



Circle of Care
Sinai Health

2020-2021
ANNUAL REPORT

*It's good
to be home*

Circle of Care's focus on **excellent home and community care** for older adults is more important than ever.



SERVICES AT HOME

- Personal Support
- Homemaking
- Hospice Care
- Friendly Visiting
- Phone Pals
- Social Work



SERVICES IN THE COMMUNITY

- Meals on Wheels
- Transportation
- Seniors' Social Groups
- Exercise & Falls Prevention



SPECIALIZED SERVICES

- Holocaust Survivor Services
- Case Management
- Adult Day Program
- Elder Abuse Prevention & Intervention
- Information & Referral



CLIENT & CAREGIVER SUPPORT

- Caregiver Respite
- Client & Family Counselling
- Bereavement Support
- Support Groups & Sessions

About Circle of Care

Circle of Care, part of Sinai Health, is a leading not-for-profit home care provider for individuals living in the Greater Toronto Area. Our staff and volunteers simplify everyday life for more than 10,000 clients and their families each year, helping them preserve their independence and live comfortably at home.

Circle of Care has a proud, successful history. We have grown with the times, but still embrace our community roots.

Our organization launched in 1974 to meet the needs of Toronto's elderly Jewish population. Over time, our mandate has expanded to serve individuals of many faiths and cultures, and Circle of Care has flourished into one of the community's leading providers of home health care and community support services.

VISION

Canada's leading integrated health system, pushing the boundaries to realize the best health and care from healthy beginnings to healthy aging for people with specialized and complex care needs.

MISSION

Sinai Health delivers exceptional care in hospital, community and home, focusing on the health conditions with the greatest impact on the overall health of the population. We discover and translate scientific breakthroughs, develop practical health solutions, educate future clinical and scientific leaders, and lead efforts to eliminate health inequities.

VALUES



PERSON-CENTRED CARE



EXCELLENCE



ACCOUNTABILITY



COLLABORATION



EQUITY



INNOVATION





Message from Leadership



Since 1974, Circle of Care has been committed to providing the best care so our clients can live comfortably and age independently in their homes. This care includes case management and personal care in the home, food delivery, transportation services and other community supports. Our team relentlessly pursues new and innovative solutions, leading efforts for a better health care experience. Our tagline, *It's good to be home*, underscores the reason why we come to work every day.

This past year, however, took on a different meaning. For our clients, being at home was required—it was not by choice. While home was the safest place to be for older adults and other vulnerable individuals, client experiences changed dramatically for many months afterwards. Our clients faced isolation and loneliness, and an intense fear of the unknown. The pandemic exacerbated all the regular challenges of aging, and our clients and their caregivers needed support more than ever.

Circle of Care teams sprang into action. We continued to deliver exceptional care in a new landscape of masks, goggles and face shields. We delivered more meals than we have ever delivered before. We provided essential rides to our clients to testing centres, hospitals and vaccination sites. Our virtual exercise classes became a new sensation, attracting up to 100 participants at a time. Our call support centre and service coordination teams became fully remote and responsive within less than a week with incredible support from our IT teams.

Our greatest accomplishment this year was delivering more, while keeping our staff, clients, and volunteers safe. We pulled together, as a team.

To our employees and volunteers, client and family advisors, board members, donors and community partners, a heartfelt thank you. We would not be able to do the incredible work we do without your support. To our clients, caregivers and families, you are the reason we come to work every day and you drive our passion and commitment for better care. *It's Good to Be Home* stands as strong as ever.

Thank you for continuing to trust us with your care.

Allan Rudolph,
Chair, Board of Directors,
Circle of Care,
Sinai Health

Carey Lucki,
Chief Executive Officer,
Circle of Care and Vice President,
Sinai Health

Circle of Care at a Glance

10,180
Clients

1,038
Employees

434
Volunteers

1,207,151
Hours of Personal Support

1,523
Holocaust Survivors Served

278,707
Meals Delivered

12,949
Caregiver Support Visits

84,606
Rides for Older Adults in 26 Vehicles



PSWs Provide Care During Crisis

While the world was being told to stay at home last year, Circle of Care PSWs were navigating around the city to our clients' homes. While shops, schools and businesses of all kinds were closed, PSWs were still providing necessary care.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit last year, it brought with it a whole host of changes for how our PSWs provide care to clients.

Circle of Care implemented many new health and safety guidelines to protect our clients and staff from COVID-19, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), which often makes communication and engagement with elderly clients more challenging.

Circle of Care PSWs had to adjust quickly to new screening tools on their mobile devices, new PPE protocols, reporting requirements, and the ways in which they communicated with office staff.

“Making a difference in the lives of others is the very reason why I go to work each day. Getting attached to your clients is inevitable, and it’s likely they’ll get attached to you too! When you work from your heart, your client feels it.”

Lita, Circle of Care PSW

“Our PSW workforce surpassed expectations to ensure that their clients remained safe and cared for. There were so many changes,” says Andrea David, Client Services Director. “However, some important things remained constant—the resilience, dedication, and commitment our PSWs have to their clients, their colleagues, and to each other.”

Many PSWs volunteered to work beyond their stated availability and traveled outside of their assigned areas to provide necessary support to clients in need.

“My clients’ safety is very important to me,” says PSW Analyn. “Simply prioritizing their safety makes me happy, because I know they’re safe.”

The dedication and commitment to their roles has been evident in the way that our PSWs have responded to the pandemic. Circle of Care is proud to have such great staff!

Pandemic Increases Emotional and Physical Toll for Holocaust Survivors

During a difficult year, Circle of Care continued to care for over 1,500 Holocaust Survivor clients. One of the greatest challenges for Circle of Care’s Holocaust Survivor Services Program (HSSP) team was maintaining consistent contact with their clients to ensure their needs were met, as well as linking them to other available support services to protect their mental health and wellbeing.

When the pandemic first hit, Circle of Care’s Holocaust case managers kept an open line to their clients and diligently worked to ensure their safety.

“In the beginning it was very hard—many rules weren’t set in stone yet,” says Yana Z., Practice Lead for the Holocaust Survivor Services Program. “We kept checking in on our clients - on their physical and emotional health, and on their situation to see how we could help.”

As a result of physical distancing restrictions, many clients went weeks or months without seeing family and friends. Our HSSP Case Managers understood the toll the pandemic created and helped provide clients with emotional support.

“Our Holocaust Case Managers almost had a 24/7 job, because they made sure their phones were always on and accessible to anyone who needed them during that time,” says Yana.

In addition to severed social connections, many HSSP clients were at risk of food insecurity. Circle of Care teams worked together quickly to introduce new approaches to make sure our clients were eating, including delivering boxes of fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as Hanukkah and Purim boxes.

Circle of Care received heartwarming and motivating feedback from Survivors, who shared appreciation for their Case Managers and for food deliveries. When public health messaging was cautioning them to stay at home, a meal and a check in phone call helped these clients feel safe and loved.

“We want to thank our Case Manager for her excellent communication, professionalism and, most importantly, kindness,” expressed a family member of one of our Holocaust Survivor clients. “She built trust in our relationship and has always communicated with my family to find optimal solutions for my parents. My family and I are grateful to have her working with us.”



“I am particularly proud of our Case Managers and the wonderful work they have done for our clients. They are a very dedicated team and they have worked relentlessly to keep our clients safe and healthy, and make sure they didn’t feel isolated.”

Cecile Raymond
Client Services Director



Innovating Solutions for a Distanced World

FIGHTING ISOLATION WITH TECHNOLOGY

To reach older adults isolated in their homes, Circle of Care partnered with an organization called Breezie.

Through the Breezie program, 85 isolated Circle of Care clients have received a “Breezie tablet”, an electronic tablet with an internet connection and an accessible and easy-to-use interface filled with customized apps and programs.

To assist clients, Circle of Care collaborated with a group of University of Toronto students to create “how to” manuals, such as how to join a Zoom call or sign up for an event on Eventbrite, along with resource manuals for museums, traveling, cooking, and exercise.

“These programs helped take away many hours of loneliness and isolation,” says a client. “The tablet has been a lifesaver. Without it, I would have spent the long weeks of lockdown alone.”

“If you don’t have any experience with a computer at all, this tablet is the way to do it. I love my tablet. It has lots of apps that I can play with. I use it to video chat with my family, and to learn something new every day.”

Lou Valdelman
Circle of Care client & Breezie user

In addition, Circle of Care’s volunteer team, many of whom desperately missed connecting with clients, spearheaded a “Compassionate Communities” initiative that has encouraged clients to connect with each other through weekly video chats.

EZ ASSIST APP KEEPS CLIENTS & FAMILY INVOLVED WITH CARE

To help strengthen communications between clients and caregivers during a time of disconnection, Circle of Care’s IT team made major improvements to the client mobile application, EZ Assist.

Debbie, the daughter of one of our clients, lives in Victoria, B.C., hundreds of kilometres away from her mother. She has responded positively to the app and likes the transparency into her mother’s schedule.

“My favourite thing about this app is that it keeps me in the loop and involved from a distance,” says Debbie. “I know who’s giving my mom care and when they’ll be there.”

In addition to being able to view their upcoming schedule, our clients and their families can cancel appointments through the app. For those caring for a loved one with dementia or other memory loss, the ability to confirm whether a visit has taken place has proved to be useful. With the app, families can see in real time whether the visit has actually occurred.

Community Programs Launch Online

The demands and restrictions of the pandemic resulted in an explosion in new virtual approaches at Circle of Care. Necessity required creativity, and the results were strong.

BUILDING A VIRTUAL ADP COMMUNITY

When the pandemic restricted activities and social connections, many of our ADP participants and their caregivers were left confined within their homes.

To help combat isolation, Circle of Care’s ADP team called each participant to check in and offer support. They prepared and delivered gift baskets and activity kits, which included puzzles along with other activities to keep our clients mentally and physically active at home.

“I’m proud of my team and the level of commitment and care they displayed. They were able to remain connected to our older adults and support them during a difficult time of disconnection,” says Maria Campo, Client Services Manager.

In July 2020, Circle of Care launched virtual programming for our ADP, bringing clients and their caregivers back together over ZOOM. The programming focused on activities that helped clients with their cognition, and reconnected friendships that had formed between clients and staff members.

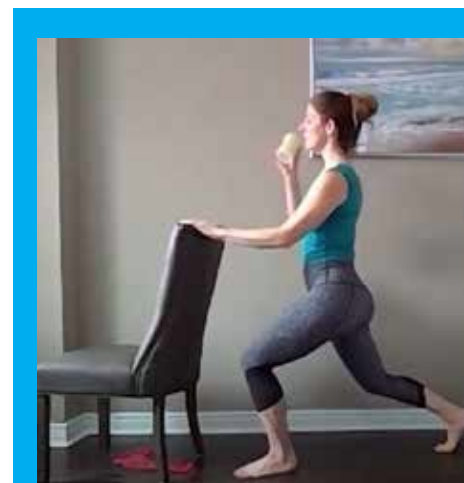
“It was vital to us to provide virtual programming. We know the value of our program, and the importance of providing support to build familiarity, connection and engagement,” says Madeline D’Arpino, ADP Supervisor. “Once we created the virtual ADP and clients were able to attend, they were so happy to see each other and talk to one another again. It was like a little community among our participants. Being



able to connect them together again—after what seemed like a very long time—was very heartwarming.”

In addition to the virtual Adult Day Program, Circle of Care’s ADP team reopened the physical location in September 2020, while ensuring all safety measures were met. These new measures included taping and spacing tables and chairs; removal of excess furniture, equipment, books and plush objects; and a creation of an isolation room.

“We were so excited and happy to see our ADP participants once again. We really missed them and they missed us along with their fellow participants,” says Madeline. “It’s more than a program here. We’re a community.”



VIRTUAL EXERCISE CLASSES PROVE HUGE SUCCESS

Circle of Care’s first virtual exercise class launched in June 2020 and was scheduled for once a week. Attendance quickly jumped from 20 to 50 participants on average per class, resulting in an increase of 15 classes per week within a span of five months, exceeding Circle of Care’s original goal.

“I didn’t mind the pandemic at all, and I think that’s because of these classes,” one client says. “I like not having to dress up or go to class with a certain appearance. The online class is much more time effective because you can just turn on the class and start exercising.”

Pandemic Ushers in New Generation of Volunteers at Circle of Care

Many Circle of Care volunteers are older adults themselves, putting them at increased risk of COVID-19 complications, and as a result, some older volunteers have stepped back. However, the pandemic inspired a younger generation to fill that gap and give back to the community.

“Many of our volunteers are retired or over 65 years of age,” says Lisa Rae, Director of Volunteers. “During the first wave, when the volunteers stayed home to protect themselves and others, many young and new volunteers stepped up and insisted on helping.”

Some volunteer programs were put on hold, prompting the development of new ones and an expansion of existing services. With the help of our volunteers, over 2,000 Hanukkah & Purim boxes, along with 500 pantry boxes, were delivered to clients to fight food insecurity. Many volunteers also put together toiletry packages and hygiene kits and delivered them to isolated clients. Overall, our volunteers dedicated over 11,000 hours to our clients during the pandemic.

“The level of compassion our volunteers demonstrated during the pandemic makes me so proud. Their level of concern for our clients, and really wanting to assist them in any way they could is truly inspiring.”

Lisa Rae
Director, Volunteers, Intake & MOW Services

A program called Triple G, initiated by University of Toronto graduate students, brought Big Brothers Big Sisters of Toronto (BBBST) and Circle of Care together, pairing the BBBST pairs to older adults on our friendly visiting program waitlist. During the pandemic, the BBBST pairs transitioned to staying connected with our clients through letters and phone calls. Volunteers also stepped up to fight isolation in our clients by increasingly calling them to check-in on their health and safety.

Corporate organizations that closed during the first wave took advantage of their employees’ drive for community involvement and helped deliver food to clients during the pandemic. Even after being called back to their offices, many individuals decided to continue to volunteer with us.

“I stayed on because I loved it. Doing something for the community felt great and genuinely improved my weekly routine,” says Lindsey Cassel, Partnership Manager for Steam Whistle. “It impacted me greatly; my life became better after I started volunteering with Meals on Wheels. It feels like my life gets extended every time I volunteer.”

Celebrating our Champions of Care

Our Champions of Care employee recognition program was launched in February 2018 with the intent of highlighting the big and little ways our employees go the extra mile – whether for a client, a family member, a colleague, or a health care partner.

Over the past fiscal year, we have received more than 100 nominations for employees who have gone above and beyond in their roles. Below, we have listed our nine award winners from 2020-2021.



TARA S.

Tara received the **Award for Innovation** for her enthusiasm towards making care better for our clients as a Client Services Supervisor.



ALLA I.

Alla received the **Award for Excellence** for always going above and beyond the call of duty in her role as a Holocaust Survivor Case Manager.



ADITYA M.

Aditya received the **Award for Collaboration** for his quick response, patience and attitude in his role of IT Help Desk Support.



KAI S.

Kai received the **Award for Accountability** for her excellent work with colleagues as a Health, Safety & Wellness Specialist.



ELENA B.

Elena received the **Award for Equity** for her professionalism and support when providing homemaking services to clients.



ANALYN O.

Analyn received the **Award for Person-Centred Care** for her wonderful spirit and initiative in her role as a Personal Support Worker.



ADELINE C.

Adeline received the **Award for Person-Centred Care** for demonstrating professionalism and selfless care in her role as a PSW.



THEODROS A.

PSW Theodros received the **Champion of the Year Award** for the bravery he showed and support he gave to clients during a building fire.



SHAN Z.

PSW Shan received the **Champion of the Year Award** for the bravery she showed and support she gave to clients during a building fire.



Our 2020–2025 Strategic Plan



Enhance excellence & integration in care and service

Circle of Care will purposefully engage with clients and partners to advance quality and leading practices with an emphasis on client-centred holistic care and the broad determinants of health.



Champion thoughtful design for innovation, efficiency & growth

Circle of Care will work to strengthen client wellbeing through investment and technology. We will foster our digital and data analytics capabilities and optimize operational processes and performance.



Create joy & pride in everything we do

Circle of Care will foster a culture that promotes healing, well-being, learning, inclusivity, collaboration and social responsibility. We will support our teams with enabling wellness and excellence in care.

Strategic Plan Highlights

Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, Circle of Care was able to make excellent progress towards the goals outlined in our strategic plan. Below we share some of our highlights:

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EXPANDED TO PSWs AND HOMEMAKERS

In 2020, our Employee Assistance Program (EAP), offered through Morneau Shepell, was expanded to allow all Circle of Care Personal Support Workers and Homemakers to receive support through the program.

The EAP is designed to provide employees with assistance to resolve personal issues or crises that can negatively impact their performance at work. It is a short-term, confidential service that is offered at no cost to our employees.



GROWING PARTNERSHIPS

As a core member of the North York Toronto Health Partners, an Ontario Health Team (OHT), we supported our OHT community by collaborating with North York General Hospital, primary care, and other community partners to deliver care for high intensity needs clients in their homes. We are also contributing to ongoing strategic planning to advance and achieve the operational goals of the OHT.



NEW OFFERINGS FOR MEALS ON WHEELS PROGRAM

Over the last year, Circle of Care's Meals on Wheels program partnered with FoodShare to provide fresh produce to clients. We've also started offering Ensure meal replacement drinks to clients as part of regular weekly deliveries. And to celebrate Hanukkah and Purim, our staff and volunteers delivered food hampers to Jewish clients.

Pivoting to Respond to the Pandemic

When COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, Circle of Care employees and management switched gears to step up and immediately respond to a variety of urgent needs.

When the pandemic hit in March 2020, Circle of Care worked quickly to respond to the urgency of the situation.

Our IT department provided equipment and resources to office employees, including call centre staff. Within a two-week span, all staff were asked to start working from home.

A number of Circle of Care employees were redeployed from their regular duties to meet growing needs in other departments during the first wave. These needs including organizing and packing large numbers of bags of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other supplies for PSWs, and delivering meals to clients through our Meals on Wheels program.

"I'm proud of the efforts of our employees during the COVID crisis," says Dara Zarnett, VP, Strategy and Operations. "Especially in Wave 1, when so much was yet unknown about the virus and there was a lot of fear and uncertainty in our province, our staff stepped up to make sure our clients were safe and their care could continue."



Large amounts of Personal Protective Equipment needed to be organized and issued to PSWs at the start of the pandemic, and Circle of Care staff from various departments were redeployed to assist with these efforts.

Our Client Services team employed creativity and strategic thinking to increase client and employee safety by reviewing client and PSW schedules to limit potential spread of infection. And our Client Services Supervisors provided coaching and support to our PSWs around correct use of PPE and infection prevention and control.

We also worked closely with our partner organizations as part of the North York Toronto Health Partners (NYTHP) efforts to respond to the pandemic. Our staff, including nurses, social workers, and other allied health professionals, provided operational support and planning to administer mobile COVID-19 testing and vaccinations in congregate care settings and seniors buildings.



CIRCLE OF CARE PSWs ROLLED UP THEIR SLEEVES AS SOME OF ONTARIO'S FIRST VACCINATED WORKERS

As frontline healthcare workers, Circle of Care Personal Support Workers were some of the first people in the province that were eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

In late December 2020, PSW Kathleen (pictured left) received her first dose of the Pfizer vaccine, and her second dose in January.

"I give thanks to God to be one of the first," said Kathleen. "I feel very privileged. I love the people I care for, and by protecting myself, I am protecting them."

Kathleen, 67, has worked for Circle of Care for 11 years, and was our first vaccinated employee.



Helping and Supporting Family Caregivers

Since Circle of Care's Caregiver Club program began in November 2020, the one-year pilot program has helped numerous family caregivers receive much-needed support and connection to resources.

"This is a program that helps to fill a vital gap within our healthcare system," says Faith Robinson, who works as the Caregiver Navigator for the program. "Family caregivers dedicate their lives to caring for their loved ones. Often, their whole lives begin to revolve around care. And yet, so often they're receiving very little support themselves. Caregiver burnout is incredibly common."

Through the Caregiver Club program, Faith has been working weekly with a family caregiver with extremely high stress levels. Faith was able to secure grant money for her from the Alzheimer Society and help her to navigate long-term care options. Faith also provided her with caregiver-specific webinars and self-care strategies to address her stress.

"Providing this caregiver with resources helped to reduce her stress levels, but the biggest positive impact that I made was simply the phone call and conversation," Faith says. "This caregiver said to me, 'Faith, it helps me a lot to talk to you. I feel more relaxed and happy when I talk to you.'"

"I'm reminded that in these isolating times that the biggest difference is connecting with the program members and helping them feel seen, heard, and valued."

Faith Robinson
Caregiver Navigator



To be eligible for the Caregiver Club, a person must be providing unpaid support to a family member, friend, or loved one who is a senior living in Toronto or York Region. This support could be long-term, or episodic to address an acute health situation. To participate in the program's virtual curriculum and events, program participants require access to the internet.



For those registered for the Caregiver Club program, they are able to access the following supports and services, depending on their level of need:

CAREGIVER NAVIGATOR SUPPORT

The Caregiver Navigator provides social work support to program caregivers by connecting them to local community resources tailored to their needs, and offering regular check-in Care Calls to provide ongoing assistance.

CAREGIVER CURRICULUM

The program offers educational sessions on topics specific to caregiving. Additional online curriculum is provided through access to our e-newsletter and website.



PEER SUPPORT

Caregivers can participate in virtual support group events to learn from fellow caregivers and share their own experiences.

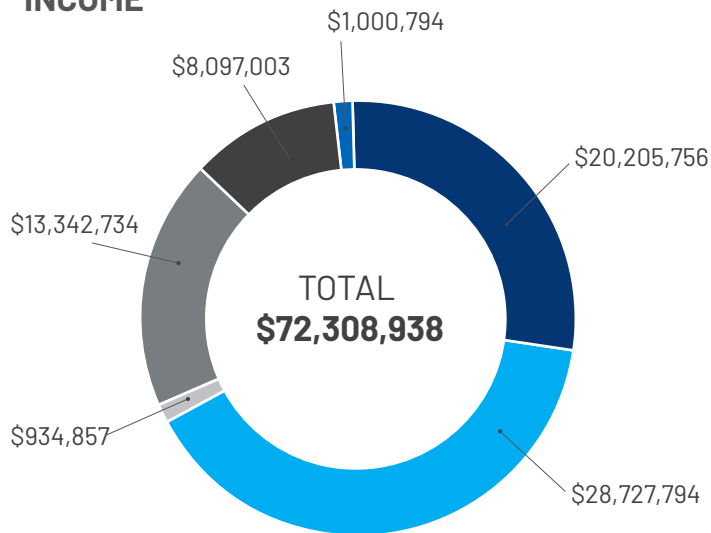
COURAGEOUS CAREGIVERS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Our recognition program acknowledges the hard work and dedication that family caregivers provide when caring for their loved ones and celebrates them through virtual events.

Our program is funded by The Petro Canada CareMakers Foundation™, which raises funds to enable and amplify the work of charitable organizations in Canada that currently support family caregivers. The Caregiver Club at Circle of Care is one of the first programs being funded by The Petro Canada CareMakers Foundation.™

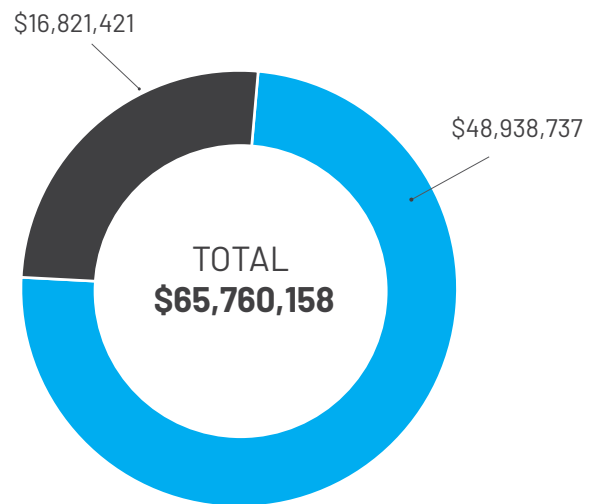
Financials Year ended March 31, 2021

INCOME



- Fees for services—Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany Inc. (Holocaust Survivors)
- Fees for services—LHIN (formerly CCAC)
- Fees for services—Other
- Grants and contributions—LHIN
- Grants and contributions—Other
- Other

EXPENSES



- Wages and benefits
- Other program expenses

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Jessica Elia, Director of Finance

Mary Ellen Armstrong, Director,
Communications and Public / Government Relations

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Community Engagement & Growth

FUNDERS & PARTNERS

Government of Ontario

Ontario Community Support Association

Central Local Health Integration Network

Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network

Central East Local Health Integration Network

Central West Local Health Integration Network

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

United Way Greater Toronto

City of Toronto

Centre for Independent Living Toronto

Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration



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