



"I was so close to being on the streets. You turned my life around."

Steven\* has loved biking since he was a young child - a way to exercise and escape from family life. In the summer of 2014, an ordinary bike ride for this young professional turned into a nightmare when he was hit by a car and assaulted by the driver.

"I had just been promoted to a cool new job as Project Manager in Risk Management a week before the accident," Steven said. "I had a great condo, a girlfriend and lots of friends."

Steven's accident resulted in a concussion, permanent vision damage, acquired brain injury, anxiety, memory loss and more. Everything changed for him after that.

He was let go from his new job three months after the accident without a compensation package.

"My savings went immediately to medical bills, rent, car payments and it quickly got overwhelming." By April 2015, Steven was evicted by his landlord, his girlfriend broke up with him, and he couldn't socialize with friends due to his sensitivity to light and sound.

*"I began living out of my car and sometimes staying at a shelter. I was scared out of my mind.*

*There was nowhere that I felt safe. Your mind goes crazy, self-esteem goes down, and I began to wonder if it was worth staying alive as nothing was working in my direction."*

Steven still remembers the day he was told Wesley could help him. "It was amazing" he said. "It was the first piece of good news I had heard in a year." A Wesley housing first worker helped him look at apartments, was a guarantor for his rent and a liaison with the landlord.

In December 2015, Steven moved into his own apartment and found stability, hope, safety and much needed quiet to help with his insomnia, migraines and anxiety.

Today, Steven continues to improve his well-being, independence and is working part-time with the goal of increasing to full-time. "It feels really good to have a home and to have come this far," Steven reflects. "Thanks for going the extra mile to help me and encouraging me to not give up."

\*Name changed to protect identity.

### Message from Daljit Garry Executive Director

As the popular Christmas song reminds us, it really is "the most wonderful time of the year." It is a wonderful time at Wesley with so many ways to give back to our community and help individuals and families in need. Take Steven, one of the thousands of vulnerable individuals we support each year – including refugees, isolated seniors, low income families and the homeless.

This Christmas & Holiday season, please help offer critical life-changing supports to individuals like Steven! I can assure you that 100% of your holiday donation will help individuals and families experiencing great hardships and working to rebuild their lives.

Have a safe and joyful Christmas and Holiday!

Sincerely,



P.S. You can learn more about our programs, financial information and the people we help, with your support, in our new 2016-2017 Annual Report at wesley.ca/publications

# Raising the Roof Toque Campaign

*"The only thing more Canadian than a toque is the generosity of our people who understand that homelessness is unacceptable, and a problem that can be solved."*

Stephen Gaetz, Board President  
and Director of the Canadian  
Observatory on Homelessness



Help solve youth and adult  
homelessness in Hamilton by  
buying a toque, mittens or ball  
cap! Visit [wesley.ca](http://wesley.ca) or contact  
with [julia.zougas@wesley.ca](mailto:julia.zougas@wesley.ca) or  
905 528 5629 x 240

# A Christmas Miracle

The late Bob Harkness, one of our most dedicated lead volunteers for our Christmas & Holiday Store, passed away in January 2017 and will be forever missed at Wesley. Bob called the Store each year "a miracle" and indeed it is!

For more than 30 years, with dedicated volunteers like Bob at the helm, Wesley has run a very special Christmas & Holiday Store in Hamilton to help people living below the poverty line in our community celebrate the holidays without stress. Instead of using money, shoppers in our Christmas Store use points to redeem new gifts and food for their families.

Our Christmas & Holiday Store is unique as it accommodates all family compositions, including single adults, and offers a wide range of gifts for all ages as well as a fully-stocked grocery and non-perishable food section. Our Christmas Store has brand new gifts for children, adults, teens, seniors and more!



Wesley's Christmas & Holiday Store is different in that it allows participants to choose their own gifts, food and knitted items in a dignified shopping experience. We're very proud of the Christmas & Holiday Store, but its success relies on the generosity of donors and volunteers.

This year's Christmas & Holiday Store is located at 1974 King Street East (Pioneer Memorial United Church), which has HSR access and free parking.

If you'd like to help us out by making a donation, signing up as a volunteer or learning more about registration and eligibility for shopping at the Christmas Store, please visit [wesley.ca/xmas](http://wesley.ca/xmas) or directly contact the below staff.

**To Donate Food, Gifts or Financial Contributions:** [andrea.buttars@wesley.ca](mailto:andrea.buttars@wesley.ca)  
or 905 528 5629 x 248

**To Volunteer as a group or individual:** [julia.zougas@wesley.ca](mailto:julia.zougas@wesley.ca) or 905 528 5629 x 240

**To Register for the Program:** [raj.matharu@wesley.ca](mailto:raj.matharu@wesley.ca) or 905 528 5629 x 360



## 3rd Annual Dinner a Smashing Success!

We served an elegant dinner in October to Hamilton's most marginalized citizens at our 3rd Annual Gala Dinner. New this year, the Gala Dinner was NOSH Week's signature charity event.

The Wesley Gala Dinner is an annual event to honour all of the hard work and dedication that clients in our Housing & Homelessness programs have done in the past year. In many cases, these people are living on the street, battling illness and addiction or facing serious challenges in life.

Thank you to all of our dedicated volunteers, sponsors and staff who helped make the night such a success. Juno Award-winner Steve Strongman came out for a surprise performance, and chefs from Cake and Loaf, Jonny Blonde and Hambrgr collaborated with Wesley's chef Joe to put together a very memorable and delicious meal.

**Any businesses interested in becoming involved in 2018 are asked to contact [andrea.buttars@wesley.ca](mailto:andrea.buttars@wesley.ca) Photo credit: Eli Leavitt**