



**Red Door**  
FAMILY SHELTER

2020-2021

Together,  
we're  
changing  
tomorrow,  
today.

# The Courage Report



Together,  
we're  
changing  
tomorrow,  
today.



## Our Vision

Ending family homelessness one family at a time.

## Our Mission

To create a safe and welcoming temporary space and critical services for women and children who have fled intimate partner violence, refugees seeking sanctuary from war and violence, and families in crisis with nowhere else to go as they heal and rebuild their lives.

## Our Values

Our commitment to ending family homelessness is driven by these core values:

- **Quality:** providing high quality, client-centred programs and working towards continuous improvement on behalf of the children and families we serve.
- **Caring:** serving our families with respect, dignity, empathy and compassion, and celebrating the diversity and uniqueness of each individual.
- **Advocacy:** working towards ending the cycles of violence and poverty through advocacy and empowerment of our clients.
- **Collaboration:** building effective relationships among clients, volunteers, donors and staff, and seeking opportunities to form partnerships with the broader community.
- **Integrity:** delivering accessible, flexible, and transparent services while acting with integrity in a professional, ethical, non-judgemental, honest manner at all times.
- **Accountability:** measuring, achieving and reporting results and using funder and donor dollars wisely.



Red Door  
FAMILY SHELTER

## Board of Directors

Ann Elliott  
*President and Chair*

Greg Sheldrake  
*Vice-Chair*

Catherine Playford  
*Treasurer*

Carina Chan

Anna Dinh

Bryan Good

Arielle Loeb

Kiddy Mengesha

Mira Lyonblum

Afrah Berhan

Carol Latchford  
*Executive Director*



“My goal was to be able to stand on my own. My priority was to be safe and provide a safe environment for my daughter. I owed it to myself to protect my mind and my soul so I would have the courage to protect my child. With the support of the Red Door, I moved on. With your generosity, my life was transformed. Thank you.”

**Former resident**



## Starting Over Takes Courage

Despite the challenges brought by the pandemic, we continued to offer hope and healing.

COVID-19 continued to challenge us all this past year as we struggled to manage lockdowns, shifting restrictions and the impact of the pandemic on our community.

All types of violence against women and girls has intensified, especially intimate partner violence. More families have been facing homelessness and it has been increasingly difficult for refugee families to seek – and find – safe harbour.

While most of the world lived virtually, our frontline staff were present in real time, and our supportive community continued to stand up and speak for those whose voices are seldom heard.

It takes courage to leave an abusive relationship. It takes courage to keep a family together. And it takes courage to hold out a hand to the families who turn to Red Door for comfort, caring and support.

This Annual Report celebrates courage in the face of adversity and honours the circle of support that is changing tomorrow, today.

**10,000**

The number of homeless in Toronto on any given night

**34%**

of the unhoused in Toronto identify as women



## Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land on which Red Door Family Shelter sits is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that the City of Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit and the Williams Treaty signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.



**The Facts**  
**Red Door Family Shelter**

- > 106 beds and cribs for families
- > 20,000 sq. ft. over four floors
- > Private bedrooms and bathrooms
- > Communal dining and social areas
- > State-of-the-art kitchen
- > Indoor and outdoor children's play areas
- > Dedicated food bank

# Red Door Family Shelter

**Thanks to our circle of support, we opened the doors of our new, purpose-built family shelter.**

On June 17, 2021, with the help of Mayor John Tory and Councillor Paula Fletcher (Toronto-Danforth), we virtually cut the ribbon on the new and purpose-built Red Door Family Shelter, an innovative shelter incorporated into a private condo development in Leslieville.

Families stay in suites with a bedroom and private bathroom. Some suites have a connecting door so large families can stay together. The finishes – bathroom tiles, and sinks – are the same as those in the condo next door.

At the entrance to the shelter, a powerful mural featuring the Seven Grandfather Teachings celebrates love, respect, wisdom, bravery, honesty, humility and truth, the

(Left to right) Councillor Paula Fletcher, Executive Director Carol Latchford, former resident Louise Blais and Mayor John Tory

foundation of living a full and healthy life. And, we think, the mural offers hope and healing to the families who arrive to begin their new life.

The mural was created by Philip Cote of Moose Deer Point First Nation, an Indigenous artist, Young Spiritual Elder, activist, educator, historian and Ancestral Knowledge Keeper.

Each animal represents a teaching, and these teaching tools aid in the survival of the community because they share the same beliefs: an abiding respect for Mother Earth and all living things.

Our new home would not have been possible without the courage of our community – you cheered for us, advocated for us, volunteered for us and embraced us as an integral part of the neighbourhood.

“The ongoing support from residents is so moving. I hope this new, innovative model will also be used to create inclusive and welcoming communities across the City.”

**Paula Fletcher**  
Councillor, Toronto-Danforth



“This was my chance to do something that gives back to the community I’m a part of and my buildings are part of.”

**Chris Harhay**  
President, Harhay Developments

“I hope to support clients in acquiring the skills they need to successfully transition into the community and achieve their highest potential.”

**Purity Sang**  
Shelter Support Worker

  
**Courage to Leave**  
**132**  
families sheltered

**70**  
families were fleeing intimate partner violence

**62**  
families experienced a housing crisis

**12**  
families were refugees seeking asylum

### Alia AlQazzaz

Caseworker

Alia helps families set life goals and develops plans contributing to success. She also links families to the community support services that will help them realize their goals.

“Knowing that I can be there for women and their children during their moment of need is what motivates me. Working with the women, learning their stories and seeing their resilience keeps me going.

“I hope residents with whom I have worked, will remember their experience here as contributing to their transition and their independence.

“I have learned so much from the families I support. We deal with a lot of external agencies, referrals and communication so I have learned how important it is to be patient. Empathy reminds me why I work here and why I am being patient. And I have learned what true resilience looks like. These women face many barriers, intersectional barriers, yet they fight for themselves and for their children.”

Alia AlQazzaz (left) and AJ Hossain



“I lead, support, facilitate and act as a role model to residents for cleaning and maintaining shelter living spaces. Helping others makes me happy. There’s no better feeling than putting a smile on someone’s face or helping someone in need. A little attention can mean a lot – it can change someone’s life. If I had one wish it would be to end family homelessness for ALL families at a time.”

**AJ (Mohammad Azhar) Hossain**  
Shelter Support Worker

## Changing Tomorrow

Our caring community of partners and event fundraisers contributed over \$150,000 to support Red Door and our programs.

“As an owner of a business that started in Leslieville, I have worked in close physical proximity to Red Door Family Shelter. However, it was the work, the purpose, the drive and the heart of the people who work for Red Door that motivated us to create a lasting partnership – now over 12 years old. The core values of Red Door resonate with our entire team, and during these uncertain times, we want to support the shelter more than ever. We are grateful to the staff and volunteers we have worked with. Thank you.”

**Jessie Holmes**  
Partner, Pilot Coffee Roasters



The Pilot Coffee team: (left to right) Rob Wilkin, Michelle Wilkin, Jessie Holmes and Andy Wilkin



# The Face of Homelessness

**A family calls for help.**

**W**hen you think about homelessness, do you see children as part of the picture? Family homelessness is a hidden crisis. More and more families need emergency shelter – on any given night, 60 per cent of our residents are children – and the impact of COVID-19 has made the issue even more critical.

Meet Ameena\*, Bashir\* and their six children.

In January 2020, they flew to Pakistan to visit family. In March, with COVID-19 fast becoming a global pandemic, they frantically tried to book a flight home, finally arriving in Canada in July, 2020. Ameena and Bashir couldn't work while they were away, and so couldn't pay their rent; they lost their home and all their belongings and returned with nowhere to live.

Ameena, who was expecting her sixth child in early 2021, called 211 and the family found sanctuary at Red Door Family Shelter.

"We stayed at Red Door for almost eight months," Ameena says. "The staff understood our situation and supported us in so many ways. We had nothing. Red Door gave us clothes and shoes and hygiene products – everything we needed to live.

"Maria helped me enroll my kids in school and made sure they had school supplies. It was difficult during the pandemic – the kids had classes online – but they got help with homework from the Red Door staff.

"When I had my baby, only my husband could come to the hospital. But it was OK because my kids were at Red Door in a safe place while he was gone, so I didn't worry.

"When we brought our daughter back to Red Door the staff was so supportive. I was worried about having to buy things for a new baby during COVID – there were long lineups at the stores and things were so expensive. But Red Door gave us everything we needed for the baby – clothes, diapers, blankets, a crib, a bath tub...we are just so grateful for their care and their love.

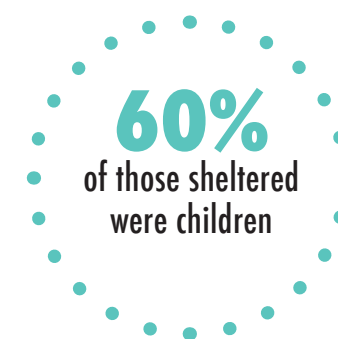
"We are in our own home now, thanks to Tasha, and Maria helped the kids enroll in a new school. We had nothing when we left Red Door but they gave us everything we needed to start over.

"We are trying hard to make a better life and are so hopeful for the future." Nine-year-old Geeta thrived at Red Door. The family's caseworker helped her and her brother and sister to enroll in a new school, made sure they had school supplies, and offered homework help. And of course, lots of activities!

"Because of COVID, we had online learning and we got a lot of help when we needed it.

"I really liked Christmas time. We made cards and door decorations and a gingerbread house.

"My best memory? I got my sister! Before she was born, I was the youngest; now I am a big sis!"



## Children and Youth Programs

We know that helping children overcome painful and frightening experiences support their growth into strong, capable and resilient adults.

Our after school and evening programs offer help with homework as well as fun activities such as games, visits to the library or a local park, and arts and crafts for children of all ages.

Seminars and workshops for teenagers and parents cover a wide range of topics designed to provide youth with critical decision-making tools, and help parents support their children through this difficult time. We also offer homework support and social activities.



## Tasha Cummings

Housing Worker

Tasha supports families to secure permanent housing.

“We can’t use a ‘one size fits all’ approach to support our clients. Each family’s experience is different. What is the same: their resilience. ‘I never thought I would be in this situation,’ they tell me, ‘living in a shelter with my children’. But they have showed me their strength and endurance again and again, and I have learned my own resilience from them.”

“If I could make one wish come true it would be for more landlords to believe in second chances, to understand that a person’s past does not define who they are today. Sometimes our clients may have bad credit and this becomes a huge barrier to obtaining permanent housing. However, landlords do not see what’s happening behind the scenes, the amazing work done by every person at Red Door to help our clients become housing ready. The growth I see in clients, from the first time they walk through the shelter doors to when they move into their new home is truly incredible and makes me proud to be a part of the Red Door team.”

Tasha Cummings (left) and Parvane Rezaei-Dodani




## Parvane Rezaei-Dodani

Housing Worker

Parvane supports families to secure permanent housing.

“We are working with people face to face, we see their hardships firsthand. We build professional relationships with clients of course, but in the process, you begin to know them personally, to learn their story. You see the families and children every day. You are now a part of their lives. I work toward being a catalyst for change for them, a way to propel their lives into new beginnings. It’s so much more than just housing. It’s their safety, their separation, their new life – everything is changing for them and I provide them with stability and consistency.”

  
**Courage to Start Over**  
**84**  
families moved to  
permanent housing  
**40**  
of those families moved into  
private housing and pay  
48.03% of their income in rent

## A Lifeline of Support

The Lawrence Schafer Foundation’s multi-year leadership generosity and unwavering support of families who come to Red Door Family Shelter is changing tomorrow, today.

“You have plenty of courage, I am sure,” answered Oz. “All you need is confidence in yourself. There is no living thing that is not afraid when it faces danger. The true courage is in facing danger when you are afraid and that kind of courage you have in plenty.”

– *The Wonderful World of Oz*, L. Frank Baum

“Who can’t relate to the above quote? We all need to discover personal courage by developing confidence in ourselves. Without courage, the Staff and Board of Directors at Red Door Family Shelter would not have embraced the emotional and physical changes required to support over 350 families each year. The Lawrence Schafer Foundation believes in the values of the Red Door and the people who live those values every day. Their continued courage requires us to act, making decisions from our heart, to financially support the vision of ending family homelessness one family at a time. We are so proud to be partnered with the Red Door Family Shelter.”

**The Lawrence Schafer Foundation**



**Patty Sylvester**

*Outreach Worker*

Patty helps families move to permanent housing and offers follow up support, connecting them to employment, financial aid, health care, legal and social supports.

“The families are humble, courageous and they never give up. They just need a break. They have had setbacks and disappointments, but they keep going. They just want to improve their lives and their children’s lives. They have taught me to be grateful for all that I have. Appreciate the little things in life and love others no matter who they are.

“We all have our burdens to carry, some more than others. If I can change the life of one person, then my job is worth it.”

**258**

families supported

**437**

people supported

**126**

families accessed our weekly food bank

“I have been at Red Door for 35 years and the families I have supported have taught me so much. I have seen grace in the face of tragedy, hope and faith in the future. Every day I am grateful for the free life I live, because I have seen many of our families survive and overcome so much. This job and these families have taught me to appreciate what we take for granted and to never give up.”

**Cathy Bedford**

*Outreach Worker*

(Left to right)  
Patty Sylvester,  
Cathy Bedford  
and Phat Adriano



**Phat Adriano**

*Outreach Worker*

Phat helps families move to permanent housing and offers follow up support, connecting them to employment, financial aid, health care, legal and social supports.

“As an outreach worker, I help brave survivors of abuse and violence build lives of freedom and dignity. I do this because I want to contribute to that change in their life, support them to start a new life and a new beginning.

“My work at Red Door has taught me so much: to be resourceful; flexible; resilient; compassionate; humble; to have great patience and understanding; to be open minded and aware of the context different cultures bring to the shelter.

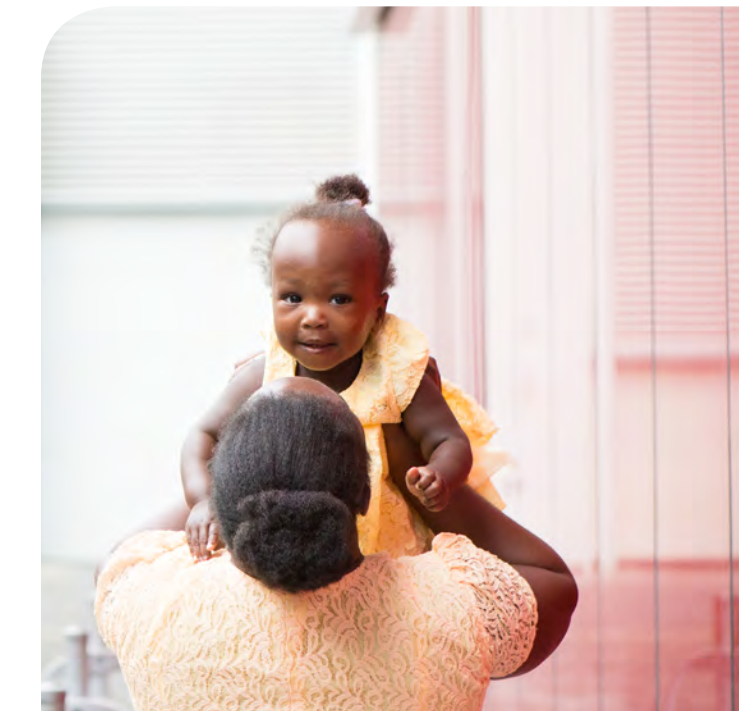
“The families I support face so many barriers including financial – limited source of income – and social – language barriers and limited support system – and I try my best to help them overcome these barriers. And I see the impact the women have on each other as they make friends, share their lives and offer support.”

**Nsalamba Mayaya**

*Moving Program Driver*

When a family is ready to leave the shelter, Red Door Family Shelter provides a truck and furniture and Mayaya helps them move.

“I always put myself in the family’s shoes and bring my smile to work for them. When they cry, I do not cry with them – I ask them to give me their strength and power to move forward. The families give me so much more than I can ever give them. When Red Door is not there, I make sure the families have the same safety and security they had at Red Door because that is what they deserve: dignity, respect and safety.”







**The Services  
Courage in Action**

- Counselling and case management
- On-site medical care and referrals
- Advocacy, legal and immigration support
- Connection to community resources
- Children's supportive programming
- Parenting and life skills workshops



**Coldest Night of the Year**

On February 20, 2021, Stephanie Porter and the Masked Marchers came together virtually to walk in support of Red Door in Coldest Night of the Year, Canada's national fundraising walk for homelessness.

The Masked Marchers were the Number One team, raising **\$11,011.09** and Stephanie Porter was the top walker, raising **\$5,481.09**.

Thirty-eight teams – 175 walkers – walked for Red Door, raising **\$108,238** – and our goal was \$75,000!

**Changing Lives**

"I've been volunteering with Red Door Family Shelter for 12 years and each year I love the organization more. I originally joined because I loved Red Door's commitment to supporting vulnerable and displaced families, as well as their focus on outplacement. I have been fortunate enough to see so many families get the support they need during some of the hardest times in their lives – and then move on from the shelter and lead happy, safe, self-sufficient lives. I've even seen former residents come back to volunteer, wanting to give back to the organization that helped them so greatly. It takes commitment, dedication

and moral courage to volunteer your time, but for me it's such a rewarding experience, feeling like you're giving back and contributing to society. I've met wonderful people and I'm honoured to have witnessed so much courage, strength and resilience. I have several close friends who also support Red Door as volunteers, monthly donors and through fundraising events. One of our favourites is the Coldest Night of the Year walk. This year was a special one for us because we were joined by new dogs and babies in our group – and got to walk around our Leslieville neighbourhood for the cause. We are all so grateful for everything

Red Door does and happy to be a small part of their proud history."

**Stephanie Porter**  
*Volunteer, Monthly Donor and Coldest Night of the Year warrior*



Stephanie Porter (back row, third from left) and Masked Marchers

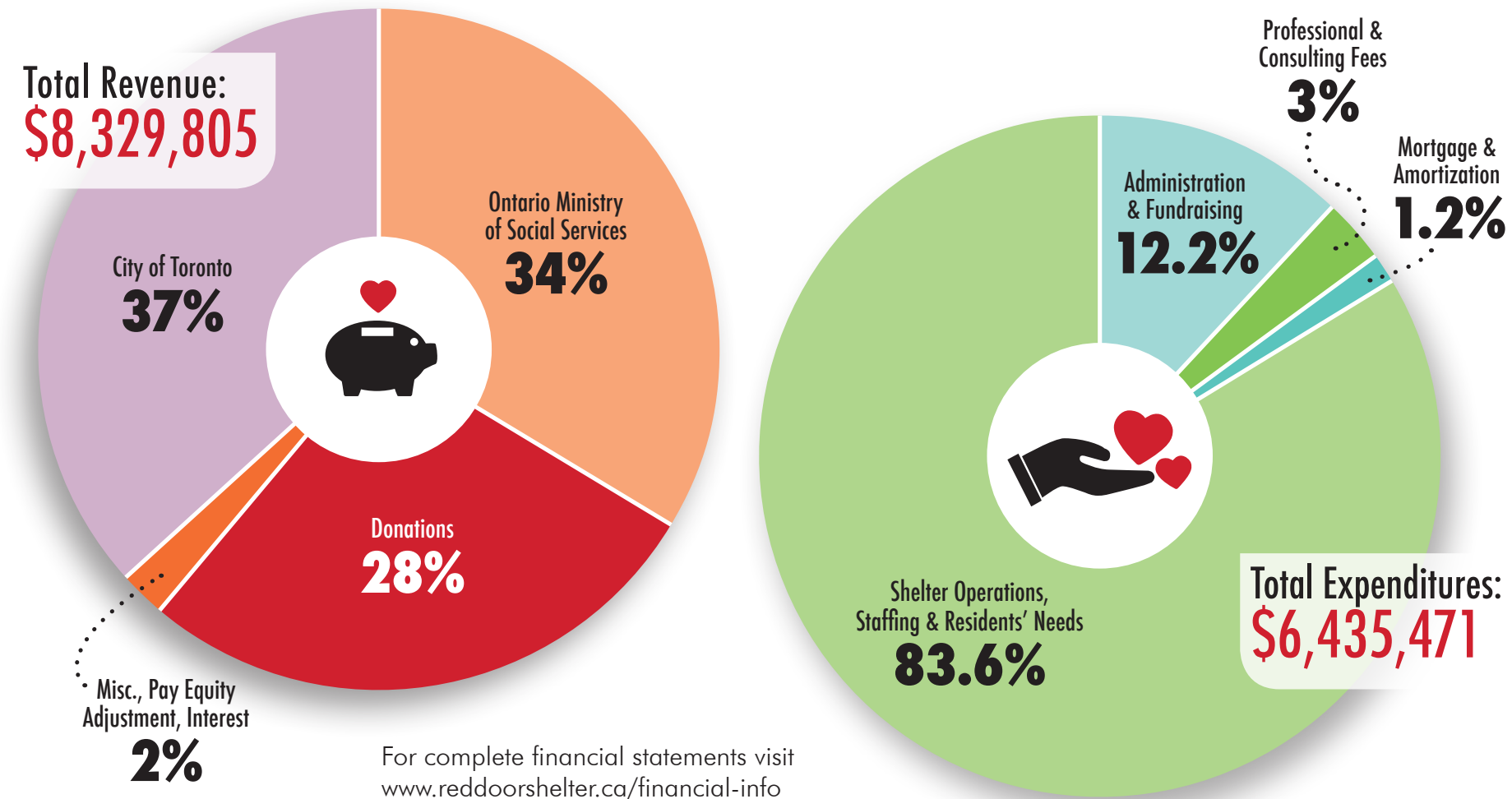
# Financial Overview

## You Give Families a Better Tomorrow

Our families depend on donors and volunteers to help change tomorrow, today. Your generous donations fund key programs and services and your volunteer time offers families

care and compassion. We couldn't support families fleeing violence and homelessness without your support.

Find our complete list of donors at [www.reddoorshelter.ca/our-donors](http://www.reddoorshelter.ca/our-donors)





“In the Anishinaabe culture the Seven Grandfather Teachings are passed down from the ancestors, from generation to generation, through oral stories and ceremonies.”

**Philip Cote**  
*Indigenous Artist*



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**[www.Reddoorshelter.ca](http://www.Reddoorshelter.ca)**  
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### Help change tomorrow today!



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