

2018/2019



RALPH THORNTON
COMMUNITY CENTRE



ANNUAL REPORT



VISION MISSION VALUES

OUR VISION Working to ensure a more vibrant, diverse, inclusive, liveable, participatory, healthy, and equitable Riverdale.

OUR MISSION The RTCC is a gathering place that welcomes, connects and engages the community in all its diversity.

OUR VALUES

Inclusion and Respect: The RTCC 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. The RTCC promotes social inclusivity in all its activities and programming.

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

Collaboration and Partnership: The RTCC 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 RTCC 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.

Community Building: The RTCC actively promotes the building of relationships and collective action across and between our diverse communities to strengthen the whole.

PROGRESS PRIORITIES

RTCC's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan identified six priorities. Over the past year, we have worked to address them in a variety of ways:



Civic Engagement

MUNICIPAL ALL-CANDIDATES MEETING AND VOTERS GUIDE

In partnership with *Applegrove* and *Eastview Community Centres*, RTCC hosted an all-candidates session for the November City Council elections. All ten candidates participated in the session, and RTCC published an online and print 'election guide' with the responses of all of the candidates to key questions.

DEMOCRACY FUNDAMENTALS

In collaboration with *North York Community House* and *Toronto Neighbourhood Centres*, RTCC offered NYCH's "*Democracy FUNDamentals*" course in October 2018 and again in May/June 2019. This series of six sessions provides a comprehensive understanding of how local, provincial, and federal governments work – and how individuals and organizations can impact their decisions. The second session was designed as a "train the trainer" session, ensuring that RTCC will have the capacity to continue to infuse all of our programming with a civic engagement focus.

EATS AND BEATS VOTE

As part of our civic engagement focus, the children's programs at RTCC organized an "animal kingdom" vote, with 'polling stations' at *Morsestock* and *Eats and Beats*.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

Under its "*Community Matters*" banner, RTCC hosted a community consultation on the City's Poverty Reduction Strategy, and has scheduled a similar consultation on the *HousingTO* strategy being developed by the City of Toronto.

SPEAKERS SERIES

In collaboration with the *Saulter Street Brewery*, RTCC launched a "storytelling" series, providing an opportunity to share stories about the people and events that have made Riverdale such a special place. The initial session, hosted by former Councillor and MPP Marilyn Churley, included former Alderman and MPP David Reville, and former Woodgreen Executive Director Brian Smith.





Educational Supports

In addition to the Mentor Program and After School, PA Day, and March Break camps for children, RTCC is increasingly used for education and training sessions by both local and city-wide organizations. A significant partner in this work is “*Toronto Neighbourhood Centres*,” the umbrella organization of community based multi-service organizations, which has used RTCC space for sessions on community engagement, on fostering Reconciliation, on a variety of equity issues, and peer coaching.



Financial Literacy

This spring, RTCC was able to assist 99 low-income individuals and families with filing their income tax – returning \$245,620 in benefits! 69% indicated they received a benefit they had not received before, and 93% of filers were ‘extremely satisfied’ with the service.

We appreciate the volunteers who donated their time to make this possible. Thanks also to *Toronto Neighbourhood Centres* for their support in returning this valuable service to RTCC, as part of a three-year initiative funded by United Way Toronto.



Health and Wellness

In addition to providing space to a wide range of peer support, fitness, and wellness groups, RTCC was able to help out this spring after the *South Riverdale Community Health Centre* suffered a serious flood – we have been happy to provide space for a number of SRCHC programs which were displaced by the flooding and subsequent repair work.



Technological Aptitude

RTCC’s Exchange Loft offers an opportunity for individuals to access computer, internet, and other office services, coupled with one-on-one support from our Exchange Loft volunteers. In addition to providing access to computer technology, the Exchange Loft reduces social isolation and helps link users with other community supports.



Developing the Organization

RISK MANAGEMENT AND PRIVACY POLICIES

The RTCC Board organized a full-day "Risk Management" workshop, which was also attended by members of the Applegrove and Eastview Boards. Out of this experience, the Board developed a Risk Management policy for RTCC, which was adopted this spring.

The Board of Management continues to regularly review and update the Centre's policies, to ensure they meet the needs of the Centre and address any changes in City or partner policies. An important addition this year was the development of a "Complaints" policy for RTCC.

Strengthening our Resource Base



GAME OF THORNTONS

Benefiting from the publicity surrounding the series finale of "Game of Thrones," RTCC's fourth annual gala silent auction fundraiser saw record attendance, raised over \$15,000 for children's programming at the Centre, and was great fun for

everyone who came out and played the "Game of Thorntons." The iconic "Copper Throne" was a hit at the event, and at subsequent community events including "Eats and Beats." Sincere thanks to the organizing committee led by Janet Routliffe, with particular appreciation to *Streetcar Developments*, for being the Platinum sponsors for the event for the third year in a row.

SCOTIABANK TORONTO WATERFRONT MARATHON

As part of the Toronto Neighbourhood Centre's team, organized by RTCC, our intrepid band of runners raised over \$2,000 in sponsorships at the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon.



PHOTO: Courtesy of Riverside BIA

BEER AND WINE FESTIVAL

The 2019 *Riverside Craft Beer and Wine Festival* was the most successful yet, with record attendance at the events hosted by local businesses and restaurants, and the "Beer and Wine Expo" at RTCC, which drew a capacity crowd for every presentation. Over \$3,000 was donated for RTCC programming – an increase of 10% over the 2018 amount.

VOLUNTEERS AT RTCC

In 2018, RTCC had 146 volunteers who worked a total of 5163 hours in our Tax Clinic, the Exchange Loft, our Children's programs, and special events. It is their dedication, hard work, and enthusiasm that makes possible much of the programming at RTCC – we greatly appreciate their contribution to the Centre.

Communicating Effectively

The RTCC Fundraising and Marketing Committee developed a Communications plan to support the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, which was adopted by the Board in January, and is now being implemented. This includes continued fortnightly publication of the electronic "RTCC Update," and print versions that are distributed periodically to the 2,500 households surrounding the Centre. Our student placements from the York University Faculty of Communications have been invaluable in expanding our social media profile, dragging some of us into the 21st century.



RALPH THORNTON COMMUNITY CENTRE

June 3, 2019

RTCC Annual General Meeting - June 12!

RTCC members, volunteers, community partners and residents are invited to join us at the Ralph Thornton Community Centre Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, June 12. The evening begins at 5:30 PM with a light dinner and an opportunity to meet friends and colleagues from the Centre, and continues at 6:30 PM with the business portion of the meeting. This will be followed by the presentation of the RTCC Community Volunteer Awards, and a final break prior to our panel discussion, which is scheduled to begin at 7:15 PM.

With the recent large number of Provincial Government announcements of dramatic funding cuts to a wide range of city and community services, we will be asking "Is our City Under Attack?" – what are the impacts of these cuts on the health, safety and prosperity of Toronto, and what can we do to defend RWAs are pleased that Peter Tabuns, MPP, and Councillor Paula Fletcher will be a part of this discussion, along with other community leaders.

Everyone is welcome for either or both parts of the meeting. If you are planning on joining us for dinner, require Chinese translation, or child care, please RSVP to RTCC at 416-392-6810 or info@ralphthornton.org

Is our City Under Attack?

Update

www.RalphThornton.org



Ralph Thornton Community Centre
Monday to Friday
9:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Office and Exchange Loft Hours
Monday to Friday
9:00 AM - 6:00 PM

The Ralph Thornton Community Centre is a non-profit organization that provides a wide range of services to the community. We are currently seeking volunteers for our various programs and events. If you are interested in helping out, please contact us at 416-392-6810 or info@ralphthornton.org.

RTCC will be closed on July 1 for Canada Day

Queen's Library
416-977-7070
Monday: Closed
Tuesday: 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Wednesday: 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Thursday: 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Friday: 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Saturday: 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Sunday: Closed

South Western Education Centre
Closed July 11-August 10
416-977-7070
Monday: 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Tuesday: 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Wednesday: 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Thursday: 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Friday: 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Saturday: Closed
Sunday: Closed

BRINGING OUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER



LUNAR NEW YEAR

RTCC works in partnership with other community organizations to make many local 'special events' a success:

- Lunar New Year at Gerrard Square
- Canada Day at Riverdale Park
- Eats and Beats Festival in Riverside
- The Antler Breakfast – this annual fund-raiser for the Rivertowne Breakfast Program, in partnership with TO Food Tours, the Riverside BIA, and Rivertowne Safety 1st, raised over \$7,000 in 2018
- Leslieville Tree Festival
- Rivertowne Craft Beer and Wine Festival



HALLOWEEN



ANTLER BREAKFAST



CARRIBEAN STREET FOOD FESTIVAL



REPAIR CAFÉ

- **Repair Café** – This July event, which ‘fixed’ close to 100 items, was expanded this year to add a “Holiday Hangover” children’s toy hospital and other children’s activities in early January
- **Halloween Party** – this year’s party drew a record crowd of over 400 creatures, using almost every space in the building.
- **RTCC Open House** – involved over 20 RTCC user groups, and brought over 300 people into the building to showcase the programming that takes place in the building (and to officially “launch” our new elevator).
- **Promoting business ‘communities’** RTCC provides a venue for events like the “Indigenous and Ingenious” Show and Sale, and the Caribbean Street Food Festival – showcasing entrepreneurs from Toronto’s diverse communities.



BRINGING OUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Strengthening Our Neighbourhoods

The RTCC Board of Management has provided active representation to a number of local stakeholder processes, including the *Unilever Precinct Study Stakeholder Advisory Group*, the *Toronto Waterfront Study Advisory*, and *East Harbour Community Engagement Committee*.

RTCC also added its voice to city and community-wide initiatives, such as the *Ontario For All* campaign and support for the safe injection site at the *South Riverdale Community Health Centre*.

Providing Accessible Space

INCREASING COMMUNITY ACCESS

In 2018, RTCC provided 11,769 hrs of 'space' to community organizations. Usage is increasing – it held steady through our elevator replacement project, and is increasing at an annual rate of 10%.

THE STAIRWELL GALLERY

The imposing marble staircase from the Saulter Street entrance to the building is finding a new life as the "Stairwell Gallery" – providing a free venue where local artists can display their work.

Delivering High Quality Programming

RAC CAMP 2018

Each year, RAC Camp provides children ages 6 to 12 with a fun and safe summer day camp experience. In 2018, 624 children attended over the 8 weeks of camp.

As well as crafts, baking, sports, and swimming at Ralph Thornton Community Centre and our partner *Jimmie Simpson Recreation Centre*, campers enjoyed a special outing in the community each week. These included: *Centreville at Toronto Island*, *Ripley's Aquarium*, *Bata Shoe Museum*, and the *Science Centre*.

MENTOR PROGRAM

The Mentor Program, offered at both RTCC and the *Riverdale Library*, provides a positive and supportive space to help newcomer Chinese children from our community to improve their English language skills and feel more comfortable living in a new country and culture.

In 2018, 133 children ages 6-12 were registered in the program, with 64 on the waiting list. 76 volunteers, ranging in age from 15-70, acted as 'mentors' to program participants.



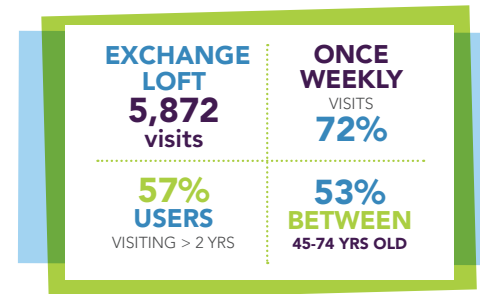
EXCHANGE LOFT

In 2018, our Exchange Loft saw 1225 unique visitors, for a total of 5872 visits over the year. With creative use of existing resources, the hours of the Exchange Loft were increased, allowing us to be open 7 days a week, from 9:30 AM - 8:30 PM, or 3,746 hours of service! With the extended hours, monthly use of the Exchange Loft increased on average by 21.6%.

During 2018, our staff and placement students created an assessment of the Exchange Loft, in an effort to learn why people come, how they benefit

from the space, and hear what else they might like to have as part of the Exchange Loft. Feedback was gathered from regular users through 50 surveys and 8 in-person interviews.

WE LEARNED:



- 72% of users come once a weekly or more.
- 57% of users have been coming to the Exchange loft for over 2 years.
- Most live in the neighbourhood, with 72% living within 20 minutes of travel.
- Many are long-term neighbours – 41% of users have lived in the neighbourhood for 10+ years, and another 23% have lived here between 6 and 10 years. 53% of users are between 45 and 74 years old.
- Employment status varies, with 44% employed (including full-time, part-time and self employed) and 52% not employed (including those looking for employment, retired, and students).

Users were asked what they like about our centre compared to other similar centres. Among the responses, 18% were related to location; 24% were related to the hours we were open, 23% were related to welcoming and friendly staff/volunteers. Responses from this project will be used to help develop future plans, including strengthening Exchange Loft services.

RTCC FINANCIAL REPORT

	2018	2017
Administration Revenue*		
City of Toronto	734,021	703,897
Toronto Public Library	39,364	39,364
Total Administration Revenue	773,385	743,261
Program Revenue		
Grants		
City of Toronto	46,750	52,010
Government of Canada	26,578	39,174
Foundations	14,000	10,000
Other	13,240	4,056
Donations	21,898	21,059
Fundraising	22,243	23,079
Rental Income	33,133	26,123
User Fees	72,445	70,663
Other Revenue	7,007	20,065
Total Program Revenue	257,294	266,229
TOTAL REVENUE	1,030,679	1,009,490
Administration Expenses*		
Salaries and Benefits	637,793	597,156
Materials and Supplies	78,865	67,637
Purchase of Services	56,727	78,468
Total Administration Expenses	773,385	743,261
Program Expenses		
Salaries and Benefits	211,948	225,123
Materials and Supplies	17,835	17,968
Purchase of Services	55,225	84,034
Amortization of Capital Assets	2,506	2,789
Amortization of Deferred Capital Contributions	-	(543))
Total Program Expenses	287,514	329,371
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,060,899	1,072,632
TOTAL SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	(30,220)	(63,142)

* Administration/Core Funding: This is the funding RTCC 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.



RTCC BOARD OF MANAGEMENT:

Ryan Acayan; Caleb Edwards; Councillor Paula Fletcher; Yang Han; Bernnitta Hawkins*; Sharon Ho; Alan Lennon (President); Megan Lorus; Daniella Moss*; Julia Peters; Janet Routliffe; William Somerville; Ejay Tupe

* Resigned during the year.

RTCC STAFF:

Grace Cameron (Reception); John Campey (Executive Director); Felix Chuang (Children’s Program Support); Ella Clark (Weekend Maintenance); Lucille Durand-Smith (Children’s Programs Coordinator); Andrew Fuller (Children’s Program Support); Susy Glass (Volunteer Coordinator); Colleen Gray (Manager: Strategic Initiatives); Glenn Gustafson (Business Manager); Wenlin Huang (Weekend Reception); Robin Irwin (Children’s Program Support); Mark Johnson (Maintenance); Lainey Little (Children’s Program Support); Ebrahim Lulat (Children’s Program Support); Amber Marsden (Children’s Program Support); Jason Oulds (Weekend Maintenance); Maia Richards (Children’s Program Support); Rose Scher (Reception); Ian Sieunarine (Maintenance); Mariah Wheeler (Children’s Program Support); Janice Zhang (Mentor Program Coordinator)

CONTRACT, CASUAL AND RELIEF STAFF:

Drew Dopwell, Conley Downey, Peter Dyett, Nicoletta Ioannidis; Mark Kovats (Bookkeeping); Stephen Bunt (Information Technology)

PRESIDENT's REPORT

It has been my pleasure to serve as President of your Board of Management for the past year. We have all been lucky to have had a board made up of disparate individuals who have all worked hard, worked together and helped move the Ralph Thornton Community Centre forward. I would like to acknowledge the contributions of Bernnitta Hawkins and Daniella Moss, who were unable to complete their terms on the board, but made significant contributions to the RTCC during their time with us. Yang Han, who is leaving the board, will be greatly missed for his contributions throughout his term. The RTCC community is better thanks to them. We are also fortunate to have a dedicated, hard-working staff – we owe them a great deal for their efforts.

We completed the first year of our five-year strategic plan in 2018-2019. We looked at our roles of “advocating”, “enabling” and “delivering” and tried to match our ability to contribute to the roles our partners and others can play. The Centre has been effective for trying to do what we can and what is best for the community rather than trying to be all things for all people. We built or developed partnerships and programming in areas of civic engagement, financial literacy, and technological aptitude, as well as supporting initiatives in health and wellness and affordable housing. We continued to look for opportunities for future activities.

Part of our mandate from the City is to look after our heritage building. This part of the mandate often is behind the scenes – in 2018 we were without

an elevator for six months (a promised six-week job) and jokes about saving on gym memberships by stair climbing



quickly lost their lustre. But we prevailed and have a functional elevator making our spaces once again accessible to

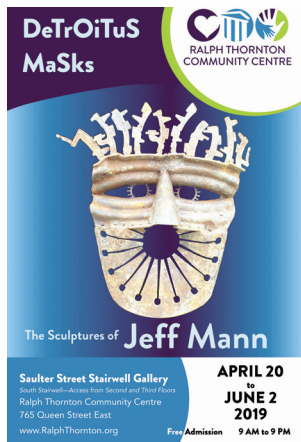
those with mobility issues. We have beautiful new signage, the auditorium dividers have been upgraded, and we have opened a community art gallery in the Saulter Street stairwell. The building, given its age and our constantly expanding usage of it, will always be a challenge to maintain and even more of a challenge to improve but we intend to continue to do just that so the cornerstone of the neighbourhood will always be at Queen and Saulter.

We have stabilized our staffing and our governance and are now focusing on our strategic priorities. During the past year, we have expanded some of our programmes, made others self-sufficient, have begun working more closely with partners in River-towne, and developed additional opportunities for civic engagement within our community.

The Board continues to work hard in all areas of its responsibility. We improved all of our fundraising events and our gala, a *Game of Thorntons*, was a huge success, raising a record of over \$15,000. Kudos go out to our Fundraising and Marketing Committee ably chaired by Janet Routliffe.

The contributions of the Board, the staff, the volunteers and the members of this Centre have been truly remarkable over this and other years and it has been an honour to have had the opportunity to lead such an effective and hardworking team. Thank you!

Alan Lennon
President,
RTCC Board of Management



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

challenging place to lead. Over the past year, all of these characteristics have shaped our work – the challenges of bringing a 1914-vintage building into the 21st century, witnessed by our elevator renewal project, renewing our staff team as some have moved on to pursue new opportunities, and working with community members and organizations to address the needs created by a rapidly changing community.

We have made significant progress – 'signature' RTCC events such as our Halloween party, the *Riverside Craft Beer and Wine Festival* and our annual cornerstone gala – *Game of Thorntons* – celebrated record attendance and support for the Centre. Our Tax Filer clinic almost doubled its impact, and our After School Program is now at capacity, with a growing reputation for quality programming. Expanding our Reception and Exchange Loft hours helped meet a demonstrated need in our community, with more than a 20% increase in usage over the previous year. New initiatives such as the *Stairwell Gallery* are breathing life into neglected parts of the building.

The Ralph Thornton Community Centre is a very special place – its iconic architecture, deep community roots, unique partnerships, and a very diverse range of users make it a rewarding, but

Sadly, we have also seen increasing challenges from this change – a rapidly gentrifying neighbourhood challenges us to maintain a space that is respectful, inclusive, and welcoming for all of the diverse members of our community. Our staff, Board, and partners in the Queen/Saulters Library and South Riverdale Child-Parent Centre have been working hard to ensure that RTCC remains a place where everyone feels welcome and supported. We value the support we have had from staff, board, and community partners as we strive to maintain a safe, inclusive environment for everyone who uses the Centre.

We appreciate the strong support we receive from the City of Toronto – as an agency of the City, RTCC receives the core funding we need to keep the building open and functioning, but also the resources required for major capital expenses such as our elevator repair project. As one very small part of a very large organization, it is easy for RTCC to get lost in the shuffle, and we are most grateful for the continued work of our Councillor, Paula Fletcher, who ensures that our voice is heard at City Hall.

It is hard to imagine how different our neighbourhood is from 1914, when the building that is now RTCC was constructed as a post office – it is even dramatically different from what it was in 1981, when RTCC was established as a community centre. Since it was built, 765 Queen Street East has been a centre of community – we are proud to continue that tradition, as it evolves to meet changing needs.

John Campey
Executive Director

MANY THANKS!

*Thanks to our Board of Management,
Centre staff, Funders, Partners, Volunteers and
Community Members for your continued support.*

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

The Ralph Thornton Community Centre is an agency of the City of Toronto, operating under an independent community Board of Management. RTCC appreciates the over \$750,000 per year in core operating funds, along with major capital project funding, provided by the City.



Nellie's

Riverside

Riverdale Share

STREETCARTM
RETHINK URBAN LIVING



Cover Photo: In 2018, the *Toronto Fringe Festival* ventured east of the Don River for the first time, mounting 'Kitchen Sink Dramas' in the Betsy Swift Community Kitchen at RTCC. Pictured are the cast, along with RTCC social media 'hound' Copper Campey Guzman.



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