



 new
circles

clothing • connections • community

 glow

annual report
September 2015-August 2016

Basic necessities and beyond

One dress can accomplish so much when it passes through GLOW. That's because we see clothing as a vehicle for social change.

When we moved to Bartley Drive two years ago, our vision was to ensure that New Circles would be a place where vulnerable people, especially newcomers, could not only meet their clothing needs, but also develop employable skills and make connections to the wider community.

Our community has responded enthusiastically, and over the past year we've made significant progress toward these goals. With 1 in 4 children in Toronto and 1 in 3 households within our catchment area living below the poverty line, the need is greater than ever; this year, the number of individuals who received clothing through GLOW increased by fifty percent.

We were delighted to receive a multi-year grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation mid-year to help us meet this need and further expand GLOW. In February, we launched the innovative Retail Foundations program, which leverages GLOW to provide hands-on, industry-certified retail training.

We are grateful to the Counselling Foundation of Canada for funding this initiative.

Perhaps no one embodies our vision better than Olu Alatise, a remarkable woman who first came to New Circles for clothing and went on to become one of the first graduates of the Retail Foundations program and a sales associate at Lowe's.

To all of our dedicated donors, volunteers, staff and Board of Directors, as you read through these pages we hope you take pride in what we have accomplished together. Truly, clothing can be a vehicle for change; thank you for making it possible.

With gratitude,
Melanie Lauber
Chair, Board of Directors

Alykhan Suleman
Executive Director



GLOW - A unique approach



Toronto is a diverse community, with immigrants accounting for 46% of the city's population. However, many newcomers face multiple barriers to employment and successful settlement, and struggle to meet their basic needs.

New Circles helps vulnerable people in Toronto meet those needs through a unique approach that integrates opportunities to develop skills and make social connections into our core service, a retail-style clothing bank called GLOW (Gently Loved Outfits to Wear).

We believe that clothing can be a vehicle for social change, and offer cost-effective, innovative and environmentally-friendly solutions.

- **11,000** clients served through GLOW, Toronto's largest clothing bank
- Over **200,000** lbs of clothing diverted from landfill

Our Clients

- **31%** refugees
- **4,572** children
- **4,180** men
- **4,310** women
- **147** countries
- Top **5** Countries of Origin: Afghanistan, Slovak Republic, Syria, Canada and Iraq

Our Catchment Area

- Thorncliffe Park, Flemingdon Park, Victoria Village, and Crescent Town/Taylor Massey
- **70,000** residents
- **1 in 3 households** live on a low income

Meeting basic needs

Along with food and housing, adequate clothing is a basic necessity, and essential for a sense of social inclusion, self-esteem, good health and employability.

This year, we welcomed 11,000 individuals of all ages to GLOW, and worked to expand our partnerships with social and community service agencies and the private retail sector, in order to better meet our clients' needs.



"I am so grateful for New Circles. It is a backbone for us, and a stepping stone."

- Olu, GLOW client and Retail Foundations graduate

Visit newcircles.ca to read Olu's story



Seniors Mobile Mall

439 seniors at **7** Toronto Community Housing locations received free clothing and health workshops



Holiday Angel

173 households (or **664** individuals) received basic necessities from **135** donors



Giving for Eid

100+ individuals from **28** families received gift baskets from **22** donors



Spooktacular

130 children outfitted for Halloween

i

Fact

A family of **4** can save up to **\$5,000** a year on clothing by using **GLOW**

250 community service agency program partners



Thank you to our clothing donors

- More than **1,000** individual donors
- Champagne and Cupcakes – dresses and accessories worth **\$15,700** to the Prom Boutique
- Gangbar Winslade – **452** pieces of Free People clothing worth **\$6,800**
- Just Socks – **2,700** pairs of socks
- Heart to Hand – **556** book and pajama packages
- The Needlework Guild of Canada – **40** baskets of handmade and new baby essentials
- **170** clothing drives across the city

Building employable skills

We're not just focused on meeting basic needs. The Business Office Skills and Retail Foundations programs integrate skill development through certificate-based training, work experience, and job search support. Uniquely positioned to offer hands-on learning in GLOW, our vision is to be the go-to agency for employment training in retail and customer service in Toronto.

In June, we celebrated the successful graduation of the first cohort of Retail Foundations, which leverages the GLOW retail space as a “learning lab” to give participants valuable and relevant Canadian work experience. Business Office Skills also continued as a core program, tailored for newcomer women who want to obtain an entry-level office administration job. Overall, enrollment in employment programs doubled in 2015-16.



Launched Retail Foundations program in February 2016

75

graduates since employment programs launched in 2014

14

students graduated from Retail Foundations

43

people received employment training this year

10

students graduated from Business Office Skills



Program Partners
Centennial College
Retail Council of Canada
Labour Education Centre



Investing in youth



Child poverty is a significant issue in Toronto, where more than 1 in 4 children live below the poverty line. Newcomer youth (who make up the majority of the youth population within our catchment area) are especially at risk; in Thorncliffe Park, more than half of all children live on a low income.

At New Circles, we help youth take on leadership roles and develop skills that support their education, through volunteer opportunities and employment skills training. Just as important is a sense of social belonging, and special events like Back to School, Teen Shopping and the Prom Boutique help teens participate fully in school and community life.

22

teens completed Leaders in Service Training and 19 certified as Retail Associates

568

teens received prom dresses, suits, accessories and footwear through the Prom Boutique

622

teens received clothing and school supplies through Back to School & Teen Shopping events

“

“Leaders in Service Training provided me with essential skills, and inspired me to think outside the box and be more involved in my community. It pushed me to realize and apply my potential.”

- Kuralay, LIST student

5

\$500 bursaries awarded to youth for outstanding community service work

Engaging volunteers

With approximately 2,000 items of clothing going through GLOW a day, volunteers are a critical part of our operation. Our diverse team includes clients and individual community members who give generously of their time, as well as corporate groups, community service agencies, schools, faith-based organizations and service clubs. Collectively, volunteers contribute more than 20,000 hours of service.

This year, we focused on creating more opportunities for clients to develop language and employment skills through volunteering, as well as offering meaningful and challenging work for volunteers with professional skills.



“Even after almost four years, when I leave the building, I still feel that I accomplished something.”

- Ivon, *GLOW* volunteer

Visit newcircles.ca to read Ivon's story

- More than **150** regular volunteers contribute the work of 10 full-time staff annually
- **1,284** hours worked in GLOW through LIST and Retail Foundations placements
- **24** Friendship Circle facilitators and Peer Language Tutors
- **27** volunteer employment workshop facilitators



Program Partners
Harmony Place
West Neighbourhood House
YMCA
Woodgreen Community Services

How we are funded

How are we funded

52%
Grants - Foundations/
Corporations



10%
Earned Revenue

8%
Rebates

31%
Donations - Individuals
and Groups

How we invest our funds

38%
Clothing



21%
Skills Building

15%
Social Programs

5%
Holiday Angel and
Giving for Eid

9%
Fundraising

11%
Administration

\$50

Cost to provide clothing
for one person for a year
through GLOW

Audited financial statements for the year ending
August 31, 2016 are available upon request.

Thank you to our supporters

We're 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 difference.

\$30,000+ Funders

- The Counselling Foundation of Canada
- Mackenzie Financial Charitable Fdn
- The Sprott Foundation
- The Slaight Family Foundation

\$5,000+ Organizations

- Arrell Family Foundation
- CIBC
- Conam Charitable Foundation
- Havergal College
- Helen McCrae Peacock Foundation
- The Henry White Kinnear Foundation
- J&L Rogers Family Charitable Foundation
- The Joan and Clifford Hatch Foundation
- The McLean Foundation
- Frederick and Douglas Dickson Memorial Foundation
- The Norman and Marian Robertson Charitable Foundation
- P&L Odette Charitable Foundation
- RBC Foundation
- St. Andrew's Charitable Foundation
- Scotiabank
- Sonor Foundation
- Timothy Eaton Memorial Church
- Tippet Foundation
- The Toskan Casale Foundation
- W.C. Kitchen Family Foundation

\$5,000+ Individuals

- Carolyn Blakely
- Kristin Blakely-Kozman & David Kozman
- Lindsay Blakely & Anthony Hammill
- Robert & Cindy Blakely
- Julie Cheesbrough
- Alkarim Damji
- Lynn Francis
- Katya & Mark Gardiner
- Maggie Hayes
- Melanie Lauber & Graeme MacGregor
- Dirk and Urai Van Den Berghe



“My ancestors wouldn’t have survived without help. Now it’s our turn. Supporting New Circles is a direct and immediate means to help newcomers and others in need.”

- Maggie, New Circles donor

Visit newcircles.ca to read Maggie's story

Lead Funders

*The Caring
Foundation*

Ontario
Trillium
Foundation



Fondation
Trillium
de l'Ontario

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

Board of Directors

September 2015-August 2016

Chair of the Board

Melanie Lauber

Vice-Chair

Meg Salter

Founder and Director

Cindy Blakely

Treasurer

Sandra Chiu

Directors

Lynn Francis

Suzanne Glen (to April 2016)

Jennifer Hinder

John McMeans (joined February 2016)

Jane Millan (joined April 2016)

Justin Ming Cheung

Sally Palmateer

Louise Stratford

Kanta Wadhwan

For current Board of Directors,
please visit newcircles.ca

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

Portraits of Olu, Ivon and Maggie
by Donna Griffith Photography.

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