ST. FELIX CENTRE
Care. Compassion. Community.



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

EMBRACING EVERY NEIGHBOUR

ST. FELIX CENTRE IS A FELICIAN-SPONSORED MINISTRY



Message from the

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Embracing Every Neighbour" is the challenging theme for St. Felix Centre which is a radically welcoming ministry of the Felician Sisters that seeks to welcome the voices, presence and worthiness of all people — especially those who have been pushed to the margins, cast out, silenced and closeted.

The staff, volunteers, and Board have been integral parts of this growing ministry. What started out not many years ago as a meal program and an afterschool program at its location at 25 Augusta Avenue (where the former convent of the Felician Sisters was located) has expanded beyond its original neighbourhood in the Alexandra Park area - The ministry can now support people in the Liberty Village and Parkdale communities. These opportunities include a 24-hour respite shelter, transitional housing for women, affordable coed housing units, and soon, two new sites - one providing deeply affordable, supportive housing for women and women with children at the Centre's original location at 25 Augusta Ave, and the other providing shelter for people experiencing homelessness in the 629 Adelaide Street West area. These additions will join the spectrum of opportunities provided by the Centre to assist in its work of transforming lives.

"Embracing Every Neighbour" is being lived out radically in so many places by a dedicated, selfless group of Servant Leaders who are blind to an individual's ethnicity, economic status, sexual orientation or mental health. Blessed Mary Angela, the Foundress of the Felician Sisters, exhorted her Sisters: "Do not discriminate…" when serving those in need. **Give aid to all without exception for everyone is our neighbour**." Mother Angela is smiling on all who serve at St. Felix Centre!

To have served as chair of Board of Directors for the last 9 years and witnessing this phenomenal expansion has been a blessing. I have been in awe every day at the dedication of the Executive Directors, Senior staff, employees and volunteers. It has been a privilege to work with fellow board members whose professional expertise, commitment to mission and belief in the Core Values that drive St. Felix Centre. May God continue to bless the work of your hearts and hands. What you do is a holy work.

Sister M. Francesca Buczkowski
Chair Board of Directors
2014-2023

THANK YOU, SISTER FRANCESCA!

9 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE



After 9 years of serving as Chair of our Board of Directors, Sister M. Francesca Buczkowski has decided it is time for her to leave that role and continue her support for the Centre in a different capacity. Through her leadership and guidance, Sister Francesca has been an instrumental part of St. Felix Centre's success, both in delivering programming for our guests and supporting staff to help us be a ministry the Felician Sisters can feel proud of. From leading our Board to walking with us and being our main fundraiser year after year for our Coldest Night of the Year event, Sister Francesca has demonstrated in many ways that her heart is filled with the Centre's mission. Many of us have also experienced her caring approach, making us feel a part of her life and the Sisters'. As we celebrate her extraordinary legacy as the Chair of our Board, we cannot thank her enough for all she has done for our guests and all of us. Thank you so much, Sister Francesca.

THANKS TO OUR DEDICATED STAFF TEAM

When we asked our longest standing assistant respite manager what he's learned about building community at St. Felix Centre, he responded, "Community building begins with empathy. If we are unable to put ourselves in the shoes of those who come to the door, we are unable to provide the highest level of care."



All of our staff members show up to work ready and willing to support anyone in need, striving to provide our community with the highest levels of care and compassion. We can't thank staff enough for how they show up for our guests and residents. Across the social service sector staff retention is challenging—it is hard work, especially with the increased cost of living in Toronto. We are dedicated to continuing to improve the support and resources necessary for staff as they work tirelessly to support those in need.

Message from the
SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

EMBRACING EVERY NEIGHBOUR



The times we are in are incredibly complex. We all had a collective hope that when we came out the other side of the pandemic, that it would be an opportunity for optimism. Unfortunately for so many of our neighbours and community members, this optimism has grown increasingly out of reach. High inflation, an ever-increasing cost of living, record high rental costs, worsening drug toxicity, and a tone of austerity from government have instead led to a season of despair and pessimism.

This reality has been difficult, but it has also inspired us to try even harder to find new ways to support the communities in which we live and work and to find new and innovative ways to alleviate poverty and to help people find their way to permanent, deeply affordable and supportive housing.

There are three main housing related activities that we've been pursuing towards this goal, and we are excited about what they represent for St Felix Centre and for the people that we support.

The first item which we started near the end of this year was securing a space to develop a new permanent shelter program. While we remain committed to our goal of finding new ways to deliver permanent housing, the sad reality is that there is an overwhelming need for a variety of indoor space. As the year came to a close, we've been busy working closely with our partners at the City of Toronto's Toronto Shelter and Support Services (TSSS, formerly the Shelter Support and Housing Administration) to prepare this new space for operation with a target of opening in early 2024. This new space will allow us to provide safe, dignified space to 50 individuals that is fully pet-friendly and can connect people to a wide array of case work support, primary and mental health services, and housing help; all in an environment that prioritizes harm reduction.

The second activity was a new partnership with the Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust. This exciting opportunity also includes partnering with the City of Toronto and involves St Felix Centre taking over operation of a residential rental building in Parkdale. This partnership allows us to extend rent and tenancy stabilization support to all the tenants in the building and provides us more opportunity to connect with people who need support.

The third activity - that was announced last year - is the construction of new affordable housing through the federal Rapid Housing Initiative, again in deep partnership with the City of Toronto and the Housing Secretariat. During this year we made major progress on this critically important project and the site at 25 Augusta Ave was prepared for demolition and new construction in 2024!

These activities, along with our existing Transitional Housing Program for Women and 24-Hour Respite Program in Liberty Village, will enable St Felix Centre to have the exciting opportunity to provide a diverse array of services across the entirety of the housing continuum. We will soon be able to potentially meet someone in an emergency capacity at our respite or shelter and then support them through transitional housing and ultimately permanent, deeply affordable and supportive housing. We believe that if we can stay connected to someone throughout their journey out of homelessness, then we will be able to achieve a deeper sense of community with them and also help them to have greater stability and success. Having services across this continuum also allows St Felix Centre to have a greater ability to meet people where they are at and help build community in a variety of diverse neighbourhoods across Toronto.

All of these exciting and critically important projects also give us a great opportunity to connect to a wider community of supporters. The expansion of the types of services we deliver has attracted a lot of really positive attention from so many amazing people, including faith and corporate groups, and has helped us to integrate into new communities.

We are always looking for new ways to connect and to grow our St Felix Centre community and we hope that you'll be inspired to join us in supporting the most marginalised in our city!



Elizabeth Wanjiru Njeri

TESTIMONIAL

“I FELT AT HOME, AND OTHER GUESTS BECAME MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, FEELING AT PEACE..”



My name is Elizabeth Wanjiru Njeri, and I arrived in Canada on June 21, 2023, seeking refugee protection. With no family in the country, I received instructions at the airport to find shelter at the Red Cross. Unfortunately, that location was full, so, along with several others in a similar situation, I camped outside the City’s Assessment and Referral Centre on Peter Street, facing hunger and sleepless nights.

For two weeks, I called every hour trying to find a shelter space, but all locations were at capacity. Occasionally, we were taken to emergency drop-ins for showers and meals. A kind woman I met at a church helped me find St. Felix Centre. By calling their 69 Fraser site, we secured a space, bringing an end to my struggles with hunger and homelessness.

Initially anxious, I quickly felt at ease in the welcoming environment. I had meals, showers, clothing, and a sense of safety. Engaging in activities like bingo and reflection groups, I found a sense of belonging. The supportive staff assisted me in accessing library services, transportation cards, and volunteer opportunities. I felt at home, and other guests became my brothers and sisters, feeling at peace all days and all nights.

With the help of my caseworker, I received training in Harm Reduction and Peer Programs, leading to a job offer. Further support allowed me to train as a Security Guard, with the Centre’s staff providing me with a quiet space and a laptop for my certification exam. After three months at 69 Fraser, St. Felix Centre assisted me in securing my own space, and on November 7, 2023, I moved out.

St. Felix Centre played a crucial role in my journey, offering support, guidance, and opportunities that shaped my present. I am grateful for their assistance, and without them, I wouldn't be where I am today. Thank you, St. Felix Centre, and God bless you.

2022-2023 HIGHLIGHTS

ST. FELIX CENTRE
Care. Compassion. Community.



24-HOUR RESPITE

Our two sites maintained 24/7 operation, providing access to a safe and welcoming co-ed space to rest for 81 people per night.

ST. FELIX HOUSE

15 women resided in our transitional home for women. We were able to help 9 residents transition into permanent housing. The program offers: One Stop Program, life skills workshops, casework & housing support.





CASEWORK & HOUSING

Over 900 guests and community members received casework supports. Our team provides access to crisis & mental health supports, housing casework; addiction & detox supports, funding supports, and more.

P.A.W.S.

P.A.W.S. provides our guests with the opportunity to apply for financial support to access emergency veterinary care for their pets. 55 applications were supported.





COMMUNITY MEALS

We served on avg. 20,000 meals/month. The program provided support to all community members who came to the Centre asking for a warm meal.

VOLUNTEERS

The Centre received the support of 59 regular volunteers for a total of 2832 volunteer hours, and welcomed 22 unique corporate groups for a total of 257 volunteer hours.



COMMUNITY ENGAGMENT

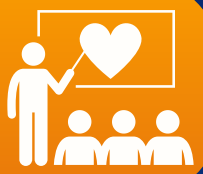
BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

In the heart of our mission at St. Felix Centre lies a deep commitment to Embracing Every Neighbour. Recognizing the unique diversity of both our guests and the communities living and working in areas where we provide services, our community engagement initiatives thrive in fostering meaningful connections.

We understand that a crucial part of the mission of our communications and community engagement efforts is to bring people together. Through diverse projects and actions, our team supports St. Felix Centre's role as a catalyst for building stronger communities where everyone feels welcomed and included. We believe in building relationships that extend beyond the transactional nature of partnerships. Our focus is on fostering connections that are deep-rooted and meaningful, reflecting our fundamental belief that everyone is our neighbour.



An important aspect to achieve that is the creation of Community Liaison Committees. These committees serve as forums where ideas are shared in a positive, solution-based atmosphere, allowing us to collaborate with community and municipal leaders in finding innovative solutions to common challenges. With the same vision, our Community Liaison team regularly visits neighbours, facilitating open conversations, answering queries about our programs, listening to concerns, and discussing ways to get involved in supporting our guests.



Another relevant part of our community engagement efforts is the implementation of Community Safety Teams covering catchment areas close to our sites. These teams are trained in de-escalation techniques and positive engagement with people in crisis. By becoming familiar with the areas near our programs, they support the Centre in building safe communities for all —guests and neighbours alike.





Our commitment to building community extends beyond our immediate neighbours to faith and corporate groups. Through tailored educational workshops, we engage in conversations with them about homelessness and other complex challenges stemming from poverty, fostering better connection and communication with those experiencing those challenges.

Volunteer opportunities are provided, allowing individuals and businesses to actively contribute to our mission of creating positive change. We also organize and participate in community events with the goal of building a sense of togetherness, doing simple things, such as eating ice cream together.

Finally, through our social media profiles and other communication channels, we not only constantly update the audience about our programs and services but also remind them to be kind and compassionate with each other. We invite them to realize that we have more positive things in common than those that divide us and that all of us, no matter our current circumstances, are just a couple of challenging personal events away—events out of our control— that could put us in a situation of homelessness or need of support.



St. Felix Centre is more than an organization; it is a community formed by our guests, staff, neighbours, and corporate friends, bound together by shared values and the pursuit of a better future for all. Our team works tirelessly every day to weave a tapestry of empathy and positive change, creating a community that truly believes in Embracing Every Neighbour.







ST. FELIX HOUSE

THE ONE STOP PROGRAM

St. Felix House continues to be a source of inspiration for what community building can look like. One of our caseworkers explained, “Building community means accepting people as they are and continually meeting them where they are at. It means offering a wide range of diverse programming and services to better reflect the people in the community. Building community means recognizing differences as strengths and continuously fostering an inclusive space!”. With this sentiment in mind, over the last year we were able to expand our One Stop program to support women with their professional goals while they are living at St. Felix House. This program is generously funded by The Sprott Foundation and we can’t thank them enough for their help!

The One Stop Program allows women who have experienced chronic homelessness the opportunity to re-imagine their futures, set professional goals, and work towards greater financial security. Women who participate in this program receive honoraria throughout the duration of the program and a bursary upon completion—this final bursary supports women with moving and housing set-up costs as they transition to permanent housing. While education and employment remain a focus of the One Stop Program we have developed a broader range of activities related to skill building, peer leadership, and goal setting so that women who are not yet ready for formal education or employment can access the program and work on the skills that will support them long-term. The One Stop Program creates an environment where women can build on their skills and experiences to access further opportunities, with the ultimate goal being to help women move out of a cycle of poverty through sustainable employment and housing stability.

Over the last year, women in our One Stop Program have worked on:

- Resume and cover letter development
- Volunteer placements
- Accessing post-secondary education
- Job Training Programs like culinary training, peer-support work programs, and first-aid/CPR









FIRST CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

RAPID HOUSING INTIATIVE

Toronto, a vibrant city known for its prosperity and towering skyline, harbors a hidden crisis that demands our immediate attention. Countless women and children are trapped by homelessness and intimate partner violence, desperate for safety, stability, and a place to call home.

At St. Felix Centre, we are embarking on our most ambitious initiative to date, aiming to be part of the solution to this challenge — building deeply affordable, supportive housing for women and women with children.

While the majority of funding for this ambitious project will come from the Federal Government and the City of Toronto, the project requires us to raise an additional $2 million to fully realize this initiative. For this reason, St. Felix Centre will soon launch its first ever capital campaign.

Donors will be acknowledged and celebrated, recognizing the integral role they play in transforming lives and uplifting our community. We have secured a campaign catalyst gift of $250,000 from the Sprott Foundation to launch our campaign, and La Fondation Emmanuelle Gattuso has pledged to match up to $500,000 of funds contributed by donors.

If this transformative project aligns with your philanthropic goals, or if you are connected to people or foundations that you think could be interested in participating as part of their legacy plan, please connect with our Director of Philanthropy and Communications, Enrique Cochegrus – enrique@stfelixcentre.com – for more information.

RESPITE PROGRAM

FOSTERING A SENSE OF BELONGING AND FORMING LASTING CONNECTIONS WITH OTHERS.

While St. Felix Centre is committed to a housing first strategy, we continue to ensure that our 24-hour emergency respite program is accessible for those who need it. Our respite site at 25 Augusta closed over the last year to prepare for our redevelopment project, while we continued to provide respite services at our 69 Fraser location.

Our respite space is a congregate setting, intended to provide emergency services and case management support to people that may otherwise be unhoused. At 69 Fraser we offer resting space, meal service, access to on-site health services, and other program referrals. In addition, this program fosters a strong sense of community. Our respite program manager shared that, "Building community is about fostering a sense of belonging and support for all individuals. It's not just about physical spaces; it's about creating a welcoming environment where everyone's unique strengths and needs are acknowledged and valued, ultimately forming a tapestry of interconnected lives. Together, we create a community where everyone thrives".

Within our respite program, our casework team operates using a person-centred approach to the work to ensure we understand the individual needs of the people we support. Our casework manager highlights that, "Building community is about forming lasting connections with others. These connections are only possible when we operate with compassion and belief in each other's capacity. Here at St. Felix Centre, we are privileged to witness this kind of compassion and understanding daily. We see this embodied by our guests when they support each other through tough times and transitions and when our guests believe in us to help them reach their goals".

We consistently seek guidance from our guests to make sure that our services meet their needs and make program improvements based on the feedback we receive. With the help of our community partners at Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre and The Neighbourhood Group we have been able to implement a peer-support program. This means that our guests can be employed as peer workers to help each other better navigate programs and services. By integrating more peer-led programs we can build a stronger and safer community where the expertise of people with lived experience are valued and embedded into our program model.

We also utilized guest and community feedback to build overdose prevention services within our respite program. Since March, 2022 we have been operating an Urgent Public Health Needs Site (UPHNS) inside our respite centre. This space has been decorated with painted handprints of our staff and guests to remind us that we are in this together. The UPHNS is equipped with harm reduction supplies, snacks and beverages, health information, and medical equipment such as oximeters and compressed oxygen tanks that allow us to significantly improve the safety of our guests who use drugs and respond to overdoses with greater efficiency. In addition to saving lives, this service has transformed our ability to have honest conversations about drug use, provide more referrals to other health care and recovery services, and combat the stigmatization of people who use drugs with greater compassion and understanding. Our guests are able to manage their substance use with dignity in a health care setting alongside staff who are always there to help. While the toxic drug supply epidemic continues to take a toll on a global level, the transformation of our services has had a significant impact on our ability to meet the most urgent health needs in our community.

With the help of our guests and other community members we have been able to:

- Enhance harm reduction and overdose prevention services, including extending the hours of our Overdose Prevention Site – To date over 800 overdoses have been successfully reversed
- Provide a broader range of health services on-site.
- Improve access to culturally specific resources.
- Become more familiar with refugee programs and services to better support the unique needs of people who have recently immigrated.
- Increase participation in recreational and skill building activities.



MAJOR DONORS 2022 2023

Felician Sisters of North America
Felician Sisters of Canada
Felician Services, Inc.
Aastha Trehan
Alena Foster-Chandler
Alex Nurse
Altea NYX Liberty
Amelia Majewski
AMMA Canada Foundation
André Cochegrus
Andrea Viveiros
Andrew Zarebski
Anita Richardson
Anna Romanelli
Anne Rose
Archdiocese of Toronto
Beanfield
Bernadette & Geri Lonergan
Bethany Simons
Blue Sea Foundation
Bob Oliver
Burger Drops
C3 Toronto
CAF Canada
Canada Life Community Relations
Carly Rian Group
Caroline Park
Carrie Chan
Cathy & Nunzio Romano
Cecilia Lau
Cecilia Romanelli
Cissy Yao
City of Toronto
Colliers
Crescent Canada
Daily Bread Food Bank
David and Patricia Rudan
David Licata
Deanna Wolfe
Deborah Williams
Delta Toronto
Diana Cottingham
Dianne and Norman Levine
Ebuka Uduezue
Elaine Vacheresse
Elevation Church
Enrique Cochegrus
Evan Prendergast
EveAnna Spehar
Extend a Hand - Homeless Outreach
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Holy Name of Mary College School
Hootsuite
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Janet Gunn
Janey Ng
Janine Sedgwick
Jean Rebello
Joey Spehar
John Croal
Jorge Garcia
Joseph Fong
Julia Hitlschuk
Julie Arie
Kathryn Rea
Kindred Spirits
KPMG Management Services
Krista Third
Kristen Traicus
Kristina Nicolaides
Laura Howells
Lauren Bates
Linda Birochik
Linda Shick
Lloyd Prevedel
Louise Morwick
Maria Rosano
Marisa Sheff
Mark Prince
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Michelangelo Lipari
Michele Childs
Michelle Marsellus
Moody's
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Peter Fitzpatrick
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Raymond James Canada
Rhonda Hartling
Richard Eriksson
Richard Salmon
Robert & Edna Podruzny
Robert Eisenberg
Rotary Club Parkdale-High Park-Humber
Rowan Saunders
Saint Clement Youth Group
Shannon Brant
Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel
Sheryl D'Souza
Sister M. Francesca Buczkowski
Sister Renee Kurczaba
Sock Footage
Sprott Foundation
St. Matthews Church
Starbucks District 268
Starbucks Foundation Charitable Fund
Stephanie Ferruccio
Sylvia Gardner
Tammy Ferreira
The Alva Foundation
Theodore Kebede
Thomson Reuters
Toronto Marriott City Centre
Ubuntu Community Network
United Way
VCA Canada
Victoria Toncic
Vital Toronto Fund
W Hotel Toronto
Whitehorse Liquidity Partners
William Broughton
William Gorman
Zena Driver
Zensurance

2022-2023
FINANCES

ST. FELIX SOCIAL MINISTRIES OUTREACH

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

	2023	2022
Revenue		
Grants and services contracts		
City of Toronto	$ 6,982,145	$ 7,338,822
Felician Services Inc.	27,890	13,291
Foundations	130,726	100,121
Other	92,806	61,236
Donations and fundraising		
Felician Sisters	243,070	245,938
Individuals	104,373	147,308
Corporate	64,468	28,913
Foundations and other registered charities	9,334	5,052
Fundraising event	64,087	64,713
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	78,265	48,648
Interest income	157,932	16,032
	7,955,096	8,070,074
Expenditures		
Salaries and related benefits	4,518,343	4,704,690
Program	2,356,154	2,405,005
Occupancy	325,371	375,447
Professional and consulting fees	211,586	241,945
Amortization	124,522	86,739
General and office	68,375	72,059
Insurance	30,584	27,470
Fundraising	11,884	22,653
	7,646,819	7,936,008
Excess of revenue over operating expenditures	308,277	134,066
Other expenses		
Loss on disposal of capital assets	--	3,157
Excess of revenue over expenditures	$ 308,277	$ 130,909

ST. FELIX CENTRE BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2022 2023

Sister Francesca Buczkowski, *Chair*
Bernadette Lonergan, *Vice-Chair*
Paul Hyung, *Treasurer*
Michelle Marsellus, *Secretary*
Todd Beadle, Senior Ministry Advisor, Board *Member*
Sister MaryAnne Olekszyk, Board Member
Elizabeth Schreurs, Board Member
Sister Renee Kurczaba, Board Member
Evan Prendergast, Board Member
Louise Morwick, Board Member

OUR COLDEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR!

Throughout 2023, our team prepared for our 6th annual Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY) event. This initiative provides an amazing opportunity to connect and build a sense of community with individuals, corporate and community groups, all while raising awareness about homelessness and funds to support our programs and services. The walk took place on February 24, 2024, with great success. In this edition, 238 walkers in 26 teams, along with 24 volunteers, joined us, walking 5 km in the cold weather from our 25 Augusta location to our 69 Fraser site and back. We would like to extend our gratitude to Felician Services Inc, Colliers, Burger Drops, and The Craft Brasserie for sponsoring the event. Donations will continue to be accepted until the end of March, so if you haven't supported the initiative yet, you still have time to help us reach an all-time fundraising record for the event. Follow THIS LINK to join our Change-Makers! - https://cnoy.org/location/torontoqueenliberty







FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

St. Felix Centre
25 Augusta Ave.
Toronto, ON, M5T 2K7
416-203-1624
www.stfelixcentre.org