



Haven Highlights

Summer Newsletter 2026

The Voices, Stories and Lives of Street Haven

A message from Andrea

Hello!

I am pleased to share several highlights in this edition of the Street Haven newsletter, that reflect the strength of our team, the impact of our work, and the growing recognition of Street Haven within our community and across the social services and healthcare sectors.

I'm thrilled to share that one training and employment program has been awarded the skills development funding grant after being selected from over 900 applicants with only 172 accepted. I couldn't be more proud of what it means: opportunities for women to build stable and lasting careers.



I am delighted to share that our Director of Shelter and Housing, Grace Kolawole, has been nominated for the Women of Influence+ WNN DEI Awards. This nomination recognizes Grace's exceptional leadership and unwavering commitment to advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging both within Street Haven and throughout the broader social services sector. We are incredibly proud of this well-deserved recognition. I am also honoured to share that on behalf of Street Haven, I accepted the Lotus Hope Impact Award for Community Service for our work of supporting women experiencing homelessness, housing insecurity, addictions and mental health issues, continues to make a meaningful difference in our community.

The achievements highlighted in this newsletter are made possible through the dedication of our staff, volunteers, donors, partners, and the ongoing commitment of our Board.

Thank you all for supporting Street Haven!



Andrea Paszti

Save the Date!

- ✓ Lace Up for Street Haven at the Yorkville Run Walk! Sunday, Sept 20, 2026 | Yorkville, Toronto. This is the perfect opportunity to gather your friends and family together to support Street Haven.

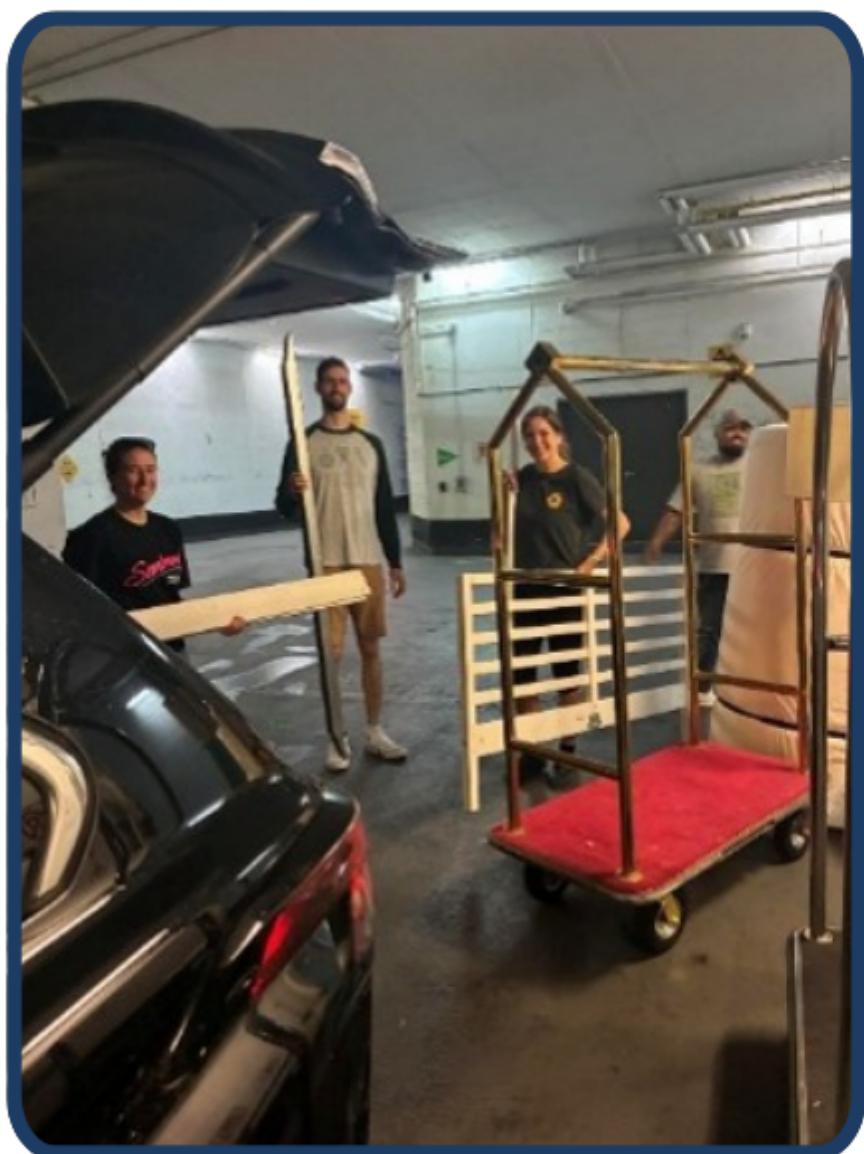
Sign Up & start fundraising:

1. Register at raceroster.com and select Street Haven at the Crossroads as your charity.
2. Fundraise on our behalf — set up your page directly through [our charity page](#) (or start a team and rally your friends, family, or coworkers!).
3. Pledge a minimum of \$100 and share your page with your network.

- ✓ Join us at Street Haven's Annual Yard Sale and BBQ: 📍 87, 91, 93 Pembroke Street. 📅 Saturday, August 22.

Behind the Scenes

Stories of Giving



*Emptying an Apartment,
Filling a Home*



Some of the biggest impacts start with the smallest gestures. This Summer, Christina, a recent Master of Nursing graduate preparing to move home to BC after finishing her studies in Toronto, emailed us out of the blue with an offer: the furniture and kitchen items she no longer needed.

Rather than let her belongings sit in storage or head to the curb, Christina wanted them to go to people who needed them. So we went into action immediately, knowing exactly where our greatest needs were. While our shelter regularly needs tables, chairs, and lamps, did you know we also run a program called Pathways to Independence? Imagine a woman who was recently homeless and has just secured a place of her own. Our team helps with all her needs to make sure she succeeds, including furnishing her new home.

Supporting Street Haven doesn't always mean writing a cheque (though we love that too!). Sometimes it's a graduate packing up her apartment and asking herself, how can I pay this forward?

To our donors, whether you give funds, time, or a full apartment's worth of furniture: thank you. Every gift, big or small, helps someone start over.

Thank you to the Forest Hill Lions Club for their generous ongoing donations to Street Haven! A special thanks to Michael Davidson, who spearheaded the support for Street Haven from the very beginning. Having community associations to rely on helps us continue providing vital services to the women who need us most. We're grateful to have the Forest Hill Lions Club standing with us.

STORIES OF HOPE

Abida works in court services with the City of Toronto, has a loving family and owns her own condo. By most measures, her life looks like success. But for years, she was fighting a battle most people around her never saw; an abusive relationship that brought on depression, followed by addiction and a slow unraveling she describes as "trying to run away from myself."

In early 2025 she decided to put herself first and ask for help. Abida connected with Street Haven through her Outreach Worker Bianca. "There was no judgment," she remembers. "It felt very organic, very natural, very easy." That connection led her into a pre-treatment program, and eventually to a 90-day stay at Grant House.

At first, Abida arrived a little skeptical, but found the program's grounding and practical lessons were exactly the reset she needed.

Looking ahead, Abida hopes to one day facilitate recovery programming for immigrant communities, drawing on her own experience. "I've lived it, I've gone through it," she reflects. "It's a way for me to give back."



Abida Rahman - "Don't be afraid. Trust the process, trust yourself, trust your gut."

*From running away from herself
to finding herself*

The Housing Outreach Team

In Ontario, affordable units are scarce, and waitlists are long. Many clients are also carrying past evictions, mental health or substance use challenges, and landlord discrimination, and if any team knows this well, it is the Outreach team at Street Haven. Finding permanent housing is hard enough without those barriers.

Yet they show up anyway.

Dera says she sees herself in the women she supports. I can relate to them. I'm hopeful to be there like I wanted someone to be there for me." Fatima describes her work simply as helping people "rescue the human soul and bring it to life." Kim, who has been with Street Haven the longest, states "Housing is more than a roof, it's the foundation for stability, safety, and opportunity."

They're right. Housing outreach isn't easy work, and it isn't quiet work either, not when you look closely.



Meet Fatima, Kim, Dera, and Jen: four women quietly building that foundation, one client at a time.

Advocacy & Expansion – Our New Shelter

We are pleased to share an important milestone in the development of our new 60-bed shelter at 3838 Bloor Street West. Recently, Street Haven joined leaders from several partner organizations at City Hall to advocate for the approval of zoning amendments that will allow two additional floors to be added to the building. These additional floors will significantly increase our ability to provide safe, supportive spaces for women experiencing homelessness and help meet the growing need for shelter and housing in our community.



This approval reflects the strong collaboration and advocacy of organizations committed to addressing homelessness in Toronto. We are grateful to our partners, supporters, and everyone who helped champion the need for this expanded space.

As the project continues to move forward, our work extends beyond planning & construction. Through community meetings, open dialogue, & relationship-building, we are working to ensure the successful integration of the new shelter when it opens in 2028.

We look forward to sharing additional updates as we continue making progress on this transformative project.





Shelter & Housing

Shelter & Housing Services continued to provide compassionate, client-centered support to individuals in both our shelter and housing programs. Staff remained focused on helping clients achieve and maintain housing stability through ongoing case management, advocacy, referrals, & daily supports.

While there were many positive accomplishments during the quarter, it was also a time of reflection and transition. We mourned the passing of two shelter clients and one housed client; none of these deaths were overdose related. Staff attended funeral and memorial services to

honor their lives and support grieving family members, reflecting the deep care and relationships built within our community.

This quarter, Street Haven provided 9,671 shelter bed nights, supporting 234 individuals through our shelter programs. Our team remained committed to offering safe accommodation, compassionate care, and essential supports to women experiencing homelessness and housing instability.

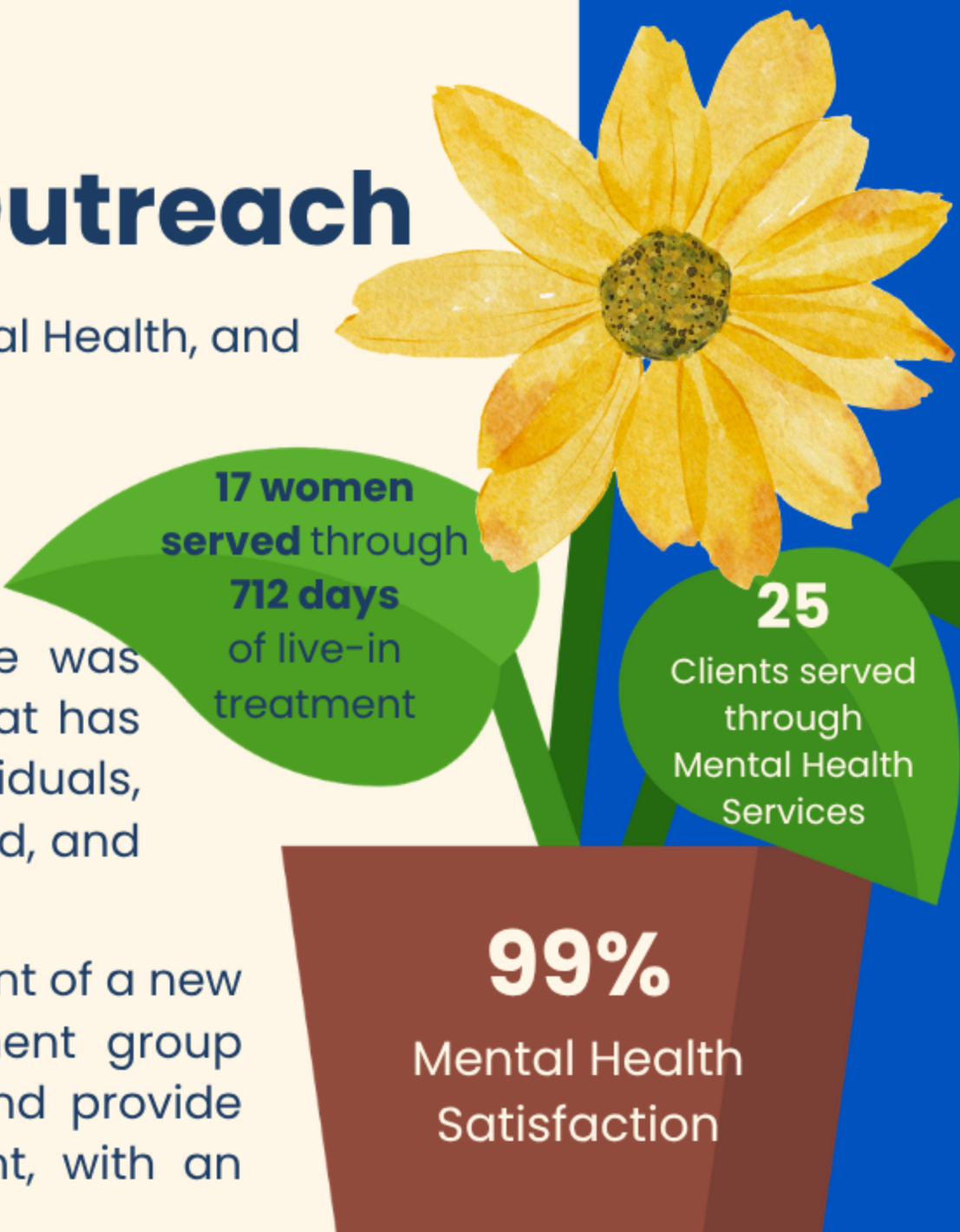
Addictions, Mental Health & Outreach

Throughout the past three months, Street Haven’s Addictions, Mental Health, and Outreach Services continued to provide responsive, client-centred supports focused on meeting individuals where they are while strengthening pathways toward wellness, stability, and recovery.

In our Mental Health Services program, a significant milestone was achieved; we facilitated a new trauma informed care training that has enhanced the staff’s understanding of trauma, its impact on individuals, and the importance of maintaining compassionate, safety-focused, and client-centred approaches across all areas of service delivery.

Within Outreach Services, the team has focused on the development of a new virtual outreach program to replace the previous post-treatment group model. The new virtual model is designed to reduce barriers and provide ongoing support following treatment and program engagement, with an official rollout in coming months.

Within Residential Treatment Services, we are celebrating the completion of Street Haven’s EQIP (Excellence through Quality Improvement Project), led by Addictions and Mental Health Ontario (AMHO) and the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA). The project focused on improving client engagement within Grant House’s residential addiction treatment program by exploring how meaningful participation in programming can strengthen connection and overall recovery experiences within a women-centred treatment environment.



Training & Employment

Our very own Manager of Training Services, Aishwarya, was accepted into this year's Next Leaders for Change program through United Way and WoodGreen Community Services. This initiative is designed to help emerging leaders build their strategic leadership capacity, advance equity in their work and lead positive change in rapidly evolving environments. The program brought together leaders from non-profit organizations across the GTA to collaborate, learn, and tackle real-world community challenges and each participant completed a group project to address an identified need in the community.

The team focused on building a newcomer employment ecosystem for internationally trained women, Shark Tank-style format and was evaluated by an external panel. Our proposed project budget was \$517,400, and following our final presentation, the panel awarded us hypothetical funding of \$600,000, recognizing both the need for and potential impact of the initiative.



Congratulations, Aishwarya!

Our New Employment Program NEW

One of the most significant achievements this period has been Street Haven's success in securing the Skills Development Fund through the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development. This new program named **Women's Healthcare Pathways** will allow us to expand employment training and workforce development opportunities for the women we serve, helping participants build sustainable pathways toward financial independence and long-term housing stability. This quarter, Street Haven's Training Services continued to empower clients through skill development and learning opportunities. A total of 53 workshops were delivered, supporting 124 clients with practical knowledge and personal growth. Our commitment to high-quality, client-centred programming is reflected in an outstanding 99% client satisfaction rate, demonstrating the positive impact of our training services and the value participants place on the support, education, and opportunities provided.



53
Workshops
delivered

99%
Client
Satisfaction
rate

124
Training
Services
clients
served in a
quarter



This funding represents an important milestone for Street Haven and reinforces confidence in our innovative approach to supporting clients through integrated employment and housing services. Participants will receive employment readiness preparation and career coaching, Industry-recognized certifications through Idea Training Collaborative and Occupational training at IBT College to train as a Home Support Worker (12-week program), or Personal Support Worker (32-week program).

City of Toronto Doors Open: A First for Street Haven!

This Summer marked our very first official Doors Open Toronto at 87 Pembroke, and we're still feeling the impact of it. Nearly 300 people walked through our doors that weekend, neighbors, long-time donors, and new faces discovering Street Haven for the first time. We shared the story of our building, our programs, and the legacy of our founder, Peggy Ann Walpole. What we heard back, again and again, was the same question: How can I help?

For many, that question turned into action. We welcomed 13 new monthly donors in the days that followed, our strongest month for new giving since October 2025. Two attendees have since started their own donation drives for bedding and towels on our behalf. We've heard from donors who came simply out of curiosity, later donated funds and summer clothing after learning about a need during her tour. And we were treated to stories from our guests who knew our founder, Peggy, which speaks to how deep our roots in this community run.

The reach went even further than our doors. Fifty-four people joined our newsletter as a direct result of the event, and our online posts were shared widely, including by the Toronto Shelter Network, introducing Street Haven to entirely new audiences across the city. It's proof that opening our doors, even for one weekend, creates a ripple effect that lasts well beyond it.



Pride Month & Our Historical Ties to the Community



Street Haven has been on Church Street every year for Pride, and this year was no different. We set up our table, met hundreds of people from our community, connected with donors (and more than a few of their dogs), and then joined the march.

For some, Pride might look like a celebration. For us, it's also personal history.

Street Haven was founded by Peggy Walpole on a simple, unwavering belief: take in women with no judgment, regardless of who they are or who they love. In the 1960s, that was a radical thing to say out loud. It meant opening our doors to women that other shelters and institutions turned away, including women who were gay, or whose lives simply didn't fit the mould society expected of them.

Peggy didn't ask questions. She just believed every woman deserved a safe place to land. That belief is still the foundation of our work today. We march for our clients, many of whom have felt that same judgment Peggy fought against decades ago. And we march for the legacy she left us, a shelter built on the radical idea that everyone deserves dignity, safety, and a place to belong, no exceptions.

Thank you to the staff, volunteers, and clients who marched with us this year, and to the donors who make it possible for us to keep Peggy's promise alive.

Help Us Win



Toronto Star Readers' Choice Award

Street Haven has been entered into the 2026 Toronto Star Readers' Choice Awards under Best Non-Profit/Foundation, and we need your help getting nominated.

Not everyone knows our name yet, but our supporters like you who do are deeply invested in our mission sure do. This is our chance to show Toronto that a specialized, women-focused organization can stand alongside the city's largest non-profits.



More recognition means more donors, partners, volunteers, & ultimately, more women getting the help they need.

How to nominate (2 minutes):

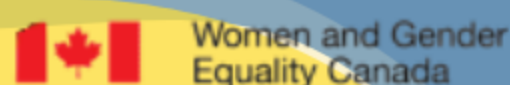
- Create a free account at thestar.com
- Visit our nomination page: [\[link\]](#)
- Click Street Haven. Done!

Nominations close by July 24. The top 5 nominated organizations move to the voting stage, so every nomination counts. Thank you for being part of our community.

Website:

<https://thereaderschoice.ca/>

Our Funders



With Gratitude





Our Vision

A future where every woman lives in safety, dignity and hope.

Our Mission

We meet women where they are and offer integrated services to help them lead empowered lives.

Senior Management

Andrea Paszti, Executive Director

Ajay Walia, Director of Finance and Operations

Grace Kolawole, Director of Housing & Shelter Services

Cynthia Lewis, Director of Employment, Training and Special Projects

Dayna Moreash, Director of Addictions, Mental Health, & Outreach Services

Board of Directors

Tatiana Soldatova, Chair

Nicole Koteff, Vice Chair

Mary Chang, Treasurer

Neil Vohrah, Director

Grace Ma, Director

Stephanie Andrew, Director

Dr. Roisin Byrne, Director

Get In Touch with Us

 **1001-2 Carlton Street, Toronto, ON M5B 1J3**

Current Needs at our Shelter

Toiletries,
toothpaste,
cream, shampoo,
conditioner, new
underwears, new
bras, bedding
and other
clothing



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