



## DESPITE PANDEMIC, MEMBERS CONTINUE TO ACCESS SERVICES AND PROGRAMS WITHOUT INTERRUPTION

When the Covid-19 pandemic first hit two years ago, Progress Place responded quickly by revamping the way it delivers its services. Thanks to virtual, online platforms and committed staff, members were able to access daily programs and meals without interruption throughout the pandemic.

We recently spoke to members of Progress Place, to ask them about their experiences with virtual programs and other services that they found most helpful during this unprecedented time – and what they are looking forward to in the future.

### Lisa, Member, Progress Place

When Lisa joined Progress Place in person about one month prior to the Covid-19 lockdowns, she wasn't sure she would continue. She felt nervous and lost. Once she started participating in programs online, she says she became firmly committed and continues to attend most programs and meetings offered virtually.



“Being a member has given me structure in my day,” she says. “I feel like I’ve come alive.” She works a couple of days a week doing reception and clerical work for the clubhouse and says she has learned valuable, new desktop skills. She says she loves participating. “I’m learning all kinds of things.”

“Being a member has given me structure in my day ... I feel like I’ve come alive.”

While she enjoys all the programs, she has found the health and wellness meetings, as well as the exercise and yoga classes, especially helpful. The Freedom From Smoking program has helped her to stop smoking for the past several months. Lisa has also started journaling, and has found this very useful in helping her to keep on track with all her daily activities. The programs have given her the opportunity to forge new friendships.

Looking ahead, Lisa is eager to see more fellow Progress Place members in person and to attend the organization's social events. She would like to see the virtual option continued permanently, so members have a choice, especially since transit costs can limit in-person attendance.

# PROGRESS PLACE AWARDED HIGHEST LEVEL OF ACCREDITATION

As a member of the international Clubhouse movement, Progress Place must be reaccredited every 3 years to ensure that we are meeting the high standards set by Clubhouse International. In December 2022, two representatives of Clubhouse International spent several days in Toronto reviewing all areas of the Clubhouse operations and meeting members, staff and the Board of Directors as part of their review.

In recognition of its strong rehabilitative environment and its commitment to excellence, Progress Place received a three-year Accreditation renewal – the highest level awarded – from Clubhouse International following the review.

The faculty had no recommendations for improvement and applauded Progress Place for the work that we are doing and the way we have been able to adapt and thrive during the pandemic.

This valued recognition is awarded only to clubhouses that closely adhere to the accredited recovery model standards, operate in a truly effective manner and provide excellent opportunities for clubhouse members. The review recognized the solid peer relationships that are fostered by the clubhouse community.

Criss Habal, Executive Director says, “We are thrilled to have received this level of accreditation and are grateful to our hard-working and dedicated staff, members and board who work hard to make the Progress Place community such a success.”



# VACCINE CLINICS OFFERED AT COMMUNITY PLACE HUB AT WESTON MOUNT DENNIS

Progress Place arranged for a Covid-19 vaccine clinic to be offered at the Community Place Hub at Weston Mount Dennis throughout March.

The pop-up clinic was available each Thursday, from 3:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and was made available through Toronto Public Health and the West Toronto Ontario Health Team.

Eligible people were able to get their first, second or third booster vaccines, including youngsters aged five to 11.

Earlier last year, we partnered with health professionals to offer vaccine clinics three times a week for interested Hub community members.

An estimated total of 20,000 people in the Weston Mount Dennis community have received their vaccinations at the Hub.

“We have been very pleased to help provide this extremely valuable service to the community,” says Progress Place Executive Director Criss Habal.

Spring 2022



**Community residents post messages after receiving their vaccine at the Community Place Hub.**



# WARM LINE RECEIVES RECORD-BREAKING NUMBER OF CALLS

Calls to the Progress Place Warm Line more than doubled over the past year, largely as a result of Covid-19 and its impacts on people's mental health.

An important mainstay of our services, the Warm Line provides peer support for callers who are feeling lonely, isolated, anxious, depressed, or in need of a friendly ear. It is a confidential and anonymous service for adults aged 18 and over.

To help better serve members and the broader community, Warm Line hours have been extended since the onset of the pandemic from noon to midnight, seven days a week.

The service typically receives between 10,000 and 11,000 calls per year. However, Executive Director Criss Habal expects numbers to increase to around 25,000.

"The Warm Line has been available for 27 years and this is the first time it has gained so much traction," Habal explains.

She says that in addition to calls from members – which generally account for about one-third of the calls – the line also received calls from across the country – from as far away as Nova Scotia, Alberta, British Columbia and Newfoundland – to name a few.

These included queries from stressed Personal Support Workers working in long-term care, as well as parents looking after their children at home during lockdown. The Warm Line partnered with Wellness Together Canada as a pilot and is available Canada-wide between 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. EST at 1 888 768-2488.

Habal says she has received calls from other organizers across the country who are looking for information and advice on setting up a similar program.

Going forward, it is hoped that more supporter donations will help keep the Warm Line's extended hours intact.

The Warm Line can be reached at 416-960-9276, via online chat at [www.warmline.ca](http://www.warmline.ca), or via text at 647-557-5882.

## Glynnis, Member, Progress Place

A member of Progress Place for 27 years, Glynnis enjoys attending programs and has regularly used the Warm Line since its inception. Progress Place introduced the Warm Line in 1995 to provide peer support for callers who are feeling lonely, isolated, anxious, depressed, or in need of a friendly ear.

"I feel so blessed that Progress Place has the Warm Line – it is the best service ever," she says. When the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns hit in 2020, the Warm Line



**"The Warm Line is the best thing that ever happened to me."**

hours were extended (see related story) from four to 12 hours a day, something that Glynnis found extremely helpful. "I started calling several times a day," she explains. "Otherwise, I feel lonely and frustrated. I like to talk about my day, my problems and the Warm Line staff are good to speak with, they are supportive, nice – and they listen. They always seem happy to speak with me."

Going forward, Glynnis says she would love to see the extended hours made permanent and would ideally like to see more lines and/or people added to handle the calls.

"The Warm Line is the best thing that ever happened to me," she says.

# SHINING A LIGHT ON MENTAL HEALTH: JO MALONE LONDON LAUNCHES CANDLE IN SUPPORT OF PROGRESS PLACE

## **An exciting announcement from partner, Jo Malone London:**

Jo Malone London's mission has always been to create products that make people feel good, physically and emotionally. For almost 10 years, we have supported those struggling with mental health through our UK charity programme, empowering people to recover, reconnect and grow.

In June 2022, we are extending our mission to Canada with a new partnership with Progress Place, a leading mental health organisation. For more than 35 years, Progress Place has empowered people to live and thrive in society.

Jo Malone London will support Progress Place with the launch of our White Lilac & Rhubarb Charity Home Candle. For each White Lilac & Rhubarb Charity Home Candle sold in Canada, Jo Malone London will donate 70% of the purchase price, less tax (between summer of 2022 to summer of 2023) to Progress Place, supporting the development of their indoor vertical garden project which will provide members of Progress Place with fresh organic produce such as a daily fresh salad.

Criss Habal, Executive Director of Progress Place stated, "we



**Proceeds of Jo Malone London White Lilac & Rhubarb Charity Home Candle to benefit Progress Place.**

are so grateful to Jo Malone London for helping us make our dream of having a garden in the City of Toronto a reality. We will be able to grow our very own herbs, and vegetables in our new state of the art vertical garden, which will definitely contribute to the overall health and wellness of members."

'The need to address mental health problems and normalise conversations around those that may be living with painful personal challenges is more important than ever. We are delighted to announce our partnership with Progress Place, expanding our commitments and our Charity Candle initiative to Canada.

Progress Place is leading the way in encouraging conversations and offering people living with mental health issues, much needed support. Its focus on mental and physical health and supporting vulnerable members of the community aligns perfectly with Jo Malone London's mission to stamp out stigmas around mental health, encouraging people to grow and reconnect. Together we hope to shine a light on mental health.'

- **Guillaume Trottier, Jo Malone London Global Brand President**

## MAKE THE CONNECTION: HOW YOU CAN HELP

Member stories like those from Lisa and Glynnis highlight the critical need to ensure Progress Place's services continue to be accessible with in-person, virtual and extended hour options for the most vulnerable members of our community, when they need help the most.

But we can't do it alone. Please donate to ensure Progress Place can continue providing extended hours for the Warm Line, as well as virtual programming and support options for those who may find it difficult at times to participate in-person.

Please help *Make the Connection* with your kind gift, ensuring that all people living with mental illness have the opportunity for full recovery.

**Visit [progressplace.org](https://progressplace.org) to donate.**

Progress Place staff can be reached by phone at 416.323.0223, Monday to Friday, 8:00 AM-5:00 PM, if you have any questions or need assistance.

Stay up to date by visiting [progressplace.org](https://progressplace.org) or by following us on social media:



**PROGRESS  
PLACE**  
MENTAL WELLNESS

### CONTACT US

Mail: 576 Church Street Toronto ON M4Y 2E3

Phone: 416.323.0223 Fax: 416.323.9843

Email: [theclub@progressplace.org](mailto:theclub@progressplace.org)

Web: [www.progressplace.org](http://www.progressplace.org)

Registered Charity: 10786 1155 RR0001