

# ANNUAL REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2018 —  
AUGUST 2019



## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD & THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As a community-based non-profit in Canada's largest city, New Circles is continuously evolving to serve best those who need us. We are a small but mighty team working hard to provide services and programs that make an impact in the lives of those in our community.

Our program model continues to focus on leveraging GLOW as a gateway for newcomers, particularly women, to access further opportunities for successful integration into their new communities. We do this through social programs, employment training and referrals to other resources and services in the community. With a federal government two-year grant, we were able to hire an additional staff member who will build our capacity for outreach, participant support and employer engagement.

A significant achievement this year was the launch of our new Settlement Support Program in September 2018 to help meet the needs of newcomers to Toronto. Settlement support includes innovative programming such as multimedia art and sewing classes, which build skills, peer supports and social connection through creativity and relationship building.

After careful evaluation and in response to shifting needs within the communities we serve, we have changed how we provide specialty clothing like prom wear and Halloween costumes. Over the last three years, GLOW attendance has increased by seventy-

five percent, with a trend toward less participation in special events and more interest in regular shopping appointments. We know our clients still need specialty-clothing items for life milestones such as job interviews, holidays and events, and we are committed to a core value of social inclusion. So we now make specialty clothing available through regular shopping appointments and will continue to accept donations of these items throughout the year.

As we continually improve our programs to best serve the people who need our support, we thank you for everything you have done to move us forward.

With gratitude,

**Meg Salter**  
Chair of the Board of Directors



**Rosie Smythe**  
Executive Director



A photograph of two people working in a clothing store. On the left, a woman wearing an orange hijab and a floral patterned top is looking down at a dark jacket. On the right, a man with glasses and a blue and black striped shirt is also looking down at the same jacket. The background shows shelves with various clothing items and other people working. The text "EVERYONE CAN FIND A PLACE IN OUR CIRCLE." is overlaid in large white letters across the center of the image.

**“EVERYONE  
CAN FIND  
A PLACE IN  
OUR CIRCLE.”**

# OUR IMPACT

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.



Citlali, from Mexico, enrolled in the Retail & Customer Service Skills program to gain Canadian job experience

"I was motivated to apply for this program because I wanted to learn something new and be able to get a job. I came to Canada only two years ago, so I don't have Canadian experience yet. The Retail & Customer Service Skills program worked for me because it was flexible."

## ALLEVIATING

Registered clients can save up to **\$1,250** annually and apply these savings to rent, food, and other high-priority needs.

## STRENGTHENING

Our skill-building programs, geared towards newcomer women, help them with unemployment, language and cultural barriers, and social isolation.

## BUILDING

Our clients make new friends, develop language skills, and prepare for employment, building their sense of self and confidence levels.

## BENEFITING

For every individual that transitions to entry-level employment through our certificate-based programs, there is an economic benefit of **\$38,000** and a reduction in annual social assistance of **\$14,000**.

We redirect **350,000 lbs** of quality clothing donations away from the landfill and into the hands of those who need it every year.

## GLOW – GATEWAY FOR NEWCOMERS

New Circles operates Toronto's largest free clothing program, GLOW (Gently Loved Outfits to Wear), which serves 13,300 people annually.

## MEETING BASIC CLOTHING NEEDS

As our anchor program, GLOW continued to provide a vital service for anyone in need of clothing in Toronto, ensuring the good health and dignity of our most vulnerable when they arrive in the city.

## 2018: #KEEPTORONTOWARM CLOTHING DRIVES

Last winter, we found ourselves facing a critical shortage of warm winter clothing in GLOW.

Thanks to more than 100 clothing drives and countless individual donors across the city, we were able to ensure the 8,500 clients who visited us during the coldest months of the year were able to get the clothing they need.

# 13,300

individuals made 18,000 visits to GLOW

# 452

new local families registered

# 4,000

families are current users, representing 112 countries

# 2,021

people across the city in urgent need were referred by shelters, food banks, public health and settlement agencies

# 120

weekly volunteers, plus multiple schools, corporate and service groups sorted and distributed an estimated 350,000 lbs of donated clothing

"Because of New Circles, we didn't need to worry about clothes. We could use the limited money we had for food and housing, and that was a big support."

— Julio, GLOW client



## OPENING DOORS TO EMPLOYMENT

Newcomers face a range of barriers to finding employment, including lack of Canadian experience, credentials and references; lack of a Canadian personal network and experience with job-searching in our marketplace. As a result, unemployment rates for newcomers are 45% higher than for those born in Canada, and rates for newcomer women are almost double that of newcomer men.

To support confidence-building, we introduced two new elements to our programs. The first is a weekly workshop for students enrolled in the Business Office Skills program, led by volunteer professionals to coach participants on how to present their skills and experience in interviews and networking situations. In Retail & Customer Service Skills, where language skills are often lower, we partnered with a program called The Stories of Us, funded by the federal government to encourage new immigrants to tell their stories. To preserve individual experiences, the stories of newcomers were written in their native language and focused on their strengths, skills and resilience. The stories also included an English translation and were printed into booklets and posted on their website.

Another priority in the past year has been to strengthen employer engagement. Mentoring workshops were hosted by Home Depot, TELUS, Lululemon and Loblaws, and the first annual employment fair took place in May with six employers participating.

## BUSINESS OFFICE SKILLS

A free, 12-week full-time training program for women, offered in partnership with Centennial College and Neighbourhood Link Support Services, combining instructor-led training and hands-on experience in administrative and/or customer services positions. Upon completion, graduates receive transferable college credits and a certificate from Centennial College.

**130**

inquiries

**52**

in-person assessments

**31**

participants enrolled

**28**

women graduated from  
2 cohorts (90%) with  
workplace experience

**17**

women (60%) were employed  
or enrolled in further training  
with six months of graduating

## RETAIL & CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS

A free, part-time, flexible 12-week program that includes a combination of classroom learning and hands-on experience in our GLOW store, leading to the Retail Sales Associate certification through the Retail Council of Canada.

# 116

inquiries

# 58

in-person assessments

# 40

participants enrolled

# 32

graduated from 2 cohorts

# 23

people (72%) were employed  
or enrolled in further training  
within six months of graduation



Our training programs for newcomer women help them develop the confidence, skills and experience to overcome barriers and improve access to employment.

To date, graduates have been hired by a wide range of employers, including:

**YMCA**

**Thornccliffe Neighbourhood Office**

**Gyro Mazda**

**Royal Canadian College of**

**Massage**

**Toronto District School Board**

**Houses Opening Today Toronto**

**Centennial College**

**Marshalls**

**Wal-Mart**

**Canadian Tire**

**Home Depot**

**Costco**

**VHA Home Services**

## COMMUNITY OF VOLUNTEERS

This year, our volunteer program went through several changes to reflect the shift in our agency's needs. We developed new roles that enhanced our current programming while increasing the value of the volunteer experience. In the fall of 2018, we ran the last of our Friendship Circle sessions facilitated by volunteers and replaced the group with a staff-led Sewing Circle and Expressive Arts class supported by volunteers. We also started a group led by skilled professional volunteers to run a 6-week Workplace English program for the participants in Business Office Skills. In our Retail and Customer Service Skills program, we recruited our first Retail Skills Mentor to guide the participants during their work placement in GLOW.

In GLOW, we focused on providing volunteers with increased structure and training with a new Operations Manual. We introduced the Volunteer Mentor role in GLOW to help onboard and assist new volunteers. Streamlining volunteer outcomes and expectations while working in GLOW has improved the integration of new volunteers, especially with regard to clothing quality control, and ensured that all volunteers help to create a warm and welcoming environment for clients.



Volunteering is an excellent opportunity to share life stories and experiences as you work together.

**We would not be able to deliver our programs and services without the essential contributions our volunteers make every day.**

### BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 2018 AND AUGUST 2019

# 250

individual volunteers

# 32

groups of volunteers  
(corporate teams,  
school groups and  
community groups).

# 21k+

hours of service

# 19k+

hours in GLOW

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Events help us strengthen our relationship with the community and our supporters. Thank you for the many ways you have helped give struggling families in our city an opportunity to build a brighter future.

### RIDE FOR REFUGE

With twelve teams and 40 members, a group of volunteers, board members, staff, and other supporters raised more than \$22,000 for GLOW at the Ride for Refuge at Ashbridge's Bay on September 29.

### ARKELLS CLOTHING

On February 16, we were excited to head to Scotiabank Arena for Hamilton musicians Arkells' sold-out show, where they hosted a colossal clothing drive to benefit GLOW.

This initiative was the second time the band has supported New Circles. Their first drive happened in October 2018 as part of an album release pop-up at Union Station, as a nod to the single from their album Rally Cry, "Hand Me Downs."

### LAUGHING OUT LOUD IN LEASIDE

"Thank you for your generosity and sense of humour at Laugh Out Loud!" said Charlene Kalia. Charlene has been organizing LOL for ten years and raised more than \$500,000 in support of various community organizations. "Together, we are building a stronger, more welcoming community that invites newcomers, refugees, and others who are struggling to pursue their dreams of a brighter future."

### NEW CIRCLES GOLF CLASSIC

With seven major sponsors, 23 corporate hole sponsors, 21 individual hole donors, New Circles' largest fundraising event of the year raised \$80,000. Since 2012, the Golf Classic has now raised more than \$430,000 – critical support for programs that help people in need live empowered lives.



## PROVIDING SETTLEMENT SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

This year we introduced a new Settlement Support Program, focused on helping newcomers successfully navigate the settlement process.

New Circles provides a natural gateway for newcomers to access a continuum of settlement supports, both in our agency and in the wider community, promoting social and economic integration. About 3,000 newcomer households rely on New Circles' GLOW clothing bank to meet their basic needs, increasing by approximately 500 new families annually.

The Settlement Support Program plays a unique and complementary role in our services by identifying GLOW clients with settlement needs and providing support with specific challenges such as housing, mental health, citizenship or education.

Social isolation is a significant challenge for many immigrant women who have fewer opportunities to expand their connections due to family commitments, cultural norms and language barriers. To invite broader participation, we phased out the friendship circle in December and piloted the Sewing Circle and Art Expression programs geared to more specific interests and skill-building.

Both the Sewing Circle and Becoming You reflect a shift towards offering social programs that also provide a transition into employment training through building confidence and skills, and in particular, the training offered at New Circles.



Two new programs were launched this year that use creativity to foster connections, skill development, and emotional well-being among newcomer women: the drop-in Sewing & Craft Circle, and an Expressive Art workshop series.

**Clothing is just the beginning. We know that to build healthy and caring communities, we must provide our clients with programs to help them integrate socially and economically into the city. We offer volunteer programs, life skills and wellness workshops, office and retail skills programs, and settlement support services.**



# 250

**clients were referred to  
specific services to address  
their needs**

# 452

**newly registered clients received  
an orientation to settlement  
supports available to them**

## THANK YOU!

We are grateful to the following supporters who made charitable contributions to New Circles.

### LEAD FUNDERS

## The Caring Foundation



### ORGANIZATIONS \$20,000+

The Arrell Family Foundation  
The Counselling Foundation of Canada  
Mackenzie Financial Charitable Foundation  
RBC Foundation  
The Slaughter Family Foundation  
The Sprott Foundation  
State Street Foundation  
Tippet Foundation

### ORGANIZATIONS \$10,000 - \$19,000

The Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation  
CIBC  
Frederick and Douglas Dickson Memorial Foundation  
The Harry E. Foster Foundation  
Helen McCrea Peacock Foundation  
The Henry White Kinnear Foundation  
J & L Rogers Family Charitable Foundation  
The Joan and Clifford Hatch Foundation  
SmartSaver - The OMEGA Foundation  
Sonor Foundation  
TD Securities Underwriting Hope Fund

### ORGANIZATIONS \$1,000 - \$9,000

Aird & Berlis LLP  
Anglican Diocese of Toronto – FaithWorks  
Armitage Capital Corp. / Fullerton Properties Inc.  
Arts & Leisure Tours  
Bell Kearns & Associates Ltd.  
BMO Capital Markets  
Bristol Gate Capital Partners Inc.  
C.B. Powell Foundation  
Cassels Brock and Blackwell LLP  
CGOV Foundation  
Chestnut Park Real Estate Ltd.  
CHUM Charitable Foundation  
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Ernst & Young LLP  
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Lawrence Park Community Church  
Lexus On The Park  
Likrilyn Capital Corporation  
Lind Family Fund at Toronto Community Foundation  
Marwah Foundation  
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McDonald's Restaurants of Canada Limited  
The McLean Foundation  
Melmira Foundation  
Newport Private Wealth Inc.

Ontario Motor Vehicle Industry Council (OMVIC)  
Ontario REALTORS Care Foundation  
Pal Insurance Services Limited  
Phil Lind Fund  
The Ralph M. Barford Foundation  
RBC Dominion Securities - The Harbour Group  
RBC Wealth Management  
Retail Council of Canada  
Rob Roy Builders  
Rotary Club of East York  
Sisters of St. Joseph  
Tacita Capital Inc.  
Take 5 Productions  
Timothy Eaton Memorial Church  
Titus Steel Co. Ltd.

### INDIVIDUALS \$5,000+

Carolyn Blakely  
Anthony Hammill & Lindsay Blakely  
Cindy & Robert Blakely  
Richard & Joan Boxer  
Joan Eddy  
Lynn Francis  
Mark & Katya Gardiner  
Maggie Hayes  
Charlene Kalia  
Kristin Blakely-Kozman & David Kozman  
Melanie Lauber & Graeme MacGregor  
Jeannie & Stephan Von Buttlar

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

Mary Wilson & Philip Arthur  
Katherine Badeau  
Jack Pasht & Penelope Bell  
Tracey Lawko & Peter Blaiklock  
Ann & Thomas Bosley  
Harvey & Bev Botting  
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 Andrea & Michael Wolff  
 William & Emma Wong  
 Joan Wright

**Find out how you can  
 support us at [newcircles.ca](http://newcircles.ca)**

## Financials

Condensed statement  
 of revenue and expenses

<b>Revenue (\$)</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
Grants and donations	\$ 1,149,175	\$ 1,120,234
Event fees and sponsorships	131,794	114,752
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	11,570	12,019
Interest income	3,349	1,962
	<u>\$ 1,295,888</u>	<u>\$ 1,248,967</u>

<b>Expenses (\$)</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
Salaries and benefits	737,692	652,421
Programs and purchases of goods for disbursing	184,520	156,356
Premises	156,817	159,604
General and administrative	56,737	46,638
Professional fees	34,624	33,198
Fundraising	14,340	31,077
Amortization	41,456	35,692
	<u>\$ 1,226,186</u>	<u>\$ 1,114,986</u>
Excess of revenue over expenses	\$ 69,702	\$ 133,981

**For a copy of our audited financial statements for the year ending August 31, 2019 please visit [newcircles.ca](http://newcircles.ca).**



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
SEPTEMBER 2018 - AUGUST 2019

**Chair**  
Meg Salter

**Vice-Chair**  
Louise Stratford

**Founder and Director**  
Cindy Blakely

**Treasurer**  
Sandra Chiu

**Secretary**  
Michael Rusek

**Directors**  
Shamima Adam  
Ann Bosley  
Lynn Francis  
Melanie Lauber  
John McMeans  
Jane Millan

**For a current list of our Board of  
Directors, please visit [newcircles.ca](http://newcircles.ca)**

**Photos** by Courtney Cunningham  
**Design** by Matthew Wai Yiu Lee

161 Bartley Drive, Toronto, ON M4A 1E6  
416-422-2591  
[info@newcircles.ca](mailto:info@newcircles.ca)  
[newcircles.ca](http://newcircles.ca)  
CRN: 83634 3673 RR0001

