



Jessica Mostert-Thiessen, Indwell's program manager in St Thomas (pictured here at the groundbreaking celebration for Indwell's second project—at Queen St in St Thomas), worked in the shelter system before coming to Indwell. In the Community mini-series, which Indwell premiered at our Virtual Road Trip in September, she shares about the impacts of opening a new program.

It takes a community

The ancient Hebrew book of Nehemiah records the story of a community coming together to rebuild a city. Much like the rebuilding of Jerusalem, at Indwell our mission remains focused on "rebuilding" communities where people who have been oppressed by life experiences, chronic health issues, and injustices can experience health, wellness, and belonging.

In working alongside individuals with housing affordability, mental health, and (for some of our tenants) addictions challenges, we've seen again and again that putting a roof over one's head is only the beginning of their journey towards wellness. Like Nehemiah faced opposition in the rebuilding of Jerusalem, there are obstacles—both systemically and individually—that we and our tenants face in this endeavour.

We explored some of these obstacles—and solutions—in our *Community* mini-series which we aired in September at our Virtual Road Trip (see page 2 for information on how to watch).

A crack in the foundation

The ongoing housing crisis has become both amplified and underscored by our current pandemic. And it's not just urban areas that are affected—small towns and rural areas are suffering too.

As if finding an affordable place to live during a global health crisis wasn't enough of a challenge for people, there's been a second pandemic brewing all throughout these last 20+ months. The opioid crisis—which has claimed the lives of too many within our communities—has been exacerbated by the aforementioned housing emergency, compounding the despair of an already desperate situation.

"This is values in action, right here. When we put those shovels in the ground we're staking our claim that we want something better for all of us."

- JEFF NEVEN AT ST THOMAS GROUNDBREAKING

What the world needs

So, is there good news in all of this?

First, we need to take a step back and look at the big picture. We provide more than the basics:

- 1) A safe place to live
- 2) Tenant-centred supports
- 3) Stability

Okay, the first two are probably obvious, but what about stability? How do we provide stability in a world that is anything *but* stable?

Without discounting the fragility of people's mental health, essentially it comes down to community: building relationships—grounded in the firm and steady hope modelled by Jesus—that bring out the best in every person.

We must remember that building life-giving relationships takes time—but it's worth the effort. Every win matters.

The good work is the hard work

Here's an example.

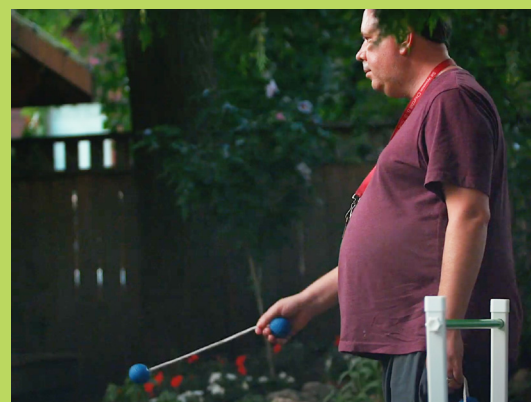
In St. Thomas just this fall, 15 people came out of homelessness and precarious housing situations and now have a safe place to live. That's no small step—it's a *huge* step—but there will likely be "*two steps forward, one step back*" events for some of these individuals in the coming weeks and months.

Does that negate the hard work that each one is doing, and that the people around them are doing to support them? Certainly not! Just like Nehemiah, we continue to trust God and love our neighbours while focusing on the goal: life-giving community.



› Scan to watch the
Community mini-series
that was aired at our
Virtual Road Trip at
indwell.ca/community

With a grant from the TD Ready Commitment fund, our Hamilton Apartment and Wentworth programs were able to invest in wellness programs for tenants, including recreation.



A part of something greater

Summer employees reflect on their experiences

It was a blessing learning how to serve those who see life differently than I do, reminding me about what is really important in this world. This program is doing very impactful work to enhance the wellbeing of residents, and I felt honored to witness it up close. I learned so many new skills, grew in creative problem solving, and built deep friendships along the way.

Chloe

Community Coordinator at Wentworth Program in Hamilton

Joining Indwell's team and learning their vision to provide hope and homes gave me a sense of purpose—waking up every day knowing that I'm making people's lives better. I've learned a great deal about different mechanical systems and maintenance from my work with the Southwest facilities team. Indwell is not only providing hope and homes for its tenants, but also for its employees. I found hope in all the smiles and welcoming attitudes—from both employees and tenants. I found a home in the sense of belonging. Working for Indwell was a meaningful experience that I will never forget.

Ashraf

Facilities Maintenance Coordinator, Southwestern Ontario

The staff and tenants at Indwell are amazing people that made me feel like I belonged. Working at Indwell has allowed me to grow personally as well as professionally. I'm grateful for everything this position has given me!

Rebecca

Community Coordinator at Blossom Park in Woodstock

Given the circumstances surrounding the pandemic, I was grateful for the opportunity to bring tenants together once again. My experience at Parkdale Landing taught me about resilience and the ability to support one another through

difficult times. I hope to incorporate these practices of working in a supportive community into my personal and professional journey.

Annemarie

Community and Housing Support Worker at Parkdale Landing in Hamilton

Working at Indwell not only provided me with tangible job experience, but it also gave me an opportunity to contribute to something greater in my community. I had a chance to work on some amazing projects, and have walked away with a strong vision for my future.

Alyssa

Communications Assistant, Hamilton



Ashraf helps with maintenance at an Indwell apartment.



Chloe takes a selfie with tenants at the bus stop.

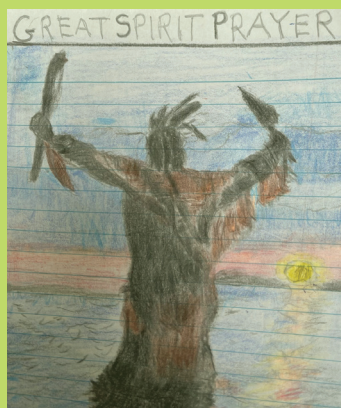


Virtual art show

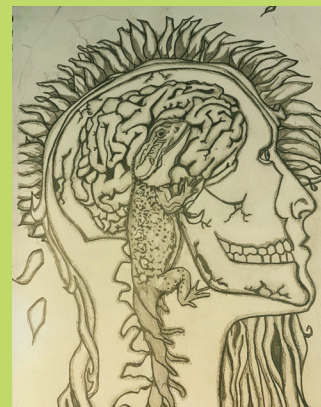
This past summer, tenants from across Indwell's programs were invited to submit some of their best artwork as part of an internal contest. The submissions were featured in a virtual art show, and the winning artwork will be used for greeting cards. Below are a few of the top entries. Thanks to all of those who shared their talent!



"Log Cabin Bears"
Janice Mawdsley



"Great Spirit Prayer"
Antonio



**"My Reptilian Brain -
Healing from Trauma"**
Marie Sinclair



› Scan to see
other entries
at indwell.ca/art-show-2021

Cut off and return to Indwell

**Count me in!
I want to make
hope and homes
a reality for more
people in Ontario.**



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FALL/WINTER 2021