



**From the Desk of Anne Babcock**  
**President & CEO, WoodGreen Community Services**  
**- August 2018 -**

**Free 2 Be Opens Its Doors on Victoria Park Ave.**

WoodGreen's new Free 2 Be (Housing First for Youth Leaving Care) staff team is now set up in new office space at our 1533 Victoria Park Ave. location, and program staff are now hard at work as the first cohort of clients enter the program this summer.

With initial funding from the Making the Shift Youth Homelessness Social Innovation Lab, Free 2 Be was designed and developed through co-design with key stakeholders, including young people with lived experience of the child welfare system. Grounded in the Housing First for Youth model, Free 2 Be aims to improve the life outcomes of young people transitioning out of Toronto's child welfare system by providing access to stable housing, life skills, social connections, wellness, education and employment supports.



*The WoodGreen Free 2 Be staff team left to right: Adam Whisler, Nijatha Subramaniam, Rasheeda Guinn, Vanessa Wu, Erik Wexler (Program Manager, Free 2 Be), Jennifer Gourley. Not pictured: Sydney Blum.*

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## **Newcomer Dream Job Panel**

On July 28th, WoodGreen's Community Connections program hosted "Overcoming Obstacles in Pursuit of Your Dream Job", a panel for newcomers at the Coxwell Library. The panelists described to a packed room how they overcame obstacles as newcomers or indigenous persons to be recognized in their fields. Tremendous thanks to our panelists.



*Panelists from Left to Right: Ha Nguyen, Crystal Fernandes, Dr. Hani Bashir, Jodie-Lynn Waddilove, Maryam Al Somahi and Darrell Pinto (moderator).*

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## **Caribbean Carnival**

On August 9th seniors from across WoodGreen sites gathered at WoodGreen's Ray McCleary Towers at 444 Logan Avenue for a Caribbean Carnival. It was a beautiful day for carnival games, Caribbean culture, and dancers that got everyone moving. Special thanks to the WareInToronto and Jess O'Reilly teams for sponsoring and

volunteering at this event, and we'd also like to thank City Councillor Paula Fletcher and MPP Peter Tabuns for joining in on the fun!



*Everyone was smiling at the Caribbean Carnival at Ray McCleary Towers.*

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## **Save the date for WoodGreen's 81<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting!**

Featured keynote speakers will share their stories highlighting the IMAPCT of their WoodGreen experience, including:

- Living in WoodGreen's affordable housing
- Graduating from Homeward Bound
- Volunteering to give back to our community

Date: Wednesday September 26<sup>th</sup>

Time: Networking reception at 5:30pm, formal program begins at 6:30pm

Place: East York Civic Centre, 850 Coxwell Avenue

*Evites and formal membership packages will be sent in early September.*

***Please RSVP by September 18 to [membership@woodgreen.org](mailto:membership@woodgreen.org).***



Sincerely,

**Anne Babcock**

President & CEO

WoodGreen Community Services



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