

# Hamilton Mental Health Outreach

ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

While Annual Reports often chronicle achievements and significant milestones and events from the last year, it also communicates what makes HMHO such a remarkable place for our clients, our staff and volunteers over these past 31 years.

At our core, we are in the people business. We are tasked with the responsibility of providing exemplary care to those living with severe and persistent mental illness. Our clients come to us in numerous ways, each with a unique journey that must not only be respected but embraced. Recovery is as unique as each of the 166 individuals we served this past year.

On the other side, it is our 12 staff and 18 volunteers and board members who guide and assist in this journey with unrivalled compassion and respect for those whose lives have been impacted by mental illness. It is our honour to witness their journeys.

The greatest achievement of our organization cannot be articulated with an award, with data or reports or with financial statements. It is in the stories of our clients' lives. It is in the small but powerful steps forward our clients take each and every day with the support of our staff that bring meaning to their lives. It is in those of our clients who maintain their well-being one day at a time sometimes one hour at a time.

We are grateful to our partners who we depend on in serving the people who need us— St Joseph's Health Care, COAST, the family doctors in Family Practice Units, IntAc in partnership with Canadian Mental Health Association, Hamilton Program for Schizophrenia and The City of Toronto's Public Health Program, Police, Ontario Disability Support Program Hamilton Niagara Halton Brant Local Health

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Integration Network/Community Care Access Centre, the boarding home staff where many of our clients live and so many others. And most of all to their families who bear the scars inflicted by the illness.

Continuous change and transformation are now and frankly have been the norm for some time. The lens to use as changes are proposed should be through this one question: How does this change make the experience better for our clients? If it does not, why are we doing it? We ask our Client Council what we could do better each quarter we meet and try to implement their suggestions asap. Moving to genderless bathrooms we can all share came from them. Starting a Youth Group for those under 35 is another effort to provide a better experience. Cleaning up and redecorating shows our clients respect. Adding an automatic door opener to our front door makes a difference to those who are challenged.

We are doubling our efforts in case rounds on reviewing the needs of clients who are failing in our system. Finding root causes, seeking interdisciplinary consultation, matching the solution to the need of the client and searching out innovative methods are other efforts we are focusing on.

While we are sad to see staff leave us, as everywhere, people have changed and we have welcomed 3 new staff and 3 new board members. With this turnover new vision, perspectives and energy enter our organization.

With the dawning of Ontario Health Teams focusing on digital and integrated service delivery, HMHO has been positioning itself in this later quarter of 2018/19 to be the best it could be for its clients, its staff and as an effective and attractive partner in a regional health care system.