



Changing lives, one woman at a time.

SISITIERING

A WOMAN'S PLACE

ANNUAL REPORT 2016/2017

SISTERING

OUR VISION

A world where all women, in all our diversity, are safe, respected, valued, and treated with dignity. All women have equitable opportunities to thrive and participate in inclusive communities.

OUR MISSION

We create a safe, welcoming and non-judgmental space for women. We are guided by principles of feminism, anti-racism and anti-oppression. We offer practical and emotional support to women who experience social isolation, homelessness or precarious housing, trauma and violence, discrimination, substance use or need mental health support. Our equitable programs and services enable women to take greater control over their lives. We work in collaboration with others in the community to change the social conditions that endanger women's welfare.

OUR VALUES

Our model is trauma informed, guided by feminism, anti-racism and anti-oppression principles, and the following core values:

DIGNITY: Each woman has dignity, is equal and is treated with respect.

EQUITY: All women are provided access to equal opportunities depending on their individual needs.

INCLUSIVENESS: Sistering's program and advocacy work is directed by participants' needs, interests and creativity, and we value the participation and contribution of each woman.

ASPIRATIONAL: Programs, advocacy and administration are proactive, innovative and committed to supporting women in achieving their goals.

SOLIDARITY: Women help each other with the unique friendship, caring and respect that they give to each other. The unfair treatment of any woman affects the lives of all women.

We use an inclusive definition of "woman" and we welcome trans women, genderqueer women, and non-binary and gender expansive people. We recognize that gender is an evolving concept and we will work to be inclusive of the full gender spectrum.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

With thanks to our tireless Board of Directors for their wisdom, guidance and commitment to the women we serve.

Anne Chappelle (Co-chair)
Judy Gabriel-Virgo (Co-chair)
Pat Craig (Secretary)
Angela Nolan (Treasurer)
Alicia Leyva Arcos
Cynthia Daley
Hanan Al Ahmad
Heather Smyth
Ida Hersi
Jessica Smith Cross
Lynne Woolcott
Joey Noble
Stephanie Mazzocut
Nicole Walton
Sue Kelleher

WE ARE GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY



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FOREWARD

At Sistering, we are driven by one simple truth: all women, regardless of circumstances, deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

Last year, almost 3,000 women walked through the doors of the Drop In – some to enjoy a nutritious meal, others to meet with a Community Support Worker, family physician or trauma counsellor, and still others to take a shower, wash their clothes and spend the night in a safe and welcoming space.

In the 18 months since we opened the Drop In 24/7, we have seen a significant increase in the number of women with complex mental health issues arrive at Sistering, referred by hospitals, community agencies and the police.

No question, this has put a strain on our resources – but the good news is, we were one of only 62 agencies awarded Anchor Agency designation by the United Way Toronto and York Region, and despite City of Toronto cuts to a variety of social services, Sistering maintained its level of funding.

We focused our advocacy work this past year on the issue of affordable housing, establishing a low barrier woman's shelter and a 24/7 safe injection site for women, presenting deputations at City Council, lobbying



Patricia O'Connell
Executive Director

Anne Chappelle
Board Co-Chair

Judy Gabriel-Virgo
Board Co-Chair

councillors and engaging the media in telling our story.

The Toronto Star has been especially supportive. Journalist Emily Mathieu and photographer Melissa Renwick stayed overnight at the Drop In; they shared the stories of the women who stay and the team who supports them, with sensitivity, compassion and understanding. The overwhelming response from Star readers was immediate.

As you read the stories in this Annual Report, shared by Sistering participants and staff, we hope you will celebrate the strength and courage we call the Spirit of Sistering.

The work we do, of course, would not be possible without a fearless Board of Directors and dedicated team of staff and volunteers, as well as our community partners, government champions and never-say-no donors.

We are just so grateful.

We know that when we turn our minds and our hearts to supporting some of Toronto's most vulnerable women, you will be there to help us find caring and supportive ways to put our sisters first.



Angela, and her 16-year-old tabby cat named – you guessed it – Tabby, have been at Sistering since the fall of 2016. Suddenly homeless, Angela needed not just a safe place to spend the night, but one that would also accept her feline best friend, and she found a warm welcome at Sistering.

Sistering has been, in many ways, a lifesaver for Angela. She enjoys three healthy meals a day (as does Tabby), internet access, showers, laundry, housing help, counselling – after she gets housing, Angela hopes to say thank you by coming back to help out.

The team at Sistering is strong in their commitment to the women who come to the Drop In, Angela says: the inclusiveness she feels is beautiful.

“You feel a lot of love here.”

– Angela

Companionship and social interaction is as important to wellbeing as nutritious food and a safe place to sleep and Angela found both at Sistering. We have happy times, she says, and she has made new friends, including Gia.

Gia came to Toronto eight months ago to transition.

She stayed at other shelters before arriving at Sistering but admits she’s a “free-spirited girl” and had an issue with rules and regulations – like when to go to bed and when to get up, and being treated like a child instead of a woman made her shelter stays impossible.

At Sistering, Gia says, she has found a safe space where staff recognizes her right to make her own decisions. She’s made friends here, too – in fact, she’s one of the few people allowed to cat sit Tabby.

YEAR IN REVIEW

DROP IN: 24/7 & PARKDALE OUTREACH

It has been a busy year at both the 24/7 Drop In and Outreach.

We offered almost 2,250 Drop In jobs to participants who received an honorarium; they earned supplemental income and also built self-confidence and self-esteem.

The 24/7 Drop In offered 21 social recreational activities this past year including: Black women’s hairstyling/salon with donations from Cloré Beauty Supply; beading; Friday night dance; movie nights; yoga at Union Yoga Studio; and massage therapy.

We introduced a new discussion group, offering participants a forum to talk about issues relevant to them – issues of oppression, current events and issues that arise directly in the Drop In.

Participants were supported by community partners and donors to attend events including: Pride 2016; Na-Me-Res Pow Wow 2016; Shakespeare in High

Park; The National Ballet of Canada’s performance of The Nutcracker; and trips to Niagara Falls and Wasaga Beach.

Participants also took part in a number of social action rallies and demonstrations including: National Drug Overdose Day; National Day for Housing; Pride Trans March; Take Back The Night; and Strawberry Festival (in commemoration of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women).

At the Outreach, 46 participants enjoyed two day trips last year, one to Niagara-on-the-Lake and one to Cobourg, thanks to a grant from the Rotary Club Toronto allowing us to rent a bus and head out on an adventure!

Volunteers at Outreach offer participants the services so many of us take for granted: reflexology (this Volunteer has been with Sistering for 20 years); hair styling; manicures; and creative pursuits such as quilt making. Brands

For Canada provides new clothing, needing some repair, for our monthly Clothing Bazaar. And Dundas Park Kitchen has been generously providing cakes and lunches once a month so we can celebrate participants’ birthdays.

FACTS

Women who visited the 24/7 Drop In: 2,923

Total visits 24/7 & Parkdale Drop Ins: 75,649

Meals served 24/7 & Parkdale Drop Ins: 155,083 (incl. snacks)

Overnight visits: 11,302

Pet visits: 1,574

Daily visits to Outreach: 70

Average age of Outreach participants: 60-72

“We are all only one pay cheque away from homelessness.”

– Karleen

Karleen has worked at Sistering for a decade; she started as Drop In Relief and today is a Community Support Worker, with a caseload of 30 to 45 women plus a high volume of women for short term, information and referral supports. She’s a force to be reckoned with, helping participants get Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and Ontario Works (OW) support, and find housing, accompanying them to doctor’s appointments, helping them navigate community essential resources and services, making phone calls and providing crisis intervention. Participants are encouraged to book an appointment to see her but, she says, if she gets a call from a client in crisis, she drops everything and runs.

Take, for example, a client discharged from hospital and sent home with no food, no supports and without her prescriptions. Another client, who has been homeless for

several years and in the shelter system, recently secured housing with Karleen’s help. For these and her many other clients, Karleen provides comprehensive supports, including advocacy with landlords, liaison with other service providers, regular home visits, check in phone calls to ensure housing stability and enhanced wellbeing.

Karleen comes to her work with lived experience. She was a young single mom, and says she was treated badly by caseworkers and the system. She needed help and couldn’t access the necessary support because she didn’t know how. She vowed she would never let other women be treated the way she was.

She believes in the resilience of the women who come to Sistering, and knows that when they have someone in their corner, when they are treated with dignity and respect, they are empowered to take on life’s challenges.

YEAR IN REVIEW COMMUNITY SUPPORT WORKERS

Sistering supports over 300 women who are precariously housed and part of the massive “hidden” homeless population in Toronto. These women are living in rooms or staying with friends/family where they have no legal rights to their housing. They’re living in situations where they have to endure harassment, threats and assaults from partners, neighbours and landlords in order to have a roof over their heads. They’re staying in vehicles or in hotels.

This past year, we hired a Coordinator, Community Support Workers to provide supervision, resources and supports to the Community Support team.

We secured additional funding to create a housing help position to focus on providing housing help in the Drop In that bridges into the evening hours.

Our Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) groups helped Syrian newcomer women create a personal wellness toolbox identifying their individual psychological resources and take control of their recovery by developing their own plan for healing.

The Community Support team continues to maintain high and diverse caseloads; caseload targets are 30 to 45 women. We continue to maintain housing partnerships with St. Clare’s Multifaith Housing Society and Toronto Community Housing in order to offer subsidized rooms/units to Sistering participants.

FACTS

Housing referrals: 685

Shelter/hostel referrals: 1,652

Accompaniments: 3,500

Landlord mediations: 95

Income support assistance: 1,402



Debbie has been involved with Sistering for a decade. She was homeless and staying at a shelter in Toronto when one of the staff there suggested she go to Sistering where she could find help and support for her severe depression. She walked in and was welcomed: the food was delicious, she says, and the team got her clothes and a real treat, moisturizing cream, which she hadn't had in a very long time.

Debbie knew that working hard helped her feel better, so she volunteered in Sisters Kitchen – she admires strong women and asked to take care of the heavy lifting – crates of food, huge pots, 50-pound bags of potatoes...

Today she works two days a week and still volunteers on other days if she's needed.

Debbie arrives at 6:30, unloading the trucks, starting up the steam tables, setting out fruit and eggs and getting ready for breakfast.

She gets satisfaction helping Sistering participants because she has been where they are. She says the team is amazing and that being a "fixture" in the Kitchen keeps her focused. Today, she says, life is good.

“Being a member of the Sistering community saved my life.”

– Debbie

YEAR IN REVIEW SISTERS KITCHEN

This past year, we served more than 155,083 meals at our Bloor St. and Parkdale Outreach Drop Ins, up from 105,000 the previous year. We often had more than 200 women join us for lunch. Although we received increased food donations it continues to be a challenge to make the meals delicious and nutritious – and balance the food budget.

New donors: Whole Foods; Bagelworks; Red Lobster; Sweet Potato Organic Store and Starbucks.

The Kitchen also gets support from Girls and Boys Club, the Yoga Studio, Second Harvest and Daily Bread, helping us out with holiday baskets and turkeys and canned goods for the festive season.

We received full meal donations from Nonnina's Kitchen, The Rahmani

Family, D'Cruz Biomedical and Dundas Park Kitchen.

Soup Sisters supplies the Kitchen with four varieties of vegetarian soup every month.

Sistering supporters know how important nutritious food is – and when we ask, they step up. Will D'Cruz asked what Sistering needed at Easter; we said 260 fillets of white fish and 15 10-pound spiral hams and he rolled up to the back door with everything we needed to make a special celebration meal.

Community engagement and partnership is an integral part of Sisters Kitchen's operating philosophy. This past year we launched our first joint community kitchen with Christie Ossington Drop In and Toronto Public Health. And in partnership with Masters' in Public Health students at Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto, we created a food

binder that gives the cooks, volunteers and participants information about allergens as well as food guidelines and nutritious menus – it has become the go-to guide for more than 40 drop ins and shelters across the city.

FACTS

Cups of coffee served:
146,000 cups

Turkeys roasted for Winter Holiday meals: 50

Pounds of potatoes cut/peeled: 13,000

Vegetarian dumplings enjoyed at our Chinese New Year celebration: 600



When Heather found herself homeless seven years ago, she arrived at Sistering to register for housing. Several years later, Carol Danis, Harm Reduction Coordinator, urged her to apply as a Peer Harm Reduction Worker and she has been an integral part of the program ever since.

Outreach, kit making, inventory management – Heather has contributed to them all. She helps keep substance users safe and healthy. And what does she get in return?

Renewed self-confidence and sense of self-worth, she says. She doesn't consider herself a role model, but she

agrees that she often reaches women at a more intimate level than their social workers do and for good reason: they know she understands because she has walked in their shoes.

Heather knows what happens when you're labelled a drug addict: the best of who you are – daughter, sister, mother, friend – is forgotten, and you become simply one more street statistic.

Her mission: helping the women she meets to remember that they are so much more.

“Being a Peer Harm Reduction Worker taught me how to be an engaged citizen.”

– Heather

YEAR IN REVIEW HARM REDUCTION

Sistering's Harm Reduction Program has received another three-year grant from the City of Toronto to work within a peer-led, low barrier, harm reduction model and framework, to target risks and harms for vulnerable individuals and to strive to foster an environment of connection and supports for our women who are most at risk.

We are currently facing an urgent public health crisis of people dying from drug overdoses across the country. In 2015, an estimated 734 people died in Ontario due to opiate related causes, roughly two people a day. According to the Toronto Overdose Action Plan: Prevention and Response (Toronto Public Health, March 2017), there was a 73 percent increase in the reported number of overdose deaths in Toronto, rising from 146 to 253 between 2004 and 2015. Accidental deaths represent the majority of deaths and they increased 149 percent, from 82 to 204.

Opioids, alone or in combination with other drugs, accounted for 135 or 66 percent of all accidental deaths in 2015.

In response to this crisis, we have increased our organizational capacity through the introduction of overdose prevention training and naloxone training for Sistering staff as well as through onsite distribution of Naloxone to participants through our partnerships. We have also increased overdose prevention workshops and groups for participants in order to raise awareness. At the same time, we continue to engage in advocacy initiatives to address this crisis and to demand that more action be taken.

We have doubled the weekly kit making shifts and increased our outreach efforts. Since January 2017, we have distributed 9,000 crack pipes and 18,575 syringes. We also distributed over 3,392 foils for safer smoking. In the upcoming year, our focus will

also include increasing the number of syringes being returned safely to our Drop In.

We are currently developing a training program for all staff and new hires in harm reduction practices including policies and procedures, specific to our context.

FACTS

Kits made: 10,400

**Workshops presented:
208 outside; 60 in-house**

Outreach hours: 1,764

**Participants trained to use
Narcan kits, in partnership
with Regent Park Community
Health Centre: 30-plus**

**Workshops in safer use and
overdose protocol: 25**

“It is my honour to walk alongside and be an advocate for the remarkable women I meet at Sistering.”

– Tina



Tina Shapiro, Drop In and Employment and Income Support Coordinator, has been with Sistering for six years. Sistering participants have identified income security as a top priority, she says, and employment and income support is vital for participants who often face barriers to getting, and keeping, work in conventional workplaces.

Tina identifies as a consumer/provider, a consumer/survivor who provides social services, and says her lived experience is valuable in helping others navigate systems and overcome employment barriers. The employment barriers faced by Sistering participants include: homelessness; culture and language; immigration; and physical and mental health issues. But with her support, Peer Workers have translated their experience

into further employment; sex workers have started careers in conventional workplaces; participants have created their own microbusinesses; and some have gone on to higher education.

Tina knows that the support she offers impacts participants on other, less tangible levels, too.

She remembers a woman in her late 40's, who had serious mental health issues and was difficult to connect with, coming to her for a résumé. Together, they created her first résumé ever – she was so excited – and Tina felt this helped with the woman's self-confidence.

Not every story is a success, Tina shares, and there are myriad reasons when the outcome is not what she had hoped for. But, she points out, Sistering is a relationship-based agency, and she is here to be supportive through good times and bad.

YEAR IN REVIEW ON THE PATH TO EMPLOYMENT

Employment and Income Support continued to be robust in offering individual appointments for job search help; résumé writing; career counselling; support for volunteering, education and training, and income support; as well as offering Employment Group.

Employment Group took part in two trips: one for haircuts complements of Studio 67; and the other, thanks to special funding, for a meal in Chinatown and a visit to Ripley's Aquarium.

We developed a new Income Tax Clinic, offering women the opportunity to get their taxes done by a volunteer accountant, including filing back taxes.

We held a large event for Women's History Month, where Peers read biographies of Canadian and international women who have made history; we also hosted a large celebration for International Women's Day.

FACTS

Women who received one-on-one employment and income support counselling: 111

Women who learned textile skills at Spun Studio, and gained the opportunity to make and sell their work: 133

Women who became self-employed, primarily through microbusinesses developed as a result of their participation in Spun Studio: 18



Donna has been coming to Sistering for four years – she lives in the neighbourhood and as she walked by Sistering she spoke to the women outside and decided to come in and find out what we had to offer.

What she discovered: Spun Studio and the weaving program.

Donna could knit and crochet but she had never turned her creative talent to weaving, and certainly didn't consider herself an "artist".

Four years later, seven of Donna's tapestries were featured in an exhibition at the Textile Museum of Canada that included Spun members' work. In fact, one of her pieces was purchased in the silent auction.

Donna weaves placemats, bags and scarves; beads; and makes beautiful magnetic meditation mandalas; but she has a special affinity for tapestry work. She uses the materials Spun has at hand, and waits for the threads and the colours to speak to her. It's an organic process, she explains, and sometimes the mistakes you make add character to the finished piece of art.

Being a member of Spun Studio, Donna says, makes her feel part of a creative community.

She has made friends; they come together to create, share their day and laugh at life's challenges.

And today she knows she is, indeed, an artist.

YEAR IN REVIEW INSPIRATIONS & SPUN STUDIOS

Our Social Enterprises achieved significant milestones this past year.

Inspirations Studio realized the best revenue year to date. Both sales revenue and participants' revenue were over expectations.

Studio Members are being hired as assistant instructors when we teach at other social service agencies such as CAMH Workman Arts and North York Community Centre.

We enjoyed continued support from the community: new and repeat orders; attendance at our community classes; and increased press and social media coverage including stories in the Toronto Star, Huffington Post, Global News and Volunteer Toronto.

Spun Studio also celebrated significant firsts. In January the Textile Museum of Canada led a

Tapestry workshop for members as part of the Community Voices: Toronto Artists inspired by Sheila Hicks. This culminated in an exhibition at the Textile Museum that included members' work.

A mitten class was held in the fall; women learned how to knit mittens and sold every pair they made. A community member led a crochet class teaching women how to crochet purses with a heavy cords. A Decorative Knotting workshop for Chinese-speaking women was led by one of their members.

An innovative Peer Artistry pilot was held at Sistering, led by training facilitators Erin Howley and Barb Aikman. Six women completed a six-session art facilitation training, and five women led two art workshops each with women at Sistering's 24/7 Drop In. Workshop participants had the

choice to include their art in a group exhibit held at Sistering in February 2017. The Peer Artistry pilot led to learnings about best practices for art programming in drop in settings and showed specific indicators for why arts and culture programming are important to the wellbeing of women who face systemic issues around poverty, gender violence and social marginalization.

FACTS

Days making pottery: 204

Days selling pottery: 104

Days knitting: 52

Days weaving: 52

"I am my most creative self in the Studio."

– Donna



“If we don’t speak out on behalf of Toronto’s most vulnerable citizens, who will?”

– Carol

Carol Danis, Harm Reduction Coordinator, has seen first hand what happens when we give a voice to women who are rarely heard: homeless or precariously housed women; women with physical or mental health issues; sex workers; substance users; women who have experienced or are experiencing trauma and violence.

Life changes.

That’s why she is passionate about the advocacy efforts she and the team at Sistering do on behalf of the City’s most marginalized women.

Sistering staff and participants are on the front lines advocating for social and systemic change, she explains: four staff members support a Social Action Group with participants to identify key areas requiring advocacy – participants contribute to identifying the issues and

developing strategies to advocate for policy change.

Sometimes we advocate on a participant’s behalf for food or housing or health care, says Carol.

Others times, she says, we work to organize the community, participating in rallies and protests, presenting deputations, speaking to schools and community groups, engaging with the media and working in partnership with our allies in government to create change.

By speaking out, we challenge the systemic barriers that keep the women we serve on the edges of life, and influence the decision makers who have the power to stand up and say, “Enough”.

YEAR IN REVIEW ADVOCACY

We continued to dedicate our advocacy work toward housing, low barrier shelters, harm reduction shelters, more harm reduction programming, systemic change and the need for a better response and more funding for the overdose/opioid crisis.

Sistering staff and participants, members of the Fair Fare Coalition (TTCriders.ca), lobbied with the group to obtain a commitment to a low-income Metropass – \$112, compared to \$145 – to be phased in over five years, beginning with Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) recipients, and working up to low-income wage earners.

The Coalition held three press conferences that led to significant media coverage including a series on Metro Morning. We made intensive

deputations in December, in order to secure the low-income Metropass. Mayor John Tory and many City Councillors voted in our favour. Also, a Sistering staff member sat on the City’s Advisory on Fare Equity, which worked on getting a low-income Metropass implemented.

The commitment to a low-income Metropass is a start, but we want free transit for those on OW and ODSP; a \$50 Metropass for low-income wage earners; and \$1 tokens as well as a discount to agencies like Sistering who distribute tokens in bulk. We are currently lobbying politicians and doing community outreach to gather support for these initiatives.

Other advocacy work included: staff sit on the Steering Committee of Commitment 2 Community (C2C) the organization behind the Poverty Reduction Strategy, lobbying on behalf

of low-income Torontonians; and staff sit on the Toronto Drop-In Network (TDIN) Advocacy Committee, which last year developed the Advocacy Toolkit for drop ins and drop in members, available on the TDIN website.

Participants and staff also took part in a number of social action rallies and demonstrations including: National Drug Overdose Day; National Day for Housing; Pride Trans March; Take Back The Night; and Strawberry Festival (in commemoration of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women).

FACTS

Rallies: 12

Deputations: 8

Reclaim the Streets: 20



“The Sistering team has a genuine desire to help, without judgment.”

– Sara



“Sistering offers a powerful sense of community, a sense of belonging.”

– Souzan

Sara Peters has been volunteering at Sistering for two years, first in the Kitchen and now as a member of the Medical Reception team, joining Sally McLean, Kayla Healy and Nicole Tollenaar.

When she moved to Toronto, Sara knew she wanted to volunteer at an agency supporting women, and when she discovered Sistering, she knew that here is where she wanted to be. What impresses her: how ferociously the team lives Sistering’s low barrier philosophy, accepting women as they come, with compassion, wisdom and a genuine desire to help.

As Medical Receptionist, Sara comes face to face with women in pain. During one of her first shifts, a woman needed to see the doctor, she told Sara, because she had been sexually assaulted. Sara had never been so close to so much suffering. But while her job involves triage – participants, doctors and the health care system – she understands that sometimes, her real impact is simply

listening – really listening – and making the women who come to her feel truly cared for.

Souzan Mirza lives in the neighbourhood and often passed Sistering on her way to school. Interested in learning more about what we do, she joined us for our One Year 24/7 Anniversary Celebration last fall.

In January, Souzan volunteered in the day Beading Program; she used to make jewelry in high school and welcomed the opportunity to reignite her creative spirit. When she learned that we wanted to offer Beading in the Drop In in the evening, she stepped up.

Along with Beading volunteers Johana Grande and Shihoko Nakagawa, Souzan meets every other week with between 10 and 20 women, connecting with them as they make beautiful pieces, often as gifts for friends.

The Beading Program brings women together, physically and emotionally, and it’s that sense of community Souzan cherishes. Belonging is the word that comes to mind.

YEAR IN REVIEW VOLUNTEERS

Stephanie Gagne and her crew from Black Dog Rescue volunteered in the Kitchen during the Holiday season and when they heard the Drop In is pet friendly they organized a series of pet clinics in partnership with Dr. Scott Bainbridge, Dr. Alexandru Folosea, Dr. Andrea Thomas and Dr. Lucy Fernandes from Dundas West Animal Hospital. And Black Dog Rescue staff Ni and Kathy, together with the staff from Patch’s Pups & Curls, provided grooming services.

New to 2016: the Medical team expanded to three psychiatrists and three general practitioners with a temporary evening family GP. The work needed to run the clinic smoothly would not be done without the support of a team of volunteer medical receptionists: Sally McLean, Sara Peters

and new to the team in 2016: Kayla Healy and Nicole Tollenaar

Volunteers Johana Grande and Souzan Mirza introduced an Evening Beading Program in the Drop In with volunteer veteran Shihoko Nakagawa who ran the day Beading Program for over eight years while doing her PhD at University of Toronto. Making beaded bracelets in the evening offers participants a creative opportunity to interact with each other and the volunteers, and they have been enthusiastic about taking part.

We were invited to speak to the 67th Unit, Girl Guides, a group of 9-to-11-year-old future leaders; they were an engaged group who demonstrated an impressive awareness of, and sensitivity to, the issue of homelessness, women’s health and poverty. Later the Unit made 30-plus pamper packages for the women at Sistering that included

shampoo, lip balm, body lotion, pretty socks and more.

We also hosted a four-day group volunteer visit from students at Ithaca College, New York, who joined us to complete their Spring Break community trip. They enjoyed their volunteer placement last fall and returned for the spring season. They helped out in the Kitchen, went to Outreach to run a Beauty Day Program and helped with many “behind the scenes” tasks in the Drop In.

FACTS

Weekly Program Volunteers: 30

Volunteers who helped in the Kitchen: 236

Necklaces made in the Beading Program: 320



Wray Barraclough has been a Sistering supporter for 20 years. She believes in our social justice and feminist foundations and the fact that we welcome whoever arrives, wherever they are in the moment, matters to her.

She also believes that it's important to recognize smaller grassroots agencies committed to ensuring that the dollars donated go to programming...to what's needed.

Wray enjoys a safe and stable life, she says, but she knows women who

can't say the same thing: it's important to her and to her family that they share what they have with women who aren't as fortunate.

Wray is a monthly donor, she explains, because it's easy; her support is guaranteed and she doesn't need to remember to send a cheque. She knows that each month, she and her family are helping to change lives, one woman at a time.

YEAR IN REVIEW DONORS

We were honoured again last year to have the support of many community members and organizations that raised funds on our behalf – without their commitment to hold out a hand to some of Toronto's most marginalized women, we would not be able to offer the services and programs that help change lives, one woman at a time.

And people got creative! Ways in which you raised funds for Sistering this past year:

- Music performances including choirs; solo performances; youth orchestras
- Pizza cookoffs
- Clothing swaps
- Birthdays
- Bake sales
- Garage sales
- Gallery openings
- Kick boxing competition

Our Extended Community monthly giving program is 170 members strong, and together they are giving more than \$42,000 annually.

Monthly gifts provide supportable income and allow Sistering to plan long-term programs and activities in advance so we are grateful for your monthly commitment.

Twenty Years+ Club – Sistering has 169 donors/organizations that have been supporting women for 20+ years. Congratulations for changing the lives of thousands of women.

FACTS

**Donated to Sistering last year:
\$415,911**

**Donated to Sistering by
170 monthly donors in
1 year: \$42,000**

**Gift cards donated to
Sistering in
December: \$4,500**

**Youngest donor to Sistering:
9 years old**

“When you have, you need to take care of those who don’t.”

– Wray

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

Year Ended March 31, 2017

	2017	2016
REVENUES		
City of Toronto	\$ 1,780,035	\$ 1,019,644
Local Health Integration Network	1,297,367	1,297,367
United Way of Greater Toronto	408,261	430,568
Donations	318,324	280,336
Miscellaneous	112,252	40,475
Ontario Women's Directorate	90,000	90,000
West Neighbourhood House (LHIN Peer)	87,026	107,916
Foundations	74,102	90,718
Ontario Seniors Secretariat	58,249	49,224
Trillium Foundation	25,223	25,000
Interest	5,059	3,841
Fundraising	1,284	66,310
Federal grant	-	4,620
Regent Park	-	900
Amortization on deferred capital contributions	184,730	181,628
	<u>4,441,912</u>	<u>3,688,547</u>
EXPENSES		
Wages and benefits	2,801,305	2,192,924
Programs	410,354	292,532
Purchased services	359,471	366,826
Building occupancy costs	325,544	290,280
Repairs and maintenance	140,688	124,680
Office and general	77,132	61,691
Professional fees	39,660	43,722
Fundraising	35,037	96,667
Insurance	19,258	16,109
Promotion and publicity	4,857	1,663
Volunteer	501	743
Amortization	187,128	193,139
	<u>4,400,935</u>	<u>3,680,976</u>
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	\$ <u>40,977</u>	\$ <u>7,571</u>



*“Sistering
showed
me the way
forward.”*

- Kathy





Sistering is a United Way Anchor Agency

Changing lives, one woman at a time.



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SISTERING

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