

mainstay HOUSING

ANNUAL REPORT 2006/07

**Without housing
there is no health.**

198⁵
2007

Our Mission

To provide, promote and support quality affordable and accessible housing primarily for consumer/survivors, as well as people with special needs.

Our Values

Transparency, mutual respect, access to information, tenant participation in decisions that affect them, and hope through community development processes embody the elements of recovery. We believe in the capacity of our tenants to make the future that matters to them both within and outside of Mainstay. Our values inform day-to-day operational practice.

Our Strategic Plan 2007-2011

1. Improve recovery outcomes of tenants

Mainstay, through its programs and in concert with partners, will improve tenant-centered services to support quality of life and wellness of tenants.

2. Members proud of and contribute to Mainstay

Mainstay will work with its members to build understanding of the rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for membership that encourages tenants to choose to act as members in achieving Mainstay's mission.

3. Supportive housing valued in an integrated system

Mainstay will work with partners and others to build an integrated system that values the role supportive housing plays in supporting people living with mental illness to live independently as citizens in communities of their choice with support that is meaningful and effective. As the transformation agenda continues to unfold, we will focus on improving service integration through sharing information and skills, incorporating best practices and service agreements to enhance access to housing and supports across a continuum of client identified needs.

4. Advocate for and create new housing

Mainstay will work with others to advocate for new housing that is safe and affordable and accessible to people living with mental illness. Mainstay will take advantage of opportunities to create new supportive housing.

5. Ensure long-term sustainability

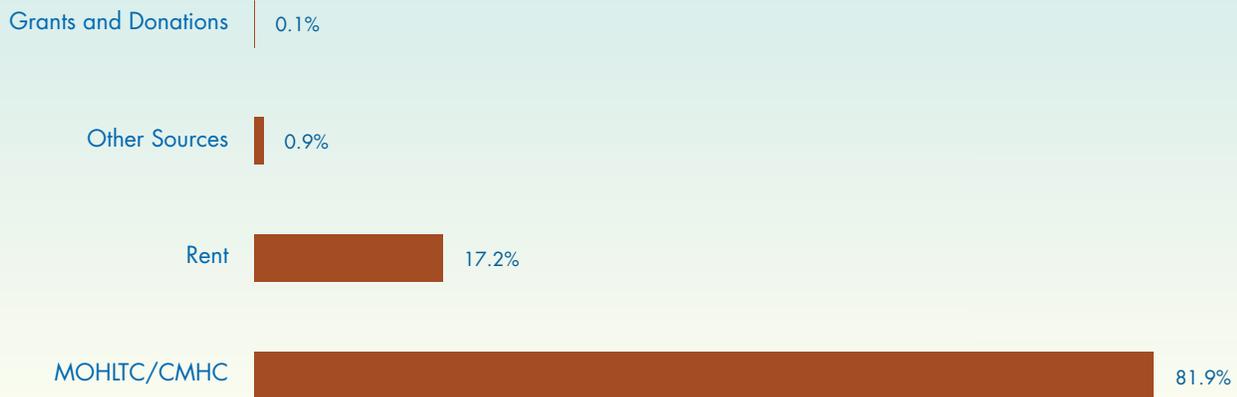
Mainstay will ensure the long-term sustainability of programs and services and sound leadership by effectively using its resources, diversifying funding sources and continued commitment to develop systems for effective information management and technology.

6. Demonstrate excellence as employer

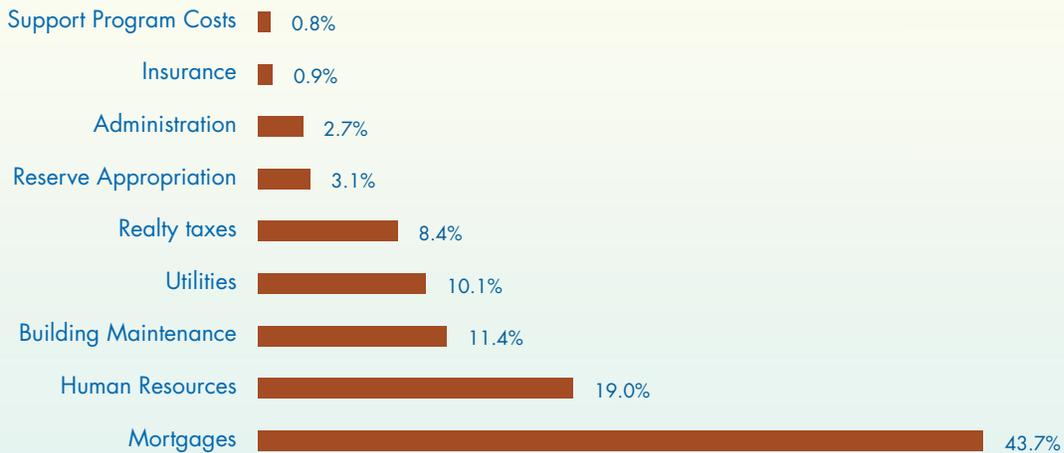
Mainstay will work to attract, support and retain a team of staff, volunteers, students.

Financials 2006-07

Operating Revenues 2006-07 \$12,466,488



Operating Expenditures 2006-07 \$12,430,500





Message from the President

I am very pleased to look back at my first year as Mainstay President and see the fruits of the board's labor.

It was only at the beginning of my tenure that the board and management began to implement the strategic directions for Mainstay moving forward into the next 5 years. I want to share with you some of the work the board in particular, has initiated.

The board began Fundraising in order to offer our members further opportunities to grow within their communities. At Mainstay, board members realize that without housing there is no health; hence, our dedication to provide safe and affordable housing. The board also realizes that housing is one component in the journey to create a healthy community. The Opportunity Fund was created to provide our members further opportunity to take a course, develop a hobby or turn a hobby into an enterprise. The Fundraising Committee has taken on the task of ensuring the board is strategic in selecting businesses to fuel the fund, so that the Opportunity Fund remains viable in the long term. At our upcoming AGM, the Opportunity Fund Committee will announce the first recipients. This is a tremendous milestone and I want to thank both the board for its vision and all the applicants for their thoughtful submissions. I am excited for those members that have been selected and wish them the best in pursuing their goals with the grants.

The board has also begun to further understand what membership at Mainstay could mean. It began at the Members Meeting in October with roundtable discussions with approximately 50 tenant-members and the board. It is still a work in progress with more tenant-members to hear from. We will share results and recommendations next year. I encourage our members to come out to the roundtables and share your experiences with our fact finding teams.

All in all, it has been a productive board year. Several initiatives began this year and will continue over the next several, in order to meet the strategic directions set out by the Mainstay Board.

I would like to thank our board members for their dedication and time. Each of our members gives a great deal of time and energy to help management achieve the goals of the organization. This is a voluntary capacity and one the organization holds in great value. I'd also like to thank management and staff; through their work and dedication, our tenant-members receive quality services that help them through their journey to recovery. It is quite right to believe that without housing, there is no health. Our staff work tirelessly to ensure that our members can retain their housing and to promote our tenant-members' wellness within a variety of initiatives.

Cindy Maule

Message from the Executive Director

It's 2007, and we've reached our twenty-five year milestone. This has been a journey nurtured on partnerships. Accountable partnership with agencies providing support to our tenant-members, helping them to succeed in their housing; partnerships with individuals and organizations advocating for the rights of people living with serious mental illness to live in quality, affordable housing and to live in areas of their choice.

The journey has also seen the growth of our tenant-members' participation and feedback in the organization, serving on the Board of Directors, taking part in social/recreational programs such as gardening, supplemental food groups, parties, coffee clubs, and our Learning and Resource Centre. It has led to tenants helping to define what it is to be not just a tenant at Mainstay, but a member as well.

As you will read later in this report, our tenants continue to reiterate that "without housing, there is no health." We were founded 25 years ago because absence of home worsened people's lives and for many living with serious mental illness they wandered under greater burdens of homelessness, addictions, loss of employment and opportunities for education. We have learned that home is control over life and builds confidence and a sense of belonging.

Through the years we began keeping statistics and refining our outcome measures in an attempt to quantify our service to tenants. Our Supportive Housing Worker program ensures that tenants understand their rights and responsibilities as tenants and links them to more intensive support from the community when required. Our efforts have served our building assets as well and made us more efficient in meeting funder reporting requirements such as MIS/CDS. Our on-going capital works program ensures that our buildings are Code compliant and compliment our day-to-day cleaning and maintenance regimen.

Evidence of our support model effectiveness and property management expertise have been the visits that Canadians from across the country and people from abroad have made to Mainstay to learn from our talented staff.

Now part of the Local Health Integration Network environment, we are keeping our pulse on the governance vision and expectations of the LHINs on Health Service Providers like us. We are already engaged in system-wide thinking, to be in alignment with LHIN directions, primarily through integration of services. To this end, I look forward to our participation on the Back Office Integration Council in the coming year, to exchange views with other members of the Council and to steer Mainstay through the evolving health-care system in Ontario.

Looking forward, I am encouraged as I think about our dedicated staff and Board of Directors and their commitment to improving the quality of life for our tenant-members and doing so with high standards, mutual respect and team work.

Brigitte Witkowski



Up Close

"Life is good for me here." - "Ray"



"Ray" has lived at Kingston Road for the past four years. He considers himself "very lucky" because he was able to move into a Mainstay unit in about two months time. The application process isn't always this quick. But Ray, now in his fifties, was living on the streets in what he calls "a hard life." He desperately needed safe, affordable housing. "I lived on the streets for years," reflects Ray. "It gets harder and harder the older you get."

On the streets, Ray spent his days panhandling at Queen and Spadina. He had his favourite coffee shops. He had his tarp shelter. He also had a substance abuse problem and no hope in sight. Then Fred Victor Centre entered his life and things began to turn around for Ray. A social worker lined up the interview with Mainstay and Ray was invited for the interview process and then offered a unit.

Stable housing has given Ray a new lease on life. He says he's never lived this long in one place. Safety is another much-appreciated reality unknown in Ray's streetlife days. "Mainstay is great. The rent is reasonable. The buildings are kept up. Life is good for me here."

In what other ways has safe, affordable housing made life better for Ray? "I'm taking care of myself now, which was really hard to do on the street. And I'm trying to give back to the people who've helped me." Every Monday, Ray volunteers at the Women's Hostel, helping in the clothing department. Housing has changed life for Ray. He now spends his days in more positive ways than in the past and hope is no longer a remote reality.

"I have my own space but I also like my neighbours". - Joan



Joan radiates a positive attitude. "I am a proud Mainstay tenant. I am truly blessed." And you know she means it. Joan has been a Mainstay tenant for two years now. She and her two cats, Mango and Oreo, live at Broadview Avenue.

As a 65 year-old consumer/survivor, Joan realizes that housing can be a difficult issue. Before Mainstay, Joan lived in shared accommodation, which wasn't right for her. She didn't have the privacy she needs. "You couldn't leave your things lying around or they might get stolen or broken." In addition, Joan never felt safe. "There were a lot of comings and goings in that house."

As a longtime member of Progress Place, a recovery centre for people with mental illness, Joan was able to access Mainstay's application process. Joan is quick to state that, for her, the most obvious benefit of living at Mainstay is the social one. "I have my own space but I also like my neighbours." Joan is neighbourly by nature. She likes to connect with people and can now do so on her own

terms. "I can meet people when I want to," she says. "Or if I want to be alone with my cats, I just close the door." Joan feels safe and comfortable in the sanctuary of her unit and in the building.

Joan also enjoys the organized social aspects of the greater Mainstay community. She regularly makes use of the opportunities available at the Learning and Resource Centre (or LARC). She attended this year's Valentine's Day party and the income-tax clinic. "I enjoy meeting tenants from other buildings."

Living in secure accommodation has taken away a major source of stress for Joan. Her sense of security translates into a desire to give back to the community. Joan volunteers two mornings a week at an old age home. She also volunteers at a food bank. Her life has a structure that she values and credits with helping her recover and helping her to stay recovered.

"Mainstay has changed my life for the better".

- Claudette



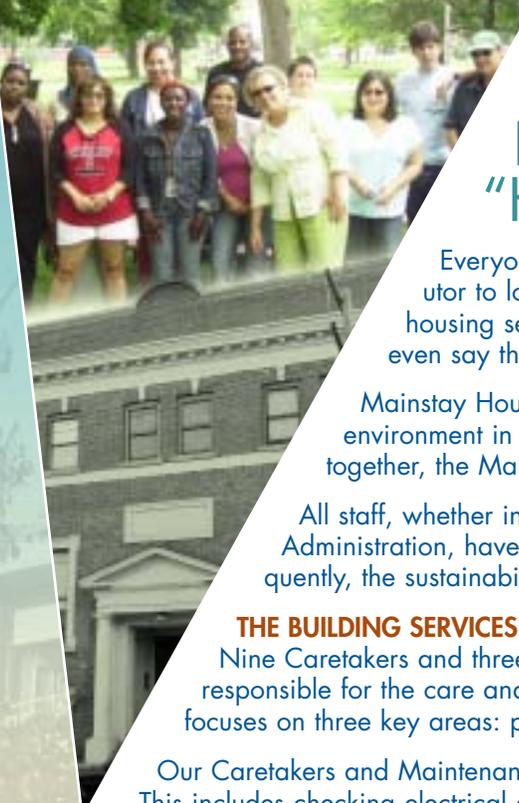
Claudette Jackson is ecstatic about her recent move into her unit at Dundas West. Her first response on viewing the freshly repaired and painted unit was, "Has anyone ever lived here before?" Claudette has lived in her unit for only four months, but her enthusiasm for her building (Mainstay's only all-female residence) and her unit ("It has lots of sunshine, a large bathroom, a locker downstairs for my bike, a roof patio.") is contagious.

Claudette came to Mainstay through Community Resource Connections of Toronto (CRCT). Before that, she had lived in housing offered through Street Haven at the Crossroads. She has also lived in a woman's shelter, but never in her own place. She speaks glowingly of all the wonders of her unit. "I like the large window and the light coming through. I love that there's no carpet. It's easier for me to breathe. I love having a roomy bathroom. I love being in charge of my own heat!" In short, Claudette is comfortable and happy in her new home.

Claudette credits her personal growth with the security she feels living at Mainstay. "You're not going to get kicked out. Mainstay works with the tenant to make the tenancy work. It's an active relationship, which I like."

Claudette loves her building and the neighbourhood it's in. She takes advantage of nearby Annette Public Library, where she uses the Internet services. She also attends a weekly laughter yoga class. Recently, she was asked if she would like to be a leader of the class. Her joy spills over as she explains what laughter yoga is and how it has "softened" her face. "Mainstay has changed my life for the better. I feel so positive now. I'm even learning how to recycle! I never cared about stuff like that before." Safe, affordable housing has improved Claudette's mental and physical health.





How our team connects “Housing” and “Health”

Everyone has the right to safe and affordable housing, which is a major contributor to long-term recovery for those with special needs. It has been proven that housing serves the physical, mental, and social health of an individual. One might even say that without housing there is no health.

Mainstay Housing strives to create a supportive environment with every initiative, an environment in which the recovery outcome of the tenant is a priority. By working together, the Mainstay team ensures a positive outcome for our tenants.

All staff, whether in Building Services, Tenant and Member Services or Finance and Administration, have key roles to play in the success rate of long-term tenancy and, consequently, the sustainability of Mainstay’s assets and the maintaining of a supportive environment.

THE BUILDING SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Nine Caretakers and three Maintenance Workers, led by three Managers and a Director, are responsible for the care and maintenance of forty-one buildings. The Building Services Department focuses on three key areas: preventative maintenance, capital works, and unit rollovers.

Our Caretakers and Maintenance Workers are the backbone of our **Preventative maintenance** program. This includes checking electrical and mechanical systems, checking fire safety devices, and managing pest control. They conduct service checks on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis and ensure that regular maintenance and cleaning occurs in a timely manner and contributes to harm reduction. Active involvement in the properties promotes a positive relationship between tenant and landlord. The Caretakers and Maintenance Workers address safety hazards and ensure that tenants live in a safe environment.

The Capital Works Program funds major projects such as roof replacements, kitchen and bathroom upgrades, balcony restorations, and code compliance work. This year we spent \$1,113,008 at several buildings. Ten buildings had carpet replaced with tile in the common areas, thereby making those areas easier to keep clean. Other major projects included bathroom and kitchen renovations, forty balcony restorations, and heating and air-conditioning upgrades.

Before these large-scale projects are tendered out, an annual report of all the buildings is completed. The Remedial Measures Action Plan ensures that all safety hazard liabilities are addressed. Repairs are described in detail and given a priority rating. In this way, we keep current with all the buildings, adding value to their long-term existence. Within the Capital Works program we have incorporated special project co-ordinators to mediate between tenants and contractors. These professionals keep the work flowing on schedule, ensure that daily operations are not interrupted and ensure minimum disruption to tenants’ well-being. All the contractors who work for us are required to be courteous to tenants and communicate work schedules and changes to the project coordinator who ensures that Mainstay tenants and staff are well informed.

The Unit Rollover process gives a vacated unit a fresh start. The unit is cleaned, painted, and repaired. The goal is to give the new tenant a warm welcome and a new beginning. This marks the first step toward building a trusting relationship between tenant and landlord. From the outset, we want our tenants to know that Mainstay is actively involved with the upkeep of their buildings and is available to address any maintenance issue that may arise.

Last year, Building Services completed one hundred unit-rollovers. This number is slightly lower than the previous year. At the time of rollovers, Building Services and Tenant Member Services work together. Building Services conducts a visual inspection of the unit while Tenant Member Services ensures that the rollover or repair job is not a problem for the tenant.

Building Services addresses the maintenance issues, while Tenant and Member Services addresses any support issues that may arise. This support directly contributes to a positive transition for the tenant while making sure that Building Services is able to do its job.

TENANT AND MEMBER SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Thirteen Supportive Housing Workers and one Housing Access Co-ordinator, led by two Managers and a Director, play a crucial role in our tenant-members' journey of recovery. Right from the beginning of the intake process, prospective tenants are encouraged to be active in successful tenancy. Making information available to tenants and emphasizing choice is vital to successful tenancy. As tenants, they have rights and responsibilities, under the *Residential Tenancies Act*. As tenants, they are also members who have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and they have the responsibility to make choices that will contribute to the health of the Mainstay community they live in.

Tenant and Member Services is a tenant-member driven department. It exists as a vehicle to support the tenant voice and its focus is defined by our tenants acting in their capacity as members. Tenant-members bring their concerns to the table; what needs would they like to see addressed: safety? food?—for example, the community kitchen, is a member-driven initiative supplying members with an opportunity to learn how to cook and to provide meals for any member who drops by the Learning and Resource Centre (LARC).

Tenant and Member Services strives to improve recovery outcomes and to focus on relapse prevention. The goal is to work strategically with tenants to ensure their success. As an aid to this process, we created the Successful Tenancy Action Plan. Tenants, at the time of intake, create the plan built out of the individual's housing history and which daily living challenges he or she might face. Various scenarios are constructed and the tenant is encouraged to come up with positive personal tools and strategies to ensure successful housing.

Many tenants face significant challenges to living independently, such as a history of homelessness, hospitalization due to mental health issues, and special needs. Past housing experiences may have included the negative experience of eviction. It is precisely because of this that eviction prevention is embedded in all practices of the Tenant and Member Services department. In 2006-07 there were 283 households at risk of eviction, however as a result of our efforts there were only four evictions, far less than the average of fifteen over the preceding five years. In addition, this year Tenant and Member Services staff completed an intensive training course on mental health recovery, which also addressed addictions and health toward maintaining housing.

Collaboration and Partnership

On a daily basis Mainstay's success revolves around collaboration and partnerships. We call on a support agency to link a tenant to a case worker for intensive clinical support; we participate on the Supportive Housing and Diversity Committee to enhance culturally competent housing options; we are members of provincial organizations to advocate for more housing and services. These are just a small sample of the myriad ways we collaborate to provide services to our tenant-members to improve their quality of life and ensure success in their housing.

Our demonstrated commitment to collaboration is in our origins. In 1981 Mainstay Housing (originally named The Supportive Housing Coalition of Metropolitan Toronto) grew out of a social movement focusing on the need for housing and support for consumer-survivors who had been moved out of psychiatric hospitals and ended up in unregulated rooming houses and boarding homes. Our original mission was to "co-ordinate and develop an effective community housing system." It was a bold mandate that required collaboration to succeed.

Between 1982 and 1996 Mainstay developed and tenants occupied 828 units of housing in 40 buildings. Along the way we developed an additional nineteen properties which we transferred to Regeneration House Inc., Accommodation, Information and Support, LOFT Community Services, Eden Community House of Toronto and Mens Sana – Families for Schizophrenics. It was in 2005 that we completed our 41st building through the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's Homelessness Initiative Phase 2, housing 29 singles in one-bedroom units.

Important change happened through partnerships. The most recent, in 2003, we and Houselink Community Homes created HomeComing Community Choice Coalition. HomeComing promotes the rights of people with mental illness to live where they choose. It was founded because "Not-In-My-Back Yard" discrimination was violating the rights of people with mental illness. Supportive housing providers, mental health consumers and survivors, city planners, human rights lawyers, mental health agencies and other citizens were invited to join together to:

- ensure city planning practices do not become a platform for discrimination, prejudices and fears;
- identify potential human rights abuses and take legal action against them;
- help supportive housing providers create new housing, without compromising the dignity of the people they house;
- mobilize citizens to support new housing for people with mental illness.

Collaboration is entrenched in our 25 year history. It's in our genes.

We are committed to providing support to our tenant-members to ensure they will succeed in their housing. In addition to our Supportive Housing Workers who provide site support, we collaborate with many other agencies who deepen that service to tenants and who ensure that supportive housing is valued in an integrated system. We are proud of our alliances with the following:

Across Boundaries	Fred Victor Centre	Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association
Bayview Community Services	Habitat Services	Pape Adolescent Resource Centre
Bob Rumball Centre for the Deaf	George Herman Memorial Foundation	Progress Place
Canadian Mental Health Association – Toronto	HomeComing Community Choice Coalition	Regeneration House
Community Resource Connections of Toronto	Hong Fook Mental Health Association	St. Michael’s Hospital ACT Team
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, through CSRU and Community Relations Committee	Legal Aid Ontario	St. Vincent de Paul Society
City of Toronto Street Outreach Committee	LOFT Community Services	Supportive Housing and Diversity (SHAD)
Connect Counselling Services – The Canadian Hearing Society	Madison Avenue Housing and Support Service	Toronto East Counselling and Support Service
ConnexOntario	Mount Sinai ACT Team	Toronto East General Hospital – COMPASS – ACT Team
COTAHealth	Na-Me-Res	Toronto Mental Health Supportive Housing Network
Dixon Hall	North York General Hospital – ACT Team	Toronto Western Hospital – IMPACT – Act Team
	Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs	



Our commitment to learning

Learning starts with acceptance and respect. At Mainstay our tenant-members get involved. Gardening connects tenants to their creativity and to each other.

Setting up and leading “supplementary food programs” strengthens belief in self. There are now 34 programs serving over 200 tenant-members. Our Learning and Resource Centre attracted 148 participants, on average, each quarter, who took part in our community kitchen, computers, clothing room, information sessions and other social-recreational programming.

We also share what we are learning with others. Learning is integral to our organization as is our ability to be nimble in meeting changing needs. Consistent with our history we strive to create an organization that supports learning.

Since 2005, we have delivered our workshop, “Beyond the Key to the Front Door: helping tenants keep their homes,” to over 500 participants from 75 social service organizations.

Brigitte Witkowski, Executive Director, was invited to Winnipeg by Human Resources Social Development Canada and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to present “Facing the Challenges of Housing People Living with Mental Illness and Substance Use Issues”, at a cross-Canada group of NGOs and government officials on *“Front-line experiences and ‘what works’ in addressing cycles of homelessness among people with mental health and/or substance abuse issues.”*

Both our Director and our Manager of Tenant and Member Services, Michelle Coombs and Volletta Peters, as well as Supportive Housing Worker, Katherine Salinas, traveled to New York City and met with colleagues from Newfoundland and looked at housing and support models at Common Ground and Pathways to Housing and gathered ideas on design development and best practices in housing and support.

Professionals in the mental health and/or housing field included Mainstay in their visits to Toronto to learn about our model of housing and support; rights and responsibilities of tenants; mutual respect; provisions of our Support Service Agreement; eviction prevention strategies. Visitors came from Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Alberta, Ireland, Rwanda (photo of visit above), South Africa and Melbourne, Australia.

Building Futures. Creating Communities.

Meeting Organizational Values

In 2006 all Mainstay employees completed a "Culture Survey," to evaluate how well Mainstay is doing in terms of key organizational values - team work, treating each other with mutual respect and acting with high standards. The survey asked respondents to identify staff who they considered role models in these areas.



At a follow-up meeting, staff defined team work by stating that, we know we are working well as a team when...

- i** together we meet deadlines under pressure while still finding time for a laugh and leaving the job with a sense of accomplishment;
- ii** we challenge each other and see challenges as an opportunity for learning;
- iii** we can rely on each other in all situations, especially during crisis.

Staff determined that we know we are behaving with mutual respect when...

- i** we are open to and think about what others say without judgment or put down or jumping to conclusions;
- ii** we are given recognition for a "job well done" by all our co-workers, both direct service and management;
- iii** we accept each other's differences and strive to accommodate each other.

We will conduct a second survey during the summer of 2007 to determine how well we think we are doing on the measures identified. Over the next year, we will keep these in our minds and strive to reflect on them in our behaviours. Next summer we will do a follow-up survey to compare our performance.



Sitting: left to right: Heather Robertson, Cynthia Lavoie, Cindy Maule, Rhoda Beecher

Standing: Gord Singer, Dennis Morency, Ken Wood, Thomas Lam

Absent: Sven Byl, Maria Cordeiro, Dean Goodman, Stuart MacFarlane, David Richards, Geoffrey Ritchie

Board of Directors

Rhoda Beecher	Cynthia Lavoie, <i>Treasurer</i>	Gord Muschett
Sven Byl	Stuart MacFarlane	David Richards
Maria Cordeiro	Cindy Maule, <i>President</i>	Geoffrey Ritchie
Dean Goodman, <i>Vice President</i>	Dennis Morency	Heather Robertson
Thomas Lam		Gord Singer
		Ken Wood

Staff, Student Placements, Funders, Donors, In Memorium

Tenant and Member Services:

Marian Adan, Ferreshteh Bahmani, Kevin Blackwood, Kelly Clarke, Melissa Consunji,
 5 Michelle Coombs, Kimberley Ellsworth, Mark Finch, Stephen Gray, Kirsten Lam, Mel Logan,
 Sandra Mageau, Alireza Mikanik, Mike Ormsby, Volletta Peters, Marta Roller, Katherine Salinas,
 Sharon Williams

Finance & Administration:

Juliet Baynes, Michael Deans, Son Do, Jane Edwards, Tony Farebrother, Sousan Ghaderi, Kleva Gruda,
 Uma Sivasuntharam

Building Services:

Daniel Acuna, Wayne Bailey, Randy Baldwin, Agustin Barahona, Scott Barry, Garfield Barrett,
 Hanna Berbersso, Wayne Bisnath, Jimmy Eshesh, Ray Fortune, David Green, Pearl Gayle, Paul Hale,
 5 George Luzio, Desmond Marrett, Laurie Mobbs, Alan Pitts, Teresa Rivas, Cristina Stuparyk,
 Jennifer Windrem

Executive Director: Brigitte Witkowski 10

Executive Assistant: Nancy Sugar

George Luzio and Michelle Coombs celebrate their 5 year anniversary in 2007 and Brigitte Witkowski celebrates 10 years at Mainstay.

Student Placements: Shevon Alli, Hasina Cockburn, Andrea Gutowski, Jessica Slotnick, Liudmilla Vega.

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.

Corporate Donors:

Chum Charitable Foundation

Prentice Yates and Clark Chartered Accountants

TD Securities – Employee Charity Auction

Ellen Wexler Consultants Ltd

In Memorium:

Marvia Forde, Michael Godin, Rohan Hollingsworth, Elaine Kelly, Ralph Lund, Dorena Murphy, Scott MacLeod, Desmond O’Grady, Alfred Reff, Miriam Solar, Farrell Toussaint



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