



ANNUAL REPORT

April 1, 2013 – March 31, 2014



United Way
Member Agency



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Mission Statement

Abrigo Centre is a multi-service, charitable organization that focuses on building community capacity in west Toronto by helping individuals and families achieve their full potential.

Vision

We want to see our collaborative efforts result in socially integrated and empowered individuals, families and communities.

List of Board Members

(April 1, 2013 – March 31, 2014)

José Medeiros, Chairperson
Natasha dos Santos, Vice Chairperson
Angela Xavier
Camila Andrade
Claire de Oliveira
Daniela Pacheco
Humberto Carolo
Kevin Perry
Lenore Cabral
Lisa Melo
Marinela Fonseca
Michael Borrelli
Oriana Melo
Sandra Gamboias

Strategic Priorities

1. Towards sustainable long-term growth, we will be...

- Collaborating with community partners
- Engaging and developing our volunteer resources
- Developing innovative funding alternatives
- Adjusting our space to meet future needs

2. Towards increasing community relevance, we will be...

- Creating/stimulating dialogue on emerging needs
- Clarifying, revisiting, and communicating our priorities
- Engaging stakeholders in necessary changes

Staff

Alessandra Marques
Ana Machado
Ana Marques
Anabelle Gonçalves
Anderson Salvador
Ashley de Souza
Bojana Petrovic
Cidalia Pereira
Diana da Costa Correia
Diana Sousa
Ed Graça

Hugo Mestre
Liliana da Cunha
Maggie Batista
Maria José Levy
Marilia Dos Santos
Marisa Gomes
Mario Lourenço
Raji Choudhury
Rosane Fernandes
Teresa Emmanuel
Valeria Sales



Abrigo Centre acknowledges the generous support received from our funding partners, corporate contributors and individual donors

Our Funding Partners

- City of Toronto – Community Service Partnerships
- City of Toronto – Employment & Social Services
- Canadian Women's Foundation
- Direcção Regional das Comunidades, Açores
- Ministry of Children and Youth Services
- Ministry of Community and Social Services
- Ministry of the Attorney General
- The Ontario Trillium Foundation
- Service Canada
- United Way Toronto

Corporate

AGF Management Limited, Ambient Designs Limited, CHUM Charitable Foundation, Franklin Templeton Investments Corporation, GCIC Limited, Invesco Canada Limited, Jack's Bakery: Pastry & Catering Incorporated, Joe's No Frills, Mackenzie Financial Corporation, Redwood, Royal Bank of Canada and Shoppers Drug Mart/Pharmaprix LIFE Foundation.

Donors

Agnelo Melo, Albertino Cardedeiro, Alberto de Melo, Alfredo da Silva, Antonio Bettencourt, Armando de Almeida, Arménio Rodrigues, Benedito José, Cacilda Rodrigues, Domingos Santos, Dr. Tomas Ferreira, Elmira Ramalho, Emanuel Almeida, Felisbela de Sousa, Felismina Pires, Fernando Batista, Fernando Borges, Fernando Coelho, Fernando Martins, Francisco Carvalho, Francisco Leite, Heldra Soares, Helena Pereira, Irene Tavares, João Franco, João Quaresma, João Trota, Joaquim Santo, Joe Mendolia, Jorge Alves, Jose Carlos Ganhão, José do Vale, Jose Lino, José Medeiros, Jose Moura, José Soares, Liliana Aguiar, Manuel Cabral, Manuel Frias, Manuel Lino, Manuel Marques, Manuel Mendes, Maria Andre, Maria Arruda, Maria Azevedo, Maria Claudina Vicente, Maria Cunha, Maria de Fatima Novais, Maria Diniz, Maria Diniz, Maria Frias, Maria Goncalves, Maria Hipólito, Maria Irene Lopes, Maria Larangeira, Maria Marques, Maria Moura, Maria Natalia Enes, Maria Sousa, Mario Craveiro, Mauro Rosa, Niveria Pereira, Noemia Couto, Paula de Jesus, Paula Medeiros, Rita de Cassia Salvador, Rógerio Costa, Salvador Outeiro, Sonia Volkening, Urânia Silva and Valéria Sales.



A big thank you to our volunteers for all their contributions

Almerinda Amaral
Amanda Cunha Queiroga
Ana Cristina Dias
Ana Paula Pinheiro
Ana Paula Rodrigues
Ana Paula Salles Carmo
Anna Naccarato
Anthony Harker
Antonio Melo
Aurelia das Neves Cacoilo
Bianca Araujo
Brenda Iaccino
Carlos Melo
Carmelia Carvalho

Carmina Pereira
Catarina Ferreira
Clara Nazareth
Deise Yuriko Yamashiba
Dina Guarda
Donzilia Veiga
Elisabete Dias
Emilia Camara
Fatima Louro
Giselle Simas
Gorett Marques
Grace Levy
Gumersinda Ribeiro
Hélia Severiano Santos

Ínes Tourita
Janaliz Gatti
Joana Felicissimo
João Quaresma
José Manuel Costa
Kyla Medeiros
Larissa Rocha
Liliana da Costa
Linda Ponte
Margarida Pedro
Maria Conceição Veloza
Maria Medeiros
Maria Silva
Maria Teresa Moura

Maria Zelia Tavares
Marilia Nogueira
Marilyn Camargo
Marisa Gomes
Marlucy Silva
Marta Santos
Mauro Rosa
Messias Medeiros
Monica Ribeiro
Odete Melo
Paula da Costa
Princia Porto
Priscilla Brandao
Rosaria Pacheco

Rui Oliveira
Sergio Sarmiento
Shana Lines
Sharon Weisbaum
Silvana Campos
Thiago Fernandes
Vanice Santos Silva
Venilde Ferreira
Veronica Estalagem
Yasmin Assis



Statement of Revenues and Expenses for the year ended March 31, 2014

| Revenue | 2014 | 2013 |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Ministry of Community and Social Services | \$ 402,618 | \$ 402,618 |
| United Way Toronto | \$267,083 | \$261,783 |
| Ministry of the Attorney General | \$174,052 | \$159,547 |
| City of Toronto - Community Service Partnerships | \$98,750 | \$94,950 |
| City of Toronto - Employment and Social Services | \$ 13,136 | \$27,958 |
| Service Canada | \$19,853 | \$73,352 |
| Ontario Trillium Foundation | \$50,900 | \$49,200 |
| Ministry of Children and Youth Services | \$37,332 | \$37,332 |
| Canadian Women's Foundation | \$30,000 | \$21,650 |
| United Way "Success by Six" program | \$14,582 | \$19,443 |
| Regiao Autonoma Dos Acores | \$10,430 | \$11,633 |
| Interpretation reimbursement | \$12,570 | \$7,315 |
| Fees | \$36,123 | \$45,784 |
| Donations and fundraising | \$36,285 | \$38,053 |
| Other | \$14,206 | \$19,134 |
| | \$1,217,920 | \$1,269,752 |
| Expenses | 2014 | 2013 |
| Salaries, benefits and training | \$883,300 | \$958,274 |
| Occupancy costs | \$175,071 | \$175,959 |
| Program costs | \$76,336 | \$ 83,223 |
| Professional fees and insurance | \$35,761 | \$29,010 |
| Communication and technology | \$13,300 | \$20,279 |
| Interpretation costs | \$12,570 | \$7,315 |
| | \$1,196,338 | \$1,274,060 |
| Excess of revenue over expenses | \$21,582 | \$(4,308) |

(Excerpted from Abrigo Centre's audited financial statements which were prepared by Dixon, Gordon & Co. LLP, Chartered Accountants with an Auditors' Report dated June 19, 2014. Full audited financial statements available upon request)



Message from Chairperson and Executive Director

We are very pleased to share Abrigo Centre's 2013/14 Annual Report with you. We appreciate you taking a few moments to review this material highlighting our services, funding partners, donors, volunteers, staff and financials. We invite you to visit our website www.abrigo.ca for more information and opportunities to get involved with our charity. If you have not already done so, check us out on Facebook (www.facebook.com/abrigocentre) and follow us on Twitter (www.twitter.com/abrigocentre) and Instagram (www.instagram.com/abrigocentre). To view a short video with this year's highlights go to <http://youtu.be/XOb0ooGwZJA>.

This past year, the Board of Directors worked on several key areas. Most significantly, we worked on the development of a revised strategic plan that will help guide us through the next 3 years. The process was facilitated by an outside consultant who very capably guided us through a five-month process culminating in June of 2014. A community needs assessment was undertaken that included conducting focus groups with clients and local community members as well as in-depth interviews with key informants. An operations review was conducted as well as an examination of environmental trends. Finally, the board and staff participated in the review of Abrigo Centre's strengths and weakness as well as the exploration of potential opportunities and external threats that may lie ahead. A new operations plan is expected in the fall of 2014. Other highlights include the recruitment and orientation of several new Board members who have collectively infused a great deal of energy into the organization; a Board commitment to helping in the development of a new Abrigo Centre brand and; an increased contribution to fundraising activities in support of our charitable services.

We are very proud of the dedicated team of staff and volunteers

who are committed to providing exceptional service while ensuring our user-friendly approach. Collectively, we helped improve the lives of over 5,700 individuals and their families in the process. We connect people to possibilities by: supporting abused women in their efforts to live free of violence and abuse; providing timely, accurate information and access to essential services such as food, shelter, disability pensions, housing and employment insurance benefits; working with men and women who want to improve their parenting skills; providing older adults with the supports to help them break social isolation; providing youth with hope and alternative strategies to combat gender-based violence and; a specialized group education/counselling program for domestic violence offenders. Please refer to annual report for details.

Our sincere appreciation goes out to the Board of Directors and to the extraordinary volunteers who have supported Abrigo Centre's work during the past year. To our staff team, thank you for the empathy, dedication and enthusiasm that you exhibit each and every day. To all of our funding partners and to the many individuals who have contributed financially to our cause, we thank you for your generosity and for your continued vote of confidence moving forward. Finally, we want to highlight that 2015 marks a significant milestone for this organization...serving the community for 25 years! We are very pleased with Abrigo Centre's history of successfully adapting our service models and programs over the years. Abrigo Centre...continuously evolving...exploring options...inspiring solutions.

José Medeiros
Chairperson

Ed Graça
Executive Director

Violence Against Women Program

Since our doors first opened in 1990, Abrigo's priority has been Counselling and Support Services for women and children experiencing domestic abuse. We offer crisis services for women and children seeking safety from an abusive situation. Many of the women who seek our services do not initially present themselves as victims of domestic violence. They typically come with questions regarding housing, finances and parenting, for example. Our experienced staff is keenly adept at recognizing when a woman is living with domestic abuse, often coping by minimizing its impact. Our counsellors work diligently to address the client's immediate presenting needs, while offering her the opportunity to benefit from individual counselling. Initial emphasis is on safety planning and supporting women in their capacity to make informed decisions about their future. Supportive counselling often focuses on the client's emotional needs and the institutional challenges faced by women and children who experience family violence. Information and access to essential services such as food, shelter, medical services, and the judicial system are provided. Our Violence Against Women counselling services are offered on an individual and group basis, in both Portuguese and English. **820 abused women gained a better understanding of the dynamics of abuse and were supported in their efforts to make informed decisions.**



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Success by Six Parenting Groups

For over 16 years, we have been able to offer a parenting group for mothers, Success by Six, an early childhood development initiative dedicated to providing children with a good start in life. It helps to ensure that children ages 0 to 6 develop the emotional, social, cognitive, and physical skills they need as they enter school. At Abrigo Centre, we offer these specialized services to Portuguese-speaking mothers or female caregivers of children aged 0-6 years. These 10-session groups focus on how to provide healthy home environments for children during their most vulnerable and impressionable years. **71 women, caring for 105 children, reported having improved parenting skills and a new network of support that they developed as a result of meeting other participants in their groups.**

focus

P.A.I. – Parenting Groups

Since 2007, parenting groups have been offered to fathers of Portuguese-speaking background, in collaboration with Catholic Children’s Aid Society. This eight-week program engages men in considering how they can become more positively involved with their children and invites fathers to discuss their parenting challenges with other fathers. This unique service is offered to men who have had previous involvement with child protection services and are seeking to improve upon their relationships with their children. Topics include building and maintaining healthy relationships with children; healthy families; positive discipline; stress management; impact of violence on children; and the impact of stereotyping. **30 men completed the 8-week PAI group program and reported learning new skills that will help them as parents and role models.**



Community Development and Integration Program (CDIP)

Abrigo Centre, from 2000 onward, has been able to offer a number of different services that fall under the CDIP category, each of which is briefly described below. All of our CDIP services typically serve as an entry point for clients new to the organization. Our program evaluation results indicate that clients appreciate our open intake system which allows them to ask our counsellors just about any question that they feel is important to them. This welcoming and easily accessible process has become the cornerstone of Abrigo Centre's successful service model. People do not need appointments to see someone at Abrigo for the first time. Our doors are open every weekday afternoon for drop-in clients. Counsellors provide general community integration services to individuals who are typically lacking informal family and social supports. **CDIP (alone) connected 3,214 people to possibilities, many of whom participated in more than one of our CDIP's services as listed below.**

• Assessment, Information and Referral

We help connect individuals to essential services such as disability pensions, housing and employment insurance benefits and others. Staff and volunteers work within a community development framework to ensure that clients become better equipped to help themselves and move towards improved self-reliance. **3,214 individuals were assessed for their presenting issue(s) and connected to the service(s) that best met their individual needs and circumstances.**



• Seniors Assisting Seniors

Each year, this program provides seniors with form-filling services in order to secure access to Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security, Ontario Drug Benefits, Canadian citizenship and Canadian passports. Along the way, our counsellors answer questions regarding seniors' rights and obligations. All of this is accomplished with an extraordinary team of senior volunteers who provide this much needed direct assistance to their peers, one day per week (all year long). **984 C.P.P. and O.A.S. applications were prepared and submitted.**

• Seniors Social & Recreation Services

This community development program has taken off since its modest inception in 2010. It was initiated by a small group of seniors who subsequently recruited other seniors to join. Their idea of reaching out to other seniors living in isolation has been hugely successful. The group, calling themselves "Life and Hope Group" (Grupo Vida e Esperança), organizes and participates in activities intended to break social isolation such as communal dining, socializing, friendly visiting, field trips, information sessions, exercise and dance. They continue to receive requests to perform their play on elder abuse and they look to branch out and engage their peers in other areas of interest such as art and computer classes and English conversation circles. **There are over 120 registered members, with an average of 80 seniors participating in social and recreational activities every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.**



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- **Free Annual Income Tax Clinic**

Our free volunteer income tax clinic completes personal tax returns for low income families and individuals in our local community. This long-standing partnership with Canada Revenue Agency has become an integral component of our work over the years. **Over 1,100 tax returns were prepared and filed by our staff team.**

- **Employ-Link**

This pre-employment service focuses on helping unemployed individuals, who are currently receiving Ontario Works benefits, prepare for re-entry into the workforce. Abrigo Centre has been able to deliver this service for the last 4 years. Each group runs for 3 weeks offering workshops that cover topics such as: self analysis; self esteem; writing effective resumes and cover letters; understanding the labour market; networking; marketing transferable skills; mock interviews and researching job leads. **17 participants benefited from having a return to work action plan and improved skills to begin the process of re-entering the job market.**

focus

Youth Outreach Program

Since 1993, Abrigo Centre has been able to offer this program to address the need to break the cycle of violence and abuse through early intervention. There are three components to this initiative. Firstly, Abrigo Centre staff and volunteers deliver a series of in-class workshops targeting youth between the ages of 11-13 in local elementary schools. These interactive workshops provide information on topics such as healthy relationships, bullying, and self-esteem. Secondly, staff and volunteers provide seminars in local high schools targeting youth in grades 9-12. These seminars focus on issues related to violence and abuse, healthy relationships, bullying, sexism, sexual harassment and assault, drug abuse and coping with stress. Much of the work deals with providing accurate information and dispelling myths through discussions, games and activities. Lastly, supportive counselling is provided to inner-city youth experiencing personal difficulties or crisis. This includes short-term crisis counselling, safety planning, helping clients explore their options and develop a plan for their personal goals. **1,234 youth were given the opportunity to learn about various healthy relationships across the lifespan.**

The **Teens Against Gender-based Violence (TAG-V)** project, funded by Canadian Women's Foundation, targets the issue of gender based violence. This past year, we worked with four committed high school communities and provided training to 90 youth leaders in total. Training focused on preventing violence against women through a gender based analysis of violence and abuse; focusing on building healthy and equitable relationships between young women, men and significant others. These youth leaders, in turn, also worked as ambassadors in bringing their message to their peers and local elementary schools with the objective of building awareness of woman abuse, dating violence, peer violence, family violence and the development of healthy relationships. This work culminated in a Leadership Conference (Youth2Youth) and brought together the students to share their experience with the project and showcase some of the great work created by them. Two videos showcasing the amazing talents of our youth are available on YouTube (*Part I* - <http://youtu.be/TcF7y6mpu0g>; *Part II* - <http://youtu.be/N8HgyVvwt4>). **90 youth leaders engaged in the project through their entire school term with their efforts impacting upon 905 of their peers.**





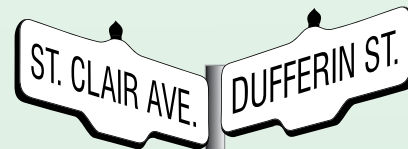
Partner Assault Response Program

The Partner Assault Response (PAR) program is a Domestic Violence Court initiative. Beginning in 1997, Abrigo Centre has been able to deliver a specialized community-based group education/counselling program to offenders who have been mandated by the court to attend the PAR program in response to a criminal charge involving domestic violence. Funded by the Ministry of the Attorney General, the program is a court-ordered sanction that provides offenders with an opportunity to examine their beliefs and attitudes towards domestic abuse, and to learn non-abusive ways of resolving conflict. The program aims to enhance victim safety and hold offenders accountable for their behaviour. Three English-speaking groups run concurrently, along with one Portuguese-speaking group. Interpreters are available to assist those who do not speak English or Portuguese. We also provide individual counselling sessions to Portuguese-speaking women or women of Portuguese descent who have been ordered by the justice system to attend the PAR program for domestic-related offences. In keeping with our Violence Against Women Program, the female partners of the participants are regularly contacted to offer safety planning, support and referrals to community resources, and information about the offender's progress throughout the duration of the program. **184 clients benefited from the program, and were provided with an opportunity to take responsibility for their abusive behaviour and make positive sustainable changes in their lives.**



Drop-in Hours for New Clients

Weekdays 1 - 3 pm
No Appointment Necessary



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