

# THE CORKTOWN NEWS

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## Historic Inglenook School

By: Michele Cummings and Maya Pettersen



INGLENOOK SUMACH SILHOUETTE

Inglenook photos courtesy: Michele Cummings

As we pass through February, Black History Month, it seemed appropriate to look back over the history of Inglenook Community School. What is the connection between the two, you may ask. Well, read on!

Located at the very bottom of Sackville Street on the east side, you will come across a lovely old school with the year placard still displaying the year it was built, 1887. That in itself is fairly significant since this makes it the oldest continually operating school in the Toronto District School Board, however, its history began years earlier.

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Sumach Silhouette”, a new beautiful piece of artwork was created for the eastern side of the school property, depicting the history of the area.

Lucie and Thornton Blackburn were African American slaves in Kentucky who met and fell in love in 1831. That year on Independence Day, July 3, the couple made their escape to Detroit, which was a free city. They were recognized and jailed but once again escaped, making their way to Canada. In 1834, they built their small wooden home at 54 Eastern Avenue in the City of York (now Toronto). After working as a waiter for a few years, Thornton started the very first taxicab company in Toronto, “The City” in 1837. He and Lucie continued to help other fleeing slaves and became prominent members of Toronto’s African Canadian community. They even helped build Little Trinity Church.

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## Little Trinity’s Refugee Family

By Joanne Millard

At its meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 5, members of the Corktown Residents and Business Association heard a short presentation from Little Trinity Anglican Church about our upcoming sponsorship of a Syrian refugee family.

This initiative began in September, when, along with the rest of the world, we were moved by the dire situation of the thousands of refugees embarking on a long, perilous, and sometimes fatal journey from Turkey through Europe in order to reach countries where they

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**INGLENOOK SCHOOL**

The Blackburns sold a portion of their property to be used for the building of the school so that when the school was built, the Thornton's home was directly in front of it. Thornton died in 1890 and it was after that that Lucie sold the remainder of the property. Lucie died 5 years after Thornton. They are both buried in Toronto Necropolis Cemetery near Riverdale Farm.

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When the Sackville Street School was built in 1887, it had an enrollment of 49 students and the principal was Georgina Stanley Riches, principal until 1912. Over the years the makeup of the area changed from residential, filled with many neighbourhood houses, to mostly industrial. As a result of the changing demographics, in 1974 Inglenook Community School was born.

In the Inglenook schoolyard, you will find historical plaques commemorating the Blackburns and their significant contributions. As well, to your right there is what you may think of as a patio. Take a closer look. This is the site where the Blackburn's home stood and it depicts a chain with a broken link, signifying the end of slavery.

With the deaths of Thornton and Lucie Blackburn, began the life of this site as a school. The school was the third school to be built in the area, replacing the Enoch Turner School and the Palace Street School. (Years later, the Palace Street School became the Canary Restaurant.)

When the Sackville Street School was built in 1887, it had an enrollment of 49 students and the principal was Georgina Stanley Riches, principal until 1912. Over the years the makeup of the area changed from residential, filled with many neighbourhood houses, to mostly industrial. As a result of the changing demographics, in 1974 Inglenook Community School was born.

The area around Inglenook has not always been as safe as it is today. There are stories of students looking out the window and seeing a dead body on the ground below, teachers finding people sleeping in their cars and ghosts roaming the hallways.

Fast forward to 2016. Corktown is now transitioning into a wonderful, safe neighbourhood. The newly built West Don Lands community has appeared across the street. "Sumach Silhouette", a new beautiful piece of artwork was created for the eastern side of the school property, depicting the history of the area. And new streetcar tracks have been built as a sign of changes yet to come. Inglenook is a thriving, small alternative school with around 100 grade 11 and 12 students, a relaxed atmosphere and open communication. They are very community focused,

recently making a donation to the Little Trinity Refugee Fund to help support the family being sponsored. They also house a gallery that can be used by the community for events. I think that

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## The Corktown News

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### WHAT'S UP IN CORKTOWN?

The Corktown Residents & Business Association is a not-for-profit and non-commercial volunteer neighbourhood organization.

We follow the latest developments in Corktown on a wide range of topics and serve as a liaison between Corktown, the City and other key organizations.

The CRBA is an inclusive organization open to all local residents and businesses. Join us and add your voice to the community discussion!

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**LITTLE TRINITY'S REFUGEE FAMILY CONTINUED**

can settle and be safe. In September, a few members of our congregation gathered a couple of times, and began to communicate via email and Facebook, to discuss what we were prepared to do about it. Encouraged by the ongoing efforts of St. Matthews' Riverdale, and by a similar movement at the Church of the Resurrection (Woodbine/ Danforth), we decided to investigate whether AURA, the Anglican-United Refugee Alliance, would be a good fit for us to work on sponsoring a refugee family (or more). AURA is the official refugee Sponsorship Agreement Holder with the federal government, for the Anglican and United Churches in Toronto. Its purpose is to assist churches and individuals to become involved in refugee assistance and sponsorship.

A few of us attended an AURA information session on September 27, and came back with the recommendation that Little Trinity work with AURA to sponsor a refugee family. The email and Facebook discussion people sat on tiny chairs in our Toddler Room after church on October 25, 2015, and agreed to create a Refugee Sponsorship and Support Committee and a Steering Committee. Given our church's focus on family ministry, we put forward

a recommendation to the church leadership and our Rector, Rev. Tim Haughton, that Little Trinity sponsor a Syrian refugee family with young

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One very positive development so far has been the wonderful contacts we have been making with other sponsoring churches and groups in downtown-east Toronto and over to the Beach. Many sponsoring groups are seeing the benefits of sharing our resources, information, and stuff! We'd be happy to hear from members of our immediate Corktown community who'd like to be involved.

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children. We agreed that the mandate of the committee should also include support for refugees in camps overseas, for services to refugee claimants/ asylum seekers, and to support agencies

like AURA that are helping to support groups like ours.

At its meeting in early December, 2015, the Little Trinity Church leadership approved our group's proposal, and set up a special, dedicated refugee sponsorship and support fund through which donations could be made and charitable tax receipts provided.

We made an appeal to the congregation for both donations and for volunteers. We have been blessed with an enthusiastic response to both, and have now exceeded our fundraising target and attracted a core of around 60 volunteers, who are in the process of receiving training, and confirming their police record checks, as required by AURA. and signed up for one of several committees.

By early January, we had submitted all of the necessary documentation to AURA to confirmed that we meet all sponsoring requirements, and as of the end of January we, along with many other refugee sponsoring groups across Canada, were waiting to be sent the profile of a refugee family. (Periodically the federal government releases this information about families eligible for sponsorship, and Sponsorship Agreement Holder organizations across Canada match them with sponsoring groups.

In January this process was slowed somewhat as government-sponsored refugees were processed.) Once we have received a match from AURA and confirmed that we can sponsor the family, travel arrangements begin and the family can be anticipated to arrive in Toronto in about 2-3 months.

We have informed AURA that we are placing no upper limit on the size of the family.

Refugees living overseas, having been assessed and screened by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR and approved by the Government of Canada, are then identified for either the government-assisted or the private sponsorship program. Private sponsorship groups are responsible for supporting the family financially for their first year in Canada, and for assisting them with everything they need to settle: finding housing, accessing medical care, enrolling in school and English classes, orientation to the city, help in budgeting and obtaining the things they need. The type of refugee sponsorship that Little Trinity and other private sponsorship groups will be engaged in, is called a "Blended Visa Office Referral." The federal government will provide six months of income support (months

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**LITTLE TRINITY'S REFUGEE FAMILY CONTINUED**

2 through 7) for the family through its Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). After the first year, the family will be eligible to receive Social Assistance, should they not be in a position to support themselves financially yet.

Even though we are still waiting, there is a lot to do, and we have struck the following subcommittees with defined tasks at the pre-arrival, arrival, and post-arrival stages. Each subcommittee has a chair and a liaison with the Steering Committee.

- » Budget/Finance/Fundraising (helping the family to set up a bank account, transferring funds, discussing budgeting with family, processing payments and reimbursements through the church accounts)
- » Housing (finding a temporary place to stay on arrival and arranging for one-year lease on accommodation appropriate for the family)
- » House Supply (furnishing the home and outfitting it with supplies)
- » Health (obtaining OHIP and interim federal health support, finding doctors, dentists, escorting family to appointments)
- » Education (enrolling children in school, adults in English as a Second Language; day care, if necessary, and translation)
- » Employment (providing advice and assistance in credential assessment, training if required, and job search when appropriate)
- » Community Orientation (showing family around neighbourhood, explaining TTC, helping them find places to buy groceries, clothing, etc.)

One very positive development so far has been the wonderful contacts we have been making with other sponsoring churches and groups in downtown-east Toronto and over to the Beach. Many sponsoring groups are seeing the benefits of sharing our resources, information, and stuff!

We'd be happy to hear from members of our immediate Corktown community who'd like to be involved. Specifically, finding suitable housing for the family will be a very big priority. If you'd like to receive more information please contact the Little Trinity office with your contact information (phone or email) and one of our Steering Committee members will contact you. If you'd like to make a donation, cheques can be made out to Little Trinity Church, with Refugee Sponsorship and Support indicated on the memo line. Our office is at 403 King St. E, just east of Parliament. Or, send an email to [admin@littletrinity.org](mailto:admin@littletrinity.org) or call (416) 367-0272.

# Development Update

By Larry Webb

As usual, there has been quite a lot of development related activity in Corktown recently. This is a short summary of the more interesting pieces.

## Queen/River Secondary Plan

The CRBA has objected to the two development proposals currently in play, one for 7 Labatt/77 River and the other for 1 – 25 Defries. Both of them were proposed at around the same time as the Secondary Plan for the area was approved by Council following an extensive period of public consultation and both of them bear no resemblance to the provisions of the Secondary Plan.

Regardless of whether one objects to the details of the proposal or not, they make a mockery of the Secondary Plan process and the Planning process itself.

It is not clear at this time what role the CRBA will have, if any, in the OMB process but we have lent our support to those who have formally objected to the Secondary Plan at the OMB even though originally the CRBA was in support of the Plan. We will report further in due course – a hearing date has not yet been set and the OMB is notoriously slow.

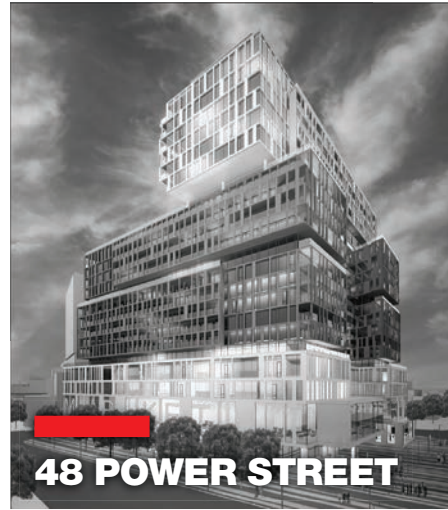
## 48 Power Street

Great Gulf originally made an application for re-zoning on the site of the old Sing Tao newspaper in 2014 but then put the whole project on hold while they partnered with another developer and acquired the rest of the block that they did not already own.

That process is now complete and the site is almost twice the size of the original; they have brought forward a new application. It is for a 22-story building which at street level stretches almost lot line to lot line on Power, Richmond, Parliament and Adelaide.

At first glance, it appears massive but on closer examination, it is an awkward site and they appear to have made attempts to minimize the impact of the building. Main features of benefit to the community are an increased 2nd floor ceiling height which will enable them to court a full-service grocery store – no guarantee that this will happen but they have made it possible.

They are also proposing a landscape treatment on Power Street which while it is not part of their site would have a potential neighbourhood benefit by tying the building to "Orphan's Green" dog-park on the east side of Power. The at-grade portion of the building will have retail stores on all sides



**48 POWER STREET**

with the intention of animating the streets, particularly Parliament. There appears to be some resistance in the community to the mass of the building directly opposite the park and adjacent to the generally low-rise aspect of old Corktown. There was one community consultation on January 28 and there will undoubtedly be more before the City's Planning department issues its recommendations to Community Council.

## River City

River City Phases 1 and 2 are occupied and Phase 3 is now under construction. This will be an exciting architectural addition to the whole City and helps anchor Corktown's eastern flank with design excellence.

Now the first images of Phase 4 have been released after it was taken to the Waterfront Toronto Design Review Panel and it is equally as interesting as the first 3 phases. The Design Review Panel was supportive of the design to date and asked for a model to be brought to the next meeting to help get a better sense of the space.

## Gusto 501

This high-end proposed Italian eatery at 501 King Street East, modelled after Gusto 101 on Portland Street west of Spadina, is on hold. Attempts to reach the owner for an update have been unsuccessful so far but we will continue to try. This would be an interesting addition to King East

## West Don Lands

The next phase of activity in the West Don Lands is the conversion of the buildings from their PanAm use in 2015 to commercial and residential use starting around April of this year. The developer had 6 months to effect the conversion and we expect to see the first occupants perhaps in May and the first retail occupancies soon after – there are currently 7 leases in place: Dark Horse Espresso, the holistic café "Fuel Plus", full-service day spa "OpusGlow", Running Room, "Think" fitness studio, "Pizza e Pazzi" Italian eatery, and "Tabule" middle-eastern restaurant.

## East United Condos

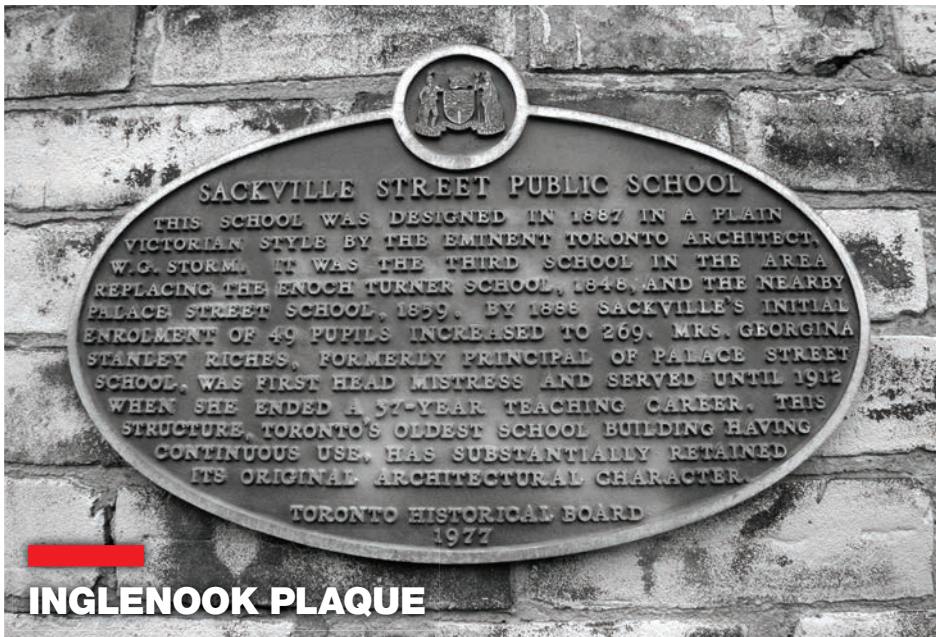
The condo development between Parliament and Berkeley Streets between Adelaide and Richmond (directly opposite the proposed 48 Power development) is now under construction with demolition of existing buildings almost complete. The heritage component on Berkeley Street will of course remain. It is 21 floors with most of the height on Parliament Street. There is one potential retail space on Parliament.

This is a sample only; there have been other interesting development activities – keeping checking [corktown.ca](http://corktown.ca) and the Corktown News, or come to our monthly public meetings, for ongoing information.



**EAST UNITED CONDOS**





**INGLENOOK PLAQUE**

**HISTORIC INGLENOOK SCHOOL CONTINUED**

Thornton and Lucie Blackburn would be very happy with how everything has turned out!

The word 'Inglenook' means a small, comfortable place beside a fire. It truly is that. To give you a sense of this amazing place, please enjoy this article submitted by one of their current students, Maya Pettersen.

*Inglenook is where education, in the academic sense, meets the pedagogy of everyday life. The school itself is a historic building, a mansion populated by a handful of personable teachers, and a flock of bright adolescents with daring minds that seek to subvert powers that would otherwise retain them. It is clear to see upon entering that over the span of decades, many young people have adorned the halls with their existential musings, art that cuts to the visceral core of social issues, and sentimental knick knacks left as souvenirs, a reminder of their presence in this school that feels like a home. It is a place for the outsider, the insider, and the clever child who floats in between both worlds with ease.*

*As an institution, Inglenook concerns itself with three main values it wishes to impart on its students, community being the first. At Inglenook, it is commonly acknowledged*

*by both students and teachers alike that to receive, one must give. Every student will find themselves in charge of doing the dishes and cleaning the communal kitchen at least once every month. While this may sound like a simple enough task, it imparts a sense of due diligence and responsibility*

In the Inglenook schoolyard, you will find historical plaques commemorating the Blackburns and their significant contributions. As well, to your right there is what you may think of as a patio. Take a closer look. This is the site where the Blackburn's home stood and it depicts a chain with a broken link, signifying the end of slavery.

*to the student and their peers. Because of small conscientious efforts, such as cleaning something that needs to be cleaned every now and then, students glean the importance of "group effort", and the over-arching value of individual contributions leading to a functional community. Everyone must*

*do their part, and in turn, things will run smoothly.*

*The second value that is prevalent at Inglenook is that of independence. This is not something that is explicitly said to students, although it seems apparent. Everyone who is there to learn, is granted a certain amount of creative autonomy over their own work, their contributions to the aforementioned community, and are rewarded for their efforts, however non-traditional, or unique. Inglenook is a place that seeks to nurture the impulse to create and expand in its students, rather than to stifle that impulse by dictating what can, or cannot be created. Of course, this kind of freedom also comes with paramount responsibility, an invaluable life lesson with the potential to enrich the lives of every adolescent who is willing to take it in.*

*The third value is somewhat intangible. It is the value of morality, a broad topic that seems to always be in discussion. Teachers and students band together to pick apart the defining qualities of things such as respect, thankfulness, responsibility, social injustice, and compassion. Since the laws of morality are evasive, subjective things, Inglenook as a whole thrives off of the perpetual growth that comes from discussing such things openly. It is not a quest to know, nor to define, but rather to explore other people's perceptions, and to broaden one's own perspective. Showing teenagers the virtues of "questioning everything", in the Socratean manner, as well as temperance and ethics at such a formative age is an essential part of preparing them for the world that lies beyond.*

*It is one thing to teach a teenager how to construct a proper sentence, how to speak the language of algebra, or become well versed in symbols, myths, and stories, but it is quite another to give them the gift of a holistic education. Social values are a thing most of us pick up somewhat intuitively, either as children, or as adults. The goal of Inglenook is to facilitate this learning process in an active and immersive environment. This gives way to the idea of a school rooted community. Perhaps it is not so strange that many students at Inglenook consider the school their second home. ☺*

# POPPED

## THE GOOD AND THE BAD



So we're at the Corktown Christmas party at Odin. And there's a nice young couple, freshly arrived

in Toronto from Iran who have somehow found their way to our party. They live somewhere on the west side and, as far as we can tell, they don't know anyone in Toronto, let alone in Corktown. Some neighbours from the NE corner of Corktown get chatting with them. Next thing we hear, they've spent Christmas dinner with a Corktown family. Then we run into them at a neighbour's New Year's Eve soiree. Within a month of their arrival in Canada, they've become honorary Corktowners and have an adopted family here. Nice! Now that's the way to welcome newcomers to our city.



Why is garbage blowing all over our neighbourhood? It is more than annoying – it's a health hazard. It

isn't like it's a complex issue to solve. Construction sites and commercial bins are the worst offenders. Yes, those new buildings being retrofitted from the PanAm Games. And Humane Society, we're looking at you. Timmy's – you, too. You all have garbage bins. They have lids. Put the lid on it and keep that crap from blowing away! And the rest of you Corktowners, don't be smug. If you see some garbage blowing around, pick it up. Use the correct bin for recycling and garbage and organics and don't dump your crap in your neighbours' bins. A little politeness, consideration and common sense is all that's needed to fix this and clean things up.



We are continually amazed and impressed by the kindness of Corktowners. We don't want to name

names and highlight the battles of those fighting illnesses, grieving lost loved ones or dealing with other life challenges. But we see so many examples of people doing kind acts for their neighbours and have to say something. It may not get publicly recognized but it is noticed when dogs are walked, kids are minded, meals are delivered, hospitals are visited, gardens are tended to, coffees are bought... (not so much snow shoveling this winter). All those small acts of kindness help more than you imagine and are noticed not just by the recipients. You're a good bunch. Thank you.



**INSIDE INGLENOOK**



# Capturing the Heart of Regent Park

By Michele Cummings

Longtime Corktown resident and photographer Diana Nazareth is passionate about teaching kids photography. She is so passionate that she decided to submit her idea of "Project Kids & Cameras" to CST Inspired Minds Learning Project's annual competition. The idea was to run photography classes for kids in

Regent Park and Corktown, where they could photograph what is most unique about their neighbourhoods.

As a youth photography educator who offers in-school/after-school photography workshops based on the Literacy Through Photography (LTP) model -- a one-of-a-kind program that



uses photography as a catalyst for self-awareness and expression, critical thinking, creative and visual literacy, and community-building – Diana was well situated to run this program.

Diana was granted an award of \$10,000 to run this program! In collaboration with ArtHeart, a community-based art centre located in Daniels Spectrum, Diana invited kids attending their after-school and weekend programming to sign up. The program was free and no photography experience was required! The program would run every other Saturday from November to March, culminating in a community-wide photo exhibit showcasing the students' photographs and writings. The program filled up!



So armed with 10 new DSLR cameras, portable printers and snacks in hand, the program began. Each week there is a lesson that explores the fundamentals of photography such as composition, framing, timing, lighting and then they go outside to practice their new camera skills. When they reconvene, they print their pictures on the portable printers, and then have a group discussion where



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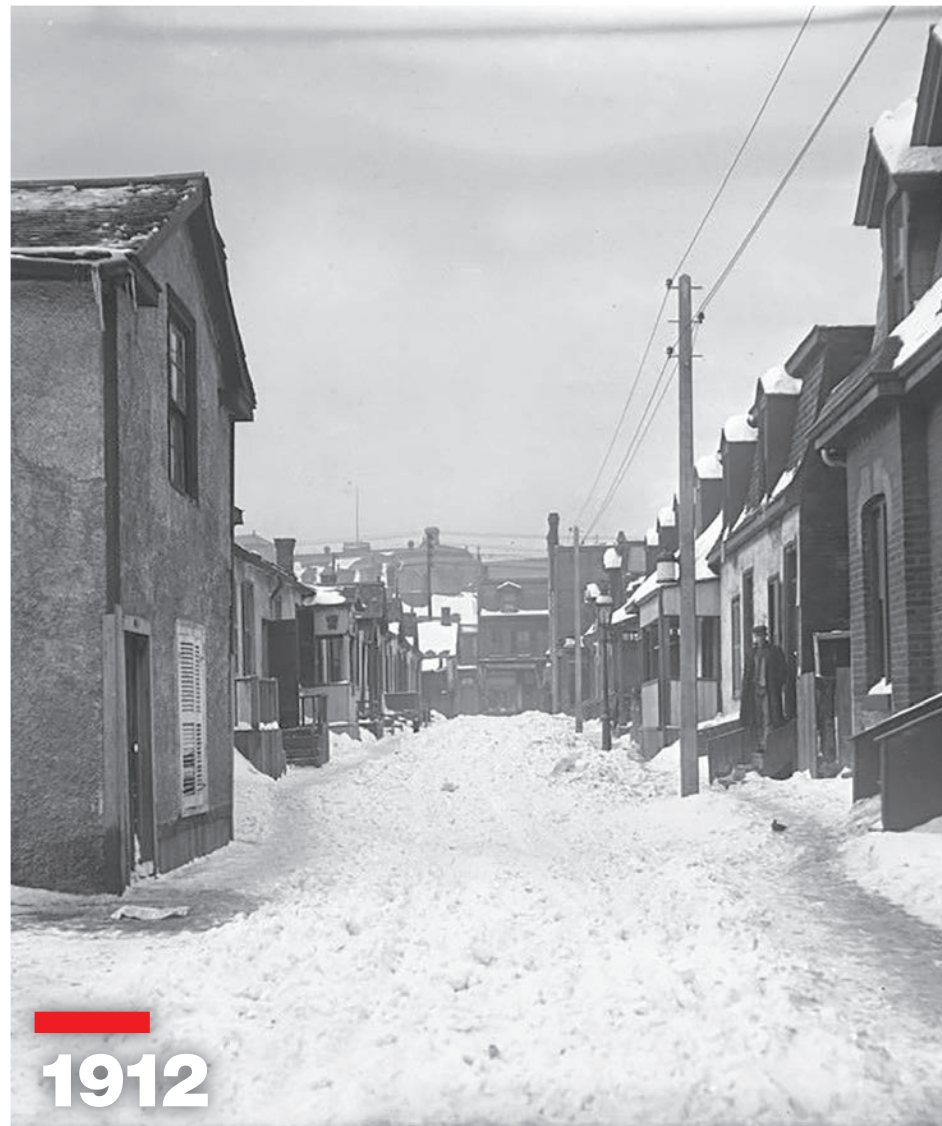
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# Then & Now

## GILEAD PLACE

by Michele Cummings



Project Kids & Cameras will culminate in a photo exhibit that will run as part of ArtHeart's 25th Anniversary celebration and showcase at Daniels Spectrum

mastered basic cameras skills, so that they are able to capture the essence of where they live, their family life, and their friends.

Project Kids & Cameras will culminate in a photo exhibit that will run as part of ArtHeart's 25th Anniversary celebration and showcase at Daniels Spectrum, 585 Dundas Ave East, from April 18-May 15, 2016. The exhibit will be open to the public.

Diana would like to thank CST Inspired Minds Learning Project for the grant, Henry's Camera for the discount on the cameras, ArtHeart Community Centre, and Outside The Lens, for providing curriculum materials, guidance and support.

It takes a village to raise a child.

they share and talk about their photos with each other. "The lessons are very student centric, and are designed to let each student feel like they have something valuable to contribute to the project", says Diana.

The young participants of Project Kids & Cameras will be able to take the cameras home for a week, once they've



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# Corktown Development Commentary: The Opinion

By Larry Webb

Corktown is really a coming together of the old and the new, almost the oldest and newest in Toronto. Over the decades, the area has seen many changes but in general terms, this was always an industrial part of the City with worker housing often provided by the industrialists.

“Davies Terrace” on Queen Street west of Sumach opposite the old Dominion Brewery is but one example. Bright Street, Ashby Place, and Percy Street are also fine examples of 19th century workers’ housing still largely intact to this day. Corktown has housed major institutions for the “poor” such as Providence House, demolished in 1962 to make way for the new “highway” access into and egress out of downtown along Richmond and Adelaide.

Some of the old industrial buildings remain and are treasures in the area – The old Dominion Brewery and Dominion Hotel being a prominent one but there are many others, only a limited number currently protected by designation. There are many other examples including religious, commercial, and retail buildings dotted throughout the area.

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So if we don’t fight development, what do we do to ensure that Corktown doesn’t end up to be another Liberty Village?

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At the same time, the reality of a growing population and the ever increasing attractiveness of downtown living is highlighting the diminishing amount of developable land downtown. Corktown has been a beneficiary of that trend and is also threatened by it.

My opinion is that the best way to protect what we already have is not to take the same approach that has

been taken in other parts of the City. With respect, I cite Liberty Village as a prime example. While essentially very different from Corktown historically, it still had many of the same post-industrial elements and had a sparkling future in its grasp, a potentially stunning blend of the old and new. And for a while it looked like it might make that potential a reality but sadly not so. I don’t know for sure, but I believe that one element missing for Liberty Village was an existing cohesive community. I also know from personal experience that the original development of Liberty Village was driven by one owner who assembled a large amount of land before the area was on anyone’s radar. Neither of those conditions exist in Corktown.

### So how do we move forward?

I believe that fighting development is a losing cause – it is going to happen one way or another, whether we like it or not. The economic and demographic pressures will ultimately prove too great to stop it. My personal feeling is that there is no real need to stop it – we live in a City and what cities need to do to survive is grow. That’s what cities are – they are where people live together in large numbers which then enables the provision of services, whether social, health, entertainment, employment, and so forth. Indeed, the global statistics reflecting the migration of people from rural to city dwelling is pretty overwhelming – it is a global trend, not just something happening in Toronto, or Ontario, or Canada.

So if we don’t fight development, what do we do to ensure that Corktown doesn’t end up to be another Liberty Village? I believe among the many separate elements to be considered, two are significant. The first is to work with the development community to extract the absolute best we can get in the way of public benefits, predominantly in excellent public realm design and features and excellence in building design. Fighting to secure those elements while also fighting to reduce the number of floors in a building are self-cancelling tactics which get everyone almost nowhere.

The second element is to be diligent about preserving what heritage we have, providing that heritage has some value. There are plenty of old buildings

which have zero aesthetic and practical merit and their elimination can be seen as a benefit. But we have a lot of highly desirable property in Corktown which helps define the area: along the north side of King Street between Parliament and Sumach; along Queen Street there are many wonderful facades which have sadly been neglected but which could be restored to their original condition; and the aforementioned residential streets off King and Queen plus Sumach (old), Sackville, Trinity, Wilkins, St. Paul and more.

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In my opinion, the old can co-exist with the new very well if excellence in design is the expectation.

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In my opinion, the old can co-exist with the new very well if excellence in design is the expectation. There is no design rule which states that new buildings in a historic area must echo the style of those old buildings. Often the contrast between old and new, when done properly, can be stunning and highlight the old rather than having it disappear into a nondescript jumble of old and faux-old facades.

When these old buildings were built, they were designed in the current style of the day and often were criticised back then in just the same way we criticise contemporary designs. And many contemporary designs are disgusting but that they get built is to me an indication of the failure of the community and the City to focus on the right elements.

We have some examples of excellence in design in Corktown already: River City is a prime example and I believe that when Phase 3 is complete, we will have the design jewel of the City in our backyard. In that case, it was the developer’s own desire to go in that direction – they are to be lauded for that. In other cases where there isn’t such a proactive player, it is only local and City pressure which will bring about that result. Indifference will, produce nothing except – well, dare I say, another Liberty Village.

# Dr. Gaby to the Rescue

By Pilar Segura

On a warm Tuesday night in September, as most Corktowners are battling rush hour traffic to get home, or are already home starting dinner, a silver SUV pulls into the driveway of the Bay Cat Hospital. The driver, a man, jumps out and opens the back to reveal four cat carriers. Inside, there are 5 cats: four tiny kittens and a heavily pregnant female. In two trips, he takes the carriers and their mewling cargo into the reception area of the Hospital. With the cats safely delivered, the man gets back into his SUV and heads east on King Street. It will take him about an hour to get home. The man is one of a group of volunteer drivers who have donated their time, vehicles and gas to bring the cats to Toronto. The cats have come from a shelter in Quebec that is so overcrowded they faced almost certain euthanasia. Now in the care of Dr. Gaby Herman and her Hospital staff, these cats have been rescued. They have been given a second shot at life.

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“Thank goodness for social media!” Dr. Gaby exclaims, “Our name is out there now.” She estimates that last year alone, she and her staff found homes for about one hundred cats.

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With the Toronto Humane Society as a longtime resident of the community, many Corktowners are familiar with the plight of stray, abandoned and surrendered cats, but the official numbers are sobering. In their 2013 report (the most recent available), the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies stated that the shelters in their network took in over 100,000 cats that year alone. About a third of these were euthanized and approximately half the cats found homes. These numbers do not include cats taken in by municipally run animal services or other cat rescue organizations.

Many people who live and work in Corktown have walked or driven past The Bay Cat Hospital at King Street East and Sumach Street and seen the sign





DR. GABY

transported relay style from Montreal to Toronto -- a trip of more than 500 kilometers by a group of volunteers. The drivers meet in mall and gas station parking lots along the way to hand off their fragile cargo. Dr. Gaby calls this group "the real heroes" of the rescue effort.

When the rescue cats get to the Hospital, they are put in kennels overnight to settle in. The next day, Dr. Gaby and her dedicated staff examined them, carry out blood tests and look for viruses. Any cats with colds or other potentially contagious conditions are isolated. If kittens are old enough they are spayed or neutered. Once the cats receive a clean bill of health, they are released into the "general population" and have free run of the Hospital. The reception area is often filled with purring and frolicking cats and kittens that greet clients by rubbing up against their legs or swatting at them playfully from the large tree near the desk.

Dr. Gaby works with her contacts to ensure she receives cats that have the best shot at being adopted, but there are always surprises. When they examined a recent arrival named Dottie, the staff found a serious heart murmur that will make it difficult for her to find a home. Yet even though there is heartbreak and she receives no payment, Dr. Gaby has no doubts about the rescue work she performs. "This is not what I do. It's who I am. It's part of being a Vet for me."

Dr. Gaby admits that she finds it difficult to turn down any cat in need. She has asked her shelter contacts to contact her only when she indicates on Facebook that cats have been adopted and that there is room for more at the Hospital.

Recently, there has been a great deal of interest in the Hospital's rescue cats because of Facebook. This has helped to generate a number of adoptions. "Thank goodness for social media!" Dr. Gaby exclaims, "Our name is out there now." She estimates that last year alone, she and her staff found homes for about one hundred cats. Dr. Gaby also uses Facebook to keep followers up-to-date on her rescues. "Look at Princess Charlotte!" she writes about a beautiful tan coloured tabby. "Cynthia is still looking for a home!" "Little Miss Sassafrass has been adopted!" It's clear that each cat is an individual to Dr. Gaby, every one worthy of her help. "We love them all," Dr. Gaby says. "And will be here as long as they need us."

If you are interested in adopting a cat from the Bay Cat Hospital check out the Hospital's Facebook page or baycathospital.com for more information.

# Veterans Build Community

By Sunil Issac

Recently, I came across a heart-breaking story of an ex-Veteran who slipped into homelessness soon after returning back to Canada. During his deployment in Afghanistan he served in several combat missions and started showing signs of post-traumatic stress disorder. He turned to drugs to help cope with the disease. He was eventually released with no benefits except a \$10,000 cheque which was quickly used up. With no money, untreated illness and addiction issues soon he found himself living on the streets.

Imagine if you served the military in some hostile place miles away from your family. And years of service had a toll on your body and mind and you decide, "It's only wise that I go back home to be united with my loved ones. Life should be a lot easier there." But then, upon return, you soon discover that the emotional and mental scars from military life will write a future contrary to your aspirations – a future marked with disabilities, isolation and homelessness.

Unfortunately, a sad reality facing our nation today is the rising number of homeless ex-military personnel. A study done by Employment & Social Development Canada in March 2015 estimates that over 2200 former soldiers are using shelters on a regular basis citing alcoholism, drug addiction, and mental health issues as the main reasons. That is about 2.7% of the total homeless population in Canada - exceptionally high and deserves our serious attention.

Aklilu Wendaferew, the Assistant Executive Director at the Good Shepherd Ministries (GSM), while sharing his insights on the issue noted, "The statistics reflecting the homeless Vets are underestimated and this number is continuing to rise. Before 2010, we had Vets participating in different programs and services but we never tracked Veterans for the sake of Veterans nor were there any programs developed specifically for Veterans. But in 2010 we experienced a shift in our focus after we discovered that almost 10% of the people we served were actually ex-serviceman."

It was in 2010 when GSM, Veterans Affairs Canada and the Royal Canadian Legion initiated an outreach and counseling program focused on supporting Veterans across Toronto.

Aklilu noted, "If it was not for the Royal Canadian Legion requesting us to collect statistics on homeless Veterans we wouldn't have known that there was a real problem at hand and that we needed to do something about it. Since the outreach and counseling program began, 160 homeless people have been identified as Veterans of whom 50% have already been housed."

Back in 2013 GSM also started life skills training to empower Vets to be able to effectively deal with daily challenges of life. For eight consecutive weeks, twice a year, 10 to 15 people including Veterans gather together on the third floor of the Good Shepherd Centre to learn simple but life-changing skills. Training is interactive and allows participants to engage with each other and learn together as a community.

Aklilu narrating the future plans noted "We will continue to work with the Royal Canadian Legion and Veterans Affairs Canada to improve the way we are delivering services to our Vets. We have made access to our Drug and Alcohol Recovery & Enrichment (DARE) program very easy by having five priority beds set aside for Veterans with addiction issues. Our life skills trainings would run twice a year but we are looking to expand the training across the year.

GSM is the only organization providing this life skills training to Veterans in Toronto and could very well be the only one in Ontario. Another important focus is to enhance our aftercare programming to those Vets who are already housed. There are strong indications that the number of Vets on the streets will increase and we just want to be prepared to provide the best possible support we can."

Life shouldn't be so risky and difficult for those who risk their lives for our peace and security. We owe our Veterans a better future for they fight for our freedoms and the freedom of the many across the globe. Let's come together to support our Vets – a lot more can be done when we work together.

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." – John F. Kennedy

next to the door that reads "Kitties for Adoption". Over the last few years, the sign has never come down. The clinic's owner Dr. Gaby, as she is affectionately known, started accepting stray and abandoned cats from the Toronto Humane Society, Toronto Animal Services and one private rescue group a number of years ago.

But it was the intake of a large number of cats from Hamilton Animal Control about five years ago that saw the beginning of a larger and more concerted rescue operation. "I looked at their website and when I saw the pictures, I agreed to take fifteen cats," Dr. Gaby recounts. "All the cats were sick. I had to build a new isolation ward and purchase stainless steel cages to house that number of rescues." As each of the Hamilton cats were adopted, another rescue took its place. This is the way Dr. Gaby has run her rescue efforts ever since.

Over the last few years, Dr. Gaby's focus has switched to cats from Quebec. "The situation there is bad and my Quebec shelter contacts were telling me, 'these animals need you more.'"

The cats that arrived at the Hospital on that warm September night, were



A RESCUE





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## New CRBA Board

By Sandra Iskandar

2015 was a fruitful year for the Corktown Residents and Business Association (CRBA).

The following are a few highlights which kept us busy:

- » Pan Am Games
- » Bright Street Parkette Renovations
- » Involvement in various development projects
- » Events including Easter Egg Hunt, St. Patrick's Day Party, Christmas Party
- » Painting of murals at Underpass Park
- » Redesign of the Corktown News, now the Corktown News

With all that behind us, I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to outgoing members:

Matt Elliott, Peter Coish, Tadeo Sanchez, Alim Rhemtulla. Your energy and enthusiasm was greatly appreciated by us and the entire community. The CRBA board for the upcoming year is: Socrates Apallas (returning), Scott Barker (new), Michele Cummings (returning), Kathrin Furniss (new), Simon Grant (new), Kara Isert (returning), Sandra Iskandar (returning), Thomas Junek (returning), Tricia Waldron (new) and Larry Webb (new).

We hope to see you all at the next CRBA Public Meeting as we look forward to another great year ahead. The meeting is scheduled for Tuesday March 1st at the Annex of Little Trinity Church 7-9pm.

## Stay Connected!

There are so many ways to stay connected that it is often overwhelming. We've compiled a short list for you so you know where to turn if you have issues in Corktown or just want to share something with your neighbours!

### Corktown Residents and Business Association

Corktown.ca – can subscribe to mailing list from this page  
Facebook – Corktown Toronto  
Instagram - @CorktownTO  
Twitter - @CorktownTO

### Police:

Emergency – 911  
Non-Emergency – 416-808-2222  
Toronto Police Service Mobile – Limited availability of the app depending on your mobile preference

### Reporting Issues to the City of Toronto:

SeeClickFix app – take a picture and report an issue to 311 right from your mobile device, app available for every mobile platform  
Toronto.ca/311  
Phone 311

### Online Neighbourhood Notice Boards:

18Blocks.com – see Corktown neighbourhood notice board  
Facebook - I'm a Corktown - closed group, just ask to Join!

## Business Thanks

The Official Corktown Christmas Party was held on December 13, 2015 and was a huge success. The Corktown Residents and Business Association would like to thank our hosts Odin Café & Bar and #LivingToronto.

We raised over \$1000 from the silent auction and we would like to thank all of the local businesses who made this happen with their generous donations:

Alumnae Theatre Company, Enterprise rent-a-car, Fusilli Ristorante, Peter Coish, The Big Wax, Made Design, Eco Stems, Tandem Coffee, The Corktown Kitchen, Sumach Espresso, Figs Breakfast and Lunch, Dominion Pub & Kitchen, Keefaa Ethiopian Organic Coffee and Breakfast, Impact Kitchens, Adornments on Queen, Extension Method, Sparkplug Coffee, Linden Grove Flowers, Redline Coffee and Espresso and Roselle Desserts.



# New on the Block: Feast

By Leslie Ma, Feast Marketing Manager

You've seen the bikes and wondered about all the delivery trucks loading in and out of 4 Gilead Place. Or you came to a recent event at Made, where Chef, Veronica Ma, treated local neighbours to bites made fresh in Feast's kitchen.

Having launched in December 2015, the Feast team is thrilled to be part of this great community. We're proud to be one of a number of new businesses popping up east of Parliament, what the Toronto Star recently described as Corktown's "rebirth".

Instead of delivering food from other restaurants, Feast serves up lunch prepared fresh in our Corktown kitchen. Neighbours already know we took over the space formerly occupied by Jamie Kennedy's Gilead Cafe. It's here that we prepare our menu serving the downtown lunch crowd using bright teal cargo bikes and BMW i3 electric cars.

## HOW FEAST WORKS

From home and at work, you can order lunch by downloading their Feast App. Service runs Monday to Friday: 11:00am to 1:30pm. This February, we'll expand our service to include dinner so that time-strapped urbanites can savour healthy, delicious fare when they get home from work.

For Corktowners still getting to know us, here's a Feast 101 - a peek into the people and philosophy behind the brown and teal bikes and cars:

### 1. Feast Delivers Local, Traceable and Delicious Food in a Sustainable Way

Other food delivery services may get food to you, fast. So does Feast. What's different? We're committed to sustainable practices: that means having direct relationships with local growers and producers including partners like Hooked Inc. (sustainable,

ocean wise catch) and Blackbird Baking Co. in Kensington Market. We use compostable and recyclable packaging, Canada's first fleet of BMW i3 electric cars and pedal-powered bikes. Even our kitchen products are green.

### 2. The Feast Menu Offers Something For Everyone

Executive Chef Curt Martin (formerly of The Harbord Room and THR & Co.) and our creative culinary team have created a menu with global flavours. From North African to Latin cuisine, Indian spice blends and Japanese to traditional stews and classic "Sammys", there's something to remind every Torontonians of home.

### 3. Feast is Bringing Service Back!

Let's face it. Delivery service has never been synonymous with high calibre, premium service. Our bike servers can speak confidently and knowledgeably about the food they're serving you (the same way you'd expect from your restaurant server). Talk to us about cooking technique, when to stir in your gremolata and hear more about how the poached albacore tuna differs from the canned variety. And thanks to responsive technology, we text you when your order is en route, and again once we've arrived at your door. We're still small, so each Feast server aims to know you by name.

Feast is working hard to provide an amazing alternative to home and work dining options, using technology to simplify the ordering process.

We're always taking suggestions and looking for feedback: whether it's menu suggestions, general inquiries or questions about how we dim our lights (for our residential neighbours). Contact us: hello@eatfeast.com, or visit our website for a preview of daily menus: eatfeast.com.

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