



March 18, 2021

Beth Sholom Synagogue/ Beth Tzedec Congregation, Out of the Cold Programs

Dear Rabbi Wernick, Rabbi Fryer Bodzin, Rabbi Frydman-Kohl, Debbie Rothstein, President, Randy Spiegel, Executive Director, Maureen Tanz, Co-Chair, Out of the Cold, Beth Tzedec Congregation

Rabbi Aaron Flanzriech, Abe Glowinsky, President, Stephanie Krasman, Executive Director, and Rafi Aaron, Co-Chair, Out of the Cold, Beth Sholom Synagogue

It would be an understatement to suggest that the collective 'we' have been through a difficult year. 2020 and 2021, thus far, have been unlike anything we have ever experienced. The pandemic has forced many organizations to close, including as many as 40 percent of charities and non-profits. Like many others, Haven Toronto has had to pivot, often, in the delivery of supports and services vital for one of the most vulnerable groups in the community. Fortunately, we were not alone in our efforts; to you, and for that, we are thankful.

Throughout 2020, we saw that the need for our support was great – and growing – and that our impact was high; but even we were astonished by the numbers at year-end.

We served a record 81,000+ meals in 2020, an increase of 92 percent in breakfasts and lunches compared to the previous year. We also saw a 442 percent increase in unbudgeted costs related to our 'Meal Program'; from the procurement of take-out containers to the purchase of food items traditionally donated through recovery programs which shutdown when restaurants closed. At the same time, our Wellness Centre supports for mental health grew 128 percent and addiction supports rose 47 percent.

The impact of the pandemic will be long-lasting, especially for the clients we serve. People who are homeless are 2.4 times more likely to test positive for COVID-19, ten times more likely to end up in ICU as a result, and five times more likely to die from the disease. Earlier this year, it was announced during the Homeless Memorial that the number of homeless deaths in 2020 increased by 100 percent.

Alarmingly, elder homeless men are disproportionately falling through the cracks more now than ever before. Their trajectory is getting worse and, long-term, they will face even greater hardships. But they will not face it alone. As we continue to reduce food insecurity and eliminate barriers to health care and housing, I, personally, would like to recognize the important role that you have played in our success.

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Thank you for your financial donation which resulted in 1,500 meals for homeless and food insecure elder men. And thank you, too, for your years of advocacy, social justice and support in our communities, and especially in the downtown core and the broad group of people impacted by poverty, homelessness and food insecurity.

I look forward to growing our relationship in the months and years ahead and welcome opportunities to work together in support of each other.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lauro Monteiro".

Lauro Monteiro
Executive Director