



RESTORATIVE JUSTICE HOUSING ONTARIO

NOVEMBER 2024
NEWSLETTER

A MESSAGE FROM RJHO CHAIR JIM HARBELL

Dear Friends of RJHO,

It's always a delight to tell you about our community and how we're helping our residents on their journeys toward successful integration. We're eager to showcase the stories of Juma and Richard, each a great example of the benefits of a stable home.

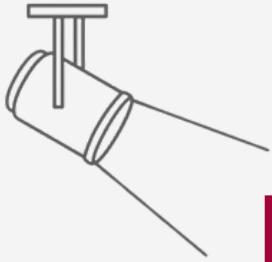
A warm welcome to Macy! As a community integration worker, Macy brings expertise and dedication, which we know will strengthen our supportive environments.

A big thank you to Mark Farrant! Mark just completed his 6-month contract with us as Executive Director. He worked hard to upgrade our administration and policy framework, increase our profile, and support more strategic direction for the board. The search for a new Executive Director has begun. Details will be posted on our website and through Charity Village, should you or someone you know be interested.

Finally, thank you to our volunteers and donors. I think of you as saints: helping us navigate increasingly long waitlists, driving our residents, accompanying them to appointments and volunteering alongside them, funding RJHO housing and activities. Your commitment encourages us to strive to do the best we can to meet our mission to provide safe, supportive and sustainable housing. Thank you for all you do.

Best,
Jim





RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT: JUMA

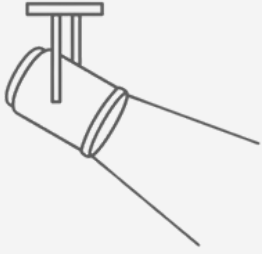
2024 saw RJHO resident Juma Kuol receive the Ghulam Sajan Humanitarian Award at the One Love Gala in Toronto from former Prison Chaplain and current Member of Parliament and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rob Oliphant. The Gala, a cornerstone event for Canada's chaplaincy community, champions the vital role of chaplaincy services in supporting rehabilitation within Canadian correctional facilities.

Journey of Resilience

Kuol's transformation story captivated the Gala audience as he detailed his remarkable journey from Africa, to incarceration, to becoming a valued member of Canadian society.

As a resident of RJHO's Scarborough house, his commitment to remaking his life for the better has become an inspiration to those living with him. Kuol's determination to succeed and rebuild his life after a long period of incarceration is legendary, and includes a story about how he once accepted a term of employment in Oakville over the summer that required him to travel from Scarborough by public transit at 3:30 a.m. (including riding the last 30 minutes of his journey by bike) to be at work for 7 a.m. each morning — and then do it all in reverse at the end of a long day of physical effort. He took on this grueling schedule, which left minimal time for rest, without complaint — exemplifying his unwavering determination to succeed. Today, Kuol stands as a fully-employed member of a local labour union, marking a successful milestone in his reintegration journey with the help of RJHO.





RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT: RICHARD

From Incarceration to Inspiration

In a compelling feature published in the November/December 2024 issue of Faith & Friends magazine, RJHO resident Richard Bonds shares his remarkable journey of transformation and redemption. The article highlights his evolution from being a Salvation Army client to becoming a valued employee at their distribution facility in Toronto.

Bonds' journey at the Salvation Army exemplifies his unwavering commitment to personal reform and professional development. Beginning with a modest commitment of two three-hour volunteer shifts per week, his dedication and work ethic quickly became apparent and eventually led to being offered a full-time staff position.

Now, Bonds has advanced to supervising the food production area and managing donations, coming full circle from once receiving Salvation Army assistance to now overseeing its distribution to others in need.

His transformation extends beyond his professional achievements as he also became the first resident of RJHO's newest house for men at the start of 2024. "The most important resident for one of our homes is always the first," said Joseph Lauren, RJHO's Program Director, "because they set the tone in regard to how the residents will interact, perform chores, and represent RJHO to the neighbours around them. I identified Richard as the applicant that I believed could not only benefit from the opportunity, but would seize it to exceed expectations, which he did."

Today, Bonds continues to inspire others with his positive attitude and commitment to giving back to the community and groups like the Salvation Army and RJHO that supported him during his own journey of reform.





NEW STAFF: MACY

Macy Victoria started with RJHO in August and has been enjoying connecting with the clients and working with other people who are passionate about restorative justice. Macy is an experienced community integration worker with over a decade of dedication to social services. Holding a degree in Child and Youth Work from Toronto Metropolitan University, Macy specializes in housing, mental health, harm reduction, crisis intervention, and homelessness.

Currently, Macy contributes her expertise to Jewish Family and Child Services and Toronto Community Crisis Services. In addition to her professional work, she volunteers with Correctional Service Canada, where she advocates for restorative justice and its vital importance in fostering healing and community reintegration.

With a passion for advocacy and community support, Macy is dedicated to making a positive impact on the lives of those she serves.



HOUSING CRISIS

RJHO is actively addressing this crisis. So far, we have provided housing for over 40 people and are currently supporting 17 residents.

- **In Toronto, there are over 12,000 people who are homeless on any given night.**
- **Two in five people with history of homelessness and police involvement cite the justice system as a reason for housing loss.**
- **There are 28,116 people on the waitlist for supportive housing in Toronto.**
- **Nearly 20% of inmates are homeless upon release from Ontario jails.**
- **A 2017 study by St Michael’s Hospital highlighted the importance of assisting individuals experiencing incarceration with securing stable housing during discharge and post-release planning.**

YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION

Your generous contributions have transformed lives and strengthened our mission throughout 2024. Thanks to your support, we've achieved remarkable growth in our capacity to serve those transitioning from incarceration to community life, including the expansion of our housing network with a fourth residence for men that supports four individuals in their journey toward rehabilitation and reintegration.

Your donations have helped us strengthen our support framework by adding a dedicated part-time Community Integration Worker who provides personalized assistance to residents of our houses for men while assisting in overseeing our house for women, as well as bringing on a part-time Executive Director to optimize our operations and enhance program effectiveness.

Every donation helps provide not just housing, but hope and the opportunity for successful reintegration through second chances. With your generosity, together we're building pathways to transformation, one life at a time.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the individuals, foundations, trusts, and faith organizations that have demonstrated extraordinary commitment to our cause.

- La Fondation Emmanuelle Gattuso
- The Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto
- Echo Foundation
- St. Andrew's Society of Toronto
- MEH Foundation
- The McLean Foundation
- Robert Kerr Foundation
- Rosedale United Church
- FriendsFUNDing Collective (Giving Circle)

Would you like to donate?

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