

camh

GIFTS of LIGHT

Impact Report

2021-2022



A Message of Gratitude

from Carrie Fletcher

Here we are again—celebrating and thanking you for your continued dedication to Gifts of Light at CAMH!

When we have the opportunity to see the impact of Gifts of Light summarized in a report like this, it always makes me pause and reflect on the growth of this program. The 2021-2022 fiscal year was another challenging period for all of us at CAMH due to the ongoing pandemic. Our patients, and the staff that care for them, needed Gifts of Light more than ever—and Gifts of Light delivered.

New programs like the hairstyling service, which was launched in November 2021, have brought so much joy; the gift of a haircut is more impactful that we can ever fully understand. As you will read in this report, we introduced a number of other new programs over the course of the year and were even able to bring back some initiatives for in-person delivery, which was greatly appreciated by the entire CAMH community.

Time and time again we hear about the positive impacts these programs are having in the lives of patients—but the biggest endorsement is the smiles on their faces. Patient interaction with the programs made possible through Gifts of Light is integral to the care journey for so many, as you can see by the numbers presented in this report.

And, of course, the Gifts of Light Store continues to provide a lifeline to many of our patients by providing access to essential items. The impact that toiletries, clean socks, undergarments, and a new pair of shoes can have on someone cannot be understated. Oh—and those holiday gifts! Getting to visit the store over the holiday season and seeing the volunteers back in action putting gift bags together brought the biggest smile to my face, and more importantly to the faces of patients receiving them. Smiles because someone cared, and thought of them, and valued them.

Thank you never feels like enough. I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude for all that you do. Our spirit of generosity is firmly planted in Gifts of Light, which is itself firmly planted in this organization and the people we serve.

With deep appreciation,



Carrie Fletcher

Vice President, People and Experience
CAMH



A Year of Challenge, Change, and Impact

This year was another rollercoaster of a year as the Gifts of Light team navigated the ever-changing environment of the pandemic. But despite the many challenges they faced—lockdowns, policy changes, and constant unknowns—the team's focus remained on supporting positive patient experiences through the power of Gifts of Light. Every step of the way, your generous and enduring support inspired and motivated staff and patients alike, and created incredible impact for people across the CAMH community.

Throughout the year, the Gifts of Light team introduced many new initiatives and adapted programs as CAMH shifted between virtual and in-person programming. Orders made through the Gift of Light Store increased, as did the number of patients reached compared to the previous year. As requests for supports and services continue to increase, the Gifts of Light team is stepping up their response to meet the needs of patients and ensure the safety, quality, and consistency of all programs.

While the team continues to navigate through significant hurdles and challenges, it is stronger than ever and moving forward with hope and positivity as team members focus on supporting patients on their recovery. Gifts of Light continues to be deeply embedded in the fabric of CAMH. The program is creating an incredibly positive impact for patients, staff, patient supports, and the community—and we cannot thank you enough.





Measuring Your Impact

2021-2022 By the Numbers

2,808 

Patient programming hours

12,198 

Patients served through
the Gifts of Light Store

4,000 

Gifts delivered during
the holidays

151 

Volunteer hours

34 

Number of special events and
experiences (*virtual and in-person*)

The Joy of a Fresh Haircut

Gifts of Light Launches New Hairstyling Service at CAMH

In response to requests from patients and staff, and thanks to your generous support, in November 2021 Gifts of Light began offering a new weekly hairstyling service. Since its launch, the service has created a tremendously positive impact in the lives of patients—many of whom had been unable to receive a haircut since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020.

Tyler Lumb, a former CAMH client and talented hairstylist, now visits CAMH once a week and rotates between the hospital's inpatient forensic units. In these long-stay units, many patients have reported having difficulty accessing self-care services like haircuts, and they are extremely grateful for Tyler's regular visits.

The Gifts of Light team worked with CAMH's Employment Works team to prioritize this service and hire Tyler, who is open about their experiences at CAMH and is thrilled to have an opportunity to give back in support of patients. The program is now being evaluated and the team hopes to expand it to other units, adding more shifts to Tyler's schedule.

"The program is so empowering for the clients. You can just see the pride and happiness they get from having a fresh cut! We always have a line-up of clients, ready for when Tyler is on our unit."

– CAMH staff member



Meet Gifts of Light Hairstylist Tyler Lumb

"I started my barber career while I was doing an extensive outpatient program at CAMH during a very difficult transition in my life. The folks in the program, as well as the clinicians and doctors, all encouraged my dream to pursue a career in hair. After CAMH, I became a pillar within my community and opened the first gender-free barbershop in Toronto.

CAMH not only saved my life, but also helped me become the barber I am today. When I heard about the position as a barber/stylist for the forensic units at CAMH, I knew this was a perfect opportunity to not only give back to the institution that helped me, but to also help patients feel a little like themselves again while navigating challenging circumstances.

This position really feeds my soul and makes me feel a purpose in my career again after losing my shop in the pandemic. A big thank you to Gifts of Light for funding this amazing program that I hope carries on for years to come."

"Thank you, Tyler, for giving me good looks! I can't wait for my next haircut."

– Patient

Between November 2021 and March 2022, **93** patients received haircuts as part of the Gifts of Light hairdressing service—an average of seven patients each week.

"I'm very appreciative to be able to have a haircut during these times."

– Patient

"Many of the clients who have received haircuts from Tyler always step out of the room with the biggest smile on their face. The endless compliments from staff and their peers makes them feel so special. Especially since many of the forensics clients are always stigmatized by the 'forensics' label. This allows them to feel comfortable within their own setting to get haircuts on their own liking. Tyler's ability to be comfortable in working with all hair types allows us him to offer his service to such a diverse population!"

–CAMH Staff member



Gifts of Light offers hope and dignity for patients visiting the Emergency Department

In 2021, CAMH's Emergency Department received a grant of \$10,000 through Gifts of Light to purchase essential items that are helping bring comfort, hope, and dignity to patients in crisis. The items include Presto passes, warm clothing, art supplies, personal hygiene items, shoes, portable phone chargers, and much more.

Ann McDowell, a program assistant in the Emergency Department, says having these items available has helped the team go above and beyond in offering support to clients during their most vulnerable moments.

"So many needs have been met through this grant," she says, "Whether it's offering a patient with autism a weighted blanket or giving someone their first pair of winter boots, it is a privilege and an honour to deliver Gifts of Light to our patients. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."

New Programming

Despite the ongoing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Gifts of Light team launched several new programs throughout 2021-2022 to help empower and support patients along their care journeys. Thank you for helping to make these innovative new initiatives possible!

New podcast initiative creates space for patients' voices

In late 2021, support from Gifts of Light enabled the launch of an innovative new podcast program that's creating a unique space for patients to have their voices heard.

Developed in partnership with our non-profit vendor Mobile Arts Programming, which works with organizations to facilitate audio recording, the podcast is being piloted in the CAMH Forensic Unit—a unit dedicated to treating people who have come into contact with the law and are receiving treatment at the hospital for mental illness or addiction.

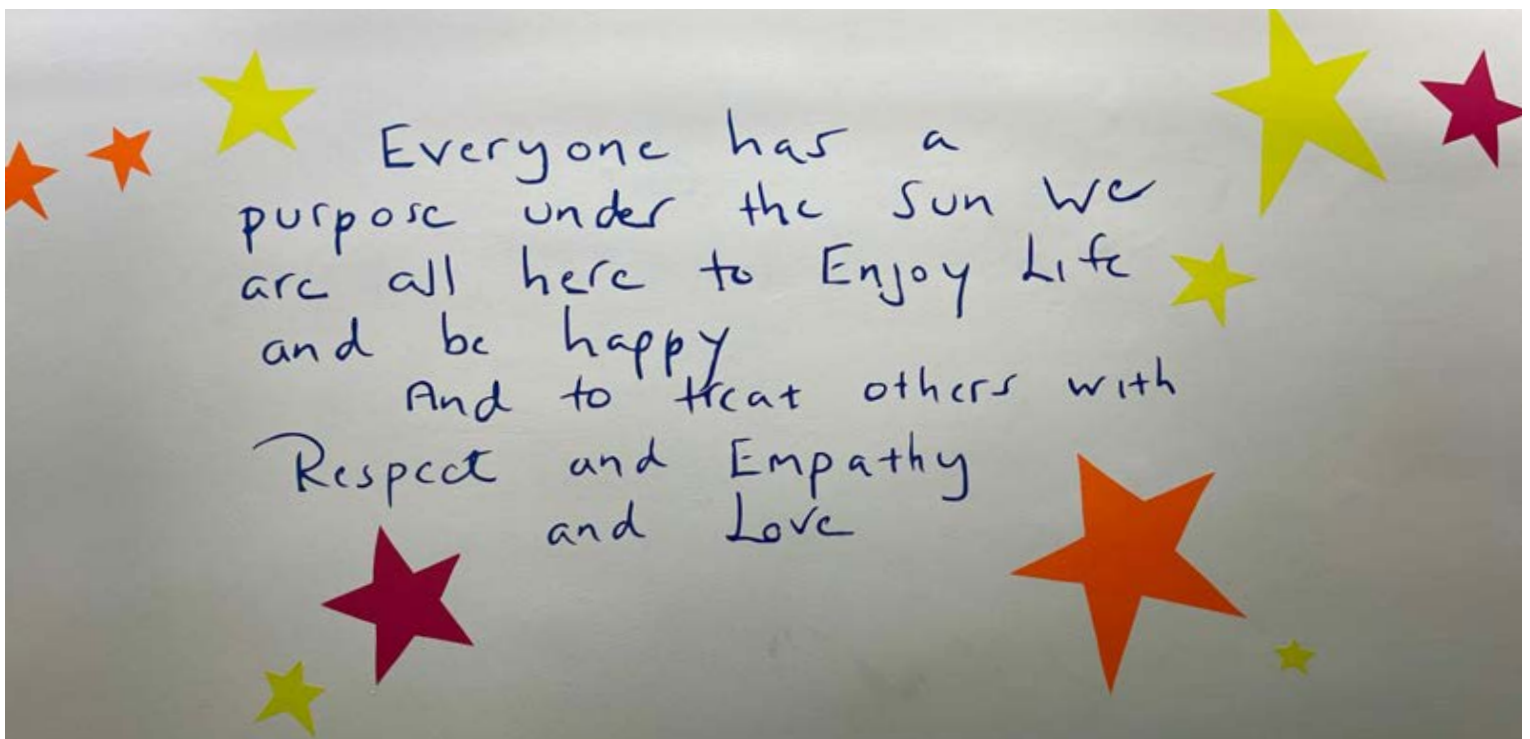
Due to increased levels of security required to aid in their recovery and eventual re-integration into the community, inpatients in the Forensic Unit can sometimes feel more isolated from the outside world. The podcast initiative has helped patients feel more connected with one another and with the broader CAMH community by offering a platform for discussion and learning.

Wes Grove, a facilitator with Mobile Arts Programming, says patients immediately connected with the podcast concept.

"[The clients] were the ones who came up with the topics, the questions, and themes, and they had the autonomy to share their perspectives on certain topics, but also to bring in some of their lived experiences."

– Wes Grove

[Learn more](#) about this exciting new podcast initiative made possible by Gifts of Light and listen to the first episode!





Creating healing spaces with Colour Connect

In early 2022, Gifts of Light facilitated and supported a new project to engage patients in conversations about the design of spaces for mental health treatment and recovery.

Called Colour Connect, the project has led to the creative redesign of clinical areas at CAMH's Downtown Central outpatient clinic, which recently moved to an upper floor of the hospital's College and Spadina location—a space that needed a little sprucing up to feel more warm and welcoming for patients.

When the Downtown Central outpatient clinic team first moved into their new offices, recreation therapist Janu Macdonald was concerned that the space felt too institutional.

“The walls of our new clinic were mint coloured, and it just felt so clinical,” she says. “It was an institutionalized space from when it was still an inpatient unit.”

Janu shared her concerns with Janine Bakalaar, Manager of the Gifts of Light program, and the two women then connected with Caroline Macfarlane—a designer, artist, and filmmaker who had previously reached out to CAMH about facilitating a collaboration.

Together, Janu and Caroline facilitated three discussion groups of about 10 participants each. The groups explored the question, “What brings you joy?” Clients then put together collages using different artistic mediums, which formed the basis of the look and feel of the revitalized space. Caroline encouraged clients to think more about how certain colours make them feel rather than how they look.

Today, the artwork created by clients through the Colour Connect program adorns hallways in both the Downtown Central and Downtown East clinics—a constant reminder to patients receiving care that they are not alone.

[Learn more about Colour Connect](#) and how Gifts of Light helped make this creative new project possible!

“I drew a sunset because I like the idea of horizons. Coming to CAMH is like a horizon that I’m always looking towards.”

– Client who participated in the Colour Connect program

Gifts of Light now supports CAMH’s FoodShare program

We are thrilled to share that Gifts of Light now provides critical funding support for the FoodShare program, which enables patient programming at CAMH's Sunshine Garden—Canada's first-ever market garden on hospital grounds.

Created through a partnership between CAMH and FoodShare, a food justice organization that advocates for the right to food, the Sunshine Garden creates opportunities for clients to grow food, cook, preserve, and sell the harvest at the Garden Market, work in the greenhouse, and much more.

During the 2021-2022 fiscal year, over 300 hours of patient programming at the Sunshine Garden were supported by Gifts of Light.

“Thank you to the team running the Sunshine Garden at Queen St. West. Your garden is a healing place. It’s really tough being confined to hospital for weeks on end. Getting a chance to finally step outside for brief outings becomes not just a highlight of one’s day but a chance to feel human and normal. Clients of CAMH are often asked not to leave the grounds on outings, as was I, so I quickly found the garden area was the best place to go. A place to sit and just see and feel nature. The plants and winding walkway; birds and squirrels. A place to meet my family and have lunch. Breathe some fresh air and just feel like you’re not in a hospital setting. Thank you so much. I think I will visit Sunshine Garden again in the future to see how it is evolving.”

– CAMH patient

Program and Event Highlights

Thanks to Gifts of Light and your generous support, 2021-2022 was filled with many fun and unforgettable moments for patients and staff alike.

Summer Fun and Festivities

During the summer months, Gifts of Light supported and facilitated a number of initiatives to engage patients and help them enjoy the warmer weather. In between waves of COVID-19, the team was able to welcome a number of vendors back for in-person programming, both indoors and outdoors.



Caribana Returns to CAMH!

For the second year in a row, Gifts of Light worked with events company Crown Mas to bring Caribana to CAMH. The event was hosted in the Therapeutic Neighbourhood Courtyard and over 150 participants attended.



Outdoor Movie Nights

During the warmer months, Gifts of Light hosted four outdoor movie nights, complete with refreshments, for different inpatient units across CAMH.



Food Truck

Thanks to Gifts of Light, programs across CAMH were given an opportunity to enter a draw to win a free lunch from one of CAMH's food truck vendors, with one draw taking place each month from June to August.



Welcoming Back Smile Serenades

Throughout the fall of 2021, the Gifts of Light team was excited to bring Smile Serenades back for in-person programming. Through this program, singalong sessions reached 15 units each week from September to December before the emergence of the Omicron variant.

Spreading Holiday Joy

During the 2021 holiday season, the Gifts of Light team was able to welcome volunteers back to the hospital to assist with holiday gift wrapping. The team engaged corporate sponsors to share messages of holiday joy and hope by writing special cards to patients, which were included with each holiday gift.

The team also helped individual units offer holiday meals to patients, and welcomed patients and staff to gather for the lighting of the purple tree in the TD Commons park—the first time the tree was placed in this beautiful location. The event included holiday caroling with the Smile Serenades, polaroid photos with the purple tree, and a food truck serving churros and hot chocolate.



A4i Wins 2021 Innovation Expo

A4i, an innovative mobile app and portal developed by CAMH and MEMOTEXT to improve care coordination for providers and people living with schizophrenia and psychosis, was named as the winner of the 2021 Innovation Expo—a pitch-style competition that celebrates grassroots digital health innovation to revolutionize the client and family care experience.

As the winner, the A4i team has received a \$50,000 grant through Gifts of Light to continue developing the app and portal. The team is using a portion of this funding to continue running a clinical trial to test the efficacy of the solution and the remaining funds are being used to continuously improve the technology and optimize the user experience.

“Thanks again so much for your support of A4i! We very much needed that boost both in terms of recognition and funding. Ultimately, we see A4i becoming a nimble platform for many severe mental illnesses—implemented in care settings globally and helping thousands every day.”

—Member of the A4i development team

Gifts of Light Store Updates

During the 2021-2022 fiscal year, the Gifts of Light team made updates and improvements to the Gifts of Light store and used the space to help raise money to further advance the scope and impact of the program.

New Digital Order Form Launched

The Gifts of Light team recently launched a new digital order form to enable a more streamlined process for clinicians to request items from the Gifts of Light Store for patients.

Along with the new order form, a streamlined pick-up process has been implemented that creates more flexibility for clinicians to independently pick up their orders. There are now two locked cabinets available where items are placed for pick-up; Clinicians are provided with a code when their order is ready for pick up, which allows them to access the cabinets at their convenience.

The store has seen a significant increase in orders since implementing this process, indicating that clinicians are better able to utilize this service for their patients.

New Store Space

The Gifts of Light Store's new space continues to offer opportunities for the program to expand its operations. For example, for the second year in a row, all holiday gifts were delivered, wrapped, and picked up by clinicians in the new space.

As more staff return onsite, they are having an opportunity to see the new space and the reactions have been consistently positive and encouraging.

Promoting the Andy Kim Concert

Through the new store space, Gifts of Light staff and volunteers sold 50/50 tickets to the 17th annual Andy Kim Christmas concert at Massey Hall, which took place on December 8, 2021. In total, over \$3,000 was raised in addition to funds donated to Gifts of Light through concert proceeds.



We are so grateful.

Every single day, your dedication to this program is felt across the entire CAMH community as patients experience countless moments of joy, empowerment, engagement, and hope—all made possible because of your deep commitment to their well-being and recovery.

As we begin to look ahead to a post-pandemic world, the Gifts of Light team is busier than ever planning the return of even more in-person events and initiatives, developing new programs and partnerships, and identifying gaps in the patient experience to inform the continued evolution of Gifts of Light.

Thank you for being by our side, every step of the way, as we continue to deliver Gifts of Light in a constantly changing world. Your generosity is changing lives, and your impact will be felt in the strength and resilience of every patient supported for many years to come.



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