

2019–2020 Annual Report

Engage. Empower. Enhance.

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www.unisonhcs.org

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The communities we serve are currently struggling with some of the highest COVID rates in Ontario and are simultaneously trying to sustain their household incomes, get access to food, and ensure their children get an education. Unison staff spent the last nine months pivoting our services to ensure access while maintaining safety for all our clients and staff. This pivoting has included a large percentage of virtual one-to-one services for primary care, counselling, and chronic disease management. Staff have taken up the call for

Our staff also quickly realized the growing rates of food insecurity and unemployment creating significant health issues in our communities. These realities created the Unison hotline for accessing food and income supports. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic also occurred at the same time as the overdose epidemic. Overdoses from the toxic street drug supply, in conjunction with stay-at-home and isolate COVID measures, accelerated an already tragic situation. As the pandemic continues, Unison has seen higher rates of mental health and substance use issues, as isolation, economic uncertainty and anxiety for the future create a difficult wellness environment.

This year has also been a watershed moment for Black and Indigenous communities and allies that have been challenging systemic Anti-Black and Anti-Indigenous racism in policing for many years. 2020 marked the resurgence of these movements on a global scale and called for much-needed attention to the trauma and harm caused by policing violence. Unison's Board of Directors and staff have heeded these calls for justice and change by advocating for the re-allocation of funding at deputations and planning tables, and by supporting Black and Indigenous communities.

We thank our funders who have been vital in allowing for the flexibility Unison requires to respond to the different needs of the clients and communities we serve as we move together through the pandemic. Unison will continue to prioritize the most marginalized clients and communities we work with to ensure that youth with barriers, seniors with complex needs, people living with mental health and substance use issues, and the members of the LGBTTTQI+ communities receive the health and community services to remain healthy during these most difficult times.



Michelle Joseph, CEO



Laurelle Knox, Chair



Vision

Healthy communities.

Mission

Working together to deliver accessible and high quality health and community services that are integrated, respond to needs, build on strengths and inspire change.

Values

Accountability: As a publicly funded organization, we are responsible to our stakeholders. We strive for integrity in our work and for the effective use of resources. We seek improvement through critical enquiry and continuous learning.

Collaboration: We embrace partnerships, both inside and outside of our organization. We foster the active participation of community members in our work, and we celebrate our collective achievements.

Equity: We work to celebrate diversity and eliminate oppression in all its forms. We are committed to treating all people with dignity, honesty and respect, and we value individual choice and self-determination.

Our Team

Our Staff

Our staff is a group of incredibly dedicated professionals that includes clinicians, legal professionals, diabetes educators, community workers and administrative staff.

Our staff culture is key to retaining and recruiting the very best and we are proud of our team. We value the many contributions of each and every member of our team and the significant impact they make on the health of our communities.

Board of Directors

Laurelle Knox, *Chair*
Geoff Cowper-Smith, *Vice-Chair*
Diana Elder, *Vice-Chair*
Elese Allin, *Treasurer*
Laverne Blake, *Secretary*
Alexis Villa
Angie Heydon
Nada Johnson
Naureen Siddiqui
Neetu Toor
Richard Linley
Tamia Daniel





UNISON SUCCESS STORY 1

Quality Improvement Plan

Every year, Unison prepares a Quality Improvement Plan. This plan maps out our areas of priority for improving aspects of our services and programs.

In 2019-20, our QIP priorities were:

1. Improve timely follow-up with clients after discharge from the hospital;
2. Provide better access to primary care appointments when needed/wanted;
3. Assess clients for palliative care needs comprehensively and as early as possible.

For each priority, a small team of managers and staff met to come up with ideas for changes and test them to identify potential improvements.

Timely Hospital Discharges

With a team at our Lawrence Heights site, we came up with a new and different way to process hospital discharge reports. The team's nurses began making phone calls to these clients to check in. We started testing this process in October 2019. By March 2020, our data showed that 76% of Lawrence Heights primary care clients discharged from hospital received a phone call from Unison within 7 days of being discharged from hospital. This was an increase of 42% from the team's performance in the previous year.

Quality Improvement Plan (continued)

Better Access to Care

In another project, we set out to look at ways to reduce lengthy waits that some primary care clients experience to get an appointment with their physician. We noticed that a number of clients were seeing their doctor for mental health issues, and were not seeing a Unison Social Worker. This gave us the idea to start working with representatives from our social work team. The team developed and started to use a standardized referral/intake and assessment. They strengthened referral pathways, including crisis response. They did more outreach to clients using the telephone, and

documented that outreach. As a result of these efforts, internal referrals to Social Workers started to increase and the team exceeded the targets they set for themselves in the early months of the project.

Comprehensive Palliative Care

The goal of ensuring that the assessment of clients' palliative care needs happens as early and as holistically as possible was taken up by Unison's Homebased Primary Care Team, with the intent of spreading any learnings to other primary care providers across Unison. During 2019-20, the team developed

a plan to test the use of a clinical tool called the Palliative Performance Scale with some HBPC clients. The team also compared their assessment tool to "A Model to Guide Hospice Palliative Care" from the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association, and then made a change to their assessment in relation to the religious/spiritual component.

Thanks to the staff and managers from the various teams who made time to come together to generate and test ideas for improvement. We have succeeded in making changes for the better, and this work will continue.



From Isolation to Collective Action:

The Story of Unison's Success in Community Development Work in the Bathurst-Finch Neighbourhood



The Bathurst-Finch neighbourhood (formally Westminster Branson) is part of Unison's service area in northwest Toronto. In 2005, Bathurst-Finch was identified as one of the 13 priority neighbourhoods through the City of Toronto and United Way Greater Toronto's research, "Poverty by Postal Code". As a result of this "priority" designation and as part of investment in priority neighbourhoods, Bathurst-Finch Hub as well as a community development program called "Action for Neighbourhood Change (ANC)" came to the Bathurst-Finch neighbourhood. ANC Bathurst-Finch started in 2007 and was aimed at nurturing resident leadership in the neighbourhood to make local improvements. Bathurst-Finch Hub opened its doors to clients and local residents in January 2013.

Here are some of the successes of Unison's community development work in the 2019-20 fiscal year through the work of "Our Strong and Beautiful Bathurst-Finch" and the Bathurst-Finch Hub.

Food Security

After over 12 years of community development work and fostering and supporting dozens of local leaders and resident-led programs and initiatives, in 2019, under the direction of its funder, the United Way Greater Toronto, the ANC program transitioned to the "Our Strong Neighbourhood (OSN)" program. ANC's transition to Our Strong Neighbourhood included the identification of one "big issue" in each neighbourhood, which will be the focus of its work

From Isolation to Collective Action (continued)



over a two-year period that started in June 2019. The big issue identified by residents and community stakeholders in Bathurst-Finch is “food security” and the focus of the program is bringing more healthy affordable food to the Bathurst-Finch neighbourhood.

A comprehensive work plan was prepared through a participatory community planning process. An important part of the plan was to establish a network of residents, partners, and stakeholders – known as the Bathurst-Finch Food Coalition (BFFC) – which will

lead food security initiatives in Bathurst-Finch. On October 28, 2019, the BFFC was formed, and soon several subcommittees were formed under BFFC.

So far BFFC has brought together over 25 residents, plus agencies, local faith groups, and other stakeholders (including the local city councillor). BFFC members meet on a regular basis and discuss local food security needs and solutions. BFFC has surveyed over a hundred residents about their food security needs in the neighbourhood. After the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, BFFC was able to quickly bring together stakeholders to respond to the urgent food needs resulting from the pandemic and form the BFFC Emergency Taskforce.

The BFFC Emergency Taskforce has met several times since March and helped with local food solutions, including identifying urgent needs, supporting our

local food bank to find a home and to reach out to local residents, finding volunteers for different programs and initiatives in the neighbourhood, and starting a meal preparation program in the Bathurst-Finch Hub’s kitchen. This latter initiative has started providing over 50 warm meal to low-income seniors and families in the neighbourhood.

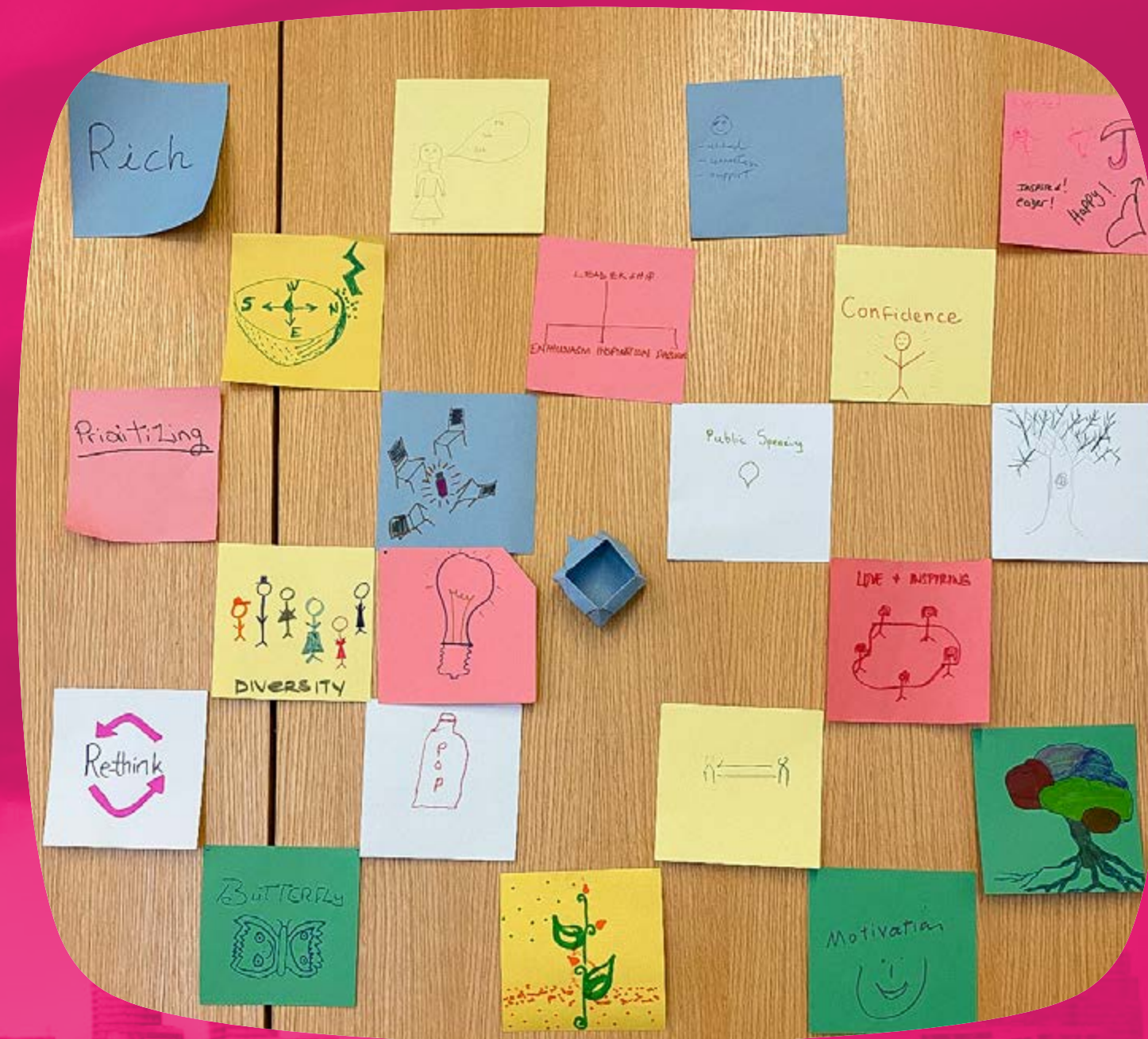
Climate Solution

In the meantime, the Bathurst-Finch Hub and Our Strong Neighbourhood program have partnered with the Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA) and received funding for a project called “Accelerating Neighbourhood Climate Solutions through Community Hubs”. The project aims to demonstrate how community hubs can help tackle climate change. The project objectives include knowledge exchange, capacity building

From Isolation to Collective Action (continued)

in local residents, and making the Bathurst-Finch Hub more environmentally friendly through waste reduction and hopefully adding solar panels.

The project has been successful in enhancing resident leaders' skills in leading climate projects and training over 20 new residents as "Climate Ambassadors" in spring 2020. The curriculum for this 6-week online training was developed and administered mainly by resident leaders, with support from TEA. A good number of climate ambassadors have joined an existing project or have started new projects. So far they have received over \$4,000 of funding through the City of Toronto's Climate Action Fund to implement four waste reduction workshops in Fall 2020, and to train local residents on four waste reduction topics: food waste, household waste, textile waste and high rise building waste.



Capacity building and leadership development

In 2019 Unison supported the revitalization of the Bathurst-Finch Neighbourhood Table (BFNT) through a City Grant. The table was convened in April 2019 and continued to meet regularly until before the Covid-19 pandemic. Through BFNT support, the Our Strong Neighbourhood program was able to provide comprehensive leadership training for existing and new local leaders in the Bathurst-Finch neighbourhood in winter 2020. We were able to train 26 local leaders on many community leadership topics including anti-oppression.

We have continued to support resident leaders as well as the resident-led groups and associations that they have developed over the years through ANC support. These groups include the Bathurst-

From Isolation to Collective Action (continued)

Finch Community Action Network (BFCAN), Bathurst-Finch Seniors' Society (BASS), Bathurst-Finch Women's Group, and Friends of Earl Bales Park. Our residents host many events and programs during the year including a neighbourhood summer festival, a holiday event, an annual park clean-up, and other occasional and one-time events, workshops, civic engagement activities and forums.

These events and programs bring hundreds of residents together each year. We partner and support hosting these events alongside our resident leaders. Our resident leaders collectively received close to \$17,000 of funding in 2019 to run different resident-led events and initiatives. We supported them with managing funds as well as planning and implementing activities. We have also strengthened ties with stakeholders on some of our programs.

Breaking isolation and community cohesiveness

The latest exciting development is that in May 2020, we joined a first-of-its-kind **Caring Communities Challenge** in Toronto, partnering with UpSocial Canada (local partner of UpSocial main office in Barcelona, Spain), the Balsam Foundation, and Ontario Trillium Foundation to examine how we can **look after each other *better* in the places where we live, work and play**. For the next 18 months, we will be working with our partners and local residents through a social lab process to identify impactful programs and strategies to improve social connections and care, and test their implementation and growth in the Bathurst-Finch neighbourhood.

Youth Engagement

Throughout this period, we have also been able to involve more youth as volunteers and participants in capacity-building programs.



Mind Your Health Program



Through our Mind Your Health program, funded by the United Way Greater Toronto, Unison has been able to bring mental health programming and services to youth in the Keele and Rogers area since 2018, in partnership with For Youth Initiative (FYI). Through the Mind Your Health program, we have trained nine local youth as Peer Educators.

They assisted us in co-creating our 10-workshop curriculum covering mental health topics such physical activity, nutrition, mindfulness, social media, healthy relationships, safer partying, identity and power. The Peer Educators also co-facilitate parts of each workshop. Over the first two years of the program, 45 youth completed the series of ten

workshops, and 303 attended our travelling health fair where they learned about the youth-focused mental health resources available in the community.

The Peer Educators are also equipped to discuss mental health issues with other youth and make referrals. One such referral is to our youth walk-in counselling clinic that took place on Thursdays at FYI. When designing our walk-in counselling model, we worked with the Peer Educators and local youth workers to ensure that services were as low barrier as possible. Youth can self-refer, or they are referred via the Peer Educators, Unison staff, local Youth Outreach Workers, and FYI staff, including their Youth Criminal Justice program and

their Recording Studio program. In year one (2018-2019), a Unison Social Worker held 68 one-on-one counselling sessions. The following year (2019-2020), 121 sessions were held. We have heard from youth that our counselling services have helped them manage feelings of low self-esteem, problems with family, housing issues, mental health challenges, suicidal thoughts, relationship problems, and issues with peers.

As with many program and services, COVID has forced us to adapt. Starting this October, we are happy to share that we will be offering the same flexible and “walk-in” counselling services in a new online format which we have co-designed with our amazing Peer Educators.

2019–2020 by the Numbers



5

Full-service locations



5

Top languages:

English
Portuguese
Spanish/Castilian
Russian
Italian



14,650

Number of primary health care clients served

102

Number of health promotion groups



211

Number of health promotion group sessions



130

Corporate members



96,529

Number of primary health care client-provider interactions



224

Staff members



62

Volunteers and students

Stories of Tremendous Interdisciplinary Care at the Keele-Rogers Site



Please note: These success stories have been simplified to ensure anonymity and readability.

Meet Mr. A, a man well into his 70s, seeking legal services for a pension matter. Unison's Legal Clinic referred Mr. A to a Unison Case Coordinator for assistance applying to Service Canada for Canada Pension Plan and benefits. During the initial intake, the Case Coordinator learned that Mr. A had stopped working more than two months previously, as he was too frail. He had not received any income since he stopped work. The Case Coordinator connected the client to Ontario Works (OW) for financial support. Mr. A received funds following his appointment with OW.

The Case Coordinator referred Mr. A to Unison's housing team as he had not been able to pay his rent and was now facing eviction. The Housing team helped Mr. A secure alternate living space. Through the Case Coordinator's encounters with Mr. A, she learned that he had been a victim of fraud when trying to complete an application for immigration status in the past and was therefore non-status and ineligible for

benefits through OW. He lost OW benefits and had to turn to family and food banks to sustain himself.

The Case Coordinator helped Mr. A obtain legal services through Legal Aid Ontario and an immigration application was submitted. At this point, the client legally qualified for Ontario Works benefits again and the Case Coordinator helped him apply. Mr. A now has financial means to support himself and he no longer must worry about not being able to afford his rent or face eviction.

In the course of supporting Mr. A with these issues, the Case Coordinator also learned that Mr. A had not seen a doctor in a long time. He was referred to Unison's primary care team to address this problem.

Mr. A is grateful to Unison for helping him to stabilize his life.

Stories of Tremendous Interdisciplinary Care (continued)

Mr. B came to Unison seeking assistance as his pension allotment had been reduced and he did not know why. Mr. B is a vulnerable senior with some memory issues, with no family support or additional income sources other than his pension.

Unison's Case Coordinator contacted Service Canada on behalf of Mr. B and was informed he had not filed taxes for the previous year; his Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) had been put on hold as a result. The Case Coordinator advocated on behalf of Mr. B, and Service Canada approved the request for special consideration. As a result, Mr. B's GIS was restored just one month after he came to Unison for help. The Case Coordinator also helped Mr. B obtain his T4 and proof of rent payment letter and referred him to North York Community House for assistance filing his taxes.

Some months later, the Case Coordinator noticed that Mr. B's health appeared to be deteriorating: he presented with poor hygiene, seemed confused, had difficulty retaining information, and was becoming increasingly forgetful. Mr. B continued to work with Unison's Case Coordinator who was able to secure a Personal Support Worker through the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), a geriatric case manager through COTA, and referred him to Unison's primary care team for medical services.

Just one year after Mr. B. came to Unison with his financial issue, his situation had greatly improved. He no longer forgets appointments, has medical exams and follow up in a timely manner, and his hygiene has greatly improved. Mr. B shared that he is happy to have found Unison and finds it convenient and helpful to have so many services in one place.

A big thanks to Unison staff at the Keele-Rogers Site. These stories demonstrate your commitment to providing high-quality care and services through a client-centred approach to vulnerable and marginalized communities. This success would not have been possible without tremendous interdisciplinary collaboration. Thank you.



Our Clients Say

“

With a sincere heart, I would like to say thanks to (my provider) for spending her valuable time with me. The discussions we had gave me comfort, hope, and courage to move on with my life no matter the circumstances.”

“

(My Provider) was really awesome and nice. She was polite and explain everything to me in detail which is something that I appreciate.”

“

I would like to thank everyone: nurses, doctors and receptionists. They always have a great treatment over the phone or in person, they are always helpful. I am so happy with my family doctor. She is so caring and really listens to how I feel.”

“

I want to say great thank you for (your) attention and willingness to help me. In any situation your excellent worker always (has) a smile. Always in (a) positive mood that transfer(s) to us, people that need help. Thank you.”

“

I have been very pleased with my care at Unison over the past few years. The office staff are always very pleasant and helpful. (The chiropodist) gives me great care with my feet.”

“

With all my heart I want to thank you and your employees... for your sensitive, conscientious and attentive attitude towards us. With any questions and wishes that I addressed, I always received answers.”

“

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to get out of the house and meet new people.”

Our Clients Say (continued)

“

I would like to take this opportunity to thank staff. It's (not) only made me aware of my health and choices but has made my outlook on life so much better. I am not alone. I am active. I eat and exercise due to the activities you have provided. I feel so much better.”

“

My family comes here, this is like my second home. This place is great there is nothing I can complain about.”

“

I love the reception: Always thoughtful and pay attention, helpful (and) respectful.”

“

I like the way and the attentiveness of the doctor and secretary. Very well explained to me. Very good services.”

“

My parents (are) 90 and 56yrs old (and) have been members here since 2010. (They) take Tai Chi and cooking demo classes. They love it—thankful that the services and classes are provided for seniors. Excellent instructors in the classes.”

“

I really like the service you provide where the caseworker meets at your home or wherever it is convenient. Keep this up...”

“

Straight goods. (My) doctor is a wonderful doctor. Very thorough and honest in her mannerism to me.”

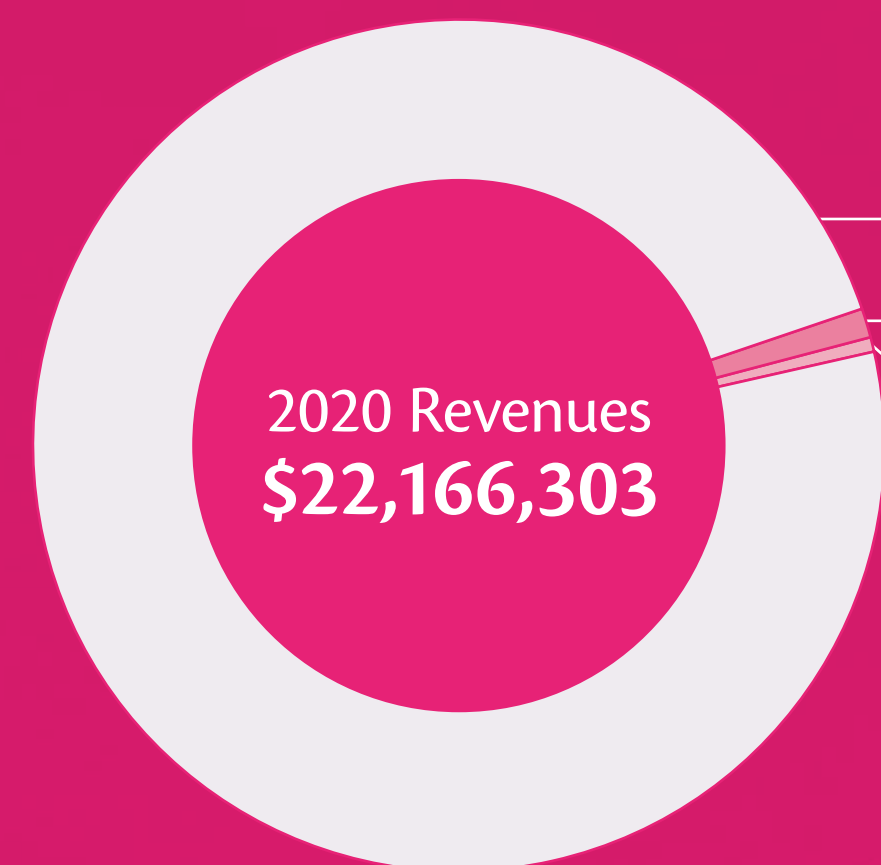
Summary Balance Sheet

As at March 31, 2020

Assets	2020	2019	Liabilities	2020	2019	Net Assets	2020	2019
Current assets			Current liabilities			Invested in capital assets	\$ 1,794,078	\$ 1,704,178
Cash and short-term deposits	\$ 8,739,293	\$ 5,490,586	Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 1,761,438	\$ 1,519,627	Internally restricted funds	702,458	702,458
Accounts receivable and prepaid expenses	668,291	616,643	Accounts payable - due to funders	5,682,640	2,397,835	Reserve for capital replacement	89,937	89,937
	9,407,584	6,107,229	Current portion of capital lease obligation	52,791	56,498	Unrestricted fund	3,137,502	3,328,029
Long-term assets			Deferred revenue	351,465	451,753	Unfunded payroll obligations	(596,223)	(549,506)
Marketable securities	1,721,633	1,832,904		7,848,334	4,425,713	TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$ 5,127,752	\$ 5,275,096
Property and equipment	11,848,645	12,366,127	Long-term liabilities					
	13,570,278	14,199,031	Long-term portion of capital lease obligation	-	52,791			
			Deferred capital contributions	10,001,776	10,552,660			
				10,001,776	10,605,451			
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 22,977,862	20,306,260	TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$ 17,850,110	15,031,164	TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 22,977,869	\$ 20,306,260

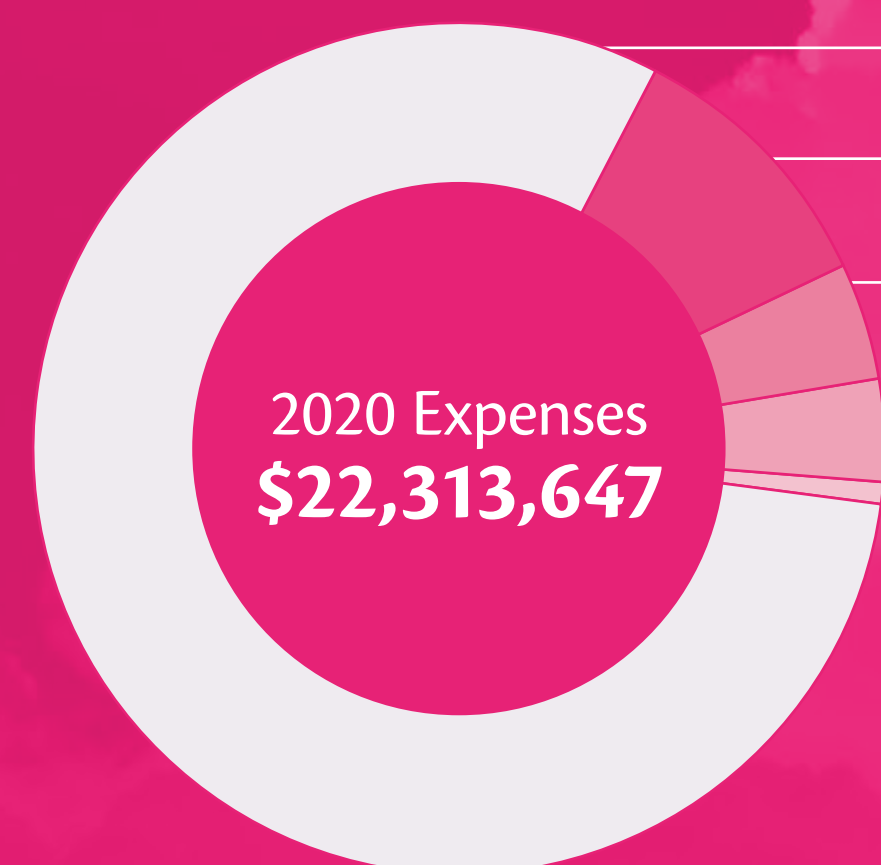
Summary Statement of Operations

Year ended March 31, 2020



Revenues

	2020	2019
Approved program funding	\$ 21,829,167	\$ 20,888,530
Hub partners and charged expenses	301,361	276,352
Grants, donations and other	62,508	90,515
Investment income (losses)	(26,733)	112,532
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 22,166,303	21,367,929



Expenses

Salaries, benefits and relief	17,185,798	16,426,584
General administration and operating costs	2,208,529	2,129,599
Occupancy costs	1,021,024	1,019,415
Program resources and purchased services	904,675	975,248
Non-insured services	854,365	759,502
Depreciation (net of amortization of deferred capital contributions)	139,256	56,647
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 22,313,647	21,366,995

Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses for the year	\$ (147,344)	\$ 934
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Note to Summary Financial Statements

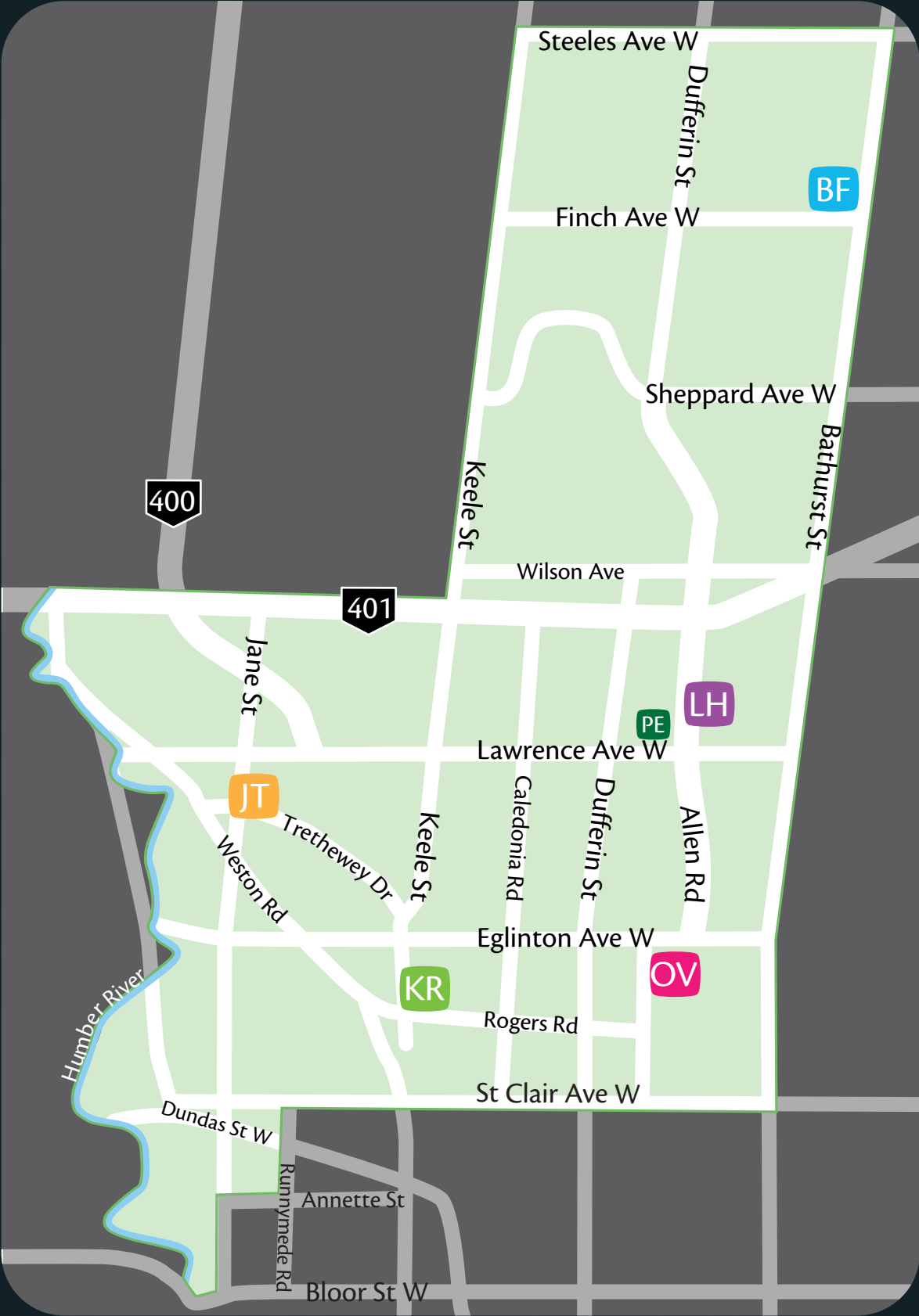
Year ended March 31, 2020.

Basis of presentation

These summary financial statements have been prepared from the audited financial statements of Unison Health and Community Services ("Unison") for the year ended March 31, 2020 on a basis that is consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial statements of Unison except that the information presented in respect of changes in net assets and cash flows has not been presented and information disclosed in the notes to the financial statements has been reduced.

Complete audited financial statements are available upon request from the office of the Senior Director of Operations.

Our Locations



LH Lawrence Heights
12 Flemington Road
Toronto, ON M6A 2N4
Phone: 416-787-1661

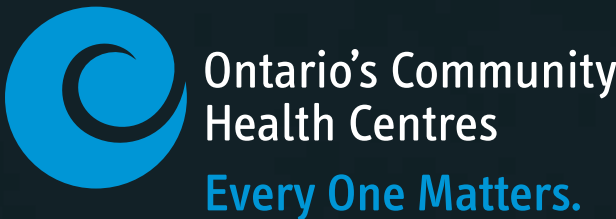
BF Bathurst-Finch
540 Finch Avenue West
Toronto, ON M2R 1N7
Phone: 647-436-0385

KR Keele-Rogers
1651 Keele Street
Toronto, ON M6M 3W2
Phone: 416-653-5400

JT Jane-Trethewey
1541 Jane Street
Toronto, ON M9N 2R3
Phone: 416-645-7575

OV Oakwood-Vaughan
501 Oakwood Avenue
Toronto, ON M6E 2W8
Phone: 647-798-0441

PE Pathways to Education
Lawrence Square
700 Lawrence Avenue West,
Suite 440B
Toronto, ON M6A 3B4
Phone: 416-787-6800



Unison Health and Community Services gratefully acknowledges funding from:

City of Toronto • Legal Aid Ontario • Government of Canada • Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services •
Ministry of Health • Ontario Health • Pathways to Education • Public Health Agency of Canada •
Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network • Toronto Environmental Alliance • United Way Greater Toronto

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