

Corktownner

WINTER EDITION

CORKTOWN'S SEASONAL NEWSPAPER

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Christmas at the Schoolhouse

by Alison Little, Site Coordinator at Enoch Turner Schoolhouse

With the arrival of fall, focus inevitably shifts towards the coming holiday season – especially in the minds of young children. In Victorian-era Toronto, students spent months preparing decorations and entertainment for that happily anticipated annual event - the Christmas pageant.

In Corktown, students at the Ward Street School (today Enoch Turner Schoolhouse) would have planned their Christmas pageant in tandem with the holiday services of Little Trinity Anglican Church. Though the neighbourhood and school were poor in funds, the community banded together to ensure that

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CHRISTMAS TREE AT WINDSOR CASTLE.—DRAWN BY J. L. WILLIAMS.—(SEE REEB PAGE)

Christmas tree at Windsor Castle from the Illustrated London News

Drawn by J.L. Williams (1848), Public Domain Picture

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Christmas was a sparkling occasion for children each year.

Built in 1848, the Ward Street School was the first free school in Toronto - students could attend classes without paying tuition, a unique opportunity presented by Enoch Turner (1792-1866) and members of Little Trinity Church. This meant, however, that less funding was available for special occasions at the School - the teachers were without the basic educational materials, even lacking a classroom globe. Turner offset some of these hardships - in November 1849, he held a massive roast beef supper for all students of the School, to ensure that the children had a proper holiday dinner. The celebration of Christmas each year, however, required extra planning and sacrifice from families in Corktown.

Throughout the fall, it was customary for common schools (today called public schools) to hold fundraisers for the annual Christmas pageant. Dances, boxed lunch auctions and

locally-made wares also found their way into the Christmas material hoard: a can of tin scraps, a few pieces of lumber, and a pile of rags would be transformed into the tinsel, stage and costumes so desperately desired by the children.

Decorations would have been handmade in Victorian-era Corktown, owing to the expense of store-bought ornaments. Chains and garlands made from fabric scraps would deck the School, with simple hoops or carefully-cut doll shapes. Scrapwork balls, snowflakes and stars made from card would add a colourful touch to the walls of the classroom, covering the maps and charts already filling the room. Decorations even involved a bit of fakery: paper cornucopias mimicked the real thing (in miniature), while dried peas dipped in red wax gave the look of fresh holly berries gleaming in the lamplight.

A Christmas tree might be obtained at great expense from a farmer at St. Lawrence Market, or from a relative

trees were an aspirational centrepiece in Toronto - certainly most of the poor families in Corktown would not have been able to afford the tree and decorations, but a community-funded tree at the School would have been possible.

With the decorations and tree assembled through considerable community effort, the teacher at the Ward Street School would turn her attention to the evening's entertainments. At a time when religion was a core component of educational curricula, Christmas celebrations would have been a major event in the school calendar. Rehearsals for the pageant would begin in class weeks prior to the event - roles were cast, and (as is often the case in modern times) costumes were constructed by parents at home. Material for the pageant would typically include dramatic and comic skits, recitations, drills and songs. Memorizing their lines became as much a part of the school day as spelling or geography - as always, repetition was the golden rule at Ward Street School.



Alison Little in costume, last year at the Schoolhouse

Image courtesy of Ontario Heritage Trust

baked good sales were just as much a part of the school calendar then as today. A few meagre pennies could buy the trimmings and treats which made the evening especially memorable for children. Parents would scrimp and save throughout the summer to provide a small donation to the school - allowing the Trustees to purchase nuts, fruit, or even boiled sweets for the children. With the majority of parents working in the factories of Corktown, bits and pieces of

living in the countryside. Christmas trees were a relatively new trend in Victorian-era Toronto, having been introduced gradually to British society gradually by German-born Queen Charlotte (1744-1818) in 1800 and Prince Albert (1819-61) in 1848. When the Illustrated London News printed an illustration of Queen Victoria and her family surrounding a decorated tree at Windsor Castle in December 1848, the trend exploded. By the mid-1850s,


The pageant would be the showcase of the event, but music and dance would also fill the evening - this was, after all, a party for parents as well as students. Desks would be pushed out of the way, and the classroom was transformed into a dance hall. The families of Ward Street School were Protestant Irish, and would have recalled the music and dances of their homeland at Christmastime. Country dances, such as the Roger de Coverley (famously danced at Fezziwig's party in Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, 1843) would have been well known by all.

The highlight of the evening would undoubtedly be the arrival of St. Nicholas - played by a parent or friend of the School, he would circulate through the audience and distribute the precious gifts to children. Again, simplicity reigned - oranges, sugar, nuts and sweets were gifted by the poor families of Victorian-era Corktown. These treats were rare and wonderful sights for children - a patch of bright colour in an otherwise grey and drab world.

With the pageant finished, often late at night, parents would gather up their children and toddle home to sleep. The teacher, exhausted from the effort of supervising the fundraising, production and performance of the pageant, could look forward to small gifts from her students' families - a supplement to the meagre income of teachers in the early days of the Toronto Board of Education (established in 1850). Though the Christmas pageant signalled the start of the Christmas holiday, most parents and children in Corktown would continue to rise early for work in the factories and manufacturing sites that filled the area. Celebrations and services at Little Trinity Church would then become the focus of the Christmas season, while a break from school lessons provided another treat to students. While some elements of Christmas at the Ward Street School seem aged and old-fashioned from today's vantage point - the mingling of excitement, anticipation, group effort and joy is still with us today.

Join Enoch Turner Schoolhouse as we celebrate the holidays with "Christmas at the Schoolhouse." This annual open house is on Sunday December 11, 2011 from 11am to 5pm. Come and visit our Victorian Christmas tree forest! Each tree will feature handmade Victorian ornaments, sponsored by local businesses - after the open house, the trees will be donated to the Salvation Army just in time for the holidays. If you are interested in becoming a Christmas tree sponsor, please contact Alison Little at 416-327-6997.

The open house will also feature craft demonstrations, live entertainment, carols, readings, and hot apple cider! Tickets are \$5 for adults, \$3 for seniors, students, and Enoch Turner Schoolhouse Foundation members, and will be available at the door. Call 416-327-6997 for more information.

Alison Little is the Site Coordinator at Enoch Turner Schoolhouse, located at 106 Trinity Street. 

Panforte

by Andrew Starling

From Sienna, Tuscany, panforte literally means 'strong bread' in Italian. It isn't really bread, or a cake, but more of a chewy dried fruit, nut, honey and spice confection. Think of it as an 800-year old powerbar recipe. The best powerbar you've ever had.

Normally it's eaten around Christmas, and served at the end of a meal with a glass of fortified wine. It's quite rich, so I like to cut the panforte into small cubes for snacking. But like potato chips, it's difficult to stop after one. It goes great with a cup of coffee to recharge the batteries mid-afternoon, or as mentioned, after dinner with port, sherry, or vin santo. I've never tried it with Grand Marnier or Drambuie, but I'm sure those would also work nicely.

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 300°F. Chop the toasted nuts coarsely. Butter and flour a 10-inch circular pan, or line the pan with a parchment paper base and collar. Mix the flour, cocoa, orange zest, fennel seeds, cinnamon and cloves in a large bowl. Add the toasted nuts and fruit and mix well.

In a saucepan melt the sugar, honey and syrup and simmer over medium heat until the mixture reaches 245°F on a candy thermometer. Then carefully pour it over all the other ingredients and stir to combine. Work fast — the mixture hardens in no time. Pour into the prepared pan. Dampen your fingers and press the raw panforte into the baking pan.

Bake for about 30 minutes until the panforte puffs up a bit. Place the pan on a rack to cool.

The beauty of panforte is you can experiment with different combinations of dried fruit, nuts, and spices. Make the recipe your own and break it out for the holidays.



INGREDIENTS

- » 1 cup toasted almonds
- » 1 cup toasted cashews
- » 2/3 cup all-purpose flour
- » 2 tbs cocoa powder
- » Zest of 1 orange
- » 1 tbs fennel seeds, grind half, leave half whole
- » 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- » 1/8 tsp ground cloves
- » 2 cups dried figs, chopped
- » 1/2 cup sweetened dried cranberries
- » 2/3 cup sugar
- » 1/4 cup honey
- » 1/4 cup corn syrup or treacle

Corktown Online

Our website was just relaunched to make it easier for us to provide more timely updates to the community. This will increasingly important as the neighbourhoods of Regent Park and the West Don Lands are developed.

For the latest updates please visit:

Website

www.corktown.ca

Forum

<http://groups.google.com/group/corktown>

Twitter

<http://twitter.com/CorktownTO>

email

info@corktown.ca

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Company Name (if applicable)

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Phone | Home

Phone | Business

E-mail

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- \$24 Business

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Please mail this completed form to the above address. Corktown board meetings are held at 7:00 p.m., on the first Tuesday of every month except August, in the back-room of the Dominion on Queen at Queen & Sumach. Come out and support your community. All residents and business owners are welcome.

Methadone Clinic Stopped in South Cabbagetown!

By Francine Barry

Corktown's methadone clinic at Trinity and King, operating since 2007, should be the last one of its kind in Ward 28 if MPP Glen Murray keeps his word. On October 13, about 300 people crowded into 500 Dundas Street East to protest the opening of yet another big box meth business in the community. The proposed site was to be that of the once infamous Soupy's Tavern at the corner of Dundas and Ontario Streets.

Our lower east-side area is already well-served by four methadone clinics. According to former CRBA president Suzanne Edmonds, these clinics are "wonderful cash cows" for the operators. There are no restrictions as to where they can be situated, despite the Provincial Methadone Task Force recommendations of 2007.

.....

51 Division police say the operator has clinics in other cities where loitering and drug dealing jeopardize the safety of residents.

With only a few days' notice, Cabbagetown South Residents' Association under the direction of president Patricia Smith, quickly sent out a community alert. Residents, members and allies scrambled to present a cohesive opposition to this clinic at the October 13th meeting. However, a couple of minutes into the meeting, Glen Murray told the jubilant crowd that the deal was off, and there would be no more of these clinics in our ward.

Finally a politician who gets it!

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Community Police Liaison Committee Report

by Danica (Donna) Keravica

Community Police Liaison Committees (CPLC) are made up of community volunteers and police service representatives from the local division's geographic area. Each committee reflects the demographics of the local community. Community members and police representatives work together, identifying, prioritizing and helping to solve local policing issues. All CPLC committees act as a resource for both the police and community members.

All 17 police divisions in the City of Toronto, including Traffic Services, have a CPLC to provide advice and assistance

to the local Unit Commander and to work in partnership with local police towards a safe and secure community. Most meet once a month.

Update from October's Meeting

.....
Good news from 51 Division who report that all crime indicators were negative over this time last year!

Also, a spirited discussion took place with the application for a methadone clinic at 376 Dundas Street (Cabbagetown South). Apparently a lease was signed and pamphlets were printed, which were shared at the meeting. It was explained that this would be the seventh clinic in the Division. The 51 Division Police Officers who were present explained that a staggering 21% of all violent crime in the Division occurs in the Dundas/Ontario area, and that the

corner of Dundas and Sherbourne is the most violent in Canada.

On October 13th, the Cabbagetown South Residents' Association rallied support to the "Stop the Methadone Clinic." Mere minutes after the meeting started, MPP Glen Murray announced the project would not be happening. The decision was met with both cheers and jeers, as residents and community activists disagreed about this contentious issue. For the full story see page 4.

The Third Annual CPLC Building Bridges Gala was held on November 10, at Corus Entertainment in partnership with George Brown College. This Cocktail Reception Gala was held to raise funds for scholarships for urban youth to attend GBC. There was a stellar line up this year, including catering by Jamie Kennedy; a fashion show featuring both established and up-and-coming fashion designers; a silent auction and a 'living art wall' to be created over the course of the evening. A terrific event for a very worthy cause!

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Blurry Vision: the Regent Park Debate

By Ryan Kohls, Ryerson Journalist

As Regent Park enters the second, and largest, phase of its one billion dollar facelift, many fear that history is about to repeat itself.

The 15-year revitalization project, which consists of six phases, is beginning its southward expansion. With development approaching Shuter Street, and the Corktown neighbourhood, residents are voicing their concerns.

“If you look at what’s happening in the city today the mayor’s saying cut back 10 per cent on everything. They seem to be good at getting money to demolish and build new buildings, but I don’t think they’ve considered how they’ll maintain it 10 years from now,” says Bill Eadie, a resident of Shuter Street since 1983.

Considering the former Regent Park declined into a dilapidated ghetto, the revitalization project, which began in 2004, faces public scrutiny as many Torontonians watch to see if the project succeeds.

When it was first constructed in the 1940’s, Regent Park was the largest social housing experiment in Canadian history with all tenants dependent on subsidized Toronto Community Housing. The project was a complete failure largely due to the City’s inability to maintain the buildings. As the site rotted so too did the community, with crime and drugs becoming notable fixtures.

With hopes of reviving the community, the City is now aiming to shift the subsidized housing ratio to 44 per cent while adding market condos and houses. “Toronto Community Housing’s vision for revitalization goes beyond replacing housing. Our goal is to transform communities to build great neighbourhoods for everyone, based on the tried and true mixed-income approach that is so successful elsewhere in Toronto,” said Kyle Rooks, the media relations consultant for Toronto Community Housing.



What will become of Block 23? So far we don’t know.

The revitalization of Regent Park is a dual partnership between the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) and the Daniels Corporation. Some see the City’s oversight of both corporations as cause for alarm.

“The City is acting as a planning authority, but on the other hand they are also the developer. There’s a conflict of interest,” says Eadie. “There’s no one questioning the planning at Regent Park.”

Earlier this year the TCHC declared a state of crisis with 650 million dollars in backlogged repair fees. Despite selling off many units to deal with the financial woes, the TCHC will construct hundreds of units in Regent Park.

Shuter Street resident, Claudio Degrano, believes that the TCHC is mishandling funds. “The sale of Toronto Housing units all over the city has created 40 million dollars... Couldn’t that money have been better used to fix up the sad state of current community housing?” he said.

Shawn McIntyre, a Regent Park specialist and assistant to City Councilor Pam McConnell, thinks the projects mixed-income model will help sustain the neighbourhood. “We need a sense of pride and ownership of property. It wasn’t like that in the former Regent Park when it came to up keeping properties. People got discouraged and stopped caring about litter,” said McIntyre. “If you bring a neighbourhood up to where it’s proud of it, and has financial and social capital to tap into, we think it’s a recipe for success.”

James Caldwell, a Corktown resident and member of the Residents and Business Association, believes that community housing is destined for failure regardless of its surroundings. “The best business policies for change have the stakeholders having a say, but we don’t do this for housing. Why are we giving everything away for free? You’ve got to earn a little bit of what you get,” he said.

Sean Purdy is a professor of history at the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil. In 2003, Purdy, a Canadian citizen, wrote his doctoral thesis at Queen’s University on the failure of Regent Park. He is convinced that the revitalization will suffer similar problems. “Redevelopment proponents willfully ignore how declining funds for education and social assistance, lack of child care, a precarious job market, racism and social stigmatization restrict the opportunities of public housing residents,” said Purdy via email. “I don’t believe in the merits of mixed-income schemes: the poor don’t need “role models” from the middle class. What they need are good jobs, education, and decent, affordable housing,” he added.

Despite contrasting viewpoints on Regent Park’s revitalization, the construction is moving along at full steam.

Trap Neuter Release Clinic at Toronto Humane Society

by Kali Hewitt-Blackie

*My partner David and I own
The Percy Bed & Breakfast which is
on a quiet laneway tucked away just
north of the Distillery District, and
south off of King Street.*

All the neighbours on Percy Street share responsibility for feeding the feral cats and kittens who live in our backyards. A couple of months ago, two of the mother cats each had litters and suddenly we had 11 kittens and two moms, all of whom were showing up daily to be fed.

Through the Annex cat rescue people, we discovered the Toronto Humane Society Trap Neuter Release (TNR) Program which is entirely staffed by volunteer veterinarians, technicians and members of the THS, TNR taskforce and the Toronto Feral Cat Coalition. All of these people are devoted to improving the lives of street cats and assisting colony caretakers with their trap/neuter/release efforts. They offer two free feral spay clinics per month – spaying 30-45 cats and kittens per clinic. Since beginning last fall, they have sterilized over 400 cats. This program also offers shelter-building workshops to bring colony-caretakers and volunteers together to build over-wintering shelters for colonies in need.

A year and a half ago the Toronto Feral Cat TNR Coalition was formed to address the serious feral cat over-population in our city. This coalition works to sterilize feral colonies and increase the welfare of these homeless cats. The coalition is made up of Toronto Animal Services, the Toronto Humane Society, the Toronto Feral Cat Project, Annex Cat Rescue, Toronto Cat Rescue, Action Volunteers for Animals, Urban Cat Relief, the OSPCA and Animal Alliance.

The first weekend of July, I rented three traps from the Toronto Humane Society and two dog carriers from the Bay Cat Hospital. We borrowed two more traps from friends. From Friday afternoon to Saturday night we managed to round up

all 11 kittens and one of the mother cats. The grey mom was crafty and avoided the trap.

What really impressed me most about the TNR clinic people was their dedication and care. They are determined to help keep the feral colonies in Toronto under control. After our kittens and the mom were fixed, they were released into my care where they stayed for a week of recovery. The vets separated out the kittens into batches: “too feral” and “nice kittens”. The first batch was released happily into the backyards of the Percy street residents to live out their lives in their natural environment while the other kittens found homes. The Toronto Humane Society has an adoption program that took the last kitten in to their care to find a family.

.....
*I cannot thank all the TNR volunteer staff
enough for their kindness and generosity in
helping us sort our feral colony in a humane
and compassionate way.*

This program is run solely on donations and the good heartedness of volunteers. Please give to the Toronto Humane Society this year, and ear-mark your donation for the TNR clinic.



Captured. Kittens joining the TNR program



Volunteers and Percy Street residents on the prowl

Filming in Corktown

*On behalf of the
Corktown Residents and
Business Association
(CRBA) – Welcome to
Corktown!*

As you may know, Corktown is a place in Toronto where the oldest meets the newest. We contain the site of the first parliament of Canada, the east edge of Old Town Toronto, the original 10 blocks of the Town, the remnants of old workers houses famous for housing immigrant Irish workers many of who were employed in the breweries and distillery active in the early days of the City.

We also contain the sites of the newest focus of urban development in the City, including the East Bayfront, West Don Lands and the athlete's village for the 2015 PanAm Games.

The CRBA is a non-profit community organization dedicated to preserving the Corktown history, beautifying our streets, promoting local business, welcoming the new, and to making Corktown a great place to live and visit. As a non-profit composed fully of volunteers, we rely on donations and memberships to fund our various initiatives and cover our operating costs.

A donation from your company would be greatly appreciated. Any donated funds are fully invested back into our little slice of Toronto.

Thank you,
CRBA Film Liaison,
filming@corktown.ca

Write for the Corktownner

We want to hear from you! Residents and business owners are encouraged to submit articles of interest for publication in the newsletter. Submit your articles for The Corktownner to: info@corktown.ca. All submissions may be subject to editing.

Advertise in the Corktownner

The Corktownner was recently redesigned by a few of our industrious members on the CRBA Board. Our newsletter is published quarterly, and distributed to all homes and businesses within the Corktown area. This area spans from the DVP on the east, to Berkeley Street on the west; and from the south side of Shuter Street down to Front Street.

Distribution is approximately 2,500 – and growing quickly – as more new residents and businesses are drawn to this vital and quickly-expanding area of downtown.

In order for any community to thrive, it's vital to promote our businesses and services within so that residents can make an informed decision to Shop Local.

Why not promote your business in the next issue of the Corktownner? Costs are very reasonable and if you buy four ads (the yearly package), you will get a sweet deal on the fourth.

Advertising subscriptions are now available! To advertise with us, please contact advertising@corktown.ca.

Corktown Mission Statement

The Corktown Residents and Business Association exists to enhance the quality of residential and business life, to promote and market Corktown and to act as a voice for the community.

Don't miss any Corktown meetings!

You're concerned about what's happening in the neighbourhood, so be sure to attend the Corktown Residents and Business Association meetings.

The CRBA lines up speakers to keep us on track regarding on-going changes in the area, and new ways to deal with problems we often face on a daily basis. Bring your questions – bring your concerns – and speak up.

Our meetings begin at 7 p.m., first Tuesday of every month except for August. The meetings are held in the back room of the Dominion on Queen, at Queen St. and Sumach.

UPCOMING CRBA MEETINGS:

December 6, 2011

TBD

January 3, 2012

TBD

Non-Profit Car Sharing in Corktown at 468 Queen St. E.



Pay for a car only when you need it! Non-profit car sharing is here at Dominion Square (on Queen St. E. just east of Parliament St.). Your first car is ready and waiting in parking spot #81. Book a car whenever and however long you need one. Sign up today by visiting our website optionsforhomes.ca.

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River Street Humane Society offers Free Public Education Evenings

Are you an animal lover with a thirst for knowledge? Then be sure to look into the Toronto Humane Society's (THS) monthly Public Education Evenings at the 11 River Street shelter, at the corner of Queen and River

Seminars begin at 7 pm and are approximately two hours long. No RSVP is required unless otherwise indicated. The following are the next scheduled seminars:

JANUARY 18

Dealing With Geriatric Issues

FEBRUARY 8

Trap Neuter Return & Pediatric Spay/Neuter

FEBRUARY 22

Dental Disease and Your Pet

MARCH 14

FIV/Felv & indoor vs. outdoor feline lifestyle

MARCH 28

Bandaging 101 (RSVP required plus \$10 for supplies. Email pnichols@torontohumanesociety.com)

More details are available at www.torontohumanesociety.com. To find out about more upcoming events in and around the shelter, visit the "Event" page of the above THS website or call 416-392-2273.

The New Toronto Humane Society

By Jacques Messier, Chief Executive Officer

In 2012 the Toronto Humane Society (THS), located at 11 River Street in Corktown, will celebrate its 125th birthday. What better time to highlight the fact that the THS of today is not only a shelter for unwanted animals, but also an independent charity that provides many other services to the community at large.

The main objective of the THS is to find abandoned animals forever homes. When animals are surrendered by their owners or transferred here from another shelter or rescue organization, the THS works diligently to obtain as much information as possible about the animal's history. This includes an examination by a veterinarian and a behaviorist. Before an animal is placed for adoption, it is vaccinated, dewormed, spayed/neutered and given any other

medical attention as required. This ensures every animal adopted out of the facility is healthy and happy. Also, if an animal has any on-going medical or behaviour issues, that information is disclosed to the owner to ensure a successful adoption.

The adoption process includes a written application form and in-person interview. This is carried out to make certain there is compatibility an animal and its potential future owner. The goal is to find the right home – one that the animal can remain in for the rest of its life.

At the shelter, animals may undergo behaviour modification to work on issues such as aggression, separation anxiety, general handling, shyness and destructive conduct. Not only will the animal receive training, but owners are also offered free classes and advice to help them better handle their new animal companion(s).

In partnership with other rescue organizations, THS supports the Trap Neuter Return (TNR) program which has so far sterilized more than 500 street cats in the GTA!

The THS also provides a free educational community outreach program, providing valuable information sessions on a variety of topics such as first aid, common toxicities, wildlife, pediatric spay/neuter, bandaging 101, dental disease and geriatric issues.

Advocacy is another important role the THS plays in the community. In the past year the shelter has taken a stand in supporting the ban of selling animals in pet stores and opposing breed specific legislation as well as the proposed elimination of Toronto's municipally-run pet licensing program.

The 11 River Street facility is 30,000 square feet in size and houses 75 employees with a roster of more than 600 volunteers and 200 foster families! The River Street location can humanely house a total of 320 animals – 215 cats, 65 dogs, and 40 special species (i.e. rabbits, gerbils, hamsters, guinea pigs, birds, reptiles). This figure is based on the Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters produced by the Association of Shelter Veterinarians. Humane care includes up to four walks a day for canines and an on-site kitten nursery as well as foster home placements for immature kittens. On average, dogs spend 15 days in the shelter while cats stay approximately 25 days.

The THS works cooperatively with many other shelters and rescue organizations within Toronto and Quebec. The THS is operated entirely through private donations and sponsors and receives no government funding. With the community's help, we hope to continue our legacy of providing medical attention, rehabilitation and finding forever-homes for countless abandoned animals each and every day.



Jacques Messier

Jacques Messier is the newly elected CEO of the Toronto Humane Society. Prior to coming to Toronto, Mr. Messier was Director of the Veterinary Teaching Hospital at the University of Saskatchewan. He has been involved in animal health and the veterinary industry for more than 35 years.



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