

BRINGING COMMUNITY TO LIFE



Annual Report
2013-2014

BRINGING COMMUNITY TO LIFE

For over 30 years, The Ralph Thornton Centre has been a hub for community conversations, community consultations and community programming.

We continue that proud tradition as we head into a new phase of the Centre's evolution. We will unveil a new strategic plan at our Annual General Meeting that will build on the Centre's history and provide guidance for its coming three years.

We will soon announce a new Executive Director who will work with staff, board members, partners and local residents to help build a healthy, inclusive and diverse community.

Ralph Thornton Centre has had an exciting year being part of many community events. It has been a great pleasure to get the chance to partner with so many wonderful organizations like the *World Wildlife Fund* hosting Riverdale's fantastic *Earth Hour* right here at The Ralph Thornton Centre. We have worked with the *Business Improvement Association* on *Eats and Beats* and *Take a Walk on the Riverside*, two huge events that showcase our neighbourhood to the rest of Toronto by highlighting the wonderful food our amazing plethora of restaurants have to offer or by taking a guided tour to learn more about Riverside's history, food and hidden gems etc. This year our building turned 100 years old. To celebrate we partnered with the Saulters Street

Library to host an amazing Open Doors-style celebration. We have continued our strong partnerships with various committees and our local politicians to once again be part of *Neighbours Together* on Canada Day, the Lunar New Year Celebration and the *Tree Festival*. These events get huge turn outs and yet manage to retain a local

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community feel. RTC partnered with the *Riverdale Food Working Group* in providing a *Good Food Market* outside of our building. *The Good Food Market* is a collaborative, volunteer run project that provides affordable, healthy fruits and vegetables to the community. We hope you will keep an eye out for us at all these great events next year. We've also been involved in *Community Matters* forums and a wide range of community programming in Riverdale which you'll find out more about in our annual report.

We hope you will find this annual report interesting and inspiring, and we look forward to your continued support in the coming years.

Volunteer Development

The Ralph Thornton Centre thrives because of the dedication and commitment from people in our community. We work with great people willing to donate their time and skills to help others. In 2013 over 150 people added to the success of The Ralph Thornton Centre. These people helped with our special events, mentored newcomer children and supported folks using our drop-in computer resource centre. Our volunteer board has worked tirelessly to ensure that the Ralph Thornton Centre remains a relevant resource to our community.



RIVERTOWNE ENGAGEMENT

The Ralph Thornton Centre has built on a long history of community development in Rivertowne. Ulli Groppler, Rivertowne Community Engagement Supervisor, has been busy the past year connecting community members and agencies as well as strengthening communication. With the involvement of staff from RTC, volunteers and Rivertowne community members, here are some of the events which took place since last year December:

Appreciation and Celebration Dinner 2013

December 18th 2013 the *Safety 1st Group* in partnership RTC organized an amazing *Appreciation and Celebration Dinner* at The Ralph Thornton Centre. About 50 community members enjoyed a delicious dinner, planned and cooked by Joan King. Children received gifts through the *Chum City Christmas* drive.

Rivertowne Working Groups

The Ralph Thornton Centre took on the important role of connecting community members with key stakeholders. Three working groups have been established: *The Employment, Training and Education Work Group, The Program & Services Work Group, and the Safety & Wellness Work Group.* Staff and residents of Rivertowne meet on a monthly basis in order to address emerging trends, issues and needs in the community.

Rivertowne Breakfast Program

This program is initiated by the *Safety 1st Group* and lead by Joan. Joan tells us about the program:

“ *The Breakfast Program is organized and run by myself, other residents and members of the Safety 1st Women’s Group. Every Friday between 7:00 and 11:00 am ‘breakfast is served’. Cooking starts at 6:00 am! I started the Breakfast Program in September 2013; th Rivertowne community did not have any food programs at that time. Children need a healthy breakfast so they can learn better in school. Youth need to be motivated to go to school and find employment. Community members want a reason to socialize with each other. The breakfast offers these opportunities. It also allows opportunities for other service providers to bring their resources and information about jobs, training, and education.*

The program started with about 24 children and adults. It now has grown to over 60 community members, seniors included, enjoying this lovely and delicious breakfast. The menu follows nutrition standards and includes fruits, milk, whole wheat bread, eggs, turkey bacon, high fiber low sugar cereal, orange juice, pancakes, and hash browns (baked in the oven without oil). ”

The cost of the breakfast programs is just over \$100.00 per week. The Ralph Thornton Centre is currently helping to establish funding for this program.



COMMUNITY engagement



Hoops, Hops and Hope!

Through the *Toronto Community Foundation Vital Youth Grant*, RTC received funding to work with a group of young women ages 16 to 26 to support a project called *Hoops, Hops and Hopes*. Sainne, one of the young women explains the meaning behind this project:

“*Hoops represent obstacles in our lives, Hops is what we need to do to jump over and get past the obstacles and Hope is what we all have: hope for a better, safer and good environment, a goal we all have.*”

One of the projects organized by this team is the creation of a movable hop scotch board with an art consultant. Each square tells a story of a child's play before and during their current live in Rivertowne.

Another game run by the team was Capture the Flag in *Jimmie Simpson Park*. Everyone had a lot of fun.

By the end of November, the *Hoops, Hops and Hope* team will have organized more games, a banner, and a comic book while discussing gender issues these young women face in their lives.

In addition to the fun games and art projects, this funded program supports Sainne and Nattisha to run basket ball practices, tournaments and team building events with a young girl's basket ball team, called *The Swag Girls*. You may watch them practice at *Jimmie Simpson's* gym every Monday and Wednesday from 6 pm to 8 pm.

The Amazing Race



During a work group meeting in June a handful of mothers in Rivertowne requested that a Rivertowne team be established for an upcoming *Amazing Race*. Initiated in 2012 by youth from various Toronto communities in collaboration with the *City of Toronto* and the *Toronto Police Services*, teams have been team building and racing against each other.

Seven youth teams raced against each other Saturday September 13th 2014 throughout the downtown core of Toronto. 10 youth from Rivertowne, ages 12 to 17, were part of this fantastic opportunity. Our youth team is facilitated and supported by the *Ralph Thornton Centre* and *Toronto Police Services, 55 Division*, and a volunteer from the *Hoops, Hops, and Hopes* team. The winning team received a *Samsung Tablet 3!*

The Riverside Green Initiative

The Riverside Green Initiative together with community members did a few projects throughout the year: the completion of the four seasons mural on the walls of the small storage shed, areas around Joel Weeks Park and 50 Matilda were cleaned up in the spring, the community gardens were planted and are well maintained, as well as the Traffic and Pedestrian Working Group keep pushing to have a safer traffic and pedestrian environment in the neighbourhood. Well done everyone and thank you to all the community members who have come and helped out. Ralph Thornton Centre is hopeful to continue to support this initiative in the future.

Safety 1st Group

This resident group is not only managing the Breakfast Program, but also initiated a clean-up day in Rivertowne in the spring, and put together the annual Back to School BBQ in August. This year BBQ was supported by the Rivertowne Safety & Wellness Work Group members and other Rivertowne community members. The event presented lots of good food (prepared by Joan), music, basket ball tournament, arts and crafts with children, and the Riverdale Good Food Market

Multicultural event

This year, a group of women with different cultural backgrounds organized a gathering where community members could share items of their cultural heritage, few food samples, costumes, and a short children's dance.



Community Matters

In 2013-2014 our Community Matters series continued with two dynamic sessions hosted by RTC.

Sharing the Harvest in Riverside: Bounty & Scarcity in our Community. The Riverdale Food Working Group in partnership the Community Matters group organized this session. It was well attended with robust discussions about the future of food in our community.

In June 2014, an expert panel of local community members presented *Movers & Shakers, Community Makers: Our Activist Neighbourhood*. This session focused on the vibrant history of community activism in South-Riverdale. It was both informative and inspiring.

All community matters sessions have been volunteer driven. Our thanks to the following people for lending their time, commitment and expertise to the sessions: Maggi Redmonds, Diane Dyson, Joy Connolly, Judy Leung, and Thorben Wieditz.

Mentoring Program

The mentor program has continued its success in delivering its unique program in Riverside. 158 children were registered and 83 were on the waiting list, showing a significant continued trend of increase of demand and love for the program.

This Children & Youth combination program is designed to help newcomer children in elementary school (Grades 1 to 6) from the Chinese community. It offers one-on-one or small group tutoring to help improve English language skills via reading, writing, dialogue, and schoolwork assistance. Enjoyable social and recreational activities such as crafts, holiday celebration, cooking and baking, painting, and visiting and using public facilities are all used to teach various skills and introduce topics to help the children adapt to and thrive in Canadian culture.

In 2013, 75 Youth volunteers benefited from helping others at the Mentor Program. They developed communication, teaching, problem solving and leadership skills in a team setting environment. Their self-esteem and self-confidence were significantly improved by contributing to the community. Shown below are some reflections from our volunteers:

“ Working with students showed me their point of view...while I learned their material several years ago, and now remembering it again. The program has made me feel smarter in a way, as well as teaching the students important materials for their stay in Canada. ”

“ My students have shown improvements in pronunciation and confidence in reading. They are less afraid to make mistakes as well. I’m glad that my time paid off. The sense of fulfilment from helping others is one of the most memorable aspects that I can take away from this whole experience. ”

Professional staff from our community partner agencies conducted parent workshop on how to read and understand your children’s school report card, parenting skills, etc. About 150 parents were reached and made connections with us in terms of seeking resources, networking, program participation and sharing information.





Riverdale Action Children's Camp (RAC)

During the summer of 2013, RTC worked in partnership with Jimmy Simpson community centre and Woodgreen to provide a summer adventure camp for children ages 5-12 years.

Through the generous funding from *City of Toronto Children's Services* and the *Toronto Star Fresh Air Fund* the partnership allowed for 65 children a week to attend a free summer camp. The camp also provides an opportunity for local youth to gain valuable work experience as camp counsellors. Thank you to our wonderful partners who have worked alongside RTC to ensure the success of this very important community initiative.

After SCHOOL

After School Program and Safe Walk

In 2013-2014 the RTC After School Program ran from Sept 2013- June 2014. The program provided after school care for up to 30 children a day. Children ranged in age from 6-12 years. The program focus has been on creating a safe, stimulating environment for children. The After School Program was staffed by the Child & Youth Coordinator, volunteers and dedicated placement students. In addition Children received nutritional snacks as part of our Student Nutrition Program funding.

The After School Program has faced some challenges with a decline in year to year funding. This year RTC made the difficult decision to stop the Safe Walk Program due to decreased funding support resulting in lower staffing numbers.

Successes/Highlights

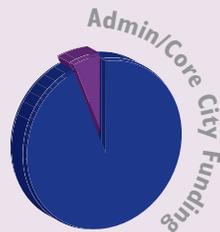
- **Increased participation** with 34 children enrolled in the program
- Children participated in **many arts, crafts, social and recreational programs**
- **Family members demonstrated overwhelming support**
- **Dedicated staff and students** ensured the program ran smoothly
- **Safe Walk ran from Sept to December** providing a safe route from school to program

Annual Audited Financial Statement of Operations

For the year ended December 31st, 2013

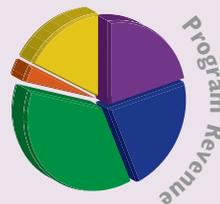
Administration/Core City Funding*

City of Toronto	\$614, 622	●
Toronto Public Library	\$39, 364	●
	\$653, 986	



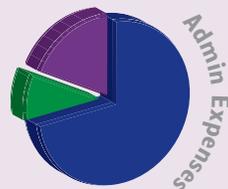
Program Revenue

Province of Ontario	N/A	
Government of Canada	N/A	
City of Toronto	\$32, 180	●
Foundations	\$32, 120	●
Other	\$53, 320	●
Donations/Fundraising	\$4, 834	●
Rentals/Other	\$23, 574	●
	\$146, 028	



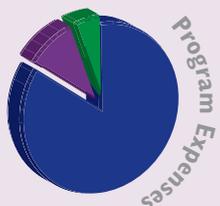
Administration Expenses

Salaries and Benefits	\$476, 377	●
Materials and Supplies	\$60, 000	●
Purchase of Services	\$117, 609	●
Amortization of Capital Assets	\$1,333	
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	(\$1,333)	
	\$653, 986	



Program Expenses

Salaries and Benefits	\$104, 710	●
Materials and Supplies	\$6, 350	●
Purchase of Services	\$11, 839	●
Amortization of Capital Assets	\$9, 110	
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	(\$8, 210)	
	\$123, 799	



Total Revenue

\$800, 014

Total Expenses

\$777, 785

Total Surplus/(Deficit)

\$22, 229

* Administration/Core Funding:

This is the funding RTC receives from the City of Toronto to keep the building open and accessible to the community - it covers basic salary and benefits as well as hard costs such as insurance, utilities, and maintenance costs.

President's Report

The past year has been a time of change, transition and growth both at the RTC and in our community. In 2013/14 we completed the Renewal Planning process announced at last year's AGM, engaging with many valuable partners in the community from members, funders, local organizations, and those who use our services. We are launching our resulting strategic plan at our AGM. In the next three years we intend to build on our long history as a gathering place for community members to strengthen our diverse neighborhoods, provide accessible, safe and inclusive community space and deliver high quality programming.

The RTC's Board of Management has continued to exercise its duty of responsible and accountable governance with care and diligence over the past year. We are committed to work to stabilize and develop the RTC. To this end, the Board has proposed changes to the RTC constitution that will be presented to the membership for approval at the AGM. The Board has also worked extensively with our interim ED, Glen, to determine the skills and capacities needed for our ED and are looking forward to welcoming a new ED this fall.

We appreciate the efforts of all who contributed to the RTC this year, but would like to thank a few people in particular: RTC's dedicated staff, working hard during turbulent times, volunteers, members, partners and funders, and the support of a committed City Staff. The Board thanks all of you for your continued support of the RTC and the community.

We thank our retiring Board members Nooreen Pirbhai, Sandy Williams, Allison Colin-Thorne and Andrew Reddin. Nooreen has tirelessly supported the RTC through the past few years of change as Personnel Committee Chair and Secretary. Sandy brought thoughtful and informed contributions to the Board, particularly as part of the selection process for new board members. Alison's energy and expertise were invaluable to Personnel and Membership and Outreach committees. Andrew only served a short time on the Board, however, his expertise and insights were much welcomed. We will miss all of them and hope they continue to remain a part of the RTC community.

Thank you Michelle Dagnino, who provided executive leadership during our transition, and the Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre who generously allowed Michelle to spend time with us. We also thank The 519 Community Centre for their continued support and friendship. We are grateful to Glen, our interim executive director, who has been working tirelessly not only to maintain but to improve the RTC.

We also thank the Ryerson School of Urban and Regional Planning Studio Project under Professor Tom Ostler, MAS Pro Bono Consulting and Sue Simington of Innovacom Consulting, and all of our partners and stakeholders who contributed to the renewal planning process.

We look forward to your continued support over the coming year.

Jennifer King

President, Board of Management



The Ralph Thornton Centre 2103-2014 Board of Management

BACK ROW: Chris May, Sandy Williams, Chris Shantz (Treasurer).

THIRD ROW: Adrienne De Francesco, Maggi Redmonds, Nooreen Pirbhai (Secretary).

SECOND ROW: Hongmai Cai, Jennifer King (President), Councillor Paula Fletcher.

FIRST ROW: Michèle Harding (Vice-President), Derek Chan, Andrew Chong.

MISSING: Alison Colin-Thorne

Executive Director's Report

It has been my pleasure to serve as Interim ED of The Ralph Thornton Centre since May of 2014.

RTC has been through a lot of transitions in recent years, and we've been working hard to build a stable and healthy organization. RTC will be poised to seize its potential when the new permanent Executive Director takes the helm later this year. I'm immensely grateful for the warm welcome and team-building energy I've received from staff, for the support and guidance I've received from the Board of Management, and for the enthusiastic engagement I've gotten from community partners and community residents. It's clear to me that all stakeholders are cheering on RTC and eager for it to succeed in its next phase.

Best,

Glen Brown

Interim Executive Director



MANY THANKS



Riverdale Share

And to all our other supporters, donors, funders and volunteers!



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