**Introduction**

This is our tenth season of operation and we have seen changes. Our President, Kathy Mochnacki stepped down and Maggie Veltheer has stepped in. As President, Kathy worked tirelessly, consistently engaging the community and all levels of government about the plight of families who are left to support their ill relative in an environment where services are inadequate. She developed the Robert Veltheer Lecture Series on Mental Illness, attracting well respected speakers who gave informative lectures to improve mental illness literacy and increase understanding.

During her tenure, Home on the Hill was able to secure stable housing for clients in the community with a severe mental illness, giving them the opportunity to live their life with dignity and purpose. Given the impact that Home on the Hill has had serving families of those with serious mental illness and the broader community, in December 2021 Kathy was awarded the Outstanding Canadian Award and Letter of Recognition for her outstanding work on behalf of our community.

**Strategic Plan.**

During the year 2022, Home on the Hill focused energy on advocating for the inclusion of families in the care of their family member, providing information and support to families, and providing educational opportunities for them and the general public through our signature program, the Robert Veltheer Lecture Series on Mental Illness.

Families feel most supported when their family member is meaningfully engaged. The programs which Home on the Hill has developed provide meaningful engagement and fit our newly developed guidelines because they are geared to serve the unique needs and strengths of each client. Each client has different interests, and we endeavour to support these interests. Home on the Hill has fostered a caring community which provides opportunities for growing, learning, and sharing.

In the coming years, we plan to build on that by creating a Hub for all our programming to take place under one roof. This will create an identifiable location to send people for services. Furthermore, we are formalizing our policies, plans and procedures to maintain consistency, review, and excellence in our programming.

**Current Home on the Hill Programs**

1.**Supportive Housing Program**. Home on the Hill continues to support one resident in an apartment at the Richmond Hill Community Hub and four other residents in “The Manse” house. A recreation therapist comes bi-weekly, and the clients who reside there have begun to feel a camaraderie with each other. They share community meals and are beginning to do activities on their own with each other. One resident has secured a part time job and has received accolades from his employers for his work efforts.

2.**The Recreation Group “Connections**” This program has been active throughout the pandemic. There are 20 clients who meet periodically virtually or in person. They have begun to feel a sense of community as they get to know each other. Socializing is a key element to staying mentally healthy. We would like to grow this program.

3. **Art Expression**. This program is run by a volunteer who is a popular artist from the Richmond Hill Group of Artists. This is not an art therapy program. It offers an opportunity for people to relax and enjoy expressing themselves through painting or art activities. It takes place at 209 Harding Blvd West in Richmond Hill. Caregivers of people effected by mental illness are welcome. This group recently enjoyed an outing to the McMichael Gallery and the Alton Gallery..

4**. Family Support Group** . This group takes place on alternate Wednesdays in person or virtually. It is run by Joni Richardson who is a wonderful moderator. It offers a place where participants can express their concerns in a safe, confidential environment. The virtual meeting often has very good guest speakers on various topics related to serious mental illness. Joni also offers helpful advice on navigating the healthcare system.

5**. Family Respite Program**. This program is increasingly popular. Caregivers value getting together for recreational outings with others who are experiencing the same struggles. They like getting together and forgetting their concerns for a little while. Caregivers met at Milestones and Oakview Terrace for the Ten Year Anniversary this year. They have met weekly with volunteers to do craft activities such as jewellery making, wreathes, garden ornaments, cement flowerpots and many more interesting activities.

**Social Media**

Home on the Hill has a wide audience who follow our Facebook for pertinent articles on serious mental illness, access to services, and other issues of real concern to families of those affected by serious mental illness. The Home on the Hill website also contains relevant information on past speakers’ lectures.

**Funding**

Home on the Hill thanks the families and other members of the public who have sent cheques by mail or contributed by donations at our public events. Each of these contributions is received with much gratitude.

Home on the Hill continues to receive funding from Bingo World Richmond Hill. This funding enables us to hire staff for our programs.

Our organization has also been the successful applicant of funding from the Federal Government from the Canada Summer Jobs and Heritage Canada for Seniors for which we are most grateful.

Home on the Hill is the grateful recipient of funding from some Foundations including the Magna Foundation and United Way.

**Summary**

Home on the Hill continues to demonstrate a commitment to our mission and resilience in the face of challenges such as COVID. We look forward to a bright future.