



ANNUAL REPORT

20

24



RESTORATIVE JUSTICE HOUSING ONTARIO

Message from the Chair

“May you live in interesting times” is an expression that’s more often interpreted as a curse than a blessing. We’ve all experienced “interesting times” recently — through disruption and economic uncertainty. Times like these can stifle optimism for many people, myself included. However, I also find hope in the urgency with which many of us are working to support marginalized populations, as they are the ones most impacted by uncertain times.

Recently, RJHO has been consolidating our efforts as a charity. We’re working to stabilize and strengthen our current initiatives and building a foundation from which we can grow. We’ve retained Howard Sapers, a former Correctional Investigator of Canada, to help us with this. He’s guided us in our plans to our move from an operational board to a more strategically-focused board. He’s also reviewed our systems and policies, and provided suggestions for consolidating our existing strengths and resources to prepare for further stabilization and increased staffing.

In late 2024, we made the difficult decision to close down our women’s house. This isn’t something we did lightly, it was a conclusion we came to after working with an outside consultant. While our women’s house was in operation, we were able to assist our residents in their transition back to the community. However, we believe that our resources, along with the physical structure of the house, did not provide the best possible support for women with complicated mental health needs as they worked to reintegrate.

We continue seeking viable ways to engage, and be responsive to, the needs of these women. We’re taking this time to assess what our support could look like and how best to use our current resources in addressing the needs we’ve identified, and the ones we may discover in the future.

We’re very grateful for the persistence and dedication of Michelle Joseph, Wendy Leaver, and others in their commitment walking alongside and supporting our residents in their journeys. We also want to specifically thank our donors for their continued support through this time of consolidation. Your ongoing loyalty and commitment to us is remarkable, and necessary, as we continue our mandate of supporting our residents.

And finally, to our residents — you are the inspiration for all that we do. Your courage and commitment to seeking a life integrated into community, to employment, to volunteer work, and to others in your life is remarkable. Long may we continue to journey alongside you.

Thank you,

Jim

Jim Harbell
RJHO Chair



Resident Spotlight

Colin



Colin's journey reflects resilience, transformation, and the quiet strength of giving back.

Nearly three years ago, he entered a Restorative Justice Housing Ontario (RJHO) home after a period of incarceration, addiction, and isolation. Today, he's a powerful example of how safe, supportive housing and community can change lives.

"I now know that my past is not my prologue," Colin says. Through prison and volunteering, he shed his old identity and found purpose in service. At The Neighbourhood Group's drop-in kitchen, he dedicated over 50 hours a week, gaining humility and earning recognition, including a service award from Second Harvest Canada.

COLIN'S STORY
CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

“Colin now works with the United Hospital Network after completing the Peer Support Program. His lived experience helps him connect deeply with others facing addiction.

People just need someone to listen with care and compassion,” he shares.

He credits much of his progress to RJHO Program Director Joseph Lauren. “Having a mentor with similar experiences helped me stay focused and out of prison,” Colin explains. “RJHO gave me more than housing — it gave me hope and healing.”



Now a role model, Colin aims to offer the empathy he once needed. “When I couldn’t love myself, I just needed someone to care. That’s what I try to be for others.”

Colin’s story shows the power of second chances — and how RJHO’s support goes far beyond shelter. Learn more through Colin and Joseph’s presentation to the **Provincial Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committee**

RJHO has:

- *4 houses for men (3 in Etobicoke and 1 in Scarborough).*
- *A total of 18 bedrooms and 18 residents.*
- *Throughout 2024, 5 residents moved on to new accommodations (their own rental units, shared home with a partner, or moving in with family with whom they reconnected)*

**“I know now that my
past is not my
prologue.”**

Thank you for your support!

We consider every individual, organization, and foundation that offers financial assistance to be a vital part of the RJHO team. Together, we work towards our mission of helping those leaving prison successfully reintegrate into their communities. Each donation towards safe and supportive housing not only provides secure shelter but also reaffirms dignity, equips individuals with essential resources, and strengthens community connections—all crucial elements in breaking the cycle of recidivism.

We understand there are many options when it comes to charitable giving, and we are deeply grateful to the individuals, foundations, trusts, and faith organizations that have pledged their support to RJHO, including:

- La Fondation Emmanuelle Gattuso
- Community Housing Transformation Centre
- Robert Kerr Foundation
- The Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto
- Echo Foundation
- St. Andrew's Society of Toronto
- MEH Foundation
- The McLean Foundation
- The Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation
- F.K. Morrow Foundation
- Rosedale United Church
- FriendsFUNding Collective (Giving Circle)



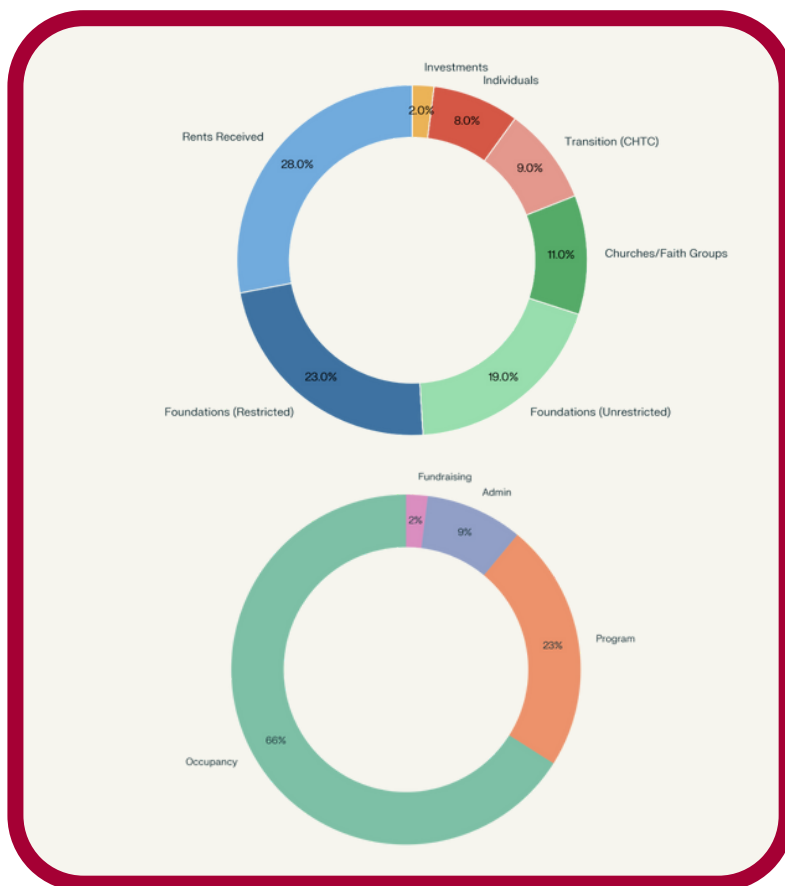
Financial Report

Revenue Sources

- Rents received: 28%
- Foundations (restricted): 23%
- Foundations: 19%
- Churches/Faith groups: 11%
- Transition (CHTC): 9%
- Individuals: 8%
- Investments: 2%

Expenses

- Occupancy: 66%
- Program: 23%
- Admin: 9%
- Fundraising: 2%



Notes:

Occupancy costs encompass rents paid to homeowners, utilities, and any repair expenses. Program costs primarily consist of salaries and wages for program directors and caseworkers. The term "foundations (restricted)" refers to funds designated for specific expenses or housing.

Once again, in 2024, the generosity of our donors enabled us to cover all expenses while still maintaining a surplus. This surplus allowed us to keep a reserve sufficient to cover rental costs for all houses for at least one year, aligning with our stated goal and policy.

Housing Update

RJHO's Houses for Men: Community Building and New Developments

In 2024, we witnessed five residents successfully transition to either their families or independent accommodations, with an equal number of new residents entering our homes, as vacancies are often filled on the same day or week they arise.

RJHO has individuals and family members calling weekly looking for housing and through our interviewing and screening process we look for individuals who will be the best fit with other residents and with the opportunities that RJHO is able to provide. For instance, if the existing residents have work-related sleep schedules, preference will be given to employed candidates. Likewise, if the house primarily accommodates residents over the age of 55, an older applicant may be favored.

The newly approved and funded House for Men, which opened on January 1, 2024, is located in Scarborough, just north of Warden Subway station. This house offers rooms for five men, all of whom are either employed or volunteering full-time. The family that owns the house includes a member who previously served as a Prison Chaplain in the United States; his experience played a crucial role in highlighting the importance of safe and affordable housing for ex-prisoners committed to positive community reintegration, as facilitated by RJHO.

Brunch and BBQs are organized for the residents to come together and support each other in community throughout the year--- the next one on June 1 at 4:30pm

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