

FEBRUARY 2022

Black History Month

February 1 – Chinese New Year (Confucian, Daoist, Buddhist)

February 3 – Setsubun-sai (Shinto)

February 14 – Valentine's Day

February 16 – Magha Puja Day (Buddhism)

February 21 – Family Day

February 20 – World Day of Social Justice (UN)

February 21 – International Mother Language Day (UN)

HOUSING SUPPLY CHALLENGE

Home Suite Hope is taking action to help make a positive change in the housing crisis in Halton.

As housing costs skyrocket – both rental and ownership – in Ontario, and especially across Halton, graduates of HSH's Homeward Bound Halton program are finding it increasingly challenging to afford housing despite having completed a post-secondary education and working full-time. The issue is challenging and HSH is rising to that challenge.

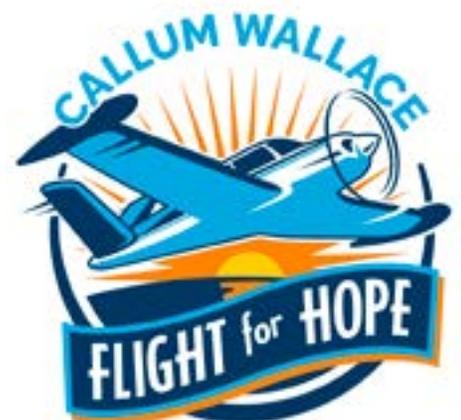
Please see inside for an update from HSH Director of Development Krystal Valencia.



OAKVILLE PILOT FUNDRAISING FOR HSH

Callum Wallace will fly from Burlington Executive Airport later this year, setting out to become the fourth Canadian in history to solo-circumnavigate the world in a small, single-engine, aircraft. The event will take approximately two-and-a-half months and everyone will have the opportunity to be involved and follow along via live tracking on the [Flight for Hope](#) website.

It's also Callum's goal for Flight for Hope to raise \$1 million for Home Suite Hope so that HSH can leverage government funding to acquire affordable housing for its participants.



HSH among 29 successful applicants in Challenge

UPDATE FROM KRYSTAL:

Home Suite Hope is one of 29 successful applicants across Canada to receive the Stage 1 Funding for New Construction in the CMHC-led Housing Supply Challenge.

The Housing Supply Challenge was announced in the 2019 federal budget with the overarching objective of reducing barriers to housing supply and affordability.

Working to achieve CMHC's (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation) corporate aspiration, that by 2030, everyone in Canada has a home they can afford and that meets their needs, the Challenge offers up to \$300 million in funding for new ideas and solutions that will help more people find an affordable place to call home.

HSH has received \$75K to plan a prototype to determine Housing Needs and Affordability for Single-Parent-Led Families. This is a client-informed approach to both creating a standardized process for collecting qualitative data in support of Affordable Housing for Single-Parent Families, and conducting a housing feasibility study.

HSH is now working on Stage 2 of the challenge – due April 27, 2022 – in hopes of winning a portion of \$37.5M available to pay architects and construction project management companies to implement the housing project as our first 'prototype.' It's a daunting grant and a process for which HSH is conducting a Housing Feasibility study. The Housing Supply Challenge will, through a series of barrier-specific rounds, incentivize and reward a diverse portfolio of solutions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of equitable access to housing. Solutions generated in the Housing Supply Challenge have the potential to play an important role to ensure a smooth economic recovery while improving the well-being of all Canadians.

HSH's Director of Development Krystal Valencia is taking the lead for HSH on this project – backed by as much support and expert advice as she can draw upon. HSH is also involved in fundraising for its housing project in a couple of ways. It is engaging in a capital campaign and has been identified as a beneficiary of Oakville resident Callum Wallace's fundraising Flight for Hope. (www.flightforhope.com). Watch HSH's Affordable Housing video: <https://youtu.be/-DV7fSjefwc>



DID YOU KNOW?

HSH stats are finalized for 2021...

In 2021, HSH served 34 families, six new families.

AGE:

The **average age of participants was 32**. In the **Homeward Bound Halton program their average age is 32** while it's **22 in Homeward Bound Halton Youth**. Thirty-eight percent of all participants served are aged 30 and under.

NUMBER OF CHILDREN:

76% of participants have one child - 15% have two children; 6% have three children and 3% have four children.



EDUCATION:

Two participants graduated last year in **Business/Accounting and Human Resources**. **Nine participants completed Academic Upgrading; 10 started first year of post-secondary education and three started their second year.**



DEMOGRAPHICS:

64% of participants identified as an individual who experience mental health challenges; 23% identified as racialized; 41% identified as being a parent of a racialized child; and, 41% identified as being a parent of a child that experiences physical and/or mental health barriers.



GEOGRAPHIC:

Most participant reside in Oakville, Burlington and Milton with **46% in Oakville, 29% in Burlington, and 15% in Milton**



SUPPORT:

An average of 54 case management meetings are held each month.

38 employees from Sheridan College were **mentors** to HSH participants.



12 Industry Council members were **advised and networked on behalf of HSH participants.**

HSH has 11 board members - 36% of whom are racialized; and, 64% women.

DID YOU KNOW?

INCOME:

The **average monthly income of HSH participants** (Ontario Works and Child Tax Credit) is **\$2,151.41**.



RENT:

The **average monthly rents** paid by participants is **\$1,390 (one bedroom); \$1,333.45 (two bedroom); and \$1,912.50 (three bedroom)**.



With the average monthly income of \$2,151/month, **65% of a participant's monthly income is allocated to rental costs** if they reside **in a one-bedroom unit**. This leaves approximately \$761 to cover the costs of utilities, food, transportation, saving, and other needs.

HOUSING STATUS UPON INTAKE:

67% of Homeward Bound Halton participants were **homeless or precariously-housed** upon intake while **57% of Homeward Bound Halton Youth** participants **were homeless or precariously-housed** upon intake.



57% of Homeward Bound Halton Youth participants **had less than high school education** upon intake while **43% had their high school diploma (or equivalent)**.

HBH and SFH participants are studying in the following fields: **software engineering, computer programming, executive administration, community justice services, personal support worker, human resources**.

ON THE ROAD TO STABILITY

Four participants completed the Homeward Bound Halton program in 2021.

All exited with employment (75% with full-time employment) and all are working in their field of education.



The average annual starting salary is \$33,200.

Seventy-five percent are able to handle market rent with reduced social assistance and 25 percent are able to handle market rent independently.

BOARD UPDATES

HSH AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE

HSH has established an **Affordable Housing Committee** that reports to the HSH board.

The committee has been meeting to guide and support HSH's participation in the **Housing Supply Challenge**. Committee members bring a variety of expertise to the discussion to assist in informing and supporting HSH Executive Director Sara Cumming and HSH Development Director Krystal Valencia, who is taking the lead on the Housing Supply Challenge.

Joining Sara and Krystal on the HSH Affordable Housing Committee are: **Blake Hampton-Davies, Chuck Scott, Melani Bastians, Mark Shufflebottom and HSH Treasurer Lisa Garland.**



HSH Executive Director
Sara Cumming



HSH Development
Director
Krystal Valencia

STAFF NEWS

2022 began with **Sarah Gillen** stepping into a new role as **Program Coordinator** at HSH. Sarah took over **Life Skills and Outreach** at HSH in 2021.

Some of you may remember Sarah as she worked in a number of capacities at Home Suite Hope over the last three years. Sarah did her Bachelor's of Social Work placement at HSH and then stayed on in a number of contracts until she left us to complete her Bachelor's of Education (Teacher's College). As a registered social worker and certified teacher, we have no doubt that Sarah will excel in this new role. Sarah also has her own counselling practice. **Congratulations, Sarah!**



Sarah Gillen



Katelyn Zaoral

HSH welcomes **Katelyn Zaoral** to the role of **Fundraising Assistant**. Katelyn will be assisting HSH Director of Development Krystal Valencia with fundraising, grant writing, and event planning.

Katelyn is a Humber College-Event Management student ready to make a positive impact at HSH and on the communities it serves. With a passion for event planning, she hopes to bring innovative and creative ways to help raise funds to better serve the HSH community.

In her free time, Katelyn enjoys spending time with family and friends, playing ringette, interior decorating, and playing with her two fur babies, Archie and Bowie. **Welcome Katelyn!**

A DONOR'S PERSPECTIVE

NANCY ROBERTSON SUPPORTS HSH

Oakville resident and Realtor **Nancy Robertson** has a lengthy list of community involvement to her credit, but it was her passion of connecting people with a home that made her realize how important finding a place to call home must be for those facing homelessness.

While her interest in Home Suite Hope is a long-standing one, when Nancy started her real estate business, she realized the tie-in to the business - the need to have a secure, safe, comfortable home – made the connection even more real.

“Having a home is so important, both psychologically and emotionally,” said Nancy, a partner in The Robertson Kadwell Group.

Born in Montreal and raised in Cambridge, Ontario, Nancy moved to Vancouver, B.C.

after marrying, but returned to Ontario and to Oakville 22 years ago. Throughout her life, Nancy has had a home, education, a career and even established a successful business so she has never known the ravages of poverty. Still, the concept of connecting people with a home is a passion that drives her business life.

Nancy attended one of the first Empty Bowls events at Appleby College and the event resonated with her then, long before she was a realtor. The HSH concept of providing education and support for single parents to change the trajectory of their lives from poverty and homelessness to employment and stability appeals “because lasting success endures if the participants are fully invested as well.”

Nancy helped sell tickets to the event in the following years. She even joined the HSH board in the mid-2000s, but had to leave as another community project – fighting a proposed power plant in her neighbourhood - began to consume great quantities of her time and energy.

Nancy continued creating awareness of HSH over the years, and continued as a big booster helping sell tickets to Empty Bowls until the pandemic created the at-home version of the event and ticket sales went online.



Nancy Robertson



Oakville based Realtors serving Milton, Hamilton, Cambridge & Toronto



A DONOR'S PERSPECTIVE

UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES

About 14 years ago, life abruptly changed for the Robertson Kadwell family. Suddenly a single parent, Nancy entered the real estate field and became very aware of the challenges of single parenting and trying to work full time.



Andrew Kadwell and Nancy Robertson

A believer in giving 'sweat equity' when you cannot afford to give cash, Nancy has long been involved in the Oakville community.

Today, as her business grows and succeeds, Nancy and her family (Partner-son Andrew and daughter-social media manager Joanna) decided the time was right to give back financially in a more substantial way. A donation was also made in support of mental health issues.

The Robertson Kadwell Group is a real estate team of Oakville-based Realtors serving Halton, Hamilton, Cambridge & Toronto with Sotheby's International Realty, Canada.

Other current commitments include her local residents association, the Chartwell-Maple Grove Residents' Association, where she has been a board member for 11 years and President for the last four years. A year ago, she joined the Downtown Oakville BIA board.

Nancy noted HSH appeals to her because its concept is not about a hand-out, but rather a true effort to educate, support and help single parents obtain jobs.

"It's so easy to just hand money to people. The objective of Home Suite Hope appeals to me more," she said. And while she doesn't share the poverty experience of HSH participants, she said she understands and sympathizes with the challenges they face.

As HSH embarks upon the goal of making a difference in the current housing crisis this year, Nancy, as a Realtor, admits affordable housing is a major issue.

"Housing is rooted in supply and demand," she notes. "Oakville is a community where people want to live and supply is not adequate to meet that demand. Sadly, the supply of affordable housing is an issue in Ontario. It is a complicated conundrum with competing factors making solutions difficult to find."

IN OUR COMMUNITY

CHEF MELANI & NO ONE GOES HUNGRY

Chef Melani Bastians of the non-profit No One Goes Hungry (NOGH) has offered to make fresh and frozen meals available to Home Suite Hope's Stabilizing First Halton (SFH), Homeward Bound Halton (HBH) and Homeward Bound Halton Youth (HBHY) participants.

Chef Melani, who also sits on HSH's Affordable Housing Committee and was one of the restaurateurs who participated in Empty Bowls at Home 2021, is a passionate supporter of HSH.

"Home Suite Hope saved my life," Melani told HSH recently, explaining her support flows from the fact she herself applied to HSH's Homeward Bound Halton program nearly a decade ago.

A chef by trade, Melani now owns The Green Eatery, a vegan café, and Caribbean Vibes, a full-service restaurant, both in Milton – and along the way founded the non-profit No One Goes Hungry (known as @hungerfreehalton on Instagram and NOGH on Facebook).



Chef Melani Bastians

Born in Sri Lanka, Melani moved to Saudi Arabia with her family and came to Canada when she was 13 years old.

The family lived in Manitoba, but Melani moved to Ontario when she married and lived in Mississauga before she found her marriage ending in divorce.

At that low point in her life, Melani said she and her four daughters – at the time aged 10, eight and twins aged five - found themselves heading to Halton Women's Place and she was applying for Ontario Works.

That's when someone suggested she apply to Home Suite Hope.

She did and received academic and life skills support before HSH connected her to Armagh House in Mississauga for transitional supportive housing.

Melani credits the support and connection she found at HSH enough to tip the balance in her life – at a time she desperately needed it.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

As the COVID-19 pandemic took hold, Melani was committed to sharing her own good fortune – especially with those agencies that had her back at a time of vulnerability.

A Sunday community dinner offering 350 meals prepared for curbside pickup in Milton has since turned into No One Goes Hungry, which now is providing approximately 2,500 meals throughout Halton across Thursday, Saturday and Sunday, she said. Free hot meals are prepared with rescued food that otherwise would be waste.

Our goal is to make sure that no one goes hungry in Halton, cooking rescued food. One town at a time, reads the social media.

“The Sunday community dinner showed me so much need in Halton in regard to food security,” said Melani, noting it also connected her with numerous social service agencies.

“I always thought when I make it to this point, I’m going to give back to these agencies, especially to the ones that really helped me,” said Melani.

Chef Melani, as she is known, said people often underestimate how great the impact an agency like HSH and its support and connections can have on those who are struggling.

“The program, even as little as I was involved, truly saved my life,” she said.

NOGH bridges the gap between rescued food and food security by cooking hot and frozen meals. It also offers food education, cooking classes, seniors’ meal kits, meal prepping and grocery support to support individuals and families in need of food security.



Sheridan



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