



Laura Murk, Housing Support staff, opens the door to chat with a tenant during office hours at Rudy Hulst Commons in Hamilton.

A Day in the life of Housing Support staff

It's all about relationships!

By Laura Murk
Housing Support Staff, Hamilton Apartments Team

I've worked as Housing Support Staff with the Indwell Hamilton Apartments Team for about one year now. Having lived in Hamilton for the past 14 years, I'm very aware of the housing crisis we face, and I want my time and talents to make a difference.

The *support* in supportive housing is what separates Indwell from a lot of other housing initiatives. We believe the job isn't done when someone is merely housed, and we make a continuous effort to reestablish hope in people — to journey alongside individuals to see them reach a point of thriving in all areas of their life. My role is to help be a source of that hope, to meet people where they're at while also helping them see where they can go.

One of my favourite parts about my job is that each day varies depending on the needs of tenants and the program. My day often starts with "office hours," meaning my office door is open for tenants to come with questions or concerns, or just to chat. I'll often help people navigate day-to-day tasks, like accessing Ontario Disability Support Program payments, making doctor's appointments, and contacting our Facilities Team for apartment maintenance, just to name a few examples.

Growing up, my mom taught me the importance of community through tea parties and seasonal gatherings in our neighbourhood. Drawing from her inspiration, I organize social events for tenants, fostering informal and enjoyable connections with snacks, music, and crafts. This creative freedom in programming allows me to cater to each tenant's interests and needs.

"Some of us will never have to experience homelessness — or the threat of it — simply because we have a family member or friend that would provide a place for us if we lost ours."

Collaboration is a key part of supporting tenants well. Some of the challenges we see often involve individuals who face barriers in accessing different resources that are available to them within the community; barriers such as lack of knowledge or transportation. It can be hard for individuals to identify where they are struggling and

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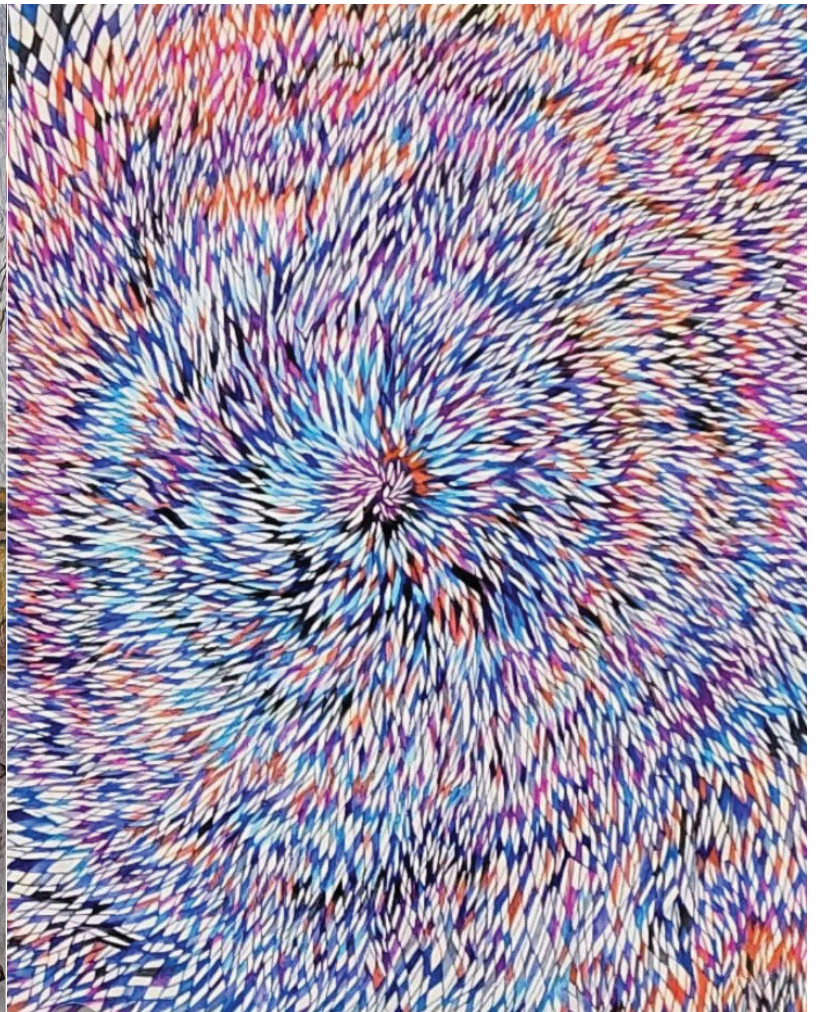
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seemingly small obstacles that are having a significant impact on their wellbeing. Thankfully, Indwell has many external partners available to help our tenants navigate through these obstacles. Indwell staff frequently serve as intermediaries, facilitating tenants' connections with specialists like the Crisis Outreach and Support Team, Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre, the Hamilton Regional Indian Centre, Helping Hands Street Mission, the SPCA, Housing Help Hamilton and many others — both in Hamilton and Indwell's other regions (it truly takes a village!). For example, we recently hosted tax clinics where the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton and Hamilton Tax Help helped tenants file their taxes for free.

One of the greatest problems I see in our world is lack of connectedness. Some of us will never have to experience homelessness — or the threat of it — simply because we have a family member or friend that would provide a place for us if we lost ours. Relationships are critical to wellness, and the supportive housing programs offered by Indwell help to establish and enhance life-giving relationships. It's so meaningful to be part of these journeys of hope. 🏠



Art at Indwell: creativity flourishes in a safe, welcoming space



Left: “Untitled” by Anonymous Artist, Robert Kerr Manor (Kitchener)

The artist was inspired by their love for American architecture, and specifically their favourite artist, Thomas Kinkade.

Right: “The Abyss Staring Back” by Brent, Lakeshore Lofts (Mississauga)

Brent was always interested in art. When he moved into an Indwell apartment, he found a safe, welcoming place to focus on creativity and now creates art in his apartment, as well as in the bright and spacious sunroom at Lakeshore Lofts.

Volunteers: fostering health, wellness and belonging



Ken Haagsma
Volunteer with Facilities Team at Woodfield Gate in London

"I've been aware of Indwell for many years, since it was still called Homestead. It wasn't until Indwell came to London that "hands on" volunteering became an option for me. I started with the Facilities Team in January 2023 and have been working alongside a great group of people ever since.

"I volunteer because I believe that the dignity, security and stability created by the supportive housing that Indwell provides is having a positive impact in my community."



Tanya and Martin Folkema
Volunteers at games night at Harvey Woods Lofts in Woodstock

"One of the things we love about Indwell is their value of community, so we decided to see how we might play a role. After coming out on Sunday afternoons, bringing baked goods to have tea and coffee with residents, it has become a bi-weekly tradition of playing cards, mostly Crazy Eights and Rummy.

"There is no shortage of laughter, sharing and friendly banter. We feel that every one of us experience the joy of connection at the card table."



Fred Spoelstra
Board of Directors, Volunteer with Facilities Team in Hamilton

"I was researching volunteer opportunities, came across an Indwell newsletter, and was immediately taken in. Serving Christ through service to the homeless through the development of supportive housing — wonderful!

"Volunteering with Facilities in Hamilton gave me opportunity to engage with Indwell tenants and work with wonderful people. Soon after, I joined the Indwell Board in a period of dynamic growth and have stayed with Indwell because I see the difference Indwell makes in the lives of tenants."



Crystal Armstrong
Volunteer with the baking group at the Perkins Centre in Hamilton

"I've had the pleasure of volunteering at Indwell's Perkins Centre for 12 years. For most of this time I've facilitated a baking group for residents on Monday afternoons. Tenants have taught me how to make pastry, and we've undertaken gluten-free baking to accommodate food sensitivities. Even if tenants can't attend the full baking session, many stop by to say hi and chat about how things are going.

"I see God working through the community of the baking group and the sense of belonging for all of us."



THANK YOU TO YOU ALL OUR WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS!
IF YOU'RE FEELING INSPIRED TO VOLUNTEER WITH INDWELL,
VISIT [INDWELL.CA/VOLUNTEER](https://indwell.ca/volunteer).

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS:

Hamilton

Thursday, June 6 - Hamilton Convention Centre

London

Wednesday, October 9 - Goodwill Industries Community Hall

Waterloo Region

Thursday, October 17 - Location TBD

Woodstock

Friday, November 1 - Maranatha Christian Reformed Church

Mississauga

Date and location TBD

UPCOMING GRAND OPENINGS:

Cornerstone Suites (Streetsville), Mississauga - Fall 2024

Magnolia Apartments, Kitchener - Early 2025



Visit indwell.ca/events
for registration details
and updates about
future Indwell events!



Over 120 guests filled the Royal Canadian Legion Building on April 11 to celebrate Indwell's supportive affordable housing in Norfolk County, as well as Indwell's 50th anniversary. Amanda, an Indwell tenant, baked a special anniversary cake and cupcakes for guests at the gala.

**For 50 years, Indwell has been providing supportive housing that transforms lives.
Every door we open together becomes a solution to homelessness.**

Indwell's communities support over 1,200 tenants in seven regions across Southern and Southwestern Ontario — with several projects currently in development. Indwell empowers tenants through a variety of supports to achieve health and wellness goals, to positively engage with their communities, and to maintain permanent, safe housing. Indwell's programming has proven effective, with 9 out of 10 tenants remaining with Indwell after their first year.

INDWELL

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