

A United Way Supported Agency



Newsletter

APRIL 2025

- April 2 – World Autism Awareness Day (UN)
- April 4 – Qingming Festival (Confucian)
- April 7 – World Health Day (UN)
- April 9 – International Day of Pink
- April 10 – Mahavir Jayanti (Jain)
- April 12 – Pesach (Passover – to April 20) (Judaism)
- April 13 – Palm Sunday (Christian)
- April 14 – Baisakhi (New Year) (Sikh)
- April 18 – Good Friday (Christian)
- April 20 – Easter (Christian)
- April 21 – Easter Monday
- April 28 – National Day of Mourning (Gov't of Canada); World Day for Safety and Health at Work

APRIL 2025

Lives permanently changed for the better



#AccelerateAction IWD 2025

International Women's Day (IWD) 2025 was celebrated March 8 with the theme 'Accelerate Action.' We at HSH joined others on this day and every day in stepping forward in solidarity to help remove barriers to gender equality for women everywhere.



JOIN OUR BOARD

Home Suite Hope is seeking new Board Members and Committee Advisors. Please see inside for details.

[Apply here](#)

PARTICIPANT UPDATES: CELEBRATING SUCCESS

Congratulations Tayler!

Join us in congratulating **Tayler** on securing a part-time remote editorial internship with a prestigious U.S. publishing company, a role that aligns perfectly with her career aspirations. She is thrilled about landing this internship, but is always looking to make more connections, learn new things, and build her skill set. The Home Suite Hope team is proud of you, Tayler! Keep chasing those dreams and crushing your goals!



Seeking apprenticeship



Join us in celebrating **Danai's** graduation from hair styling school in December 2024! Danai is currently working towards accumulating 2000 hours to obtain her license and is actively searching for an apprenticeship or full-time position to fulfill her required hours. Ideally, she is looking for opportunities in a salon located in Milton. If you or someone you know is interested in supporting Danai on her path to certification, please reach out to us!

Employment secured!

HSH participant **Shanice** graduated from the Personal Support Worker (PSW) program in December 2024 and is already making her mark in Halton, securing a rewarding job at a good salary. Way to go, Shanice!



BOARD NEWS

ROBYN PANGMAN JOINS FINANCE COMMITTEE

Home Suite Hope welcomes **Robyn Pangman** to its Board Finance Committee. Robyn, born and raised in Oakville, joined Henderson Partners LLP in 2008 and has been a partner there since 2014.

A graduate of Dalhousie University in 2001, Robyn travelled extensively, and then joined PricewaterhouseCoopers in Edinburgh, Scotland where she obtained her CA designation in 2007. Robyn subsequently obtained the Canadian CA designation on her return to Canada in 2008.

Robyn's specialty is in tax and business advisory services. As a Partner at Henderson Partners, she works closely with professionals, entrepreneurial private companies, their owners and their families. Robyn is actively involved in the community and has held previous board positions on three local community organizations. Outside of work, Robyn enjoys being active and spending time with her family. Home Suite Hope is grateful that Robyn will share her expertise and time with us.



HONOURING A PAST DIRECTOR: PETER KOLISNYK

Home Suite Hope recently nominated **Peter Kolisnyk** for the **Realtors Who Care Award** because of his extraordinary dedication to supporting Oakville's most vulnerable families.

For over 15 years, Peter has selflessly contributed his time, expertise, and resources to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty. His leadership has been instrumental in securing affordable housing, facilitating wellness programs, and spearheading impactful fundraising initiatives that have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars.

As a former interim CEO and long-serving Board member of Home Suite Hope, Peter helped transform the organization from financial instability into a thriving, living-wage employer. His unwavering commitment and compassion have made a lasting impact on our community, making him truly deserving of this honour.

REALTORS Care®

Canadian
REALTORS Care®
Award 2025
Nominee

Peter Kolisnyk
Engel & Völkers Oakville
Oakville, Ont.

10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

BOARD NEWS



CALL FOR BOARD MEMBERS & COMMITTEE ADVISORS

Home Suite Hope is a not-for-profit organization in the Halton Region focused on uniting a network of vital support services for **single parent families** on their journey from **poverty to stability**.

We are currently accepting applications for Board members and advisors for our committees. Your time and effort can create a significant impact!

SEEKING INDIVIDUALS WITH EXPERTISE IN:

- Fundraising & Events
- Government Relations
- Networking
- Additional areas: Finance, Accounting, Real Estate Development, Social Services, Strategic Planning

COMMITMENT & RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2-3 year term for Board members
- Bimonthly Board meetings (no meetings in July and August)
- Opposite bimonthly committee meetings
- Term begins June 2025 with duties beginning September 2025
- Join standing committees: Governance, Fundraising, Finance, or subcommittees (HR, Housing)

HOW TO APPLY

- Visit www.homesuitehope.org/board-of-directors
- Click 'View Application'
- Send completed application along with Resume and C.V. to AngelaB@HomeSuiteHope.org
- Interviews will be conducted in May 2025, with successful applicants being appointed in June 2025

Deadline to Apply:
April 13th, 2025

Contact Us

- 905.339.2370
- Info@HomeSuiteHope.org
- HomeSuiteHope.org

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- [@HomeSuiteHope](https://www.instagram.com/HomeSuiteHope)
- [Home Suite Hope Shared Living Corp.](https://www.linkedin.com/company/HomeSuiteHopeSharedLivingCorp)

[Apply by April 13](#)

HSH'S JOURNEY:

BLOG SERIES: A NEW ERA OF IMPACT AND ADAPTATION

Home Suite Hope's Executive Director Sara Cumming's blog series, *A New Era of Impact & Adaptation*, published throughout March, takes its readers through the journey of HSH in the past few years, highlighting the successes, challenges, and strategic pivots that have been essential in our ongoing efforts to support single-parent families.

A NEW ERA OF IMPACT & ADAPTATION

THE HOME SUITE HOPE JOURNEY



For over 20 years, HSH has been at the forefront of helping women and children break the cycle of homelessness and poverty. From its humble beginnings to its current, well-established programs, HSH has continuously adapted to meet the needs of our community. One of our most talked-about programs, Homeward Bound Halton, has had a profound impact, providing marginalized women and children with the tools they need to rebuild their lives. But as with many not-for-profit organizations, we have faced significant challenges along the way — from funding fluctuations to shifts in housing affordability and labour market demands.

Sara's blog series speaks to the evolution of Homeward Bound, the community support that has been instrumental in our growth, and the hurdles we've had to overcome — especially in the face of an increasingly difficult housing market. As we look to the future, we are excited to share our vision for 2025 and beyond — through our Strategic Plan, we are committed to adapting our programs, expanding housing options, and continuing to empower families to achieve lasting self-sufficiency.

We invite you to follow along as we navigate these changes, focusing on our core mission while responding to the evolving needs of the families we serve. If you missed it, this new blog series by Sara can be found on our website at HomeSuiteHope.org or click the links below

[**HSH's Journey: Introduction to Home Suite Hope's Journey and the Homeward Bound Halton Program**](#)

[**The Evolution of HSH and the Impact of Community Support**](#)

[**Strategic Shifts: Preparing for the Future with the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan**](#)

[**Looking Ahead: Continued Commitment to Helping Single Parents Achieve Self-Sufficiency**](#)

HSH CELEBRATES IWD 2025

SARA GUEST SPEAKER AT SAGEN

Home Suite Hope's Executive Director Sara Cumming, had the pleasure of speaking at Sagen Canada's International Women's Day (IWD) event.

Sara's inspiring words highlighted the importance of empowering women and building stronger communities. IWD 2025 was all about #AccelerateAction



Collectively, we can Accelerate Action for gender equality.

Focusing on the need to Accelerate Action emphasizes the importance of taking swift and decisive steps to achieve gender equality.



SARA IS HSH UWHH IMPACT SPEAKER

Home Suite Hope's Executive Director Sara Cumming, was the Impact Speaker at the United Way Halton & Hamilton March Board meeting at McMaster's Ron Joyce Centre, DeGroote School of Business in Burlington March 26.



HSH became a United Way-supported agency in 2024 with the receipt of a three-year Feed Grant for HSH's Homeward Bound Halton program.

WOMEN'S FAIR

IWD EVENT AT MILTON'S SHERWOOD LIBRARY

Home Suite Hope Program Coordinator Jovelle Reid and Caseworker Haley Weber were at the Milton Public Library's Sherwood Branch Women's Fair Friday, March 21.

The event, a nod to International Women's Day, included a vendors market, art hive, open mic and an evening of conversation with author and Olympian Perdita Felicien.

It was a valuable opportunity for HSH to join other community organizations in getting the word out about what we do for women in our community.



HSH ATTENDS OAKVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SPEAKER'S SERIES EVENT IN GLEN ABBEY



HSH's Board Chair Emma Jarratt and Director of Operations Catherine Villasenor attended the Oakville Chamber of Commerce's Insight Speaker Series breakfast presentation March 27 at the Glen Abbey Golf Club featuring with Michael Grochmal, Director of Culture, CEO Global Network.



The former President of AtlasCare – Winner of the 2019 RBC Large Business of the Year award in Oakville – Michael shared the game-changing philosophy that helped scale his company to new heights: making everything easy in his powerful presentation: *The Power of Easy: How Simplicity Fuels Business Growth*.

SALUTING SOCIAL WORKERS

SOCIAL WORKERS' MONTH IN CANADA

Hats off to social workers! March was a time to thank a social worker you know – and it’s a sentiment that would be more than welcome year round.

March was **National Social Work Month** in Canada, a time to recognize and celebrate the work of social workers. Ontario recognized Social Work Week March 6-12, and across Canada, World Social Work Day is celebrated on the third Tuesday of March.

This was a global event where social workers worldwide come together to promote the profession and its impact. The theme this year was ‘Strengthening Intergenerational Solidarity for Enduring Wellbeing.’

HSH reflects on the many positive contributions of the social work profession and salutes the social workers on its staff and the many others at work helping the most vulnerable in our communities.

As the largest group of mental health professionals in the province, social workers are here to help Ontarians on their journey to better health, mental health and wellbeing. Social workers in Ontario are celebrated with the theme - Wherever you are, so are we – which speaks to the availability and versatility of the social work profession, highlighting its critical role in addressing a growing and universal problem: access to care. In schools, community centres, doctor’s offices, hospitals, long-term care homes, libraries and more, social workers support you and your loved ones through all of life’s challenges and complications. They are here for you in small towns, big cities and everywhere in between, ready and able to provide specialized expertise to help navigate whatever barriers you may be facing.

HSH joins in celebrating the power of this profession, and the many ways Ontario’s 25,000+ social workers are here for you, where and when you need them. Thank you!



Catherine Villasenor
Registered Social
Worker



Haley Weber
Registered Social
Worker



Temisha Jacques
Registered Social
Service Worker



Jovelle Reid
Registered Social
Service Worker

STAFF NEWS

WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY

March 21 is recognized worldwide as **World Down Syndrome Day**, a day to raise awareness and celebrate the uniqueness of Individuals with Down Syndrome.

Catherine Villasenor, HSH's Director of Operations, along with her husband, family, friends, and HSH, celebrated her son, Caidan who was born with Down Syndrome and is quickly approaching the 'three-nager age, sharing his smile and tenacity for life.

Catherine has openly shared her experiences of raising a child with Down Syndrome, often crediting her community made up of those in her personal circle, work, medical practitioners and therapists, daycare educators, and Down Syndrome advocates for helping with providing Caidan with the support he needs to thrive. She knows raising a child is not meant to be a one- or two-person job and should include the community. And building a world that not only celebrates Caidan's abilities and differences, but also includes and accepts him for all that he is, must include everyone.



Caidan

***“Many things do not come easily to Caidan, and so when he’s completing everyday tasks, he may be slower or need a little extra help. But if given the opportunity and space to practice, he has the potential to eventually do things on his own and learn new skills. But I need people to believe that and believe in him. If people continue to live with the assumption that he has no ability and never give him the opportunity to learn like any other kid, then he won’t ever get the chance to reach his full potential – he needs opportunity, just like you or me!*”**

I’ve seen the power of what a community coming together can accomplish. And a lot of these conversations start at home with our children. While World Down Syndrome Day has passed, there is always time for us to take action and invest in building a world of inclusion and supporting your neighbour.”

Catherine

As an organization, we celebrate the Down Syndrome community, and support building a community of inclusion and sharing opportunities to support all individuals reach their full potential.

FUN FACTS ABOUT DOWN SYNDROME



- *Down Syndrome is a genetic condition caused by an extra copy of chromosome 21, resulting in 47 chromosomes instead of the usual 46*
- *March 21 (3/21) was the chosen date of World Down Syndrome Day, to signify that chromosome 21 has 3 copies instead of 2 for individuals with Down Syndrome*
- *Chromosomes look like socks, so on World Down Syndrome Day, people wear mismatched or colourful socks in support of the celebration*
- *While it is anticipated that Individuals with Down Syndrome will experience developmental delays, individuals with Down Syndrome have a wide range of abilities, talents and many lead fulfilling and independent lives*

321 ROCK YOUR MISMATCHED SOCKS

The Villasenor family took part in the **321 Rock Your Mismatched Socks** initiative to raise awareness about Down Syndrome at Caidan's daycare.

Catherine and her husband Danier, Caidan and their family are also connected with the **Halton Down Syndrome Association (HDSA)** and through this connection find support, education and lots of fun activities for their friends and family. www.haltondownsyndrome.com

Established in 1984, this charity works to improve the quality of life for people with Down Syndrome and their families. HDSA is an active and vibrant leader in advocacy, awareness, education and support within the Halton community. Its mission is to empower individuals with Down Syndrome to reach their full potential through all stages of life.



Halton
Down Syndrome
Association
HDSA



STAFF NEWS

FORMER STAFFER'S COUNSELLING SERVICES

HSH's former BSW placement student, **Sarah McAlpine**, who later was hired as the HSH Life Skills Coordinator, is now the owner and Clinical Director of **Lakeview Counselling & Wellness**, which opened full-time in February 2022 and has grown into a multidisciplinary team of 12 with therapists and a nurse practitioner.



Sarah McAlpine

With a primary office in Huntsville and others in North Bay and Toronto, Lakeview is a dynamic mental health clinic that offers in-person and telehealth counselling, assessments, and medication prescriptions as needed. It also offers free and low-cost therapy for low income individuals.

Sarah offers in-person counselling in Huntsville and virtual counselling Ontario-wide for ages 10 years and up. Sarah is a Registered Social Worker and Ontario Certified Teacher. She holds an Educational Assistant Diploma, an Honours Bachelor of Social Work, and a Bachelor of Education. She is trained in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Dialectical Behaviour Therapy, Emotion-Focused Therapy, Play Therapy, Canine-Assisted Therapy, and Crisis Intervention. She has professional experience with special education, neurodivergence, dual diagnoses and many mental health diagnoses like anxiety, depression, mood and personality disorders, ASD, ADHD, ODD, etc.

Sarah supports youths, adults, couples, and families, in a non-judgmental space. Sarah is a 2SLGBTQIA+ affirming-therapist with personal and professional experience within the community.

To learn more visit [Lakeview's website](#) or Text/Call: (705) 380-5631.

HSH SUPPORTING SINGLE PARENTS

March 21st was **National Single Parent Day**, a day to honour the strength, dedication, resilience and sacrifices of single parents.

Raising a family alone takes incredible strength and determination.

At Home Suite Hope, we are proud to support single parents and their families, helping them build a brighter, more stable future for themselves and their children.

HSH is here to walk alongside single parents, providing them with the resources and support they need to build a hopeful future. You are never alone in this journey!



FUNDING NEWS

THANK YOU APPLEBY STUDENTS

A special shoutout to **Appleby College** students for creating summer fun kits for our participants' children to keep busy over the summer break!

These kits were very thoughtfully created, the students even included step-by-step instructions for the youths to follow when making their crafts.

Thank you for your continued support!



DONATIONS FROM ST. MILDRED'S-LIGHTBOURN STUDENTS

A big thank-you to **St. Mildred's-Lightbourn School** students for their generous donation of feminine hygiene products to Home Suite Hope!

The timing was truly ideal, perfectly aligning with the spirit of International Women's Day. The students at St. Mildred's are consistently creating inspiring initiatives that beautifully embody the power of women supporting women.

HSH IN THE COMMUNITY

DIGGING INTO A FRESH NEW SEASON AT BLUEBERRY FIELDS GARDEN

With spring's arrival volunteers are rolling up their sleeves in anticipation of another year at **Home Suite Hope's Community Garden Blueberry Fields**.

The garden, established and loved by **the late Ken Stockstill**, is located behind the **Upper Oakville Shopping Centre** at Eighth Line and Upper Middle Road in Oakville.

Volunteers are definitely on the To Do list at the garden.

"Yes, we are definitely wanting volunteers again this year and although we won't start working in the garden until end of April, I'll always respond to anyone who reaches out about volunteering," said **HSH Garden Volunteer Coordinator Ruth Borst** who manages the garden's volunteer roster with the shopping centre.

Those interested can contact HSH at volunteers@homesuitehope.org or request to volunteer on the shopping centre's [website](#).

Volunteers prepare, care for and then harvest the garden. The foods grown are transported to Kerr Street Mission where they are available to our program participants, KSM clients and the community.

Here's to another productive season at Blueberry Fields!



**The late Ken Stockstill at
Blueberry Fields**



Sheridan



CHANGING THE PATTERNS OF POVERTY TO A LEGACY OF PROSPERITY