Ve’ahavta’s
2017-2018
Annual Report
A time of change and of focus:

2017 marked the beginning of many changes at Ve’ahavta. Building on our accreditation with Imagine Canada, Ve’ahavta has been in the process of professionalizing our programs and services to enable us to broaden our reach and deepen our impact.

Last year, we saw the development and piloting of two new successful programs dedicated to creating income and skill development for those affected by poverty:

**MYTORONTO**, a photography contest and calendar project, enabled over 100 people affected by poverty to learn the art of photography, earn cash prizes, develop sales skills and earn additional income through the sale of calendars, providing over $14,000 in income to participants.

**Meal Box** provides paid work placements for those affected by poverty to work with volunteers in the kitchen preparing nearly 2,000 nutritious meals distributed to the people served by Ve’ahavta’s outreach van.

The stage is set for 2018 to be a year of focused and disciplined growth. We have been working closely with our dedicated Board of Directors and talented staff to develop and realize a new vision. This vision is one of Ve’ahavta as a professional and mature organization having a profound impact on the lives of people experiencing poverty and homelessness through the mobilization of a community that wants to make a difference. Ve’ahavta’s mission statement is now driving our programming decisions and funding pursuits with a focus on developing best practices across the organization.

In 2018, we are proudly launching an expansion of the Ve’ahavta Street Academy program geared specifically toward women. **Building Foundations for Women** will provide training workshops, individual sessions with our social worker and vocational assessments to women affected by poverty, supporting them to make lasting changes for themselves and their families. With tremendous support from the **Ontario Trillium Foundation** in the form of a three-year grant, along with the generous support of **The Azrieli Foundation**, the impact of this program will be profound and a source of pride to our supporters.

In 2018, we will also redevelop the Volunteer Services Department based upon industry standards with a goal of deploying 1,000 volunteers per year in meaningful roles designed to address the issues of homelessness and poverty in this city.

We are grateful to our donors, volunteers, staff and leadership, both past and present, who make our work possible. Your compassion, caring and belief that we are all responsible for making this world a better place is what Ve’ahavta is all about.

May we go from strength to strength,

Gary Samuel, Chair, Ve’ahavta Board

Cari Kozierok, Executive Director, Ve’ahavta
OUR STORY
The name Ve’ahavta is Hebrew meaning “and you shall love” from the phrase in the Torah (Bible) “And you shall love your neighbour as yourself.”

We believe that positive change happens when we meet people where they are and provide a path through which they can progress at their own pace, based on their own circumstances and readiness. In many cases, we meet these individuals on the streets of Toronto, where we provide them with support through our Mobile Jewish Response to Homelessness (MJRH) outreach van. Some people will enrol in one of our training programs and learn both life and job skills to prepare them for future employment, volunteerism or further education. Some will go on to our programs that offer paid work opportunities where those affected by poverty can earn income and learn skills to further prepare them for the workforce.

Our mission is also focused on the community of “carers” that we mobilize. We believe that people want to “do good.” In the face of overwhelming social problems that often leave well-intentioned people feeling helpless to make an impact, Ve’ahavta offers a path through which they can play a part—large or small—in helping to make a difference in the lives of those affected by poverty and hardship. Often, the individuals who help are program participants who return to volunteer with us and sometimes work as staff after they have graduated from our programs. Through social action programming, philanthropy, volunteerism and leadership, our community of “carers” takes purposeful action and knows, without a doubt, that they can and do make a difference.

Collectively, working with all our supporters, Ve’ahavta restores dignity, creates a sense of empowerment and deepens empathy, helping to create a more just and noble society.

OUR MISSION
Ve’ahavta is a Jewish humanitarian organization dedicated to promoting positive change in the lives of people of all faiths and backgrounds who have been marginalized by poverty and hardship. Ve’ahavta mobilizes volunteers in meaningful, hands-on experiences to fulfill our collective responsibility to care for our neighbour.
MOBILE JEWISH RESPONSE TO HOMELESSNESS VAN PROGRAM

The Mobile Jewish Response to Homelessness (MJRH) van program provides potentially lifesaving mobile services to individuals in Toronto who are homeless/at risk of becoming homeless.

Using a harm-reduction model, staff and a team of volunteers provide nutritious food and supplies including clothing, sleeping bags, winter jackets, boots and toiletries. Staff provide follow-up support, including assistance finding shelter or longer-term housing and counselling to improve overall physical and emotional well-being.

The outreach workers receive and respond to calls requesting support for clients on a daily basis from the City of Toronto Streets to Homes outreach workers, public health staff at safe injection sites and other agencies.

For more information, visit: veahavta.org/MJRH

2017 PROGRAM STATS

382 Community service referrals

146 Sleeping bags distributed

92 Harm reduction kits

312 MJRH shifts

5,616 Volunteer hours

Where Ve’ahavta stands out is its consistency. Ve’ahavta provides food and clothing, but your workers forge relationships with the clients and give useful and practical advice, and when possible offer real help. Because the van is out there almost nightly, there is follow-up and accountability for both the worker and the client.

— Sheldon A. Hosannah, MJRH client and Ve’ahavta Street Academy Graduate
MEAL BOX PROGRAM

For people who are chronically homeless, being able to access healthy food is not easy.

This program addresses the connection between food insecurity, poverty, economic vulnerability and social isolation by providing work placements for 5 to 10 individuals with lived experience of poverty and homelessness.

They receive training to work in a kitchen alongside a group of volunteers to prepare a healthy and nutritious selection of meals. The meals are then distributed by Ve’ahavta’s mobile outreach van to individuals experiencing homelessness in Toronto.

For more information, visit: veahavta.org/mealbox

2017 PROGRAM STATS

1,800
Meals served

7
Employed kitchen coordinators

156
Meal Box shifts

1,037
Volunteer hours

I was very fortunate to be a part of the Meal Box program. I’ve gained valuable knowledge through our First Aid and Food Handlers Certificate courses, which have afforded me the opportunity to get back into the workforce. I would highly recommend Meal Box to those in need of a nutritious meal, a part-time job, or a rewarding volunteer experience.

— Sonya, Meal Box Coordinator

Relief and Referral
Life/Work Skills Training
Paid Work Opportunities
An innovative adult education program, the Ve’ahavta Street Academy, in partnership with George Brown College, provides students with practical skills empowering them to pursue further education, employment and volunteer opportunities.

Through daily workshops on topics ranging from interviewing skills to conflict resolution, students also work weekly with a Ve’ahavta social worker to create individual goals and plans for success. Participants receive vocational assessments to build awareness of possible career paths and earn stipends of up to $295, helping them to overcome barriers to achieving their goals.

For more information, visit: veahavta.org/VSA

2017 PROGRAM STATS

46
Students participated

37,500
Dollars for vocational assessments

11,800
Dollars in stipends

680
Hours of one-on-one meetings with social worker

76%
Of graduates achieved their goals of employment, further education, participating in treatment programs or volunteering

“...a good change. I was participating in a group environment and never felt judged. Throughout the course, I felt empowered and my confidence came back. I could and would make a difference at this point in my life. I am happy to tell you that I am now the Ve’ahavta Street Academy program assistant.”

— Lisa Visconti
MYTORONTO, a photography contest and calendar project for individuals with lived experience of poverty and homelessness, was launched in 2017. The project provides an opportunity for its participants to engage in artistic expression, make meaningful connections and learn new skills.

Participants are given single-use cameras and given five days to take photographs of the world around them. Participants receive cash rewards if their photographs are selected for the calendar or the art exhibit. They also receive training and earn extra income by selling the calendars.

The theme for the 2018 MYTORONTO project is “Strength.”

2017 PROGRAM STATS

- 40 Exhibit photos displayed
- 13 Photos selected for the calendar
- 45 Trained calendar vendors
- 1,710 Calendars sold
- 14,808 Dollars earned by vendors

For more information, visit: veahavta.org/MYTORONTO

I wanted to communicate something about homelessness, the fact that it’s not just a bunch of dark huddled creatures living in the shadows, but that it had a face and that face is our face.

— Bob, MYTORONTO Participant
RENÉE ROTH MEMORIAL SPEAKERS BUREAU

This program provides training in presentation and public speaking skills. The initial program is offered over a period of two months to a small group of graduates of the Ve’ahavta Street Academy and participants in other Ve’ahavta programs. After that training is complete, graduates continue to develop their skills through ongoing monthly sharing meetings.

Piloted in 2016, past participants have gone on to become involved in such activities as working on the city’s poverty reduction strategy and paid work opportunities with programs serving other marginalized individuals. The Speakers Bureau’s graduates have also shared their stories at numerous public events, including Ve’ahavta’s gala Starry Nights, as well as on CBC Radio.

For more information, visit: veahavta.org/MJRH

2017 PROGRAM STATS

5
Speakers trained

10
Hours of one-on-one coaching provided

11
Paid speaking engagements for program graduates

100%
Of grads felt prepared to move forward with writing their speech with assistance from the project manager

As a senior who has graduated from the Renée Roth Memorial Speakers Bureau, I have become more aware of my courage and confidence. I now participate in many organizations such as the LEAG (Lived Experience Advisory Group) which advises the city’s poverty reduction strategy. The Speakers Bureau has helped me realize my self-worth and ability to become a productive and useful member of society.

— Gerry Banks
Central to our mission is the belief that people care and want to make a difference. Ve’ahavta’s youth programming focuses on educating and then deploying teens in meaningful hands-on experiences to develop their empathy and sense of responsibility towards others.

Through our programming, teens become dedicated volunteers serving both on our van and at events and programs, such as Starry Nights and our Community Passover Seder.

Teens become passionate fundraisers and youth have raised over $18,000 by participating in our B’nai Mitzvah and TikunGen programs.

For more information, visit: veahavta.org/YouthEngagement

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**2017 PROGRAM STATS**

- **50** Engaged teens
- **32** Tikun workshops
- **20+** School and community partnerships
- **11** Opportunities for clients with lived experience to share their stories with youth

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I thought the workshop was excellent and opened the children’s eyes to a part of life they may not have associated with up until this point.
— Chabad on Bayview
VOLUNTEERS

Mobilizing volunteers in meaningful, hands-on experiences is an essential part of our mission. At Ve’ahavta, we have developed roles to meet the schedules, interests and skill sets of volunteers from all walks of life.

Roles range from one-time volunteering at Ve’ahavta events to ongoing roles, such as the volunteers who participate on our Advisory Committees sharing their expertise and specialized skills. Volunteers also serve on our Board of Directors and chair our major events, such as Starry Nights and the Off the Clock Networking Event and Poker Tournament. It is not surprising to hear from this caring community that volunteering with Ve’ahavta has changed their lives, deepened their appreciation for their blessings and filled them with a sense of purpose and meaning.

2017 PROGRAM STATS

770+
Volunteers in 2017

7,100+
Hours volunteered in 2017

63
Volunteers in Meal Box Program

400+
Volunteers registered through NEW digital portal

For more information, visit: veahavta.org/MJRH

“With every person that I speak with, every hot meal that I serve, I know that my volunteer work with Ve’ahavta is making a difference. My life has been enriched with a deeper understanding and empathy and a greater appreciation for the blessings in my life.”

— Paula Zivot
Ve’ahavta would not be able to carry out its important work without our committed leadership and donors. As the demand for Ve’ahavta’s programs and services continues to increase, we depend on individual donors and diversified revenue streams to support enhancements and growth. We thank you for your very generous support!

2017 Major Donors

Listing acknowledges donations of $5,000+ in 2017. Please accept our sincere apologies for any errors or omissions.

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The Azrieli Foundation
Distributel
Shirley Granovsky

Groundbreakers
Barter Network Ltd.
The Ben and Hilda Katz Foundation
The Robert Kerr Foundation
Evelyn Levine and Family
Ontario Trillium Foundation

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Nani and Austin Beutel
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2017 Financials

**REVENUES**

- Individual Donations: 48%
- Foundations: 20%
- Government Grants: 15%
- Corporate Donations: 10%
- Contributed Goods & Services: 6%
- Investment Income: 1%
- Total: 100%

**EXPENSES**

- Programming Expenses: 67%
- Fundraising: 20%
- Admin. & Communication: 13%
- Total: 100%

**EXPERIENCES**

- Mobile Outreach: 27%
- Ve'ahavta Street Academy: 28%
- Community Engagement: 18%
- Meal Box: 10%
- MYTORONTO: 11%
- Other: 6%
- Total: 100%

The total funds raised by Ve’ahavta in 2017: **$2,427,209**

Total number of donors from all sources: **2,544**

To see Ve’ahavta’s full 2017 financial statement, please visit veahavta.org
Ve’ahavta
200 Bridgeland Ave. Unit D
Toronto, Ontario M6A 1Z4
416.964.7698
veahavta.org

Charitable No.:
BN 88804 2439 RR0001