



May 22, 2019

Dear Habitat Services' Partners:

In my capacity of Chair of the Board of Directors of Habitat Services, I am writing to let you know that Leslie McDonald, Habitat's Executive Director, has decided to retire after 21 years with our agency. Many of you will have worked with Leslie in a variety of roles since she joined Habitat's staff team in 1998. She assumed Habitat's Executive Director role on a permanent basis more than 10 years ago and has brought committed leadership to the organization as well as making many contributions to the broader supportive housing sector.

On behalf of the Board and our staff, I want to commend Leslie on her leadership and for serving Habitat Services so diligently. Leslie began her work at Habitat Services in 1998 after varied experience on the front line in the shelter sector. Though she progressed through successive leadership positions culminating in an Executive role, she always kept her focus on the experience and well-being of Habitat tenants. Leslie successfully led initiatives to increase single rooms, add self-contained units, introduce more flexible and high support boarding home models, and preserve affordability for tenants.

The Habitat subsidy program continues to safeguard critical housing stock for Toronto consumers/ survivors, and Leslie has tirelessly advocated for funding increases for Habitat's private sector and non-profit housing providers to ensure the continued sustainability of 931 units of affordable, supportive housing.

Leslie has also been a strong advocate for the preservation of housing for low income singles in the City of Toronto. She has collaborated actively in sector-wide advisory groups and policy initiatives like those at The Access Point, the Toronto Mental Health and Addictions Supportive Housing Network and the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness, to name a few.

We congratulate Leslie on her truly outstanding career and wish her the best with her next adventures. As we move forward to look for a successor, a special committee of our Board has been established. If all goes as planned, we will see this transition take place by the fall of 2019.

Sincerely,

*Justine Saccomanno*

President, Board of Directors

