

A United Way Supported Agency



United Way
Halton & Hamilton

Newsletter

DECEMBER 2025

December 1 – World Aids Day (UN); Advent (to December 24) (Christian)

December 2 – International Day for the Abolition of Slavery (UN)

December 3 – International Day of Persons with Disabilities (UN)

December 6 – National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women (Status of Women)

December 10 – Human Rights Day (UN)

December 14 – Hanukkah (to December 22) (Judaism)

December 18 – International Migrants Day (UN)

December 20 – International Human Solidarity Day (UN)

December 24 – Christmas Eve

December 25 – Christmas Day (Christian)

December 26 – Boxing Day

December 31 – New Year's Eve

DECEMBER 2025

Lives permanently changed for the better



HOPE 4 HOLIDAYS 2025

Home Suite Hope is in the midst of its annual **Hope 4 Holidays** campaign for the 2025 holiday season!

Whether you've supported us in previous years or are joining us for the first time, we are so grateful for your generosity and compassion.

This year, we are honoured to support 30 single parent families across Halton.

Each family is on a unique journey toward stability and independence, and your kindness helps bring warmth, dignity and a sense of hope to parents and children as they navigate a challenging season.

We're excited to share that there's still lots of time to get involved and many ways to do so and make a meaningful difference this holiday season.

[Hope 4 Holidays 2025](#)

EMPTY BOWLS FILLED WITH HOPE

Empty Bowls returned to **Appleby College Sunday, November 2** for a heartfelt tradition that brings our community together in support of families working toward stability.

[View the photo gallery from the event](#)



PARTICIPANT NEWS

HELP MAKE IT HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

As of December 1, two **Home Suite Hope** families are moving into new townhouses in Oakville—just in time for the winter holidays. Thanks to the generosity of local development company, **Argo Development Corporation**, not only have the units been supplied but some major household items have also already been covered. Now we've invited our community to help fill the remaining needs and bring warmth, comfort, and cheer into their homes.

Home #1 - Mother Ginger House

This family includes a mom and teenage son and daughter who are excited to begin their next chapter

Still needed: Spacious couch or sofa (family-sized); Bar stools (for breakfast bar); Entryway storage bench or organizer; Dining table and chairs; Cleaning supplies (mop, broom, vacuum, laundry items); Towels and toiletries; Holiday hamper: grocery cards, festive treats, non-perishable food.

Home #2 – Sugar Plum House

This family includes a mom and two young boys and teen girl ready to celebrate their first winter in their new home.

Still needed: Bar stools (2–3); Kitchen supplies (dishes, utensils, cookware); Small appliances (microwave, toaster, kettle); Dressers for bedrooms; Cleaning supplies; Towels and toiletries; Holiday hamper: grocery cards, kids' snacks, small gifts, festive items

How You Can Help

Donate new items from the lists and gift cards by:

- Dropping them off at the Home Suite Hope office
- Emailing nikkianh@homesuitehope.org to arrange a drop-off or pickup
- Making a monetary donation at www.homesuitehope.org/donate

**Let's come together to make these new houses homes filled with hope, comfort, and holiday joy.
Every item helps a family start their next chapter with dignity and warmth.**

MAKING IT HOME FOR THE WINTER HOLIDAYS

MOTHER GINGER HOUSE

- Spacious couch/sofa
- Bar stools
- Storage/benches for front entrance
- Hampers

SUGAR PLUM HOUSE

- Bunk bed mattresses
- bedding pillows
- Bar stools
- Kitchen supplies
- Small appliances
- Cleaning supplies
- Furniture (table, chairs, dresser)
- Towels and toiletries
- Hampers

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- Dropping it off at the Home Suite Hope office
- Email nikkianh@homesuitehope.org to arrange a drop-off or pickup
- Make a monetary donation at www.homesuitehope.org/donate

HSH HOME SUITE HOPE
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PARTICIPANT NEWS

CELEBRATING A SUCCESS STORY

Since beginning programming in September, just two months ago, a participant has transitioned from a shelter after securing housing and has also moved ahead two positions within their employment. **Congratulations!**



HSH'S INDUSTRY COUNCIL CONNECTIONS

Home Suite Hope's **Industry Council** plays a critical role in the development and success of the Homeward Bound Halton program. The Industry Council is a group of senior executives from a variety of fields with decision-making authority who meet throughout the Homeward Bound Halton program to support the professional advancement of participants in the program.

The Industry Council is a group made up of eight to 12 representatives from organizations including private sector businesses, non-profit and public sector employers, community champions with influence in the local community and representatives from employment services at the local college, municipality or community services organization.



A key success factor for **Homeward Bound Halton** participants is that the college programs available through the program are aligned to the local labour market opportunities with the organizations that sit on the Industry Council. If you work in one of the following fields, please consider joining our Industry Council; advertising and marketing, architectural technician, business accounting, finance, human resources, chemical laboratory technician, community and justice services, computer engineering technician, computer programmer, computer systems technologies, office administration (legal, health, executive), graphic design, visual merchandising, electrical engineering technician, electromechanical engineering technician, mechanical engineering technician —tool making, and welding.

If you are interested or would like more information please contact SaraC@homesuitehope.org

**To learn more about our current Industry Council representatives,
please visit our [Industry Council](#) page on our website.**

Hope 4 Holidays

A season of giving, a message of hope.

Home Suite Hope is in the midst of its annual **Hope 4 Holidays** campaign for the 2025 holiday season!

Whether you've supported us before or are joining us for the first time, we are so grateful for your generosity and compassion. This year, we are supporting 30 single-parent families across Halton. Each is on their own journey toward stability and independence, and your kindness helps bring warmth, dignity, and a sense of hope to these parents and their children as they navigate a challenging season.

We're excited to share the **many ways you can help to make a meaningful difference** this holiday season. Some - like **Karen & Ray Spence** (below) and the team from **Clarity Recruitment** (at right) - stepped up to our call to [Sponsor a Family](#) by purchasing items on their wish list.



You can also **Donate General Items** such as household cleaning, personal hygiene and general items. You could assemble a kit containing these types of donations to help our families with the items that are essential to their household, but expensive to purchase.

You could [Donate Gift Cards](#). Our participants make the most use of grocery, gas and Walmart gift cards, but we welcome donations of others, too, as these help our single parents do their own shopping for their family and can provide the means for a holiday feast, a special holiday outing and more for parents to give their family.

Gift drop-off deadline is December 9, 2025 at 484 Kerr St., Oakville (Monday to Thursday, 9:30 AM – 5 PM). If you require an alternate drop-off day or time, please email NikkianH@HomeSuiteHope.org

Upon request tax receipts can be sent out in early 2026 but require all gift purchase receipts to be dropped off along with the gifts

HOPE 4 HOLIDAYS 2025

DONATIONS & GIFT CARDS

HOUSEHOLD & GENERAL DONATIONS

Help us support families by donating much-needed household and personal care items. These donations go a long way in bringing comfort, stability, and dignity to single parents and their children throughout the year. Every item makes a difference and reminds our families that their community cares.

Donations can be dropped off at our office:

- 484 Kerr Street, Oakville Monday to Thursday, 9:30 AM – 5 PM

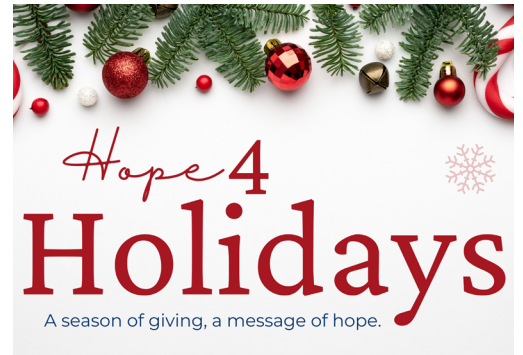
If you require an alternative drop-off day or time, please email Nikkian at NikkianH@HomeSuiteHope.org

Suggested Donation Kits:

- Hygiene Kits: Shampoo, soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant, etc.
- Self-Care Kits: Candle, journal & pen, note of appreciation, treats, etc.
- Menstrual Hygiene Kits: Pads, tampons, pantyliners, wipes.
- Infant Kits: Diapers, wipes.
- Household Essentials Kits: Toilet tissue/paper towels, dish soap, laundry detergent, etc.
- Holiday Stockings: For adults, children and teens

GIFT CARD DONATIONS

Gift cards are a meaningful way to help families meet their monthly needs and provide a sense of choice and independence. Your donation allows parents to purchase groceries, household essentials, and other items for their family. If you can help, please consider donating (but not limited to) Walmart, No Frills/President's Choice, gas, or Visa/MasterCard gift cards, as these are most helpful for our participants. Gift cards can be dropped off at our office (484 Kerr Street, Oakville, Monday to Thursday, 9:30 AM – 5 PM) or purchased online [DONATE GIFT CARDS](#)



FUNDRAISING UPDATES



GIVEOAKVILLE 2025

HSH is proud to be included in the **Oakville Community Foundation's (OCF) 2025 GIVEOakville Campaign** that runs through **December 8**.

Last year, GIVEOakville raised more than \$860,000 through the campaign, and inspired Foundation Fundholders to direct a further \$86,000 to GIVEOakville charities during the campaign.



GIVEOakville LIVE! was held **Sunday, November 16** at **Appleby College** for the community to learn about the important work going on in the community. **HSH Caseworkers Kennedy**

Apold and **Haley Weber** were there as more than 65 local GIVEOakville charities came together to kick off the annual GIVEOakville campaign.

The OCF has introduced the **GIVEOakville Fund**. It's open year-round and all money donated to this Fund will be allocated to the 2025 GIVEOakville charities. [GIVE TO GIVEOakville](#)

APPLEBY WALKATHON

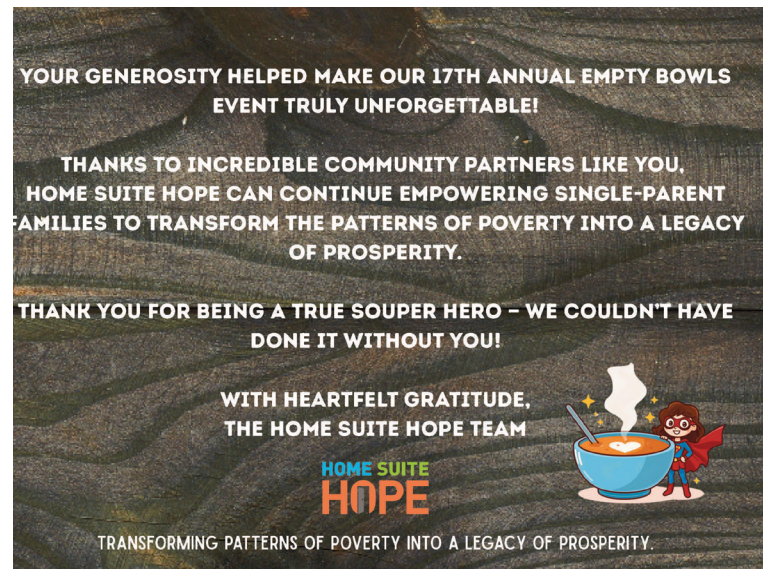
Walkathon has been an **Appleby College** tradition for 55 years as it supports the Oakville independent school's mission to educate and empower students to become leaders of character and valued contributors to their local, national and international communities.



This year, students walked approximately 18 km through Oakville and raised \$86,000 funds for local organizations - including **Home Suite Hope**. Other beneficiaries included **Halton Multicultural Council (HMC)**, **United Way Halton & Hamilton (UWHH)**, **HSH** and **The Terry Fox Foundation**. The Appleby student body hosted **HSH Executive Director Sara Cumming** in November to hear more about the work HSH does to support single parent families facing poverty and homelessness in Halton. Thank you for the support!

EMPTY BOWLS 2025

COMMUNITY SOUPER HEROES FILL BOWLS - AND HEARTS WITH HOPE



EMPTY BOWLS 2025: RAISED \$60, 918.50

A THANK-YOU NOTE FROM SARA

We are deeply grateful to all our sponsors, donors, and attendees for supporting this year's Empty Bowls fundraiser.

Your generosity fuels our award-winning programs and allows us to continue breaking generational cycles of poverty for families in our community.

Thanks to your incredible support, we raised just under \$61,000! Every contribution helps us change lives and build brighter futures.

From all of us at Home Suite Hope, thank you for helping us fill bowls — and hearts — with hope.

***Sara Cumming, Executive Director
Home Suite Hope***

[To view photos of the event click here](#)

EMPTY BOWLS 2025



EMPTY BOWLS 2025



EMPTY BOWLS 2025 SPONSORS



EMPTY BOWLS 2025



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Koa & Kind



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AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS

National Housing Day was recognized November 22 to raise awareness about the importance of safe, affordable, and stable housing for all Canadians and to acknowledge housing challenges faced by vulnerable groups – like the single parents HSH serves - and to discuss solutions.

Since 2000, National Housing Day has been dedicated to highlighting the critical role of housing in individual and community well-being. It is a call to action - a reminder for communities, organizations, and governments to work together on solutions to housing crises, affordability issues and homelessness. Housing provides stability: A home is a foundation for health, safety, and the ability to thrive, providing stability for families and individuals – a basic to which many Canadians, including our single parent intake clients, do not have access. The day encourages a collective effort across sectors and levels of government to find and implement new, creative solutions for housing.

On Friday, November 21 **Halton's National Housing Day Forum 2025** was hosted in Burlington by **Community Development Halton**. Thanks to support from Halton Region and the United Way of Halton Hamilton (UWHH) more than 160 community-minded citizens, community and nonprofit leaders gathered for an inspiring morning of local impact stories, interactive small group sessions, and information on concrete ways to be part of ensuring everyone's right to housing.



A panel of local leaders advocating for changes in Halton's housing landscape included: **Dr. Daryl Kaytor, Director of Housing, Halton Region** (at left with **HSH Interim Director of Development & Program Manager Nikkian Hanson-Daley**); **Dr. Steven Barrow** and **CDH Peer Researcher, CDH Learning for Voice of Lived Experience Project**; **Cathy Greven, Halton Community of Faith Advocates**; **Garth Brown, Mary's Ark**; and, **Dr. Mary Vaccaro, Faculty School of Social Work, Gendered Perspectives on Housing and Homelessness**. The panel also included two individuals with lived experience spending over two years homeless in Halton and just recently becoming housed.





HOUSING PLAN RECEIVES PUSHBACK

As the struggle to access affordable housing is at crisis point, **Home Suite Hope Executive Director Sara Cumming** and **Halton Women's Place Executive Director Laurie Hepburn** were at the **Town of Oakville's Planning Council** meeting November 17 where a proposal to build a six-storey affordable housing community hub at 1493 Sixth Line, south of Upper Middle Road, received significant pushback.

The complex envisions assisting single parents and women affected by domestic violence by offering affordable rental rates and working with a host of key community players including **Home Suite Hope, Halton Women's Place and Halton Region, Sheridan College, Community Development Halton, Food for Life** and the **YMCA Oakville**.

While the proposal is in line with Town of Oakville and Region of Halton affordable housing goals, area residents raised concerns about congestion, traffic and the size of the proposed building.

Both [**Oakville News**](#) and [**Inside Halton**](#) reported on the debate – set to go before Town staff for review and then go back before council.

The need for affordable housing is dire locally – and local families and women are up against a monumental hurdle as they try to rebuild their lives.

[**See the proposal details filed with the Town of Oakville**](#)

OAKVILLE RENTS HIGHEST IN ONTARIO



It is not news to Home Suite Hope that Oakville is an extremely expensive community – never mind for those who are struggling.

We read with interest – and alarm - **Oakville News** journalist **Tyler Collins'** recent story headlined: **Oakville surpasses Toronto as most expensive place to rent in Ontario**. Collins reports that *"New figures show that renters are paying more on average to live in Oakville than almost anywhere else in Canada — including the traditionally pricey Toronto"*

HSH works to get single parents facing poverty and homelessness housed and then provides wraparound support as they move through a two-year post-secondary diploma program in order to secure employment and a stable income and home. HSH's stellar success rates have of late been increasingly impeded by the lack of affordable housing, in Oakville and across Halton. This **Oakville News** story shows just what our families are up against as they try to stabilize and rebuild their lives in their home community. It demonstrates the support HSH needs to help these families and to access affordable housing locally. [Read the story](#)

STAFF NEWS

SARA'S NEWEST RESEARCH PROJECT

Sheridan College is advancing solutions to some of today's most pressing social challenges — in healthcare, gender equity, and homelessness — through three applied research projects supported by more than \$1 million in federal funding from the **College and Community Social Innovation Fund (CCSIF)**. **Home Suite Hope's Executive Director Dr. Sara Cumming, a Professor of Sociology at Sheridan** and Canada's only applied sociologist, is co-leading the gender equity project.

Sheridan

Natural Sciences and Engineering Council of Canada (NSERC) funding, will provide each project up to \$360,000 over three years to support development of innovative solutions to pressing social issues and community needs: amplifying the voices of palliative care patients to improve clinical trainings, empowering women with sustainable pathways to leadership and examining the impact of mobile primary care units for the homeless and underhoused.

Embedded Meaning: Adding Voices of Patients Receiving Palliative Care in Clinical Training, led by **Dr. Karen Slonim** through Generator at Sheridan's Centre for Elder Research, will enhance education around palliative approaches to care, advanced care planning and serious illness conversations by adding the human connection into theory-based teachings through the co-creation of videos with persons at end-of-life. These videos will be part of an open-source library for healthcare professionals and educators and integrated into training.

RESEARCH PROJECTS INCLUDE WOMEN & HOMELESSNESS

Women comprise nearly half of Canada's labour force and earn advanced degrees at higher rates than men yet they continue to hold fewer leadership roles across industry sectors. **Community Ideas Factory: Pathways to Potential Co-Leaders Dr. Sara Cumming and Dr. Jessica Pulis**, professors in Sheridan's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, are tackling this gap by uncovering and dismantling systemic barriers that hold women back in the workplace.

While existing research shows early life experiences can play a crucial role, this project will explore additional under-examined influences such as family dynamics, mentorship and extracurricular activities in bringing up future women leaders. The project is exploring the gap that persists in female leadership, especially in STEM and other male-dominated fields with industry partners Balsam Advisory, Trillium Health Partners, WeirFoulds LLP and Women of Influence +. Findings will be used to create evidence-based leadership development strategies and eventually integrated into schools and extracurricular programs.



With over 80,000 Ontarians experiencing homelessness as of 2024, **Innovations in Healthcare: Offering Primary Care Services for the Homeless and Underhoused Through a Mobile Community Health Centre**, is led by **Dr. Daphene Francis** through Sheridan's Faculty of Applied Health and Community Studies, along with co-investigator Dr. Linda Frost from York University's School of Nursing. It aims to provide insights into how best to meet the healthcare needs of unhoused individuals.

**HOME
SUITE
HOPE**

RESOURCE HUB

The Home Suite Hope Resource Hub is a welcoming space for clients, organizations, and community partners to connect, learn, and share.

It brings people and information together — from life skills and employment to housing, children, and wellness supports — helping our community grow stronger, together.

NEWS FROM HSH

Home Suite Hope Resource Hub is a welcoming space for clients, organizations, and community partners to connect, learn, and share.

It brings people and information together — from life skills and employment to housing, children, and wellness supports — helping our community grow stronger, together.

As the Community Resource Hub establishes and expands, stay tuned to our social media and our website for updates.

[Visit HSH Resource Hub](#)

CELEBRATING THE SECTOR

Celebrating the Sector - an inaugural event presented by the new **Impact Halton Coalition** and **Community Development Halton** - was held November 28 in Burlington.



Those attending the sold-out event, including HSH staff members, were updated on the state of the nonprofit sector in Halton Region and were able to share stories of impact and hold conversations for action.

Last year's event aimed to explore the state of Halton nonprofits based on data released by **Ontario's Nonprofit Network** in 2024.

The challenges of a siloed sector and the need to work together to advocate for nonprofit needs were identified as top issues so following last year's event, a team of nonprofit leaders came together to organize nonprofit advocacy in Halton into a formal coalition.



Impact Halton Coalition has been formalizing over the past year and this year's Celebrating the Sector event marked the official launch date of the coalition. Its immediate objectives are to spread the word about the new group, share the impact and challenges of the sector and explore ways for nonprofits' leaders to advocate together.

WATCH FOR IT

Don't forget! December 2 is **GivingTuesday**, a day dedicated to giving back and making a difference in our community. Make your mark and join our mission to empower single parent families on their journey from poverty to stability. Donate to HSH. Visit [HomeSuiteHope.org](https://www.HomeSuiteHope.org)

GivingTuesday is a global generosity movement aimed at unleashing the power of generosity. GivingTuesday was created in 2012 as a simple idea: a day that encourages people to do good. Since then, it has grown into a year-round global movement that inspires hundreds of millions of people to give, collaborate, and celebrate generosity. Together, we can create a brighter future for all.

HSH IN THE COMMUNITY

LIGHT A CANDLE, LIGHT THE WAY

The holidays are the perfect time to remember that **Home Suite Hope** has formed a partnership with **Koa and Kind**, which is donating \$1 from every candle sold to HSH.

Koa & Kind is a local small business specializing in handcrafted home fragrances. It's deeply passionate about creating products that not only bring warmth and comfort to their customers' homes, but also give back in meaningful ways to the community around us.



Koa & Kind

For every candle you purchase, Koa & Kind will donate \$1 to Home Suite Hope, an organization supporting single-parent families in our community. Together, we can help bring light, stability, and hope to someone's life, one candle at a time. [Purchase candles here](#)

At Koa & Kind, the candles that are crafted are high-quality, safe, and eco-friendly home fragrances that use non-toxic ingredients. Their mission is to enhance your well-being and create scents that truly feel like home. They're dedicated to constant improvement, ensuring their products are safe for your family and the planet.

Koa & Kind, meaning "have courage and be kind," beautifully reflects the journey of Home Suite Hope's program participants — single parents who demonstrate incredible courage as they rebuild their lives, and who are met with compassion and support from a community that believes in kindness, dignity, and second chances.

Through this partnership, every candle sold lights more than a home—it lights the way for a brighter, more stable future for families overcoming homelessness.

Together, Koa & Kind and Home Suite Hope are creating a ripple effect of courage, kindness, and hope.

Visit koaandkind.ca



Sheridan



CHANGING THE PATTERNS OF POVERTY TO A LEGACY OF PROSPERITY