



**Making
a Difference**

Annual Report 2005/06

mainstay
HOUSING

**Building Futures.
Creating Communities.**



Report from the President

As out-going President of the Board I look back on another year of solid progress in responding to and supporting the varied needs of our tenants as they move forward in their individual journeys of recovery.

The achievements of the past year are due to the hard work and dedication of our knowledgeable and skilled staff. Through their efforts, our tenants receive quality services that promote recovery, wellness and quality of life. As a Board, we are proud of our staff and the results they achieve – results which are reported on through year-over-year metrics. Yet, as impressive as these results are, we know how much more Mainstay tenants could benefit from our services when the historic staff under-funding issue is addressed.

I am also proud of the accomplishments of the Mainstay Board of Directors. The committed and experienced members of the Board have established both Fundraising and 25th Anniversary Committees, and are actively working on establishing an “Opportunity Fund” to support our tenants’ aspirations to “live, learn, grow.” The Board also completed a strategic planning process that saw us setting the strategic direction for the organization for the next 5 years.

All in all, it has been a very productive year for the Board and the organization, and we are well positioned to succeed with the challenges and opportunities of the future.

Katrina Easton, President, Board of Directors



Brigitte Witkowski, Executive Director

Katrina Easton, President, Board of Directors

Message from the Executive Director

Twenty four years later and “making a difference” continues to be a benchmark for Mainstay. Last year we put in place another tool to measure the results of our efforts to respond to the changing needs of our tenants in delivering support to them. Data collection and evaluation are key to effectiveness and we have included some of the baseline data from our new ‘outcome measurement tool’ in this report.

Yet we know that data itself cannot fully express the ways our model of housing with support and a historic commitment to partnership impact on the day-to-day lives of the people we house. The heartbeat that gives meaning to the numbers are tenant-members, staff, board members and all those who work with us. That is why this report resonates with some of the voices of our staff and tenant-members and partners describing the ongoing commitment to quality service.

Working with partners has always been a Mainstay imperative. We know the importance of combining efforts to support the well-being and quality of life of our tenants. This is the art of service in a community setting: ensuring access to specialized health care without institutionalizing someone in their home. Last year we increased the number of partnerships with community - and hospital-based clinical services, especially ethno-specific agencies seeking access for their clients to the housing with support we provide.

Last year we also found ourselves the destination for mental health practitioners from Halifax, Cape Breton, Rwanda and Ireland who were curious about our model of housing with support and the interplay of community development, harm reduction, and education within a rights and responsibility framework. It was a gift to Mainstay for us to be able to showcase our direct service staff, managers and tenants, and include our partners where appropriate to meet with our visitors. Together we shared stories about service challenges and solutions and the necessary interface between acute care and community services.

As we move forward, we will continue to engage in knowledge exchange opportunities particularly through conference presentations. We will continue to address system needs by working with partners such as Supportive Housing and Diversity, the Toronto Mental Health Supportive Housing Network as well as the City of Toronto’s Street Outreach Steering Committee and ONPHA’s Supportive Housing Committee. We will continue to engage in the unfolding health care transformation work in Toronto Central LHIN and ensure our tenants are included.

Finally, I know we can move forward because of the dedicated and professional staff in all of Mainstay and the committed Board of Directors who point us to the future.

Brigitte Witkowski, Executive Director

Tenant and Member Services

Mainstay's team of Supportive Housing Workers and Housing Access Coordinator had another busy year providing individual and group support to 771 households. They worked closely with staff from 23 community and hospital based mental health agencies to deliver timely and integrated solutions to help our tenants/their clients succeed in housing.

The goals of the Tenant and Member Services department are:

- to build tenant capacity to maintain housing through providing information and education on the rights and responsibilities of being a tenant;
- to provide a link to clinical supports when tenants experience the symptoms of their mental illness so they are able to access the supports that they need;
- to decrease social isolation for people who experience stigma and disconnection from family and social supports;
- to provide meaningful opportunities for tenants to participate in their community;
- and to succeed in their individual journey of recovery.

Key Accomplishments

- Developed Support Service Agreements with 23 community and hospital based mental health agencies;
- Completed Successful Tenancy Action Plans with 20% of new tenants;
- Published 3 booklets: " Fire Procedures", "Talk Safe" and Cooking Healthy on a Low Budget;"
- Hosted monthly meetings of the Supportive Housing & Diversity (SHAD) Group focussing on poorly served ethno-racial and ethno-cultural groups. SHAD received a \$90,000 grant from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation for a one-year project to create a "Manual of Best Practices in Developing Culturally Competent Supportive Housing"
- Designed and distributed Satisfaction Survey to tenants on support they receive;
- Applied for and received City of Toronto grant of \$30,000 for common area furniture for 28 buildings;
- Included tenants in feedback process for Decision Review Policy.

Stephen Gray — Supportive Housing Worker

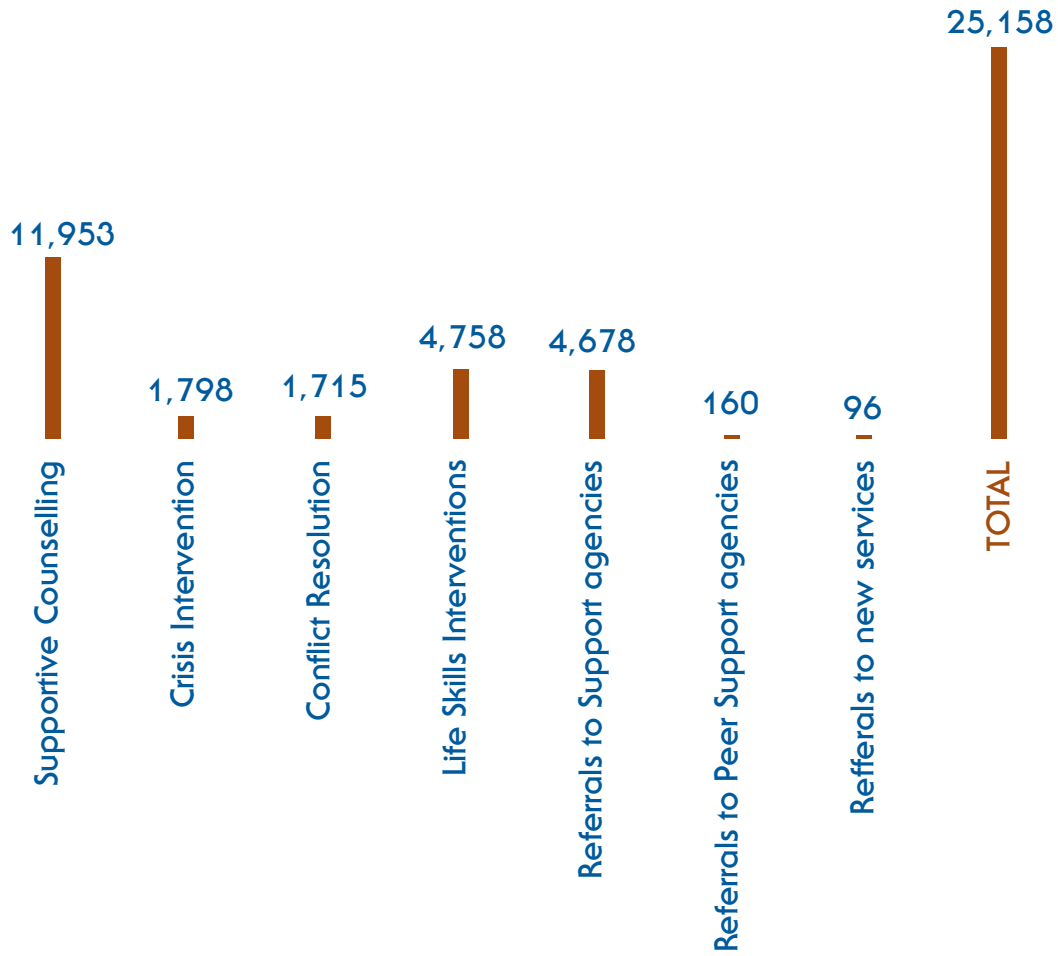
Stephen Gray brings his thoughtful, caring manner to his role as a Supportive Housing Worker. Stephen's responsibility is to support the tenant in whatever way possible. That support often comes in the form of creative problem solving. "Working within Mainstay guidelines, I listen and try to respond to the unique needs of each tenant."



Learning to live with other tenants in a community setting can present its own particular challenges. Stephen works in partnership with the managers to ensure growth in community. "I am often working along side others when dealing with tenants. We all work together to ensure the tenant's success."

Stephen emphasizes that the true spirit of teamwork is achieved through open communication and a willingness to adapt to change. "Our focus is the tenant. We are all motivated by the desire to provide support to the tenant, whatever form that may take." Stephen's compassion, kindness, and respect for people of all cultures is evident in his interactions with the tenants and staff.

Site Support Interactions 2005-06



Volletta Peters — Manager, Tenant and Member Services

Volletta Peters works at the large-scale, or macro, level—that is, she brings her expertise to work in collaboration with the managers of Mainstay’s 23 partner agencies. Together, Mainstay and its partners advance their collective mission of providing safe, affordable housing to those in need. As Volletta puts it, “Mainstay provides a common voice through which all partners speak. We offer a whole-person approach, with the tenants’ best interests at the center.” By working together, Mainstay and its partner agencies are able to offer housing in a timely and effective manner. Working in partnership allows each organization to make effective use of limited resources.



Working with other agencies comes with its own set of challenges. Each agency has its own philosophy and value system. In order to work together, Mainstay and its partner agencies must keep the lines of communication open. There must be a willingness to remain open to new ideas.

For Volletta, working as part of a team is the magic ingredient. Without teamwork and a willingness to work through difficulties, the tenants’ best interests may not be served. Working with multiple partners allows the use of many approaches and means to achieve the common goal of providing housing.

Volletta’s commitment is the standard by which she operates. She considers herself an ambassador for Mainstay and acts accordingly. Her respect for the rights and dignity of each person is paramount in her work. Volletta’s role is that of leader, mentor, and supporter of the front line workers. She makes a difference by inspiring others to give their best.

Access Partnerships

Marta Roller — Housing Access Coordinator

Housing is more than just shelter. It is hope and security. Safe affordable housing is vital to one's well-being and opens a door to improving quality of life. This is Marta Roller's guiding principle in her work as Mainstay's Housing Access Coordinator.

Marta bridges the distance between the applicant and Mainstay. She works closely with 23 mental health agencies to get the best fit between the individual and the available units. Marta's job is to involve the applicant and support agency in the intake process so that decision-making around support is relevant and meaningful for the tenant moving in.

At the first point of contact with a prospective tenant, there is a lot at stake. Marta aims to put the person at ease, to listen with care and compassion and to help identify the supports needed to make that person's housing experience at Mainstay a success.

Marta wants tenants to understand they have choices about what happens to them and control over how successful their tenancy will be. Fairness, respect and a non-judgmental attitude are key values Marta brings to her work. In this way, Marta makes a difference to Mainstay and increases Mainstay's value to the community.



Paula Wynter — Housing Outreach Worker, Canadian Mental Health Association – Toronto Branch

Paula Wynter is proud of the 15-year partnership Mainstay has had with the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)—specifically, the work both organizations are doing to provide housing for those who find housing a challenge. As CMHA's Housing Outreach Worker, Paula works closely with Marta Roller to match a CMHA client to Mainstay Housing. The partnership works because each organization brings its unique talents to the table. Mainstay has units and support staff. The CMHA has clinical knowledge as well as support staff. Once



a client is housed, Paula encourages the CMHA's continued relationship with that client to ensure success. "The book is never closed on a client. Clients receive as much support as they request to ensure that they remain in their housing for as long as they wish."

Paula credits Mainstay's seamless service with accomplishing the goal of housing clients in as timely a manner as possible. A unit isn't left standing empty for long. As Paula puts it, "Mainstay cuts out the red tape to benefit the client. Clients need housing now, not sometime down the road."

Paula makes the CMHA–Mainstay partnership work by bringing her passion and interest in mental health to the task. She believes in education and advocacy. "I want clients to know what's available for them to be able to make life changing decisions." Paula makes a difference by being reliable, responsive, and ready to do all she can to help a client.

Focus on Community Development

Kirsten Lam — Supportive Housing Worker

Kirsten Lam is proud of Mainstay's partnership with Dixon Hall, one of our 23 partner agencies. The Dixon Hall referrals are all male, independent, but fairly isolated. Once they've moved into Mainstay's Eastern Avenue building, Kirsten works closely with the Supportive Housing Worker at Dixon Hall, to create a positive, thriving environment for Mainstay tenants.

Kirsten's passion is community development. She brings energy and creativity to her job of building community. She and Dixon Hall have tried different activities to encourage tenant get-togethers. At first, there was little interest—only two tenants showed up for the first social event. But Kirsten and Dixon Hall persevered. The success of the recent hiking trip to the Niagara Escarpment is the result.

Many more tenants showed up for the hike than for any other activity. In the outdoor setting, they felt more free to open up. In addition to enjoying a day spent in nature, the tenants bonded with the Supportive Housing Workers. This will have long-term benefits.

Kirsten especially values Mainstay's partnership with Dixon Hall. She is encouraged by the ongoing support and the care given to the tenants living at Eastern, and is looking forward to the next tenant get-together.



Melissa Consunji — Student Placement

Ryerson student, Melissa Consunji spent seven months working with Mainstay in the Tenant and Member Services department. From the start, Melissa was not just along for the ride. She was assigned to the diverse population living at St. Clair Avenue West where she worked in tandem with the Supportive Housing Worker to provide site support to tenants and facilitating the development and implementation of community programs. One of the most important skills necessary to work with independent-living tenants is knowing where to draw the line between the personal and the professional. This was something Melissa learned first-hand in daily one-on-one contact, as well as in the monthly tenant meetings.



Melissa especially enjoyed her work with the dynamic, diverse tenant population. She played her part in several programs within the community—an adult computer program, a youth homework club, an adult sewing club, a youth sewing club, and a food program. These programs are facilitated by Mainstay, but are tenant led and operated. Working with the tenants, Melissa was encouraged by the amount of education and wisdom the tenants brought to their roles within the community.

Melissa chose Mainstay for her placement because she wanted to learn more about independent living for people with mental illness. During her placement, Melissa learned many valuable on-the-job skills. In turn, Mainstay was the recipient of Melissa's boundless energy and enthusiasm, as well as her keen interest in mental health and community development.

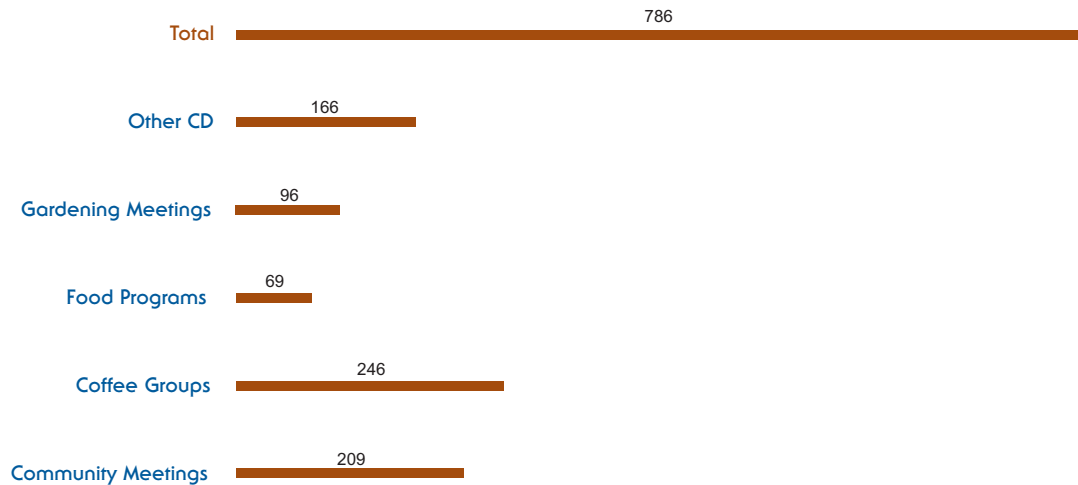
Focus on Community Development

Learning and Resource Centre

The Learning and Resource Centre (LARC), which we launched in October 2001, is a welcoming place for tenants where they can access information and resources. The LARC provides opportunities for tenants to meet, socialize and learn.

The LARC Advisory Committee, which plans LARC programs is led by two tenants, Tommy Lee and Maria Cordeiro along with Supportive Housing Workers Katherine Salinas and Kirsten Lam.

Community Development 2005-6



Maria Cordeiro and Tommy Lee

Learning and Resource Centre Advisory Committee

Maria Cordeiro and Tommy Lee are communicators. They are articulate and enthusiastic about their volunteer work with the advisory committee of the Learning and Resource Centre (LARC).

When asked why they volunteer to be part of LARC, both emphasize the same motive, "We want to give something back. We want to be active. We want to help the community grow, and we want to provide creative input." In fulfilling their goals, Maria and Tommy have not only gained a sense of belonging to the larger Mainstay community, but also earned a sense of pride and increased self-esteem.

Maria and Tommy are both proud of the LARC Open House, which was planned and carried out by the committee. They each speak of the evening as a great success. Many people attended and were introduced to the work of LARC.

Maria and Tommy proudly list the resources available at LARC: the community kitchen; the library; the computer room; "Windfall," which is a free clothing resource; a television for watching movies; and tables and chairs for sitting and visiting. LARC is an invaluable resource for Mainstay, and Maria and Tommy are vital to its existence.



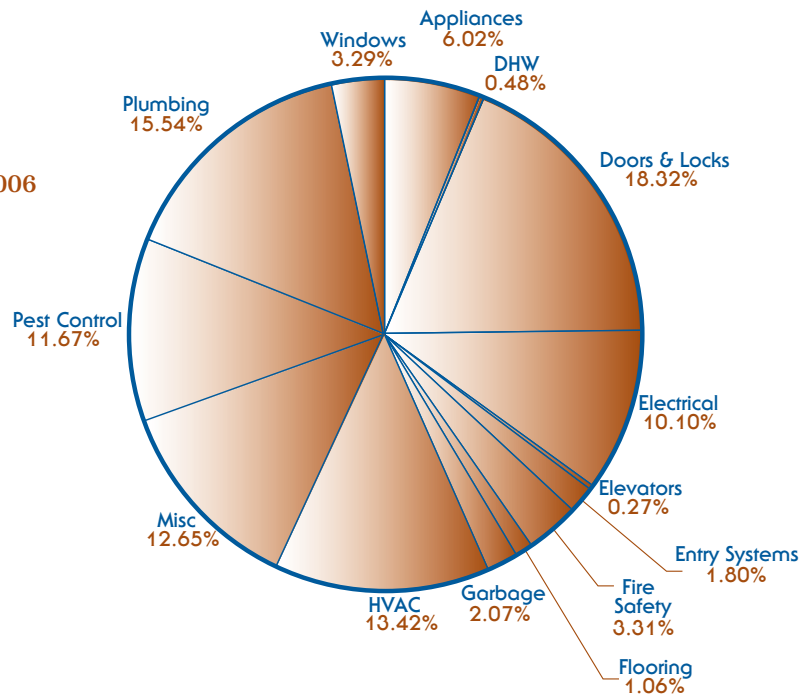
Building Services Department

Given our city-wide portfolio of houses, boarding homes, walk-up and elevated apartment buildings, our professional Building Services Department (BSD), worked diligently to deliver corrective and preventative maintenance programs at our 41 properties. Once again, our Building Services Department lived up to its commitment to ensure clean, safe homes for our tenants.

Key Accomplishments

- Invested \$1,553,961 to improve 8 properties;
- Provided updated training on WHMIS and safe operation of garbage carousel equipment;
- Hired three new staff;
- Reduced the number of repeat work orders from tenants by 25% since last year.

Work Orders
April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006
Total Work Orders: 3,771



Laurie Mobbs — Administrative Assistant, Building Services Department

Laurie Mobbs takes her job seriously and it is important that she does. “If the Building Services Department doesn’t respond immediately to a need—for example, to repair a faulty fire alarm—someone could die.” Laurie acts as a bridge between the tenant and Mainstay’s maintenance staff or, when necessary, an outside contractor. Laurie has hundreds of building service details at her fingertips, and organization is key to keeping on top of it all.

When a tenant calls with an emergency, Laurie decides how to address the situation. She fills out work orders, tracks them to make sure repairs are dealt with in a reasonable time, and documents the information for follow-up. She

also communicates Building Services Department information, policy, and procedures to staff, tenants, and outside agencies and contractors.

Teamwork is key to Laurie’s job. As Laurie says, “Team work means that everyone involved works to the best of their abilities to make sure the task is done correctly. No one is making a decision on their own.” For her part, Laurie listens to tenant concerns with patience and compassion. She wants tenants to know that, whatever the situation, she will do her best to help them. Laurie makes a difference to Mainstay by ensuring that all her responsibilities are handled with care and efficiency.



Agustin Barahona — Maintenance Worker

As a Maintenance Worker, Agustin Barahona, along with his team, makes sure that Mainstay's 41 buildings are kept in tip-top shape. Aside from addressing tenant concerns, which can be anything from fixing a fridge, stove, or toilet to replacing a broken window or lock on a door, Agustin also makes daily and monthly routine checks of every operating system within each building. It is a big job, and one that Agustin loves.

A well-maintained dwelling fosters a feeling of safety that is essential for tenant morale. It is also vital in the development of trust between tenant and Mainstay. When tenants know they can count on Maintenance Workers to respond to concerns in a timely manner, they are encouraged to respond in kind by treating their units in a responsible manner.

Visitors and family members often comment on how well the buildings are kept and on how quickly the tenants' needs are addressed. Agustin is justly proud of the communication that exists between the tenants and the Maintenance Workers. He knows that he makes a positive difference in the day-to-day life of Mainstay's tenant population.



Paul Hale — Caretaker

Paul Hale works hard to keep three of our buildings clean and tidy. A clean, clutter-free building tells everyone who sees it that both the landlord and the tenants take pride in their dwelling. Paul has a schedule of regular visits to each of the three buildings in his care.

At each building Paul does a walk-through, making sure that the building and the grounds are clear of garbage and clutter; that all the lights, locks, and fire panels are working; and that repairs are kept up. He tackles minor repairs, and promptly refers major ones to the Maintenance Workers.

Paul knows that tenants are pleased to be living in a clean, safe environment because they tell him so. He treats the tenants with kindness and respect, and the result is a positive relationship between tenant and landlord. For example, Paul speaks proudly of his work with the hearing impaired tenants. He's even learned to sign a number of phrases, such as "Happy New Year!" and "Hey, Boss!" It is important to Paul that the tenant—landlord relationship is a positive, nurturing one, and he works hard to make this happen.



Building Futures. Creating Communities.



Finance and Administration

Our role is to provide customer service to internal and external customers. By customers we mean tenants, staff, contractors, funders, agencies we work with, volunteers, donors and the public. We answer the phone, send out the mail, receive and pay the taxes and bills, ensure the office equipment is operational, process payroll, and maintain confidential tenant and staff files. We are the “glue” that binds us to the functions of Building Services and Tenant and Member Services and we make it possible for them to do their jobs efficiently and effectively.

Key Accomplishments

- Increased in-house skills eliminated reliance on fee-for-service external consultant to process the annual PST Rebate;
- Successfully launched software database project to identify need and source out solution to better meet financial, tenant, support, building database and information requirements into the future;
- Successfully integrated our new Danforth property into our portfolio;
- Re-organized the Finance & Administration department to provide better Human Resources and Information Technology support.
- Volunteered to provide leadership support to other agencies implementing the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care’s MIS requirements.

Administrative Support

Uma Sivasuntharam — Receptionist

Uma Sivasuntharam has many roles to play in her work with Mainstay—she greets newcomers when they cross the threshold; handles phone enquires from the general public; directs tenant queries to the proper channel, be it an outside agency, a contractor, or a Supportive Housing Worker; assists tenants with rent payments; handles petty cash and bank deposits; and ensures that all needed office supplies are stocked. In short, the flow of the office is Uma's domain.

It is apparent to all who meet her that Uma values the personal component in her work. She strives to treat each person as she would wish to be treated. Her desire is for people to see that Mainstay is a caring place.

Teamwork is essential for the health of any organization. Uma says that “it's impossible for me to think of Mainstay without thinking of team work. ”Mainstay works like a family and, like a family, members are dependent on one another. Uma's standard of service benefits not only every tenant and prospective tenant, but also the support staff and the outside agencies working with Mainstay Housing.



Sousan Ghaderi — Administrative/Data Entry Clerk

Sousan Ghaderi smiles a shy smile when she tells you that she's not that fond of paperwork. This makes it all the more admirable when you find out just how much paperwork she does. Sousan is responsible for the annual tenant-review process. Each year, she prepares and mails out income verification packages for over 900 tenants. With the updated income information, Sousan calculates a tenant's rent based on rent-gear-to-income guidelines. If the rent changes, or even if it stays the same, Sousan communicates this to the tenant.

Sousan's work of documentation is vital to Mainstay in order that funding can be obtained. The updated income records establish a tenant's need and eligibility for subsidized housing. Sousan is also responsible for tracking data from the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal for Tenant and Member Services.

It goes without saying that this amount of paperwork requires a strong sense of organization. Sousan keeps motivated by her desire to contribute to the well-being of people who need safe, affordable housing. She wants the tenants to feel that she is approachable and that she desires to help them. She keeps the tenants' best interests at the top of her list.



Progress Report on Strategic Priority to Advocate on issues that affect the right to housing of people living with mental illness

Education Workshop

With the help of a City of Toronto Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) grant of \$20,113, we designed and delivered, "Beyond the Key to the Front Door", a guide to helping tenants keep their homes. This is a workshop designed for staff of mental health and other social service agencies who support homeless, hard to house persons and help them keep their homes and break the street/hostel/hospital cycle.

The course, first announced at the Canadian Conference on Homelessness in May 2005, ended up reaching 222 participants from over 100 agencies in Toronto, Kingston and Kitchener. Looking ahead, we will present the workshop at the Psychosocial Rehabilitation Canada (PSR) Conference in Kingston, Ontario in September 2006 and at the Making Gains in Mental Health and Addictions Conference in Toronto in November 2006.

HomeComing Community Choice Coalition

- HomeComing continued its efforts this year to promote the right of people with mental illness to live in communities of their choice.
- Secured extended funding from the federal Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative administered by the City of Toronto;
- Met with Deputy City Commissioner about the need for more affordable housing and HomeComing input into community meeting process;
- Revised "Yes, In My Backyard": A guide for Ontario's supportive housing providers;
- NETWORK Magazine published an article in the Spring/Summer 2005 edition on HomeComing and advocacy on the right to housing;
- Activated website - www.homecomingcoalition.ca;
- Worked with Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association to combat NIMBYISM;
- Delivered workshop on "Human Resources in Development", sponsored by City of Ottawa, for groups interested in developing housing.

Progress Report on Strategic Priority for Further development of new housing for people living with mental illness.

Danforth Official Opening



Standing left to right: Katrina Easton, Maria Minna, MP Beaches East York, Brian Davidson, Manager of Supportive Housing at MOHLTC, and by Paula Fletcher, Councillor for Toronto-Danforth

2005 began with tenants moving into the 29 one-bedroom units at our newest building located on Danforth Avenue. On November 18, 2005 we celebrated the Official Opening. The tenants began planning for the event in the summer, deciding on food, tour leaders, greeters, and tenant representative who would provide the keynote speech. Complimentary remarks were made by The Honourable Maria Minna, MP Beaches East York, Brian Davidson, Manager of Supportive Housing at MOHLTC, and by Paula Fletcher, Councillor for Toronto-Danforth, who welcomed the Danforth tenants to the neighbourhood.

Martin Desmarais, Danforth tenant said, "Mainstay means financially subsidized independent living for myself and others, which lessens our financial burdens and allows us a better chance of achieving our full potential as individuals. Without Mainstay, I am fairly certain that there would be no way for us to live comfortably."

Martin also said, "We are extremely fortunate because we are living in a new centrally located building. There are many food stores near us, many parks and open spaces for recreation. The beach is only half an hour away, downtown only 20 minutes. We are in a prime location in the centre of everything!" Guests included friends, family members, staff, agencies and local business and residents.

Board of Directors

Key Accomplishments

- Formed Fundraising and 25th Anniversary Committees;
- Engaged University of Toronto consulting group to develop fundraising strategy;
- Recruited and transitioned in 6 new board members and Treasurer.



Standing left to right: Ken Wood, Sven Byl, Dennis Morency, David Richards, Geoffrey Ritchie

Front row left to right: Thomas Lam, Cynthia Lavoie (Treasurer), Katrina Easton (President), Maria Cordeiro

Absent: Dean Goodman, Cindy Maule (Vice-President), Gord Singer

Celebrating the commitment of staff who reached their 5th anniversary (5) and 15th anniversary (15) in 2005-2006:

Building Services Department: Randy Baldwin, Agustin Barahona, Scott Barry, Garfield Barrett, Hanna Berbersso, Wayne Bisnath, Jimmy Eshesh, Barry Eversley, Ray Fortune, 15 Pearl Gayle, David Green, Paul Hale, George Luzio, Desmond Marrett, Frank Melo, Laurie Mobbs, Teresa Rivas, Cristina Stuparyk

Tenant and Member Services: Marian Adan, Ferreshteh Bahmani, Kevin Blackwood, Wayne Burke, Kelly Clarke, Michelle Coombs, Kimberley Ellsworth, Stephen Gray, Daina Hodgson, Kirsten Lam, Mel Logan, Laurie McMann, Mike Ormsby, 5 Volletta Peters, David Reid, 5 Marta Roller, Katherine Salinas, Emma Thomas, Barbara Walker, Sharon Williams

Finance and Administration: Son Do, Jane Edwards, Tony Farebrother, Sousan Ghaderi, Kleva Gruda, Uma Sivasuntharam

Executive Director: Brigitte Witkowski

Executive Assistant: Nancy Sugar

Student Placements this year:

Irene Baka, Nicole Charles, Melissa Consunji, Reza Sarvi

Interviewer/Writer:

Monica Kulling

Funders:

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care;
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation;
City of Toronto Supporting Communities
Partnership Initiative

Audited financial statements available upon request.

Corporate Donors:

Bennett March and Associates
Chadwick Towers Co-operative
CHUM Charitable Foundation
Duke's Cycle and Radio Ltd.
Prentice Yates & Clark
Reboot Canada
United Steelworkers of America

In Memorium

Tenants who passed away in 2005-06:

Mervyn Best, James Cockell, Margaret Hill,
Diana Law, Simone Rumley, Carl Tsenis, Sandra
Wilkinson



mainstay
HOUSING

761 Queen Street West, Suite 301, Toronto, ON M6J 1G1
Tel: 416-703-9266, Fax: 416-703-9265, TTY: 416-703-9267
www.mainstayhousing.ca Charity no. 119258440 RT0001