

APRIL 2026

- April 1 - Pesach (Passover – to April 9) (Judaism)
- April 2 - World Autism Awareness Day (UN)
- April 3 - Good Friday (Christian)
- April 5 - Easter (Christian); Qingming Festival (Confucian)
- April 6 - Easter Monday
- April 7 - World Health Day (UN)
- April 8 - International Day of Pink
- April 13 - Holocaust Remembrance Day Yom HaShoah
- April 14 - Baisakhi (New Year) (Sikh)
- April 28 - National Day of Mourning/World Day for Safety and Health at Work



APRIL 2026

Lives permanently changed for the better

HELLO GORGEOUS



HSH thanks **Fresh Kitchens + Juice Bar Oakville** for partnering with us throughout March to donate \$1 from each **Hello Gorgeous Powershake** sold during the month to HSH. We are so grateful to have been selected to participate with this fundraiser once again, thank you!

TICKETS TO HIGH TEA FOR HOPE

HSH's popular Luxury Bingo event is back! This year it has a twist...**High Tea for Hope** is set for Thursday, May 21 at Narenj. Get your tickets before they're sold out!

[Purchase Tickets to High Tea for Hope](#)

PARTICIPANT NEWS

MASTERCHEF-STYLE COOKING SOCIAL



HSH hosted Ignite & Inspire, a fun, MasterChef-inspired event for its program participants, in partnership with **Adecco**.

Two teams had 60 minutes to create a main dish – one protein, one vegetarian using the ingredients provided. All dishes had to contain one designated mystery ingredient, but the rest was up to the team and what their team runner could find in the shared pantry. Plates were judged on taste, creativity, presentation, teamwork and 'Hope Factor' – the story or inspiration behind the creation. One team was crowned MasterChef Champions but everyone had fun! Thanks to Adecco for sponsoring and participating in the event.



SPOTLIGHT ON PAST PARTICIPANT

MELISSA ESTABLISHED HER OWN BUSINESS

Melissa Filice is a Homeward Bound Halton alumni of Home Suite Hope who graduated in April 2022 from **Sheridan College's** Business Administration, Human Resources program. Since graduating, Melissa has gained HR experience supporting both startups and established organizations across a range of industries.

She recently launched her own business, **Practical People Co.**, where she provides fractional HR support and guidance to growing businesses that are not yet ready for a full-time HR hire. Her work focuses on helping small businesses build clear, compliant, and usable HR systems that support both their people and their growth.

Her journey has been shaped by a desire to build meaningful work that aligns with the life she is creating for herself and her son.



Melissa Filice
Founder, Practical People Co.
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www.practicalpeopleco.com



UWHH DONATES

HSH Caseworker Dayna Ramawad, Sheridan Social Service Work Intern Amber Dailey and Administrative Assistant Angela Blackburn filled the HSH truck with donations personal hygiene and household cleaning products from the **United Way Hamilton & Halton (UWHH)**. HSH is a UWHH-funded agency and is grateful that the UWHH shares its donations with its member agencies. These items are some of the most expensive on the grocery list for our program participants and are most welcome. **Thank you!**

A United Way Supported Agency



THANKS FOR THE DONATIONS

YORK UNIVERSITY: HYGIENE HAVEN



Home Suite Hope's Program Team members – Interim Director of Operations & Program Coordinator **Nikkian Hanson-Daley** and Program Coordinator/Content Creator **Madison Apold** headed to York University to pick up a generous donation of personal hygiene items from the student-led Hygiene Haven program. **Thank you!**

TECH FOR TEENS

Halton Tech for Teens recently donated five laptops for our participants. **HSH Caseworker Kennedy Apold** picked up the donations from Halton Tech for Teens organizer **Mike Denninger** in Burlington.

Founded in 2019, the charitable organization collects donated devices, securely wipes all data, sanitizes them and upgrades where possible to primarily support teens and their families dealing with difficult economic circumstances as well as other young people without resources to secure technology for college or university.

At times there are surplus devices, the organization may also provide them to individuals requiring devices for online learning opportunities; newcomers requiring devices to learn English as a Second Language (ESL); economically-challenged individuals seeking job or employment training and isolated seniors seeking to learn technology. Contact mike@haltontechforteens.ca or 905-320-1853. **Thank you!**



BOARD OF DIRECTORS NEWS

WELCOMING PATRICIA LIZARRALDE

We welcome **Patricia Lizarralde** as our newest Board of Directors member. Patricia is starting her term on the HSH Board as of April.

Patricia is a passionate Human Resources leader known for her strategic approach and expertise in business partnership, talent management, organizational effectiveness, employee engagement, coaching, and inclusion and diversity.

Over the course of her 30-year career in the technology, telecommunications, and health care industries, she has found her greatest fulfillment in helping people grow and in creating thoughtful, relevant talent management programs.

As a proud Colombian, Patricia runs on the world's finest coffee, fresh air from a good hike or bike ride, and adventures with her husband and three children.



THANK YOU JUDI



HSH extends its thanks to **Judi Hesp** for her work on the HSH Board of Directors and wishes her all the best as she moves forward. Judi brought more than two decades of People & Culture expertise to her role on the Board of Home Suite Home, driven by her passion for building inclusive, people-centered organizations.

As Chief People Officer at World Vision Canada, and with her Certified Human Resources Executive (CHRE) designation and experience spanning non-profit, retail, banking, mining, and consulting, Judi is recognized for her leadership in people strategy and driving cultural and digital transformations. In her role on the Home Suite Home Board, she looks forward to applying the same principles to further the organization's vision of creating welcoming, inclusive communities. Judi's leadership is rooted in her belief that empowering people is key to achieving meaningful and sustainable outcomes.

CHEERS TO VOLUNTEERS

VOLUNTEER WEEK: APRIL 19-25

National Volunteer Week 2026 in Ontario and across Canada is **April 19–25, 2026**. This year it celebrates the theme ‘**Ignite Volunteerism**’ to highlight the power of civic participation.

This year aligns with the UN’s International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development, aiming to rebuild, strengthen, and celebrate volunteer efforts nationwide.

Volunteers are part of Home Suite Hope’s daily routine - whether it’s through donations, lending a hand at our fundraising events, digging into our community garden Blueberry Fields or answering our call for special requests.

HSH is also fortunate to have a volunteer **Industry Council**, a group of senior executives from a variety of fields with decision-making authority who support the professional advancement of participants in our programs. They are representatives from organizations including private sector businesses, non-profit and public sector employers, community champions and representatives from employment services at the local college, municipality or community services organizations.

From helping our college graduates prepare their resumes, elevator pitches and interview techniques to providing feedback and networking connections, these volunteers assist our single parents prepare for and enter the workforce.

HSH is also fortunate to have another group of dedicated volunteers who serve on its **Board of Directors**. From steering the fundraising, governance, finance and human resources governance of HSH, these generous volunteers give of their time and talent.

HSH’s current Board as of April 2026 includes: **Emma Jarratt (Chair)**; **Nazeera Khan (Vice Chair)**; **Kevin Farrell (Treasurer)**; **Blake Hampton-Davies (Finance)**; **Julianna Varpalotei-Xavier (Finance)**; **Robyn Pangman (Finance)**; **Rose Sharifi (Governance)**; **Amanpreet Dhillon (Fundraising)**; **Lindsay Anderson (Fundraising)**; and, **Shalu Bains (Fundraising)**. **Judi Hesp (Governance)** just finished her term and **Patricia Lizarralde** is starting (**Governance/Human Resources**). A special shout-out to **Emily Milligan** who, while not on the HSH Board, sits on the HSH Fundraising Committee to share her expertise.

The Industry Council members currently include: **Hugo Breton**; **Bea Kwak**; **Cheryl Pitt**; **Mark McLaughlin**; **Audrey Bailey**; **Laura Edge**; **Melissa Bryant**; **Heather Charlton**; and, **Sheel Webber**.

For more information on volunteering with HSH or getting involved with our Board of Directors and Industry Council, please visit HomeSuiteHope.org.

Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers. We are so grateful for their time, talent and generosity.



INDUSTRY COUNCIL

WELCOMING HEATHER CHARLTON

We welcome **Heather Charlton** as a volunteer connector, coach and mentor with Home Suite Hope's **Industry Council**.

Heather is the People Experience Coordinator at Nurse Next Door, where she supports caregivers and staff by helping to foster a positive and supportive workplace culture.

In her role, she contributes to recruitment, onboarding, and employee engagement, ensuring team members feel valued and equipped to provide compassionate, high-quality care to clients in the community.

Heather was drawn to community-focused work through her passion for supporting people and building meaningful connections. She believes strongly in the power of collaboration and in creating opportunities that help individuals and families thrive.

Through her involvement on the industry Council, Heather is committed to contributing her perspective, supporting initiatives that strengthen the community, and helping create inclusive pathways that empower others to succeed.



WELCOMING SHEEL WEBBER



HSH's Industry Council is pleased to welcome **Sheel Webber** as a volunteer coach and mentor.

Sheel Webber has over 20 years of experience in HR and education, with a focus on career advancement for post-secondary business students at the University of Toronto. Her work includes one-on-one consulting, workshop development and facilitation, and building strong employer partnerships.

Sheel is most fulfilled through her volunteer work and enjoys collaborating creatively within her community. Her passion for supporting members of Home Suite Hope is rooted in her genuine joy of service.

STAFF NEWS

SARA HONOURED FOR IWD

International Women's Day (IWD) was Sunday, March 8 2026 and HSH Executive Director Dr. Sara Cumming was honoured as a nominee in the YWCA Hamilton's 2026 Women of Distinction Awards.

Hamilton and Halton community members nominated 73 exceptional women and girls across nine award categories. These leaders, innovators, and trailblazers are creating legacies that will shape the future of our community. Sara was nominated by **Adine Carter, Vice President, Corporate Affairs at ARGO Development Corp.** in the Public Service category, for exceptional dedication, innovation, and impact in her role serving the public good in the community.



A WORD FROM SARA

Thank you so much for this incredible honor of nomination. I am reminded that no one arrives at a moment like this alone. This recognition for public service reflects the strength, resilience, and generosity of the many women who have shaped my life and the countless women I've had the privilege to walk beside.

I arrived at this destination as the daughter of a 16-year-old single mother, and as the 22 year old girl already raising babies alone, who didn't always believe she belonged in academic spaces. I am here because of the mentors who saw possibility in me long before I did. These women reached back to lift me up and showed me that transformation is never an individual achievement — it is a community effort.

This award also belongs to the 118 single mothers who have gone through Home Suite Hope's program. These women are fierce, determined, and courageous — rebuilding their lives while holding their children's futures in their hands. They are a daily reminder that poverty is not a personal failing; it is a structural issue we must confront together.

I also want to acknowledge the hundreds of women in Kenya I've had the honour to work with — women fighting gender inequality at levels that are difficult for many of us in Canada to fully comprehend. Their strength, their leadership, and their refusal to be silenced are powerful lessons in resilience and resistance. They inspire me, and they deepen my commitment to global solidarity and equity.

To my nine remarkable female staff members — thank you for turning ideas into impact with compassion and integrity every single day. And to my four beautiful daughters, two of whom were with me last night — you have grown up watching me balance motherhood, scholarship, and community work. You are my grounding force, my motivation, and my greatest source of pride. And finally, a special thank you to Adine Carter from ARGO Development. Even after only recently collaborating, you took the time to write this nomination. That act of generosity reflects exactly what women supporting women looks like. This award nomination represents what becomes possible when determination meets community. When we lift one woman, we lift families, neighborhoods, and generations.

STAFF NEWS

IWD: HSH STAFF 'GIVES TO GAIN'



International Women's Day (IWD) was Sunday, March 8 2026 and HSH's all women staff enthusiastically spread awareness of the 2026 theme: 'Give To Gain.'

When we give, we gain, so together we can forge gender equality through abundant giving. The IWD 2026 Give To Gain Campaign encourages a mindset of generosity and collaboration.

It emphasizes the power of reciprocity and support. When people, organizations, and communities give generously, opportunities and support for women increase. Giving is not a subtraction, it's intentional multiplication.

When women thrive, we all rise.



STAFF UPDATES

SARA CELEBRATES ANNIVERSARY

Home Suite Hope is very fortunate to have **Dr. Sara Cumming** at the helm and today Sara celebrates her eighth anniversary in the role of Executive Director of HSH.

Sara is a Professor of Sociology at Sheridan College where she also serves on the Board of Governors. If you can keep up with her, Sara is also a published author and researcher with several research projects to her credit. Sara was raised by a single mom and was a single mother herself. She is now the proud mom of four grown daughters and a grandmother.

The HSH Team, program participants and the community are grateful for all the work Sara does on their behalf each and every day. Congratulations, Sara!



NEWS FROM SHERIDAN COLLEGE



If you missed it on social media posts, that is HSH Executive Director Sara Cumming next to **Sheridan College's President Dr. Cindy Gouveia**, who in March was officially sworn in as the ninth President and Vice Chancellor of Sheridan College. Dr. Gouveia assumed the role on January 8, 2026, and was officially inaugurated on March 10, 2026. She succeeds Dr. Janet Morrison, who was also an HSH mentor. Dr. Gouveia brings over 20 years of experience in education with a focus on equity, empathy, and student access to her role.

Sara is a Professor of Sociology in Sheridan College's Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, and is also on the Sheridan College Board of Governors. Sheridan College provides a two-year bursary to HSH participants through its Homeward Bound program.

PROGRAM UPDATE

PATHWAYS FORWARD

Home Suite Hope (HSH) is known for its signature Homeward Bound Halton program. This program houses and stabilizes single parents and their families as they face homelessness or precarious housing.

After stabilizing a family that includes housing, child care, academic upgrading, if needed, all with wraparound support and counselling, it moves a single parent into a two-year diploma program through a bursary at Sheridan College.

Upon graduation, up to a year of support for employment search connects a participant with employment that enables them to continue after HSH on a stable path for themselves and their families.

One of HSH's newest programs is **Pathways Forward**...made possible through grants from the **Robert Kerr Foundation** and the **Halo Fund**, a division of the **Minto Foundation**, offers similar support but in a different format.

Pathways Forward provides targeted wraparound supports to help single-parent families stabilize in housing while actively working toward education and employment goals.

It is designed for single parents who are ready to pursue education, training, or employment while receiving housing stabilization supports.

Participants receive wraparound support including intensive case management, life skills and professional development workshops, psychotherapy, and access to rental subsidy support.

The program also assists participants in maximizing community and income resources while working toward education and/or employment. Pathways Forward allows us to support families who may not fit the Homeward Bound Halton model but still require strong, structured support to achieve long-term stability and independence. Pathways Forward is open to single parents with at least one dependent in primary care.

For more information, visit HomeSuiteHope.org

Lives permanently changed for the better.

PATHWAYS FORWARD

Funded by:

  

Pathways Forward is a one-year program by Home Suite Hope supporting single-parent families in Halton Region to achieve stable housing, wellness, and meaningful employment.

Who is Eligible?	Program Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ 18 years of age or older✓ Single parent with up to three dependants✓ Motivated to pursue employment, education or training opportunities✓ Able to work in Canada or receive income supports✓ Able to maintain stable housing (*with or without a subsidy)✓ *Participants receiving a housing subsidy must live within Halton Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Stable and secure housing✓ Improved mental wellness and life stability✓ Enhanced life and financial management skills✓ Greater connection to community supports✓ Increased access to employment and training opportunities✓ Higher household income and long-term independence

Program Supports

Participants in Pathways Forward receive access to a range of individualized supports, including:

 Rental Subsidy up to \$1,200/month	 Bi-weekly 1:1 case management meetings	 Access to a registered psychotherapist	 Life Skills: Financial literacy, goal setting, parenting	 Resume help, mock interviews
 Vocational Certifications	 Peer networking & mentorship	 Technology & Transportation support		

905.339.2370 | Programs@HomeSuiteHope.org | HomeSuiteHope.org

HIGH TEA FOR HOPE MAY 21

Join us for **High Tea for Hope**, a beautiful evening of high tea, bingo, and exciting prizes in support of Home Suite Hope. This unique event brings our community together for a lively night filled with connection, laughter, and purpose — all while raising vital funds to help single-parent families move from homelessness to independence. Every ticket purchased helps provide housing, education, and support services that empower families to build stable, hopeful futures.

Date: Thursday, May 21, 2026

Time: 6:00 PM – 9:30 PM

Location: Narenj Oakville

Ticket Price: \$100

Your ticket gives you a full evening experience:

- Elegant high tea service featuring tea, two appetizers, and two desserts
- 10 rounds of bingo. Each round played with three bingo cards
- Bingo dauber
- Curated swag bag
- Raffle entry for a chance to win tickets to our popular Empty Bowls event
- Live string ensemble music
- Opportunities to win exciting prizes throughout the evening
- Tickets eligible for a tax receipt

**Additional bingo sheets will be available for purchase to increase your chances of winning*

Evening Schedule

6 p.m. – Doors Open; Welcome reception, guest check-in, raffle sales, and socializing

6:45 p.m. – Welcome Remarks & High Tea Service Begins

7:00 p.m. – Bingo Begins: Five rounds followed by a brief intermission

Intermission

Opportunity to purchase extra bingo sheets and raffle draw

8:05 p.m. - Second Half of Bingo

Grand Prize Blackout Round

9:00 p.m. – Closing & Winner Photos



*Dress Code: Garden party/Spring chic
Feel free to embrace the elegant atmosphere and
dress up for the evening!*

[Purchase tickets to High Tea for Hope](#)

FUNDRAISING UPDATE

HELLO GORGEOUS!

Fresh Kitchens + Juice Bar Oakville in downtown Oakville partnered with Home Suite Hope for the month of March. It donated \$1 from each **Hello Gorgeous Powershake** sold during the month to HSH.

We are so honoured to have been selected to participate with this fundraiser once again. **Thank you!**



NEW: COUNTRY ROADS TAKE ME HOME



**COMING JUNE 14
AT THE RANCH**

Join HSH for a family-friendly, country-themed fundraising celebration featuring live music, line dancing lessons, a southern barbecue and kids' activities.

This heartwarming community event will bring together neighbours, families and businesses - all in support of housing stability for single-parent families in need.

More to come...

FUNDRAISING UPDATE

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

HSH has a **2026 Sponsorship Package** with which it is reaching out to the corporate community as well as service clubs, local organizations and others upon whom we depend to carry out our mission. As one of Halton's nonprofit agencies, we rely on fundraising and grants

Our new package outlines who we are, what we do, how we do it - and why. It also outlines our success story - but that's a story not possible without community engagement. We know that.

Please connect with our **Fundraising and Events Coordinator Katelyn Zaoral** if you would like to get involved or simply find out more about us and how you can help - whether it's financial support or



[View HSH 2026 Sponsorship](#)

[Contact Katelyn](#)

WISHING OUR STUDENTS THE BEST

HSH sends its best wishes and heartfelt thanks to Alison Charlton and Amber Dailey, two Social Service Work (SSW) program interns from Sheridan College who spent the school year doing their practicums with HSH.

Their friendly faces and hard work were much appreciated by the entire team. Both are graduating this spring and we wish them all the very best on their future journey in academic pursuits and the job market.



Amber was a teen mom raised by a single mother in a marginalized community, so she has first-hand experience with the barriers and challenges that arise when resources are limited or inaccessible.

Meanwhile Alison is a second career student, with a background in economics from Queen's University and a career spent primarily in risk management and process improvement design. She was heavily influenced by her father who worked in the social services field and is following that passion remembering that not everyone starts out on equal footing, and that compassionate community-based support can make a profound difference.

HOUSING UPDATE

A special invitation to Homeowners and Faith Leaders!

The single mothers and their children supported by Halton Women's Place and Home Suite Hope are in need of safe secure and affordable housing. Haven to Home is an initiative focused on housing solutions for the families they serve!

By-laws in Burlington and throughout Halton Region are evolving to allow more housing on existing residential properties and faith properties!

Could your backyard or under-utilized land be a future home to one or more of our families?

Please join us in person on Monday, May 11, 2026 at Port Nelson Church 3132 South Drive in Burlington L7N 1H7 from 7:00 PM- 9:00 PM (doors open at 6:30 PM) and discover how you can benefit from these new zoning and by-law allowances!

Homeowners:

You can now create up to three legal Additional Residential Units (ARU's) on your property! New enhancements to these allowances give you more choices than ever before. Find out how these options can be solutions to aging in place; meeting your family's affordable housing needs (rental and ownership); and/or provide homes for the families our agencies support!

You grow the equity of your property, generate positive monthly cash flow and help to create more diverse and vibrant neighbourhoods!

A new home in a Burlington backyard!



38 homes for seniors built on an empty parking lot!

Faith Leaders:

Studies suggest one third of the 27,000 faith properties in Canada could close in the next decade (SFU Renewable Cities Report). Creating multi-unit homes on your property(ies) could provide a new revenue stream and mission to grow your congregation in meaningful and sustainable ways! Join us to discover how faith groups from coast to coast have created housing on their properties and met and exceeded their expectations! Perhaps some of the housing you create will provide homes for the families we serve!

This free event is being facilitated by the Halton Faith Network on Monday, May 11, 2026 from 7-9 PM at Port Nelson Church, 3132 South Dr, Burlington L7N 1H7

Please RSVP at HaltonFaithNetwork@gmail.com or by calling 416-459-2730.

We look forward to everyone attending this innovative information session! See you there!!

HSH IN THE COMMUNITY

Light a Candle,
Light a Way



**SPRING COLLECTION
NOW LIVE!**

With every candle you purchase,
\$1 is donated to support single
parents & their children.
Because when you light a candle,
you light a way for someone in
need.

HOME SUITE
HOPE

&

Koa & Kind

[Join Koa & Kind's newsletter](#)



Sheridan



CHANGING THE PATTERNS OF POVERTY TO A LEGACY OF PROSPERITY