



THE KENNEDY HOUSE Beacon



DECEMBER 2023

Happy Holidays to All!

As we come to the close of another year, it's important to be reminded of all the good that is happening – much of it right here at home.

At Kennedy House, we provide a beacon of hope for young people. And we are delighted to share some of the highlights of the past few months with you.

It's just a sampling of the small miracles that happen at Kennedy House – not just at the holiday season, but year-round. These miracles are possibly only with the continued and growing contributions of the companies and individuals in our community. Thank you for your ongoing support of Kennedy House youth! We truly are stronger when we work together.

On behalf of everyone at Kennedy House, we wish you a happy, healthy holiday season and all the best for 2024.

Shelly Jaigobin, Executive Director

Cindy Bruce-Barrett, Chair of the Board of Directors

Providing warmth and kindness

"I would like to thank Kennedy house for giving me a place to stay when I didn't have one, for being so cool and kind.... I really appreciate them for what they have done for me until I moved out."

— Kennedy House Youth Shelter Client

Storefront program – now open for after-school fun and friendship



We were delighted to reopen our Storefront after school program in July. At the program we offer activities such as baking, arts and crafts, movies, games, and physical exercise, celebrate the children's birthdays, and host special events like pizza days.

This holiday season, we'll be giving gifts and holding celebrations for the youth, who have expressed much excitement and anticipation.

It has been a joy to watch the young people in the program grow and form friendships over the past few months.

Thanks to recent additions to program staff, we look forward to welcoming more children into the program in 2024, and the opportunity to have an even greater impact on the community.

Act now to help local youth!

Every donation matters. Make your contribution of \$20 or more to Kennedy House on or before **December 31**, to receive a receipt for your 2023 income tax return. You'll be supporting our mission to be a beacon of hope for young people, and you'll save at tax time.

To donate, click the orange Donate Now button at [kennedyhouse.org](https://www.kennedyhouse.org).



Exploring new approaches at the Shelter

At the Kennedy House Youth Shelter, we support clients from many circumstances, and have learned to be adaptable in our approaches.

Sharing experiences

For example, our clients deal with many sources of stress, both from their past and on a daily basis. We talk about the stressors at our group discussions, and participants share the methods that have helped them manage stress. We also we play a game called “stress bingo” – a variation of the traditional game that mentions external and internal stressors and coping strategies.

Supporting one another

Recently at the Shelter, a young newcomer shyly asked one of his peers a question about snow, as he had never seen any before in person. The youth answered the question with great sensitivity, and the session quickly expanded into an open discussion about how the

newcomers in the group could prepare for winter. The group talked about everything from what “long johns” are to how to safely break your fall if you slip on ice.

Friendship from surprising sources



We’ve also started using dog therapy, which has been enormously successful. The youth are very appreciative of the sessions and enjoy interacting with the four-legged visitors.

A safe place for young refugees

“When I got to Canada I had nowhere to go but luckily, I found an empty spot in Kennedy House. They made me feel welcome with a clean environment, hot shower, and delicious food. It gave me opportunities to create new friendships, join different programs, and find my home!”

— Kennedy House Youth Shelter Client

Warm up a cold night



The next **Coldest Night of the Year** takes place February 24, 2024. Please consider supporting this important fundraising event for Kennedy House, which in past years has raised more than \$20,000 for our clients. We need volunteers to help at the event, and fundraisers to gather donations and walk one of the local 3k, 5k, or 10k routes. To get involved, please reach out to our office by calling (416) 299-3157 or emailing info@kennedyhouse.org.

Thank you, donors!

Our Christmas wish came true



There's nothing like seeing the face of a child or youth light up as they unwrap a Christmas present. So we were delighted to have been selected as a recipient of the **CP24 CHUM Christmas Wish** program. Their contribution will put \$500 in gifts under Kennedy House trees this year.

Welcome, Second Harvest!



In June 2023 we began receiving donations from **Second Harvest**. In the first three months of the service, we received more than 3,000 pounds of food valued at over \$10,000. We're doubly thrilled to know we're helping the environment while nourishing our clients.

Opening doors

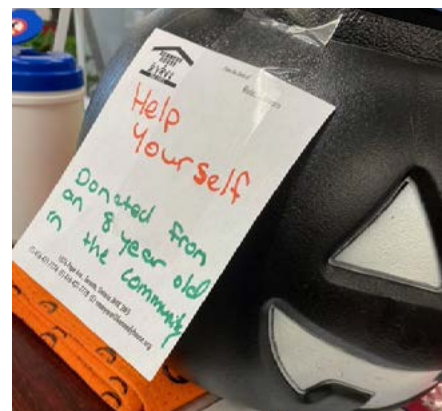


The Home Depot Orange Door 2023 holiday campaign runs November 28 to December 17. Donations collected through three local stores (Morningside, Curity, and Scarborough [Warden and Ellesmere]) will be directed to Kennedy House. The program has been an important source of funds for us, raising about \$100,000 over the past four years.

Random acts of kindness

Ad hoc generosity from our community is important to us for so many reasons — not least of which is your demonstration of love and support! Here are a few instances of your kindness to the Shelter over the past several months:

- An anonymous donor provided our Thanksgiving meal and The S.P.A.C.E. performing arts school held a Thanksgiving food drive.
- The Leaside Winners location filled our entire van with donations of summer overstock.
- The Lions Club generously donated a library and a reading/study nook.
- A board member donated gently used items and we also received a number of other donations that were dropped off by community members.
- An 8-year-old boy donated all his Halloween candy to the youth.



The Kennedy House Beacon Newsletter

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