



University Settlement

FOUNDED 1910

2023 ANNUAL REPORT





University Settlement

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Our Mandate

University Settlement helps individuals and families to learn and grow by engaging them in social, cultural, recreational and educational opportunities. Founded in 1910, University Settlement is committed to enhancing the quality of life of the people in the diverse communities we serve.

Our Vision

Our vision is a community that is safe and healthy, where individuals of all ages, from all social classes and cultures belong, mix freely and respect one another. In this place, people's basic needs are met, and they have the opportunity to grow and learn through participation in artistic, cultural, recreational, educational and employment opportunities.

Our Values

At University Settlement, we as Staff and Volunteers:

Value partnerships and teamwork

Operate with equity and fairness

Demonstrate responsiveness to community needs

Ensure accountability and transparency to our stakeholders

Respect and celebrate the diversity of our community

Work towards excellence in all that we do

Nurture the potential of all those with whom we interact



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Mulaho Hassan

Message from the President of the Board

The remarkable achievements of University Settlement over the past year are a testimony to the collective efforts of our organization. A wide array of events, including the Grange Festival, Lunar New Year celebrations, and various music and arts concerts, were hosted, enriching our community, and fostering unity, and belonging. The deep gratitude of the Board extends to our outstanding staff members, whose hard work and dedication made these events possible.

This year holds particular significance as it marks my inaugural year as Board President. Collaborating closely with the management team has provided invaluable insights into the exceptional work they undertake for our community. Their dedication, creativity, and tangible impact on the lives of those we serve continue to inspire.

Despite economic challenges, our organization remains resolute in delivering impactful programs for community members of all ages.

The commitment to excellence is evident in this year's annual report, which outlines the evaluations of our current programs. Serving over 10,000 individuals, the overwhelmingly positive feedback reflects the dedication and creativity of our staff, whose efforts deserve recognition and celebration.

Looking forward, while I will be stepping down from the board after five fulfilling years, I am confident in the organization's ability to thrive and expand. Serving has been an honor, and I eagerly anticipate

witnessing the ongoing progress and achievements of this remarkable organization.

Thank you to our funders, donors, partners, volunteers, supporters, staff and community members for your unwavering support and dedication to University Settlement. Together, we will continue to effect positive change in our community.

Mulaho Hassan

President





Message from the **Executive Director**

Raymond White

As we pause to reflect on the past year, I'm so very proud of the strides we've taken in empowering our community and nurturing diversity and inclusivity. At University Settlement, our array of services is designed to meet the diverse needs of our community, from subsidized Day Care and enriching children's programs to our thriving Music and Arts School. We're committed to providing accessible, high-quality programming for individuals of all ages and backgrounds, with standout programs including Language, Settlement, and Social services, as well as initiatives for seniors, women's empowerment, and employment.

Our gratitude extends to our generous funders whose support enables us to break down economic, social, and language barriers and foster a more equitable society. This year, we achieved a significant milestone with the establishment of our Youth Council, a platform by and for the youth, amplifying their voices and fostering leadership and community engagement.

Our dedication to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) shines through in our collaboration with students from the Public Good Initiative to refine our EDI planning, thus fostering a more inclusive environment. This commitment was further exemplified by the 82nd Grange Festival, which brought together over 5000 individuals from diverse backgrounds, supported by sponsors IFDS and Kiwanis Club of Casa Loma, and with active participation from numerous community organizations.

Our outreach efforts extend beyond our walls, with active participation in fairs targeting newcomers and offering essential settlement and language services. We're grateful to IRCC for funding our language and settlement programs, which play a vital role in integrating newcomers into our community. None of this would be possible without the dedication of our remarkable volunteers, whose contributions we honored at a special appreciation event.

Looking ahead, our commitment to serving and empowering our community remains steadfast.

To our valued community members, I express heartfelt thanks for your ongoing support and trust. Your engagement and feedback are invaluable as we strive for excellence. Together, let's continue building a more inclusive and vibrant Toronto for all.

Raymond White
Executive Director





Our Programs

As we reflect on the past year, we are proud to share the impact and growth of our programs at University Settlement. Our commitment to fostering inclusive communities and empowering individuals has been at the forefront of all our endeavors.

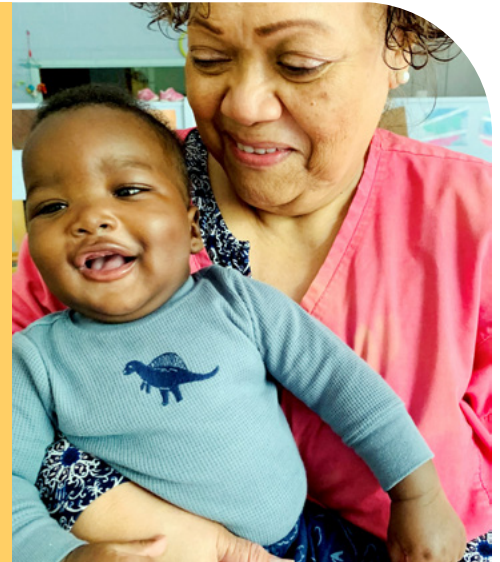
Throughout the year, our diverse range of programs and services has provided invaluable support to members of our community. From initiatives nurturing lifelong learning to social services ensuring well-being and stability, each program embodies our dedication to serving the needs of our neighbours.

As we embark on a new chapter, we remain steadfast in our mission to create opportunities for personal and collective growth. We extend our deepest gratitude to our funders, supporters, volunteers, members, and clients whose unwavering dedication fuels our work.

Here's to another year of collaboration, impact, and transformation.

Day Care

University Settlement Day Care provides a full range of services for children ranging in age from infancy to 5 years. It houses two separate and well-maintained playgrounds, both of which overlook Grange Park, and contains a private kitchen, which supplies daily home-cooked meals and snacks, in accordance with the Canada Food Guide.



Experienced and Caring Teachers

Our Early Childhood Educators are experienced, caring professionals who ensure a high-quality program that supports the social, cognitive, creative, emotional, and physical needs of each of the infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in our care. Throughout 2023, our teachers continued to develop innovative and creative ways of delivering interesting, age-appropriate programs for all the children in care. They cultivated a nurturing environment that provided children with opportunities that fostered self-expression, self-reflection, and self-control, while stimulating their imagination, curiosity, and intellect. A variety of structured and spontaneous daily activities helped children understand the relation between cause and effect, develop hand-eye coordination, promote creativity, improve literacy, and encourage conceptual thinking and problem solving.



Representing Diversity

Our central location ensures a multicultural, multilingual, and multiracial complement of families and staff. Careful attention is paid to ensure that all program areas are equipped with books, toys, materials, and supplies, that reflect the diversity in cultural representations, family make-up, and abilities of our society at large.

Supported by Major Funders

In 2023, the Day Care also welcomed some significant contributions from our major funders:

Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Agreement

After careful consideration, the Day Care signed on to the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Agreement. CWELCC is a five-year plan that is being implemented in stages to make childcare more accessible and affordable. Fees are to be reduced each year, reaching an average rate of \$10/day by 2025-2026. Though the funding formula has not yet been developed, the agreement had a major positive impact on parents who saw their daily fees reduced by 52.75%.

Toronto Children's Services Workforce Innovation and Continuous Learning Fund

Toronto Children's Services distributed a Workforce Innovation and Continuous Learning Fund which

supported our Day staff in participating in “Child Abuse Prevention” training as well as “Supporting Mental Health” training.

Toronto Children’s Services Support Funding

Toronto Children’s Services Support funding provided financial assistance to help support children that were identified as requiring extra assistance with language development and self-regulation.



DAY CARE IMPACT STORY

Resilience Unveiled: A Journey of Reconnection at University Settlement Day Care

In 2023, the Day Care was free to operate without the constraints and restrictions imposed by COVID-19, so the centre slowly and cautiously worked its way back into pre-pandemic mode. Re-establishing familiar routine helped restore a sense of normalcy. Our Day Care family could once again reunite for large gatherings as parents and agency staff were invited to participate in our special events.

The restoration of normalcy brought with it a profound sense of joy and relief. Parents and agency staff rejoiced as they were once again welcomed into our Day Care community, eagerly participating in special events and celebrations that showcased the rich tapestry of diversity within our midst. From vibrant parades through Grange Park to indoor festivities bursting with creativity and color, every moment became a testament to the resilience and unity of our community.

For parents, the opportunity to physically engage in their child’s daily experiences was a long-awaited

privilege, fostering deeper connections and a renewed sense of involvement in their child’s growth and development. Meanwhile, children reveled in the sheer delight of having their parents by their side, sharing in the magic of each day with unbridled enthusiasm and boundless joy.

As we embraced the restored freedom to gather and celebrate together, we contributed to a collective collage of memories that will define the spirit of University Settlement. Each cardboard dragon, drumbeat, and rainbow-inspired accessory served as a vibrant brushstroke on the canvas of our shared experiences, painting a picture of resilience, unity, and unwavering optimism for the future. In breaking free from the shadows of the past, we emerged stronger, more connected, and more determined than ever to nurture a community where every child can thrive and flourish.

Children's Programs

Within University Settlement's children's program, young learners 4 to 12 are immersed in a journey of skill-building and growth. Through our Afterschool, Day Camps, Aquatics, and Music programs, children experience a dynamic blend of education and enrichment. In our nurturing and inclusive environment, every child finds a safe space to explore, learn, and flourish. Our focus on engaging, fun-filled activities not only entertains but also ignites a lifelong passion for discovery.



Our programs go beyond the academic realm, nurturing vital qualities such as self-esteem, confidence, and emotional intelligence through a variety of enriching activities, including teamwork exercises and problem-solving challenges, children develop crucial skills like perseverance and collaboration. Furthermore, our initiatives equip young participants with the social skills needed to thrive in group environments while forming meaningful and lasting friendships.

Afterschool and Camps

Our Day Camps and Afterschool Program, provide a diverse array of age-appropriate activities designed to ignite children's curiosity and foster exploration, including: Weekly on-site swimming lessons, engaging reading clubs, interactive baking & cooking sessions, access to computer labs, creative arts and crafts workshops (such as drama, advanced arts, mixed media, etc.), hands-on science experiments, energetic and fun-filled active games, various sports activities and more.

Through our Afterschool Program, we've provided families with memorable experiences through close to 800 tickets to various events, generously donated by Kids Up Front. From Toronto Maple Leafs games to Young People's Concerts, magic shows, and LEGO movie, families have enjoyed enriching moments together. Additionally, we've extended our outreach with 200 tickets to the Toronto Zoo and 130 kids passes to the CNE, ensuring that children in our Afterschool Program and Camps can explore and learn beyond the classroom.



Aquatics and Swimming

Children love University Settlement's onsite Life-Saving Society swim classes, aquatics programs, and swim team. Classes are fun and engaging and there are plenty of opportunities to make friends and grow in confidence

Music & Arts

Our Music & Arts School offers a wide range of music programming, including a children's choir, individual instrumental and vocal lessons, dance classes, music theory and history classes. With fees significantly lower than market rates, and subsidies of between 30% and 80%, University Settlement's Children's Programs are accessible to all families.

HIGH FIVE® Accreditation

We were proud to be a HIGH FIVE® Accredited Organization. To achieve this acclaimed designation, our team worked very hard over a two-year period to ensure that the quality standards for children's recreation programs at University Settlement met or exceeded the criteria established by Parks and Recreation Ontario. Accreditation means that our children's recreation programs are verified to be of the highest quality.

AFTERSCHOOL IMPACT STORY

A Letter of Appreciation from Sasha

(Mother of Maiia and Liia, attendees of our Afterschool Program)

I want to thank University Settlement community center, particularly its Afterschool Program.

As newcomers to the area, my daughters barely spoke English when they first joined the program. However, within just a few months, they began to blossom with confidence. Each day, they forged new friendships, made connections, and gained invaluable experiences.

The Afterschool Program plays an important role in fostering a strong sense of community among children in our bustling downtown area. It ensures that they don't lose touch with the joys of childhood.

I also want to commend the dedication and professionalism of the staff. They offer unwavering

support and create a safe, friendly environment where all children can flourish and learn.

The inclusion of the swimming program is a wonderful addition, providing my daughters with essential skills that will positively impact their lives.

As a working mother, knowing that my girls are safe and engaged in learning, communication, and relationship-building after school is paramount to me.

I consider us incredibly fortunate to have the Afterschool Program in our neighborhood. It has become an integral part of our family's journey, aiding my children in adapting to a new country and community with ease.



Youth Programs

In 2023, University Settlement's commitment to empowering youth was maintained through meticulously crafted programs designed to refine skills, nurture leadership qualities, and provide vital support to overcome challenges, thereby shaping resilient, independent leaders.



Youth Council

Monthly meetings have been held by the Youth Council, actively engaging in University Settlement's special events such as the Grange Festival, We Care, and themed activities for the Afterschool Program. Additionally, workshops on resume building, cover letter writing, and job search strategies have been spearheaded by the Council. Members have generously volunteered for community field trips and eagerly participated in diverse cultural, artistic, and sporting events across Toronto through our collaboration with Kids Up Front.

University Settlement warmly welcomed students from the University of Toronto during their Alternative Reading Week. They actively joined our intergenerational Tai Chi and Calligraphy sessions, displaying enthusiasm and eagerness to learn. Additionally, they participated in speed mentoring sessions with our youth council, fostering meaningful connections and valuable exchanges of knowledge and experiences.

Additionally, our dedication to education and skill enhancement extended to facilitating student placements from a variety of colleges and universities. These placement students played a crucial role in supporting the Youth Council by aiding in the preparation of various programs and assisting in grant applications to secure funding for the council's creative endeavours. Placement students from York University were instrumental in facilitating our Afterschool Program by supporting our Safe-walk initiative and planning activities for the children.

These collective efforts have significantly amplified community engagement and played an integral role in nurturing the holistic development of our youth participants.





YOUTH PROGRAMS IMPACT STORY

Embracing Community: Nicole's Journey at University Settlement

Nicole's journey with University Settlement began in her earliest memories. From childhood summers filled with swimming lessons to the joy of Grange Festival, the center has been a constant presence, leaving a mark on her heart.

Now fifteen, Nicole has transitioned from a participant to a valued youth volunteer, sharing her love for the center by guiding younger children through activities and camps.

"University Settlement isn't just a place—it's a second home," Nicole reflects. "It's where I've found lifelong friends and mentors who've shaped who I am today."

Her dedication extends beyond volunteering; she's completed the Youth Leaders in Training program and

is an active member of the Youth Council, shaping the center's future with her passion for community engagement.

"As I continue my journey, I carry the lessons and memories from University Settlement," Nicole shares. "It's instilled in me a deep sense of responsibility towards others."

For Nicole, University Settlement is more than a community center—it's a ray of hope and a reminder of the impact of giving back. Her experiences have equipped her with valuable skills and knowledge, while also nurturing a profound sense of empathy and kindness towards others, both within the center and in the broader community.

Fitness & Recreation

University Settlement is committed to providing affordable fitness, recreation, and aquatics programming designed to meet the diverse needs of our community members.



Grange Fitness Centre

Our Fitness Centre offers a comprehensive array of exercise machines, weights, and fitness equipment, empowering members to achieve their personal fitness goals. In addition to individual workouts, members have access to a variety of fitness classes led by experienced instructors, including yoga, flexibility training, strength training, aquafit, and the newly introduced pilates.

Enhancing Physical and Mental Wellness

Our facility also offers opportunities for drop-in sports such as badminton and basketball, as well as designated lane swim times for lap swimming. These programs are tailored to enhance the physical and mental well-being of our participants, contributing to an overall improvement in their quality of life. To ensure inclusivity, we provide reduced membership rates for older adults, youth, and students.

Aquatic Programs

Our aquatic programs are a cornerstone of our offerings, attracting numerous community members year-round. From swimming lessons to aquafit classes and leisure swims, our pool serves as a vibrant hub for individuals and families alike. Leisure swims which are free for members, provide valuable opportunities for community engagement and connection.

Get Active Downtown

In 2023, University Settlement expanded its programming with support from the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, offering free basketball and aquatics programs to newcomers. Participants had the opportunity to enroll in complimentary swimming lessons, and basketball, and join the Settlement Sharks Swim Team. These initiatives provided invaluable skills and experiences that may have otherwise been inaccessible, revitalizing our Swim Team and promoting active lifestyles within the community. While we couldn't sustain free programming year-round, we've maintained low costs for the Swim Team to ensure accessibility for all.



Swim Meet

On November 25th, University Settlement proudly hosted its first recreational swim meet since the pandemic, welcoming over 58 swimmers. The Settlement Sharks program offered children and youth a platform to explore competitive swimming, forge friendships, and engage in friendly competition with other teams. This initiative has been instrumental in fostering a sense of community and encouraging active participation among our youth.



AQUATICS PROGRAMS IMPACT STORY

Making Waves: A Family's Journey with University Settlement's Aquatics Program

Since 2011, the Hedges family has been an integral part of University Settlement's Aquatics Program, finding convenience close to home and discovering a welcoming community within its walls. Starting with the mom and baby swim program, their journey expanded with Level 1 swim classes, drawn by the small class sizes, cleanliness, and excellent instructor training. For the Hedges, University Settlement wasn't just about swimming—

"The proximity to our house, cleanliness, safety measures, and friendliness of the staff kept us coming back," recalls Mrs. Hedges. *"We never went anywhere else for swimming after that."*

"What sets University Settlement apart for us is not just the programs but the people," Mr. Hedges reflects. *"The lifeguards are the best. Kind, patient, and always ready to say hi even if we see them outside of class."*

The family shared –*"The impact of University Settlement extends beyond the pool, we have been offered free tickets to the games and inclusion in community events like Grange Festivals and We Care, gives us a sense of belonging and joy. The genuine outreach from the program coordinator, especially towards homeschooling families like ours, has left a lasting impression in our hearts."*

Through the Aquatics Program, the children gained confidence, with the elder one progressing remarkably in just a year and a half. Beyond swimming, the program became a space of growth, community, and empowerment for the Hedges family and many others, leaving positive ripples far beyond the water's edge.

Music & Arts School

We live by our fundamental belief that the arts should be a right, not a privilege and that lessons should be accessible to everyone regardless of age, ethnicity, perceived talent, disability, or ability to pay. Our aim is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to pursue their passion for music.

Located in Toronto, we offer classes at below for-profit rates, reaching students across the GTA. Additionally, we provide subsidies to children from low-income families, with 29% of enrolled children and youth receiving financial assistance of up to 80% in 2023. This support allows us to create a diverse and inclusive learning environment.



Our Faculty

Our diverse and high-caliber faculty are dedicated to nurturing talent and fostering a love of music in a safe and fun environment that celebrates success and promotes self-esteem, perseverance, and confidence.

Our Lessons and Classes

With a wide range of offerings, students can choose individual lessons in piano, strings, woodwind instruments, percussion, and voice. Our classes encompass various genres, including classical, folk, pop, and jazz.

In addition to individual instruction, we offer group programs that cater to different interests. These include a popular children's choir, chamber music ensembles, early childhood music classes, world music drumming, ukulele groups, dance classes, as well as ear training, music theory, and recreational art classes. By maintaining low instructor-to-student ratios, we ensure a high-quality learning experience for all participants whether with aspirations for serious advancement or simply for personal enjoyment.



Fostering a Diverse and Welcoming Space

As Toronto's oldest community music school, we have always prioritized radical inclusivity and we remain steadfast in our commitment to fostering a diverse and welcoming space. The Music & Arts School is where the community comes together to create music and enrich lives through creativity, and we take great pride in that legacy.



MUSIC & ARTS SCHOOL IMPACT STORY

Audrey Cai's Journey

Audrey Cai, a 14-year-old pianist and violinist, has spent over six years honing her musical talents at University Settlement's Music & Arts School. Under the guidance of pianist Ken Marple and violinist Alex Cheung, Audrey has earned praise as an "exceptional student and gifted musician," garnering awards and scholarships such as the Steinhauer Family Music Award and the Mark Hill Music Award.

Beyond the school's walls, Audrey's musical achievements shine brightly. She recently claimed first place at the North York Music Festival's Grade 10 C category with Chopin's Polonaise in C# minor and secured second place in the Grade 10 D category with Debussy's Clair De Lune.

Ken Marple commends Audrey's ability to captivate audiences, describing her as "simply an exceptional musician, performer, and student." Audrey's dedication

led her to pass her RCM Level 9 Piano Exam with First Class Honours in 2024, and she's now preparing for the RCM Level 10 Exam. As a member of the Music & Arts School's Youth Chamber Ensemble, she continues to thrive under Alex Cheung's mentorship.

Reflecting on her journey, Audrey credits the Music & Arts School for nurturing her passion and helping her fulfill her dreams through music. *"Not only has the school helped me by learning how to play piano and violin, but it has taught me how to be myself, express my feelings through music, and finding a way to achieve my dreams"* – Audrey.

Audrey's story exemplifies the transformative impact of music education, showcasing excellence in both her musical achievements and personal growth.

Language and Settlement Services



Newcomer Settlement Services

Our Settlement Services team plays a critical role in helping newcomers overcome the difficulties and barriers they face in re-establishing their lives in Canada. Individual and group counseling sessions orient newcomers to our society and assist them in accessing basic services. Recognizing the challenges faced by newcomers in resettling their lives in a new country, we have designated multilingual staff and settlement counselors who provide essential services to facilitate a smooth settlement process. We work closely with individuals to develop personalized settlement plans based on their specific needs and goals.

Our services include one-on-one settlement counseling, translation, interpretation, referrals to community resources and information, general orientation to life in Canada, assistance with income tax filings, and help with government forms and applications.

In addition to working with individuals, we also deliver regular workshops and seminars on key topics such as housing, employment, healthcare, the Canadian legal system, banking, financial management, and the process of becoming a Canadian citizen. These workshops provide valuable information and create opportunities for participants to make new friends and build connections within the community.

Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)

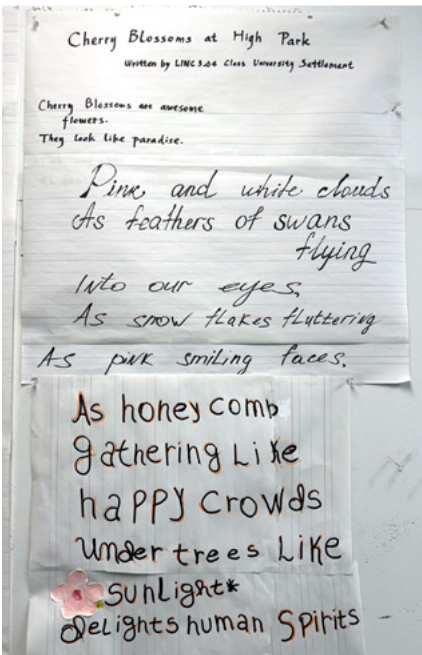
Our Language Instruction for Newcomers (LINC) program helps newcomers develop the English language skills essential for successfully building a new life in Canada. In a supportive and inclusive environment, students engage in spoken and written English, explore diverse cultures, and form meaningful connections with their peers.

We offer LINC classes to all permanent residents and conventional refugees, using a Portfolio-Based Language Assessment (PBLA) teaching and assessment model. This model is grounded in recognized best practices



for language instruction and assessment for adults. Our instructors have extensive experience teaching in diverse multicultural environments. Upon completing the program, many students report increased confidence and often pursue advanced career training.

Additionally, we offer conversational cafés, writing workshops, and a computer lab for online learning and research. All English-language instruction programs are provided free of charge.



LINC IMPACT STORY

Cultural Enrichment and Creative Expression: Learning Together at University Settlement

Following an enriching trip to the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), students from the LINC 3 & 4 class at University Settlement expressed their gratitude to Carolyn, their tour guide, with a heartfelt letter. Carolyn reciprocated their appreciation, eagerly anticipating their return for another tour. Inspired by their ROM visit, students created a vibrant poster showcasing their field trip reports about ROM and the Egyptian hieroglyphic letter drawing on authentic papyrus paper.

During another visit to High Park, students immersed themselves in the beauty of cherry blossoms, crafting a poignant poem titled “Cherry Blossoms.” Through similes and metaphors, they eloquently captured the delicate allure of the flowers, likening them to “pink and white clouds” and “feathers of swans flying into our eyes.” This creative endeavor not only showcased their linguistic proficiency but also highlighted their growing confidence in self-expression.

This exchange of gratitude and creativity exemplifies the transformative power of experiential learning and cultural immersion at University Settlement, along with building their language skills. Through their shared experiences and creative endeavors, students continue to learn, grow, and inspire one another, embodying the spirit of cultural enrichment and creative expression, fostering unity, and understanding among diverse communities.

SETTLEMENT SERVICES IMPACT STORY



Empowering New Beginnings: Eva's Journey

Eva, an immigrant from Ukraine, turned to University Settlement, Spadina location, for getting settlement services in 2016, and has since been navigating her path to success with the guidance of Settlement Counsellors Jun, Jimmy, and Lei. Through their dedicated assistance, Eva tackled various challenges, from PR card renewal to employment counseling, with unwavering support.

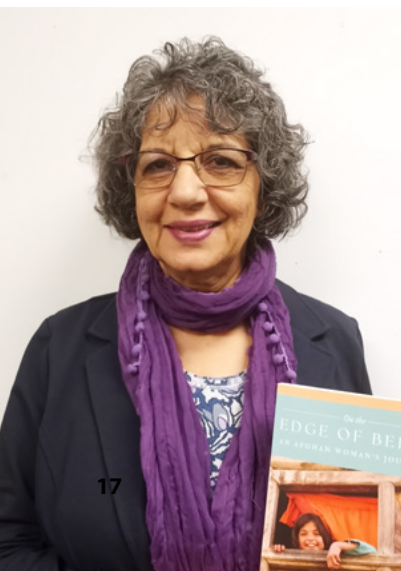
Reflecting on her journey, Eva shares, *"Without the guidance and support from the Settlement team at University Settlement's Spadina location, I wouldn't be where I am today. They've been instrumental in helping me navigate the complexities of settling in a new country."*

In times of uncertainty, the encouragement from settlement counselors has been of immense support for Eva. *"They lifted me during tough times, especially when I felt lost in my career path."*

Now enrolled in a college program, Eva is hopeful for her future. *"I'm grateful for the opportunity to pursue further education in Canada. With the support of University Settlement's team at Spadina, I'm confident I'll soon be able to fulfill my passion for nursing."*

Eva's story epitomizes the transformative impact of settlement services, empowering newcomers like her to overcome challenges and thrive in their new homeland. Through dedication and support, University Settlement's Settlement Services continues to make a profound difference in the lives of immigrants, fostering resilience and opportunity in their journey toward success.

SETTLEMENT SERVICES TEAM HIGHLIGHT



Spotlighting Immigrant Voices: 'On the Edge of Being' by Sharifa Sharif

SETTLEMENT SERVICES TEAM HIGHLIGHT

From Newcomer to Valued Team Member: Naghmeh's Journey at University Settlement

"From the moment I set foot in Canada, I was determined to rediscover my strengths and skills and adapt them to my new home. Enrolled in the BESIP (Bridge to Employment in Services for Immigrant Populations) program, I was to interview a settlement and social worker as a part of enriching my experience. Little did I know, this encounter would change the course of my journey. The settlement and social worker, impressed by our conversation, offered me a placement at University Settlement.

During my time there, I immersed myself in the vibrant community, learning and growing with every interaction. When the opportunity arose, I eagerly applied for the position of Farsi-speaking settlement and social worker. Through two rounds of interviews, I poured my heart into showcasing my passion and expertise, rooted in my background in psychology.

Finally, the moment arrived when I received the offer letter. It was a validation of my journey, a confirmation that life indeed unfolds in mysterious ways. Today, I stand proudly, serving my fellow newcomers at University Settlement. Each day, I am reminded that every experience, every challenge, has led me to this moment of fulfillment and purpose."

– Nagmeh

Sharifa Sharif, our Language Program Coordinator, has a book titled 'On the Edge of Being,' offering a poignant glimpse into her immigrant journey from Afghanistan and the challenges faced by women in her homeland. As an immigrant herself from Afghanistan, Sharifa has poured her experiences into this book. Through candid storytelling, she explores the complexities of identity, resilience, and the pursuit of belonging. Her narrative deeply resonates with

immigrant experiences and sheds light on the struggles faced by women in Afghanistan.

We are proud to feature this in our annual report to highlight the richness of talent and diversity within our staff community. It serves as a reminder of the valuable perspectives and voices that contribute to the fabric of our organization.



Seniors and Social Services

Seniors

At University Settlement, as a designated Seniors Active Living Centre, we are dedicated to fostering connections and promoting active and healthy living among the senior community. The impact of COVID-19 on seniors, particularly the issue of social isolation, continues to be a significant concern.

To address the needs of seniors and provide them with opportunities for engagement, we offer a wide range of weekly interactive recreational and social programs, available both in-person and online. These programs include Tai Chi and dance classes, performing arts groups, Chinese calligraphy, computer classes, intergenerational cooking classes, hiking, and online conversation groups. By participating in these activities, seniors can stay connected, maintain healthy lifestyles, boost their self-esteem, and improve their English language skills. Additionally, we provide one-on-one counseling services, tax clinics, and more.

We also organize monthly educational workshops covering important topics such as health and wellbeing, fraud prevention, estate planning, mental health, subsidized

housing, wills and powers of attorney, financial literacy, and elder abuse prevention.

Social Services

At University Settlement, we offer programs dedicated to community development, advocacy, and well-being initiatives for our community members. These programs include volunteer empowerment, women's discussion groups, intergenerational activities, and health and well-being activities.

Through these programs, we host educational fairs and events designed to empower the community through knowledge transfer. Additionally, we provide workshops on financial literacy, food and nutrition, voting rights, career development, and digital skills. We also offer recreational activities that promote mental health and well-being, such as board games, intergenerational book clubs, and field trips. Our goal is to create a supportive and inclusive environment where community members can thrive, connect, and build a stronger, more resilient community.

Finding home and community with University Settlement

"Living close to University Settlement on McCaul Street, I've been able to actively engage in community programs, especially during the pandemic. Zoom technology enabled my participation in various online and in-person activities seamlessly. Attending online computer classes on Fridays has broadened my understanding of technology, while tuning in to program news on Mondays keeps me updated. Wednesdays are dedicated to Canadian history workshops by Teacher Zhang, sometimes followed by outings like our trip to the Blue Mountains last year.

As someone in my seventies and relatively new to Canada, the community's support has been invaluable. "The community has taught me many things," I reflect gratefully. With summer approaching, I'm eager to explore more. Guided by the community's support, I look forward to discovering more of what surrounds me. I express my sincere gratitude to University Settlement and the community for their ongoing support."

– Hong Qu



SENIORS IMPACT STORY

A Senior Immigrant's Journey to Dignity

Dexing Xu, a 70-year-old immigrant newcomer, arrived at University Settlement seeking refuge and assistance after his dream of familial reunion in Canada was shattered. Displaced from his child's home within three months and grappling with language barriers, Dexing Xu found support from Settlement Counselors. Together, they navigated the complexities of a domestic violence case and secured essential documentation for a social housing special unit application.

Three months later, Dexing Xu was offered accommodation in Scarborough, coupled with an

approved ODSP application. Regular visits to the Spadina office ensued, where dedicated counselors facilitated his integration into Canadian life, aiding in matters such as legal documentation and financial support. Expressing heartfelt gratitude, Dexing Xu acknowledged the transformative impact of University Settlement, affirming, *"They are not my children, but they are close to my heart. The fact is that I can live in Canada with dignity because of them."*

SOCIAL SERVICES IMPACT STORY

A Note of Gratitude to University Settlement's Social Services Department

As an immigrant who has called Canada home for over 20 years, I've encountered my share of challenges, particularly with language barriers. Despite my efforts, my language skills remain limited, leaving me anxious whenever official government letters arrive. Fearful of missing important deadlines that could jeopardize my senior housing and pension, I found myself in a state of constant worry.

Retirement should have been a time of relaxation, yet the looming language barrier cast a shadow over my peace of mind. However, the people at University Settlement became my lifeline. They patiently translated government

letters, assisted with tax filings, and helped navigate bureaucratic forms. Their support not only eased my financial worries but also provided a sense of security and reassurance.

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of University Settlement, I've efficiently managed my affairs over the years. My gratitude extends to both University Settlement and the government for their unwavering support.

*With appreciation,
Mr. Gao*

Partnership Initiatives

University Settlement has established multiple formal partnerships with community organizations to facilitate seamless service delivery for our clients with diverse needs in the area of Language, Settlement, and Social Services. Our partnerships with Access Employment, Housing Help Centre, and Career Foundation enable us to refer clients to various services and assist them in navigating the system. Additionally, we provide our services at itinerant locations such as the Toronto Public Library Board, The

Community Place Hub, Working Women Community Centre - Victoria Park Hub, YMCA, and LOFT Community Center. We also work closely with Seneca College, Centennial College, JVS Toronto, COSTI, George Brown College, and TDSB - City Adult Learning Centre by providing student internships, helping the students gain first-hand experience working in the settlement and social services environment.

Employment and Training

Gaining employment and achieving financial independence is a crucial milestone toward self-sufficiency. University Settlement's Employment and Training program is dedicated to empowering individuals by providing customer service and call center training, job search resources, and one-on-one career counseling. We help individuals navigate the job market and share strategies to help them overcome barriers to employment.

A key component of our program is the intensive four-week Customer Service and Call Centre Certificate Program.

Customer Service and Call Centre Certificate Program

Participants enhance their skills through hands-on practical experience in a computer lab, followed by on-the-job training. This immersive approach allows individuals to strengthen their abilities and gain valuable real-world experience, ensuring long-term success. Participants receive ongoing coaching and job retention support for six months after program completion, enabling them to navigate the challenges of employment and maintain job stability.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING IMPACT STORY

Empowering Lives: A Story of Transformation

University Settlement's Employment and Training program was like a ray of light for Fatima*, a single mother of two, who had been struggling on welfare for a decade. Feeling hopeless, she'd often find herself in tears, pleading for a way out of her daily desperation. But within the program, Fatima didn't just find guidance; she found hope. Over eight weeks, fueled by a newfound determination, she dedicated herself to breaking free from the cycle of poverty.

With our team's unwavering support, Fatima faced job interviews with courage, even though fear still lingered. Then came the turning point: two job offers. They brought both joy and the weight of newfound responsibility for herself and her children.

As months went by, Fatima's transformation unfolded. Each paycheck and milestone – from buying her first home to getting her driver's license – lifted her spirits, buoyed by the love of her family and community.

Fatima's journey is a testament to human resilience, reminding us that even in the darkest times, kindness and inner strength can shine through. Witnessing her success has left an indelible mark, underscoring the profound impact of compassion and support on someone's life.

(*Name changed for privacy)

Events at University Settlement

At University Settlement, diversity, equity, and inclusion are woven into the fabric of our identity. Every day, we honor and embrace diversity and inclusion in our activities. Our numerous annual festivals and celebrations offer opportunities for communities to gather and celebrate the traditions and customs of the diverse groups we serve.

82nd Annual Grange Festival

Our 82nd annual Grange Festival embodies our dedication to fostering an inclusive environment where diverse communities can unite. This free, public outdoor fair showcases tables from all our community partners and social service agencies, catering to various groups. With almost 6,000 visitors, over 22 partner agencies, and more than 100 volunteers and staff from University Settlement and sponsors in attendance, the festival truly thrived.

Highlighting the festival were captivating performances by local artists, a plethora of activities suitable for all ages, and complimentary snacks for all attendees. Despite its growth, the festival's core mission remains steadfast: to support children and families in our community. Thanks to sponsors like International Financial Data Services and Kiwanis Club of Casa Loma, the festival successfully fulfilled its goal of providing an inclusive platform for the community, transcending economic, racial, and social barriers.

We eagerly anticipate continuing to celebrate our diverse communities through this event for years to come.



We Care 2023

The annual We Care event has evolved into a beloved holiday tradition, holding significant importance for University Settlement and the communities we serve. Since its inception, nearly 2700 parents and children have been brought joy by Miller Knoll through their annual We Care holiday parties hosted at University Settlement.

The event helps children unleash their creativity while crafting holiday gifts for their families, teachers, and friends at various craft stations, staffed by volunteers from prominent design firms in Toronto. The event was brimming with pizza, treats, and special festivities that were enjoyed by both children and adults alike.

We Care serves as a wonderful testament to what can be achieved when everyone comes together. It would be challenging to find a holiday event that better exemplifies the spirit of giving. Our deepest gratitude goes to Miller Knoll and all the other design partners who have made this holiday season brighter for over 250 families this year.





Nowruz

We believe in the strength derived from embracing various traditions and uplifting one another. Recognizing our roots as a nation of immigrants, we hold dear the diverse customs and cultures that enrich our collective heritage. To honor this, we hosted a festive lunch for all staff at our North York Office and engaged children in our Day Care in planting seeds, symbolizing growth and the arrival of spring. As an organization, we value the richness of our multicultural heritage and strive to foster an inclusive environment where all traditions are celebrated.

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

As part of our organization's commitment to observing the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a presentation was organized in the foyer. This initiative aimed to provide context and raise awareness among our employees, visitors, and community members about the importance of this day and the history behind it. The presentation, circulated to all staff, played a crucial role in fostering understanding and reflection.

Additionally, the staff of our Music School took part in a virtual tour of a residential school hosted by the Woodland Cultural Centre. This experience provided firsthand insight into the realities faced by Indigenous peoples, contributing to a deeper understanding of the significance of reconciliation efforts. These initiatives underscore our ongoing commitment to acknowledging and honoring Indigenous histories and experiences.



Lunar New Year 2023

University Settlement's 2023 Lunar New Year Celebration was a vibrant blend of cultural traditions and community solidarity. Over 400 guests, including local leaders and dignitaries, graced the occasion. The event commenced with a heartfelt land acknowledgment, paying homage to Indigenous heritage, while welcoming speeches resonated with gratitude and optimism for the future.

A focal point of the celebration was the ceremonial cutting of the Golden Pig, symbolizing the dawn of prosperity. The day unfolded with performances, ranging from lively lion dances to captivating martial arts demonstrations, each reflecting the cultural tapestry and unity of the community. The closing performance of the God of Wealth bestowed blessings upon all present, infusing the gathering with a sense of abundance and goodwill.

The Lunar New Year Celebrations served as a testament to our commitment to fostering cultural harmony and inclusivity within Toronto's diverse landscape.



Celebrating Black Excellence: A Reflection on Black History Month

In February 2023, University Settlement embraced the rich diversity of Black history and culture with a series of engaging and meaningful activities to commemorate Black History Month. Throughout the month, our organization was adorned with vibrant posters showcasing prominent Black leaders of Canada, serving as both a tribute and an educational opportunity for all who passed through our facility.

Among the highlights of our Black History Month celebration was a captivating storytelling session led by Ugonma Ekeanyanwu, a masterful storyteller of African descent. Through her enchanting African folktales, Ugonma transported children from the community on an immersive journey, of resilience, courage, and triumph. Her storytelling not only entertained but also inspired young minds, fostering a deep connection to the African heritage and nurturing cultural understanding and empathy.

In addition to the storytelling session, University Settlement organized a special lunch for staff sourced from a local Black-owned business. As a gesture of solidarity and support for Black entrepreneurship and economic empowerment. It was a moment to celebrate the contributions of Black businesses to our community and to acknowledge the importance of economic equity and inclusion.

Through education, storytelling, and community support, University Settlement remains committed to fostering a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion, not just during Black History Month, but throughout the year.



Senior Active Living Fair 2023

On November 25, seniors gathered for the Senior Active Living Fair 2023, a day filled with activities aimed at promoting their wellness and connection. Thanks to funding from the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility and in collaboration with OACAO, the event offered a valuable opportunity for our senior community.

Attendees had access to informative sessions and presentations by University Settlement and other partner agencies, covering topics on health, fitness, and community resources. They explored exhibits showcasing programs and services tailored to their needs, sparking interest and engagement.

Between sessions, seniors enjoyed healthy snacks and participated in fun games, fostering friendships and laughter. The presence of political leaders added to the sense of importance and support for seniors in our community.

As the fair concluded, seniors left feeling empowered and connected, armed with knowledge and newfound connections. The Senior Active Living Fair 2023 was more than an event—it was a celebration of seniors' vitality and resilience, reaffirming our commitment to their well-being and inclusion.

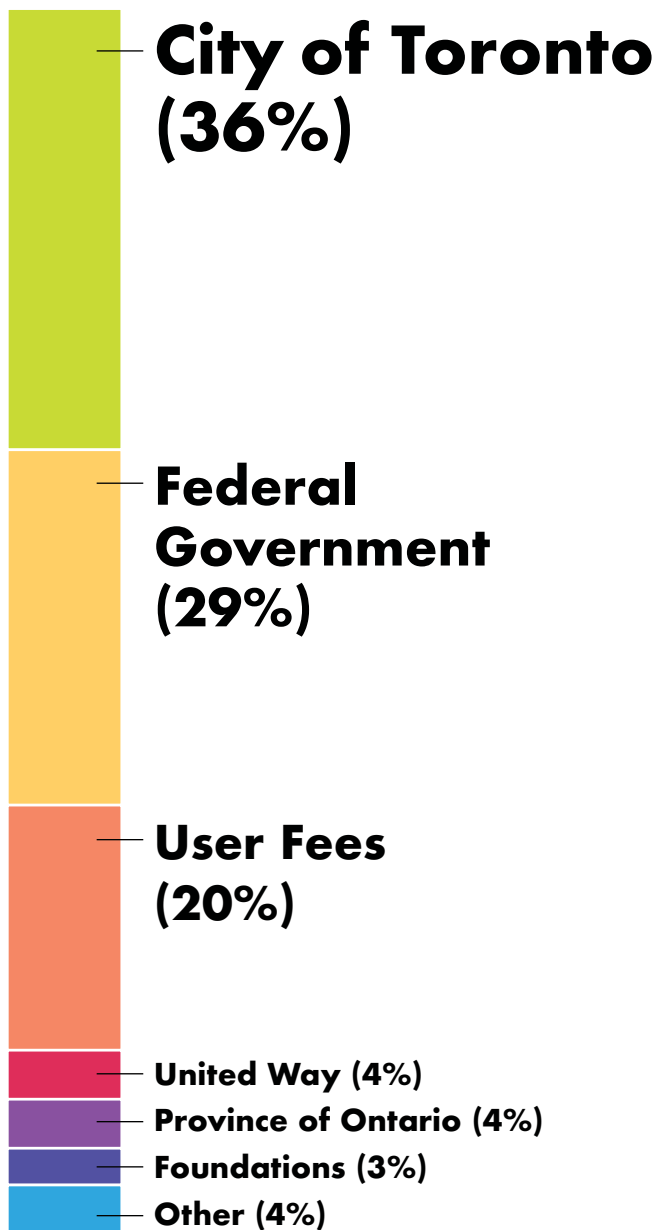


Statement of Revenue and Expenses

Year Ended December 31, 2023

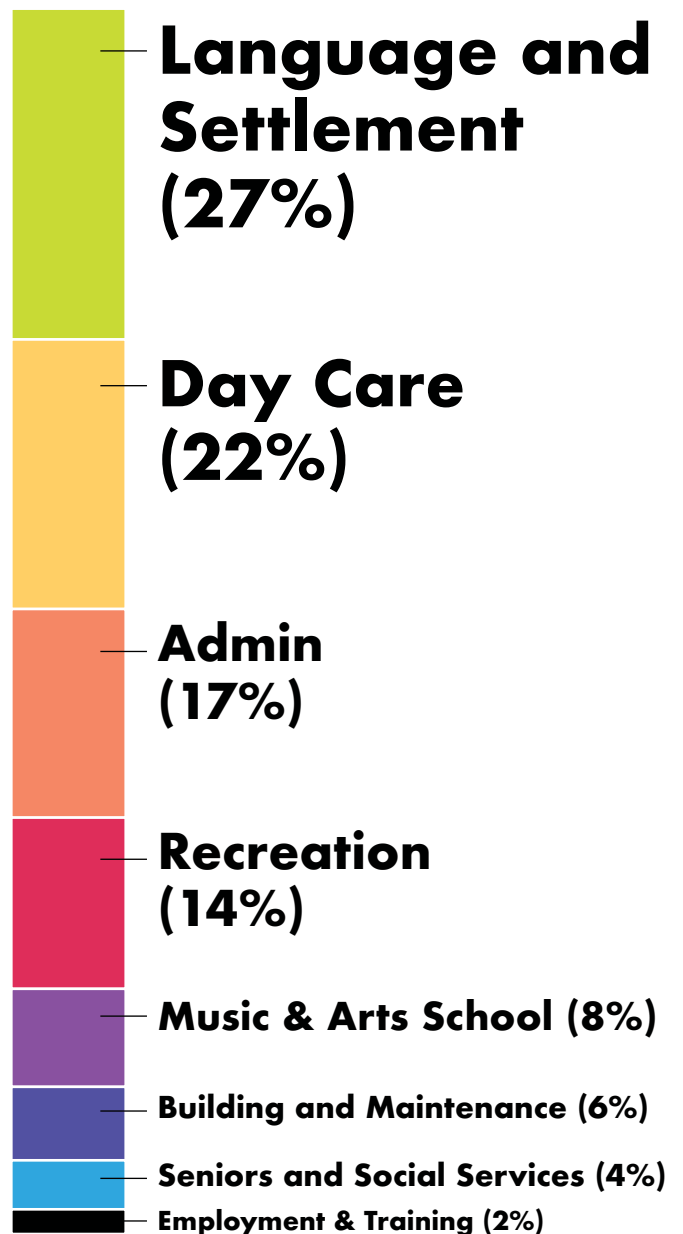
Sources of Funds (2023)

\$5,443,471



Uses of Funds (2023)

\$5,515,241



2023 PROGRAM Facts and Stats

48

cultural and special event days

celebrated with children at Day Care



18

different cultural backgrounds

make up the Day Care staff



19

Canadian immigrants

are part of the Day Care staff

60 youth

participated in swimming, lifesaving, and leadership programs each month



Over

3500 kids

attended the

Grange Festival



1127

sports and event tickets

given through our children's programs

Over

250 kids

participated in the

We Care Event



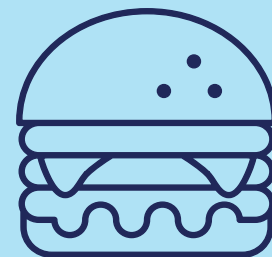
300+

school pick-ups

740+

lunches

provided to campers and their families

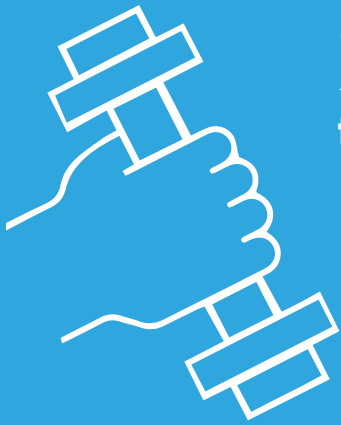


164

employment and training support

sessions provided to clients





265
fitness classes

368
badminton
sessions

2106
hours of
swim lessons



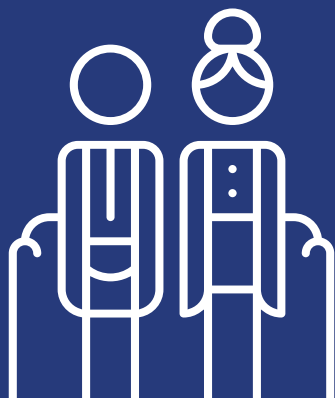
1342
lane swim, aquafit, and
leisure swim sessions



141 ribbons
given at our swim
competition

58 attendees
at our swim competition

10012
counselling
sessions and
workshops
provided to seniors



502 Music & Arts
School students
enrolled

8268 education/
training sessions
provided by the
Music & Arts School

112
students
received subsidy

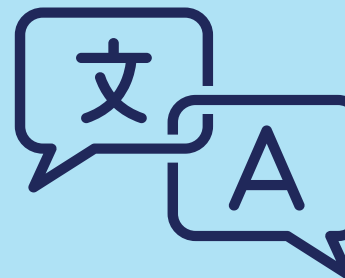
150+
students
attended world-class free
concert opportunities



5476
newcomers
served

151
students
enrolled in language
programs

264
workshops
conducted by language
and settlement services



Board of Directors 2023-2024

Executive

Mulaho Hassan

President

Hannah Riordan

Vice President

Johanna Lim

Treasurer

Andrew Lam

Secretary

Members

Danielle Rombough

Dariusz Szypula

John Amardeil

Joshua Grondin

Kasha Huk

Mark Van Ginkel

Myriam Gafarou

Wendy Yang

Mark Haan

Michelle Lin

Sagun Vaidya

Ex Officio

Maureen Gans

Past President of the Board

Raymond White

Executive Director

"In my nine years as a Board Director of University Settlement, I've witnessed University Settlement's remarkable evolution: embracing digital operations with minimal investment, enhancing member communication, navigating budget and COVID-19 challenges, introducing innovative programs, strengthening management and policy-making processes, and making inroads in our fundraising efforts.

It is an honour to serve this respected, century-plus community service organization with other Board Directors and dedicated staff. I am confident that University Settlement will continue to thrive and serve well, the evolving needs of the community."

- Andrew Lam, Departing Board Secretary

Funders & Donors

Funders & Donors

Foundations & Corporate Donors

Minstrel Foundation
Canadian Parks and Recreation Association
International Financial Data Services (IFDS)
The Star Charities
Kids Up Front Toronto
Miller Knoll
Glen Colborne Fund at the Toronto Foundation
Second Harvest
The Arthur and Audrey Cutten Foundation
Lynn Bevan Fund at the Toronto Foundation
Bits in Glass
Clovers Insurance Brokers

Government of Canada

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
Public Health Agency of Canada
Employment and Social Development Canada
Youth Employment and Skills Strategy

Province of Ontario

Ministry of Labour, Training & Skills Development
Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services
Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility

City of Toronto

Toronto Children's Services
Community Services Partnerships
Toronto Arts Council
Toronto Employment and Social Services
Corporate Real Estate Management

United Way

United Way of Greater Toronto

Community & Arts Organizations

Kiwanis Club of Casa Loma
Corporation of Massey Hall and Roy Thomson Hall
National Ballet of Canada
Sinfonia Toronto
Tapestry Opera
Associated Chamber Music Players ACMP

Individual Donors

Amar Mamone
Amir Abbas Yaghooti
Andrew Currie
Andrew Lam
Andrew Wolf
Angela Meharg
Behnaz Milani
Bernard Tarroza
Bruce Barber
Clara Bensimon & Simi
Danielle Rombough
Dariusz Syzpula
David Olds
Donald Boere
Dora Sarmiento

Dugald Cameron
Earl Mitchell
Gail Geltner
Gary Rogers
Haoyu Huang
Hong Chang
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Jeffery Callender
Jennifer Friedland
Johanna Hillary
John Baker
Joshua Grondin
Kasha Huk
Laraine Herzog
Larry Steinhauer

Lisa Jayne
Lizz Bryce
Long Pham
Maggie Lam
Mark Van Ginkel
Maureen Gans
Mei Lin Huang
Michelle Lin
Miguel Villarroel
Mulaho Hassan
Myriam Gafarou
Neil Davis
Orbakh Boris
Paul Greenwood
Raymond White

Sagun Vaidya
Shin Bok
Steven Luck
Susan Joyce
Susan Kingdom
Susan Sturman
Rosehaven Management Limited (In Honourable Memory of Zdy Orliński)
Ariel Balevi (in memory of his sister, Haya Vivette Itescu)

Volunteers

Thank you to our volunteers! University Settlement could not make the impact it does in the community without the help of our dedicated Volunteers. Thank you so much for everything you do.

Grange Festival 2023

Aaron Klymov

Abby Deccico

Advaita Chakraborty

Ahsan Taqveem

Alessandro Barros

Aletzia Fattori

Alicia Argudo

Alison Jones

Allen Calderon

Amberyn David

Amelia Diebel

Amie Khondo

Amy Marchitto

Ana Tome

Andrew Lam

Andy Baczynskyj

Angela Minarolli

Anjola Sokunbi

Anne Thomas

Ariana Fattori

Arlene Keizer

Aurel Tako

Bach An Hoang

Benedetta Parise

Bill Theofilopoulos

Blanka Klisz

Boots Maggro

Carol Zheng

Catherine Kwon

Chloe Tse

Chris Diebel

Claire Chen

Daliya Holender

Danny Baczynskyj

Darlene Tam

Dave Bachan

David Drew

De Ly

Diana Ly

Divine Othniel

Don Kibblewhite

Dorreen Loui

Emmanuel Ng

Eric Lin

Etsuko Ikeda

Evan Guan

Fiorenza Alvisi

Francesco Coccimiglio

Geralyn Pereira

Gerley Po

Gianna Fattori

Irene Pavlakidis

Jade D'Souza-Alexis

Jahmoya Smith

Jasmin Blackman

Jayden Eng

Jeffrey Mariano

Jehan Aguilar

Jessica Fattori

Joshua Grondin

Kaoyi Mai

Kathi Silke

Kathleen Brown

Kenny Yip

Kimberley Chau

Kris Xig

Layla Alli

Linh Hoang

Marcello Marchitto

Margaret Kang

Mark Han

Maureen Gans

Mei Yun Mai

Meiling Huang

Michelle Liang

Mike Ferguson

Miranda Louie

Mulaho Hassan

Muoi Muoi Lam

Natasha D'Souza

Nicole Shulgatyy

Nikki Pavlakidis

Omololu Sokunbi

Parker Richardson

Princess Gerez

Reggie De Lazzari

Reid Stafford

Riley Do

Rod Minden

Sagun Vaidya

Shannon Bogue

Simon Young

Simone Dsouza

Sirkka Liisa Palokoski

Stefano Marchitto

Stefany Francoeur

Susan Lee

Suzana Greenaway

Tam Minh Ho

Tamrat Abraha

Tido Do

Tony Zhao

Victoria Sosa Leal

Walter Jedrzejek

Xia Wia

Yu Long Li

Ziadie Diebel



Music & Arts School

Andrew Wolf
Ethan Duan
Lily Yan MacDonald
Patricio Llovet
Ying Qi



Afterschool, Recreation and Aquatics

Al Amin Rahman
Ambrielle Sotero
Asmerom Mhretab
Awin Eavour
Carol Zheng
Catarina Fagulha
Danica Pan
Deanna Boodram
Dimitrii Anufriev
Edgar Arriaga
Hannah Riodan
Iris Zhang
Jayden Eng

Jonathan Bliss
Khanh Du Dinh Quang
Khloe Santos
Kitana
Linda Rysan
Lorna Woodliffe
Lrenerose Mbwanbo
Mansi Syngle
Maya Mulahmetovic
Ngagen Chanh Nguyen
Pang Gia Anh Thu
Quin Sayo
Savannah

Veronica Garcia
Volunteers from Braemar college
Volunteers from TMU
Volunteers from UofT
Volunteers from York University

Language, Settlement, Seniors and Social Services

Baohong Ma
Bernice Au
Bojana Vojvodic
Calum Gillespie
Chuen Lin Wun
Derek McLean
Diana CHU
Farkhondeh Mousavi
Fuqin Mao
George Shui
Harry Fine
Jian Yang
Jinlong Li
John Middleton
Judy Yong

Keqin Bi
Lai-Yee Au
Le Lang Le
Lucinda Fang
Marhsa Khoury
Qiwen Tong
Sewon Lee
Shima Bagherian
Stanley
Them Banh
Tim Wah Cheung
Tony Chow
Wendy Mclean
Xinwei Huang
Yajuan Xu

Yaowen Liao
Yi Cao
Yuet Cheung
Zahra Zahmatkesh



University Settlement
FOUNDED 1910

23 Grange Rd.
416-598-3444

720 Spadina Ave. #218
416-408-4058

6075 Yonge St., 4th Fl.
416-218-8990

Charitable Number:
119279412RR0001

CREATE CHANGE TODAY

At University Settlement, we're driven by the belief that everyone deserves a chance to thrive, irrespective of their circumstances. For over a century, we've been steadfast in our mission to establish a community hub where individuals of all ages can find the assistance they require to lead enriching lives.

Your contribution doesn't just help individuals; it enriches the entire community. With your generosity, University Settlement can extend programs to people experiencing financial barriers, ensuring accessibility for all. Consider a monthly donation today to leave a lasting impact.

Join us in making a difference and learn more about the impact you can create at: WWW.UNIVERSITYSETTLEMENT.CA/DONATE



Thank You to Our Funders and Supporters



Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada