



COVID-19

Resiliency in a Pandemic

safe
haven

Safehaven is resilient, innovative and believes in building a community where **we all belong**. COVID-19 has shown us that in the face of adversity, our clients, staff, volunteers and stakeholders will come together and make us stronger than ever.

The pandemic enabled us to accelerate our work in addressing the gaps we knew existed for our clients. Not only did it reinforce our goals but provided the platform to solidify our work for the future.

We are focused on three main areas throughout the COVID-19 pandemic: protecting those we support, supporting the sector and engaging our community. We are pleased to highlight some significant accomplishments we have achieved, despite the rapidly changing environment we have all been living in since March 2020.



PEOPLE

WE ARE CHANGEMAKERS.



Our clients, families and employees are the heart of what we do, and creating a supportive environment for them was critically important to our organization. Because of COVID-19, Safehaven temporarily closed its respite program and implemented multiple enhanced visitation guidelines.

To counteract the potential impacts these actions could have on our clients and their families, Safehaven has implemented high-touch communications with the parents and caregivers of our exceptional clients.

With the support of a psychotherapist and our leadership, Safehaven has been delivering regularly scheduled video Zoom meetings with our respite and residential families to provide them with a safe and comfortable forum to share their feelings, express any concerns and ask important questions about their children and Safehaven's next steps.

We also recognize that our amazing employees have had to adapt quickly to our changing landscape while providing safe, high quality care for our clients.

Daily phone calls take place with our Client Care Coordinators and Leadership Team. In addition, regular weekly communications with staff across the organization are sent to keep them informed of any changes that may arise.

Lastly, we have created *Safehaven's Self Care Corner* designed to provide a variety of resources to support our staff during this time. It includes items like mental health supports, online health and wellness classes, discounts and special offers for products, services and more.



SECTOR

WE ARE ADVOCATES.



Angel Payawal, R.P.N Mask Fitting Minister Smith

The pandemic has uncovered a significant number of challenges for our most vulnerable residents and the organizations who support them. From long term care homes to community-based care providers, gaining access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), funding opportunities and support for frontline workers in a community setting was challenging. Safehaven has built strong relationships with our government partners and actively advocated for support to not only enable Safehaven, but also other organizations, to receive vital supports to help navigate through the pandemic. We were encouraged to see the provincial government support a pay increase for frontline workers in vulnerable care settings, access to PPE and the implementation of the *COVID-19 Action Plan for Vulnerable People*.

Similarly, we are so fortunate to have such fierce advocates at the municipal, provincial and federal levels. From representatives in our riding to political leaders across the GTA with whom we have further strengthened relationships with – they all understand that We

Belong in every community and have supported Safehaven in our many asks intended to support our clients, employees and sector.

Safehaven is proud of the work we have undertaken to support organizations who care for vulnerable children, youth and adults by developing an Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) program for the Toronto Developmental Service Alliance (TDSA).

This cross-sectoral approach recognizes the challenges in protecting vulnerable clients and employees and will address gaps in existing infectious disease programming. Safehaven is working with 28 organizations and over 5,000 employees serving thousands of clients in the Developmental Sector. We have also created an IPAC Extender Team (SWAT Team) to provide expertise and training to employees across the sector. In addition, we are being approached on an ongoing basis by community-based agencies within the Ministry of Health, the Women Against Violence sector and Children's Services, to participate in this program. With a focus on education and site inspections designed to help elevate

IPAC standards, the program will deliver learning modules, conduct mask fit and swab testing, as well as on-site infection environmental reviews with individuals who have a background in IPAC. We have also hired an epidemiologist who will help tell the stories of the impact on the sector from COVID-19.

Safehaven is passionate about championing cross-sector change for our vulnerable clients and their families. COVID-19 has enabled us to work with our partners to create system change that will break down silos and allow for integrated, seamless care for the population we serve. Our goal is to change the way we work with health and community not only during the pandemic but beyond – we are firmly committed to continuing this work and disrupting the system to ensure our sector can deliver safe, high quality care for those we support. The pandemic will not stop us in being a leader and advocating on behalf of those most vulnerable in our community.

COMMUNITY

WE ARE COMMUNITY.



As Helen Keller once said, “alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” COVID-19 has been a heartwarming demonstration of what can happen when a community comes together to support one another.

As a result of the pandemic, Safehaven had to make some difficult decisions to protect the health and safety of our clients but it hasn’t stopped our community from banning together to support our exceptional children, young adults and staff from feeling connected to the broader community.

Safehaven developed Calls To Action intended to foster a sense of connection, fill programming gaps and invest in COVID-19 related supports designed to help our clients through this challenging time – the community did not disappoint. Community members

have been creating videos of their children singing songs and making artwork that can be shared with each of our residential clients to entertain them during this time. In addition, people have been making generous donations to Safehaven to support our response to COVID-19.

Spearheaded by members of our Board of Directors, Safehaven families and community members, our Grocery Heroes program was born.

These volunteers found a responsible and safe way to purchase and deliver groceries to each of our locations, so no one goes hungry – but also so we can reduce exposure and ensure our front line workers can spend their time caring for our clients. Even better, Safehaven has been working with local food providers to ensure a steady delivery of individually packaged and portioned food is being shared with our homes.

Safehaven has been actively identifying needs for our clients and families and the community has stepped up and responded. We are thankful for each and every one of them!





Safehaven remains steadfast in taking all necessary precautions to protect our community; we were the first to implement COVID-19 measures and will be the last to return to regular programming. The work we've done in between is intended to ensure the health, safety and protection of those we are committed to caring for – our clients and employees. The pandemic has not stopped us but instead has fueled our ability to be innovative, resilient and inclusive.

WE ARE CHANGEMAKERS.
WE ARE ADVOCATES.
WE ARE COMMUNITY.
WE BELONG.



Safehaven is proud of the work we have done to address COVID-19 at our organization. We know there is a long road ahead but we are ready to tackle whatever obstacles the pandemic may bring.