



Red Door  
FAMILY SHELTER

# COURAGE REPORT

Rebuilding  
Lives



2025

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinaabe, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples.

Today, this land is still home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

We recognize that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13, signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties, signed with multiple Mississauga and Chippewa bands.

We are grateful to live, work, and learn on these lands, and we acknowledge the enduring presence and resilience of Indigenous communities in this area.

We commit ourselves to ongoing learning about the history and cultures of Indigenous peoples, and we pledge to work towards building respectful relationships and advancing reconciliation.

### VISION

Ending family homelessness, one family at a time.

### MISSION

We provide safe, temporary refuge and vital services that enable families to rebuild their lives and establish themselves in their communities.

### VALUES

**Compassion:** We believe all people are deserving of respect. Therefore, we celebrate our diversity and uniqueness, and treat each other with kindness, empathy, and dignity.

**Equity:** We recognize that systemic barriers privilege some people and hold others back. Therefore, we strive to deliver inclusive services, work to address discrimination, and end cycles of violence and poverty.

**Collaboration:** We know that we are stronger together. Therefore, we build effective relationships, work as teams, and partner for excellence and impact.

**Integrity:** We are responsible for the resources entrusted to us. Therefore, we measure, achieve, and report our results, strive to learn and improve continuously, and behave at all times in a manner that is ethical, transparent, and professional.



## REBUILDING LIVES

### A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Over the past year, Red Door has made significant progress toward the goals outlined in our three-year strategic plan, with a renewed emphasis on enhancing support for children and youth. The theme of this year's Courage Report, "Rebuilding Lives," reflects our unwavering belief that every child deserves the opportunity to heal and thrive.

Children and youth now make up over 60% of Toronto's shelter residents — a crisis that demands urgent attention. Behind every number is a young life disrupted by fear, instability, and trauma. This year's **report highlights the impact of homelessness on children and youth**, and the collective responsibility we share to change this reality.

At Red Door, we are acting with purpose by doubling child and youth worker hours, expanding trauma-informed supports, and introducing programs that build resilience through therapeutic play, creative arts, tutoring, and one-on-one emotional care. Last year alone, our School Readiness Program supported 135 children in staying connected to their education. When 9-year-old Amina tells us, "At Red Door, I feel like I can sleep without bad dreams," it is a reminder of the small but powerful victories that mark the path to healing.

These investments go beyond meeting immediate needs; they lay the groundwork for lasting stability and brighter futures. Rebuilding lives is a continuous journey, and we are honoured to walk it alongside every child who comes through our doors. As we look ahead, we remain focused on achieving key milestones that ensure we stay true to our mission, continually strengthening supports and outcomes for families in crisis.

In addition to our focus on children and youth programs, we have made strides in other strategic areas, such as enhancing partnerships to increase enrichment activities and upgrading IT systems to better support our staff. We are also excited about the upcoming renovation of the Pines, our Gender-Based Violence shelter, which will better serve women and children escaping violence.

We invite you to stay tuned as we continue to share updates on our progress and work together to build a stronger future for all. Your support makes a difference, and we look forward to having you with us on this journey.



Marissa Andersson  
Board Chair



Maritza Sanchez  
Executive Director



#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## THE SURGE IN CHILD HOMELESSNESS

NEARLY 3,000 OF TORONTO'S CHILDREN  
ARE WITHOUT STABLE HOUSING

In Toronto, more children than ever are growing up without a stable place to call home.

On any given night, nearly 1,500 children are staying in the city's family shelters, most under the age of 10. Another 1,400 sleep in temporary hotel rooms, a stopgap the city now relies on as demand has soared.

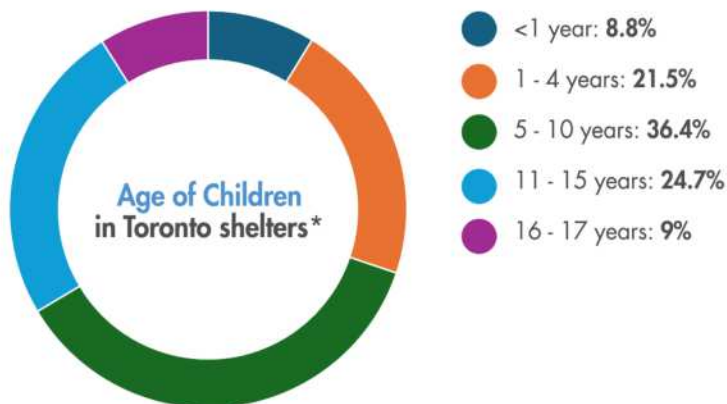
Eight years ago, the numbers were far lower—today's shelter counts are almost triple those in 2016, and hotel placements have climbed tenfold in just a few years.

In purpose-built family shelters, children might still find small comforts like playgrounds or safe courtyards. But in many hotels, there are no kitchens to prepare meals and no spaces to play.

Families turn to shelters for countless reasons—escaping violence, losing work, or facing rent hikes they can't afford—but finding permanent housing is another uphill battle. For some, these early experiences can shape a lifetime: city surveys show one in three adults experiencing homelessness first lost their home as a child.

Red Door Family Shelter's 'Pathway to Housing' supports women and children, providing temporary housing, nutritious meals, and programs for adults and children that address trauma and prepare for safe, stable and sustainable housing.

On any given day, 60 percent of Red Door residents are children. In the last year, 40 percent of clients were housed—71 percent in under one year—and 95 percent remained housed after two years.



Source: The Toronto Star & City of Toronto  
\*Total may not equal 100 due to rounding

## RE-BUILDING YOUR LIFE AT AGE 13

### FROM BIG BROTHER TO FATHER-FIGURE OVERNIGHT

Derek's story is one of quiet strength, sacrifice, and resilience far beyond his years. In 2016, he arrived in Canada with his mother and younger brother, seeking safety and a fresh start. They came as refugees, landing not just in a new country but in a world of unknowns.

At age 13, Derek became the 'man of the house'. With his father still overseas, Derek stepped into a role no child should have to fill—protector and provider for his family, father-figure and emotional anchor for his brother.

While other kids were immersed in school and friendships, Derek selflessly supported his mom and devotedly cared for his younger brother.

**"I just love my brother,  
but I missed a lot of my childhood," Derek recalls.**

Eventually, Derek and his family landed at Red Door. That's where they found a roof, food, supports, and most importantly, a sense that **they were no longer alone**.

Over time, the family began to find their footing. Red Door was more than a shelter—it was a source of community, care, and stability. Derek remembers one staff member who stood out; "she was always there for my brother, took time to talk with him, listen to him. My brother would light up when he saw her."

**Red Door Family Shelter forever changed the lives of Derek, his mom, and his brother.** Now, caring for his brother was a cherished opportunity for quality time together, allowing them to forge a strong bond despite the challenges.

As stability grew, so did Derek's dreams. He threw himself into programs that gave him purpose and connection while gaining life skills and exploring new opportunities.

Today, Derek has finished high school and enrolled in a post-secondary program to become an HVAC technician.

With the ongoing support of Red Door, and his own unshakable resolve, Derek is stepping into a new chapter—not as a boy burdened by responsibility, but as a young man ready to shape his future.



## WHO WE HELP, HOW WE HELP TOGETHER, WE'RE REBUILDING LIVES

	22/23	23/24	24/25
<b>Shelter Residents</b>			
# of families:	135	132	110
# of individuals/adults (18+):	171	153	143
# of children/youth:	278	273	207
Average family size:	3	3	3
Total individuals:	449	426	350

### Housing Situation (After Moving Out)

Out of City/Province/Country:	10	0	2
With friends/relatives/returned home:	11	12	6
Undisclosed address:	7	6	2
Transfer to shelter/hospital:	26	20	20
Subsidized/transitional housing:	33	17	17
Private market housing/single room:	31	35	25

### Outreach Programs & Services

# of families supported:	163	144	137
# of individuals supported:	380	466	434
Employment, Adult Education & Job Training:	*	*	72
Hospital & Medical supports:	37	58	37
Housing Set-Up & Help:	73	72	64
Social/Community Integration:	*	*	105
Basic Needs:	*	*	949
Service Supports (Legal, Income, CAS, etc.):	575	1100	604
New family units who used the food bank:	161	132	129
# of food bank visits:	4180	5027	4919

\*Data not tracked or available

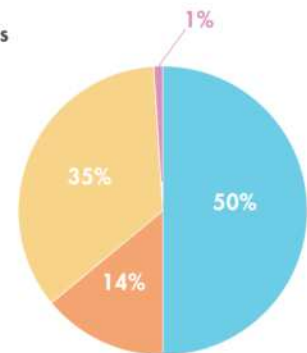
# '24'25

**298 families and 918 people**  
accessed vital programs  
and supports last year.

*\*In Shelter, Outreach and Transitional combined*

### Food Bank Users (By Age)

- Under 15
- Age 15-25
- Age 26-64
- Age 65+



### Food Bank Use (By Month)



To our **donors**—you fuel our programs, sustain our services, and help create lasting change.

To our **volunteers**—you give your time, your talents, and your hearts, reminding our residents that community care is powerful and real.

# Thank you



Art by a  
Red Door  
resident,  
age 15



## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

### YEAR-END MARCH 31, 2025

The women, children, and families we serve depend on the generosity of donors and volunteers to create positive change today and ensure a better tomorrow. Your donations provide crucial funding for essential programs and services, while your time and commitment offer invaluable care and compassion.

Thanks to your support, we can assist women and children affected by gender-based violence, families experiencing a housing crises, and refugee claimants fleeing violence and persecution.



- City of Toronto (44%)
- Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (29%)
- Donations (20%)
- Miscellaneous, Pay Equity Adjustment, Interest (7%)



- Programs and Services, including staffing (81.2%)
- Administration and Fundraising (11.1%)
- Professional and Consulting Fees (3.5%)
- Mortgage and Amortization (4.2%)



- Mental Health & Child and Youth Programming (42%)
- Housing & Outreach (38%)
- Food Security & Basic Needs (20%)

Financial Statements and a **list of donors** are available at [reddoorshelter.ca](https://reddoorshelter.ca).  
Additional reporting available at **Charity Intelligence Canada**.



Lea  
Luna Ink

## IN THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY WE'RE REBUILDING LIVES TOGETHER

At just 17, Lea fled an unsafe home with her newborn and found refuge at Red Door Family Shelter. "They helped us with everything—housing, baby supplies, food." That moment changed her life. Today, she's a successful tattoo artist and studio co-owner in Mississauga. Her shop, **Luna Ink**, hosts fundraisers for Red Door. "They gave me a second chance. I'm forever grateful." Lea's story is proof that with support, change is possible.



Allan Cobham  
Knights of Columbus

For years, **the Knights of Columbus at Monsignor Ingoldsby Council** have been vital to Red Door—donating, volunteering, and hosting community events. "It is extremely important... to take care of the most vulnerable," says Allan Cobham. Thank you, Knights, for your unwavering commitment to helping families in crisis.



Eva Ain and Jade Gonsalves  
Drop Shot for a Difference

For two years now, **Eva Ain** and **Jade Gonsalves** brought the Leslieville/Toronto East pickleball community together for Drop Shot for a Difference—a day of play, connection, and giving back. Driven by passion and purpose, Eva and Jade show how grassroots efforts can spark real change. Thank you for making **Drop Shot for a Difference** a powerful tradition of community and care.

We first met **Christian** and his mom, **Melanie**, (opposite page) at the Kid2Kid Marketplace in The Beaches, where they were selling their handmade card game in support of Red Door Family Shelter. That game—**Give Thanks**—wasn't just colourful and creative. It was the start of Kindlil, their family-run company with a simple but powerful goal: to make kindness part of everyday play.

Give Thanks is a card game for kids aged 4 and up. As players match colours, stack symbols, and race to play all their cards, they're also building empathy, gratitude, and connection. It's a fun, engaging way for families to spend time together—and a gentle reminder of what it means to be kind.

For Melanie, the project has been the best learning opportunity. "Anything we do, we try to add a bit of giving back."

Available online at [kindlil.etsy.com](https://kindlil.etsy.com), Give Thanks is built for families by families—rooted in research, focused on well-being, and kid-approved.

**WE  
ARE  
ONE.**





Melanie and Christian  
Kindlii - Give Thanks





We want to take this opportunity to extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who participated in the capital campaign study. Your insights will guide our efforts to raise the funds necessary to rebuild the Pines-GBV facility.

We also want to express our sincere appreciation to the members of the Pines Advisory Committee, whose valuable contributions provide essential oversight and guidance to ensure that the new facility meets the highest standards.

Anna Leon  
Bryan Good  
Catherine Moore  
Chris Dunlop  
James Booty  
Jo Bradley  
Kevin Arkell  
Laurel McCorriston  
Lindsay Toth  
Mike Moffatt  
Nicolas Tyers  
Ron Legacy  
Salahuddin S. Kazi

Thank you for your commitment and support in making this important project a reality!

## RE-BUILDING THE PINES / GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE SHELTER

### A NEW CHAPTER OF SAFETY & DIGNITY

At Red Door, we firmly believe that every individual fleeing violence deserves a safe, respectful, and supportive environment to heal.

For over three decades, the Pines gender-based violence shelter has served as a sanctuary for women and children escaping abuse. However, the time has come for change. The building is now in significant disrepair—its aging infrastructure, lack of private spaces, and persistent maintenance issues are taking a toll on residents' well-being and staff's ability to provide essential care. Daily challenges such as overcrowding, frequent plumbing and heating failures, and the absence of trauma-informed design features undermine our mission and the dignity of those we serve.

We are embarking on a bold initiative to rebuild the Pines as a modern, purpose-built Gender-Based Violence (GBV) shelter that prioritizes safety, dignity, and healing from the ground up. Our vision for the new facility includes self-contained rooms with bathrooms, accessible design, abundant natural light, green spaces, and dedicated therapeutic and group programming areas.

As we launch our capital campaign, we are actively engaging stakeholders—including survivors, frontline staff, and community partners—to ensure that the new space reflects lived experiences and aligns with best practices.

We are counting on the unwavering support of our community, our dedicated Red Door supporters, and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) to bring this vital project to fruition. The redevelopment of the Pines facility hinges on this collective commitment.

Together, we can ensure that women and children escaping violence in Toronto have access to safe, modern, and trauma-informed shelter infrastructure. We are not just building a refuge; we are creating a transformative space that fosters healing and provides the opportunity to rebuild lives.

Join us in this essential journey toward safety and dignity for all.

## IN MEMORY

This summer, Red Door experienced the profound loss of a cherished and invaluable staff member, **Julie Areghan**, whose dedication and compassion touched the lives of everyone she encountered.

Her passing left a deep void in our community, but it also brought the staff team together to honour her life and legacy.

In the face of grief, we found strength in shared memories and stories, celebrating her unwavering commitment to our mission and the countless lives she impacted.

This collective remembrance deepened our bonds and inspired us to continue her work with the same passion and love she exemplified every day.



Julie Areghan







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Charitable Registration Number: 11930-3287-RR0001