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Two tired travel

Cyclists share their love of riding

Many of us remember the thrill of riding a bike as a child—the exhilaration and newfound independence we felt tooling around our neighborhood. That sense of freedom—along with the very practical benefits of cycling as a mode of transportation—inspires many adults to continue to cycle.

Yvonne, a tenant at the Blossom Park Townhomes in Woodstock for over 10 years, has enjoyed cycling since she was a child.

“My dad is Dutch, so he always gave us bikes,” she says. As a young adult, Yvonne was a member of the Christian International Cycling Club in BC.

“I wanted to be where it was flat, so I came back to Ontario,” she jokes. She uses her bike for shopping trips, as well as for pleasure. “It’s fun to go with a friend, enjoy the scenery, stop for a drink,” she says. “You feel so strong after a ride, just happy!”

Kerry, a tenant at Woodfield Gate in London since 2019, is also an avid cyclist. Last year, he made five day-long trips of over 200 kilometres to different towns across Southwestern Ontario. He hopes to make a multi-day trip to Montreal this summer.

“You’re in your own world when you’re out there on the highway and taking in the scenery,” he says. “I’m pro-green. I’m not really one for cars.”

Very few Indwell tenants own cars, so alternate modes of transportation are essential. Indwell supports cycling by providing safe places to store bicycles, and sometimes lending bike locks to tenants. Many staff bike to work, and some will occasionally take a ride with a tenant as a way of connecting. Recently, a generous friend of Indwell gave funds to build a secure bike storage space at Blossom Park, and both tenants and staff are looking forward to having a safe place to store their bikes.

At Woodfield Gate, a bike share program is launching this spring, thanks to a grant from the London Environmental Network (a similar program has been instituted at Hamilton’s Wentworth program through SoBi Hamilton). Two bicycles will be available for tenants to borrow, making it even easier to cycle for fun, errands, or both.

Next year, when Embassy Commons opens in London, one of the commercial tenants will be the Squeaky Wheel Bicycle Co-op. Luis Patricio is the Board Chair for the London Cycle Link, the nonprofit organization that runs the co-op as a social enterprise.

Luis sees the alignment of mission between Indwell and the London Cycle Link as a key reason for their move to Embassy Commons.

“We both want to create a city where everyone can be their best,” he says. “Mobility and housing are fundamental human needs.”

Luis is also a dedicated cyclist, who uses his cargo bike to traverse the city and transport his young children to daycare and elsewhere.

“My window into cycling started when I moved to a new city,” he says. “With a bike, I could learn my city slowly. But then I also realized that I was saving money, getting healthier, and living more sustainably. To me, cycling is the main tool to transform our cities into better, more inclusive, resilient places.”



Kerry, from Indwell's Woodfield Gate in London, rides his bike just east of Thamesford on one of his day-long trips last summer.



Luis, board chair of London Cycle Link, using his cargo bike to deliver meals to agencies distributing food to those in need during the pandemic. London Cycle Link will be renting out space at Indwell's Embassy Commons (opening next year) to run the Squeaky Wheel Bicycle Co-op.

Volunteers bring change, creatively

Every April we, along with organizations across the country, dedicate a week to celebrating and honoring our volunteers. This year's theme was “volunteers bring change.”

As one might imagine, volunteering in a pandemic is somewhat of a challenge. While volunteering did look very different this past year, half our volunteers still found ways to make a meaningful impact in our staff and tenants' lives.

Even from a distance, these incredible people stepped up and supported our tenants through letters, phone calls, and videos. Thanks to technology, our board and committee meetings continued virtually, and our building maintenance volunteers adjusted to work safely—including preparing apartments for incoming tenants at our newly opened buildings in Hamilton, North End Landing and McQuesten Lofts.

Check out more of their stories on our Facebook and Instagram pages.



Led by Jody O'Neil (R), volunteers from OWL (Oxford Wholesale Lumber) Distribution Inc. have been organizing office events to raise money for Indwell since 2017. The funds raised are then used to bring opportunities and events to the tenants at Blossom Park.

Despite not being able to volunteer in-person, Jody and the team at OWL (pictured here pre-pandemic) continue to raise funds for the folks at Blossom Park. They look forward to returning and planning some exciting events when we can all come together again.



“When we provide stable, supportive, and deeply affordable housing in our neighbourhoods, we're not only assisting people to get back on their feet and live healthier lives, we're building stronger communities all around.” - Ann De Bono, Indwell Capital Campaign in London

Ann De Bono is a member of the Indwell Capital Campaign in London—a group of Londoners who are committed to helping their neighbours who are struggling with precarious housing. They meet monthly to exchange ideas about how to financially support the Indwell projects in London.



Tenants from Hamilton's Wentworth program writing letters to support a student-run mental health initiative—have spent the last academic year at Wentworth.

Indwell creates affordable housing communities, currently supporting more than 700 people seeking health, wellness, and belonging.

McQuesten Lofts: new homes and new hope

In December 2020—just before Christmas—the first of 50 tenants began to move into their new homes. Earlier in the year, as the pandemic loomed, no one was sure that even essential construction would be able to continue. Would all our active sites need to shut down? What would happen to those who were counting on these homes? Thankfully, construction continued, and the two buildings we had anticipated opening in 2020—both in Hamilton—opened very close to schedule: North End Landing (which we highlighted in our last newsletter) and McQuesten Lofts.

In the shadow of Hamilton's vibrant industrial sector, the exterior of McQuesten Lofts is a nod to shipping containers that come in and out of the harbour. The building itself, as with all of Indwell's recent construction, is highly energy efficient—built to the rigorous passive house standard. The 50 one-bedroom units include 10 that are barrier-free. The beautifully landscaped outdoor spaces are shared by the 57 tenants at adjacent Parkdale Landing.

And it's the tenants that we especially want to celebrate. In this program, we've reserved 10 units (20%) for Indigenous peoples. Through new partnerships with HRIC (Hamilton Regional Indian Centre) and the Aboriginal Health Centre (De dwa da dehs nye>s), tenants are being referred to McQuesten Lofts, and receive additional supports as needed.



Visit to indwell.ca/McQuesten for an introduction to a few staff members, a sneak peek at an apartment, and a quick tour of some of the common spaces.



Outdoor common space at McQuesten Lofts, shared with tenants from Parkdale Landing

"I felt welcome with an open heart at McQuesten Lofts, and I love my new apartment," says Marvin, who moved in this past April.

"I have my own things such as a stove, oven, and fridge, and I enjoy a nice clean and new place to live. I also have the space to cook my favourite foods. I like having the opportunity to talk with staff when I am feeling sad. I feel safe here."

The Hamilton Public Library, on the main floor of McQuesten Lofts, has delayed their opening until restrictions lift. They look forward to serving the immediate Indwell community as well as the McQuesten neighbourhood in the 1,500 square foot Parkdale branch with wi-fi, public computers and printers, meeting spaces, a children's area, and a location-based collection of new and bestseller books, music, and movies.



Marvin and his dog Sophie. "Living at McQuesten lofts allowed me to be reunited with my longtime companion, my dog Sophie," says Marvin. "I was separated from Sophie because my old house did not allow me to have her live with me."

"During our pre-pandemic, in-person events, we saw how much the tenants enjoyed the support and companionship. With the onset of the pandemic, we realized that many tenants are experiencing increased isolation and loneliness, which further motivated us to initiate the letter writing program." – Nima and Annie, COPE



"My hope in leading this group is to give to others what has so unselfishly been given to me over 34 years in a fellowship that has saved my life and given me the tools to change who I am. If I'm only a small part of someone else's recovery in life, I've succeeded in using those tools to help others." – Dave

back to volunteers. Volunteers from COPE McMaster – a pandemic year writing letters back and forth to Indwell residents at

Dave Connolly (L) has been volunteering at Hambleton Hall in Simcoe since June of 2020, co-leading a recovery group with Addiction Support Worker Tom Morrison. Though the pandemic has impacted how groups are run, they have continued to walk alongside and support people in their recovery journey.

The Big Question: “What can I do?”

This past year has been exceptionally difficult for so many. At Indwell, we are incredibly grateful for you, our caring support community, and each volunteer and donor who stepped up to make sure that our tenants weren't left behind.

Your support has enabled us to employ new safeguards and procedures that help keep our tenants—and those who support them—healthy, as we continue to navigate through these challenging times.

These include:

- Supplementing our nursing, housing support, and addictions support staff
- Making changes to our food security programs, including door-to-door meal delivery
- Purchasing technology so tenants can connect with their professional and personal supports
- Investing in PPE
- Enhancing our cleaning and sanitizing protocols
- And so much more

With a gift to our COVID-19 Tenant Support Fund, you ensure that these supports continue, even while we all transition to the next phases of recovery. You're investing in a stronger, healthier future for our tenants.

This year's virtual gala has been postponed to **Thursday, September 23**.
Save the date and visit **indwell.ca/road-trip** for more details!

Have more questions?
Send us an email: info@indwell.ca

Cut off and return to Indwell



☒ I will support Indwell's tenants by donating to the COVID-19 Tenant Support Fund

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