

Annual Report

SEPTEMBER 2016-
AUGUST 2017



**new
circles**



glow

clothing • connections • community





WELCOME TO NEW CIRCLES

Message from the Chair of the Board and Executive Director

What do we need to survive? Food, shelter, clothing. But clothing is about so much more than mere survival. Beyond keeping you healthy, adequate clothing allows you to live with dignity, fit in socially, and “dress the part,” whether it’s for a job interview, your prom night, or adapting to Canadian culture. In short, suitable clothing supports social inclusion.



Every day, we see the powerful impact on families struggling to make ends meet, when their clothing needs are met. GLOW delivers that impact for thousands of vulnerable people every year, particularly for newcomers and refugees striving to rebuild their lives in a new country.

But our vision for New Circles goes far beyond meeting basic needs. Leveraging GLOW as a natural gateway, we continue to expand our programming to assist newcomers in building social connections and employable skills. Last year, we doubled the number of adults enrolled in our retail and office skills training programs. Salima’s story illustrates the critical difference this training made on her ability to break through the Canadian work experience barrier and find a job.

Throughout this report, you will see the tremendous momentum we’ve gained over the past year toward achieving our vision, deepening our impact, and expanding our presence as a community resource in partnership with other service agencies, to ensure that newcomers are supported throughout their settlement journey.

To all of our dedicated donors, volunteers, staff, and Board of Directors, as you read through these pages, we hope you take immense pride in learning how these programs have helped transform individual lives. Together, we are tapping the potential for a clothing bank to be a gateway to opportunity and positive change.

With gratitude,

Melanie Lauber
Chair, Board of Directors

Alykhan Suleman
Executive Director



“

New Circles means to me a new start in another country. At the beginning when you arrive, the whole city of Toronto is enormous. Sometimes, you cannot get enough for your whole family. Canada is a really cold country, but when you find a place like New Circles, it makes your life warm and you feel not alone. New Circles is a friend who opens their door, who opens their heart, and makes you feel warm.

- GLOW CLIENT



MEETING NEEDS

GLOW is a unique resource for a wide range of needs, supported by a huge network of donors across the city.

So what does a typical day in Toronto's largest clothing bank look like? From September 2016 to August 2017, on average, 89 people received 1,789 articles of clothing, assisted by 15-20 volunteers, every day. That's more than 12,000 people in need helped, and 300,000 lbs of clothing diverted from landfill – and we're still growing.

Our clients include newcomers and refugees who need help with basic necessities as part of their initial settlement; people in crisis or those struggling to make ends meet on limited resources; new moms, single parents, seniors, teens, and more. Whether they need a business suit or baby clothes, we've got them covered.



OUR CATCHMENT AREA:

Thornccliffe Park, Flemingdon Park, Victoria Village, and Taylor Massey + emergency clients and Syrian refugees across the city



Top 3 Countries of Origin

- Syria
- Afghanistan
- Canada

WHAT DO OUR CLIENTS SAY?

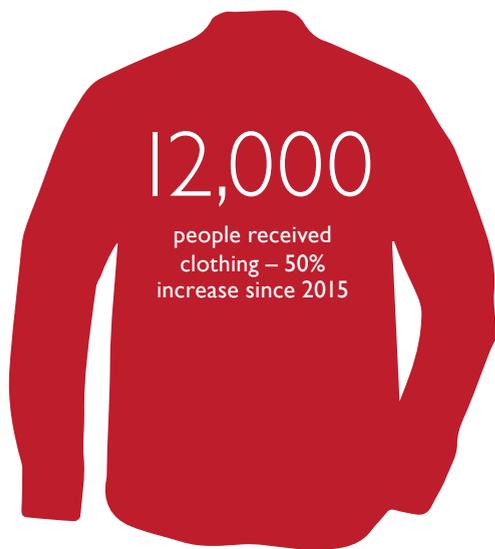
CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY, SUMMER 2017

- 89% said that GLOW helped them save money for other essential items, like food, transportation and rent
- 76% said GLOW helped them get clothing appropriate for Toronto's climate

99%

would recommend GLOW to a friend

This year, we focused on serving even more people in need by reaching out to the community, expanding our network of partner agencies and clothing donors, and upgrading GLOW to continue providing a dignified retail experience.



- 300,000 lbs of clothing diverted from landfill
- 70 winter clothing drives
- 66% increase in emergency referrals since January 2017
- 320 partner agencies across the city
- Member of 8 local immigration partnerships & interagency networks



- Children 32%
- Women 35%
- Men 33%



“

The difference it made in my life is phenomenal. I've worked more since I have decent clothes and I've been to more meetings and networking events.

- GLOW CLIENT



BUILDING SKILLS

Many newcomers face significant employment barriers due to a lack of Canadian experience and connections.

That's where Business Office Skills and Retail Foundations come in. These innovative programs offer industry-certified training (including hands-on experience in a work placement or GLOW, plus job search support from our employment partners) that prepares them for their first job in Canada – at no cost.

This year, building on the success of the program, we expanded enrollment in Business Office Skills from 12 to 30 participants, with the introduction of a second cohort in the fall of 2016. We also continued to enrich the curriculum and strengthen the practical component of the Retail Foundations pilot program, and hosted a roundtable with the Retail Council of Canada and retailers to share perspectives about how best to prepare graduates for a dynamic and shifting job market.

PROGRAM PARTNERS

- Centennial College
- Retail Council of Canada
- Labour Education Centre (to August 2017)

AGENCIES USING GLOW FOR RETAIL PRACTICUMS

- West Neighbourhood House
- St. Stephen's House
- Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office

27

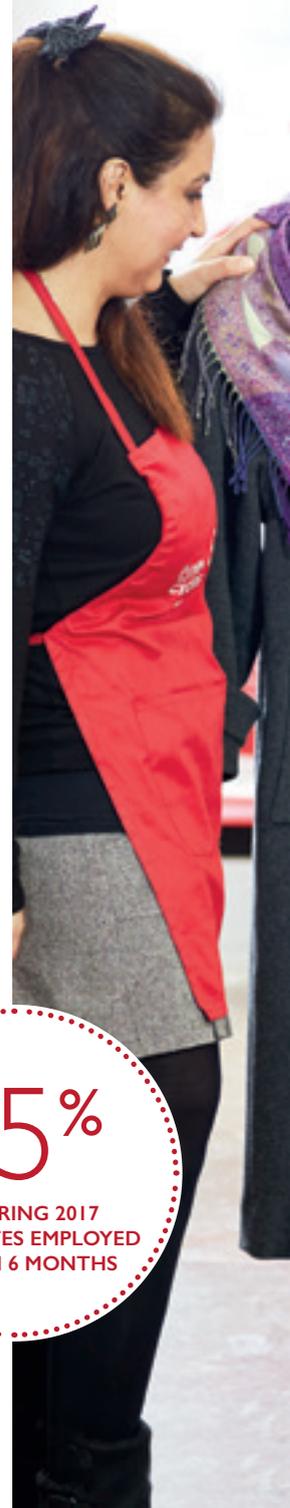
RETAIL FOUNDATIONS GRADUATES

24

BUSINESS OFFICE SKILLS GRADUATES

75%

OF SPRING 2017 GRADUATES EMPLOYED WITHIN 6 MONTHS





SALIMA

BUSINESS OFFICE SKILLS GRADUATE

When I first came to Canada, I thought getting a job would not be difficult. But every time I applied, I was asked for Canadian experience, Canadian references, and a Canadian degree or certification. When you are in a new country, every basic necessity feels expensive, and trying to pursue certification was next to impossible. My work placement through Business Office Skills allowed me to make a small contribution to the community while giving a big boost to my resume.



To read Salima's full story,
visit newcircles.ca



EMPOWERING YOUTH

Newcomer youth face unique challenges in adapting to a new community and culture, such as language barriers, a lack of social networks and supports, and difficulty finding employment. Our youth programs are tailored to provide young people with the opportunities and skills they need to succeed. Leaders in Service Training gets newcomer

youth ready for their first Canadian jobs in retail or customer service, Back to School and Teen Shopping events help teens get contemporary clothing so they can fit in and participate fully at school, and the Prom Boutique ensures financial barriers don't prevent grads from sharing an important milestone with their peers.

467

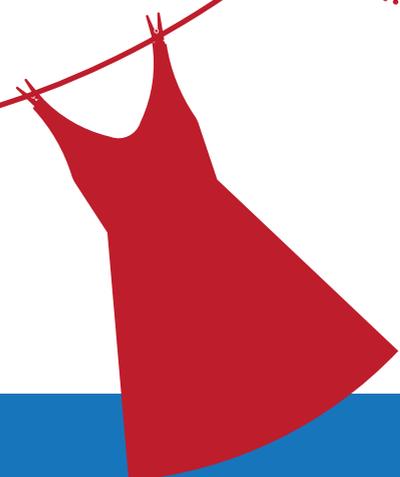
PROM BOUTIQUE
PARTICIPANTS

22

LIST
GRADUATES

568

BACK TO SCHOOL
AND TEEN SHOPPING
PARTICIPANTS



LALARUKH

LEADERS IN SERVICE TRAINING PARTICIPANT

I learned a lot in the LIST program. It was a great way to spend my summer – I felt very productive! I got a retail certificate and a lot of information on how to make a resume, be organized, and save money. Working in GLOW was a great experience because it prepares you for the retail world. If I were to apply for a job now, it would be a lot easier for me.



To read Lalarukh's full story,
visit newcircles.ca

LUCY GLOW VOLUNTEER

Volunteering at New Circles is equal parts head and heart. Come prepared to feel and to think. Expect to learn about yourself, learn about others and meet a diverse group of people. Expect to laugh – sometimes a lot! And expect to leave feeling really grateful for everything you have, and everything you have to offer.



To read Lucy's full story,
visit newcircles.ca



CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS

Since New Circles was founded as a grassroots charity more than a decade ago, volunteers have been at the heart of what we do. Volunteers sort and process clothing, assist clients, tutor, translate, answer phones, facilitate workshops, organize events, fundraise, deliver gift baskets, and much more. Collectively, our diverse team of individuals, clients, corporate groups, schools, faith-based organizations, and service clubs contributed almost 25,000 hours of service this year – the equivalent of almost 12 full-time staff members.



- 12 Friendship Circle facilitators
- 23 Peer Language tutors
- 40 Holiday Angel volunteers
- 14 partner schools volunteering in GLOW

Thank you to our supporters

We are fortunate to have a generous, caring community that has embraced our mission to welcome and support newcomers and others in need. To all those who have donated clothing and/or products, volunteered, contributed funds, organized clothing drives, or hosted fundraising events, we offer our sincere thanks. Every contribution makes a real difference.

LEAD FUNDERS

*The Caring
Foundation*



An agency of the Government of Ontario
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

\$20,000+ FUNDERS

- The Counselling Foundation of Canada
- Mackenzie Financial Charitable Foundation
- State Street Foundation
- The Slight Family Foundation
- The Sprott Foundation
- TELUS Corporation

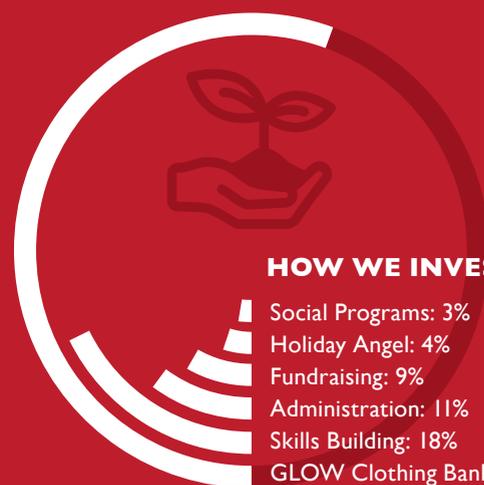


\$2,500+ ORGANIZATIONS

- CIBC
- Conam Charitable Foundation
- Delaney Family Foundation
- The Dickson Family Foundation
- Frederick and Douglas Dickson Memorial Foundation
- Havergal College
- Helen McCrea Peacock Foundation
- The Henry White Kinnear Foundation
- Hermes Canada
- The Joan and Clifford Hatch Foundation
- J.P. Bickell Foundation
- The Kiwanis Club of Toronto Foundation
- Lawrence Park Community Church
- LDC Logistics Canada
- Mack Trucks Canada
- The Mariano Elia Foundation
- The McLean Foundation
- The Norman and Marian Robertson Charitable Foundation
- P & L Odette Charitable Foundation
- St. Andrew's Charitable Foundation
- Sonor Foundation
- Timothy Eaton Memorial Church
- Tippet Foundation
- W.C. Kitchen Family Foundation

\$2,500+ INDIVIDUALS

- Anthony & Anne Arrell
- Tracey Lawko & Peter Blaiklock
- Carolyn Blakely
- Robert & Cindy Blakely
- Anthony Hammill & Lindsay Blakely
- Jenifer & George Burbidge
- Julia Cheesbrough
- Joan Eddy
- Lynn Francis
- Mark & Katya Gardiner
- Margaret Hayes
- Kristin Blakely-Kozman & David Kozman
- Melanie Lauber & Graeme MacGregor
- Linda Robinson
- John Grandy & Meg Salter
- John & Ellen Spears
- Jeannie & Stephen Von Buttlar





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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
September 2016-August 2017

CHAIR OF THE BOARD
Melanie Lauber

VICE-CHAIR
Meg Salter

FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR
Cindy Blakely

TREASURER
Sandra Chiu

SECRETARY
Michael Rusek (joined January 2017)

DIRECTORS

- Lynn Francis
- Zahra Ladhani (joined March 2017)
- John McMeans
- Jane Millan
- Jennifer Hinder (to January 2017)
- Justin Ming Cheung
- Louise Stratford
- Kanta Wadhwan (to January 2017)

For current Board of Directors,
please visit newcircles.ca

Photos by Donna Griffith Photography
Portraits by J. Crawford Photography
Design by doug&partners

161 Bartley Drive
Toronto, ON M4A 1E6

416-422-2591
info@newcircles.ca
www.newcircles.ca
CRN: 83634 3673 RR0001