

Reflection **Growth** Inspiration



2010-2011 Annual Report

Message from the President and the Executive Director



Brian Davis (left) and Frank White

The past year has been one of reflection, growth and inspiration. For both of us, it was our first year in the roles of President and Executive Director. We recognized that a transition in leadership also offered an opportunity to deepen our understanding of what Houselink is, what it stands for, and how Houselink fits into the broader community.

A highlight of this year was the opening of one of our largest buildings in the east end of Toronto! Another 29 more individuals can now call Houselink home. With more than 3,000 people waiting to get into supportive housing, our board and management team reaffirmed our commitment to continue seeking ways of increasing our stock of supportive housing.

Over the past three years, Houselink members and staff have worked to make progress toward the goals set out in our 2008-2011 Strategic Priorities. Those priorities — Aging at Home, Access to Housing and Retention, Sustainable Funding for Programs, Meaningful Measurement and Reducing our Environmental Impact — have prompted us to make significant changes in our organization. We have made our buildings greener and more accessible, and we have added to our understanding of aging and age-related illnesses. Through the results of our DREEM survey, we have also learned how we can better support our members on their personal journey of recovery.

As we formulated our new three-year priorities, we held many conversations about Houselink's future. Thank you for sharing your ideas and dreams! We hope that you see your ideas reflected in our

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new priorities and get involved in helping to realize them. We’re privileged to work with members, staff and supporters who are all committed to making Houselink more compassionate, recovery-oriented and inclusive — with a constant zeal for social justice.

This year we said a sad farewell to Double Exposure: to our donors, we cannot thank you enough for your support! It’s because of you that Houselink is able to offer such a wealth of programs. Did you know that DX raised more than one million dollars in support of our programs over the years? Now, looking ahead, we are very excited about how our new fundraising plans are taking shape.

At Houselink, we have exceptional staff, volunteers and members who continually strive to create a community that promotes and fosters recovery.

We have dedicated the program section of our annual report to the theme of employment, because we all know that having a job is often a key to mental well-being.

As we move forward, our commitment to Houselink’s mission to provide safe, supportive and affordable housing and programs for our members remains as strong as ever.

Wishing you all the best in the upcoming year,

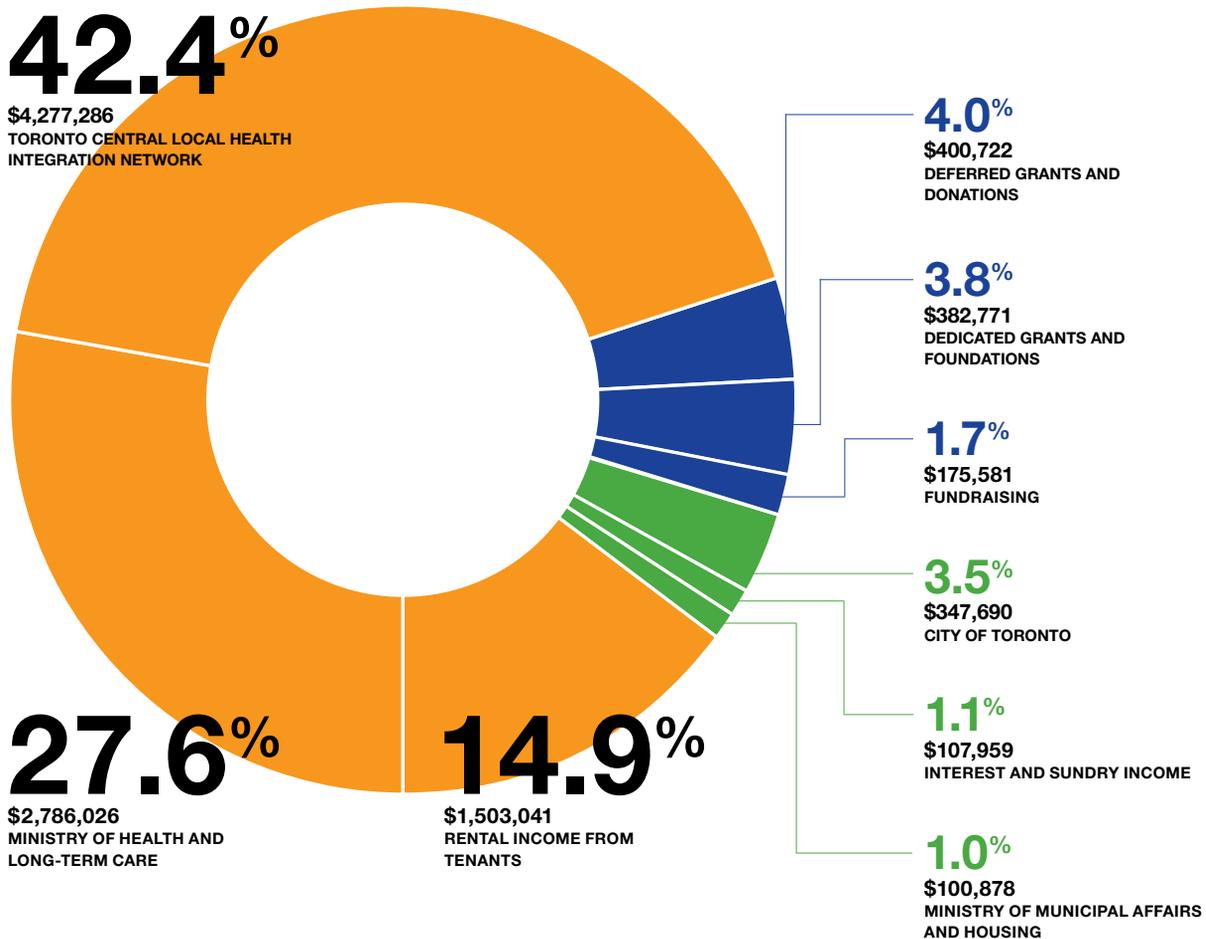
Frank White
President

Brian Davis
Executive Director

Financial Highlights

Total Revenues

\$10,081,954

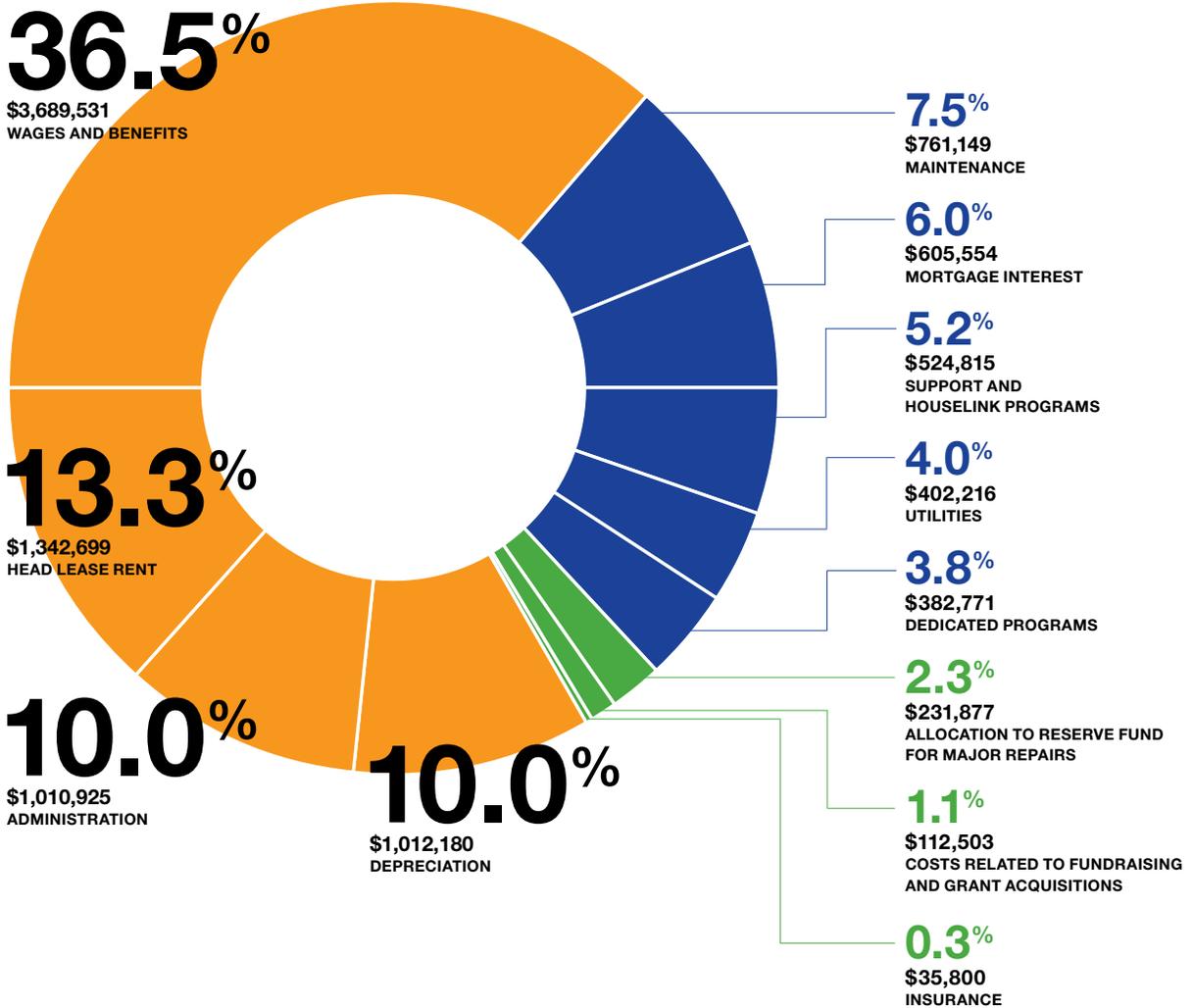


Complete audited financial statements are available upon request.

Financial Highlights

Total Expenses

\$10,112,020



Strategic Plan

Reflections on the past three years

1

AGING AT HOME

Addressing age-related illness is an ongoing priority for us and will be for years to come, since 48% of our membership is 35 to 54 years of age, while another 25% is 55 to 84 years of age. We continue to work with our changing community to identify multifaceted, long-term approaches, including advocacy that addresses poverty and its devastating impact on health.

As well as responding to individual requests for unit modifications, we have also been making the 805 Bloor drop-in more accessible with automatic door closures and assessing accessibility at nine other buildings using criteria developed by CILT (Centre for Independent Living).

2

ACCESS TO HOUSING AND RETENTION OF MEMBERS

Housing retention is part of our core day-to-day business. This became a strategic priority in 2008, with particular attention paid to people dealing with substance use, as well as our families. We developed more family-friendly programs. To ensure new members felt welcome in their new homes, we created welcome kits and formed welcoming committees. We developed more effective responses to hoarding and trained staff and members in fire safety. These initiatives were informed by the following reports: the *Drug Committee Report* (2009) and *Supportive Housing for Families with Children: Parent and Child Narratives* (2008).

3

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Houselink has paid close attention to how to become a more environmentally friendly organization. In this past year one-time funding of \$189,000 has allowed us to install ten solar heating systems — bringing the total number of properties with solar heating installations to 12.





4

SUSTAINABILITY

Maintenance

Houselink's maintenance department has been working diligently to meet or surpass all of its goals. While most of the city has seen an overwhelming increase in bedbug infestations, the actual costs for extermination services at Houselink have decreased for the past two years because of our maintenance department's proactive approach and timely response.

Fundraising

The last Double Exposure was held on April 15, 2011. This ended the ten-year history of an event that raised more than one million dollars for Houselink. We'd like to thank Carole Tanenbaum, Stephen Bulger, and all those who made generous contributions to Houselink through this remarkable event that will always stay close to our hearts.

Houselink has also enjoyed fundraising success over the past three years through a partnership with Raising the Roof, as well as an incredibly successful Employee Campaign. These two campaigns have raised more than \$50,000 in support of our programs.

Becoming a Learning Organization – Reflecting on Recovery

The DREEM (Developing Recovery Enhancing Environments Measure) survey gave us insight into the elements important to our members' recovery. The survey was completed by 198 of our members, and the results ranked Houselink high overall as a recovery-oriented organization because of its staff/member relationships and peer support.

- > 58% of members told us that they are actively engaged in recovery.
- > 86% of respondents told us that they participate in at least one program, with the number of programs used by each Houselink member averaging eight!

5

MEANINGFUL MEASUREMENT

This year's implementation of the Logic Model and the Theory of Change has increased our capacity to engage in evidence-based practice. This will allow us to more effectively discuss and celebrate the impact of our work in our communities and beyond. It should also allow us to make more informed decisions, secure more funding and measure our performance against short-term and long-term targets.

New Strategic Priorities

Our Board of Directors conducted a full and inclusive consultation on the new priorities that will inform our work for the next three years. The process began with a renewed commitment to our mission and values, as well as our recovery policy. During the four-month process, members and staff took part in more than 20 discussions about our collective future. Surveys and voicemail were also used to ensure everyone had an opportunity to provide input.

HOUSELINK'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2011-2014:

1

PROMOTE PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY HEALTH for people with mental health challenges. Support Houselink members in living their lives to the fullest.

2

IMPROVE SUPPORT for Houselink's varied membership, with a focus on aging.

3

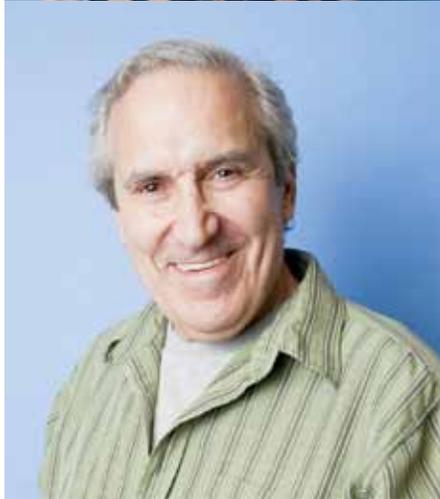
SET AND MAINTAIN STANDARDS for community safety, building quality and repair.

4

BUILD HOUSELINK'S CAPACITY to be member-driven and recovery-oriented. Promote our strengths and share our knowledge.

HOUSELINK FAST FACT

Our Employment Support Coordinator provides personalized, intensive employment counselling and support to members interested in working, learning or volunteering. This year she also initiated a new employment preparation group program, which has been made possible by the generous support of the Opportunities Fund of Service Canada.



Growth in our Housing Stock

“ When I moved into this new unit, my very first bachelor pad...all I could say was ‘WOO HOO!’ I moved in October and it was the first time in years that I had my own private space. Let me tell you, being able to entertain, test out new recipes and run my catering company has truly changed my life. ”

Keith, Houselink member



Houselink has a history of acting on its commitment to increase Toronto’s stock of supportive housing units, and this year was no different!

In an innovative partnership with Alternative Living Solutions, CAMH and Streets to Homes, Houselink was able to add a new building to its portfolio in the city’s east end. The building now provides 29 new self-contained supportive homes, along with indoor and outdoor community space.



Inspiration to Recover: Accessing Meaningful Employment

“ The meaning of peer support for me is the opportunity and ability to share knowledge, experience, and emotional, social and practical help with each other. ”

Youssef, Peer Support Worker

At Houselink, we pursued a number of collaborative initiatives, with employment as a key outcome.

The PREFER program (Peer Recovery Education for Employment & Resilience), funded by the Trillium Foundation, provides education and support to individuals with personal lived

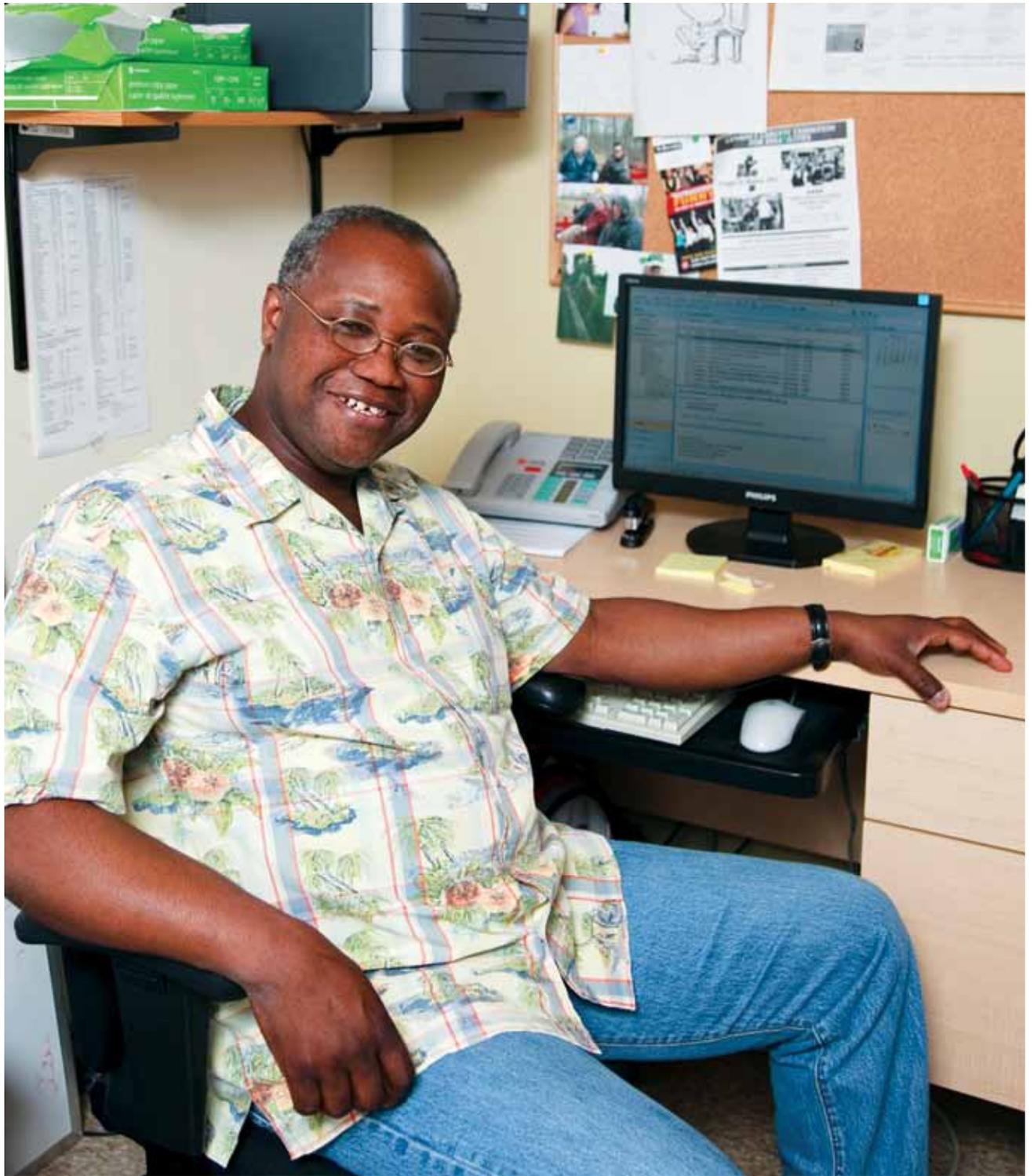
experience who are committed to becoming peer support workers. The program is a collaboration between the Gerstein Centre, the Krasman Centre (Richmond Hill) and Houselink.

In its first year of operation, the Silver Brush project, a community economic development initiative involving Houselink and PARC, overshot its revenue

targets! The project creates employment opportunities for painters in residential buildings and non-profit housing. Silver Brush is supported by the United Way of Toronto, the Toronto Enterprise Fund and the Trillium Foundation, as well as the income from its business operations.

HOUSELINK FAST FACT

Since moving into our housing, the number of our members who now have employment as their primary source of income has tripled!



Inspiration to Recover: Accessing Meaningful Employment

Reform of the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) is a priority for many of our members who are eager to work. The ODSP Action Coalition continues to do great work. In addition, the Dream Team, Houselink and CAMH collaborated this year on a report entitled *What Keeps Us from Working*. The report recommends changes to the ODSP to remove barriers to accessing and keeping meaningful employment. The report highlights these recommendations with compelling personal stories.

“Why can’t I hold down my job? You get to thinking you’re just so different that your life will always be like this. What I want to do is make a difference. I love working and I wish I could do more of it. I just don’t know where to start.”

(from a personal story in the report *What Keeps Us from Working*.)

Additional funding this year allowed us to host two recognition lunches for members who participate in our supported employment program. This

program offers opportunities to work in landscaping, cooking and reception and as program assistants. Approximately 100 members find part-time employment through this program every year.

In conjunction with George Brown College and the Ministry of Health Promotion, Houselink was able to send 18 members to participate in the Community Health and Education Through Food (CHEF) program, a ten-week training opportunity in healthy eating and cooking.

HOUSELINK FAST FACT

Houselink has a long history of promoting the employment of people with lived experience within our labour force, a history that predates employment equity directives. Recently, we consulted with staff to develop strategies that will ensure we continue to move forward on our commitment to maintaining an inclusive and welcoming workplace.





Sponsors, Donors and Volunteers

Thank You!

Our donors and funding partners make a meaningful difference in the lives of our members through their financial support.

Funding Partners

Toronto Central LHIN
Ministry of Health
City of Toronto
Ministry of Municipal Affairs
Human Resources and Skills Development

Silver Brush Funding

Ontario Trillium Foundation
Toronto Enterprise Fund
United Way of Greater Toronto

Dream Team Funding

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70% of Houselink staff make regular financial contributions

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