

# mainstay HOUSING

ANNUAL REPORT 2004-2005



Building Futures. *Creating Communities.*



This year we announced our new name: Mainstay Housing. We were founded in 1982 as The Supportive Housing Coalition of Metropolitan Toronto to address the housing and support needs of people living with serious mental illness and others with special needs. Today, the term “supportive housing” is widely known as an approach to meeting housing needs, rather than as the name of an actual organization that meets those needs.

After a process of consultation, debate and reflection, the tenant members and Board of Directors adopted Mainstay Housing as the name for the present and future. It’s a new name with the same commitment to quality housing with support services.

The dictionary says “mainstay” in its oldest meaning, signifies “chief support; something that plays the most important role in a particular group, place or situation.” Our tagline, “Building Futures. Creating Communities” expresses the belief of Mainstay that housing is not an end, but a means to an end.

As tenant members themselves have eloquently said, “housing is an important step in their journey to recovery.”

Thanks to Joan White, former Director of Tenant and Member Services, who came up with the name. Thanks to Jeff Chow of Provoq Inc. for designing the process that lead to the new name and for creating the image.

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# President and Executive Director's Message



Brigitte Witkowski (left), Katrina Easton (right)

Choice, not placement is a Mainstay hallmark. This year we fulfilled our strategic plan to increase fairness, transparency and accountability for access to our housing. This strategic direction was established in 2001-2002 and included a multi-stakeholder change process. The year began as we took responsibility for access to our housing by implementing our Support Service Agreement with 20 clinical community and hospital-based support agencies seeking to find housing for their clients. The Agreement is a framework for effective communication and mutual accountability among the agency, their client and our tenant, and to ensure that the agency client, once housed, stays housed.

The steps toward this goal of successful tenancy start with "choice." We encourage the prospective tenant to look at the vacant unit and decide if they want to live there. Then, the prospective tenant meets with our Housing Access Coordinator to talk about their individual housing needs, previous experience of housing situations and their support requirements to help them keep the apartment they want.

Choosing where you want to live is something most people take for granted. This is often not the case for people living with serious mental illness, who are homeless or have long histories of institutionalization. Mainstay knows that choice is limited for people with low incomes and living with stigma and disability. However, our goal is to enhance choice wherever possible and we believe that exercising choice and accepting responsibility for choice connects people to themselves and to their communities. We believe that choice is a key tool to take on the identity of tenant and householder, and leave behind the identity of patient and homeless person.

Choice this year also meant conducting an organizational review of our Finance and Administration department to ensure that we found ways to reduce costs without compromising quality services to both the Tenant and Member and Building Services Departments. The result was a restructuring of the information technology and human resource positions into one management function and better support for customer service to our tenants. Moving forward into 2005-2006, a key goal will be to grapple with the effects of historic, systemic support funding problems that threaten our desire to continue to meet the 'housing with support' needs of individuals living with serious mental illness. The challenge is how to meet this goal and continue as a viable, innovative, effective supportive housing provider.

We are proud of our accomplishments this year as each department has worked hard to fulfil our mission out of a conviction that if the people we seek to serve had adequate income, there were vacancies everywhere and they faced no stigma, they would still choose to live at Mainstay.

Katrina Easton, President  
Brigitte Witkowski, Executive Director

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📁 Accomplishments

## Further development of new housing for people living with mental illness

### Occupancy of 777 Danforth Avenue

In January 2005 we were proud to open the doors to permanent housing for formerly homeless and under-housed individuals filling the 29 new one-bedroom apartments at 777 Danforth Avenue. Relying on funding released under the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's Homelessness Initiative Phase 2 program, and the Federal government's Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative, administered by the City of Toronto, we completed an extensive renovation of this two-



Prospective tenants at unit selection meeting studying unit layouts

storey building and created a well appointed building. Tenants have access to a rooftop deck, community kitchen, laundry room, community room, staff office and separately ventilated smoking room. The location provides easy access to shopping and transportation. Our partnership with Toronto East General Hospital COMPASS Assertive Community Treatment Team (ACTT), complements the support provided by our Supportive Housing Workers (SHW's).



Hub for community cooking activities

OW/ODSP start-up funds, budgeting, resources available in the neighbourhood and brainstorming for community development activities, such as in-house yoga classes, craft groups and a community kitchen. Our commitment to people living with serious mental illness is that there is choice where they live. This was demonstrated as each eligible client was encouraged to tour the building prior

Months before move-in the SHWs held weekly meetings at the COMPASS office site for prospective tenants served by ACTT. These facilitated sessions covered a wide range of topics such as accessing

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## Choice, not placement

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to move-in and choose their unit and then decide if they wanted to move in. The result: each prospective tenant got the apartment they wanted. Practical skills learned in these sessions and the pre-move-in tour helped ensure a smooth transition into their new housing. Equally as important, it gave the prospective tenants an opportunity to meet each other, socialize and develop the foundation for creating a strong building-based community.



Restored façade adding to streetscape

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## Advocate on issues that affect the right to housing of people living with mental illness

### HomeComing Community Choice Coalition

The opening of our Danforth building did not happen without NIMBY attempts to thwart its development. This precipitated us, along with Houselink Community Homes, in 2002, to co-found HomeComing Community Choice Coalition. HomeComing promotes the right of people with mental illness to live in communities of their choice.

We continued to provide support to supportive housing providers facing opposition and revised and updated our toolkit, "Yes in My Back Yard: a guide for Ontario's supportive housing providers".

Our efforts were recognized by the Atkinson Foundation, which approved a three year grant totaling \$117,000 to work toward a Charter Challenge when planning decisions undermine human rights. The City of Toronto SCPI program provided funds to do public education.

### Key presentations:

- ONPHA Conferences – Educational Workshop
- Waterloo Region Community Homelessness Network, February 2004;
- Canadian Housing and Renewal Association's Cross-Canada Teleforum, "Community resistance to affordable housing development.", February 2004;
- Canadian Institute of Planners Annual Conference entitled, "Moving Minds: Our Urban Challenge", July 2004;
- "Making Gains in Mental Health & Addictions" Conference, October 2004.

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## Support tenant members choice to live and participate in the organization

### Community Kitchen at the LARC

Every Friday afternoon, the Community Kitchen program takes place. Offered to all members of Mainstay Housing its objectives are to learn about healthy cooking on a budget, working together as a team and to develop decision-making skills.

The Community Kitchen program evolved and includes Portfolio Community Kitchens. Specific buildings and communities are invited to participate in the cooking activity, alongside their Supportive Housing Workers, either at the LARC or in buildings with a kitchen. Examples of successful portfolio Community Kitchens are the one at Kingston Road, where tenants made mini pizzas and among the deaf, deafened and hard of hearing tenants, who made tacos.

To further encourage decision-making skills among participants, members plan out each week's meal together and a placement student assists them in budgeting and shopping for groceries.



Dundas Community tenants receive first year anniversary certificates of appreciation for their participation in Tulips Food Sharing Program.

## LARC Supports Ingenuity

During the former "August Blackout" many Torontonians emptied their freezers and organized impromptu neighbourhood barbecues. Tenants at two Mainstay buildings were able to do the same, thanks to a weekly "Cooking Healthy" program offered through the LARC. This program was organized by Mainstay staff, facilitated by a city-funded facilitator and made available to Mainstay's deaf tenants through an ASL interpreter. The program gave tenants the know-how to prepare low-cost meals and forged connections among participants. Tenants loved the program. Now when they talk about the blackout, they can retell the same stories of ingenuity and camaraderie that other Torontonians tell.

## LARC Advisory Committee

The LARC Advisory Committee met on a monthly basis this year to plan, implement and discuss programming and develop the LARC workplan. Four tenants, Maria Cordiero, Marlene Shortt, James Tessier and Tommy Lee participated on the committee with Supportive Housing Workers, Beverley Jones and Kirsten Lam, with the assistance of placement student Whynant Prince. This year the Committee:

- developed a marketing plan to increase committee membership and participation in programs;
- visited tenant meetings to promote committee membership and programs;
- created a new LARC brochure;
- re-designed the feedback forms and box to increase the amount of suggestions so that tenant ideas can be included in future planning of events and activities and to be environmentally conscious;

Committee goals for next year are a tax clinic and peer support program.

## 1st Prize at the 2004 ONPHA Conference

Mainstay was invited to participate in the Tenant Lounge Display at the 2004 ONPHA Conference. Three tenants, Paul Lowery, Chau Yu (Susan) and Dennis Graham joined Supportive Housing Workers, Wayne Burke and David Reid to create a display board which provided a snapshot of the evolution of Mainstay Housing and manned the table and answered questions about Mainstay. The result: first place honours.



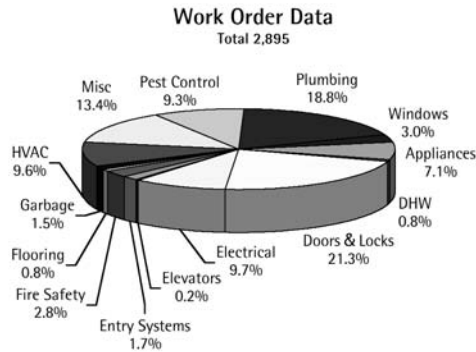
## Gardening

2004 was a terrific year for gardening at Mainstay. Tenants at 26 buildings came together to plan, plant and maintain their gardens and they grew everything from roses and daisies to mouth-watering tomatoes and even corn-on-the-cob! Feedback has been very positive: tenants at two buildings reported that they held a late summer BBQ and featured the veggies they grew in their own gardens. Several other tenants said the gardening clubs provided a much-needed excuse to go outside, enjoy the fresh air and socialize with their neighbours, both in the building they live in and the homes near by. A lot of tenants also expressed their appreciation for the four summer student community groundskeepers, who helped the tenants with weeding and watering.

*Rose had this to say. "If you're anything like me, gardening is a passion that sometimes borders on obsession. Gardening connects the soul to the earth, and it's fun – a way to wind down from daily stresses and enjoy the pleasure of creating something both useful and beautiful."*

## Spotlight on the Building Services Department

# Preserving our building assets - now and for the future



Each day, caretakers, maintenance workers, with the support of their managers, director and administrative assistant, work hard to service our 41 sites and ensure that our tenants have clean, safe and well maintained places to live. Caretakers' daily efforts ensure our buildings fit inconspicuously into the neighbourhood and enhance curb appeal. The success of these combined efforts fulfill our mission to ensure that our tenants, present and future, continually choose to live here because Mainstay offers quality housing.

Maintenance Workers' duties are to complete tenant generated work orders. This year they and expert external contractors completed 2,895 of them. We are pleased that this is 24% less than last year. We attribute this to fewer tenant generated work orders in the first place and greater efficiency in completing them in one trip rather than multiple visits. Simply stated, the magnitude of repairs the tenants require has reduced and this is a direct result of our capital works program and more effective work order assignment system.

This year, for example, we completed re-plumbing of 3 buildings, which translates into fewer faucet and pipe leaks.



### Building Services Department:

**Seated:** Frank Melo, Barry Eversley, David Green, Pearl Gayle

**Standing:** Ray Fortune, Darren Sarniak, Laurie Mobbs, Desmond Marrett, George Luzio, Randy Baldwin, Garfield Barrett

**Absent:** Agustin Barahona, Hanna Berbersso, Wayne Bisnath, Jimmy Eshesh, Paul Hale, Teresa Rivas, Cristina Stuparyk

## Preventative Maintenance

Preventative maintenance plans have been the cornerstone of our building and system management, which has resulted in reduced failure rates. This involves annual and semi annual inspections of roofs, walls, doors, windows and equipment at every site. These inspections pay extra attention to the building envelope to ensure that it is weather tight and to prevent accelerated deterioration of the building's weather shield.

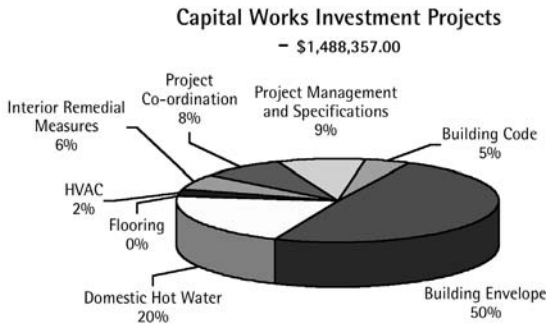
Capital planning must be well thought out and be adaptable to the changing environment to ensure that the valuable resources reinvested into the building will continue to provide safe, comfortable and affordable housing for years to come.



East end buildings after exterior stucco work

## Capital Works Plan

Our Capital Works Plan has made a significant improvement to our housing assets as well as our risk management. Since 2000-2001 and the start of our Capital Works plan we have undertaken the task of bringing the housing stock up to fire and building code and municipal standards. Our focus has always been centered on the safety and quality of life of our tenants. This year our work focused on building re-plumbing, building envelope, equipment replacement and some unit rehabs.



An analysis of work orders and a review of our reserve fund study developed in 1998-99 by a building science company, is the basis to design a Capital Works Plan to zero in on building components which have reached their useful life span. The result: cost savings, better staff assignments and more satisfied tenants.

## Education and Research Projects

- Created tenant-friendly brochure on Personal Information Policy, in compliance with the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA)* and *Personal Health Information Privacy Act (PHIPA)*
- Updated and revised our Tenant Handbook

- Mid-way through a collaborative research project, with Toronto East General Hospital, entitled, "Qualitative Research Study of a Community Development Strategy to Break the Cycle of Homelessness of People Living with Serious Mental Illness."
- Working with Jim Dunn, Research Scientist of the Inner City Health Research Unit of St. Michael's Hospital, received an enabling grant of \$11,950 from Wellesley Central Health Corporation, to assess the feasibility of and develop a grant proposal for an in-depth "study of the effects of supportive housing on health, quality of life and health care utilization patterns for people with serious mental illness living in supportive housing."

## Thanks to our Staff

Mainstay succeeds because of the people who choose to work here. Each day they walk the mission and values in each thing they do. They take their jobs seriously; they care. As professionals in every position their combined efforts make Mainstay a place people want to live in and a leader in delivering quality housing and support. Their achievements are reflected in this Annual Report.



Staff Working Retreat - Ward's Island

Celebrating the commitment of staff who reached their 5th anniversary ( 5 ) or 15th anniversary ( 15 ) in 2004 - 2005.

Randy Baldwin, Agustin Barahona, Garfield Barrett, Hanna Berbersso, Wayne Bisnath, Wayne Burke, Michelle Coombs, Son Do, Jane Edwards, Jennifer England, 5 Jimmy Eshesh, Barry Eversley, 5 Tony Farebrother, 5 Ray Fortune, Pearl Gayle, 5 Sousan Ghaderi, Sarah Glide, John Gooderham, David Green, Kleva Gruda, Kola Ilyomade, Beverley Jones, Paul Hale, Daina Hodgson, 5 Carlton Johnson, Wendy Kent, Kirsten Lam, Mel Logan, George Luzio, 5 Desmond Marrett, Laurie McMann, Frank Melo, Laurie Mobbs, Karla Parks, Volletta Peters, David Reid, Teresa Rivas, Marta Roller, Darren Sarniak, Jackie Saleh, 5 Uma Sivasuntharam, Laurie Snyder, Cristina Stuparyk, 15 Nancy Sugar, Emma Thomas, April Trehwhitt, Barbara Walker, 5 Sharon Williams, Brigitte Witkowski

#### STUDENT PLACEMENTS THIS YEAR:

Nadesha James, Gail Besset, Whynant Prince, Salome Aigbogun

#### COMMUNITY GROUNDSKEEPERS FOR SUMMER 2004:

Mark Blinch, Alexander Simpson, Michael Horsford and Kendrick McNaughton

## Thanks to our Board

Mainstay relies on its Board and its passion for our mission. Mainstay benefits from the wide range of skills and experience that board members bring to monitoring results and engaging in strategic discussions and decisions about the future. Board achievements include establishing committees related to Fundraising, Education, New Development and Public Policy and planning for the first time a successful General Members Meeting where representatives from The Dream Team (including Mainstay Board members Dennis Morency and Mary Vizsy) spoke eloquently on the value of supportive housing. We thank them for their generous volunteer efforts throughout the year, including the Seasonal Party.



#### Board of Directors

Front row: Cindy Maule, Dean Goodman, Andr ea Kissendal  
Centre: Rozsa Gyulay, Katrina Easton (President)

Back row: Dennis Morency, Gord Singer, David Richards,  
John McMillan, Lorri Detta (resigned)

Absent: Paul Dowling (Treasurer), James Gorham (Vice-President),  
Sean Martin, Karen Mann, Mary Vizsy

To the funders and friends of Mainstay Housing who gave generously this year, we extend our sincere thanks.

#### Funders

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

#### Donors

Bennett March and Associates  
Blockbuster Canada  
Chadwick Towers  
CHUM Charitable Foundation  
CHUMCity Christmas Bureau  
Joy Connelly

#### Dukes Cycle

Local Union 5296  
United Steelworkers of America  
Onyx Fire Protection Services  
Reboot Canada  
Rogers Video  
Sporting Life  
Springfield Graphics

#### In memorium

Tenant members who passed away in 2004-2005  
Dale-Ann Bennett, Norman Bieda, Dorothea Biernath, Sheldon Cohen, Frances Davie, George Hill, Saeed Shahabi, David Shannon, Dennis Smith, Herbert Taylor, Thomas Webster

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# Financial Highlights

## Statement of Financial Position

Year ended March 31, 2005	2005	2004
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash and temporary investments	\$1,651,821	\$2,239,403
Cash in trust	-	\$882,637
Accounts receivable	\$320,073	\$133,969
Subsidies receivable	-	-
Deposits	-	\$4,700
Prepaid expenses	\$226,264	\$170,011
<i>Total Current</i>	<b>\$2,198,158</b>	<b>\$3,430,720</b>
<b>Capital Assets &amp; Development Costs</b>	<b>\$72,442,179</b>	<b>\$71,757,399</b>
<b>Restricted Funds</b>	<b>\$4,569,496</b>	<b>\$3,563,525</b>
	<b>\$79,209,833</b>	<b>\$78,751,642</b>

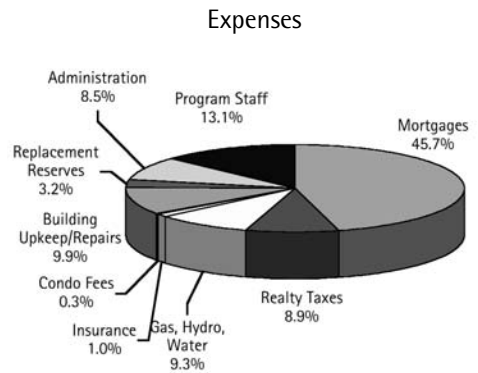
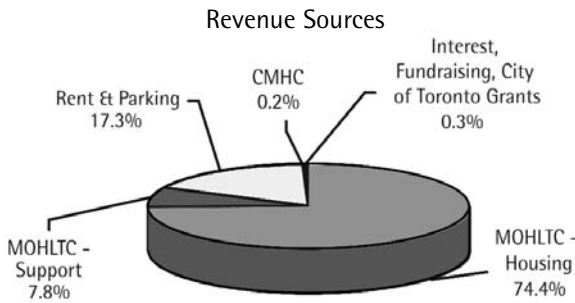
## Liabilities and Net Assets

Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$975,654	\$852,760
Subsidies payable	\$538,929	\$694,819
<i>Total Current</i>	<b>\$1,514,583</b>	<b>\$1,547,579</b>
Mortgage and Loans Payable	\$67,050,631	\$68,567,919
Deferred Contributions Related to Capital Assets	\$4,999,576	\$4,036,743
Net Assets (Reserves included)	\$5,645,043	\$4,599,401
	<b>\$79,209,833</b>	<b>\$78,751,642</b>

## Statement of Reserves

	2005	2004
Organizational	\$683,575	\$643,904
MOHLTC	\$3,970,831	\$3,408,103
CMHC	\$526,034	\$127,393
Homeless Initiative	\$40,832	
General Programming	\$31,799	\$28,029
	<b>\$5,253,071</b>	<b>\$4,207,429</b>

Full Audited Financial Statements are available upon request.



**Statement of Income and Expenses**

Year ended March 31, 2005	Total 2005	Total 2004
<b>Revenues</b>		
Rent	\$249,049	\$204,552
OCHAP rent subsidies	\$148,057	\$135,995
CMHC subsidies	\$16,470	\$19,544
Interest and Other	\$60,804	\$59,284
Fundraising, Donations	\$13,916	\$21,438
Rent geared to tenant income	\$1,788,747	\$1,808,862
MOHLTC subsidies and grants	\$9,811,137	\$9,732,814
	<b>\$12,088,180</b>	<b>\$11,982,489</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Mortgage interest	\$3,925,029	\$4,248,125
Amortization	\$1,561,976	\$1,408,757
Municipal taxes	\$1,051,730	\$1,041,211
Insurance	\$117,958	\$83,070
Utilities	\$1,131,830	\$1,123,793
Maintenance	\$1,139,341	\$1,011,280
OCHAP distribution to tenants	\$148,057	\$135,995
Administrative costs	\$387,509	\$339,665
Appropriation to replacement reserve	\$385,601	\$379,801
Bad debts (recovery)	-	\$7,025
Maintenance, salaries and benefits	\$814,152	\$838,325
Administrative and tenant support salaries and benefits	\$1,323,248	\$1,358,269
Rent	\$58,308	\$60,057
Fundraising	-	-
	<b>\$12,044,739</b>	<b>\$12,035,373</b>
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$43,441</b>	<b>\$(52,884)</b>

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