



ANNUAL REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2017 – AUGUST 2018

A Message from the Chair of the Board & the Executive Director



Toronto is a city full of opportunity – but it's also a city marked by a growing divide. One in five people in Toronto lives below the poverty line, and soaring costs of living are putting a deep strain on vulnerable families. Poverty and unemployment rates for newcomers are among the highest in the overall population.

At New Circles, we provide families in need with free clothing so they can stay warm and healthy even with limited income. But that's only the start. To build a successful future, we need to take an integrated approach.

We believe that clothing offers a natural gateway to social and economic empowerment. It protects us from the elements, and preserves our dignity. It keeps us warm, and conveys who we are. It is about health, culture, self-expression, and inclusion. And it can be the starting point to develop skills, build confidence, and ultimately find a job.

This year, we provided a record 15,000 people with quality, free clothing through GLOW, added a fifth neighbourhood to our catchment area, and extended our services to government-assisted refugees across the city. Our employment programs provided training for 92 youth and adults, and we continued to enrich the curriculum by fully incorporating soft skills training, and providing more opportunities for professional networking. As a result, 74 percent of our adult participants were employed or enrolled in further training within six months of graduating.

Our dedicated donors, volunteers, staff, and board members each contribute their own skills, strengths, and resources to this work. We were pleased to take on new leadership roles as Chair of the Board and Executive Director respectively this year, and look forward to continuing the growth of the past several years, while leading New Circles' evolution. Together, we're building a city that is collectively stronger and more diverse, where families can not only meet their needs, but also live successful and empowered lives.

With gratitude,

Meg Salter
Chair of the Board of Directors

Rosie Smythe
Executive Director



MALALI
GLOW client, volunteer &
Retail & Customer Service
Foundations grad

To read Malali's story,
visit newcircles.ca

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New Circles is my second home. Having only one income, we never could have afforded clothing for our five children without GLOW. My kids were able to wear what other kids were wearing and feel like they fit in. We also got clothes for all the seasons and weather here. I'm still volunteering in GLOW because I love helping people and giving back.





It all starts
with **GLOW**,
a unique gateway
to a variety of
services supporting
social and economic
integration.

3

20,000
visits to **GLOW**

At GLOW, a diverse range of people can get the clothing they need for work, school, and daily life, find out about other community supports, and gain hands-on work experience in a retail-like space.

An individual can save up to \$1,250 a year on clothing by using GLOW – critical support when you're facing the choice between a warm meal and a warm coat. In 2017-18, a record 15,000 people visited GLOW for free, quality clothing. That's over \$18.75 million saved.

In February, we opened our services to residents of Oakridge, and celebrated with a successful launch at Warden Woods Community Centre. Through partnerships with other service providers, including COSTI Immigrant Services and Mount Sinai Hospital's Schwartz/Reisman Emergency Centre, we were able to provide clothing to those in critical need, such as government-assisted refugees and people experiencing health emergencies.

6,231

Pairs of Socks
& Underwear

2,536

Syrian Refugees

210

Referring Agencies
Across the City

7,576

Emergency
Relief Clients

750

Youth Attended
Teen Shopping

1,426

Coats and Jackets

396

Teens Attended the
Prom Boutique

Employment is a crucial step in the settlement journey. That's why skill development is integral to what we do.



Program Partners

- Retail Council of Canada
- Centennial College
- Neighbourhood Link Support Services

Agencies using GLOW for retail practicums

- TNO – The Neighbourhood Office
- St. Stephen's Community House
- Tropicana Community Services

Our programs focus on retail, customer service, and office administration as ideal launching pads for newcomer women to rebuild their careers or land their first jobs in Canada.

This year, we continued to enrich our curriculum to ensure participants graduate with the skills employers are looking for. In Retail and Customer Service Foundations, we fully incorporated the Employability Skills Assessment Tool (a collaborative framework for mentoring participants on soft skills like motivation, confidence, and time management), and in Business Office Skills, we strengthened the program's digital literacy component with additional online learning tools.

We also created more opportunities to connect with employers through networking events with the State Street Professional Women's Network, TELUS, Mackenzie Investments, Home Depot, and OMD Canada. Along with focused job search support from Neighbourhood Link Support Services, employment outcomes keep getting better. Beginning in 2017, we also began tapping into our graduate pool to hire qualified candidates for staff positions in GLOW.



"Without the training from the BOS program and all the other instructors, plus a placement at Working Women's Victoria Park Hub, I would not have landed or secured a job of this calibre."

TIA, Business Office Skills graduate, Administrative Assistant at Lockwood Fire and Sprinkler

"I had no professional skills or Canadian experience. I did not know how to make a resume to acquire a job. What attracted me to the program was the flexible schedule, program content, the fact that the training was free, and I could achieve a Retail Sales Associate Certificate. I also liked that I would get to work at GLOW to get first-time experience working in a store."

SHAHEEN, Retail & Customer Service Foundations graduate, employed by Marshalls

**FATUMA**

Business Office Skills
graduate & GLOW
Floor Supervisor

To read Fatuma's story,
visit [newcircles.ca](https://www.newcircles.ca)

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The support at New Circles went beyond the classroom. I felt welcome. Everyone was helping to ensure my success. I was able to upgrade my skills, get work experience, and start believing in myself again. With all that, I could do what I wanted to do: work in an office environment, and use my skills to give back. I'm now proud to be working at New Circles and helping people every day.

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From our clients to our volunteers, women form the core of our community.



Our women clients are mothers, sisters, professionals, caregivers, leaders, and much more. They are the primary family members who take care of their families' clothing needs. Most of them are newcomers to Canada, and they face unique challenges finding employment and integrating socially.

This year, our social programs provided support tailored for women in group and one-on-one settings. The Friendship Circle offered a safe space for 40 women to form

positive relationships and improve their conversational English, through activities like language lessons, a cultural potluck, and community excursions. Peer Mentors provided personalized tutoring that helped women work towards specific goals, like studying for the citizenship exam, or earning their driver's licenses.

Next year, we're looking forward to developing programs that prepare women to enroll in our training programs, by building their confidence, learning practical skills, and improving their workplace English.



From the beginning, New Circles has been driven by passionate volunteers.

It started nearly fifteen years ago, when our founder Cindy Blakely collected basic necessities from friends, family, and colleagues, and distributed these donations to people in need.

In 2017–18, more than 250 individual volunteers and 45 corporate, school, and community groups provided their time, energy, and skills to helping us achieve our mission. Their work spanned across the agency – sorting clothing, assisting clients, doing outreach in the community, helping at the front desk, making phone calls, translating and interpreting, and so much more.



13,000

hours of work
in GLOW



1,000 Holiday Angel
gift baskets delivered
to 155 households



1.2 million items
of clothing sorted



10 special
shopping events



"On my first shift, a client told me, 'This place means a lot to me,' and it was so gratifying to hear that. I've found a niche sorting and stocking the clothes, particularly men's pants, because attention to detail is very important to me. It helps create an inviting, dignified, and positive experience for clients."

JACK, GLOW volunteer



"I found out about New Circles through an article in the newspaper. I always wanted to work in retail, so I thought this was a great opportunity to work in a clothing store and also help people. I love to connect with clients and help them find the clothes they need."

ANN-MARIE, GLOW volunteer

**We've been called
"small but mighty."
But we can only
do what we do
with the support
of thousands.**

We rely on generous, motivated people across Toronto who organize clothing drives, sponsor events, donate funds – or simply travel across the city to ensure their gently-loved clothes go to people who really need them. Together, we accomplish a lot.

90

Keep Toronto
Warm winter
clothing drives

420

Holiday
Angel donors

300,000

lbs of donated clothing
diverted from landfill

**Thank you to our generous event sponsors,
who helped raise \$120,000 this year.**

Golf Classic Main Sponsors

- Aird & Berlis LLP
- Bell Kearns & Associates
- Chestnut Park Real Estate
- Gluskin Sheff & Associates
- Potbelly Sandwich Shop
- RBC Wealth Management & The Harbour Group
- Rob Roy Builders

For a full list of Golf Classic sponsors and donors,
visit newcircles.ca

Leaside Smokedown Sponsors

- COBS Bakery
- The Filipiuk Group
- Gravitate Travel
- Interior Care
- Ivy Glen Homes
- Likrilyn
- Patrick Rocca
- Zone Six Design



This year, you gave more than \$1 million to help vulnerable families meet their needs, develop skills, and rebuild their lives. We hope you feel as proud as we do.

Special thanks to:

LEAD FUNDERS

*The Caring
Foundation*



ORGANIZATIONS \$20,000+

- The Arrell Family Foundation
- The Counselling Foundation of Canada
- Mackenzie Financial Charitable Foundation
- P & L Odette Charitable Foundation
- State Street Foundation
- The Slight Family Foundation
- The Sprott Foundation
- TELUS Corporation

ORGANIZATIONS \$10,000–19,999

- CIBC
- The Harry E. Foster Foundation
- J & L Rogers Family Charitable Foundation
- The Joan and Clifford Hatch Foundation
- RBC Foundation
- Sonor Foundation
- TD Securities Underwriting Hope Fund
- W.C. Kitchen Family Foundation

ORGANIZATIONS \$1,000–\$9,999

- Arbonne Charitable Foundation
- Axia Investments
- CHUM Charitable Foundation
- Frederick and Douglas Dickson Memorial Foundation
- Grace Church-on-the-Hill
- Havergal College
- Helen McCrear Peacock Foundation
- Hermes Canada
- Jim & Katie Stewart & The Stewart Family Foundation
- Lind Family Fund at the Toronto Community Foundation
- Phil Lind Fund
- The Mariano Elia Foundation
- Mary Usher-Jones Foundation
- Marwah Foundation
- McDonald's Restaurants of Canada
- The McLean Foundation
- Patrick Hodgson Family Foundation
- The Ralph M. Barford Foundation
- Retail Council of Canada
- Rotary Club of East York
- Round Table Capital Partners Inc.
- Sisters of St. Joseph
- Timothy Eaton Memorial Church
- Tippet Foundation

INDIVIDUALS \$5,000+

- Carolyn Blakely
- Cindy & Robert Blakely
- Dave Kozman & Kristin Blakely-Kozman
- Anthony Hammill & Lindsay Blakely
- Joan & Richard Boxer
- Julia Cheesbrough
- Catherine & Ian Delaney
- Joan Eddy
- Lynn Francis
- Mark & Katya Gardiner
- Maggie Hayes
- Melanie Lauber & Graeme MacGregor
- John Grandy & Meg Salter
- Jeannie & Stephan von Buttlar

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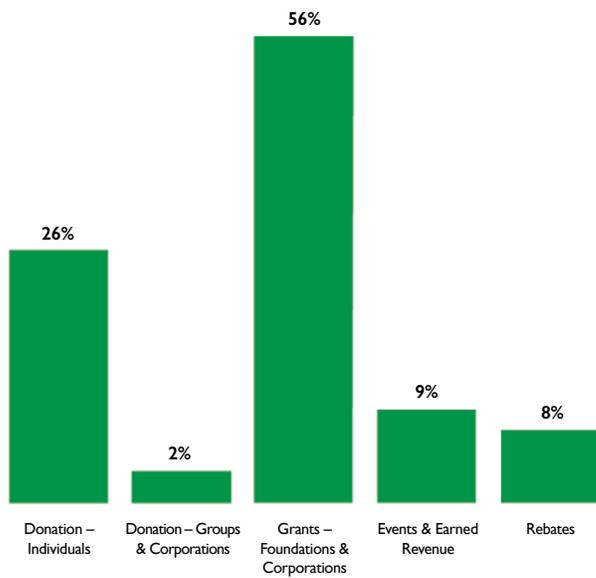
New Circles provides an important service to the community, whether that's through skills training, providing clothing, mentoring, or helping people participate fully in life milestones. I believe Canada's future is dependent on supporting newcomers' integration, and it's been a very positive experience to welcome these families and help them get settled.

— Anne Arrell, Donor

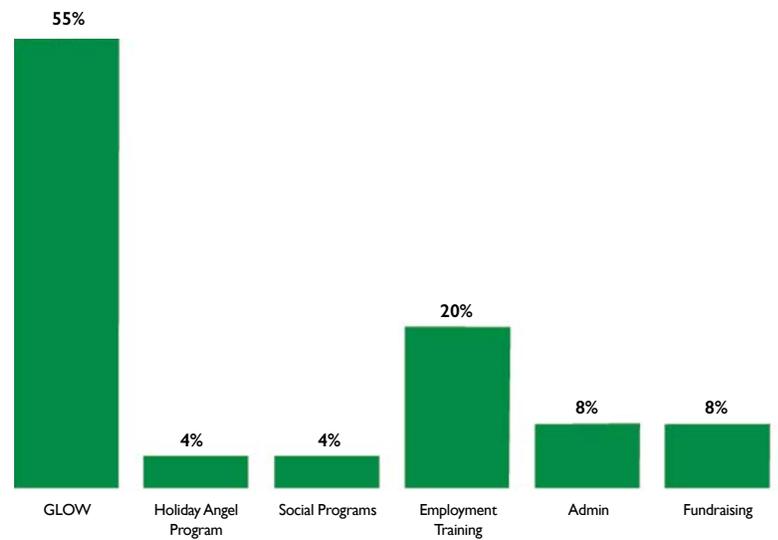


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How We Are Funded



How We Invest Our Funds



Audited financial statements for the year ending August 31, 2018 are available upon request.

INDIVIDUALS \$1,000-\$4,999

- Shamim Ahmad
- Mary Wilson & Philip Arthur
- Jack Pasht & Penelope Bell
- Tracey Lawko & Peter Blaiklock
- Greg & Elizabeth Boehmer
- Ann & Thomas Bosley
- Harvey & Bev Botting
- Patti Bunston-Gunn
- George & Jenifer Burbidge
- Timothy & Sheila Casgrain
- Jane Cowan
- George & Heather Dickson
- Firoz Ahmed & Susan Fisher
- Sarah & Peter Fullerton
- Joy Gray-Donald
- Richard & Nancy Hamm
- Mary Hatch
- Doreen M. Haveman
- William Horan
- Jeremy Fraiberg & Martha Hundert
- Donna & Richard Ivey
- Vicki Kelman
- Carolyn Langill
- Chris Tambakis & Rebecca Leigh
- James & Danielle Macdonald
- Sarah & Don Macintosh
- Martha MacNeil
- Janet Marsh
- Diane Mavrinac-Ross
- Janet & Bruce McKelvey
- Lynn McLaughlin
- Paul & Janet Morrison
- Nancy Mulvihill
- Sajid Rizvi
- Linda Robinson
- Tom & Barbara Ryder
- Lynn Saunders
- Chris Sexton
- Julie LeBlanc & Paul Smith
- Alan Munn & Karen Somerville
- Robert & Linda Sommerville
- Richard Talbot
- Heather & Richard Thomson
- Jennifer Tory
- Andrew Vernon
- Rod Davidge & Catherine Waugh
- Michael Weber
- Andrea & Michael Wolff

New Circles is an innovative, community-based agency that provides clothing, employment training, and settlement support to newcomers, refugees, and others living on a low income in Toronto.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

September 2017–August 2018

CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Meg Salter

VICE-CHAIR

Louise Stratford

FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR

Cindy Blakely

TREASURER

Sandra Chiu

SECRETARY

Michael Rusek

DIRECTORS

- Ann Bosley
- Lynn Francis
- Zahra Ladhani (left June 2018)
- Melanie Lauber
- John McMeans
- Jane Millan
- Shobha Oza (joined January 2018)

For current Board of Directors,
please visit newcircles.ca

Photos by Donna Griffith Photography

Portraits by J. Crawford Photography

Design by doug&partners