

SHEENA'S PLACE

# ANNUAL REPORT

# 2022



**SHEENA'S PLACE**  
Support for eating disorders



**John Choi (He/Him)**  
Executive Director

## OUR MISSION & VISION

Our mission is to provide accessible, timely support and education to increase awareness and understanding of Eating Disorders, while fostering a sense of community and connection. We envision a world where every one has an accepting relationship with their body.

# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In 2019, Sheena's Place began implementing a new strategic plan which included the piloting of online virtual groups. Of course, in 2020, that plan was accelerated and all but small amounts of programming was offered online through the course of the following year plus.

2022 marked a time of working towards bringing back programs to the house. There continue to be many advantages to remote programming, most relating to accessibility. Participants and facilitators alike repeatedly express their preference for this format for a variety of reasons: participants who would face one or more of a myriad of barriers to visiting in person now have access. There is, however, something tangibly different (and beneficial) about being able to gather in person, that is extremely difficult to replicate online. Moving forward, we'll continue to offer virtual services and work towards re-establishing in-person programs paying close attention to the needs of our community.

Two events that had been regular fixtures for years on the Sheena's Place calendar were revived in 2022. The in-person Shout Out Gala made its return. In May, over 120 supporters gathered to raise funds to support our services. And a modified version of Sheena's Camp was held at the house on a weekend in the winter, to the delight of a houseful of "campers".

In 2022, data from the Canadian Institute for Health Information clearly demonstrated that concerns related to Eating Disorders continued to rise. The work of Sheena's Place is more important than ever. Please consider joining us as a participant, volunteer, or donor.

## WE VALUE

### COMMUNITY

Our strength lies in our collective efforts, and there are psychological, emotional, and practical benefits to the experience of community

### COMPASSION

Eating disorders are not a choice. We strive to interact with every individual with compassion and understanding.

### INCLUSIVITY

Eating Disorders do not discriminate, and affect individuals from every demographic. We all stand to benefit when everyone can access our community.

### INNOVATION

In providing effective support and education, we strive to find new ways of improving our work.

### INTEGRITY

Trust is a key factor for our participants, volunteers, and donors.

# WHAT HAPPENED IN 2022?

## NEW GROUPS

### NEURODIVERGENT SUPPORT

This group aims to hold space for neurodivergent folks who would like to explore the intersection of neurodivergence and eating disorder experiences. Topics may include barriers to treatment, masking, sensory experiences, executive functioning, etc.

### BIPOC NUTRITION SUPPORT

This group focuses on nutrition education for participants experiencing distressed or disordered eating, using an anti-racist and anti-oppression lens. Participants in the group are encouraged to enhance their understanding of food, nutrition, food insecurity, and health equity while learning to embrace their cultural foods and lived experiences.

## GROUP HIGHLIGHT!

### NAVIGATING RECOVERY SUPPORT

In the past, we have offered a closed group dedicated to folks who consider themselves far along in their recovery journey. Last year, we introduced a new open group for folks who consider themselves to be recovered who want a little bit of extra support.

Navigating Recovery Support is a support group for people who feel they are in the recovery process. Each week, group members explore challenges, share strategies, and support the changes that group members have made in a non-judgmental space. The intention of the group is to draw on the wisdom of lived experience along with facilitator-provided skill-building offerings. Building community through shared experience, group facilitators and members work together to explore coping strategies and stress reduction techniques, encourage peer support, and to acknowledge barriers and facilitators to change.

# WHAT DID OUR PARTICIPANTS HAVE TO SAY?



98% said the facilitator(s) created a safe and respectful environment.



98% said the facilitator(s) had enough knowledge and expertise to run this group/workshop.



98% said overall found this group/workshop to be helpful.



96% said they would recommend this group/workshop to others.



91% said they felt connected to and/or supported by other group members.



89% said this group/workshop was supportive of their recovery journey.



85% said they learned new skills or coping strategies.



81% said this group/workshop increased their motivation for change.

**Total therapeutic hours: 1300**

**Total number of group participants: 1000+**

"Such an amazing group! Would not change a single thing. Incredibly grateful to be a part of this space and have access to it."

Just keep up the great work! I'm very excited to have the two of them as ongoing facilitators. It definitely allows me for greater understanding and knowledge of self. Both are understanding, wise, and complement each other nicely.

"Thanks so much for doing the groups! You all are fantastic!"

"This group was awesome! This was my first time playing and the facilitators made it easy and fun to learn and I felt completely at ease with experienced players."

"The facilitators are thoughtful and respectful, amazing & provided so much information in a topic I had zero knowledge of. Their listening skills allow many loved ones to speak openly of a topic many people are not familiar with. High recommendations."

"A big thanks to all of you for your gentle strength and support of all of us."

"Keep up the good work. Thank you for being so supportive and happy. Your mood affects my mood. Feel so much better afterwards."

"Great program. Thanks to the facilitators who were friendly, inviting, knowledgeable, professional, and supportive. Keep up the great work!"



# OUR PARTICIPANTS SHARE THEIR RECOVERY JOURNEYS

We're very grateful to have three participants share their road to recovery. And while each story is unique, one constant is the role Sheena's Place has played—and continues to play—in supporting them.

## Michelle Gallacher (She/Her)



About 34 years ago, Michelle was diagnosed with two eating disorders, but recalls her symptoms existed long before any diagnosis. And while she recovered from one eating disorder about 19 years ago, the other has been more persistent. In July 2022, when symptoms reappeared, Michelle found support at the Port Colborne Eating Disorder Clinic; there, her therapist also told her about Sheena's Place.

It was the first time Michelle had heard of Sheena's Place, and it marked a turning point in her recovery.

"My recovery journey has continued since September," says Michelle, "specifically since connecting with Sheena's Place. I'd say prior to that, it was a very bumpy road. But since starting with Sheena's Place, I've been so rewarded with the programming."

Michelle has attended several of our virtual groups, including Navigating Recovery, DBT, and some of our Expressive Arts groups.

For Michelle, an important breakthrough came in one of our groups when she realized her eating disorder had nothing to do with food. "Eating disorders have to do with you and whatever has gone on in your life," she says. "In my particular case, this was not a realization I had ever had before coming to Sheena's Place." In this group, she learned how trauma had affected her, and how food was the easiest way to cope.

***"Never in my decades of trying to deal with my eating disorders have I felt so supported," says Michelle of her experience at Sheena's Place.***

# OUR PARTICIPANTS SHARE THEIR RECOVERY JOURNEYS

**“The wisdom that has come from the facilitators,” she says, “I’ve never heard before, even after being in treatment for so long. That has been so helpful for me.”**

When an uncomfortable feeling arose in one Navigating Recovery session, Michelle was able to explore it further with a painting she created in an Expressive Arts session. This was the first time she used art to dig deeper into what was going on with her eating disorder.

Michelle also learned to be much kinder and more compassionate to herself.

**“Because diet culture is so loud, I think when you have an eating disorder, it makes it much more excruciating to take that step in your life. Everywhere you go, you’re being told the body you are in, is not the body that is being accepted. By building that self-compassion muscle and being aware that the most important relationship you have is with yourself, that gives you the ability to tune out everything else. And that has been really key in terms of my own recovery.”**

Navigating Recovery has helped Michelle shift her thinking about what her own recovery looks like.

**“I now think recovery doesn’t include any specific type of body I might be looking at. Instead, what it includes is making healthy choices for myself every day and making sure I’m not engaging in diet culture; making sure I’m not engaging in my symptoms; and turning off my eating disorder brain.”**

Sheena’s Place continues to be an incredibly valuable resource for Michelle. And the more she learns about eating disorders, the more she realizes how much education needs to be done in schools and workplaces so people are more aware of eating disorders.

**“Eating is something you need to do every day and so many people are in a state of need. You start to wonder why this isn’t something everyone is learning about.”**

# OUR PARTICIPANTS SHARE THEIR RECOVERY JOURNEYS

In July 2021, Natalie was nearing the end of a 16-week eating disorder program in her hometown of Ottawa. Feeling stuck in the same place she'd been prior to treatment, Natalie found Sheena's Place in a Google search. Within a few weeks, she was participating in several drop-in groups.

What immediately surprised Natalie about our virtual groups was the strong sense of community and connection.

"I remember the facilitators being very welcoming," she recalls of her first group at Sheena's Place. "The folks in the group, my peers, everyone seemed to be very genuine and willing to hold space for each other...It was very different than what I'd experienced before."

Natalie's favourite group, and the one she's been participating in since January 2022, is Body Liberation.

In a world rife with diet culture and anti-fatness, Natalie says it's extremely helpful to be in a group for larger body folks. Body Liberation provides her with a safe and supportive space where she's learned her body isn't wrong, and her experience was shared by others. **"It was validating, and weird to hear thoughts so similar to mine. I'd think 'How the heck did you also have that same experience'?"** She credits *Body Liberation* as the key to accelerating her recovery.

**"The resources people share...podcasts, websites, books as they relate to body liberation...for me that's where my growth really came from,"** says Natalie. **"I have so much gratitude this group exists. It's put me back into recovery and it's been keeping me in my recovery."**

Natalie has curated an Instagram feed that includes many different fat activists. Their posts show size diversity and people living happy lives and serve as a positive reminder her body isn't wrong.

"I feel like I'm sitting in a space where I'm now accepting of my body. I feel like I'm there."

Natalie says Body Liberation is the group that will take her right to the end of her recovery.

**"I am ninety-five per cent there. Recovery is having an awareness of having an eating disorder mind. The voice might always be there, but it is quieter. I'm aware and I know how to check in with myself."**

**Natalie Casagrande  
(She/Her)**



# OUR PARTICIPANTS SHARE THEIR RECOVERY JOURNEY

"I've lived most of my life with an eating disorder," says Nicolle, who was diagnosed with an eating disorder when she was 14 years old. "But I'm in a very good place now with my recovery. And I wanted to share my story in hopes it will help even one person take steps towards their own recovery."

## Nicolle Sirisko (She/Her)



Nicolle recalls seeing doctors and therapists after her diagnosis, but it wasn't until she was 19 years old, in 2004, that she made the decision to seek help on her own terms, arriving at Sheena's Place for a Young Adult Support group.

**"I remember walking in. The house was very welcoming. The staff were amazing. I walked in the front door, and it was almost like they could sense I was new. It was very comforting. I was one of the first people there. I had knots in my stomach and was very anxious. As people came in, I remember noticing they knew each other...and I realized people came here and made connections."**

**"At first, I just listened. But it didn't take me long to realize this was a safe space. People were talking and sharing. And I was thinking I've been in those same situations and had those same thoughts."**

For several years, Nicolle was a regular in our groups. And then stopped for a few years when she felt closer to recovery. But when symptoms reappeared in early 2020, she returned. That was three years ago, and she credits our groups as a key to her continued recovery.

**"That's one thing I can say about Sheena's Place. It's consistent and it's always there when I need it. It's one of those resources I'm grateful has been around for as long as it has."**

The weekly group Nicolle now attends is our 2SLGBTQI+ Support group. "Having these sub communities and groups is amazing. It makes it very inclusive and provides a greater sense of belonging."

For Nicolle, and our many other participants—whether they're just starting on their journeyS or they're in their final stages of recovery—it's reassuring to know Sheena's Place is here to support them.

**"As much as I would love to not need Sheena's Place," says Nicolle, "I don't know if there's a reality where that is true for me. So, it is very comforting to know I can access the support any time. Just to know it's ok to slip up and need some extra help, and to know Sheena's Place is always there."**



# OUTREACH

While conversations about mental illness have gained momentum in our society, there remains a huge gap in knowledge about eating disorders – within the healthcare system and within the general population. For this reason, delivering workshops and trainings about eating disorders (and related topics like weight stigma and diet culture) feels critical and impactful. Many folks report feeling powerless around their own relationship to food and body, or in supporting others with eating disorders. We consistently receive feedback from outreach attendees that the information they are learning from our presentations has direct positive impacts on how they support themselves and others, which is extremely rewarding and motivating. On a personal level, I also learn so much every time I facilitate a presentation. While I may be seen as the “expert”, I always leave a presentation with a deeper understanding and more insight than when I arrived.

## Quantitative Outreach Feedback



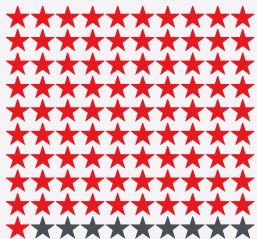
97% of outreach presentation respondents agreed that the facilitator(s) had sufficient knowledge and expertise to run the presentation



97% of outreach presentation respondents agreed that the facilitator(s) created a safe and respectful environment



92% of outreach presentation respondents would recommend the presentation to others like them



91% of outreach presentation respondents agreed that the presentation was helpful



91% of outreach presentation respondents agreed that the presentation helped them feel better equipped to identify disordered eating



91% of outreach presentation respondents agreed that the presentation helped them feel better equipped to support others who experience disordered eating



# OUTREACH

## OUTREACH 2022 STATISTICS

NUMBER OF OUTREACH ATTENDEES (LIVE): 1469  
NUMBER OF RECORDING VIEWS: 2322  
TOTAL NUMBER OF OUTREACH INITIATIVES: 52  
TRAININGS & WORKSHOPS: 25  
WEBINARS: 6

## INTERVIEWS (RADIO & PRINT) WITH

GLOBAL NEWS  
GLOBE & MAIL  
CBC RADIO  
PSYCHOLOGY TODAY

## ORGANIZATIONS WE PRESENTED WITH/FOR

NEDIC  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO (RESIDENCE LIFE, FIFSW, INNIS COLLEGE, UTM)  
TORONTO METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY  
TRENT UNIVERSITY  
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HARD FEELINGS MENTAL HEALTH  
STELLA'S PLACE  
MISSINFORMED  
ATTACHED KIDS  
WESTVIEW PCN YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC  
RISE UP SOCIETY  
GRIEF CENTRE (NEW ZEALAND)  
TORONTO FRENCH SCHOOL  
TRIANGLE PROGRAM - OASIS ALTERNATIVE SECONDARY SCHOOL

# QUALITATIVE OUTREACH FEEDBACK

"I was inspired to do a lot of self reflection related to my participation in diet culture. I thought I was an ally or advocate for those with EDs but now I realize I have more reflection and learning to do to be effective in this pursuit."

"It was eye-opening to learn about the different ways different people experience eating disorders and disordered eating. What is taught and perpetuated is so narrow so it is extremely valuable to have had the opportunity to learn beyond the narrow lens".

"The way the content was approached and spoken about was respectful, informing and gentle - nothing felt too harsh to handle, and everything was fine for me - I felt no shame for my weight and size during the entire presentation!"

"The environment made me feel safe. The presenter's tone was very reassuring and welcoming to conversation, yet confident."

"The whole presentation was amazing. The style, the content, ability to engage throughout. It was informative, but not over doing it. Information to time ratio was excellent!"

"The environment was comfortable and did not tolerate judgement. The content was interesting, detailed, and explained well by the presenter."

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

"I'm so very thankful to have had the opportunity to attend the presentation. Understanding this is loosely related to the education we're building on diversity, equity and inclusion, it didn't occur to me for a second that diet, weight and disordered eating were pieces which could be part of the conversation. In an hour I learned more about myself than I have in years, and the presentation has given me critical tools to build self compassion and vocabulary to leverage for healthier conversations. Thank you so much for the work you do, the help you provide and the education you've imparted today. This was a moment maker if ever I've experienced one."

"This was a great presentation! Engaging and easy to follow. Coming from lived experience with disordered eating, this presentation felt very thought out and came from a compassionate lens of practice."

"Thank you for the very informative presentation! I learned a lot about eating disorders and am much more aware of the impacts of diet culture."

"Our team really enjoyed this training and found it very helpful for our everyday practice. Thank you!"



# SHEENA'S CAMP!

## HISTORY OF SHEENA'S CAMP

Sheena's Camp was born in 2015 by a group of Sheena's Place staff and volunteers. The goal of Sheena's Camp was to recreate an environment that many of these staff and volunteers had experienced as kids and teenagers – a place where they felt free to be themselves, connect with others, and have fun, without fear of judgment.



Sheena's Camp started small with fewer than 10 campers and a handful of staff and volunteers at the house. It included 2 full days of camp-inspired activities.

The number of campers continued to grow: over 60 registered and over 30 attended.

Sheena's Camp took a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2015

2017

2020 & 2021

2016

2018 & 2019

2022

Sheena's Camp was hosted at the downtown Campfire Circle office as it needed a bigger home. Over 40 campers registered (and over 20 attended); Sheena's Camp started to develop a "following".

Sheena's Camp relocated to Gilda's Club in Kensington Market.

After a two-year break, Sheena's Camp made a successful comeback by having the highest attendance rate of all time: 22 participants gathered at the Sheena's Place house. There was also a waitlist, which demonstrated a high demand for the camp.



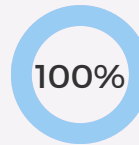
# SHEENA'S CAMP!

## IMPACT OF SHEENA'S CAMP

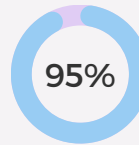
Research shows that core benefits of summer camp include increasing social connection, skill-building, increasing self-esteem & confidence, and exposure to secure and low-stress environments. These benefits positively impact mental health and physical health. Sheena's Camp is a free camp program in the city that prioritizes inclusion, safety, and respect. It gives adults with eating disorders an opportunity to experience something they may never have had the opportunity to experience before.



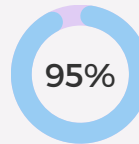
## Survey results from 2022



100% of participants agreed that the facilitators created a safe and respectful environment



95% of participants said Sheena's Camp helped them feel less alone



95% of participants felt connected to and supported by others



# OUR VOLUNTEERS

Sheena's Place benefits greatly from the generosity of our volunteers. Their expertise, passion, dedication, and time contribute in immeasurable ways. We could not do what we do without you!

**ADAM JESIN**

**BETH ADAMS, CHRISTINA POLITIS, DEBRA KATZMAN**

**EMILY STERNBERG, GAVIN SWARTZMAN, INKA SKINNER, KAREN JORDAN**

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JESSE HAYMAN, KATRINA PARKER, KIRA MCCARTHY, LAURI MITCHELL, LAURA KURDYAK**

**MADELEINE CHO, NICOLE MALBEUF, SHAWN HEISSLER, TRACY BRITNELL  
VICTORIA BUBULJ**

## REVENUE

**DONATIONS &  
FUNDRAISING** \$658,423

**OTHER** \$55,575

**CAPITAL  
CONTRIBUTIONS** \$12,681

**TOTAL REVENUE** **\$676,679**

## REVENUES

## EXPENSES

## EXPENSES

**PERSONNEL** \$585,815

**PROGRAM** \$356,428

**OCCUPANCY &  
MAINTENANCE** \$27,748

**ADMINISTRATION** \$27,514

**FUNDRAISING** \$67,401

**AMORTIZATION** \$42,836

**TOTAL EXPENSES** **\$1,107,742**

**(INVESTMENT INCOME LOSS)** **\$115,225**

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**NET INCOME** **- \$546,288**

# 2022

# DONORS

## GALA SPONSORS

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Foundation  
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# 2022

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# 2022

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Meghan Seaman  
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Melanie Miller  
Melissa Nemec  
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Nancy Wilk  
Nancy Seto  
Nancy's Very Own Foundation  
Natalie Gold  
Nataliya Gurba  
Nathalie Benninger  
Nidal Haque  
Nikki Dorkin  
Nina Bacellar  
Noah Buchman  
Norm Jesin  
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