



acsa   
CARES



2020 ANNUAL REPORT  
**STRONGER  
TOGETHER**

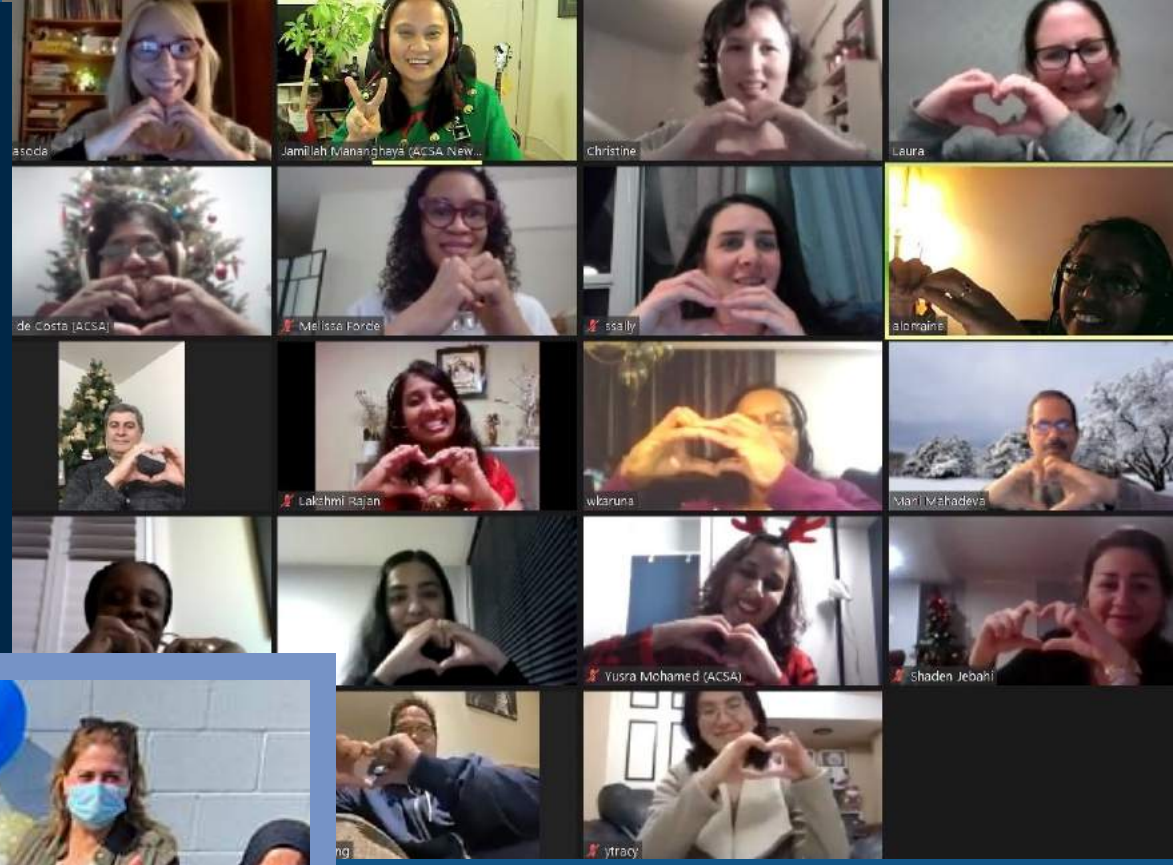
# MISSION

We are a non-profit, multi-service agency addressing needs and empowering children, youth, newcomers, homeless and underserved communities to build a better tomorrow

# VISION

Working with Scarborough residents to build strong and healthy communities





**STRONGER  
TOGETHER**



# HOW DO WE SUM UP A YEAR LIKE 2020?

**LEE SODA,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Two things come to mind... “stronger together” and “ACSA Cares”. These two #hashtags were used repeatedly in 2020. Despite unprecedented challenges ACSA mobilized and came together for community in BIGGER ways than ever. Hand in hand WITH OUR COMMUNITY.

ACSA has been at the frontlines of a food security crisis, economic precariousness, mental health decline, the erosion of our social safety net and the deep inequities within our City became our scarlet letter to bare and face head on. ACSA has built its reputation on its leadership in poverty reduction, community development, welcoming newcomers and decades of experience in direct service allowed us to jump into action during this most difficult year!

The mantra “stronger together” has never reflected our core values more than in this past year. Since March 2020 when the first provincial lockdown was announced I have been in awe of the unwavering commitment of ACSA staff and grateful to our volunteers, Board members, community leaders, donors and friends of ACSA who have all risen to the challenge during the pandemic. Everyone coming together demonstrating incredible care, resilience, creativity and grace. “ACSA CARES” is not just a mantra but it’s the way everyone has been showing up for each other.

Coming to work over the past year, I have seen and felt the care for community and for one another from everyone who’s been part of this incredible journey.

During the pandemic ACSA has distributed thousands of dollars worth of food hampers and essential items through the food bank, we’ve incorporated home delivery of essential items to COVID+ individuals, moved many programs online, distributed laptops, telephones, and tablets to families to keep them connected to school and community. ACSA’s Newcomer department continued to serve newcomers in need of supports in person and virtually. Our street outreach workers continued to connect with those experiencing homelessness, working with our City partners to find appropriate housing solutions and we even rented portable toilets and installed a handwashing station for community members to use. Staff created phone trees and not a day went by where staff didn’t call, text or video call our Seniors, our neighbours, our friends in the community. We made sure we stayed connected to the community members that count on us.

We also learned that despite all the adversity around us we had to continue and challenge ourselves to be effective advocates for the people who rely on us, to speak truth, to speak and point out the cracks in our system, to point out the inequities and let our anger fuel us to do better, expect better, demand change. There is still much work to do with our Indigenous communities, we must learn what it means to be true allies to our LGBTQ2SAA community and to stand against anti-Black racism. The road ahead includes exposing our vulnerability and learning from failures past and present.

It is my privilege to work at ACSA and I never take for granted the hard-working staff and volunteers that fuel this organization. We celebrate the strength and resilience of community and the successes we have met together. We cheer for the opportunities that come our way and we find courage in the barriers we break down. It’s been a tremendous year and I know we were able to accomplish all that we did because we are **stronger together!**



# A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

## DOUG BROWN, BOARD CHAIR

As the Board Chair, it is normal to provide a few words about the year that just passed. Well, I don't need to tell you that there was nothing normal about 2020.

Starting around mid-March of last year, the Leadership Team at ACSA had to determine how to keep the doors open and to serve those who needed our help the most, at a time when other agencies were closing theirs. ACSA staff struggled to find wipes, masks and other personal protective equipment to keep everyone safe. All the while dealing with the personal stresses that each of us were going through at that time.

ACSA's Food Bank (soon to be rebranded as the ACSA Food Centre), has always been one of the busiest in the GTA, and the Pandemic multiplied that need. ACSA served over 1,100 families each week through the Food Centre at the Dorset Park Hub. While ACSA did everything possible to accommodate this unforeseen surge, it became painfully obvious that we needed to find larger facilities in order to serve the community. This will be a key focus in the coming year.

As we progressed through the Pandemic, again ACSA repositioned itself to assist the community with its greatest needs. It has hosted vaccination clinics for those unlikely to get their COVID shot elsewhere, and educated its clients about the facts on vaccination, all the while providing its other services-in person where possible, and in other cases, remotely.

Please read thorough the 2020 Annual Report. You will see for yourself how ACSA makes such a difference in the lives of so many.

It is the end of my second three year term with the Board, and in accordance with the By Laws of ACSA, I will be leaving the Board at the end of this year. On reflection, I look back on how ACSA has grown over those six years. From helping with Syrian refugees, to homeless outreach, and of course to the various challenges with COVID-19; ACSA, time and time again, gave a hand up to our community.

Our Board continues to get stronger, with a great group of new recruits standing for election. I thank my fellow Board members – both those who are leaving the Board and those who remain. I appreciate your hard work, commitment and initiative.

The ACSA staff, lead by its superstar Executive Director, Lee Soda, continue to do an incredible job. You have put together a great organization. I am proud to have been on the Board of this organization, and will continue to be involved in some capacity.



**ACSA'S WORK IN THE COMMUNITY REMAINS STEADFAST. WE ARE COMMITTED TO THOSE WHO NEED US MOST.**



**Salma Zahid**  
@SalmaZahid15

Today in virtual Parliament I paid tribute to Lee Soda @ACSA\_ED and all the staff and volunteers at @acsaToronto for their tireless support and work for our community during the COVID-19 pandemic. They help make us Scarborough Strong! #ScarbTO



# STRONGER TOGETHER

## A NOTE FROM OUR ACSA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LEE SODA

*Truer words could not be spoken during 2020!*

The past year has been challenging and full of uncertainty and as we've all turned to data and evidence to guide us during the pandemic...we know that research indicates that the stronger the sense of connection and people working together makes for a more resilient community. And we at ACSA have stood tall and rallied *around* community, *beside* community and *with* community to demonstrate our deep care for the people we serve!

True to our history and roots in community, we have worked with community partners, local businesses, donors, volunteers, funders, faith groups, residents and elected officials to adapt to the whirlwind that was 2020. We were quick on our feet constantly identifying needs and issues that were emerging daily at a local level. Immediately after the first Provincial lockdown in March 2020, ACSA declared several of our programs as "essential services" and kept our doors open to serve those most vulnerable in our communities. For staff working from home they continued to check in on vulnerable seniors, individuals and families with children. We never left community...instead increased our presence and remained steadfast in our conviction that **TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER.**

## GET INVOLVED IN 2021

### A NOTE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR, DOUG BROWN

If you have an ACSA membership, thank you. You are supporting a great organization, and membership is a great first step. If you are not yet a member, please do so by contacting ACSA. Besides being a member, there are other ways you can help.

- 1) **Volunteer** - There are a number of opportunities to volunteer through ACSA. The Food Centre always needs volunteers. The tax clinics are staffed by volunteers too. Those with skills in marketing, fundraising, and / or social media are always needed by ACSA.
- 2) **Join the Board or Committees of the Board** - The Board traditionally is made up from people with a connection to the Community; historically Scarborough, now the broader GTA. This is a Board which relies so much on the valuable skills of its volunteer members.
- 3) **Donate** - Individuals making a personal donation do not make up a large part of our budget, but any donation we get helps immensely. Any donation you can make, big or small, does make a big difference. Simply, go on our website and click on the "Donate Now" link. Please consider being a monthly donor to ACSA. The cost of a few coffees a month would do so much to help individuals and families without proper food, shelter and / or clothing.
- 4) **Advocate** - One of the pillars of the ACSA strategic plan is "Systems Change." Add your voice to the plea for change. Make your voice heard with your elected officials.



# THE ACSA NEWCOMERS' CENTRE

*The Newcomers' Centre remained agile and responsive to the needs of newcomers since the pandemic began in 2020.*

The team transitioned to a blended model of working shortly after the Provincial lockdown was announced, providing both virtual and in-person support to Newcomers while extending critical services to newcomers who have been severely impacted by COVID-19. The team received a flood of calls from newcomers reaching out for support and information...and the stories that were shared allowed us to respond to the emerging needs arising from the pandemic.

New projects emerged such as the COVID 360 Wrap Around Support, which addressed urgent life-stabilization needs of newcomers who have been impacted by the pandemic; Pathways to Employment which supported the employment needs of newcomers receiving social assistance; ACSA's Virtual Legal Clinic which increased access to legal supports to those most in need during the lockdown. Over 1729 new arrivals to our great City have been provided with case management support through our IRCC funded program, and another 1300 participants joined our webinars related to supports during the pandemic, legal educational sessions, skills training for women entrepreneurs, online language program, and citizenship test preparation workshops.

In addition to the ongoing work and responsiveness of the ACSA Newcomers' Centre, we were also honoured to be nominated as a finalist for RBC's Top Settlement Agency Award. Of course we were not expecting this nomination and we are grateful for the recognition of the work we do. Working to increase the capacity of newcomers and share in their settlement journey is a privilege. We continue to work in community to strengthen and build up newcomers so they can thrive and flourish.





# SUPPORTING NEWCOMERS' FOR OVER 10 YEARS

*The pandemic provided opportunities for service providers and community members to come together and demonstrate solidarity to help those who are struggling and have little to no other means of accessing supports.*

## So many examples of “TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER”.

- Toronto Public Library – loaned over 150 Wi-Fi Hotspots and Interconnectivity Kits to newcomers
- Renewed Computer Technology (RCT) – increased digital access of newcomers by allocating 100 refurbished, low-cost computers
- YWCA – trained 30 women in Home-based Small Business trainings for women entrepreneurs
- TEQ-LIP (Toronto East Quadrant Local Immigration Partnership) – network table that connected newcomers to different services during the pandemic
- City of Toronto- provided 148 Uber vouchers
- Canadian Women’s Foundation – provided financial aid to 83 women
- Partnership with Foodbank and HOS department- These 2 departments provided volunteer opportunities to our 12 OW clients who are completing a course on Security Guard Training under Pathways To Employment project
- Partnership with Foodbank – provided 772 food hampers for COVID 360 clients
- BacOff Food Safety & Hygiene Training and Consulting – trained over 200 women in Food Handler’s Certification
- Lochchana Cake House – trained 100 women in cake/cupcake decoration

*“ACSA’s skills training gave me strength during the pandemic crisis and supported my mental health. I enjoyed the cupcake decoration and small business training. I met other women like me who are struggling a lot but found support through this agency.*

*Thank you!”*

**– Stronger Women Project Participant**

## THE IMPACT.



3013 newcomers provided with case management support, skills training, educational sessions, citizenship workshops, and language support



285 women joined the Stronger Women Project training on food handling, cake decoration, small business workshops, social media training



81 clients accessed virtual legal clinic; 200 attended legal education webinars

# ACSA CHILD AND FAMILY

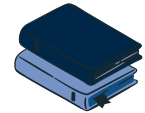
ACSA's Child and Family department showed itself to be agile, as the department quickly pivoted to virtual platforms to ensure children 0-12 years and their families were provided with the support they desperately needed during the pandemic.



ACSA Child and Family offered 26 virtual programs 6 days/week



ACSA after school program has served over 450 children in 2020



We distributed over 300 books to our participants with donations from Children's Book Bank and other individual donors

Within days of the provincial lockdown, our staff connected with over 500 families and continued to support our community with phone calls, text messages, and WhatsApp group chats. The staff wanted to make sure we maintained connections with as many of our families as possible...*connecting was vital* to share information and support one another. The team quickly modified all our programs and services and offered them virtually. Our EarlyON/Creative Play (0-6) drop in programs offered Story time, Circle time, music and movement, nature exploration, STEM/STEAM programs, parent's workshop all went virtual and we quickly embraced a digital platform. Working virtually felt strange, we all had to learn new skills and become comfortable with technology but most importantly it was vital that we maintain connections with our families. We knew that **TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER** and that's what continued to drive our desire to persevere and embrace what was happening around us.



The ACSA after school programs also pivoted quickly to online platforms where children were able to connect to their leaders regularly. *We understood the importance of maintaining a consistent presence for children.* Staff were able to support children and their families as they navigated the complexities of virtual learning, and also assisted families in securing the necessary technology so they could actively participate in the "new" way of learning. Staff connected families with necessities such as food supports, resource kits and education supplies. The programs not only served as a platform for social interaction and physical activities, but also as a forum for homework help, reading and writing support... and perhaps, most important of all, help to alleviate social isolation.



***"Thank you so much for helping me out during these difficult times. I don't know how I would have managed without your help and support. Again, thank you so much."  
- ACSA Child and Family Parent***

Learning virtually has been challenging for many of our participants but we found/find new ways to support them as we continue the pandemic journey together. Social isolation has our participants longing for social interactions and we have ensured that through our programs they can meet with their friends from school, offer opportunities to play games, be physically active and stay entertained. We make sure our families have the necessary resources to take part in our programs by providing them with the resources they need. Staff continue to stand with the children and families of our Scarborough communities as well as join forces with our TDSB, TCDSB partners because we know that taking care of one another is not a simple task during a pandemic and that “together we are stronger” and that is exactly what we need to care for one another during these unprecedented times.

# ECE APPRECIATION

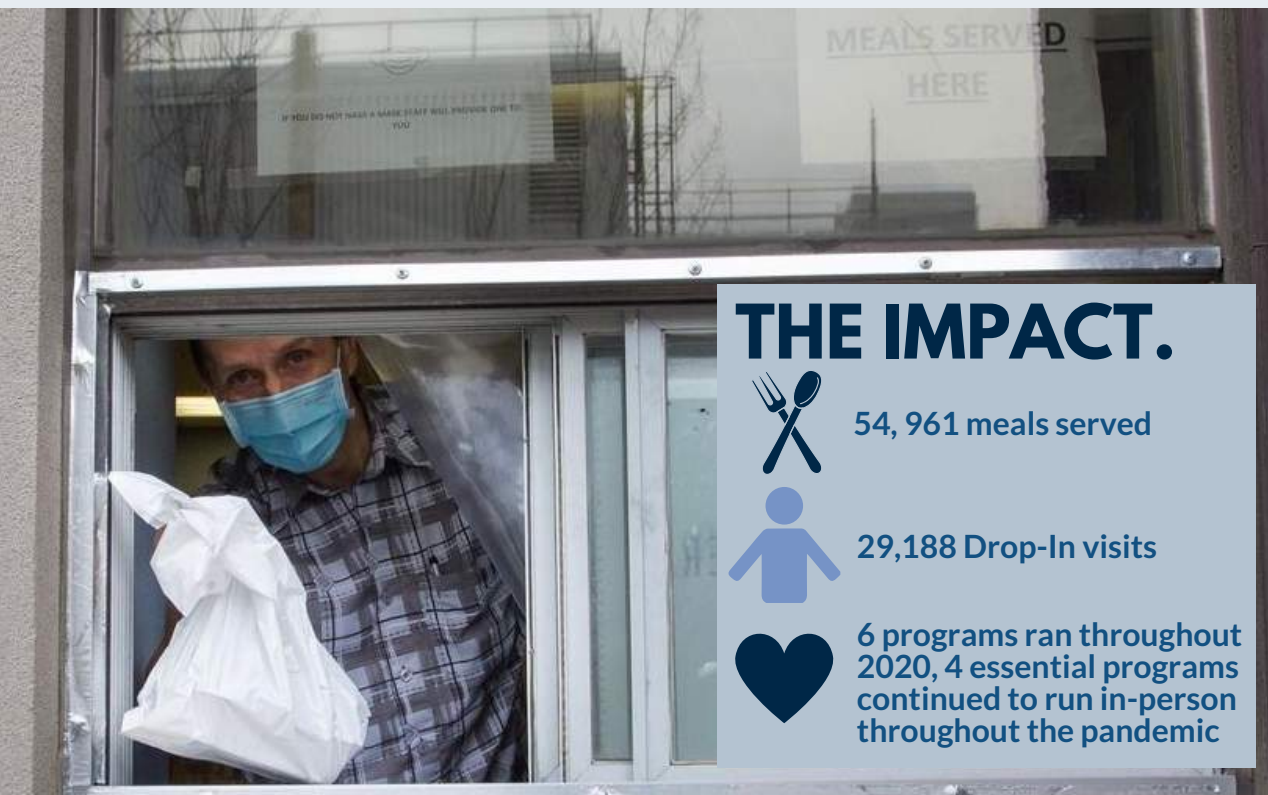
The ACSA Child and Family Centre staff relentlessly reached into the community to offer a variety of supports to parents and caregivers. There continues to be ongoing virtual chat opportunities to connect and learn about resources in the community. Lockdowns, caring for children and aging parents, and becoming at home teachers for children partaking in online learning has put an enormous strain on families. ACSA continues to connect people to resources and bring resources to the people who need it most. *ACSA's presence in Scarborough runs deep and the pandemic highlighted deep inequities in our communities.* ACSA mobilized quickly and does what we do best...build bridges and connect people and stakeholders because we know and believe that **TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER.**



**YOU CAN  
SEE THE  
SMILING  
FACES  
EVEN  
BEHIND  
THE MASKS**



# HOS DROP-INS



*Our ACSA Mainsite became a hub of activity in 2020 where the motto quickly became “Suspending services is not in our vocabulary” (Scarborough Mirror, March 2020)*

During the pandemic, HOS maintained human connection with the community’s most vulnerable. Programs quickly adjusted to follow public health guidelines while still offering essential services in person. Community partners, staff across the agency and volunteers came together to ensure continued access for the community to vital basic needs and supplies. Drop-In North increased service to 7 days a week and provided thousands of food hampers in response to growing food insecurity amongst seniors in the community. The ACSA Street Outreach continued to provide wellness checks for individuals experiencing homelessness, distributing sleeping bags and offering connections to shelters. ACSA also contributed to the City of Toronto’s Emergency Cold Weather Alert programs during the winter months patrolling and providing hot beverages, tokens and transports to people without a place to go and found outside during cold weather alerts. 2020 presented challenges never before experienced and collaborating and partnering within community and with many stakeholders allowed us to persevere.

## TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER

*“My parents situation was very complex. The HOS team worked extremely hard and went above and beyond to help them and today they have been successfully housed. We are so grateful for the work you do! Thanks again for your efforts!”*

- ACSA HOS Client

In 2020, the ACSA Homeless and Outreach Support department kept its doors open and deemed several of its programs as “essential” therefore continuing to provide services and supports to the community, and maintaining connections with those who are homeless, underhoused, and socially isolated. In person support such as the provision of hot meals and snacks were available 7 days a week. We understood the importance of distributing hand sanitizer, face masks and renting portable washrooms and installing hand washing stations for our clients experiencing homelessness. We ramped up our wellness checks for those staying outdoors and referrals to shelters, access to harm reduction kits, clothing and informal counselling were provided by Drop-In North, Drop-In South, Street Outreach and the FIX were active and essential to ensuring the well being of those experiencing homelessness or those precariously housed. ACSA’s Housing Help program offered in-person and virtual services, providing referrals to essential services and supporting housing needs for individuals, newcomers and families.

## Homelessness and Outreach Services

# HOS HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION SERVICES

*ACSA's housing programs provide intensive case management supports and eviction prevention services to individuals and their families. Working from a client-centred model, the programs offer wrap around supports to foster greater independence and housing stability.*



Staff conducted 400+ wellness checks with clients during COVID



EPIC staff worked with 24 landlords to successfully prevent 35 evictions



11 laptops were provided to clients to maintain communication, help reduce isolation, and provide access to services

*"COVID-19 pandemic cut my husband's work hours in half, we were scrambling to keep a roof over our heads and ate one meal a day, thank you for helping us catch up with our rent payments and connecting us to these services you saved us from becoming homeless".*  
- ACSA HOS Client

In 2020, ACSA's EPIC, Housing Follow Up and Home for Good programs continued to support clients by conducting wellness checks, providing grocery and transportation supports, access to technology and ensuring that individuals were connected to essential services. Staff successfully advocated and mediated on behalf of clients to negotiate payment plans, prevent evictions and sustain tenancies. Working in collaboration with other departments, ACSA staff facilitated a webinar for service providers and clients on "Supports for Tenants during COVID-19" providing information on financial resources available as well as landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities during COVID-19. As our City continues to experience a housing crisis and desperately needs more affordable housing, the housing support programs and eviction prevention program are fundamental to ensuring formerly homeless clients and individuals facing evictions have the necessary supports to stabilize and maintain their housing. Our housing staff have a "whatever it takes" motto to work alongside our clients to plan, support, advocate and connect to vital supports and services that will aid them to successful tenancies.





 Sara Asalya  
@saraAsalya

While many organizations shifted online, [@ACSAtoronto](#) kept its doors open & provided essential life-saving support to the most vulnerable!! From its food bank, to homeless initiatives, to newcomers support, to name a few!! Kudos to its dedicated staff & volunteers!



# The Financial Empowerment and Problem Solving Program

# FEPS

The Financial Empowerment and Problem Solving (FEPS) program provides financial education, advocacy and problem-solving services to people living on a low-income. FEPS services are free, confidential, one-on-one, and give hands-on help with such things as:

- Completion of income tax returns
- Applying for government benefits
- Solving financial problems and questions related to letters received from CRA
- Changes to child tax benefits
- Accessing bank services
- Managing debt, credit and liens
- Protection from financial fraud and abuse



 **United Way Greater Toronto** ✓  
@UWGreaterTO

This is a fantastic example of how even the little things that local community social service agencies do—little things like tax clinics—that can have a big impact in the lives of people like seniors with fixed incomes.

Thank you for your hard work, [@ACSAtoronto!](#)

## THE IMPACT.

- 1,999 people served
- \$7.26 Million dollars in refunds and benefits returned to community members
- 2,041 Income Tax returns filed
- 34 Volunteers trained to help clients file their tax returns

With the Pandemic striking just as the annual tax clinics were getting underway in 2020, the FEPS team had to develop a whole new way of working. In partnership with other community agencies working with the CVITP program, we were able to get the Canada Revenue Agency to change some of their policies and procedures to allow us to help people virtually to do their taxes. Using a combination of phone, internet services such as WhatsApp and Zoom, and a secure document exchange program, we were able to help hundreds of people in our community to file their tax returns, resulting in millions of dollars of benefits flowing to them; as well as helping them to remain eligible to continue receiving their benefits in 2021. Working with community partners, mobilizing dedicated volunteers and working to find creative ways to file income taxes during a pandemic has definitely proven that **TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER** and that we've remained steadfast in our commitment to serve those most vulnerable in our community.



**WHEN COVID HIT,  
WE MOBILIZED QUICKLY  
AND LEARNED HOW TO  
BEST SERVE AND KEEP  
OUR COMMUNITY SAFE!**

**OUR DOORS NEVER  
CLOSED.**



 **Jean Yip** ✓  
@JeanYip3

Recognizing the continued efforts to fight the pandemic at [#ScarboroughAgincourt](#)'s Largest social service provider [@ACSAtoronto](#) Thank you for the essential work that [@ACSA\\_ED](#) Lee Soda and her team do for our community #❤️



# FOOD SECURITY

ACSA's Food Security Department provides year-round programming to increase access to nutritious food while taking a holistic approach to addressing food security.

*Food security was already an issue facing community, but the pandemic exasperated the issue and brought to light the deep inequities that exist within our social fabric.*



Food insecurity is inconsistent or uncertain access to food due to financial constraints. In Canada, there are 4.4 million people living in food insecure households and the problem is getting worse. ACSA food security department continues to develop new and innovative responses to ensure the community received the support it needed.

The department was able to transition much of its trainings and workshops onto virtual platforms, and this allowed us to reach new individuals and families. Our Cooking Healthy Workshops were a huge success as parents with children 0-6 years were able to gather, learn new recipes and was able to provide people with much needed social connection.



**117 households, consisting of 353 individuals, received food and essential item hampers**



**35 community gardeners grew diverse foods, donating 40% of their produce to a local food bank**



**Over 80 participants joined our Food Security online programs**

*"...excelled my expectations. I learned a lot and met a lot of interesting people. I really enjoyed the food workshops and the team was very supportive as well which helped a lot."*

**- ACSA Food Security Client**

Our community groups and volunteers stepped in when we needed them, and this helped ensure that community gardens were tended to and that food hampers could be delivered to our most in-need clients.

In 2020, ACSA also received a Climate Action Fund Grant that brought youth and seniors together on a virtual platform to learn recipes, to learn about climate change and to identify action that they could take in community. The department was also able to develop a food access map, that supported clients and staff in navigating the multitude of food resources that arose through the pandemic.

With the collaborations of our community, ACSA's Food Security department continues to address food insecurity, improve access to culturally relevant food and use food as a pathway to sovereignty and connection. **TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER**

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

*Community engagement is integrated throughout the work of ACSA and is at the core of what the organization does. ACSA views community engagement as a process by which people are meaningfully engaged in:*

- Defining the issues of concern to them;
- Making decisions about factors that affect their lives;
- Formulating and implementing policies;
- Planning, developing and delivering services; and
- Taking action to achieve change.

*During the pandemic, community engagement became even more important as the pandemic did not impact everyone in the same way. It became evident early in the pandemic that the inequities in our society run deep. It became the work of our staff, through our community development initiatives, to ensure that the community remain engaged, that locally based responses were put in place and resident led initiatives were supported. More than ever it was imperative that ACSA stood in community, with community to ensure everyone was connected. **TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER.***

## SCAN

Scarborough Civic Action Network (SCAN) is a community-driven network that aims to support civic engagement activities to address inequities and mobilize a civic voice for Scarborough. *SCAN had a busy 2020, as the pandemic amplified the inequities in our system, and SCAN played an essential role in organizing residents and partners around those issues.*

SCAN engaged over 400 residents that gave direction to their action mandate, and residents were clear in that the issues of transit, housing and safety were the most pressing. As a result, SCAN implemented a variety of initiatives. Over 200 Scarborough transit riders were engaged through the Right to Ride Campaign which called for more buses and better bus service. SCAN engaged tenants across Scarborough about the need for more affordable housing, rent supports and an eviction moratorium. SCAN was also the lead organizer for WARD 22 VOTES, a campaign to help engage voters in a local by-election.

Scarborough communities were adversely impacted by the pandemic, and SCAN worked diligently in ensuring policies and pandemic responses made sense and had the most impact for the community.



# Community Engagement

## OUR STRONGER NEIGHBOURHOOD



Engaged with over 100 residents through wellness checks & grocery deliveries



Connected with 400+ residents through community events, community meetings, WhatsApp groups, workshops and COVID-19 information sessions



Provided 150+ youth with back packs, school supplies and PPE for ACSA's annual "Back to School" event

In 2020, the "Our Strong Neighbourhood" (OSN) projects in Dorset Park and Steeles-L'Amoreaux with initial priorities of safety and food security, were able to quickly pivot to focus on working with residents and ensuring the community had the support they needed through the pandemic. In addition to supporting the priority issues, this work included conducting wellness checks, delivering PPE, food delivery to those most vulnerable in the community, as well as information sessions, workshops and training surrounding mental health and other relevant topics. 2020 was a year where "**ACSA CARES**" became our mantra and it was demonstrated in countless ways. It became what fuelled us, *ACSA staff and volunteers banded together to ensure the community was cared for!*

## STEELES-L'AMOREAUX

Physical distancing and other restrictions brought on by the pandemic meant that people needed to take fewer trips to the grocery store and began to stockpile food and toilet paper. Doing this was near impossible for those who were already food insecure. As the pandemic went on, we saw unprecedented job losses. All of a sudden people suddenly had to figure out how they were going to afford to pay for rent and food. In the Steeles-L'Amoreaux community, food access was a large focus, and staff were able to work with residents to implement a Good Food Market and backyard gardening program, both of which increased access to fresh food to those who needed it most. Youth were also a large focus, as they were engaged in a different way around food security. Over the course of the year, 24 different workshops were offered on a variety of topics relating to food and leadership, and all of the learning went into residents practicing the skills learned and leading projects of their own. This project resulted in amazing impact, as residents were able to increase their access to healthy and affordable food and this was essential through the pandemic.

## DORSET PARK

In Dorset Park, staff supported residents on the priority issue of safety. Various platforms such as WhatsApp and Zoom were a way for residents and partners to keep connected, and for them to stay informed around community incidents, opportunities, and resources. These platforms allowed OSN to continue to host safety workshops, COVID-19 information sessions, community meetings, and connect with individuals within the Canlish and Glamorgan community who face barriers accessing basic necessities. The project also conducted individual development training and information sessions such as Youth and Women Self-Defence classes, COVID-19 and Domestic Violence, and Covid-19 Vaccination. OSN DP was also able to host fun events that lifted people's spirits such as International Women's Day event and Holiday Celebrations. The project also conducted events in community during the summer months, as the virtual can never replace the importance of in person connection.

ACSA YOW, R.A.A.C.K.S &  
BayMills Youth Teams

# THE ACSA YOUTH TEAM

*"Because of the one-on-one support this encouraged me to return to school and develop a positive peer circle."*

- ACSA Youth



Our ACSA youth team served over 500 youth during 2020



During 2020, the Youth Team redirected outreach strategies in response to COVID-19. This work included a combination of both in person and virtual programming, with a focus of maintaining a presence in Glendowner, Chester Le and Bay Mills communities. ACSA was able to support youth and their family's by providing essential food through the ASCA Cares program, gift cards, groceries, and hot meal programs.

As we all know, the best way to engage youth is in person, out in the community, face to face. As a result of COVID, the Youth Team had to adjust our outreach strategies to enable us to continue the meaningful work. The staff did regular check-ins by phone and when safe in person with youth.

We continued to partner with other service providers which speaks to a holistic approach when engaging and outreaching to youth. We built a platform on social media and offered a variety of programming virtually, which included workshops, cooking programs and recreational activities that were essential in keeping youth engaged. The virtual programs were able to bring youth from the from Steeles L'amoreaux which break down the stigma around community barriers and allow us to grow **STRONGER TOGETHER.**

We kept our doors opened for our clients throughout the pandemic.



COVID-19 highlighted food insecurity in Scarborough. With the help of our community and volunteers we were able to provide food access services and connect our clients to food security resources.

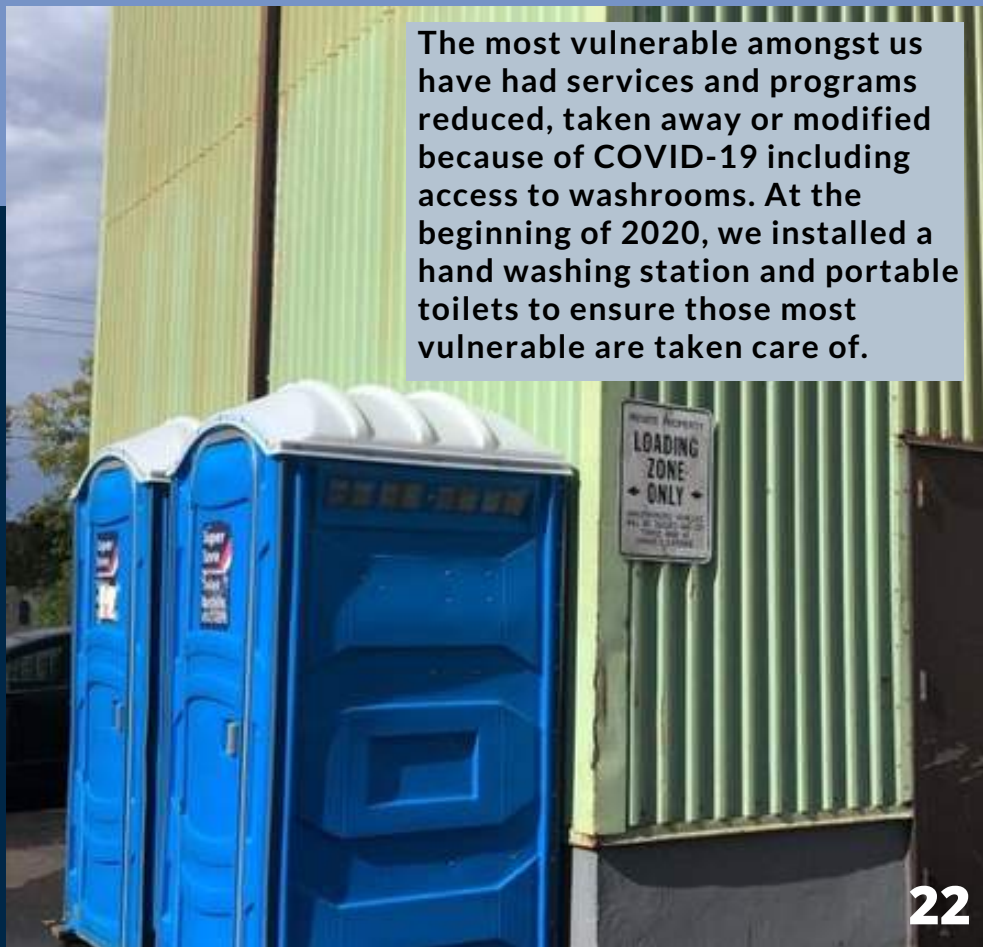


# #ACSA CARES

We stayed connected with our clients throughout 2020.



The most vulnerable amongst us have had services and programs reduced, taken away or modified because of COVID-19 including access to washrooms. At the beginning of 2020, we installed a hand washing station and portable toilets to ensure those most vulnerable are taken care of.



# THANK YOU ACSA VOLUNTEERS

Throughout the pandemic, volunteers continued to play a crucial role in ensuring ACSA could provide services to those most vulnerable in community. As ACSA kept its doors open, its core volunteers worked right alongside us, and stepped up in tremendous ways especially in the food bank, where there was the greatest need. The Food Bank saw the number of clients triple during the course of the pandemic, and we were able to serve 1200 families weekly because of the support of this amazing group of people. Without them, none of this would have been possible.



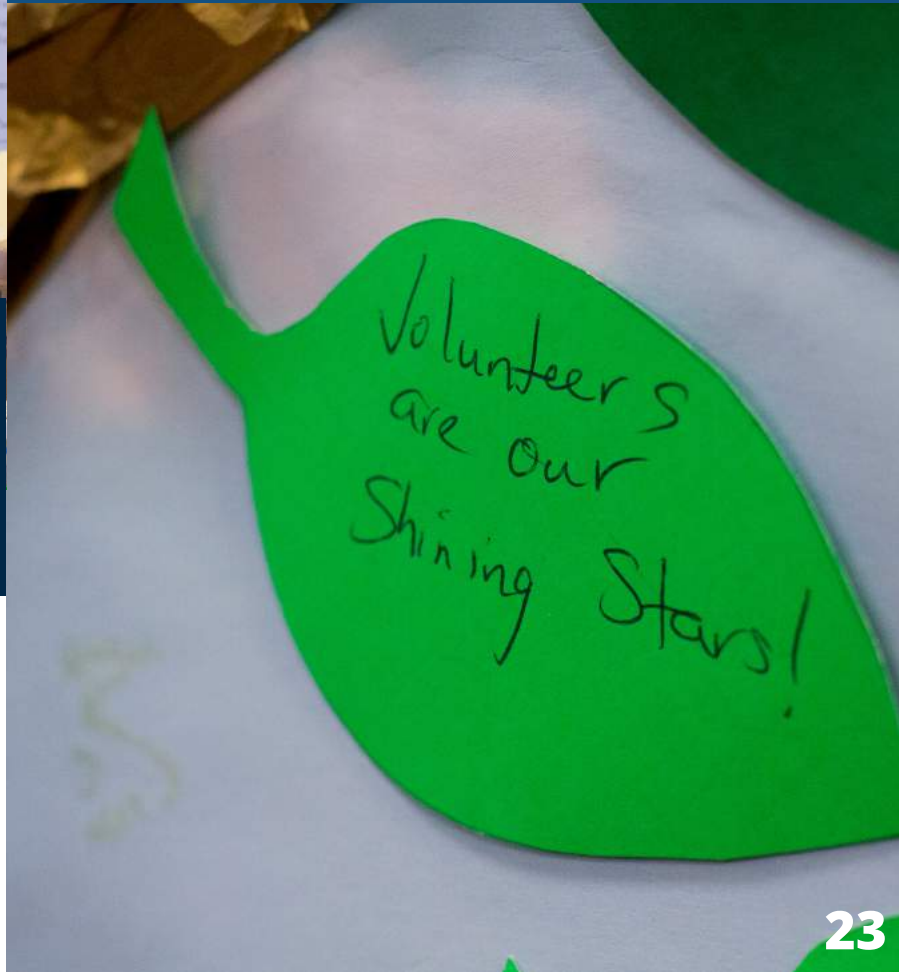
## THE IMPACT.

- 300 total amount of volunteers for 2020
- 6.5 average volunteer hours/ week
- Over 14,000 total number of volunteer hours for 2020

*"Volunteer work is important to me because of my good fortune in life, which I want to share with others not as fortunate. Our society is too often selfish and self centered, but we ARE our brother's keeper. Each week I leave the Food Bank feeling tired, sometimes frustrated, but always good about adding one more drop to the bucket"*  
- Volunteer at the Food Bank

*Together with volunteers support, we were able to keep our doors open throughout the pandemic and continue to provide the community with much needed food and other resources and services that they need.*

We continued to accept volunteers, making the application process easier by encouraging persons to apply online. We ensured that there was enough PPE on hand and implemented a number of COVID protocols to make the space safe. **TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER.**



# Dorset Park Community Hub

# FOOD BANK

Prior to the pandemic, Scarborough was experiencing the biggest increase in the number of food bank visits compared to other regions in Toronto. *Scarborough saw a 30% spike in food bank usage!* When March 2020 saw the first Provincial lockdown, the floodgates opened.

In 2020, the ACSA Dorset Park Community Hub, transformed into a community food centre in response to the growing need for food access in the community. This increase made the HUB Toronto's busiest food bank, at its peak, serving over 1300 families weekly (an average of 5000 individuals). The line-ups for the food bank extended for blocks. The pandemic caused job losses and the need to access food was overwhelming.

**STRONGER TOGETHER.** Staff from across departments and volunteers quickly rallied together and served food hampers to those in need. Many of those individuals were connected to other essential supports and services, as they experienced a diversity of issues arising from the pandemic. With the effort and support of staff from outside departments and dedicated volunteers, the food bank was able to quickly adjust and manage the 200% increase of clients that was seen with the onset of COVID-19.

The food bank continued to operate throughout the year, making many changes and improvements along the way in order to continue to efficiently support and serve the community.



These staff and volunteers from @ACSAfoodbank are just some of the #frontlineheroes who are helping to keep food flowing to residents in need at this critical time.

THANK YOU for all your hard work in continuing to support your communities ❤️ @ACSAtoronto @ACSA\_ED

## THE IMPACT.

*Nazir and his wife from Afghanistan, came to Canada in 2011 looking for a new life, now they have two children, 8 and 9 years old. Since they arrived they have been linked with the Hub and other ACSA services, such as Food Bank, Newcomers Centre, and the Tax Clinic. Nazir expresses his gratitude for our services, and especially for the kindness and respect with which they are treated, and despite the fact that they live in Pickering they don't care about the distance and they prefer to continue coming to ACSA.*

In addition to the plethora of volunteers and staff that rallied behind the food bank, the food bank also saw many new partnerships that helped to make this work possible. This included various volunteer groups, 15,000 bag donations from Dollarama and 1000's more from the local Councillor's office, as well as lunch donations that went towards feeding and thanking the volunteers. IKEA was also a huge supporter with not only bags, but the donation of a vehicle which made food delivery possible to those most vulnerable in the community.



Over 80+ women participated in the English Circle Program



100+ seniors participated in the Seniors Yoga Program

## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE HUB?

All other Hub programs including the English Circle, Seniors Cafe and the Yoga program for seniors moved online. The Staff for these programs worked together to ensure that as many persons as possible could continue to participate in the programs, by exploring various options to connect with participants, What's App groups were created and regular check in phone calls were put in place to ensure a lifeline was available for all residents in the community.



# COVID 360 Wrap Around Support

# COVID 360

COVID 360 Wrap Around Support provided a holistic support to those who have been severely impacted by COVID-19; those who have been infected by COVID-19, cared for sick members of the family, those in self-isolation and mandatory quarantine, isolated seniors, isolated single parents with small kids and no family to help them out, frontline workers in essential occupations who have lost jobs or have fallen ill or experienced extreme mental health struggles.

The Project included support for food and essentials, virtual check-ins, laptop lending program, webinars, and referral to resources; a total 360 degree approach to address life-stabilization needs during the pandemic. This Project was initially funded by the City of Toronto, targeting only 24 Ontario Works clients and expanded to a larger population after receiving support from the United Way under the Emergency Community Support Fund. A total of 1089 clients have been supported during the pandemic under COVID 360.

COVID 360 paved the way to more partnerships to intensify support for the most marginalized groups who have less access to supports. **TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER**

- **YMCA** - supported in providing employment training
- **Toronto Public Library** - provided Wi-Fi Hotspot
- **Renewed Computer Technology** - increased access to low-cost, refurbished computers
- **Canadian Women's Foundation** - provided financial aid for women
- **Children's Book Bank** - donated books for children and youth
- **Food bank department** - provided support in packing food hampers
- **Knights of Columbus (St. Lawrence)** - donated winter jackets
- **IKEA Canada** - donated a van to be used for deliveries

*"I want to thank you very much for the services that you provided for me and my wife during our self-quarantine for 14 days. It was so helpful for us because we don't have any family in Canada. Food and hygiene services were more than enough in these 14 days. As a newcomer it was so helpful for me to learn new information from the webinars. We thank ACSA for the services that they provided."*  
- COVID 360 client



## THE IMPACT.



1089 clients have received support



772 food hampers were distributed



381 essential items were delivered



3288.40 KM spent on the road delivering essentials to clients

# THE BAYMILLS HUB



Over 800 visits to the Bay Mills Hub for our Breakfast Program in partnership with Starbucks



300 + people accessing our Bay Mills Drop In Services



Working with Toronto Community Housing to support 120 residents through the Food For All Scarborough program

*"I really appreciate the staff for keeping the hub open and continuing the breakfast program for the community. I come every week just to talk to the staff and pick up some breakfast."*

- ACSA Client at the Bay Mills Hub

*Due to COVID 19, the regular operation of the Bay Mills Hub, located at 365 Bay Mills Blvd, had to be modified. Based on needs analysis and community feedback, the priorities of food security, mental health, and social isolation were identified, and staff worked diligently to ensure the community had the supports they needed.*

As a result, the hub quickly transformed to accommodate the current needs of the community by offering support at the door and lobby, as well as virtual engagement programs. The staff and volunteers worked with community leaders and we partnered with different organizations and businesses that supported our breakfast and lunch programs that helped to alleviate food insecurity and social isolation.

The Bay Mills Hub has had amazing impact through its mix of virtual and in person programming. Children, youth, seniors and adults were able to participate in one of the many online programs, and could also participate in various engagement activities such as Community bingo. The community was also able to host its annual Canada Day event, albeit a walk through event, staff were able to adhere to all safety protocols and still offer residents an opportunity to safely interact and enjoy a modified celebration. Creativity and commitment to community was evident throughout 2020 at the Bay Mills Hub, the work had to look different but several opportunities were created to come together, enjoy some food and have some fun.

At the Bay Mills hub, collaborations and partnerships were at the forefront. Working with partners like Toronto Community Housing, Toronto Police, the local MPP's office, local restaurants, we were able to be **STRONGER TOGETHER.**

# THANK-YOU TO OUR DONORS!

WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU.



*With care...  
from our family  
to yours! ♡*



**Lee Soda**  
@ACSA\_ED

A formerly homeless client housed and supported by [@ACSAtoronto](#) came in today and donated \$65."I don't have a lot of money" he says. "You guys helped me a lot when I was in a bad way, I know it's not much". Sir, it's a lot! Thank you 🙏 for donating! [#community](#) [#gratitude](#)



# THE ACSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The ACSA Board of Directors are volunteers giving of their time and talent during the unprecedented year of 2020. Each one of the Directors stepped up and showed up for ACSA and the community! Each member of the Board makes a personal commitment to support the mission and vision of ACSA and during 2020 this Board worked together to ensure ACSA was meaningfully supported during the pandemic crisis. The members met year round to support the management of ACSA, they raised funds, organized community members to sew masks, donated food, supported social media campaigns, checked in with staff, called and served community in whatever way that was needed. A truly committed and dedicated group of people because they too believe that **TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER!**

To Naeema Mascarenhas and Jay Paleja who were supposed to end their term on the board last year but continued to serve for an additional “pandemic year” in order to provide additional consistency and support. An additional year of service offering guidance, support and care when it was very much needed. A huge thanks, your support has been so valued and appreciated!

To Doug Brown, who has come to the end of his term this June...thank you! As Board Chair, Doug has been a pillar of strength and wisdom and constant support especially throughout 2020. Rallying the Board to meet throughout the summer months and always ready for an “old school chat” (that means using the phone instead of ZOOM). It was Doug’s caring nature and sensible steady leadership that we counted on throughout 2020! A huge thanks, your leadership has been invaluable!

“The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team”-Phil Jackson

## OUR BOARD

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Board Chair

**MANUEL SOUSA**  
Vice-Chair

**STANLEY SZETO**  
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**MARIA LYKOS**  
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