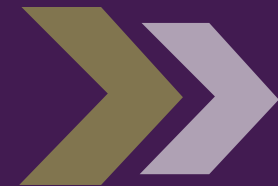


RTC ● ● ●



2015-2016 ANNUAL REPORT



vision MISSION VALUES

The Ralph Thornton Community Centre (RTC), located in the historic (1914) Postal Station G, was established by the Toronto City Council in 1980 as a multipurpose community facility and “Town Hall” to recognize its historic role as a gathering place for community members. Over the past 36 years, RTC has played a key role in bringing residents together to identify, discuss, and address local issues and needs. We have a track record of supporting social justice and civic engagement along with social, recreational, and cultural activities.

OUR VISION:

Leading and supporting a vibrant, diverse, inclusive, liveable, participatory, and healthy Riverdale.

OUR MISSION:

Serving all residents of our catchment area, the RTC shall be where community members gather and work together to celebrate our diversity, foster inclusivity and community well-being, and promote social justice.

We will work collaboratively with partners, stakeholders and community members to strengthen our neighbourhoods, support resident engagement, and nurture a collective sense of belonging.

We will assist individuals and groups to build their capacity to participate in the community’s social, political, economic, and cultural life.

OUR VALUES:

Inclusion and Respect: The RTC supports and adheres to the City of Toronto Human Rights and Anti-Harassment Policy. We operate in a manner which models ethical, respectful, and inclusive service delivery and employment practices, encourages diverse perspectives, and ensures equitable treatment for all.

Social Justice: The RTC supports, acts and advocates for solution-focussed policies and systemic changes that create long term improvement for all within our community and the larger society.

Collaboration: The RTC works collaboratively and in partnership with individuals, groups and organizations to achieve our mission and vision. We work in ways that engage community members, foster on-going relationships and build the strengths of the whole community.

Capacity Building: The RTC supports community members, especially the more marginalized, to increase their ability to solve problems, define and achieve their objectives, and fully participate in and contribute to community life.



In September 2014, the Ralph Thornton Centre identified a number of strategic priorities for action between 2015 and 2017. Over the past two years, RTC has been working to align its activities with those strategic goals:

STRENGTHEN OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS

The RTC will cultivate vibrant, diverse, and engaged communities to strengthen community inclusivity, resident engagement, and community building, and to advance equitable social development outcomes.

PROVIDE ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY SPACE

The RTC will provide affordable, accessible community public space where the community can meet, gather, and participate in activities, events, and services that are beneficial to them.

DELIVER HIGH QUALITY PROGRAMING

The RTC will enable and/or deliver high quality programming for the community.

STABILIZE AND DEVELOP THE ORGANIZATION

The RTC will stabilize and develop its organizational infrastructure and capacities through development and implementation of effective management and administrative structures, and recruitment and retention of competent management and staff.

IMPROVE AND DIVERSIFY OUR RESOURCE BASE

The RTC will develop a strategic approach to resource development in order to effectively and efficiently generate revenue and resources from diverse sources to support the Centre’s ability to meet its strategic objectives and priorities.

COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

The RTC will develop and implement an effective communications infrastructure and strategies to communicate with and engage its members, funders, community, user groups, and staff.

This Annual Report reflects the progress that has been made on these goals, and celebrates the accomplishments, dedication and hard work of the Board, staff, volunteers, and partners who comprise the Ralph Thornton Centre Community.

Strengthening neighbourhoods

STRENGTHENING OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS

Despite a shifting funding situation, RTC continued to provide support to the Rivertowne community. In addition to providing transitional leadership on a variety of Rivertowne governance structures, we provided continuity on the Rivertowne Project Management Team, and helped ensure the continued success of major Rivertowne events such as the annual BBQ and Holiday Party. We guaranteed the financial stability of the Rivertowne breakfast program for 2015. Our work in Rivertowne resulted in us being encouraged to apply for an Access and Equity grant to continue and document this work – we were awarded \$40,000 annually for the next two years.

We concluded our involvement with the 2015 *Playing for Keeps* initiative, leading a wide variety of small and larger community events focusing on the PanAm Games.

Under the *Community Matters* banner, RTC hosted a well-attended Federal Election All-Candidates meeting, two Children's Services Forums, and a public meeting focusing on the gentrification of the Queen Street retail strip.

RTC was a lead partner in a wide range of community events and festivals, including the *Lunar New Year* celebration at Gerrard Square, the second annual *Riverside Wine Festival*, *Eats and Beats*, the *Leslieville Tree Festival*, the *Canada Day* celebration in Riverdale Park, the *RTC Halloween Party*, and initiatives such as *Community Clean-up Day*.

RTC provided leadership and energy to the *Riverdale Food Working Group*, and expanded

from operating the Ralph Thornton Centre *Good Food Market* to add a market in Rivertowne, and participation in the community garden at the *Matty Eckler Community Centre*.

We hosted a number of city-wide community engagement initiatives in partnership with *Toronto Neighbourhood Centres*, and were part of the *Commitment2Community* campaign supporting the City's investment in community services and a City of Toronto poverty reduction strategy.

PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY SPACE

In 2015, RTC provided space to 200 organizations and individuals, for a total of over 12,000 hours of programming. Twenty six groups use the space for weekly meetings.

We have upgraded the Betsy Swift kitchen by replacing the stove and adding a commercial dishwasher and additional sink, bringing the kitchen up to Public Health's "commercial kitchen" standards. In addition, a complete retrofit of the Centre's lighting with LED lights was undertaken, with anticipated savings of over \$8,000 per year.

We have also improved security and service in the building by ensuring that there are at least two staff persons on duty any time the building is open to the public. We have appreciated the cooperation and flexibility of all staff in adjusting their schedules to make this possible with our existing staffing and budget.



DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY PROGRAMMING

RTC continued to offer the *Mentor Program* for Chinese-speaking newcomer children from ages 6-12, with parents, volunteers, and children indicating strong satisfaction with the program. Over the past year we strengthened the program by engaging and training relief staff to ensure continuity.

RTC also expanded its traditional summer *RAC Camp*, increasing its offering by 20% to add an additional 16 spaces for the duration of the camp, which also increased from eight to nine weeks. The additional spaces were earmarked for children from LGBTQ families and children from local low-income families.

This expansion was funded with a grant from *MCC Toronto*, and fund-raising from the RTC and LGBTQ communities.

RTC reinstated its after school program in collaboration with *Eastview Boys and Girls Club*, and piloted *Date Night* – an opportunity for parents to access quality childcare and enjoy a discounted 'night out' on Sunday evenings.

The RTC *Exchange Loft* community access computer space grew in popularity, and we expanded our hours to offer this service on Friday evenings and Saturday daytimes. This has proven very popular, and is now part of our regular schedule for 2016.

In partnership with Nellie's, RTC piloted the *WEAV Program* – a pre-employment program for women who have experienced domestic violence. This program has been very well received, with positive responses from staff from both agencies, and strong uptake, continued participation, and positive response from program participants.

STABILIZING AND DEVELOPING THE ORGANIZATION

RTC has moved forward to strengthen its organizational infrastructure, with progress on a range of Human Resources practices, adoption of a range of policies and procedures which are consistent with both best practice and the City's expectations of the Centre, and development of operational planning and budgeting plans which provide a clear framework for the operation of the Centre and the activities and accountabilities of all staff.

RTC has also hired its full staff complement, including our permanent Business Manager, as well as a group of program, administrative, and maintenance relief staff reflective of the diversity of our communities. We have also hired a third Maintenance staff person to ensure that weekend maintenance is at the same high standard set by our regular maintenance staff.

IMPROVING AND DIVERSIFYING OUR RESOURCE BASE

RTC has taken important steps in this direction, establishing three annual fund-raising initiatives – our *Mugging* fund-raiser in conjunction with *Eats and Beats*, a *Glamour Camping* event to support our summer camp program, and participation in the *Scotiabank Waterfront Marathon* "Charity Challenge." Together these raised over \$5,000 for the Centre

in 2015, and established a platform for further fundraising progress. In May, RTC premiered *Thornton Abbey* – a fundraising reception and silent auction, linked to the anniversary of the “Cornerstone” laying of the building on May 18, 1914. *This event raised almost \$5,000 for our children’s programs.* RTC ended 2015 with a balanced “City” budget and expenditures, and a surplus of approximately \$8,000 in its overall operations.

RTC also increased the funds it generates from space rental, with an increasing range and number of groups and individuals booking the space for everything from baby showers to weddings to memorials to craft shows. Existing funding relationships have been strengthened, and new ones have been established. RTC continues to benefit from its relationship with the *Ralph Thornton Community Organization*, and is collaborating closely with its charitable arm.

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

RTC has strengthened its social media presence, more than doubling its Twitter and Facebook following over the past year. We are working toward a new web presence, but in the meantime the existing website has been regularly updated with new content, and is an increasingly useful repository for the Centre’s event notices, policies, and other important documents.

The bi-weekly *Ralph Thornton Centre Update* has been extremely well-received, providing members, volunteers, partners, and other stakeholders with

regular information on current activities and program at the Centre, along with alerts to activities and initiatives of our partners. It serves not only to promote the work of the Centre, but has made our community much more aware of the range of activities at RTC.

VOLUNTEERS AT RTC

Our programming at RTC thrives because of the assistance of many volunteers. *The Mentor Program, Exchange Loft, WEAV Pre-Employment Program*, and our many community events rely on the thousands of hours that volunteers dedicate to the Ralph Thornton Centre. Administration of the Centre also benefits from community volunteers interested in seeing us soar. RTC was able to say thank you to our volunteers in many ways this past year, through gifts, fun outings, sweet treats, and a fabulous party.

In 2015 we supported over 130 volunteers who donated more than 4000 hours to the Ralph Thornton Centre.

PLAYING FOR KEEPS

Playing for Keeps is a partnership we continued to build in 2015. With RTC serving as a P4K hub, volunteers in our community were provided with the opportunity to receive training at *George Brown College* organized and paid for by the *Toronto Foundation*. This training prepared volunteers to become community leaders known as Ambassadors. Our Ambassadors hosted



over 10 neighbourhood games and activities at Ralph Thornton for the Riverdale community. The *Toronto Foundation* also provided us with a *Try-A-Sport* grant. This money allowed us to partner with *WoodGreen Community Services* to host an activity at the *Bloor Viaduct Bridge Lighting* festival. Local grass-roots sports organizations *DeSantos* and *Muay Thai Training Centres* introduced attendees to a hands on demonstration of two different styles of martial arts.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

The Health and Strength Action Group has been a grass-roots group in the neighbourhood for 6 years, focusing on issues related to poverty reduction. The members all have lived experience, and they support advocacy campaigns such raising the minimum wage, lowering transit fares, and implementing a Guaranteed Basic Income. This group does outreach to assist community members learn about the importance of these issues, builds support for their campaigns, offers workshops to help others understand some of the causes of poverty, and attends social justice actions to advocate for a better life for lower income community members. RTC provides support and resources to keep the group active and animated.

THE EXCHANGE LOFT

The Ralph Thornton Centre continues to provide the Riverdale community free access to technology through our *Exchange Loft*. The Exchange Loft is a drop-in computer lounge that is volunteer run. Users of the Exchange Loft have free access to computers, a telephone, scanning and a FAX machine, as well as printing and photocopying for a small cost. Volunteers offer one-on-one training and support sessions - providing a most helpful resource for Exchange Loft users.

In 2015, the Exchange Loft had over 3300 visits by more than 1400 visitors.

We are excited by the growth we are witnessing in the Exchange Loft and are certain that the one hour one-on-one sessions that our volunteers offer are vastly improving the experience of our users.

THE WEAV PROGRAM

In 2015 RTC partnered with Nellie’s women’s shelter to develop a pre-employment program for women who had experienced abuse or violence. This wonderful partnership resulted in a unique pilot program. This pre-employment program took a holistic view of the barriers women coming from backgrounds of violence, abuse, and oppression face upon entering the workforce. We designed a program that would address many of these obstacles. *The program contained 5 major components; Career Exploration, Life Skills, Self-care Tools, Understanding Violence Against Women, and Computer Literacy. In the fall of 2015, outreach and recruitment activities engaged over 50 agencies, and 25 women entered the program.* The success of this program was beyond our expectations, with 85 percent of participants moving on to employment, education, specialized training/program or a combination of employment/training.



MENTOR PROGRAM

In 2015, the mentor program continued to successfully deliver support to Chinese newcomer children from Grade 1 to 6, learning the English language and smoothing their transition to Canada.

The mentor program was fully enrolled and fully attended throughout the year, with a continuing waiting list. **We offer three sessions a year, serving a total of 332 individuals (comprised of 95 ‘mentees’, 87 volunteers, and 150 parents) with a mentee attendance rate of over 95%.** The total number of participants for all activities – including public events, workshops, conferences, and community contacts through distributed publications – was 873, a 14% increase compared to 2014. Our partnerships with *Frontier College*, *South Riverdale Community Health Centre*, *Toronto Public Library*, among others, has helped us strength our capacity in delivering this service to the community.

It is rewarding to see the progress of the children and the satisfaction expressed by parents:

“My daughter is able to speak English more clearly and confidently after speech exercises with mentors.”

“My kids love to come here, they said they like to talk to their mentors. I noticed that they are more willing to do their homework with less stress at home.”

“My son started to talk to his school teacher after he joined the program. He is no longer scared of people. That’s great!”

Both children and volunteers benefitted from the program. Volunteers were glad to have an opportunity to give back to the community while improving their leadership, communication, teaching and problem solving skills.

“My time at the Ralph Thornton Centre was extremely rewarding and taught me so much more than I thought I could learn. It gave me a chance to develop a great relationship with the students I was working with, as we all felt so comfortable in the space provided. I am very grateful for this experience and will always cherish what this program has taught me.”— Mahta

“Hearing nice things, not only in the classroom, but from parents who tell me that their kids talk about how much fun they have in the program at home, really makes me feel like I’m on the right career path.”— Hayden



PRESIDENT’S REPORT

A few weeks ago it seemed like spring would never begin. As I prepare this report it now feels like summer came early.

Just like our weather, change can come quickly to a community and have a profound impact on our lives. New developments are popping up around the Centre, bringing with them new members of our community. This influx of newcomers changes what services become available to those people who are here and have been here for some time, specifically those who might feel excluded as the community changes to serve the needs of these newcomers. As a city Centre we seek to serve and bridge the divide between both groups, newcomers and the marginalized, in ways that connect their lives and enrich our community.

In order to connect lives and enrich community, the Centre must embrace change and continually look to become stronger.

STRONGER GOVERNANCE. The Board has worked hard at reviewing and passing a number of key policies that will ensure stable and responsible decision making by this Board and all future Boards. Our Centre Constitution was approved and adopted by City Council this past winter, and our finance policy developed by our talented Business Manager, Glenn Gustafson, along with our Executive Limitations policy, represent key pieces of accountability to both the membership and our community;

STRONGER FUNDING BASE. This past May was the first cornerstone fundraising event hosted by the Centre since I began sitting on the Board three years ago. Not only did the Centre raise funds to support the Centre’s children’s programing but the event was a great way to bring the community together. Many thanks go to the volunteers and staff who helped us with organizing the event. In particular, I’d like to single out Cindy Monk-Fuller, whose expertise and dedication made the event a success. I encourage everyone to attend an RTC fundraiser in the future to support any cause worked on by our team.

I would like to thank the Centre’s dedicated and highly skilled staff who ensure that the Centre’s mission is being delivered, and offer sincere thanks to the members and volunteers at RTC — through your efforts, the Centre continually delivers high level programming to our community.

And finally, thank you to the Board of Management for all their hard work. Specifically, thank you to those Board members who are retiring from service as of this AGM:

Hong Mei Cai – One of the longest tenured Board members. Among her many accomplishments on the Board, she oversaw the growth of our membership and led the Centre’s efforts to connect with the local Chinese community who predominantly use the centre.

Ming Gen Ou – A new member filling in a one year vacancy, Ming brought considerable experience in marketing and branding to the Board. Her work towards readying the Centre’s marketing strategy has been invaluable over the short amount of time she’s been an active Board member.

In both Ming and Hong Mei, the Centre is losing two valuable contributors. Thank you to both of you for your time and efforts.

Lastly, it has been a privilege to lead all dedicated Board Members this past year.

Andrew Chong, President, Board of Management

Ralph Thornton Centre Board of Management

Hongmei Cai, Graham Chernoff (Treasurer), Andrew Chong (President), Councillor Paula Fletcher, Jeff Garkowski, Michèle Harding (Secretary), Mae Hum, Jennifer King, Alan Lennon, Samantha Morrison (Vice President), Ming Ou, Chris Shantz, Jordana Wright

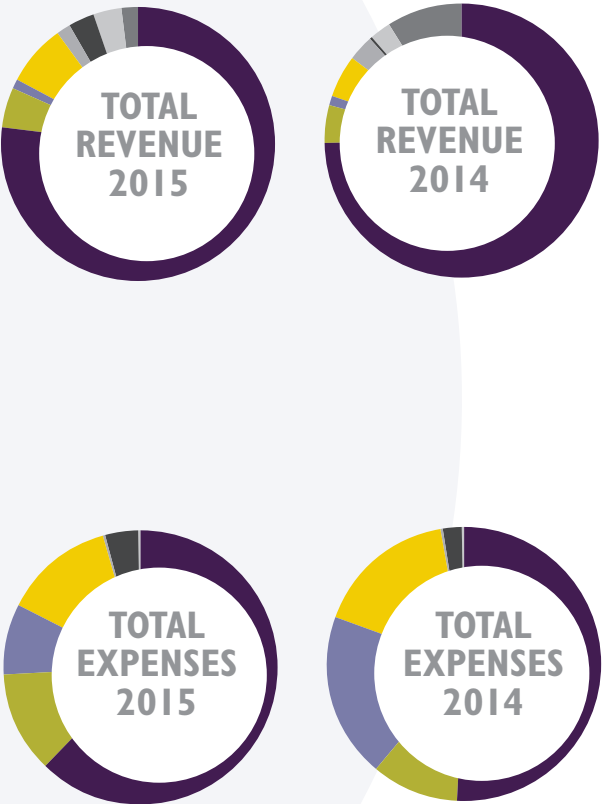


Annual Audited Financial Statement of Operations

For the year ended December 31st 2015

	2015	2014
Administration/Core City Funding Revenue*		
City of Toronto	642,746	666,465
Toronto Public Library	39,364	39,364
Program Revenue		
Province of Ontario	N/A	N/A
Government of Canada	8,801	8,815
City of Toronto	61,125	43,890
Foundations	12,875	28,500
Donations/Fundraising	25,660	1,266
Rentals/User Fees	28,340	22,342
Other	14,429	78,173
TOTAL REVENUE	833,340	888,815
Administration Expenses*		
Salaries and Benefits	514,783	446,418
Materials and Supplies	99,565	88,577
Purchase of Services	67,762	170,834
Amortization of Capital Assets	30	1,003
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	(30)	(1,003)
Program Expenses		
Salaries and Benefits	108,153	145,203
Materials and Supplies	2,562	2,217
Purchase of Services	30,910	20,883
Amortization of Capital Assets	9,909	9,109
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	(8,210)	(8,210)
TOTAL EXPENSES	825,434	875,031
TOTAL SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	7,906	13,784

***Administration/Core Funding and Administration Expenses:** 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 like insurance, utilities, and maintenance costs.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Moving this year's Annual General Meeting forward from September to June means that this 2015-2016 Annual Report actually only covers an eight month period in terms of the activities at the Ralph Thornton Centre, but it has been a busy period witnessing significant progress for the Centre on a broad range of fronts.

Under the leadership of *Program Director Maria Moutsatsos*, we have re-established RTC's after-school program, initiated a Sunday afternoon child-minding program, and continued the expansion of our summer camp program to be more inclusive and responsive to our local communities. In partnership with Nellie's, we successfully piloted the WEAV program providing pre-employment support for women who have experienced violence.

We welcomed our new *Business Manager, Glenn Gustafson*, who has led the development of comprehensive financial policies and procedures for the Centre, and has moved on a wide range of initiatives to make the Centre's operations more efficient, more environmentally and financially sustainable, and making better use of our space and resources.

Our *Volunteer Coordinator, Susy Glass*, has continued to recruit and support the large number of dedicated, engaged individuals who make it possible for us to offer the range of RTC programs that address community needs, such as the Exchange Loft, which provides computer access and support, leadership and support to a variety of local and city-wide initiatives promoting social and economic justice, and ensuring that the many special events on the RTC calendar are successful.

Mentor Program Coordinator Janice Zhang continues to offer a high-quality program of support for Chinese newcomer children, maintaining high levels of satisfaction among mentors, participants, and their parents. She has also provided invaluable support to the Centre as we strive, with limited resources, to be more responsive to the Chinese-speaking community that comprises a vital portion of our catchment area.

Rose Scher, who staffs our Reception desk, keeps an enormous number of balls in the air – dealing with bookings, supporting all program staff, and providing administrative assistance and pitching in to ensure that all of our programming and special events run smoothly.

Our two maintenance staff, *Mark Johnson and Ian Sieunarine*, keep the Centre a clean, safe, and healthy environment. This year we have established a *weekend maintenance position*, filled by one of our long-time weekend staff, *Jason Oulds*, who is working to ensure the same high levels of maintenance on weekends.

We have also established a team of fifteen "Relief Casual" staff, who assist us in filling in for staff who are ill, on vacation, or simply when we need extra hands on deck for special events or initiatives. They bring a wide range of skills and experience to the Centre, and are a real asset as we strive to be more reflective of the communities we serve as a Centre. *Our regular staff are also complemented by Mark Kovats, who is so much more than a bookkeeper, and Stephen Bunt, who has gone above and beyond to work miracles with our limited IT resources.*

This staff team is directed and supported by a talented and dedicated Board of Directors and community Committee members, who offer leadership, support,

and counsel – ensuring that the activities of the Centre are aligned with the identified strategic goals, that policies and procedures are in place to govern and support the Centre's operations, and providing volunteer support for many of the Centre's activities, particularly as we build a fund-raising and communications capacity.

I continue to be amazed by the amount and quality of the volunteer time committed by the Board and Committee members who provide governance support for the Centre.

At the mid-point in implementation of the 2015-2017 renewal plan, I believe the Board and Staff teams can take pride in significant progress toward the strategic goals that were identified, and are well-positioned for continued accomplishment. My thanks to staff, Board, and the many community partners who have made this possible. Let's continue to move forward!

Sincerely,

John Campey, Executive Director

Ralph Thornton Centre Staff

John Campey (Executive Director), Peter Dyett (Weekend Reception), Ted Ellis (Weekend Reception), Susy Glass (Volunteer Coordinator), Glenn Gustafson (Business Manager), Mark Johnson (Maintenance), Maria Moutsatsos (Program Director), Jason Oulds (Maintenance), Rose Scher (Reception), Ian Sieunarine (Maintenance), Janice Zhang (Mentor Program Coordinator), Sajida Kadri (Summer Admin Support)

Casual and Relief Staff

Ella Clark, Conley Downey, Lucille Durand-Smith, Andrew Fuller, Lan He, Wenlin Huang, Roula Ioannidis, Joan King, Bridget Marzin, Rennie Moffat, Aishah Rasool, Inci Telger, Charmaine Tsoutsas, Qian Zhang, Mark Kovats (Bookkeeping), Stephen Bunt (Information Technology)

MANY THANKS

Thanks to our Funders and Partners

City of Toronto, Human Resources Development Canada, Ralph Thornton Community Organization, Riverdale Share, Toronto Community Housing, Toronto Foundation, Toronto Foundation for Student Success, Toronto Star Fresh Air Fund, Eastview Neighbourhood Community Centre, Jimmie Simpson Recreation Centre, Nellie's, Riverside BIA, South Riverdale Community Health Centre, South Riverdale Child and Parent Centre, Toronto Neighbourhood Centres, Toronto Public Library—Queen/Saulter Branch, WoodGreen Community Services.

And to all of our continued supporters, donors, funders and volunteers!



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