

MEDIA RELEASE

OTF's Resilient Communities Fund Elevated BDB to New Heights

For Immediate Release

Tuesday, February 28, 2023 (COLLINGWOOD, ON) – Breaking Down Barriers is pleased to announce today marks the completion of the OTF Resilient Communities Funding. The installation of new energy efficient main floor windows, together with a newly installed wicket window for safer service and accessibility, is the final element to be completed,

Meeting the challenge of transitioning all in-person programs and supports to virtual platforms, responding to the urgent needs of its Consumers including rapid response to mental health crisis intervention and ensuring the technology, IPAC training, procedures and protocols be implemented was only made possible by this level of support.

"We are very grateful to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for their continued support. The Resilient Communities Fund enabled important and necessary changes to the way we operate and allowed us to re-imagine connecting virtually for programs and services for Consumers who rely heavily on structure and routine", says Teresa Gal, Executive Director for Breaking Down Barriers. "We are an organization that, among other things, identifies barriers that prevent inclusion replacing obstacles with opportunities. The support received by the OTF Resilient Communities Fund elevated those opportunities", states Gal.

As a result of the funding, Breaking Down Barriers was able to equip board members and employees with supports to implement new approaches, prepare for change and build resiliency through organizational training and coaching, strategic planning and implementation, research and development as well as improve and increase its ability to access financial resources and develop new and alternative sources of revenue.

"We were able to work together to meet the needs of communities as well as implement safe infection and disease control protocols with adequate training for staff and volunteers to be fluent in all public health procedures. The acquisition of technology, specialized software and equipment taking into consideration visual and hearing impairments was required to enhance our ability and quality of virtual programs and services. These new approaches to actively engage are integral elements for framing our future. This could not have been accomplished without the funds granted by the Ontario Trillium Foundation", adds Gal.

For more information about Breaking Down Barriers, please visit www.breakingdownbarriers.ca or call 705-445-1543, ext. *301.

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For 38 years, Breaking Down Barriers has been providing programs, supports, services, resources and referrals to enhance opportunities for people with diverse disabilities to live independently in communities they call home. Serving Simcoe, Grey and Bruce Counties, Breaking Down Barriers provides advocacy, peer support programs, Direct Funding opportunities and independent living skills training.

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MEDIA RELEASE

NEWLY RENOVATED RESOURCE CENTRE PROVIDES GREATER ACCESSIBILITY FOR LOCAL CHARITY

For Immediate Release

Tuesday, December 15, 2020 (COLLINGWOOD, ON) – Breaking Down Barriers, an Independent Living Resource Centre for individuals with diverse disabilities, has undergone significant renovations in 2019-2020 making it an even more accessible Centre for its Members.

Thanks to the Ontario Trillium Foundation's Capital Grant program, Breaking Down Barriers' *Accessibility First Project* created a space that enables free and easy access for all its Members, particularly those requiring wheelchairs and other support devices. Highlights of the renovations include the removal of walls, widening of doorway entrances, construction of a fully accessible kitchen for independent skills training, new flooring, improved outdoor ramps and railings, better functional program room and accessible washroom upgrades. The finishing touches were completed this month including a new and improved paved parking lot with accessible parking designations, repairs to interior doors and newly installed carpeting on stairs leading to the Centre's administration office.

Breaking Down Barriers is home to in-person independent living skills training, peer support activities and provides much needed assistance with access to housing, transportation, health services, employment, education and training for its Members.

"We are so thankful and appreciative to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for their continued support. Their Capital Grant enabled important and necessary renovations to take place at our Centre", says Teresa Gal, Executive Director for Breaking Down Barriers. "We are an organization that, among other things, identifies barriers that prevent inclusion for the disabled. We replace obstacles with opportunities", states Gal. "Our completed renovation at the Centre is a good example of how the elimination of obstacles can offer a barrier-free environment for individuals with disabilities in our community to freely access, learn, participate and flourish within. This could not have been accomplished without the generous in-kind contributions from local businesses, helping to leverage funds granted by the Ontario Trillium Foundation", adds Gal.

Earlier this year, plans were underway for an Official Grand Re-Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony with local dignitaries, community members and representatives from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to celebrate and see first-hand changes made to the Centre; a fitting end to the organization's 35th Anniversary year. Due to the pandemic and in the face of challenges resulting from COVID-19, these plans have been put on hold until it is safe to do so. As Breaking Down Barriers continues its virtual online programs and support as a result of COVID-19, it looks ahead to 2021 in anticipation of the day when the Centre can safely re-open and once again provide in-person activities its Members depend on - only this time in a fully accessible and functional newly renovated space,

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