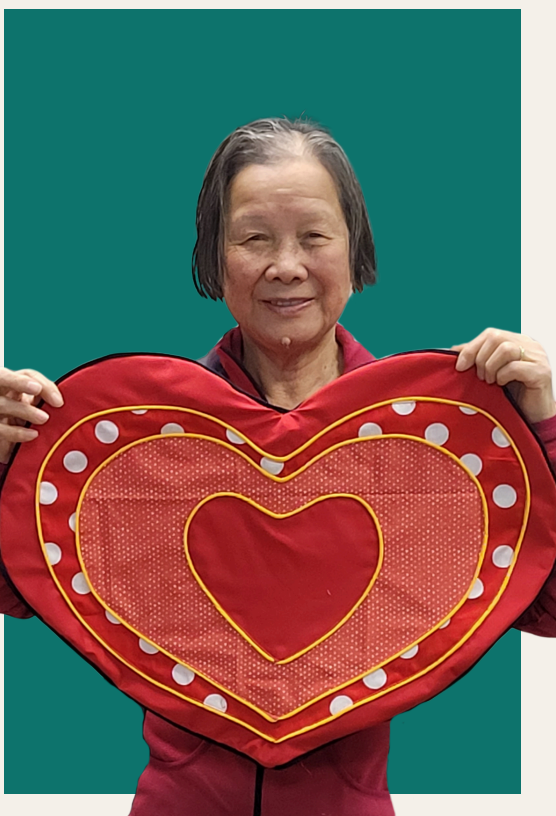


SISİTERING



2024-2025
Impact
Report

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2024 - 2025
Annual Report

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A message from our *Board of Directors*

Dear Sistering Community,

This past year has been one of transformation for Sistering—marked by progress, resilience, and preparation for the future. While we celebrate key successes, we also recognize the difficult realities our participants continue to face. Economic uncertainty, funding cutbacks, and a growing affordability crisis have deepened the challenges for the women and gender-diverse people we support. Yet through it all, Sistering has remained a vital lifeline.

The Board has worked closely with Sistering's leadership to support long-term sustainability, ensuring our governance and planning reflect the needs of the organization and those we serve. We're proud to have supported initiatives such as strategic planning and internal capacity-building—efforts that combine organizational insight with lived experience to help shape a more resilient future.

For over 40 years, Sistering has been a vital part of Toronto's social landscape, offering 24/7, low-barrier, participant-centered support for those most marginalized by systemic barriers. Looking ahead, we remain committed to sustaining and expanding this work—

by strengthening partnerships and exploring innovative, inclusive fundraising strategies, even as economic pressures continue.

We are deeply grateful to our supporters for believing in Sistering's mission. Your encouragement and generosity are essential to delivering responsive, impactful services. In particular, we thank our donors and funders—your continued investment allows Sistering to respond with care, flexibility, and strength.

On behalf of the Board, we extend heartfelt thanks to Volletta Peters for her steady leadership, and to the entire Sistering staff, peer workers, and volunteers for their ongoing dedication. Your efforts make a lasting difference in the lives of our participants and across our city.

To all our supporters, allies, and champions—thank you for standing with us. Together, we are building a stronger, more compassionate future.

With gratitude,



Gail Di Cintio, Chair & Sara Fruchtman, Vice-Chair

We thank our 2024-2025 Board of Directors for their leadership and dedication to advancing the work of Sistering



Gail Di Cintio, Chair
Sara Fruchtman, Vice-Chair
Sharon Bell, Treasurer
Joey Noble
Kathryn Fox

Vera Ranieri
Bobbie Gunn
Kersti Kahar
Sancia Pinto
Dilya Niezova



Never Alone, Always Welcome. Day or Night.



Sistering is Toronto's **only** 24/7 Drop-In exclusively for women and gender-diverse individuals. Thanks to our dedicated staff and peers, our generous funders, and our loyal donors and volunteers, we have been offering critical services and trauma-informed support to those facing homelessness, poverty, and violence for over four decades.

Because no matter the hour, everyone deserves to be safe, accepted, and treated with dignity.

1

Our Mission

Sistering is a multi-service agency that provides low-barrier practical and emotional support for women and gender-diverse people.

2

Our Vision

A world where all women and gender-diverse people are safe, respected, valued, and treated with dignity.

3

Our Beliefs

Guided by anti-racism, anti-oppression, and a harm reduction approach, our programs empower individuals to take control of their lives and work to improve social conditions.



A message from our Executive Director



Dear Friends and Supporters,

As I reflect on the past year at Sistering, I am filled with immense gratitude for the unwavering support and resilience of our community. Together, we have navigated challenges and embraced opportunities, all in service of our mission to support women and gender-diverse people in Toronto.

One of our significant achievements this year was conducting a comprehensive staff engagement and environmental assessment. The insights gained have been instrumental in helping to shape our new strategic plan, ensuring that our future direction aligns with the needs and aspirations of our staff and the communities we serve.

Additionally, we co-created a data project with our staff aimed at improving how we collect, analyze, and utilize information. This included implementing a new Ontario Health compliant Client Management System tailored for mental health and addictions services.

By strengthening our data capabilities, we aim to make more evidence-informed decisions, deliver programs and services that meaningfully respond to the needs of our participants, and amplify our impact.

Despite the economic uncertainties and the rising cost of living, which have deeply affected our participants, Sistering has persevered. We have continued to provide essential services, ensuring that those who rely on us receive the support they need during these challenging times.

These accomplishments would not have been possible without the dedication of our staff and peers, the guidance of our board, and the generosity of our donors, volunteers, and community partners. Your belief in our mission fuels our work and inspires us to strive for a more inclusive and supportive community.

Thank you for standing with us.



A stylized signature of Volletta Peters.

Volletta Peters, Executive Director

OUR PROGRAMS: Food Access



FY 2024-2025

127,306

total meals served

27,656

Breakfast Meals

47,977

Lunch Meals

28,363

Supper Meals

23,299

Snacks & Sandwiches

11

Special Event Meals

Meet A Kitchen Volunteer

"Hi, I'm Katalin! I'm a student at Sistering since February 28, 2025. I finished the student status. After March 17, 2025, I came to interview. And I'm so happy because I succeeded. I like working here in the Kitchen. I thank Angie so much for teaching me. This job is very easy for me. I'm happy and smile here. I like other women working together. And very good feeling helping other people..."



Thank you to our valued Food Access Partners:

Red Lobster

KFC

Daily Bread

Second Harvest

Whole Foods

North York Harvest

Ubuntu Collective



Food Insecurity Is On The Rise

According to the University of Toronto, In 2024, 25.5% of people in the ten provinces lived in a food-insecure household. That amounts to approximately 10 million people, including 2.5 million children, living in households that struggled to afford the food they need.

This is the third consecutive increase in the percentage of people living in food-insecure households and another record high level.

Daily Bread Food Bank. 28 May 2025.

A new commercial stove generously donated from the Rotary Club of Toronto.



OUR PROGRAMS: *Low Barrier Drop-In*

FY 2024-2025

Bloor 24/7 Drop-In

75,404

Drop In Visits

3,436

Attendees at

364

Social Programs & Group Outings



What is a Drop-In?

Sistering's 24-hour low-barrier drop-in is a welcoming space where women and gender-diverse people can come for support, services or connection without needing an appointment. It offers essential services including hot meals, snacks, shelter, hygiene care and supplies, restroom access, shower and laundry facilities, case support and harm reduction supports—without strict requirements. This ensures anyone in need can access help without judgment or bureaucracy and it prioritizes dignity, safety, and accessibility.

A Few Highlights of the Wellness Programs & Social Events Offered this year:

- St. Jacobs Farmers' Market
- Acupuncture
- Singing Bowl Ceremonies
- International Women's Day Celebrations
- Niagara Falls Trip
- Sistabana
- Pride March
- Caribana
- National Ballet
- Harbourfront Centre Trip
- Wasaga Beach trip

10,258

Referrals to wrap-around support services accessible to participants

this included Harm Reduction Services, Mental Health Services, Housing Support, Career Support, Legal Services, and more.

"Sistering is not just a place where I don't feel judged, it is a place of hope."

— Cheryl, Participant

OUR PROGRAMS: *Low Barrier Drop-In*

Transformative Support

This year, Drop-In and Case Support staff worked closely together to help participants navigate the complex process of applying for housing support. The program prioritized individuals experiencing mental health challenges, those with undiagnosed mental illness, and refugee-identifying participants. Through this collaborative approach, each participant successfully transitioned out of homelessness and into stable housing.

On their final days at Sistering, the group gathered to celebrate their achievements and shared words of encouragement as they embarked on this new chapter. Notably, one participant secured employment with the same cleaning agency that provides services to Sistering — a meaningful step toward long-term stability and independence.



A Few Highlights of the Wellness Programs & Social Events Offered this year:

- Crafts & Baking
- Gardening
- Seniors celebration
- Clothing bazaar
- Wasaga beach trip
- Chinese new year
- St. Jacob's Market Trip

FY 2024-2025

Parkdale Drop-In

16,075

Drop In Visits

2,265

Referrals

23

Programs & Events



OUR PROGRAMS: *Medical Clinic*

Through our partnership with Inner City Health Associates, four family physicians and four psychiatrists provide medical care at the Sistering Medical Clinic, Monday to Thursday. These services are available to clients from our 24-hour Drop-In and the wider community.

We also collaborate with the Jean Tweed Centre, bringing a Reach Out to Women (ROW) counsellor on-site twice weekly to offer specialized mental health and substance use support. Additionally, our partnership with the Access Alliance RIO Network ensures interpretation services are available, enhancing access and equity in care. These partnerships strengthen our holistic approach to supporting vulnerable women and gender-diverse people.

FY 2024-2025

1,021

Primary Care Appointments

680

Psychiatrist Appointments



Access To Care In The City of Toronto

According to Toronto Public Health, between January and June 2024, 135 deaths were reported among people experiencing homelessness. The median age of death for women was just 36 years—significantly lower than in previous years (42 years in 2022 and 43 years in 2023) and alarmingly younger than the general female population's median age of death at 85 years. These stark disparities highlight the urgent need for accessible, low-barrier healthcare services like those offered at Sistering.

Through culturally safe, trauma-informed, and low-barrier services, we create a space where participants feel seen, heard, and respected. Our clinic is a place of treatment for many in the community, offering consistent support, connection to broader social services, and a pathway to wellness. By operating within the heart of our Drop-In and extending care to the broader community, Sistering's Medical Clinic embodies a commitment to health as a human right and works every day to close the dangerous health gaps faced by the city's most marginalized populations.

Toronto Public Health. (2025, February 3)

OUR PROGRAMS: Harm Reduction

Community Care

Over the 2024-2025 year, Sistering's Harm Reduction program provided vital education, care, and connection through a range of workshops, events, and outings that prioritized safety, dignity, and community. Participants engaged in workshops on HIV, Hepatitis C, STIs, fentanyl, HPV, and overdose prevention—including Narcan and toxic drug training. Sistering also hosted events like Take Back the Night, Grassy Narrows workshops, and legal and anti-violence sessions.

The Harm Reduction Pick-up Program has been expanded into both Bloorcourt and Bloordale. In 2024, Peers picked up about 1,500+ harm reduction supplies in the streets and alleyways of Bloorcourt and Bloordale.

FY 2024-2025

28,869

Harm Reduction and
Naloxone Kits
Distributed

70

Programs & Events

3380

Referrals



"Sistering's harm reduction program is and has been keeping me grounded from giving up in times when I struggle with different situations"

- Lourdes, Harm Reduction Peer Worker

OUR PROGRAMS: *Case Support*

Follow-Up Supports

At Sistering, follow-up case supports help women and gender-diverse people stay housed and connected to care. This includes ongoing check-ins, advocacy, referrals to health and mental health services, and crisis prevention. These supports ensure long-term stability, safety, and access to essential resources after exiting emergency or transitional housing.



Clients Supported

109

"I personally gained self-worth, a sense of community, a sense of I'm not alone in my fight, my feelings. Inclusion, a space away from isolation. A sense of being part of something on a larger - I'm not alone in how I feel about these things, you know. And you will feel the same way that I do and that is motivating"

-Sistering Participant

CASE SUPPORT: *Back to Home*

of clients supported

36

” Stories of Empowerment

One of our clients, who has long struggled with untreated mental health challenges and addictions, was recently at risk of eviction due to pest infestation and hazardous hoarding. The Back to Home Staff team worked collaboratively and consistently with the client to address the issues and ensure compliance with the violation order. Through daily check-ins, reminders, surface counselling, moral support, and food assistance, the client remained actively engaged in the process. They successfully eliminated approximately 96% of pests and completed a full unit cleanse. With the help of staff and a supportive landlord, the client made a significant and inspiring transformation toward stability.



CASE SUPPORT: *General*

FY 2024-2025

of clients supported

216

Ongoing support is essential to ensuring that individuals can maintain stable housing after transitioning out of homelessness. It significantly contributes to housing stability, lowers the risk of eviction, and helps break the cycle of homelessness. Building strong, trusting relationships between housing workers, participants, and landlords lays the groundwork for long-term success and sustained housing security.

CASE SUPPORT: *Community Wellness Groups*

The community wellness groups meet bi-weekly to discuss resources, offer practical support, and share information, with an emphasis on trauma-informed topics and wellness recovery.

18

Spanish Group
Participants

12

Arabic Group
Participants

38

Refugee Group
Participants



Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP)

This year, thanks to the generous support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Sistering implemented the peer-led Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP), supporting newcomers and refugee participants. Together, they developed wellness toolkits, strengthened emotional regulation, and built meaningful community connections. Participants shared that WRAP helped them navigate the significant trauma, mental health challenges, and emotional stress of resettlement.

We are deeply grateful to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for making this life-changing program possible. Their support has empowered newcomers and refugees to build resilience, healing, community, and a sense of belonging.



Sistering's WRAP (Wellness & Recovery Action Plan) Group, Proudly Supported By:

Ontario
Trillium
Foundation



Fondation
Trillium
de l'Ontario

An agency of the Government of Ontario
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

OUR PROGRAMS: *Spun Studio*



312

Programs Provided

Spun Studio runs a variety of creative programs, including support for senior participants who come together to sew, socialize, and share meals. The program welcomes all skill levels, from beginners learning sewing basics to experienced participants working on guided projects. Some choose to sell their finished items, helping to supplement their income. With long-time participants and ongoing projects like an upcycled men's shirt collection, Spun continues to foster creativity, community, and connection.



Classes & Workshops Include:

- Senior Sewing
- Jewelry Making
- Exercises for Seniors
- Sewing
- Knitting & Crochet
- Upcycling
- Art Therapy
- Quilting
- Fabric Painting
- Aromatherapy
- Candle Making
- Drum Circle



3,610



Spun Program Attendees

"I am coming to Spun for two years now. At Jewelry class with Aramis, I learned to make rings and bracelets. I knit shawls using different stitches and colours. Khadije is my favorite teacher. I learned to do what I didn't believe was possible for me. Spun is the best thing that happen to me lately and I like people there."

- Chris, Sistering Participant



Finding Our Way

Sistering is proud to be the recipient of funding from Women and Gender Equality Canada for Finding Our Way, a three-year systemic change research initiative. In partnership with four organizations across Toronto, this project explores how gender identity, employment structures, and organizational policies shape the experiences of peer workers. Guided by a peer-led Community of Practice, Finding Our Way centres the voices and leadership of lived experts. The project envisions a future where peer work is not only valued but also supported, sustainable, and transformative.

Sistering is honoured to also collaborate with a range of academic and research institutions that help to strengthen and expand our impact. This year, we continued to work alongside the Douglas Mental Health University Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Women's College Hospital, and the University of Toronto.



Social Action Committee

The Social Action Committee is a collective of Sistering participants, peer workers, volunteers, and staff committed to advancing social justice through initiatives grounded in the lived experiences and current realities of our community. This year, the Committee focused on education, advocacy, and activism related to 2SLGBTQIA+ rights, decolonization and reconciliation, and safe consumption sites.

With Your Support



"Some of my most impactful roles include participating in the Grassy Narrows Run to show solidarity with our Indigenous neighbours, raising awareness and funds for Sistering, and serving on the social action committee, where we address social issues and organize relevant events. These experiences have deepened my understanding of the challenges faced by individuals affected by homelessness, poverty, trauma, and social isolation, and they continue to fuel my passion for advocating on their behalf. Volunteering with Sistering has been incredibly rewarding, as it allows me to connect with others, grow personally, and make a meaningful difference in my community."

Judy, Volunteer + Social Action Committee Member

Thank you, *Volunteers!*



"In a nutshell, I'm struck by witnessing ...

- the common denominator of trauma disrupting participants' lives
- their resilience as many rebuild, and
- that Sistering is an invaluable haven, community and support for these women and gender-diverse people, 24/7, 365!

I'm honoured to be welcomed to do my little part."

Patricia, Volunteer, Registered Acupuncturist

FY 2024-2025

273

Individual Volunteers
Donated Their Time

2,500

Volunteer Hours Spent At
Sistering

26

Corporate Groups



Community Engagement

OUR OUTREACH:

- 29 Advocacy presentations facilitated
- 2000+ Educational resources distributed
- 10 Toronto Public Library Coffee & Conversation outreach
- 98,700 accounts reached through social media advocacy



260+

Community
organizations
contacted

10

Community
Town Hall
Meetings

9

De-Escalation
Workshops
Facilitated



“ —

Sistering has saved me from homelessness, and helped me regain financial freedom. I am blessed to have the opportunity to volunteer with Sistering in many capacities, and now I have decided to change my career to Social Services because of the positive impact the organization had on me.

– T. L., Former Participant, Current Volunteer

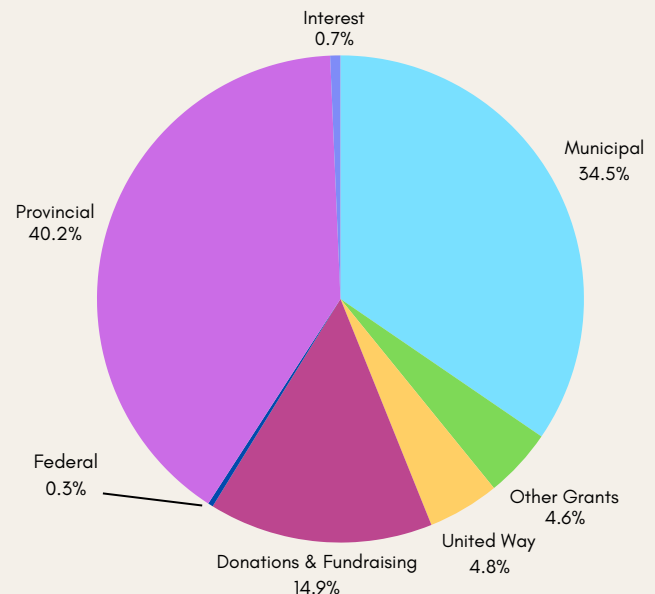
Financial Highlights

REVENUE

City of Toronto	\$2,327,932.29
Ontario Health	\$2,261,373.75
United Way of Greater Toronto	\$320,879.49
Ontario Women's Directorate	\$154,241.00
St. Clare Partnership	\$58,887.28
Woodgreen Community Housing	\$25,983.24
Ontario Trillium Fund	\$92,200.00
West Neighbourhood House	\$121,100.00
Province of Ontario	\$157,500.00
Ontario Seniors Secretariat	\$42,700.00
Government of Canada	\$23,144.00
Donations & Fundraising	\$1,003,170.11
Other Grants	\$103,942.59
Interest on Investments	\$45,687.81

\$6,738,741.5

WHERE OUR FUNDS COME FROM



EXPENSES

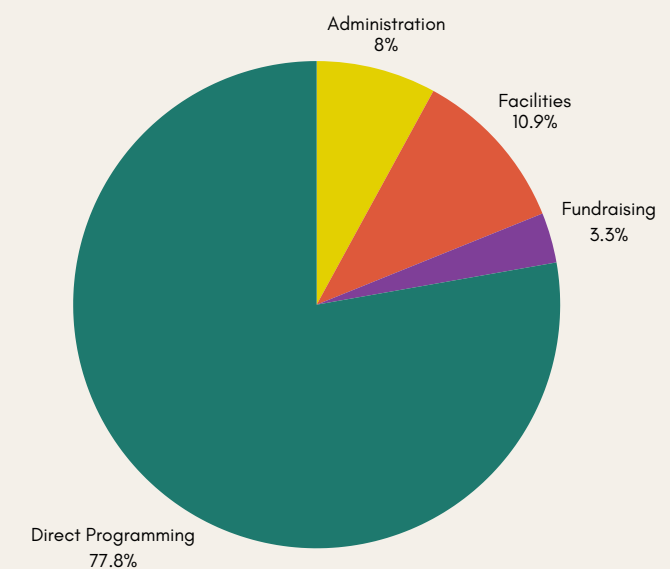
Wages & Benefits	\$4,702,273.95
Programs	\$1,316,896.91
Building Occupancy Costs	\$785,324.93
Office & General	\$266,174.24
Amortization	\$25,932.68
Insurance	\$23,049.11
Fundraising	\$25,796.82
Promotion & Publicity	\$36,582.57

\$7,182,031.21

Deficit

\$(443,289.65)

HOW WE USE OUR FUNDS*



*Includes Wages & Benefits

Expenditures during the period exceeded funds raised, resulting in a deficit for the year. Included in the deficit is a provision for back pay wages for staff. The deficit does not impact the overall financial health of the agency, and there is no anticipated impact on future programming or service delivery.

Sistering's Signature Events

Thank you to our incredible community of supporters for championing our annual events! Together, we have helped sustain Sistering's vital programs, ensuring women and gender-diverse people have access to the 24/7 care and holistic support they deserve.

Food For Thought, November 2024



110

Attendees

\$24,563.24

raised at Food for Thought, providing over 4,900 additional meals

13

Volunteers

Coldest Night of the Year, February 2025



19

Teams

84

Walkers

\$38,893

Raised

469

Donors

22

Volunteers

In Tribute: *Honouring Lives & Legacies Through Giving*

In October 2023, local resident Raquel Margulies experienced an unimaginable tragedy when her mother, Ana Paula De Sousa, lost her life in a senseless act of domestic violence.

In the face of overwhelming pain and grief, Raquel channeled her sorrow into a mission to support other victims of gender-based violence. She started a GoFundMe campaign with an initial goal of \$10,000 to cover her mother's funeral expenses. Any additional funds raised were intended to support causes close to Ana Paula's heart, particularly aiding victims of gender-based violence. The campaign garnered over \$22,000, with \$15,000 generously donated to Sistering.

Ana Paula was a beacon of hope for women in her West-End Toronto community. She was known for offering shelter and support to those fleeing domestic violence, often opening her own home as a safe haven. Raquel vividly recalls her mother helping women find secure housing, providing a refuge in times of crisis, and offering them a lifeline when they had nowhere else to turn.

We are deeply grateful not only for Raquel's incredible generosity but also for the profound legacy Ana Paula leaves behind. She saved lives with her warmth, her empathy, and her unwavering strength. Her spirit lives on in the lives she touched—and through Raquel's powerful tribute.

Together, we carry forward Ana Paula's legacy and commit to continuing the fight to finally end the epidemic of gender-based violence.



Margaret Parker & Marie Thomas

The Marie & Margaret Women's Foundation focuses on the legal rights and protection of women and those that identify as female through donations towards legal and administrative matters.

The Foundation was inspired by financial abuse and control that Marie suffered several times in her two marriages, but most recently in the final years of her life, particularly while trying to settle her late husband's estate. The lack of legal knowledge, counsel and administrative support she faced at her greatest time of need, inspired her family to help other women in her memory.

Sistering is grateful to have received two generous \$10,000 grants from this foundation, providing crucial support to participants navigating legal challenges. Whether facing landlord-tenant disputes, securing separation agreements, resolving settlement claims, or seeking justice as survivors of gender-based violence, many Sistering participants have benefited from this transformative legacy gift.

"I want to say thank you for helping me with this funding – I was able to pay for my refugee hearing and I got a positive result. My lawyer appreciated the prompt payment, and was then able to help me to apply for my permanent residency and sponsoring my family for a reduced cost."

–Ruth, Sistering Participant



Ana Paula De Sousa



Collective Action, Lasting Change

To Our Donors:

Sistering's work would not be possible without the generous support of the many foundations, corporations, and individuals who contribute financially. Whether you donated once or give monthly, every contribution has made a meaningful difference. Your support fuels our programs, sustains our 24/7 services, and reminds our community that they are not alone. We are humbled by your generosity and deeply grateful for your confidence in our ability to drive lasting change in Toronto.

Thank you to our generous funders for
standing with Sistering



Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada



An agency of the Government of Ontario
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

The Power of Collaboration:

Thank You to Our Community Partners

Bloorcourt BIA
Inner City Health Associates
The Jean Tweed Centre
West Neighbourhood House
St. Clare Multifaith Housing
Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre
WoodGreen Community Housing





Homelessness, isolation and violence
don't take a day off.

Neither do we

Because of you, Sistering is always here—day and night, providing warmth, compassion, and inclusive support.

Thank you for making sure no one is left behind.



The need never sleeps.

Contact us



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Support Our Work at
Sistering.org/donate

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Charitable No. 10798 3009 RR0001