



## **Retirement Announcement for Joanne Knutson**

It is with mixed emotions and warm wishes that I announce the retirement of Joanne Knutson after 23 years of dedicated tenure at Habitat Services.

Joanne began her career at Habitat in 1999 as a Community Liaison Worker. She became a founding, front-line member of the Habitat Services Housing Support Team, eventually taking on the role of Manager, and then Director. Joanne's recovery-orientation to mental health was key in the development of Habitat Services' Housing Support model, and the integration of workers with Lived Experience into the team. Then, in 2019, Joanne became the agency's Executive Director, 6 months before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Joanne led the Habitat Services organization through a tumultuous period as COVID-19 introduced many challenges for tenants, owner/operators, and support workers across the GTA. She brought an in depth understanding of the quality of services required for Habitat tenants and a keen ability to develop relationships and collaborate with partners in the community to this task.

The Board would like to recognize Joanne for her tireless advocacy on behalf of the individuals the agency serves, the Habitat-funded providers who house them, and the staff employed by Habitat. Joanne and her team fought to secure PPE, timely testing, access to on-site vaccines, and other much needed resources, including pandemic pay and additional funding.

Under Joanne's steady leadership, Habitat services was able to continue providing much needed support to many people that count on our organization, while keeping people safe to the greatest degree. Always guided by a deep respect for the tenants, Joanne will be remembered for her integrity and dedication, and for her heartfelt appreciation of everyone who contributes to the Habitat mission, on the front-lines, in the back office, and in the community.

Please join me in wishing Joanne the best of luck in this new and exciting chapter of her life.

Beel Yaqub  
President