To celebrate this milestone, there were speeches from keynote speakers from across the community, as well as community ambassadors, volunteers, partners and management representatives. Politicians and well-wishers sent supportive and celebratory messages over video. In addition, a video depicting 10 years of The Corner's journey was screened, and attendees enjoyed entertainment from fellow community members of all ages. Each attendee was able to leave with a delicious take home meal made by Flavours from Our Neighbours, our neighbourhood catering collective.



Members of Social Bike Club during a group ride on Halloween's Day

HALLOWEEN MEET & GREET

In-house partners came together to offer a Halloween pop-up event on October 31st at The Corner. There were kid's games, and a draw for prizes (bikes donated from The Corner@240), loot bags, toys and books (donated by The Children's Book Bank) for kids to take home.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

International Women's Day (IWD) was celebrated on March 8, 2022 over zoom, with more than 200 participants joining the event. The theme for this year's IWD was "Break the Bias". Following the event, food was prepared by staff who identify as male as a token of gratitude and appreciation.

Caring & Connecting: Community Outreach and Engagement

SPRING GATHERING

In June we held a pared-down version of our annual Spring Gathering inviting fifty-six participants to engage in a conversations about life during the pandemic. The event was spread over a month from May 6th to July 8th. Residents shared stories about having to make serious career pivots, including small business owners who had to completely rethink their goals and ambitions for the future. They also shared, more generally, how the pandemic affected their personal, social and spiritual lives. These participants were able to learn from each other, sharing tips on resources, services and support programs that helped through the height of the pandemic. They also work-

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Workshop And Events Participants

4 540

New Programs

28

Resident Led Programs

64

Service Partner Led Programs

86

Number Of Residents – Repair Skill Instruction

31 236

Bike Club Participants

19

BUILDING COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITIES

New Partners

13

Resident Partners

64

Service Partners

114

Volunteers

56 347

Placement Students

13

Green Ambassadors

47



Kiddos all masked up during their art class

shopped ideas in small breakout groups, covering a range of topics, including entrepreneurship opportunities in St. James Town and the broader challenge of achieving employment and financial security. These sessions were hosted in Mandarin, Tamil and English. We also made time for participants to participate in fun activities and win prizes including a variation on The Price is Right and a series of riddles focused on financial issues.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Staff, Ambassadors, and Volunteers participated in various COVID-19 outreach activities. The goal was to communicate where people could access COVID-19 vaccine clinics, in order to increase vaccine uptake. Ambassadors were able to communicate up to date information and assist residents in making the best decision for their health and safety. As part of their approach to addressing vaccine hesitancy, Ambassadors and The Corner staff worked together to create small video clips about the importance of vaccination. These clips were recorded in Tamil, Hindi, Nepali, Spanish, French, and English, and were shared via The Corner's social media accounts.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION: TOWARDS A GREENER ST. JAMES TOWN

A community conversation was held to discuss the movement towards a greener and more eco-friendly St. James Town. Thirty-six people participated in small discussion groups on waste diversion and creating greener spaces in the neighbourhood. Partners included Community Resilience to Extreme Weather (CREW), Sherbourne Health, The Neighbourhood Organization, The Corner, and our community health and green Ambassadors.



Green Ambassador demonstrating air grafting in plants



Repair workshop in partnership with Repair Café Toronto



Catering Collective at The Cabbage Town Farmers' Market

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

Number Of Electronics Repaired

895

Waste Diverted (Tons)

9.309

Number Of Bikes Fixed / Refurbished

558

Number Of Laptop Repairs

339

Laptops Refurbished and Donated

34

Resident Trained In Clothing Transformation

58

Bikes Donated To Residents

14

MEET AND GREET OUTREACH POP-UP

The team from The Corner and a number of in-house partners came together to organize the first of a series of outreach pop-ups. Each pop-up had a different theme. One was focused on Healthy and Active Living, with free bike repairs and tune-ups outside 240 Wellesley Street East. Partners included Sick Kids CMHA, TNO, Sherbourne Health, CREW, Migrant Resource Center Canada, and Catering Collective. The outreach events were organised between July-September 2021.

COMMUNICATIONS

In October, the communications team updated four promotional brochures: 1) The Corner, 2) The Corner@240, 3) St. James Town Service Providers' Network and 4) Health Access St. James Town. We also completed a new banner for promoting the SJTSPN. In addition, we continued to develop the 'feedback page' and 'book a space' page on our website to help residents have more freedom in shaping how they engage with our programs, services and spaces.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

On February 25th 2022, staff from The Corner, in partnership with the SJTSPN, hosted a community-wide discussion between Black African and Caribbean residents. Thirty-seven people participated in a series of rich and engaging conversations that addressed people's unmet needs and concerns about how to better shape programs and services for Black St. James Town residents.

Health, Wellness, and Curbing the Spread of COVID-19

COVID-19 POP-UP CLINICS

Vaccine clinics at Wellesley Community Centre started in March, 2021 and continued until April, 2022. More than 46,000 doses were administered through the vaccine clinic supported by Unity Health, Sherbourne Health, Health Access St. James Town, and The Corner. Pop-up clinics were also set up at The Corner, including midnight clinics at Rose Avenue Public School and Food Basics to ensure easy access to vaccines for all community members.

COVID-19 VACCINE ENGAGEMENT

Throughout the year we challenged ourselves to have as many vaccine engagement opportunities for residents as possible.

With increased uncertainty and fear around the Omicron variant in late 2021, Health Access St. James Town and Sherbourne Health collaborated on a multi-pronged engagement strategy, which included:

- 1:1 phone-calls between residents and primary care providers. Dr. Iqbal and Nurse Practitioner Sharron Wright made themselves available for residents to ask any questions they may have about vaccines, variants and other COVID-19 strategies.
- Virtual weekly drop-in Q&A sessions with Dr. Iqbal to address new questions about vaccines and other COVID-19 concerns.
- A virtual vaccination presentation focused on pediatric experiences that also included Q&A sessions with Sharron Wright. Toys were distributed as a small reminder that part of the reason these sessions were offered is so that families can get back to living a joyful, normal life once the pandemic ends.



A midnight pop-up vaccine clinic at Parliament and Wellesley



Residents lining up to get their vaccine shots

VAX AND SNAX

Also in December, 2021, an evening vaccine clinic was hosted to increase vaccination rates amongst children. Fifty-six kids received their first dose vaccines and fifty-two adults received their booster doses. The Catering Collective provided candies, gingerbread cookies and hot chocolate.

COVID-19 TESTING CLINICS

Four testing clinics were held in January, 2022, with seventy-four residents accessing testing that month. January was the final month for testing clinics due to new government guidelines. Wraparound support services continued to be provided for clients who tested positive.

BLACK WELLNESS HUB

The Corner and Health Access, along with the 519, Sherbourne Health, Black C.A.P, and Women's Health in Women's Hands organized a wellness event exclusively for the local Black community.



Community ambassadors and volunteers during a door-to-door outreach



Vaccine clinic at Rose Avenue Public School

FLU CLINIC MEET AND GREET

Sherbourne Health and The Corner offered its annual Flu Clinic at Wellesley Community Centre on November 12th, 2021. Service Providers joined the flu clinic to promote their programs and services. This included Sick Kids, Canadian Mental Health Association, The Corner@240, Corner@240, HASJT, Migrant Resource Centre Canada, and Sherbourne Health Community Dietitians.

PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

A primary healthcare service started in September, 2021 at The Corner. A Nurse Practitioner was available on weekdays and some weekends. The case workers worked closely with the primary healthcare team to provide referrals and wraparound services to clients who needed support.



Opposite:
Thanksgiving meal giveaway

Promoting Food Security

THANKSGIVING TURKEY MEALS

A partnership among Health Access, The Corner and 51 Division neighborhood police officers brought donations of turkey meals sponsored by Longo's and Volvo. The meals were distributed to community members making it a thanksgiving to cherish and remember.

HOLIDAY HOT MEAL PROGRAMS

Around 350 meals were distributed to the community as part of holiday celebrations on December 16, 2021. These meals were sponsored by Longo's, Share a Meal, Medallion, and Humanity.

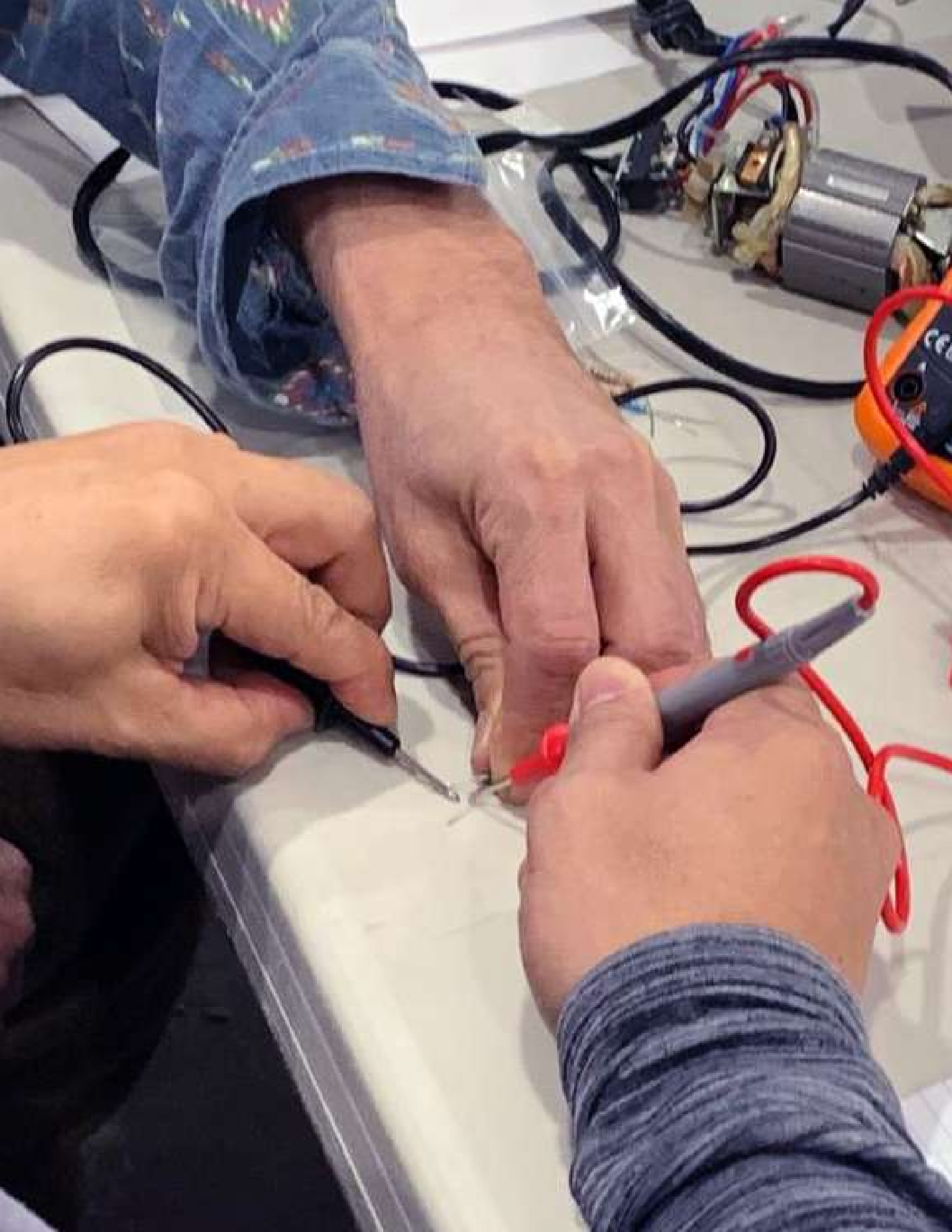
To support isolated seniors during holiday season, Health Access St. James Town provided 60 hot meals every day from December 27th to 31st. The meals were prepared by The Catering Collective and distributed by volunteers and The Corner staff.

SENIOR MEAL PROGRAMS

One hundred twenty meals were provided on a weekly basis to seniors who were identified through the intake team, Progress Place, and the seniors outreach program led by intergenerational ambassadors. Food hampers were provided to those who tested positive for COVID-19 or were isolated due to COVID-19. Thirty-two residents were able to benefit from this program.



Catering Collective members preparing meals for home bound residents



Volunteer & Ambassador Engagement

EMPOWERING SKILLS

Number Of Youth Trained in Bike Repair

11

Residents Trained in Laptop Repair

17

Residents Trained in Knitting And Crocheting

54

Resident Trained in Clothing Transformation

58

Residents Trained In Sewing

36

COMMUNITY TRAINING PROJECTS

17 ambassadors participated in various community projects as part of the Ambassador training practicum component. The projects included:

- Website Redesign – (2 Ambassadors)
- Financial Literacy – (3 Ambassadors)
- Community Outreach – (4 Ambassadors)
- Skilled and Thriving – (3 Ambassadors)
- Waste Management – (3 Ambassadors)
- Green – (2 Ambassadors)

SHARE AND REUSE

VOLUNTEERING TOWARDS A GREENER NEIGHBOURHOOD

The Corner relies on community members supporting one another, and we have been grateful for the volunteers who have dedicated their time to helping the St. James Town Community Corner grow. Throughout the year The Corner@240 alone had more than 90 dedicated volunteers making a positive impact in supporting repairs, leading workshops, sharing outreach materials, supporting the front desk, and more. Together they have contributed more than 1200 hours. Despite challenges posed by space restrictions due to the pandemic, the engagement of volunteers has been significant, particularly in bike maintenance and computer support.

EMBRACING THE FIXABLE

Repair Services at The Corner@240 continued to be a highly in-demand service. Residents bring electronic appliances, bikes, clothes, digital items, jewelry, watches, and small furniture for repair. In total, more than 1900+ items were fixed during the year 2021-22 leading to a total waste diversion of 12 tonnes.

A LIBRARY OF SHARED RESOURCES

The Corner in partnership with The City of Toronto and TNO (The Neighbourhood Organization) has initiated a Digital Lending Library as part of the Library of Things at The Corner@240. The pandemic exposed the vast digital divide in our communities with several individuals without access to technology and the internet to access resources and keep in touch with



51 Division officers donating Kids' Bikes at The Corner @240



Mini book library in front of The Corner@240



Looking for feathered beauties - residents during a Bird Watching Walk

their loved ones. It has made a great difference in many residents' lives. One resident stated that through the digital lending library she was able to graduate college, become a Canadian Citizen, and even pass her G1 simply by having the opportunity to borrow a laptop.

The Corner@240 also initiated a Seed Library intended to support the community in establishing balcony gardens. The Seed Library is accessible to residents through the Library of Things. 370 seeds were distributed to more than 50 residents.

COMMUNITY DONATIONS

The Corner@240 received a steady flow of donations in terms of furniture, appliances, and other household items. In 2021-22, we received close to 1.5 tonnes of these donations, which have been recycled to other residents and families. Newcomers are a particular target group for furniture and household items as they try to settle into a new life in Canada. The Corner collaborates with service providers whose clients are in need of furniture donations. The same applies to home appliance donations, which are either repurposed and sold at 70-80% off their original in-store price or given away to residents and families who are looking for used items. Items that cannot be fixed are scavenged and parts are used to fix other items.

The Corner@240 has received 17 bikes as donations from 51 Division, and 6 of those bikes have been donated back to the community through the Learn to Earn a Bike Workshop instructed by our bike fixers in July and October 2021. Here, participants can learn how to repair and maintain their bikes to earn one. We have also given 3 bikes away as prizes during community outreach.

In July-August 2021, we designed and built 2 mini book libraries for both The Corner@240 and The Corner@200 where residents can pick up or drop off books at their convenience. More waste is diverted by residents donating their used books and sharing them with others community members. We have also repurposed torn and damaged books as recycled materials for our crafting workshops.

CREATING CONNECTIONS THROUGH SKILL BUILDING

Following health and safety policies around the pandemic, The Corner@240 transformed many of their in-person workshops and programs to virtual programs. This included The Basics of Information Technology, Knitting Workshop, Clothing Transformation, Python Coding Workshop, and Repair Workshop which kept residents connected and engaged in learning new skills. Some of the in-person programs included Design and Make Your Own Recycled Product, which had 4 participants.

In June 2021, The Corner@240 started a Social Bike Club, where 4-5 members of both staff and residents join weekly rides every Sunday. Another outdoor event The Corner@240 organized with the Feminist Bird Club Toronto was a community bird walking event with 5 residents. They explored nearby parks and ravines to spot different types of birds and learn things about nature. This event received very positive feedback with requests for more outings like these.

In October, as part of Canadian Waste Reduction Week, an in-person "Fall Fix-it Day" was conducted in partnership with Repair Cafe Toronto.



Community members and Staff with Steven Del Duca, Leader of Ontario Liberal Party during his visit to The Corner

With a total of 22 participants for the event, 6 residents were trained in repairing electronic appliances and 5 community fixers used their skills and training to support 11 residents to see if their items were repairable.

The Corner@240 also participated in the Regent Park Youth Fair with a closed-circuit game to interact with the youth. During this event, The Corner also gave away a bike and several board games to youth.

During the winter holiday season, The Corner @240 received a Christmas tree from Cabbagetown BIA. Fourteen kids from the neighborhood participated in decorating it using decorations made of recycled material. The kids were rewarded with bikes and board games.

THE CORNER @240 SPACE EXPANSIONS

In August of 2021, a transformative journey unfolded at The Corner@240. With approvals in hand, plans were set in motion to renovate the adjacent space for storage and bike repairs. Collaborating with architects, the vision for a vibrant community hub took shape, aiming to seamlessly blend with the existing fabric of The Corner@240.

The Corner team has also been working with City Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam to help us secure more funding for expansion and to ensure stable project City funding for the project.

LIBRARY OF THINGS

Seed Library
(Residents / Seeds)

504

Number Of Tools Borrowed

182

Number Of Laptops/Tablets
Borrowed

148



Yoga for wellness – Staff Retreat

COMMUNITY-CARED PLANTS ON ROAD TO RECOVERY

The Corner@240 has an inspiring story regarding the plants surrounding its vibrant space, most of which are generous donations from the community, each with its unique tale of resilience. The Corner and many in the community can thank Nina, a dedicated resident and volunteer, with nurturing hands who transformed The Corner@240 into a haven for these botanical companions. The commitment of the Corner@240 to plant care extended to the broader community. Residents seeking a touch of green in their homes could purchase the plants for \$5 or less.

CELEBRATING OUR WINS AND FAILURES

On July 30, 2021 The Corner staff, in-house partners, Ambassadors, members of the catering collective took a day off regular work and gathered at High Park for a Staff Retreat. The day involved some meaningful reflection on the year that was, some yoga to rejuvenate our bodies and minds, fun and interactive games for team building and some good food. The retreat was a great way for everyone to let their hair down and gather with their team mates for some lighted hearted moments amidst the pandemic.