

Growing Memories: A Tree-Planting Initiative

Wigwamen Housing tenants now have the opportunity to honour someone they care about with a tree in the yard by their home. A tree specialist, called an arborist, will look at the space available and recommend a tree that will grow well there. Once the tree is planted, a small plaque will be added and the arborist will teach the tenant how to care for the tree during the important first few years after it has been planted.

Forty trees will be available, in recognition of Wigwamen's 40th anniversary in 2012. Tenants who are interested in applying for a tree are asked to write a short statement about the loved-one whose memory they would like to honour. If you did not receive an application in the mail, you can e-mail kwatts@wigwamen.com or call Head Office to have another sent out. ❖



NICE Tips for Debt Management

The National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly (NICE) publishes very useful information on financial literacy, legal issues and elder care. You can read or print pamphlets by going to the “tools” section of their website at www.nicenet.ca. The following debt management tips are from their Financial Literacy pamphlets, and are reprinted with permission.

What are the warning signs of financial distress? You are using credit cards to pay for monthly necessities. You cannot pay your credit card bill fully when it arrives. Creditors are harassing you. You are frequently worried about how you will pay your bills.

Do not add to your debt by borrowing more money. Keep copies of everything you sign. Be honest with yourself about your debt. Think about how you got into debt in the first place so that you can avoid making the same decisions in the future.

Payday loans are offered by privately owned companies and cheque-cashing outlets. The federal government does not regulate these companies. A payday loan is a very expensive way to borrow money.

If you feel overwhelmed by debt, free professional financial counselling services in Ontario include: St. Christopher House’s Financial Advocacy and Problem Solving Program, 416-848-7980. ❖

The New Secure Certificate of Indian Status Card

To prevent identity theft, tampering and counterfeiting, the current Status Cards are gradually being replaced. The new SCIS (Secure Certificate of Indian Status) is a hard plastic card and has many security features.

Old versions will stay valid until they expire, but new ones can be applied for early. There will be two formats: the in-Canada format, which is now available; and the Border-Crossing format, that will be available soon. For more information visit www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca and type “SCIS” into the “search” window at the top of the page. Or you can call 1-800-567-9604.

The card itself is free, but applicants must pay any fees for the photographs and documents that they are asked to provide. The new cards will be valid for 10 years. The Toronto office of AADNC (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada) is located at 25 St Clair Avenue East. The phone number is 416-973-6234. ❖



HST Exemptions

Remember that if you have a Status Card, you may be exempt from paying 8% of the HST on your Bell or Rogers bills. To apply for an exemption, fill out the form at www.bell.ca/taxexempt or call 416-310-2355. For Rogers, fax a letter with your customer number and your Status Card to 1-800-219-6473 or call 1-888-764-3771.



Working Against Violence Everywhere: The Louise Russo Youth Awards

These awards of up to \$1,500 recognize individuals or teams of students from 9 to 19 years of age who are working to reduce violence in their communities. The Awards celebrate and promote “Respect, Responsibility, and the Role of Leadership”. The money is meant to help cover education expenses.

Interested students must fill out an application and submit 2 letters of recommendation. The deadline for applications this year is **Friday March 8th**. For more information visit www.louiserussowave.ca ❖



Maya loves getting her “Book of the Month” in the mail! 103 children are currently registered in this program for Wigwamen tenants. See page 5 for details.

kids@computers Scholarship Project

So far, over 40,000 children in Toronto have been helped by the City’s kids@computers scholarship project. The program provides computers and computer training to low-income families. Any family that lives in rent-subsidized housing, and has children from 8 to 14 years of age, can apply for a computer. Call 416-392-8610 to request an application form. ❖

Dial-A-Story: 416-395-5400

Recordings of stories for children in 14 languages can be listened to, for free, by calling Dial-a-Story. The stories are in divided into 2 categories: for children under 7, and from 7 to 12 years old. The stories are changed daily and are read by a wide variety of professionals and celebrities. The Toronto Public Library’s popular Dial-a-Story is open 24-hours a day and receives an average of 700 calls per day.

HOW TO GET A LIBRARY CARD AND THE GREAT THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH IT!

Toronto Public Library cards are free to anyone who lives, works, or studies in Toronto. All you need is identification and proof-of-address. The card will be created and activated while you wait.

Members with a valid card, can borrow books, music, movies and more. Library cards also allow you to reserve materials and have them sent to your local branch, reserve computer time, access newspaper and magazine databases, and get free passes to 18 museums and galleries across Toronto.



The Database of Award-Winning Children’s Literature (DAWCL)

recommends the following honoured picture books about Aboriginal children in Canada. All of them are available for loan from the Toronto Public Library.

- ◆ Arctic Memories by Normee Ekoomiak
- ◆ Enchanted Caribou by Elizabeth Cleaver
- ◆ Murdo’s Story by Murdo Scribe
- ◆ Northern Lights by Michael Kusugak
- ◆ The Wave of the Sea-Wolf by David Wisniewski
- ◆ This Land is My Land by George Littlechild
- ◆ Very Last First Time by Jan Andrews
- ◆ Ytek and the Arctic Orchid by Heather Woodall

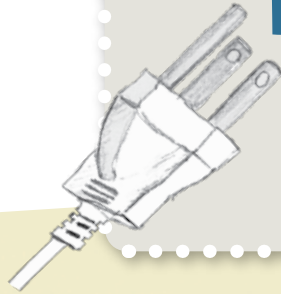


PLEASE PICK UP POOCH POOP

◆ Some dog owners feel that it's not necessary to bring bags with them on winter walks. But dog poop is hazardous to children playing in the snow. And when there's a thaw, it's just as messy and smelly as when it was first deposited. So please continue to stoop and scoop - even in the winter.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY COMPETITION



◆ Wigwamen Housing tenants now have a chance to win up to \$400, simply by being more careful about their energy consumption. The household that reduces their energy use the most in 2013 will be the winner. Watch your mailbox for contest details.

COMMON-SENSE REMINDERS FROM OUR ENERGY EFFICIENCY CO-ORDINATOR

- ◆ Do not open windows in winter without first turning the thermostat down.
- ◆ Turn down the thermostat when your home is empty, and at night.
- ◆ Put on a sweater before turning up the heat.
- ◆ When baking, do not pre-heat your oven for longer than necessary.
- ◆ Never use your oven as a home-heating device; this is a serious fire hazard.
- ◆ Do not use space heaters; report any heating problems immediately.

ABORIGINAL HOUSING SUPPORT CENTRE

The new AHSC Office at the Elm Centre is now open regularly from 9 to 5:00. The address is 106 Edward Street, right across from the bus depot. To book an appointment for help with a housing search, call 416-260-6011 or e-mail info@aboriginalhsc.org

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE UNITS

◆ Are you 59 years of age or older and of Aboriginal descent? Are you in a wheelchair, but able to live safely on your own? Are you looking for safe and affordable housing in downtown Toronto? Wigwamen may be able to help.

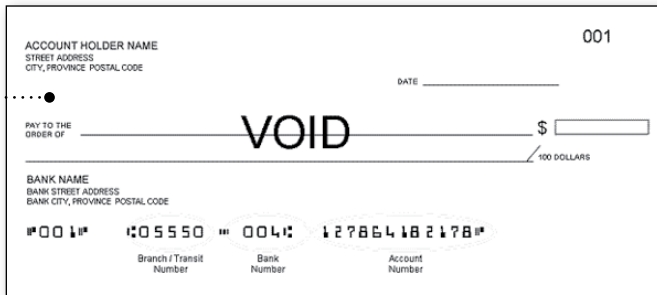


Contact the Property Manager at The Terrace for more information: Lisa Kristensen, 416-925-9165.



Pre-Authorized Payment: Pay Your Rent Automatically

◆ Did you know that you can save time, money, and hassles, by having your rent withdrawn from your bank account automatically at the beginning of each month? To sign up for Wigwamen’s Pre-Authorized Payment Program, call or e-mail Jodi at 416-481-4451 or jhetherington@wigwamen.com You will be asked to submit a “void” cheque and sign an authorization form.



For information about the following Wigwamen tenant programs and contests, call Head Office or e-mail Karen: kwatts@wigwamen.com

- ◆ GIFT BASKETS FOR NEW MOTHERS
- ◆ KIDS’ BOOK-OF-THE-MONTH
- ◆ BACK-TO-SCHOOL PACKS
- ◆ WIGWAMEN POST-SECONDARY SCHOLARSHIPS
- ◆ MONTHLY ZERO-BALANCE RAFFLE

As always, the Terrace Christmas Dinner was well attended and much appreciated.



Karen, ready to deliver the Dear Santa Program gifts for tenants’ children. Forty children signed up this year.

Plumbing Problems




◆ If you have a plumbing problem, please let Wigwamen know as soon as possible. It can be difficult to arrange for a plumber to come out late in the day or right at the end of the week, so the sooner you call the better. Some leaks can lead to mould problems inside walls or flooring. Also, the longer you wait, the more water is wasted. One drip per second wastes 21 litres of water per day.

WIGWAMEN MAINTENANCE

- ◆ If you have a maintenance issue, please contact your building manager. If you don’t have a building manager on site, please call Head Office – 416-481-4451.
- ◆ In event of an after-hours maintenance emergency – a flood, power-outage, or heating failure – call 416-481-4451 and Wigwamen’s Emergency Service will send help.

TO APPLY FOR WIGWAMEN HOUSING

Families & individuals of Aboriginal descent should fill out Wigwamen applications that are available: 

In person: at Head Office, at Wigwamen Terrace (14 Spadina), or 20 Sewells Road;
By mail: call 416-481-4451 to request; or
Online: at www.wigwamen.com

You must submit proof of legal status in Canada and a copy of either your Status Card or an Affidavit of Aboriginal Descent for Housing Purposes with your application. Affidavits can be obtained from Aboriginal Legal Services.

Non-Aboriginal Families & Individuals should fill out a Toronto Social Housing Connections application that is available:



In person: at Housing Connections, 176 Elm St., near Dundas & University;
By mail: call 416-981-6111 to request; or
Online: at www.housingconnections.ca

You must submit proof of legal status in Canada and your income with your application.

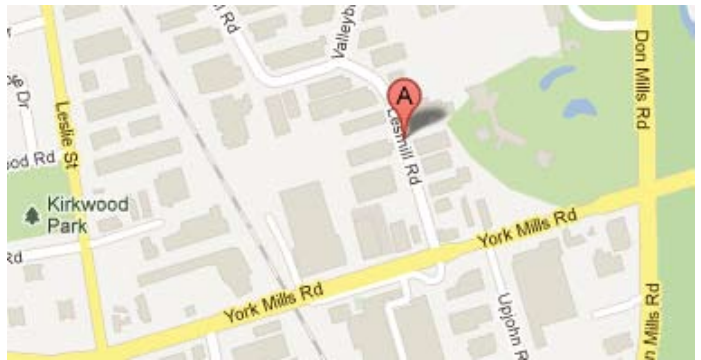
WIGWAMEN HOUSING

- ◆ **The Terrace (104 units for Aboriginal seniors)**
14 Spadina Road, Toronto, ON, M5R 3M4
- ◆ **20 Sewells Road (92 units for Aboriginal & non-Aboriginal individuals & families)** Toronto, ON, M1B 3G5
- ◆ **228 Galloway Road (60 units for individuals & families)** Scarborough, ON, M1E 5G6
- ◆ **Scattered Housing (for Aboriginal families)**
230 homes located throughout the GTA



Wigwamen Head Office

23 Lesmill Road, Suite 106
 Toronto, Ontario, M3B 3P6
 Tel: 416-481-4551
 Fax: 416-481-5002
 E-mail: info@wigwamen.com



23 Lesmill Road is located north of York Mills Road, between Leslie Street and Don Mills Road.

To get to Wigwamen's Head Office by TTC:

From York Mills Station take the 122 bus, which stops directly in front of the building; or any 95 bus, which all stop at Upjohn, just 200 metres south of Head Office. Alternately, from Pape Station, take the 25 Bus, get off at York Mills and transfer to a westbound bus, or walk west for about 5 minutes.

MEEGWETCH

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