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Thanks to the many individuals who generously supported RTC in 2011!



Ralph Thornton Centre



Annual General Report 2011

Together we bring community to life

Executive Director Report

After 30 years of life, the Ralph Thornton Centre had much to celebrate in 2011. We were reminded that when Postal Station "G" closed in 1975, community members fought a years - long battle to have the building dedicated as a community centre. These were the days – not long after activist Ralph Thornton himself had died in 1974 – when Torontonians worked to wrest power from a small group at City Hall and put decisions and resources into the hands of residents around the city. People were citizens (not merely taxpayers) and they claimed that right. In this environment the Ralph Thornton came into being as a neighbourhood centre accountable to the community and governed by a board made up of local residents.

Resource Centre, our Talking Spoon Community Kitchen, the Riverdale Community Development Institute and the Strong Voices, Strong Communities project in Rivertowne. You can read about each of these in the following pages.

We do all this with a great small staff group and the fantastic support of volunteers and placement students who mentor, tutor, counsel, reach out and deliver mail and flyers, strengthen governance, help raise money and increase our network of supporters and friends. We are grateful to our board of directors who worked very hard this year and to all those who left us to pursue other ventures including Nzinga Walker, interim Program Director who replaced Winnie Lee who was on sick leave, Joanne Fisher, RCDI Coordinator, and Dale Hamilton, Strong Voices Coordinator. The students and volunteers who kept us true to our mission are numerous and we thank them all!

In 2011 we also felt a cold wind – and reduced budgets - from those who seem not to see the value of publicly funded and supported neighbourhood centres governed by and accountable to local residents. To these we say come visit, participate, celebrate, and witness the changes in people's lives that neighbourhood centres like ours make. 30 years on we are making a difference in the changing landscape of South Riverdale and helping build an inclusive, healthy community.

**Shawn Conway,
Executive Director**

The 30th Anniversary party and fundraiser gave us a chance to remember our past with pride and to consider our current responsibility to the community.

The 30th Anniversary party and fundraiser this year gave us a chance to remember our past with pride and to consider our current responsibility to the community. We are still open seven days a week for community groups to come together to learn, support each other, organize, and much else. In 2011, we participated and helped facilitate many special community events such as Doors Open, Canada Day, the Riverdale Art Walk, the annual neighbourhood clean-up, and a Lunar new year celebration. We were proud to continue our After School Programs for children 6 -12 years of age, including our mentor program for young Chinese newcomer children, our summer RAC camp, our summer youth mural program, our Computer

Volunteers

In 2011 the Ralph Thornton Centre worked with 280 volunteers who donated 12,119 hours of service.

The Ralph Thornton Centre is able to provide fabulous programs and services because of the dedication of these wonderful community members. Volunteers are involved in all levels of the organization from our Volunteer Board of Directors to our Newcomer Mentors.

This year we saw new initiatives from volunteers who organized some exciting events for us, who are creating long-term goals and plans for the centre and who provided fun learning experiences for our kids.

2011 Summarized Financial Information

For the year ended December 31st, 2011

Administration Revenue

City of Toronto	656,827
Rental Income - Toronto Public Library	39,364
Total Administration Revenue	696,191

Administration Expenditures

Salaries and wages	449,101
Employee benefits	141,302
Purchase of services	78,816
Materials and supplies	26,972
Depreciation	2,067
Amortization of deferred capital contribution	(2,067)
Total Administration Expenses	696,191

Administration Income/(Deficit)

0

Program Revenue

Province of Ontario	100,268
Government of Canada	6,959
Foundations	32,814
Other Grants	68,615
City of Toronto	104,158
Donations and Fundraising	92,245
Rentals	18,005
Other / User Fees	2,520
Total Program Revenue	425,584

Program Expenditures

Salaries and wages	293,022
Employee benefits	45,736
Purchase of services	39,436
Materials and supplies	30,528
Depreciation	9,057
Total Program Expenses	417,779

Program Income/(Deficit)

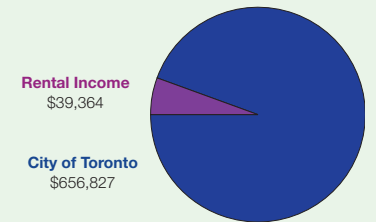
7,805

Net Agency Income

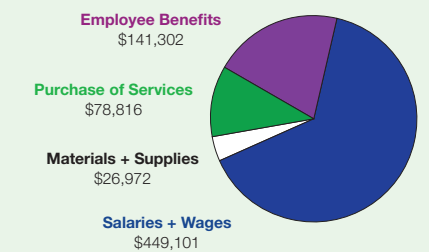
7,805

Administration includes administrative salaries and costs associated with the operation of the building, including heating and maintenance.

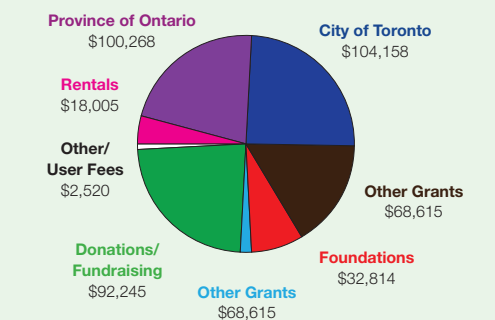
Administration



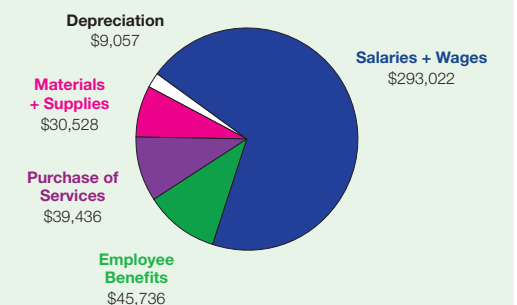
Administration Expenditures



Program Revenue



Program Expenditures



Source: Audited Financial Statements - Statement of Operations

Happy 30th Anniversary!

After 30 years of bringing community to life, the Ralph Thornton Centre's staff and board thought it should have a celebration on October 22nd, 2011. But what started as a small memorial celebration ended up being a fabulous all ages birthday party that brought over 600 people together.

There was something for everyone: art and craft activities and other goodies for children, great musical entertainment including acoustic guitar, Jamaican, and lounge music, dance demonstrations, a zany clown, a classy but fun silent auction, beer and wine to keep things flowing, and of course birthday cake for all. Numerous local businesses and residents lent a hand to make it all happen and RTC's second floor was thronged with people all afternoon. To top it off we even raised money to support future work in the community.



RTC Doors Open 2011 An Eye-Opening Success

About 500 people had a rare RTC experience during the annual Doors Open Toronto event in 2011. RTC had participated in Doors Open in 2002 and 2003 but this year we went all out to give visitors an inside view of the building's past and present. Local historian Gerald Whyte created an illuminating guide to the building's history and its unique architecture. Gerald and local residents Lucile Barker and Hongmei Cai gave frequent tours of the building's exterior. In the early afternoon, Councillor Paula Fletcher also led a Riverside social history walk. Inside the building visitors had guided tours of the library with its stunning marble counter, the beautiful, intact back stairwell dating to 1913, and the turret clock (that still needs to be wound each week by hand!)

Special exhibits including original art works and historical panels were on display throughout the building. Visitors could read more about E.J. Lennox, the building's architect, the legendary Ralph Thornton himself and the fascinating story of the New Brunswick sandstone from which the exterior was built. It was an extraordinary day made possible by many, many community volunteers and ably steered by Board President Maggi Redmonds, Board Vice President Tracy Horvath and Library Service Manager Peggy Thomas. In RTC's 30th anniversary year, the Doors Open event was a special chance for us to show off our beautiful building, highlight the great work we do, and get to know more local people who may never have entered RTC before.

We are delighted to have had Ralph Thornton's daughter, grand daughter and two great grand children with us.



Ralph Thornton Family



Board of Management, President's Report

What does the RTC Board of Management do?

We are responsible for the "governance" of the organization. That is, on behalf of the local community and RTC's users, we develop and implement policies and procedures to guide and monitor the values and goals of the organization. And because RTC is a small organization that does a lot, volunteer Board and committee members often roll up our sleeves to help with a range of events and endeavours.

Though very rewarding, being an active Board member is a lot of work. I want to take a moment to specifically thank 2 people who have played important roles on the Board over the past several years. Tracy Horvath has stalwartly served on the RTC Board for 8 years, including multiple terms as President and Vice-President. RTC's loss is Tracy's new neighbourhood's gain; she is already active in environmental advocacy for the Scarborough Bluffs. Merrilees Willemse started at RTC as a placement student. During her 5 years on the Board, her contributions included leading the process to develop the strategic directions that now guide the Centre's work. Great appreciation is also due to the others on the 2011 – 2012 Board: Seamus Atkinson, Hongmei Cai (Treasurer), Krista Downey*, David Hoang*, Jennifer King,

Terry Milne*, Paul Oxley, Nooreen Pirbhai (Secretary), Lauren Walter, Manirul Wasik* and Thorben Wieditz. (* served partial year). Thanks also to Councillor Paula Fletcher, our ex officio Board member, who has proactively supported our work.

Over the past several years, the RTC Board has been undergoing a revitalization of its purpose and structures. We feel we are now in an even better position to soundly fulfill our governance functions, support the Management and staff to continue their excellent work, and advocate for the community and funder backing required to sustain this Centre, which is so vital to the well-being of our community.

As Board President, I am looking forward to welcoming new Board members who will invigorate our work, continuing to work alongside our excellent on-going Board members, and a coming year of renewed efforts toward full achievement of RTC's organizational goals.

Maggi Redmonds,
President, RTC Board of Management

"As Board President, I am looking forward to a coming year of renewed efforts toward full achievement of RTC's organizational goals."



A catalyst for community development

Riverdale Community Development Institute

The Riverdale Community Development Institute remains the foundation of RTC's community development work. Not really an "institute", RCDI is a program which partly helps staff and volunteers, through workshops and information sharing, to view themselves as catalysts in creating broader, systemic change rather than just offering service to individuals.

In 2011, RCDI maintained our tradition of training post-secondary students from several disciplines and placing them in CD projects. We also continued to facilitate the Strong Voices Strong Communities project with the goal of bringing together dissimilar populations (low income tenants, condo owners and upper income homeowners), in the Rivertowne neighbourhood to explore how they can create an inclusive, healthy mixed income neighbourhood. In 2011 we supported and or directly facilitated the development of a women's leadership group, a pedestrian safety walk and steering committee, youth theatre, and the Navigators community steering group.

In 2011 we also continued our community kitchen work in two ways. Until the summer, we facilitated weekly sessions, with Toronto Employment and Social Services, under our Talking Spoon Community Kitchen program. The groups of single parents learned how to prepare fresh food and affordable meals, and connect with neighborhood employment resources within a supportive, informal environment.

A smaller group of women from one of the original Talking Spoon groups continued to work as a catering venture both in-house for volunteer and business celebrations and within Riverdale. Calling themselves the Fantastic Food Fanatics (F3), they discovered a love for creating food together and learning and supporting each other as single parents.

"The F3 experience has given me a sense of leadership, a deeper understanding of my community and how best to apply myself in providing for its future."

- Lina Gisondi (F3 Member)

Riverdale Youth Graffiti Transformation Project

The summer of 2011 saw 6 young artists create a fantastic mural to share with the community. Under the direction of professional artist Lindsay Bess, a multi media 1940's Toronto inspired mural was painted at the Ok Ok Diner on the exterior wall facing Bertmount Avenue.

The streetcar is a symbol many residents can relate to. The addition of the wooden "television" panels reflected the interior of the restaurant and added a multimedia touch that has not been done previously within an RTC mural. Finally, the photo transfers that were added onto the TV screens reference the era the restaurant used as its inspiration. Images of well-known figures, poets, singers and athletes from the 1940's were also added.



After School Program

The Ralph Thornton Centre's After School Program had another successful year in 2011, with 33 children registered and participating in a number of social, recreational, educational, and personal health related activities. As we deepen relationships with residents of the Rivertowne community, more children from that neighbourhood have attended our program, with 17 children hailing from Rivertowne.

Highlights for the year include a fun trip to a local Fire Hall, and hosting an incredible Art Gallery to display the creative talents of our young ones.

RAC Camp

RAC Camp delivered another fun filled summer for over 480 children. Campers were treated to great trips to places like the beach, High Park, and Riverdale Farm, while also working with guest leaders from organizations like Aussie X.



Mentor Program

The Mentor program is a Children & Youth program designed for newcomer children from the Chinese community. It focuses on children's language development and cultural adaptation. Running as both an after school program, and a summer day camp, it offers one-on-one or small group tutoring to help improve English language skills. Enjoyable social and recreational activities are used to teach various skills.

Lewis Pearsall Computer Resource Centre

Unique in its informal approach, people visit the **Lewis Pearsall Computer Resource Centre (LPCRC)** to not only hunt for work, but also because the centre and staff offer help with other challenges.

People have come to the LPCRC to gain access to the internet, share information, do business on line, use back end office technology, and to socialize with others rather than be isolated and alone.

Offering multiple formal and informal services on a shoestring budget, staff and a dedicated group of volunteers helped members to learn, create, and explore.

