

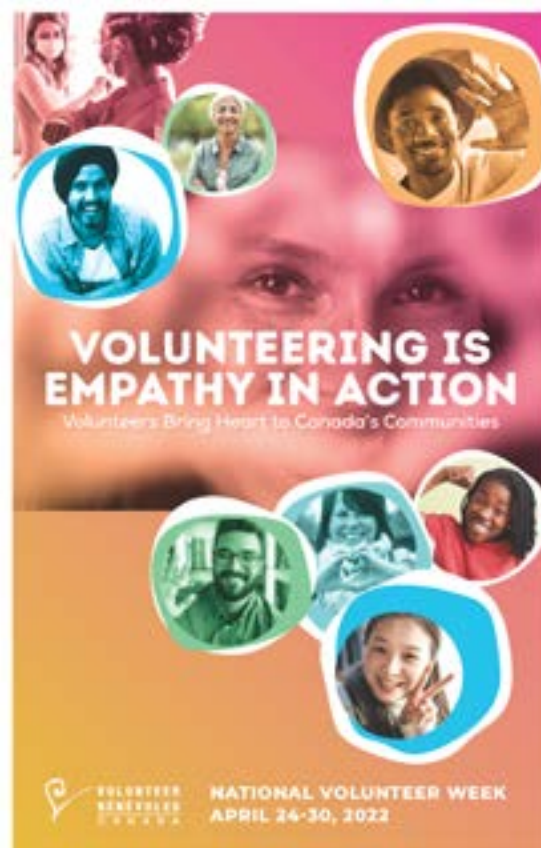
### APRIL 2022

April 1 – Hindu New Year  
April 2 – World Autism Awareness Day; Ramadan Begins (Islam)  
April 7 – World Health Day  
April 10 – Palm Sunday (Christian)  
April 13 – International Day of Pink  
April 14 – Baisakhi (New Year) (Sikh); Mahavir Jayanti (Jain)  
April 15 – Good Friday (Christian)  
April 15 – Pesach (Passover – to April 23) (Judaism)  
April 17 – Easter (Christian);  
April 18 – Easter Monday  
April 22 – Earth Day  
April 28 – National Day of Mourning; World Day for Safety and Health at Work

## CELEBRATING VOLUNTEERS

April 24-30, 2022 is National Volunteer Week in Canada. This year's focus is Volunteering is Empathy in Action. The empathy, compassion and generosity of volunteers creates connected communities and builds a stronger Canada.

Home Suite Hope celebrates the many volunteers – corporate and individual – who help us assist single-parent families move from homelessness and poverty to stability. In this edition of our newsletter, we spotlight just a few of those who help out - as well as sharing the impact they have on our families.



## HSH IN VIDEOS AND IN THE NEWS

HSH has released numerous videos about the important work it does and its Executive Director Sara Cumming was recently featured on **Cogeco TV's Oakville Matters** episode **Affordable & Assisted Housing**: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9RR9TiHJZhk&t=183s&ab\\_channel=YourTVHalton](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9RR9TiHJZhk&t=183s&ab_channel=YourTVHalton)

**HSH's Virtual Life Skills**: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFFsKHd6sa0&t=3s>

**HSH's Partners in Change**: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jf16plBKT7w>

**HSH's Empty Bowls at Home**: <https://youtu.be/cXZTOc9vXjo>

**HSH's Affordable Housing Campaign**: <https://youtu.be/-DV7fSjefwc>

**SEE INSIDE: HSH featured on the Oakville Chamber of Commerce's Meet The Members**

# NEW CANADIAN CITIZENS!

**H**SH participant Robin and her daughter Leanne officially became Canadian citizens in March. This was an incredible achievement for Robin, who is searching for an internship opportunity in IT as she journeys from poverty to stability through HSH's four-year Homeward Bound Halton program.

Robin grew up on the Island of Antigua, and moved to Canada in 2014 - four years after having her daughter who lives with Cerebral Palsy and uses a wheelchair.

"We arrived in Canada in November 2014 without a plan of how we'd stay in the country. My reason for moving was based on my daughter's medical condition. In 2015, we applied for permanent residency and maintained our visitor status until our PR application was approved in December 2018. The years of waiting for our permanent residence were very challenging in every way. Not being able to work for such a long time caused a lot of financial hardship for me and my family in Antigua, who were trying their best to support us. I was told by many, including immigration lawyers, medical professionals and personnel, who worked closely with government officials, that becoming a permanent resident was not possible because of my daughter's condition. So becoming a citizen of this country is way more than I thought could be possible for us. In 2021, I applied for citizenship and became Canadian Citizens in March 2022," said Robin.



From living in an unfinished basement, hotels and friends, Robin found a basement apartment and carried her daughter and her wheelchair up and down stairs for years. Then Robin was introduced to HSH.

"My favourite thing about being attached to Home Suite Hope is knowing there are dedicated staff working to give me the tools and guidance needed to ensure I become independent and able to provide for my home. I hope to secure employment in the IT field, and five years from now, would like to have full-time employment and be able to start saving to purchase or build a fully-accessible home and vehicle, said Robin.

"I'm in Sheridan College's Computer Systems Technician – Software Engineering program. This course takes me through the complete development cycle of creating an application, including research done before development, coding, testing of the app, deployment and maintenance, etc. Other core skills I will acquire are programming and software development in Java, C and C#, web technologies and web application development, database management and administration and network administration and security. Unfortunately, the course does not have a co-op, and I am eager to start putting the skills I have learned so far to use through a summer internship.

"HSH is very unique. It's about guiding us through this stage of our lives. Being a part of this journey goes beyond the value of a coin. It enriches the lives of all who are involved, said Robin.

# BUILDING ON SUCCESS

## LANDING THAT SUMMER INTERNSHIP

Last August, Home Suite Hope participant Monell looked on feeling 'beyond proud' as her daughter Kyjuana was awarded the 2021 William G. Davis Scholarship by FCT Canada.



Photo Courtesy FCT

For numerous years, FCT has presented the scholarship in partnership with HSH.

Now, Kyjuana has landed a summer internship with FCT.

Kyjuana has a keen interest in law, both Canadian and international, and a history of community involvement and leadership at school and in her church. Kyjuana said receiving the scholarship made her feel special.

Kyjuana speaks four languages including French, Spanish and Korean, in the hopes that she can eventually reach more individuals around the world. She is studying political science at Western University.

*Home Suite Hope is grateful for the support **FCT Canada** has provided through the annual scholarship it offers to a child of an HSH participant parent.*

*For the last three years, FCT has presented the William G. Davis Scholarship in partnership with HSH. The scholarship is named for the late Honourable William G. Davis, a chairman of FCT's board, former education minister and Ontario's 18th Premier, and since its inception in 2015, reflects his passion for education and investing in youth.*

*HSH also thanks **St. Jude's Anglican Church**, which supports a runner-up recognition in HSH's annual scholarship call-out to participants' children.*

*Businesses, community groups and individuals who would like to get involved with a scholarship program can contact [krystalv@homesuitehope.org](mailto:krystalv@homesuitehope.org).*

# STAFF NEWS: LEAH'S SHOWER



## CONGRATULATIONS LEAH & DAN

Shh... HSH staff surprised Case Manager Leah B. with a wedding shower graciously organized and hosted by HSH Executive Director Sara Cumming and catered by Angela from Sweet Oven Niagara. HSH sends much love to Leah and Dan on their journey!



# PARTNER IN CHANGE

## MARK MCLAUGHLIN

Retired Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) Mark McLaughlin likes to play tennis, windsurf and paddle, but says he really only needs a few T-shirts and a pair of shorts to do so – so he’s investing some of his ‘retirement spending money’ to becoming an HSH Partner in Change.



HSH has partners in the roughly \$48,075 per family annual cost of this program – from Halton Region, Sheridan College, the Oakville YMCA and the Oakville Community Foundation, to individual donors and corporations like Sagen. Still, the bottom line shows a \$9,534 funding gap – so Mark is stepping in to cover that gap over four years as one of HSH’s newest Partners in Change. “The concept of investing in an individual with a family and the group of experienced HSH staff and their success rate sounded like a pretty good return to me,” said Mark.

Read Mark’s story at <https://homesuitehope.org/2021/06/11/new-partner-invests-in-home-suite-hope-single-parent-families/>

# CORPORATE PARTNERS

## SAGEN CANADA

As early as 2014, Sagen (formerly Genworth Canada), had a solid partnership with HSH.

Besides the Sagen team rolling up their sleeves in HSH’s Blueberry Fields Community Garden, in 2017, Sagen was an event partner in the Sleep in Your Car for Hope 2017: Oakville Cares event. Sagen committed \$25,000 in corporate financial support of HSH in 2021-22 and took on the Back-to-School Campaign, providing backpacks full of

supplies for back to school. Sagen is also behind a Back-to-School Laptop Loaner Program, HSH’s Sagen Savings Program – a four-part Virtual Life Skills Module for college graduates moving into employment, and a Sagen Matching Incentive Program offering new graduates up to \$1,000 during their first year after graduating from HSH’s programs.

For more about Sagen, visit [www.sagen.ca](http://www.sagen.ca).



# CORPORATE VOLUNTEERS

## IAN MARTIN GROUP - SYDNEY WESTON

**A** chance meeting in 2018 at Home Suite Hope's community garden, Blueberry Fields, laid the seeds of a partnership between Home Suite Hope and Ian Martin Group that has blossomed.

When Ian Martin Group's Sydney Weston, Stewardship Council member and HSH liaison, saw her coworkers' response to the garden volunteer opportunity, she knew Ian Martin Group had made

a connection. Now, an official corporate partner of HSH's, Ian Martin Group has continued seeing its employees volunteer at Blueberry Fields – there is often a wait list. For two years, HSH has successfully applied and won a grant from Ian Martin Group's North America Foundation, The Meaningful Work Foundation. Ian Martin Group invests 10 per cent of its North American profits into grants administered by its foundation worldwide.

Ian Martin Group employees were also busy for B-Corp Week, not only rolling up sleeves in Blueberry Fields, but also launching the Ian Martin Basic Needs Program, which Sydney anticipates becoming a quarterly effort. The company and its employees worked with Kits for a Cause to purchase, assemble and then deliver Summer Survival Kits to HSH single-parent participants and their families.

This year will also mark the second that Ian Martin Group is involved in HSH's signature fundraiser Empty Bowls. Last year, company employees were in the warehouse packing and then helping deliver soup kits over a late October weekend as HSH co-hosted its COVID-19 edition of the fundraiser, Empty Bowls at Home.

Most recently, Ian Martin Group has become a Partner in Change, supporting the nearly \$10,000 funding gap in the \$48,000 annual cost of supporting a single parent-led family through a four-year journey from poverty to stability. Sydney also volunteers on the HSH Industry Council.

Read Ian Martin Group's story at <https://homesuitehope.org/2021/07/30/ian-martin-group-and-home-suite-hope-work-well-together/>



# FUNDRAISING FRIEND

## PETER KOLISNYK

The idea of not giving someone a fish, but teaching them to fish is what first attracted Peter Kolisnyk, an Engel & Völkers real estate broker, to Home Suite Hope (HSH). More than a decade later – after agreeing to join HSH as Interim Executive Director and later serving as Board Chair – Peter is proud to see that HSH not only survived but thrives.

Peter took the lead on a major restructuring and drastic changes that put HSH on solid ground. He also joined the HSH board serving as Chair and Past-Chair for the better part of a decade. He tackled the Ironman Muskoka and raised \$10,000 above his \$50,000 goal for HSH. He then raised another \$40,000 in a Sleep in Your Car event that saw him sleep in a car for seven nights. Two subsequent Sleep in Your Car events, hosted at the YMCA of Oakville and the Infinity Oakville car dealership, also raised significant funds for HSH.



Read Peter's story at <https://homesuitehope.org/2022/02/25/hsh-supporter-peter-kolisnyk/>

# EMPTY BOWLS ORGANIZER



## CINDY PERRAS

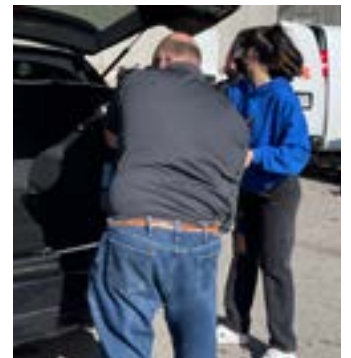
Long-time Oakville resident Cindy Perras enjoyed Empty Bowls when she first attended HSH's signature fundraising event that replicates a communal soup kitchen. She was inspired to get involved upon hearing how HSH helps change the trajectory of single parents' lives and those of their children, away from poverty.

Helping those in need in the community and organizing special events are the significant talents Cindy, an independent event planner and special education consultant, has invested in HSH and Empty Bowls – and HSH is so grateful.

"I firmly believe in the mission of Home Suite Hope, 'to unite a network of vital support services for our families on their journey from poverty to stability' and I am very proud to be involved," said Cindy.

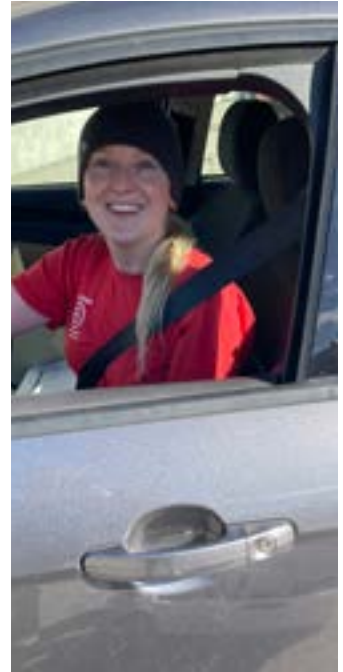
Read Cindy's story at <https://homesuitehope.org/2021/04/23/volunteer-inspired-to-make-a-difference-through-empty-bowls/>

# VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION





# VOLUNTEERS AT WORK



# OCC MEMBERS MEET HSH



## GETTING TO KNOW HSH

**H**SH Director of Development Krystal Valencia was featured on the March 17 Oakville Chamber of Commerce Meet The Members.

Krystal is a great ambassador for HSH and shared the story of HSH with the Chamber. Krystal shared lots about HSH including the fact that 91% of students who completed HSH's Homeward Bound Halton scholarship program exited with employment!

HSH participants can study academics or take part in the Jill-of-All-Trades skilled trades programs. Participants also get the opportunity to do internships with local companies, many of whom partner with HSH. In 2021, HSH served 49 families, 29 single parents and 74 children.

Here's where you can watch the video:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/oakvillechamber/videos/3131354547111289>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CbNmKhxu3IK/>

YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndH\\_VBui7xg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndH_VBui7xg)

Website: <https://oakvillechamber.com/videos/#/lightbox&slide=1>



## HELP US PLAN OUR JUNE AGM

**H**ome Suite Hope has begun planning for the Annual General Meeting that will be held this June 2022. Help us determine if we should host the meeting online or in-person by voting through the survey link below:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DVY3FLP>

# GET INVOLVED WITH HSH

## TAKE IN A CONCERT

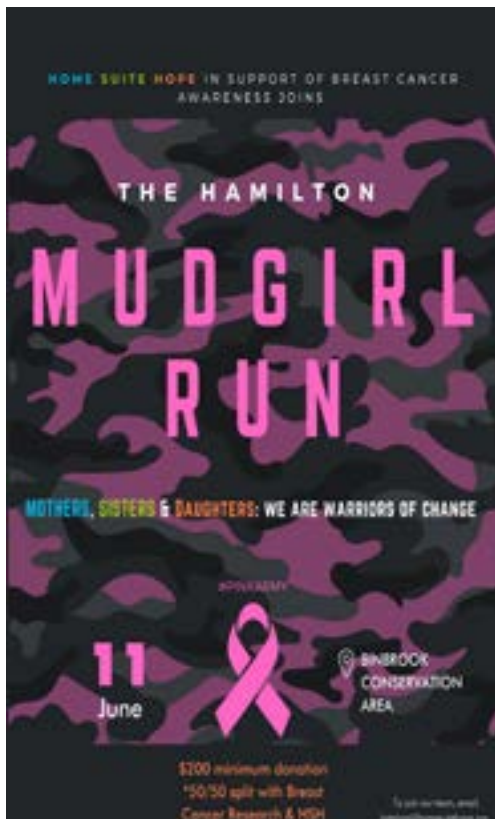
The Burlington Welsh Male Chorus will be raising funds for Flight for Hope/Home Suite Hope with a concert to be held May 4 at 7:30 p.m. at the Oakville Performing Arts Centre. "Bringing the sound of Wales to Oakville." It's their first concert in two years!

Tickets are available at <https://www.oakvillecentre.ca>

The Burlington Welsh Male Chorus (BWMC) was founded in June 2001 by Lyn Harry. The BWMC sing, in keeping with the tradition of Welsh four-part Male Chorus, and performs Welsh folk songs and hymns, to opera choruses, spirituals and musical numbers. <https://burlingtonwelsh.com>



# JOIN OUR MUDGIRL TEAM



Step up to the challenge by joining Home Suite Hope's MUDGIRL Run team in 2022. Get ready for an all-inclusive, 5km (about 3 miles) race, consisting of 17-plus obstacles to overcome. The course is committed to testing your strength, endurance and above all, your spirit.

There is no timing and no obligation to complete all the obstacles. You are competing for the sole purpose of having fun and having a great experience, regardless of your athletic ability.

MUDGIRL Hamilton is Saturday, June 11, 2022. MUDGIRL Village Opens at 7:45 a.m. with waves of competition beginning at 8:30 a.m. and taking off every 15 minutes until 1 p.m. The Challenge takes place at 3120 Binbrook Rd., Binbrook, Ontario with parking at the Binbrook Agricultural Society.

For more info, visit <https://register-en.mudgirlrun.ca/event/mudgirl-hamilton-sun>.

You can also contact HSH at [info@homesuitehope.org](mailto:info@homesuitehope.org) or [katelynz@homesuitehope.org](mailto:katelynz@homesuitehope.org).

# DO YOU WANT TO HELP?

## LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES - FOR EVERYONE

### **Blueberry Fields Community Garden (Seasonal) - May through October**

Volunteers work in the community garden doing weeding, planting, harvesting, etc. spring through September.

### **Empty Bowls Annual Fundraiser – mid-to-late October**

Volunteers help packing soup kits prior to delivery and/or help in delivering soups according to predetermined routes.

### **Hope4Holidays Annual Holiday Fundraiser – late November to mid- December**

Volunteer groups could sponsor a family by purchasing gifts for family members as outlined on a wish list from the family or help with gift wrapping gifts prior to delivery.

### **Calls to Action**

Groups can assist with specific calls to action, as needed, to meet needs that arise ie. Collection of toiletries, cleaning supplies, gift cards.

### **Life Skills Facilitators**

We welcome experienced individuals to create a pre-recorded video workshop for a range of essential life skills, including food literacy, financial literacy, household chores, parenting, and more!

### **Professional Development Day Facilitators**

We welcome experienced individuals to develop a pre-recorded video or facilitate a live half-day workshop on professional development topics such as LinkedIn/Social Media platforms when job searching; how to ask for a salary and negotiate job offers/positions; how to prepare an elevator pitch; how to read your pay stub; understanding corporate benefit packages, and more!

**CALLING FOR VOLUNTEERS**

**BLUEBERRY FIELDS GARDEN**  
May - September  
- Prepare Garden  
- Plant Garden  
- Maintenance of garden in growth season (weeding, etc.)  
- Harvest  
- Garden Prep for Winter

**EMPTY BOWLS 2022**  
Mid-to-late October  
- Soup Delivery  
- Event Set-up/Takedown  
- Service at Event

**HOPE 4 HOLIDAYS**  
Late November - mid-December  
- Gift Wrapping

For more information on volunteering, please contact:  
[volunteers@homesuitehope.org](mailto:volunteers@homesuitehope.org)

**HOME SUITE HOPE**

# EVERYONE WELCOME AT HSH

## Mentorship

Our mentoring program connects our eager single parents with community members who want to see them succeed. Home Suite Hope's mentoring program started with its Homeward Bound Halton program as a means to help students network and prepare for their new careers. We believe mentoring – professional or informal – helps empower people by providing positive models and networking opportunities.

## Industry Council

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 community and representatives from employment services at the local college, municipality or community services organization.

## For information, please contact the following:

HSH Volunteer Coordinator Kinda Jazeh at [volunteers@homesuitehope.org](mailto:volunteers@homesuitehope.org)

HSH Administrative Assistant Angela Blackburn at [info@homesuitehope.org](mailto:info@homesuitehope.org) or [angelab@homesuitehope.org](mailto:angelab@homesuitehope.org)

# FAMILY RETREAT



**H**ome Suite Hope is offering its single-parent families a Cabin Retreat Experience, June 24-26, 2022.

HSH's Cabin Retreat 2022 will be hosted by Penbrook Resort at 7 Nulty Lane in Emsdale, Ontario.

HSH is grateful to Penbrook Resort (@penbrookresort) owners Bill and Debbie McAlpine as gracious hosts to our single-parent families.

The resort is owned by the parents of HSH's Sarah Gillen's fiancé Taylor and is situated on beautiful Deer Lake.

Our families are looking forward to the adventure of the year and HSH is so grateful to the McAlpines for their generosity. Thank you! For information about sponsoring families for transportation to the retreat, contact [katelynz@homesuitehope.org](mailto:katelynz@homesuitehope.org).

# VOLUNTEERING WITH HSH

## MEET HSH'S VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

**K**inda Jazeh grew up in a happy, humble environment in Aleppo, Syria, famed for being the oldest, continuously-inhabited city in the world.

Kinda, who studied business management in Syria and again at Sheridan College in Oakville, now lives in Oakville and is an Administrative Assistant at Golf Canada.



Coming from Syria, golf was a new sport for Kinda, who recalls watching the RBC Open Tournament at Glen Abbey Golf Club in 2018 on TV, never thinking that the following year she'd be at the event as one of the admin team members. Kinda likes playing cards and cooking for her family, drawing on her international experience. She was first introduced to HSH when she met France Fournier during an Oakville Chamber of Commerce event. She also met Sharon Richardson who asked her to take over the responsibilities of coordinating the volunteers.

The help HSH gives to single parents was a major factor that attracted Kinda to join HSH. As a mother she knows the challenges families face while raising children – and appreciates what it must be like for a single parent.

For information about volunteering, contact Kinda at [volunteers@homesuitehope.org](mailto:volunteers@homesuitehope.org)

## WATCH FOR HSH'S ANNUAL APPRECIATION REPORT

**I**n conjunction with National Volunteer Week, HSH will be publishing its annual Appreciation Report later this month.

It will be emailed to all regular newsletter subscribers and posted on our website, so stay tuned!

<https://homesuitehope.org/>



Sheridan



SAGEN™

*CHANGING THE PATTERNS OF POVERTY TO A LEGACY OF PROSPERITY*