



**RECEIVED**  
November 12, 2025  
REGION OF PEEL  
OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL CLERK

**ToughTimes**  
Nothing about Us, Without Us, Is for Us

November 12, 2025

The Council of the  
Regional Municipality of Peel  
10 Peel Center Drive, Suite A  
Brampton, Ontario L6T 4B9

**Re: Council Agenda November 13, 2025:  
Delegations on topics of Food Security, Housing, Intimate Partner Violence, and  
Staff Report, Item 11.1: Bill 60, Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025**

Peel Poverty Action Group – PPAG – writes this letter in support of all Delegations to Region of Peel Council appearing on Agenda for November 13, 2025.

Organizations and their calls to action have been represented in Tough Times editions published limited print and digital editions (.pdf attached):

- September 2025 <https://ppag.media/category/sept2025/>
- October 2025 <https://ppag.media/category/october2025/>

Tough Times will cover the perils of Bill 60: Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act 2025 in its upcoming Winter 2025 edition.

PPAG concurs with the Staff Report Item 11.1 on Bill 60 (2025) citing urgent concern of sudden and immediate impacts to exacerbate housing insecurity:

“The proposed changes in the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) will modify the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) processes impacting both Peel Housing Corporation’s operational processes – and if these changes result in increased housing insecurity, increased service pressures on Peel Region in its capacity as Service Manager to prevent homelessness and evictions. In February 2025, Regional Council passed a resolution (2025-142) and advocated to the Attorney General to adequately fund and resource the LTB to deal with backlogs and delays.”

Immediate solutions appear in Tough Times to mitigate hardship of individuals experiencing homelessness and unhoming that can be affordably undertaken, and appropriately scaled:

- On existing Peel Region and constituent municipal websites, publish the locations of warming centres where folks can be connected to personnel and peer supports and services.
- Address digital connectivity by equipping all those in need with a mobile device and service connection, to increase personal safety and close the loop on “Housing First”.

(Refer to May 11, 2023 delegations to Region of Peel Council, Agenda Items 7.4 and Item 7.5).

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Soplet  
Member – Peel Poverty Action Group  
Editor, PPAG.media / Tough Times publications

REFERRAL TO \_\_\_\_\_  
RECOMMENDED \_\_\_\_\_  
DIRECTION REQUIRED \_\_\_\_\_  
RECEIPT RECOMMENDED  \_\_\_\_\_

# ToughTimes

Nothing about Us, Without Us, Is for Us



## TAKE BACK THE NIGHT



Photo via Peel Committee Against Women Abuse

### By: Tough Times

On September 18, 2025, the Peel Committee Against Women Abuse (PCAWA) held their annual Take Back the Night rally and march. Hosted in the Region of Peel since 2016 and led by Embrave, it's an important event that raises awareness of the need to support an end to gender-based violence, especially sexual violence, and the right to live without fear of it.

Around half of women feel unsafe walking alone at night on a quiet street near their home or a busy public place. Four out of five feel unsafe walking alone in a park or open space after dark.

"[It's about] taking back time that continues to be a dangerous time for women and gender diverse folks, where we're told to walk on the light side of the street," says Embrave Development and Education Manager Rebecca Pacheco. "All of these things that we shouldn't have to do because of our heightened awareness of the danger that comes with nighttime."

Take Back the Night is not a Peel-specific event. It's a worldwide issue, with approximately one in three women having been physically or sexually

assaulted. It's global fight for action. Similar marches and events take place in over 40 countries including in many communities across Canada. In Peel, it's a collaborative effort with 25 member organizations and many community members to make the event possible.

"Every year, it continues to grow. And it's incredible to see the progression of the event, and to know that it just continues to do that," says Pacheco. "The connections that have been formed because of this event, it's remarkable."

The event began with a community fair with a poster-making station and booths showcasing the partner organizations and supports that are offered to survivors of violence. There was also a dance performance by Frog in Hand, a Mississauga not-for-profit dance-theatre group.

After that, the march begins and the message is heard loud and clear.

"We yell and scream and we chant, and it's so powerful. I always have my megaphone, and it's electric, the energy during the march," says Pacheco. "It's almost like this tangible thing."

## Inside the Issue

[Take Back the Night](#)

[ACTO Report on Gender-Based Violence](#)

[Canada's Digital Success Dashboard](#)

[ACORN Report: Paying More, Getting Less](#)

[The Problems With AI Predictive Policing](#)

[PC Expansion of Housing Fund Still Falls Short of Peel's Need](#)

[What Can \[ ? \] Get You?](#)

[News to Know](#)

[+More](#)

[Visit PPAG's Website](#)



[ppag.media](http://ppag.media)

### Produced by:

Peel Poverty Action  
Group (PPAG)

### Email queries to:

info@ppag.media

### Issue Editors:

Catherine Soplet  
Hailey Ford

PPAG's mandate is to advocate for people in need and to educate the public about poverty issues. Tough Times is part of that. PPAG is open to every individual and organization in Peel Region that cares about what poverty does to people. It provides a safe place to speak up and out

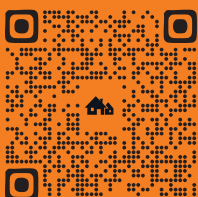
### Want to contribute?

Do you want to share your story?

Are you an organization or individual looking to submit a poster, write an article or make a comic?

Do you just have an idea?

Email [info@ppagmedia](mailto:info@ppagmedia) or fill out this form:



"People's lives don't neatly fit into one singular data point."

~ Katrina Ingram, founder of Ethically Aligned AI This callout in "The problems with AI Predictive Policing" by Hailey Ford, points out the obvious from methodology used in reports Tough Times covers this issue. The constellation of material needs for people's lives is set out in Maslow's Hierarchy. These data points must be met, in concert, for resolution. After air and water, to survive humans need food, shelter and health. The next essentials are physical safety and personal agency that is free from barriers to meet material needs. In today's world, this looks like adequate and stable finances, and freedom from discrimination.

October 17 marks United Nations Day for the Eradication of Poverty, themed: "End social and institutional maltreatment by ensuring respect and effective support for families". In Peel, advocacy networks already action the 2025 theme. Read how ACORN is documenting from tenants their experience of unsafe units. Reports lead to remedy in Ontario municipalities via by-law enforcement.

Instead of Thanksgiving abundance and harvest, this issue looks at reports from Ontario tenant rights and foodbank sectors that document how food insufficiency foretells imminent unhoming and worsening health. When people are relentlessly engaged to get enough food to

survive on a day-to-day basis, there is no time for dreams of a different future, or of fostering community connections. A full belly is necessary for learning. Public education and food program play a vital role. Data maps created by Feed Ontario and Let's Get Together, filtered by federal ridings, generate food scarcity and digital equity profiles to inform where weakest links get largest ROI in leveraging positive impact for individuals. For an upstream food security initiative, look to CBC's "Make the Season Kind" School Challenge 2025 teamed up with Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario, FeedOntario and local participants Food Banks Mississauga and Brampton Knights Table.

Terror, not Halloween trick-or-treating, underpins Peel's tenth "Take Back The Night" march held in Malton by Peel Committee Against Women Abuse (PCAWA). ACTO - the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario - reports how violent episodes are a tripwire, via injury, into urgent housing (shelters). When a survivor is cut off from their routine circle of supports, recovery is even more complicated. Of ACTO's 17 recommendations, Peel has already completed one : In 2023 Intimate Partner Violence was declared an epidemic by Peel Region and constituent municipalities Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga as a result of PCAWA's advocacy and network engagement.

People's lives are an abundance of data points. Dig in with us.

## A FEW OF THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESOURCES IN PEEL

### ASSAULTED WOMEN'S HELPLINE

Crisis counselling, safety planning, emotional support, information referrals. 24/7.

Phone: **416-863-0511**

### OASIS CENTRE DES FEMMES

Services for Francophone women in regaining independence. Interventions, counselling, transition support.

Phone: **905-454-3332**

### EMBRAVE

Non-profit organization that provides shelter, counselling, and advocacy supports for survivors of gender-based violence.

Phone: **905-403-9691**

### VICTIM SERVICES OF PEEL

Crisis counselling, transitional support, shelter information, safety planning

Phone: **905-568-1068**

### INDUS COMMUNITY SERVICES

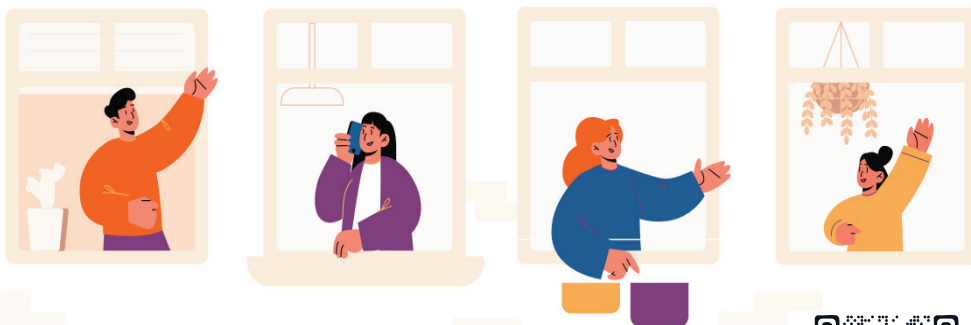
Culturally aware services for newcomers, families, women and seniors. Crisis intervention and counseling.

Phone: **905-275-2369**

### SAFE CENTRE OF PEEL

Partnership of multiple organizations in one place. Risk assessment, safety planning, referrals, counselling.

Phone: **905-450-4650**



### By: The Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario (ACTO)

This excerpt and the above graphic are taken directly from the published version of the report. The text below contains only a condensed version of the policy recommendations and key findings. The full report is linked through the QR



GBV is the leading cause of homelessness for women and gender-diverse people. The link between GBV and housing instability is critical yet often overlooked in Ontario. The research findings provided new insights into the challenges women, Two-Spirit, transgender, and gender-diverse people face when seeking safe, adequate, and affordable housing, including a dire lack of housing options, homelessness services, and legal support. Survivors face constant setbacks, forcing them to move in and out of homelessness, shelters, precarious housing, and even back to the violent situation they left before reaching housing stability—for far longer than prior research has suggested.

Renters experiencing violence have limited legal options if they wish to stay in their homes. They often have limited awareness of their rights and are faced with overburdened legal clinics, eligibility hurdles, and re-traumatizing experiences at the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB). The legal system often lacks trauma-informed practices, contributing to further harm.

Survivors of GBV also face multiple barriers when trying to access private market housing, including a lack of affordable or accessible units, strict rental requirements, the prohibitive cost of required rental deposits, and discrimination from prospective landlords. They also frequently face the threat of losing their housing due to arrears, unsafe or unhealthy living conditions, abuse from landlords and roommates, and bad-faith evictions.

Across the housing system, survivors of GBV are pressured and forced into making housing decisions that do not align with their safety, needs, or healing. The housing affordability crisis compounds these

pressures, pushing survivors into long-term shelter stays or into housing that is unaffordable, inaccessible, or unsafe. In rural and Northern regions, survivors are often forced to move away from their communities to access housing, separating them from cultural supports and intensifying their trauma. This is especially harmful for Indigenous survivors.

Survivors often felt that they had no choice but to accept housing that was unsafe, unsuitable, or unaffordable because of the threat of losing access to shelter, being faced with extensive social housing waitlists, or being timed out of transitional housing programs. Rental housing was also often weaponized against survivors. Abusive partners would withhold rent or damage units, leaving survivors financially and legally liable.

Survivors experienced a lack of agency and choice in what happened to them, frequently relinquishing their needs and sense of dignity to secure a rental unit. Without meaningful access to justice, the cycle of violence is tightly linked with the cycle of homelessness.

In the context of an affordability crisis, the limited protections offered by housing legislation and housing policies do not reflect the lived realities of survivors of GBV and have failed to mitigate the risk of further violence. Despite laws intended to support survivors of GBV, access to housing and related resources is inconsistent and largely dependent on discretionary decisions made by individual workers, lawyers, or shelter staff. This unpredictability creates a system in which support feels arbitrary and success is perceived not as a right, but as something achieved by chance.

## THE 17 ACTO POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DECLARE IPV AND GBV AN EPIDEMIC.
2. RE-ESTABLISH THE ONTARIO OUNDTABLE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN.
3. INCREASE FUNDING FOR INDIGENOUS-LED SOLUTIONS TO THE HOUSING CRISIS.
4. INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF TRANSITIONAL HOUSING.
5. INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF SPECIALIZED SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR SURVIVORS.
6. REFORM THE HOUSING SERVICES ACT AND SPECIAL PRIORITY PROGRAM .
7. RESTORE RENT CONTROL.
8. INCREASE SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RATES.
9. BUILD CREDIT SCORES AND RENTAL HISTORY FOR GBV SURVIVORS.
10. EXPAND AND EXTEND THE CANADA ONTARIO HOUSING BENEFIT PROGRAM.
11. REBUILD FINANCIAL PATHWAYS FOR SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE.
12. ADDRESS THE LIMITATIONS OF THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT.
13. IMPROVE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR RENTERS EXPERIENCING GBV.
14. IMPROVE SAFETY FOR RENTERS THROUGH LANDLORD TRAINING AND ACCREDITATION.
15. PROVIDE TRAUMA-INFORMED LEGAL AND HOUSING SERVICES.
16. INVEST IN SPECIALIZED WRAPAROUND SERVICES FOR SURVIVORS FACING RENTAL HOUSING CHALLENGES.
17. BUILD OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING AND COLLABORATION

Despite the National Housing Strategy Act's recognition of housing as a human right (2019), Ontario's housing and legal systems remain largely reactive. Without legal reforms and proactive, trauma-informed interventions, survivors are left vulnerable to chronic homelessness, exploitation, and femicide.

Implementing survivor informed, trauma responsive practices is not just good policy—it is a justice imperative. Real change requires systemic transformation that restores survivors' autonomy, dignity, and access to safe housing. These best practices, when consistently implemented, create legal and housing services that not only respond to trauma but help to restore agency and dignity.



Preyas Patel / Let's Get Together | From left to right: Nicolas Iovu, Prathamesh Patel, Preyas Patel, Sana Rosanally, Paban Sangroula, Alison Canning

## By: Namrah Jamal and Hailey Ford

In today's world, the expectation is that everyone has access to a phone, a laptop, and the internet. Everything from government resources and education to social opportunities are online and digital.

"Many people don't know that there are hundreds of thousands of people [without access or easy access]," says Let's Get Together (LGT) founder Alison Canning. "If you don't have a computer, you are at a severe disadvantage, and moving forward, that gap is going to widen if we don't address this issue now."

This past summer, LGT soft-launched the Canada Digital Success Dashboard, a geographic information system (GIS) map that will track tech needs and collection centres across Canada. They believe this tool will reshape how Canada understands and addresses tech equity, giving policy makers, schools and community leaders a real-time visual representation of the gaps.

At its core, the initiative is about making the invisible, visible and the impossible, possible

"One of the big reasons why we wanted to have a map was to raise awareness about the problem," says Canning, adding that it's also intended to guide donations and help governments align their strategies with actual needs. "Our goal is to solve the tech equity problem, and so by 2030, or sooner, we'd like to see every person in Canada who needs a computer have a chance to own one."

The dashboard first took shape in Peel Region, where a diverse and fastest-growing population makes digital inequities especially visible. But the vision has always been national.

"The reason to call it the Canada Digital Success Dashboard is to communicate that we have cross-Canada ambitions," says LGT Software Engineer Prathamesh Patel. "It also encourages everyone to be a part of the story."

Nicolas Iovu, the Student Software Engineering Lead of the team noted that Peel's diversity and rapid growth increase disparities, especially for newcomers and low income families. According to the map, 72 per cent of applicants have household incomes under \$20,000, and 29 per cent identify as low income.

The dashboard directly highlights collection points where Canadians can drop off e-waste for refurbishment and also displays data on where the need for devices is greatest.

Users can hover over any federal riding to see how many applicants are waiting for support. The choice to visualize through federal ridings was intentional. It allows the

data to be practical for all levels of government without singling out individual neighbourhoods. Iovu says this allows for the data to serve as opportunity, not stigma.

The digital divide is a problem with many facets and many interpretations. However, it always starts with access.

"It's very hard for people to function well in society, to be active citizens, to be politically involved, to be community involved, without technology," says Anabel Quan-Haase, a professor and sociologist who focuses on the impacts of technology on society.

According to the Digital Success Dashboard, at least 34 per cent of their current applicants use Ontario Works and many others are on the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). Single-parent families, those living in transitional housing or shelters and students are some of those most in need.

"I know students who just bought their first laptop, in the second, third, fourth year of college," says Patel. "Not because they did not know they needed a laptop but because it was not possible for them to acquire one."

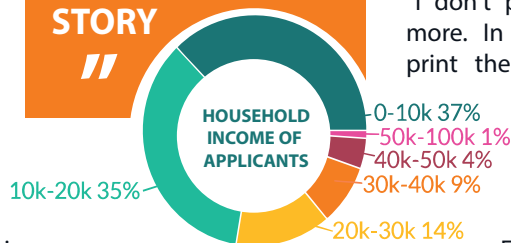
Many universities and high schools rely near-solely on online learning tools to provide course materials, class updates and assignment information.

"I don't print anything anymore. In the past, I would print the syllabus, I would print readings, I would print assignments. Now, I post everything," says Quan-Haase. For those competing

with siblings or parents for a computer or unable to afford one at all, it's difficult to keep up with class.

She says the problem extends beyond that. With how quickly technology becomes outdated, often planned by companies to drive up sales, updating or operating on outdated operating systems can be a challenge for students who often don't have a stable income.

**// IT ALSO ENCOURAGES EVERYONE TO BE A PART OF THE STORY //**



## Canada Digital Success Dashboard

Let's Get Together, Tech4All

GIS System
Data System
  
Stats
Layers
Centers

### Federal Ridings Stats

**2,126**

TOTAL APPLICANTS

**166**

FEDERAL RIDINGS

**13**

AVG PER RIDING

**90**

TOP RIDING COUNT



Internet access is also a problem. According to Dr. Janette Hughes, a professor at Ontario Tech University and Canada Research Chair in Technology and Pedagogy, only 67 per cent of rural households have adequate access, which drops to only half in indigenous communities. While free internet and devices may be available at libraries or schools, they're not always open - and not always equal.

"Schools are supposed to be the great equalizer. But even within the school system, there are schools that are more advantaged than others," she says, adding that there is a direct correlation between access and academic performance. "Schools in well-connected areas have greater opportunities to integrate online resources and digital tools, while those in under-served areas might struggle to provide even basic digital experiences for students."

Hughes says that if students don't have reliable access to the internet or devices at home, the divide between those who do and those who don't will continue to widen. She says this starts in elementary school and gets worse as students move up in education and out into the world. From reduced academic achievement to reduced career prospects, access enables equality.

"One of the early interactions I had with the internet was watching TED videos. And without a laptop and internet connection and [those] videos, I don't think I would have a lot of my ideas," says Patel. "We see the digital divide, not just as not having a system, but also the first degree, second degree and third degree consequences."

Canning says that right now, solving the problem of tech equity is left to nonprofits and charities in the community. "We just don't have the capability, tools or funding," she says. "We need to lean on the government, corporations and the public-private sectors to help solve the problem, and that's what this map is going to do, and that's why the data is there."

Knowing the issue is in place is often the first step to solving it. The dashboard tracks not only individual but organizational needs. Canning says there are not enough collection sites, and matching the need to those gaps will help both bring technology to those who need it and reduce the environmental impacts of e-waste that's been improperly disposed of.

"We want to bring everyone together into our Equity in Education Collective, and anyone who joins that collective will be supporting us," says Canning.

"We are at a crisis, and we don't need to look any further than our own country and sometimes our own province, to know there is a problem. But we need everybody on board, and this, data, this map, will be available to everyone."


She says they won't be stopping here. The Digital Success Dashboard is a tool built for everyone to be able to join and unite their efforts, resources and direction towards bridging the digital divide collectively.

"It's a global problem, but very much solvable," she says. "Every hand counts and no hand is too small, and that really matters in this situation when we're talking about our economy, our future and our planet."

**// EVERY HAND COUNTS AND NO HAND IS TOO SMALL. //**

Want to learn how to refurbish a computer and/or sponsor a computer for someone in the community? Have e-waste or computers to donate? Know someone in need?


**VISIT THE DASHBOARD**



Join the collective and help LGT make learning and education equitable and accessible for all! Visit [letsgettogether.ca](https://letsgettogether.ca) or email [info@letsgettogether.ca](mailto:info@letsgettogether.ca)

The Digital Success Dashboard was made possible through the help of the Canada Summer Jobs Program. LGT thanks MPs Kristy Duncan (former), John Zerucelli, Iqwindar S. Gaheer, James Maloney, Ali Shafqat, Sonia Sidhu and Ruby Sahota.

**WEBSITE HOMEPAGE**





# Sunday Dinner

**Please join us at**  
 St. Francis of Assisi, 6945 Meadowvale Town Centre Circle  
 (next to the Meadowvale Town Centre Transit Centre)

Sunday, **October 5**  
 Sunday, **November 2**  
 Sunday, **December 7**

Doors open @ 4:30 pm  
 Dinner is served 5 - 6 pm

*Sponsored by the Faith Communities of Meadowvale*



**By: Catherine Sople**

For 50 years, since 1974, Central Mississauga Lions Farmers Market has managed weekly hardtop locations for local Ontario farmer's stalls and independent vendors in the central Mississauga area of Square One.

General Manager Ahmad Khan recently assumed duties. "The Farmers Market is important to family-run Ontario farms, some of whom have been with us for more than 30 years," says Khan.

Seasonal produce and artisanal food products are sold in the pop-up open air markets.

During COVID response beginning in 2020 Ahmad, his family and at-large community answered the urgent call to source and deliver food for shut-ins, especially seniors, in the South Asian community in Peel and elsewhere in the GTA.

Khan's efforts were recognized with Red Cross Emergency Responder credentials.

Currently Lions Farmers Markets are located at Mississauga Celebration Square on Wednesdays, and the parking lot of 3 Robert Speck Parkway on Sundays, running from late May through the end of October.

Proceeds from Lions Farmers Market have donated more than \$6 million since 1975 to benefit Lions' community. Recipients of Lions Club donations include:

- Open Door – Square One
- Seva Food Bank
- Victim Services of Peel
- St. John Ambulance
- East Mississauga Community Health
- Eden Food for Change
- Salvation Army – Mississauga

# LOADS OF CARE

Neighbours caring for the unhoused by providing access to a basic human need: **The Dignity of Clean Clothes**


*"We provide free shower passes to our clients to be used at local community centres, but then they put on the same dirty clothes."*

**-Veroy Clarke**, Community Development Coordinator, Open Window Hub, City of Mississauga

Providing Pre-paid Laundry Vouchers

"LOADS OF CARE" is a love and kindness initiative of local faith communities in partnership with City Councillor Martin Reid and the Peel Poverty Action Group for the good of Mississauga.

For more information contact Sam Cooper at [scooper@meaderc.com](mailto:scooper@meaderc.com) Or join us by donating at: [www.meadowvalecommunitychurch.ca/giving](http://www.meadowvalecommunitychurch.ca/giving)



**FEED ONTARIO: HUNGER IN MY RIDING**



This tool by Feed Ontario can calculate the impact that hunger has in your riding. They will generate a custom report based on the information you put in. The data comes from a variety of sources including statistics, surveys, reports and news articles.



# INTERNATIONAL DAY for the ERADICATION of POVERTY

17 OCTOBER



## By: The United Nations

The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, is a yearly reminder that ending poverty is not only about income, but about dignity, justice, and belonging. In 2025, the Day focuses on a powerful theme: Ending social and institutional maltreatment by ensuring respect and effective support for families.

The aim is simple yet urgent, put the furthest behind first and build institutions that help families stay together, thrive, and shape their own futures. Families living in poverty are often navigating impossible choices while confronting stigma, scrutiny, and systems that can punish rather than support.

Around the world, parents—especially single mothers, Indigenous families, and those from historically discriminated groups—report daily experiences of judgment and control in places meant to help: schools, clinics, child protection offices, welfare agencies. These interactions too often erode trust, undermine agency, and can even result in family separation due to poverty, with lasting emotional and social harm for children and parents alike.

Building a sustainable future requires us to intensify our efforts towards eradicating extreme poverty and discrimination, and ensuring that everyone can fully exercise their human rights. The full participation of people living in poverty, particularly in the decisions that affect their lives and communities, must be at the centre of policies and strategies to build a sustainable future. In this way, we can guarantee that our planet and our societies can fulfil the needs and aspirations of everyone – not only those of a privileged few – for this and future generations.

Therefore, it is appropriate that the theme — chosen by the United Nations, in consultation with people living in poverty and civil society organizations — recognizes that all people must come together to end poverty and discrimination in order to build a sustainable future in which the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The 2025 theme is grounded in global consultations with people who have lived experience of poverty and with organizations working alongside them. It calls on all of us—policy makers, practitioners, and communities—to listen to families, recognize their efforts, and transform support systems so they are built on trust, respect, and collaboration.

To change course, the Day's theme urges three shifts:

1. From control to care: Design services that start with trust. Reduce punitive conditionalities, streamline documentation, and prioritize respectful, person-centred interactions.
2. From surveillance to support: Rebalance investments away from monitoring and removal toward family-strengthening services: income support, quality childcare, adequate housing, mental health care, parenting support, and access to justice.
3. From top-down to co-created solutions: Involve families living in poverty at every stage—assessment, design, budgeting, delivery, and evaluation—so policies reflect real needs and constraints.

In a world characterized by an unprecedented level of economic development, technological means and financial resources, that millions of persons are living in extreme poverty is a moral outrage. Poverty is not solely an economic issue, but rather a multidimensional phenomenon that encompasses a lack of both income and the basic capabilities to live in dignity.

Persons living in poverty experience many interrelated and mutually reinforcing deprivations that prevent them from realizing their rights and perpetuate their poverty, including:

- dangerous work conditions
- unsafe housing
- lack of nutritious food
- unequal access to justice
- lack of political power
- limited access to health care

The observance of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty can be traced back to 17 October 1987. On that day, over a hundred thousand people gathered at the Trocadéro in Paris, where the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed in 1948, to honour the victims of extreme poverty, violence and hunger. They proclaimed that poverty is a violation of human rights and affirmed the need to come together to ensure that these rights are respected.



## KEY FACTS AND TERMS (TL;DR)

### PEEL REGIONAL POLICE USE OF AI COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

The Peel Regional Police are holding a series of public community consultations on the use of artificial intelligence.

The final session is on privacy and data protection. It's on November 4th, 2025 from 6-8 p.m.



You can go either in-person at the Region of Peel Council Chambers at 10 Peel Centre Drive in Brampton or on the livestream linked to the QR code.

### PREDICTIVE POLICING

Not just an AI thing. It's looking at past data like locations and times crime happens and is reported. It also looks at the people who are arrested or found guilty for crime.

The police then use that to predict where and when crime is likely to occur and the likely demographic (such as age, gender, race or income) of who is going to commit it.

### ALGORITHMIC BIAS

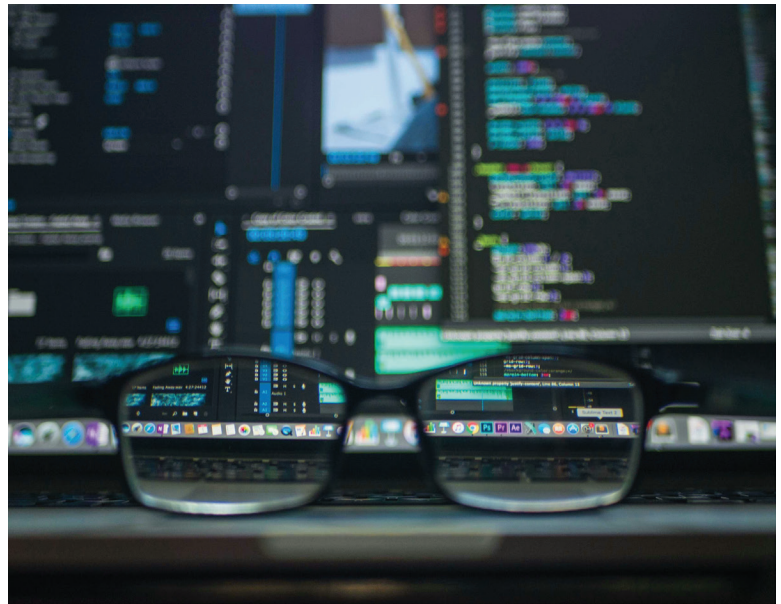
When that is done through AI, it does not take into account past over-policing, discrimination or any other things that mean the information is incomplete or misleading. Data is not neutral. AI is biased as a result.

### THE BLACK BOX

Because AI technology is mostly made by private companies who don't want their code or systems to be copied, they're hidden. Users can see what they put into the AI and what it answer it gives, but they don't know how or why it's doing what it's doing and there's no way to check. This means that it's harder both to identify when bias is present and remove it when it is.

### LACK OF REGULATION

AI is fairly new and the government lags behind when it comes to making rules for new technology. The main bill that regulates AI in Ontario does not mention of human rights. Because of the way it's worded, it also doesn't restrict courts or police services. This means that the way AI is used by police, their ethical guidelines and restrictions are largely self-created.



Kevin Ku / Pexels

### By: Hailey Ford

On October 14th from 6-8 p.m. the Peel Regional Police held the second of three community consultations on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in policing. The topic of the second session was "predictive policing and community perspectives on machine learning. The Peel Regional Police have not yet shared specifics on how they hope to use AI.

"It's going to be increasingly adopted in a multitude of sectors, including policing. Key is ensuring that we do it right, or do it as right as we can," said Deputy Chief Anthony Odoardi during the first public consultation. He also stated during both sessions that the consultations are about information, not for or against the use of the technology.

Both AI and predictive policing are complicated terms with baggage attached. Predictive policing is, essentially, processing and analyzing large amounts of data to determine where crime is most likely to occur and who will either commit or be affected by it.

One of the session panelists was Dr. Kanika Samuels-Wortley, an expert in race and racism in the criminal justice system. She

stated that a nation-wide survey about AI in policing found that predictive systems were the greatest concern Canadians had.

"Without confidence in the transparency and ethics, even well-intentioned innovations risk being met with resistance or doubt," Samuels-Wortley said.

As a whole, the problems with predictive policing can be divided into three main categories: algorithmic bias, the concept of the black box and lack of regulation.

AI looks through past data and statistics, using those to come to a decision, often without considering the other factors that went into those numbers. Data is not neutral. Santa Cruz, Chicago and Los Angeles have all had and dropped predictive policing programs because of issues with discrimination and transparency.

"If algorithms are fed historical data that is replete with individual or institutional biases, and these predictive models risk repeating and reinforcing and further entrenching those biases," said Odoardi. "We risk hardwiring discrimination, quite literally, into future policing practices."

Because certain communities have been over-policed or discriminated against in the past or present, they will be overrepresented in the data, which will then loop back around and be repeated. When combined with the lingering idea that AI and data are more reliable than humans, these tools can be used as a way to brush off, intentionally or unintentionally, accusations of racism.

“Artificial intelligence predictive policing does not increase safety, and rather has far-reaching implications, as what it does is replicate, reinforce and exacerbate the ongoing systemic harms of policing, including systemic discriminatory practices such as racial profiling,” says Andrea Vásquez Jiménez, the director and principal consultant of Policing-Free Schools. “The reality is that the institution of policing, including when it comes to artificial intelligence predictive policing, can not community consult, reform, or guardrail their way out of these systemic harms.”

Katrina Ingram, founder of Ethically Aligned AI described the issue of algorithmic bias through the idea of someone looking for their keys in the dark, searching in the area illuminated by the streetlight, even though that wasn't where they were lost. It isn't a direct one-to-one comparison, but the idea remains. One area is looked at more closely, more things are found there, and it just keeps adding to the problem, creating a feedback loop. These concerns were mentioned in the second session.

“A key guardrail is going to be audits for bias and discrimination, testing and monitoring to work to identify and mitigate biases where those may exist,” said Odoardi. “Accountability must not vanish into the algorithm.”

However, cleaning up the data isn't a straightforward task. This is where both the creator of the AI tool and the issue of the black box become important. Odoardi stated that “The manufacturers of such technologies want to protect their own corporate interests, and so we oftentimes don't get to see how these algorithms and technologies actually function.”

To simplify, the idea of the black box means that the people using the AI don't know

why or how it's doing what it's doing and that there's no way for either them or the general population to check.

Without being able to reliably understand how the recommendations are made, and how they're acted on, the public may further lose trust in the police. This is particularly relevant in Peel, where the Peel Regional Police do not have a good track record in their interactions with racialized communities,

Their 2024 Use of Force report was recently released. It states that in 2024, 28 per cent of the times force was used, it was exerted on Black individuals, three times more often than their share of the population. This is down from 34 per cent in 2023.

In February 2024, after investigating at the request of the Peel Police Services Board, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation released a report stating that “racialized communities in Peel continue to face human rights issues at the hands of Peel Regional Police.” The report speaks about both the disproportionate use of force and the serious issues that Peel has with racial profiling.

There have been multiple occasions where the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario has found that race was a factor in an interaction with the Peel Regional Police caused harm. This includes in 2016, when police handcuffed the wrists and ankles of a six year old Black girl and held her down on her stomach for 28 minutes.

Combining police and a tool that are both known to have issues with discrimination risks losing any trust that might have built up and may worsen the issue in new ways. Particularly when there are so few regulations currently in place surrounding artificial intelligence tools.

“What this means locally, is that despite the amount of community consultations in attempts to showcase the misleading

narrative that 'community's voice is at the center of decision-making' by local police boards as a means to rationalize the use of artificial intelligence technologies in policing,” says Jiménez. “Systemic harms will continue to remain intact, which is compounded by the reality that police are not bound to provincial artificial intelligence accountability measures.”

Jiménez is referring to Bill 194, the Strengthening Cyber Security and Building Trust in the Public Sector Act, 2024. Bill 194 placed requirements on public sector institutions using AI regarding privacy, use of personal information and cybersecurity. However, it

makes no mention of human rights, transparency of decision-making or safety.

The bill applies to public sector entities. However, the way the bill defines the term means that it does not apply to tribunals, courts, or police services. Both the Ontario Human Rights Commission and the Law Commission of Ontario have raised concerns about the gaps in the legislation, including specifically as it applies to police use and predictive policing.

While community consultations are important, they mean nothing if the recommendations and voices of the community aren't truly put into practice .

“I think that we have to really pay attention to lived experience. It doesn't always get captured well in an algorithmic system. They tend to really want to quantify everything,” says Ingram. “People's lives don't neatly fit into one singular data point.”

Artificial intelligence driven predictive policing is unregulated, often untrusted by Canadians, runs on hidden algorithms, is known to have bias and discrimination issues and would be used within a system that , while working towards fixing them, has severe institutional flaws.

Both community consultations have had these risks clearly stated and indicated that the people of Peel are being heard. However, there has not been clarity in how Peel hopes to implement the technology or how the safeguards mentioned as a necessity will actually be implemented.

**// PEOPLE'S LIVES DON'T NEATLY FIT INTO ONE SINGULAR DATA POINT //**

**// ACCOUNTABILITY MUST NOT VANISH INTO THE ALGORITHM. //**



Kevin Ku / Pexels

## HYPOTHERMIA

### WARNING SIGNS

- Numbness.
- Feeling tired or losing consciousness.
- Confusion and unusual behaviour.
- Weak pulse and breathing.
- Turning pale or blue
- Difficulty walking and speaking.
- Shivering that later stops.
- Feeling warmth or heat.

### SEEKING HELP

If someone has hypothermia, they may not know because it reduces their ability to think properly. It is important to seek help and call 911, especially as symptoms worsen. It can kill you.

Stopping shivering after they had been or feeling warm or hot is a clear sign of an emergency situation. The Government of Canada recommends trying to touch your thumb to your pinkie. If you can't, it means the muscles aren't working properly and need medical help immediately.

### TREATMENT

While waiting for help or while in the early stages, get inside or out of the cold if possible. If not possible, do whatever you can to protect from the wind. Do not attempt to stop shivering.

Drink warm and sweet non-alcoholic drinks but only when conscious and responsive. Do not use alcohol or tobacco. They interfere with rewarming.

Do CPR if their breathing stops. Do not assume someone is dead. Hypothermia can slow breathing and pulse enough that they appear dead when they're not.

### ALCOHOL

Alcohol may make you *feel* warm, but it increases the risk, because it's not actual warmth. It changes your blood flow, moving it away from vital organs and towards your skin.

The reduced awareness of the actual temperature can also prevent things the body does to keep you warm, like shivering.

### RISK FACTORS

Poor nutrition, heart issues, thyroid issues and anything that affects blood flow increases the risk of hypothermia, similarly to alcohol.

This includes many prescription, over-the-counter and many other drugs and medications. Do not stop taking prescription medication, but be aware of and monitor more closely for symptoms.

Older adults and young children are also more at risk.

### REHEATING

Do not apply direct heat. Use warm or cool water, not hot. Cold-damaged areas, such as those that have been frost-bitten are more at risk of burning. An unconscious or numb person will also not have the same level of awareness of temperature.

Do not rub cold-damaged skin. Do not thaw the affected area if it may refreeze. It increases the risk of infection and other long-term damage. If already thawed, wrap the area to prevent refreezing.

### BRAMPTON LIGHTHOUSES



A map of faith based organizations who have signed on to offer refuge during cold alerts.

### CALEDON WARMING CENTRES



Caledon will open warming centres during extreme cold when the city determines they are needed.

### MISSISSAUGA DIRECTORY



Community centres that may be used as warming centres and can offer shelter during the day.

We don't have a big choice, but we do have lots of food for you. Also some good products almost ready to eat (pre-cooked). Nobody should be hungry. It was a good week as always. We have lots of food and gave out a lot of bread and corn.

We go to the Tent encampment at least once a day with sandwiches and other things, including water. The numbers are reducing although I did see one new tent.

We can always use food. Also, water is always needed. Socks are welcome year-round. We found a source of warm but cheap gloves. They will be needed soon.

Shirley has kept many of the tent folks in Egg, salmon, Tuna, and Peanut Butter & Jam sandwiches again this week as well as the Legion ladies on the weekend have been doing sandwiches every Saturday morning for over four years.

Sincere thanks to the many good folks supporting our efforts bringing socks, toothpaste all types of food, Tim Cards, blankets, sleeping bags and more.

Food is getting scarce and the future doesn't look that great. Some people seem to suggest a repeat of 1990. If you can get food drives going then please do. Places like Food Banks Mississauga and Regeneration in Brampton need and deserve your support.

Food Bank Mississauga has a Food To Home program for people who are housebound and Regeneration (Grace Place) in Brampton serves great meals.

Also, St. Francis of Assisi, 6945 Meadowvale Town Centre Circle will be serving dinner from 4:30 pm until 6pm. This will be on the following Sundays: October 5th., November 2nd And December 7th. Please pass this on to anyone needing a meal. We thank this group for doing this.

Those we are fortunate to serve appreciate what you do...thank you. And our sincere to all the good people that have always helped. We, and those we serve, are greatly indebted to you

-William H. Graham

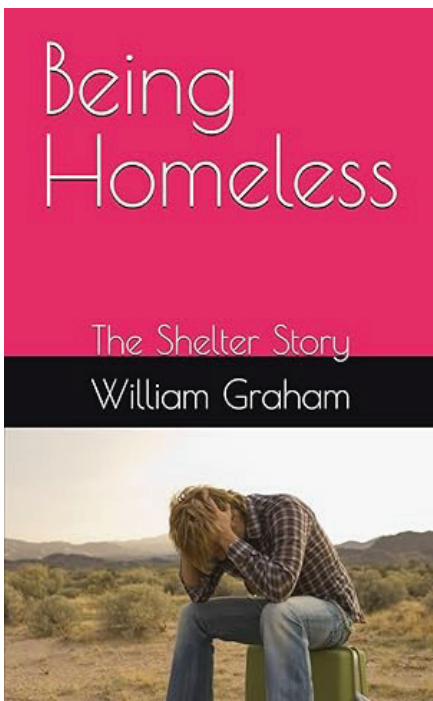
**SEPTEMBER 2025:  
FREE FOOD TABLES**

Five tables on Dundas St. filled one or more times per day.

**Food received:** 11,607 pounds.  
**Estimated persons served:** 1,813  
**Sandwiches:** 540 + 300 Meals

Added to tables without their knowledge (approximations):

**Food:** 9,000 pounds  
**Meals + Sandwiches:** 700



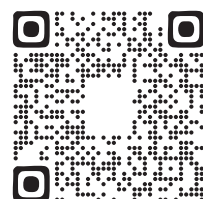
In September, William H. Graham, the founder of the Free Food Tables Program published *Being Homeless: The Shelter Story*. It describes the shelter system in most of North America and offers suggestions on ways it can be changed.

**FOOD BANKS MISSISSAUGA THANKSGIVING DRIVE**



The Mississauga Food Banks Thanksgiving Drive goes until October 17th! They aim to raise \$800,000. This goal reflects the continued food insecurity emergency in Mississauga, as annual food bank visits increased by 20 per cent. For every \$1 donated, Food Banks Mississauga can provide healthy and appropriate food for 1 meal to neighbours in need. This means that by donating \$100, food for 100 meals can be provided, thanks to the community's support and Thanksgiving Drive sponsor, Keurig Dr Pepper Canada.

**DONATE**





Hailey Ford / Tough Times

**By: Hailey Ford** (Originally Published by *The Pointer*)

Premier Doug Ford recently announced the key funding mechanism that supports municipal housing projects will be increased from a total of \$2.4 billion to \$4 billion, but stakeholders are already questioning how the bump from Queen's Park will meet the crushing demand towns and cities across Ontario are struggling with.

The announcement came at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario's annual conference, when the PCs pledged to expand the Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program (MHIP) which provides funding toward housing enabling infrastructure projects.

While the extra \$1.6 billion was welcome news, housing advocates in the municipal space say it's not nearly enough.

Peel, for example, needs a staggering \$50 billion over ten years to meet its core housing need. In 2024, the regional government reported an \$11.5 billion gap just to cover the infrastructure needed to hit the provincial housing target of 246,000 units by 2051.

"Growth is no longer paying for growth," said Mississauga City Councillor Natalie Hart.

"We need the provincial government, as well as the federal government, to step up and cover that gap."

Traditionally, the cost of infrastructure needed to support new builds comes from development charges. These are typically left up to the discretion of the municipality. It's a balancing act.

Higher development charges mean developers may be unwilling to build. Lower ones mean the infrastructure budget may fall short.

However, the Government of Ontario has been passing legislation that limits the

ability of municipalities to make those judgment calls on their own.

Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act of 2022, amended the Development Charges Act of 1997 to include development charge exemptions and mandated the reduction of development charges as a whole.

Earlier this year, Bill 17, the Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, delayed when development charges must be paid and removed interest on installment payments.

"There's a nervousness in the market about are they're going to occupy as quickly, or are they going to sell as quickly," said Michael Fedchyshyn, CEO of the Building Ontario Fund, a Crown corporation created in 2024, during a panel at the AMO Conference.

"We can take some of that risk off the table by dropping the wires and the pipes in the ground with the anticipation that those sales will eventually come."

A Peel Region pre-budget reported stated that the development charges shortfall as a direct result of Bill 23 will be approximately 1.5 billion over 10 years.

In June 2025, Peel Regional Council voted to further cut development charges in half until November 2026. The motion was originally pushed by Mississauga and opposed by Brampton and Caledon due to concerns over the lost revenue. A similar motion two weeks earlier ended with Brampton and Caledon councillors leaving the meeting and breaking quorum.

The motion was passed after the region was promised 1.3 billion from the Building Ontario Fund by Housing Minister Rob Flack. This is still 200 million short of just the shortfall brought on by Bill 23.

"It's really important that we have a mechanism where growth is paying for growth," said Laura Mirabella, Commissioner, Finance and Regional Treasurer for the Region of York, during an AMO Conference panel."

If it's not going to be development charges, then it has to be senior levels of government using their fiscal tools to provide transfer payments to municipalities that become dollar for dollar reductions."

The Building Ontario Fund is different from the Building Faster Fund, which rewards municipalities who reach 80 per cent of their annual assigned housing goal. In 2024, 27 of the 50 municipalities given targets didn't make it there, including all three Peel municipalities. In 2023, Brampton and Caledon earned \$25.5 million and \$2.8 million, respectively.

As of August 8, 2025, all three are again falling short, with Brampton and Caledon sitting in the 60 per cent range and Mississauga just under 35.

**// IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT THAT WE HAVE A MECHANISM WHERE GROWTH IS PAYING FOR GROWTH. //**

Even with the promised 1.3 billion, MHIP and the Building Faster Fund (which Peel will likely see no benefit from), Peel still doesn't have what it needs to make up the billions of dollars in shortfall.

Municipalities have an extremely limited pool of revenue sources and are not permitted to run deficits. The loss from the development charges will require increases in property taxes.

"We cannot transfer the cost of growth onto existing taxpayers," Mirabella said. "NIMBYism gets much stronger when people think that they have to pay for the infrastructure, the cost of the new communities."

The development charge reductions also do not guarantee an actual lowering of housing prices. An AMO report from 2019 detailed an Ottawa experiment where lower development charges were offered in a specific area, but did not see a decrease.

"How much it costs to build a place affordable over the last few years has been shrinking and shrinking in what affordable means," said Councillor Joe Horneck. "At this price, they can't sell it for a profit because the construction costs are still too high. They're gonna just hold on to that project until they can."

The reduced development charges are an incentive for developers to build. Fedchyshyn explained that they are also there to provide an "exit path for what might have been the right intention at the time" with the changing market conditions brought on by the greater affordability crisis.

"We're seeing a number of our members now converting condo developments going into the rental market," said Scott Andison, the CEO of the Ontario Home Builders' Association, during the AMO Conference panel. He added that they could no longer build at a price people could afford to buy. "They're finding ways to do that because that's where they can get the best return on capital."

For-profit developers cannot afford to build for free or at-cost. Municipalities cannot afford the loss of the development charges.

Higher levels of government aren't making up the difference, even though 76 per cent of government fees on new homes are from provincial and federal taxes. Those taxes are also not under the same obligation as development charges, which must be paid back into growth-related costs.

These policies apply to affordable housing, which Hart defines as being for those making between sixty and one hundred thousand per year.

In Peel Region, one in five households is experiencing core housing need, defined as unaffordable (more than 30% of pre-tax income spent on housing) or inadequate. This is only a portion of the housing need in the region. Peel needs subsidized housing.

As of the November 2024 Point in Time Survey, 2,799 people are living in shelters or the streets.

**// ALL CITIES ARE STRUGGLING WITH THE WAY MUNICIPALITIES ARE FUNDED. //**



Social services in Peel Region are underfunded by the province by around \$868 million annually compared to other municipalities.

"We need the province to be coming to the table, just like we do on all of our social services, where Peel is underfunded by 60 per cent," said Hart. "People are like, 'well, you can just build some'. We can't, because we don't own the land ourselves."

After the Second World War, the federal government heavily invested in subsidized housing. In the early to mid-90s, they dropped funding and stopped building.

In 1999, the Social Housing Agreement transferred responsibility for social housing to the province. In 2000, the Social Housing Reform Act passed it to municipalities. The Strong Communities through Affordable Housing Act, 2011, replaced it, but most responsibility is still on municipalities.

With the lack of revenue available to them, municipalities are reliant on not-for-profits or support from higher levels of government to afford it.

The new policies and funds are not designed to accommodate.

While the Building Ontario Fund is a Crown corporation, the stated objective within the Building Ontario Fund Act, 2024, states that its investments and sought investments will be for infrastructure projects that will be in the public interest and generate revenue.

"It is not designed to be a mass, scalable system for making affordability across the province. We're just not capitalized that way. We're not set up that way," said Fedchyshyn, stating that they subscribe to the housing continuum view.

"Building Ontario Fund is going to play on, by mandate, the more investable side of that."

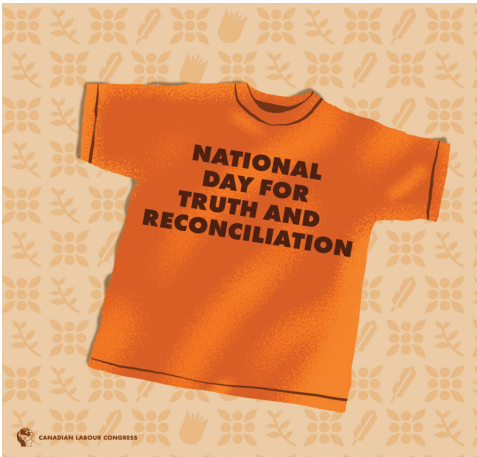
AMO says they are calling on all levels of government to invest in deeply affordable community, supportive, and transitional housing.

They state that the provincial government's actions and plans are insufficient and do not adequately address the lack of deeply affordable housing or provide meaningful strategies to reduce homelessness.

AMO has modeled that an additional 11 billion investment over 10 years would end chronic homelessness.

"All cities are struggling with the way municipalities are funded, and the amount of services we have to deliver, and the fact that our only revenue source is truly property taxes," said Hart.

"A new deal for how we fund and support cities with the province is important to us."



### By: The Canadian Labour Congress

Canada's unions are marking the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation by calling on government to fulfill its obligations under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (UNDRIP).

Bill C-5, An Act to enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act, passed in June 2025,

provides an opportunity to facilitate internal trade and accelerate critical nation-building projects. These objectives could support good union jobs and generate lasting economic benefits for workers and communities across Canada.

However, as it relates to Indigenous rights and implementation of the Act, we urge government to heed the concerns of Indigenous organizations and community members regarding consultation with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

The Government must ensure it is fulfilling its commitments to respecting treaty and constitutional rights of Indigenous peoples, as well as its international obligations under UNDRIP, which include the requirement to obtain free, prior, and informed consent when undertaking projects and developing related policies affecting Indigenous peoples' rights to land, territory and resources.

"Upholding these commitments as part of implementation of the Building Canada Act

is not merely a legal duty. It is a matter of enacting true reconciliation and demonstrating that respecting Indigenous peoples' rights to decision-making is integral and deeply linked to protecting and advancing the national interest," said Lily Chang, Secretary-Treasurer of the Canadian Labour Congress.

Canada's unions believe that any project deemed to be in the best interest of the Canadian economy must not only reflect economic objectives but also advance labour and human rights, equity, sustainability, and community resilience.

The Building Canada Act offers government an important opportunity to prioritize Indigenous rights and advance reconciliation by guaranteeing a high-standard, rights-based consultative process with Indigenous peoples, an approach that puts people-centred partnership with Indigenous communities, rule of law and human rights first, all of which are essential to building a just and strong economy for all.

## ONTARIO HEALTH COALITION: CODE RED PROTEST



Photo via the Peel Regional Labour Council Instagram

Image from the Mississauga Code Red protest on September 27th where the Peel Regional Labour Council and other community organizations joined the Ontario Health Coalition in protest of the Ontario Government's privatization of healthcare.

### By: The Ontario Health Coalition

The Ford government is privatizing our public hospitals. That is not an exaggeration.

When they privatized cataract surgeries, Ford appeared all over TV promising that people would never pay with their credit card, only their OHIP card. That was a lie. All over Ontario, seniors are now routinely charged thousands of dollars in the private for-profit eye surgery clinics.

We heard from an 80-year old woman who was told she had to make a down payment of \$1,500 followed by almost \$11,000 for her surgery. We heard from a 71-year old who had to come out of retirement to work to pay for his surgery.

We heard from Maureen, a widow whose eyesight was failing, who was charged almost \$7,000 for her eye surgery. She had to take out a loan. Everywhere I go, every event at which I make a speech, people come up to me and tell me about how their mother or father was charged thousands for their cataract surgery.

Now, Ford wants to expand his privatization plan to orthopedic surgeries — hips and knees, shoulders and so on — as well as MRIs, CTs and other diagnostics and surgeries. Just imagine the tens of thousands of dollars they are going to charge patients.

The hardship and suffering caused by this privatization is exactly what public medicare was set up to stop.

We have made formal complaints, held press conferences with the patients who have been extra-billed illegally, written letters, asked for meetings with the Minister and Premier. It isn't that they don't know this is happening. They are pretending it isn't and ignoring it, as long as they are able to do so.

We are going to lose public medicare if we don't ramp up our fight back.

Please pay attention and spread the word. It matters.

# WHAT CAN [ ? ] GET YOU?

one fast food value menu meal  
 OR  
 around **six packs** of instant ramen  
 OR  
**two cans** of beans  
 OR  
**one litre** of milk  
 OR  
**three** eighty-page notebooks  
 OR  
 the ability to produce around **100 loonies**  
 (only applies if you're the Royal Canadian Mint)

\$5

**slightly more** than a full tank of gas  
 OR  
**one week** of groceries, with strategy  
 OR  
 one month of a low-level cellphone plan  
 OR  
 the ability to process **one \$5** access  
 to information request filing fee, if  
 paid by cheque or cash  
 (government only)  
 OR  
**one-hundred** filing fees, if  
 paid online (see above)

\$50

a laptop  
 OR  
 around **five nights** at a motel  
 OR  
 the ability to cover an emergency  
 expense  
 that **26 per cent** of Canadians couldn't  
 OR  
 the ability to cover **one** first-time Canada  
 Learning Bond grant payment (only if  
 you're the Government of Canada)  
 OR  
 the renewable amount for **five families**  
 (see above)

\$500

\$5M

around **three** detached four-bedroom  
 houses at the current average price in  
 Mississauga  
 OR  
 about **154 years** of rent for a  
 two-bedroom apartment in Brampton  
 at the current rate  
 OR  
 about **seven** MRI machines  
 OR  
 around **150,000 litres** of Maple Syrup  
 OR  
 the ability to cover **more than** is  
 budgeted for the salaries and benefits  
 of Caledon's finance department  
 OR  
 about **1/37th** of the way to the cost of  
 the 2025 Ontario General Election

\$5K

around **two months** of the average rent in  
 Mississauga  
 OR  
 down payment on a car  
 OR  
**almost a year** of tuition for some University of  
 Toronto Mississauga Campus programs  
 OR  
 the ability to provide the maximum monthly  
 Ontario Works amount (for a single person) to  
**almost seven** people (only applies to the  
 Government of Ontario)

\$5B

// **THERE'S 80,000 PEOPLE HOMELESS IN  
 THE PROVINCE RIGHT NOW...SAY, ON  
 AVERAGE, IT WOULD COST BETWEEN  
 12 AND \$15,000 A PERSON TO  
 HOUSE PEOPLE...**

**YOU COULD ACTUALLY HOUSE EVERYBODY  
 FOR FIVE BILLION DOLLARS //**

-CHRIS GLOVER, MPP

“We have three elevators, but one has been broken for at least six months (a sign is on it saying they’re “waiting on parts”). One is used for people who are moving in or out of the building and set to be unusable by the general building residents during that particular day (which is quite often). There are 15 floors so God knows how many residents are down to one elevator, where you have to wait sometimes 15 minutes to be picked up. Having disabilities, it sometimes forces me into the staircases, where I have fallen three times as a result.”

“We have two washing machines that leak water all over the floor, and residents have slipped and fallen. There are constantly machines out of order, dryers with no heat, and the laundry room becomes a sauna due to no ventilation. When I’m in there, it becomes very difficult to breathe. As someone with heart disease, I have to be in and out of the excessively humid room because I run the risk of passing out.”

“When we rented the apartment two years ago, we were told that there is a swimming pool under renovation. Till now, it has not been renovated. We were also told that the balconies and the building from outside will be renovated also, yet nothing has been done. The ceiling where the main entrance is always leaking and the smell of garbage at the entrance even on the floors is very bad.”

“They don’t take care of the building, inside or out (this is an older building complex and it needs a lot of work). They don’t want to do the necessary repairs, and every material they use is the cheapest money can buy. Their idea of a repair is to put a Band-Aid over it and call it a day. They don’t care about the tenants, and that’s the biggest problem.”



**By: Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN)**  
*The text, statistics, testimonials and the above photo are taken directly from the report. It has been condensed down but the full report is linked through the QR code.*

<p><b>88</b></p> <p>PER CENT OF TENANTS SAID THEIR BUILDING NEEDS REPAIRS</p>	<p><b>38</b></p> <p>PER CENT OF TENANTS PAY CLOSE TO OR OVER <b>\$2000</b> IN RENT. TRIPLE AS MANY THAN IN 2023</p>	<p>ALMOST <b>40</b> PER CENT OF TENANTS NEED MOLD REMOVED</p>
---	---	---

Peel ACORN launched this tenant survey in the summer of 2025 to better understand the conditions renters are facing in apartment buildings across Mississauga and Brampton. Our goal was to identify the most pressing issues tenants are facing in their buildings and understand how effectively, if at all, current systems are addressing them.

Across Peel Region, tenants are facing a crisis of neglect in the places they call home. From pest infestations and broken elevators to skyrocketing rents, renters in Mississauga and Brampton are being forced to live in unsafe and unhealthy conditions, while landlords raise rents and ignore basic maintenance responsibilities.

Even when taking the most conservative approach to the numbers by assuming highest income and lowest rent in each bracket, most tenants’ rent is above the affordability threshold of 30% of income and for many far exceeds it.

For too long, tenants have been left to navigate these challenges on their own. Landlord accountability is weak, enforcement by municipalities is inconsistent, and many tenants are unaware of their rights. Even when complaints are made, repairs are often delayed, incomplete, or ignored entirely. Meanwhile, living conditions continue to deteriorate and the cost of housing climbs.

By identifying key concerns and gaps in enforcement, we can push for stronger tenant protections and policies that put renters’ health and safety before landlord profits. Tenants in Peel deserve homes that are safe, dignified, and livable, and we won’t stop organizing until they get them

.This report is one part of that fight. It shows what tenants are experiencing and what needs to change. The problems are clear and so are the solutions. Now it’s time for Mississauga and Brampton to listen and act. Tenants are organized, and we’re ready to win.



Canada Post is on strike. However, they are currently performing rotating strikes. This means that strikes will be isolated to a few areas for a length of time.

The areas where strikes are taking place will change. However, locations, dates, times and durations will not be announced. No mail or parcels sent through Canada Post in those places will be processed or delivered for the duration of the strike.

Live animals that have already been shipped will be delivered, but new ones will not be accepted. Government social assistance cheques will also still be delivered. This includes cheques for Old Age Security, the Canada Pension Plan, the Canada Child Benefit and the Canadian Disability Benefit.

Ontario Works and ODSP payments won't be delivered. Other documents that have been sent through Canada Post will also not be delivered, including passports that have already entered the system. New ones will be sent through different couriers. If someone needs their passport urgently, they should visit any Service Canada location or call 1-800-567-6868.

Mail delivery will continue where strikes are not happening. However, delays and inconsistencies should be expected.

Those who normally receive Ontario Works or ODSP cheques through the mail should contact their local social assistance office. They are also encouraged to either sign up to receive direct deposits or a reloadable payment card.



Raysonho / Wikimedia Commons

## MAKE THE SEASON KIND CHALLENGE



Calling all classroom changemakers!

As part of CBC's annual heartwarming Make the Season Kind holiday campaign in support of food banks, Daily Bread Food Bank, Feed Ontario, and food banks across the province have joined forces with the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario to create an impactful learning experience for your students: the CBC School Challenge.

The Challenge welcomes entries from all publicly funded elementary schools across Ontario. After last year's incredible launch, we've designed year 2 two to spark even deeper conversations about food security, community care, and social action—all while aligning with your curriculum goals.

How the Challenge works:

- Register your class to participate
- Access ready-to-teach lesson plans and activities in the ETFO-created Food Insecurity Educator Resource.
- Submit your class project by 4 p.m. EST on November 7, 2025.
- See if your project is named an outstanding submission!

Three outstanding classroom submissions per division, which are Primary (grades 1-3), Junior (grades 4-6) and Intermediate (grades 7-8), will be:

- Announced on December 5, 2025
- Celebrated with a classroom pizza party courtesy of Pizza Pizza\*
- Featured on social media platforms for the whole community to see.

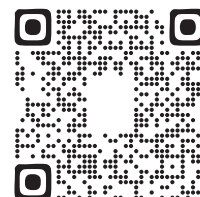
Plus, EVERY participating classroom will receive an official certificate of recognition from CBC, ETFO, and their local food bank—perfect for display in your classroom.

What the Challenge empowers your students to do:

- Connect curriculum to real community issues they can see and understand
- Develop empathy while building critical-thinking skills
- Create projects they'll be genuinely proud to share
- Experience the joy of making a real difference in their community

This is more than just another classroom activity—it's a chance for your students to see how their learning translates into real community impact. Teachers who participated in last year's Challenge shared that this was an incredible opportunity, with students enthusiastically engaging with concepts of food security, community responsibility, and social action.

## REGISTER







Cole Burston / The Canadian Press

**By: Tough Times**

Ontario Education Minister Paul Calandra has said he’s working on a plan to eliminate school board trustees.

Currently and historically, school board trustees are elected locally. They work to identify the needs and priorities of the school board, and ensure the community has direct input into the way their schools are run and supported.

This comes after the Ontario government took over five school boards including the Peel-Dufferin Catholic District School

Board, claiming financial mismanagement. However, Ontario schools are underfunded which often means either running deficits or dropping programming. A poll conducted for CUPE found that 57 per cent of respondents believe the main issue for school boards is underfunding - not trustees.

The trustees at the boards that have been taken over have been effectively stripped of their power and replaced by appointed supervisors. In the case of Peel-Dufferin, the appointment was former Bruce — Grey— Owen Sound MPP Rick Byers. A common trend amongst the supervisors is that they have financial backgrounds and close ties to the conservatives - and little to no experience with schools or the communities they’ve been told to serve.

If the Ontario Government follows through on this plan and makes similar appointments everywhere else, schools will keep suffering cuts from a government that prioritizes money over students. And there won’t be anyone there to fight back.

**PEEL REGION NEWS RESOURCE HIGHLIGHTS**

**THE POINTER**

*The Pointer* focuses on local evidence-based accountability journalism. They currently **do not** have paywalls on their stories but are supported by \$10 monthly subscriptions.

**POLICORNER**

*Policorner* has now launched *The Peel Report*, a newsletter going out every Monday and Friday with Peel-Region specific coverage. Subscription is \$20 per month and also includes Queen’s Park coverage.

**103M RECIEVED BY PEEL FOR REFUGEE CLAIMANTS**



Region of Peel image of the Refugee Reception Centre

**By: Tough Times**

Through the Federal Government’s Interim Housing Assistance Program (IHAP), Peel Region is receiving a grant of \$103M to meet the housing needs of refugee claimants and reduce strain on the shelter system. It was reported that in February 2024, 72 per cent of shelter and overflow hotel beds in Peel were used by asylum claimants, with the system at the time operating at over 400 per cent capacity - down to around 300 per cent in early 2025. The letter from the Minister of Immigration, Citizenship and Citizenship also requests that the region collaborate with other facilities funded by IHAP when shelter capacities have been reached.

**BRAMPTON’S NEW RENTAL INCENTIVES PROGRAM**



Photograph via the City of Brampton

**By: Tough Times**

On September 10th, Brampton announced and implemented a new Development Charges Incentive Program specifically aimed at encouraging purpose-built rentals. There will be 50 to 100 per cent reductions in development charges, tiered based on unit size, with larger units seeing greater reductions. Brampton hopes this will also reduce reliance on additional residential units (ARUs), which are self-contained residences added on to an existing home. The city is concerned that ARUs place strain on resources, lead to overcrowding, and that they “undermine neighbourhood character.”

**FOOD BANKS MISSISSAUGA ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT**



Photograph via the Food Banks Mississauga “Our Team” Page

**By: Tough Times**

Food Banks Mississauga has now released their annual impact report. They say that use of the food bank has risen by 20 per cent with over half a million visits in 2025. That’s the highest ever in their history. 38.5 Per cent of their visitors were new and over a quarter were children. They are calling for policy changes to help end the food insecurity emergency. Among their demands is the need for Ontario’s social assistance programs to increase the amount given to recipients, investment in affordable housing, supporting community organizations and helping workers through labour laws, livable wages and earning exemptions.

## REGIONAL HOMELESSNESS SERVICES IN PEEL

In Peel there are many programs available to support housing, shelter and fundamental needs. Please visit [www.peelregion.ca/housing](http://www.peelregion.ca/housing) for more information.

### Street Helpline Peel - 1-877-848-8481

- Offering 24/7 support for urgent homelessness needs, food, shelter access, referrals and more. The Street Helpline connects you to our mobile Street Outreach team who can often come to your location to help. If you're in crisis or face an urgent need, call us.

### Shelter Intake Line - 905-450-1996

- We can help you find the best option in any Peel shelter, including in adult, youth and family shelters.

### Mental Health Support

- Distress Centre Peel – 905-278-7208
- Kids Help Phone – 1-800-668-6868
- Mental Health Mobile Crisis Centre of Peel – 905-278-9036
- Youth Mental Health Crisis Response Service – 416-410-8615

### Regeneration Meal Program and Supports -156 Main St N

- Facilities and food for people in need
- Showers and laundry
- Phone and computer
- Staff support
- Clothing
- Breakfast - 8 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. (9:15 a.m. on Sundays)
- Lunch - 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Monday to Thursday
- Hours - Monday to Friday 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturdays 7 a.m. to 9:30 a.m., Sundays 7 a.m. to 9:15 a.m.

### City of Mississauga

- Services are available to support at-risk individuals and the homeless in Mississauga, including free hot meals and shower access.
- Visit [mississauga.ca/recreation-and-sports/sportsand-activities/assistance-programs/help-for-thehomeless/](http://mississauga.ca/recreation-and-sports/sportsand-activities/assistance-programs/help-for-thehomeless/)



### Call - Street Helpline Peel Team at: 1-877-848-8481

Call if you are homeless, or at risk of being homeless, or know someone who is in need. Get help to access emergency and transitional shelters, street outreach, support services and finding permanent housing



The **Peel Food Map** provides updated hours and information on donations, through the Emergency Donation Centre.

Call 211 if you can't access the online food map.

Photograph via The Region of Peel

### Visit PPAG's Website



[ppag.media](http://ppag.media)

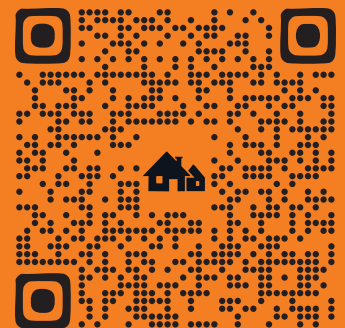
### Are you a person with lived experience who wants to share your story?

Are you an organization or individual who wants to write an article or make a comic? Do you just have an idea?

Tough Times is looking for content providers for its upcoming editions.

Contact [info@ppag.media](mailto:info@ppag.media) or fill out our new form for submissions!

### Contribute to Us



Submissions Form

# ToughTimes

Nothing about Us, Without Us, Is for Us



## LEGAL ACTION THREATENED AGAINST REGENERATION BRAMPTON



Screenshot via Tough Times Homeless in Peel 2023 video where guests of Regeneration Outreach speak about worsening conditions following COVID.

### By: Tough Times

For more than 25 years, Regeneration Outreach Community has offered vital food programs, addiction supports and food programs. For the past 10 years it has occupied space at Grace United Church in downtown Brampton.

The City of Brampton and Region of Peel have benefited from Regeneration's frontline knowledge to shape policy and programs, which have saved costs, and led to better outcomes for distressed individuals.

On July 17, Brampton City Council directed the city solicitor to issue a formal letter threatening legal action to Regeneration Outreach and Grace United Church. Council claimed Regeneration operations were causing concern to residents' public safety issues stemming from visitors to their site.

Regeneration told the Brampton Guardian it was blindsided by the threat of the letter and was not invited to the town hall meeting to hear residents issue their complaints.

The July 17 motion sets legal action should Regeneration not take corrective action for

residents' safety concerns which go against neighbourhood character. Corrective steps include hiring private security and deterring loitering. With the limited resources, funding, and operating hours, Regeneration cannot monitor their site all times.

Increased loitering in Brampton is an impact of Region of Peel's "No-Encampment Zones" enforcement as part of its coordinated homeless response program. Individuals cleared from encampments shift between overcrowded shelters and other spaces such as Grace United Church.

Regeneration has been searching for a new site for over a year. Its current lease with Grace United expires and Regen services require more space to serve guests.

In Open Letter published on social media, Regeneration states it cannot solve this issue alone. It requests support from the city and has willingness to "move forward together". Read it here in Tough Times.

*PPAG and Regeneration have a legacy relationship.*

12.6-22

## Inside the Issue

Letters regarding  
Regeneration Outreach

Peel Coordinated  
Encampment Response

Those Forcing People  
From Shelter Spaces  
Should be Ashamed

Sharon's Story

How Comedy Can Help  
Kids Cope with Trauma

The Path to Belonging

Health Coalition  
Shadow Summit

Q&A With Martin Reid

News to Know + More!

Visit PPAG's Website



ppag.media

**Produced by:**

Peel Poverty Action  
Group (PPAG)

**Email queries to:**

info@ppag.media

**Issue Editors:**

Catherine Soplet  
Hailey Ford

**Contributors:**

Michelle Bilek  
Jesssica Chiang  
Juliana Allin  
Josslyn Johnstone  
Wesley Jackson  
Sylvia Menezes Roberts  
Michael Gyovai  
Christina Rose Marshall  
Mzwandile Poncana  
Food Banks Mississauga  
Regeneration Outreach  
ACORN  
Let's Get Together  
Ontario Health Coalitions  
Boys and Girls Club

**Printed by:**

Print Three Brampton

PPAG's mandate is to advocate for people in need and to educate the public about poverty issues. Tough Times is part of that. PPAG is open to every individual and organization in Peel Region that cares about what poverty does to people. It provides a safe place to speak up and out.

As Tough Times prepared to go to press, our readership is preparing to "get back to school". Our cover story on Regeneration Outreach -- as it continues to unfold for a third decade -- is an abysmal example of upstream failed math and inaction on how to develop living conditions where folks can thrive.

By math, I mean the fundamental science that explores patterns, structures and change. There is evidently a delta between what exists in the world, and what bounces around as beliefs inside decisionmaker brains.

Back-to-school for some families feels the ripple effect of hard turn, away from summer activities back into wintering mode. Stressors increase for their children and youth socially and as ever-growing beings.

For other families, summer activities were thwarted by excessive heat both indoors and out, oppressive forest fire fog, family job loss.

Workplace-only adults are not immune to impacts upon

colleagues or clients as home life and commuting adjustments run tempo rubato against daily schedules.

One example of upstream bad math which will have impact by 2035: The loss of Canada Summer Jobs funding for Knights Table and BCG Peel interns. It's not a simple belt-cinching exercise for the non-profit sector.

The budget move thwarts youth opportunity, which changes everything. Sure, a few funder budget bucks get clawed back but the opportunity cost is priceless, and impossible to recover.

Non-profits may not be able to run a program. They lose ROI on overhead budget when operations lay idle. The hopeful intern loses calendar time in their life, that they will not get back. Non-profits see the entire client family sharing the burden of disappointment of their job seeker.

Some good math is in the pipes – the promise of new, culturally honed resident physicians. Let's Get Together efforts with its TechCollect

program to broadly equip learners and earners with digital devices, wifi and know-how and the Introduction to Science Rendezvous each May apprises students and families of pathways to STEM.

As budgets do math at every level, PPAG has an eye on the August 28 calendar to nudge federal policies for budget 2026.

In my own experience, the good math to get the change we want to see in the world is via a democratic vote. I mapped how voter turnout increased where volunteerism led to improved student outcomes.

PPAG is enthusiastic to celebrate its 10-year beta experience with Vote PopUp to engage youth and their supportive network of adults to learn more about how to shape issues now to get the results they want to see in 2035.

We'll see you folks again in October.

**-C. Soplet**





### By: Regeneration Outreach

For over 20 years, Regeneration Outreach Community has served as a lifeline for Brampton's most vulnerable, those facing homelessness, addiction, trauma, and poverty.

We provide life-stabilizing care, housing navigation, daily meals, and support services that help people move toward stability and dignity.

We recognize and hear the concerns of nearby residents and the City of Brampton. Safety matters to us, to our neighbours, and to those we serve. We share the goal of creating a safe, welcoming community for everyone.

The issues that confront us, mental illness, substance use, and the severe lack of affordable housing in Peel Region are complex and systemic. They cannot be solved by enforcement alone, nor by service agencies working in isolation.

We remain deeply committed to working in partnership toward solutions that protect both safety and human dignity.

In 2024, Regeneration served 45,228 meals—a 13% increase from 2023. Each day, 150–200 people come through our doors seeking community, referrals, and crisis support.

Local Homelessness in Peel Region has risen 93% since 2021 (Everyone Counts Peel 2024). Our operations at Grace United Church are stretched in both operational hours and facility space, but we remain committed to doing our part.

We know we can do more with the right partnerships and collaboration, particularly with partners like the City of Brampton.

This is why on July 12, 2024, we presented to Brampton City Council, requesting support to secure a long-term, appropriate facility near our current location—one that will meet the needs of our guests. Council passed a motion directing City staff to investigate options. We remain ready to move forward together.

Affordable housing, treatment programs, and emergency shelters are stretched beyond capacity. Regeneration has always operated as a bridge, doing our part while long-term solutions are developed.

We cannot solve this crisis alone, and we will not walk away from those who rely on us.

We do not abandon our neighbours.

"The need for care of homeless people has always been most sharply focused on Brampton's downtown. It was like this before any councillors were elected, and will probably stay that way for many years. Attacking Regen won't fix the underlying issues."

-*Sylvia Menezes Roberts*

"Brampton is trying to sue a charity for feeding the homeless. Council's decision—made behind the shield of procedural language and legalese—sends a chilling message: compassion is only acceptable when it fits neatly into bureaucratic boxes. This is not about public safety. This is not about zoning. This is about optics. And property values. And the discomfort middle-class voters feel when poverty becomes visible.

Apparently, it's more palatable for the city to hide the homeless than to help them. This motion isn't just a blow to the homeless. It's a warning shot to every grassroots organization in Brampton: be careful how much you help, or where, or whom. Because if your kindness becomes inconvenient, the city might just sue you too."

-*Wesley Jackson*

"Disappointing and potentially for all not for profit organization and charities across the City. This is the last thing our most vulnerable communities needs. There is always a better way, better solution. We need to help protect their human dignity, end homelessness and keep everyone safe. We need to do and be better, Brampton."

-*Michael Gyovai*

" Instead of finding out how they can HELP with the problems at hand they choose to threaten ? Where will this charity go other than where the unhoused population IS. They are there whether you see them or not.

-*Christina Rose Marshall*

**By: Juliana Allin**

I'm a resident of the "Alexander, Union, and Church Streets" community in downtown Brampton. On July 17 a group of my neighbours attended a special city council meeting claiming to represent our neighbourhood, but I was not represented.

At the meeting, this group vilified the Regeneration Outreach Program, Grace United Church, and the many people who rely on these places for food, showers, and social support services.

This created impetus for my local city councillor, Rowena Santos; Brampton Mayor, Patrick Brown; and the rest of Brampton's city council to threaten legal action against Regeneration and the church that houses it.

They did this despite Regeneration asking for help from the city to move a year prior, and at a time when funding and support for charities, food banks, healthcare, and housing are at an all time low, leaving places like Regeneration stretched thin.

I'm well aware of the impacts of the housing

and addictions crises affecting not just my neighbourhood, but neighbourhoods across the province, and it's distressing to be affected by the desperate actions people are doing here to stay alive.

**// THERE ARE  
KNOWN SOLUTIONS  
THAT ARE BEING  
IGNORED //**

However, unlike the group who attended the July 17 meeting, I don't see the folks who congregate on the steps of Grace United Church and rely on the services provided by the Regeneration Outreach Program as a problem: I see these people as my neighbours.

Attacking and threatening the Regeneration Outreach Program and Grace United Church puts the onus on those organizations to "fix" the issues, but the onus to address the issues we face along Alexander, Union, and Church Streets—and beyond—is on our government.

There are known solutions that are being ignored, such as adopting a housing first approach to address homelessness, creating more supervised consumption sites, and increasing funding to community mental health and addictions services, as well as creating government managed infrastructure to support them.

It is deeply upsetting that these evidence-based approaches, or others like them, are not being advocated for or put into action by the government. I, as a member of the Residents of Alexander, Union, and Church Streets' neighbourhood, see another way forward. We all need safety. We all need shelter. We all need community. And we all deserve these things.

Attacking and threatening won't solve the problems. What's actually needed is for us to humanize those in need, collaborate with organizations like the Regeneration Outreach Program, advocate to our government to use forward-thinking approaches, and work together as a community of neighbours.

If we do this, then it's absolutely possible for all my neighbours to have what they need.

**By: Mzwandile Poncana (Originally Published by The Brampton Guardian)**

Michelle Bilek, on behalf of the Peel Poverty Action Group (PPAG), submitted a formal letter to councillors opposing the city's motion, asking them to rescind the legal threats. She added the work of Regeneration is an essential service that "saves lives and fosters hope."

"While we understand and acknowledge the concerns raised by nearby residents and City officials, we believe these challenges reflect broader systemic issues like the growing mental health crisis, substance use, and the acute lack of affordable housing in Peel Region."

In an interview, Bilek also expressed anger and said Regeneration was being used as a scapegoat for issues such as crime and looting. Santos, and the City of Brampton, were labelling service providers as the

problem, when the real issue is the housing crisis, she said.

In the email that accompanied the letter sent to council, she added: "Enough. Only inhuman people would attack and deny the rights of marginalized people in such a manner, and the essential services that Regeneration Outreach provides."

Bilek said the legal threats made toward Grace United Church and Regeneration Outreach were inhumane. Bilek said this decision is politically motivated, and that councillors are only responding to the needs of voters who will keep them in power, and not to unhoused people.

PPAG has begun a letter-writing campaign that aims to put pressure on those responsible for the decision. If legal action

against the church and outreach hub moves forward, she says, they are prepared to escalate their response through protest and are exploring other forms of civil disobedience.

She also confirmed that PPAG plans to launch a voter-education effort, saying the group aims to support council candidates in Brampton who are committed to addressing poverty, housing and food insecurity in the 2026 municipal elections.

**READ THE  
COMPLETE  
ARTICLE**





Photo via Michelle Bilek

In early July, Peel Region approved its new Coordinated Homeless Encampment Response. The policies are intended to unify the strategies taken by the three Peel municipalities.

One of the core functions is the establishment of “No Encampment Zones.”

It states that expedited removal and enforcement of encampments can occur in areas owned by Peel, Brampton, Caledon or Mississauga where there are “significant health and safety concerns that cannot be mitigated.”

While the Region states that the preferred approach is for residents living in encampments to leave or relocate voluntarily, enforcement will be used “as a last resort.” When encampments are investigated or responded to, the Region says that outreach teams will be on-site with hygiene products, food and shelter referrals.

The Encampment response also emphasizes a commitment to the “do not turn away” policy at Peel’s emergency shelters. With those shelters operating at as much as 400% over capacity, the plan

doesn’t mean there will be the space to fill the additional demand created by encampment evictions.

They’ve previously used hotel rooms for overflow, which is a significant expense on top of the cost of clearing the encampments to begin with. With Peel receiving \$578 less per person annually from the Government of Ontario for municipal and social services compared to other regions, there are not enough resources to meet the needs of homeless individuals in Peel.

The list of no-encampment zones includes:

- Prominent municipal spaces regularly used for public gatherings.
- Municipal facilities where events with a permit are scheduled.
- Sites located within floodplains.
- Obstructing critical infrastructure sites.
- Active construction sites.
- Playgrounds, sports fields and any fenced-in, off-leash dog area, on any community garden, and in any garden shed or greenhouse.
- On or within any designated fire route, or the entrance to or exit from a designated fire route, or located so as to block any fire hydrant.
- On or within areas prone to erosion, slope instability, not serviced in winter, or other environmental hazards, due to risks to health and safety.



**By: Michelle Bilek (Originally Published by The Pointer in June 2024)**

Homeless encampments here in Peel Region are some of the most visible evidence of the failure by all levels of government to protect the human right of all community members to adequate housing. In Brampton, city officials have responded not by addressing what causes encampments but by evicting the people living there, who, like all of us, are searching for home and belonging.

Whether it is caused by divestment in community housing and non-market housing options, the financialization of the housing and non-market housing options, lack of skilled trades people, growing affordability issues, plateaued social assistance rates that have , and systemic underfunding to the Region for decades, the City of Brampton still must work together with Peel on solution-making.

The Region of Peel Homeless Encampment Policy and Joint Protocols, as indicated in the "Homelessness Policy and Programs" report to Regional Council dated October 26, 2023, states that more investment is needed in homelessness prevention, emergency response, and supportive housing to end chronic homelessness. The report also noted a need for a Council-endorsed encampment policy and protocols, to better manage the growing number of encampments in Peel. As a result, a project to create a new encampment policy and protocols began in April 2024.

Despite recommendations by the Office of the Federal Housing Advocate on Encamp-

ments, delegations by community members, certain members of Brampton council continue to apply political pressure, fuel fear among local citizens, and create distrust and mistrust between unhoused people, outreach teams, Regional staff and community members.

What I find strikingly clear and alarming, is that power holders (council members) are using people's lives for political play; covertly using bylaws; erecting signs in parks, issuing fines, citations, and removing belongings of people by paying security officials to evict encampment residents while telling constituents and business owners not to let community groups and other stakeholders find out what is happening.

Forced eviction is a serious violation of human rights. While there are exceptions to the legal prohibition on forcibly decamping residents for pressing safety concerns, evictions must still be undertaken according to human rights standards.

The fundamental human right to housing was recognized in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Canada formally agreed to comply with the right to housing under international human rights law in 1976 when it ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

I also acknowledge that City of Brampton and council members are receiving many complaints and concerns of safety, theft, substance use and sanitation issues by other surrounding residents and businesses but, continuously undermining the work of the Region and support services and also putting tremendous pressure and responsibility for our homelessness crisis and encampments on Regional staff is not helpful.

Working alongside and supporting the Region of Peel would be more productive and responsive, and as we have seen, despite fiscal constraints, Housing and Homelessness services have gone above and beyond to take care of our most vulnerable community members. The City could better use its own tax base for funding to the Region for supports and providing their unused lands and properties for community housing and supportive housing. This would be a solution centred approach, unlike their current reactive responses of spending tax dollars on security and excavating encampments.

Over the last few months, the Region of Peel and Community partners have been able to transition many people along the Etobicoke Creek trails into temporary shelters in hotels, while respecting the individual needs of unhoused community members. But will a 400 percent overflow in the shelter system, the lack of sufficient funding and the additional pressure from the City of Brampton cause more chaos, anger and resentment?

**// ENCAMPMENT RESIDENTS, LIKE ALL OF US, ARE SEARCHING FOR HOME AND BELONGING //**

Encampment residents, like all of us, are searching for home and belonging and are entitled to their human rights. Too often, they are met not with empathy and empowerment, but criminalization and dehumanization. It is up to local authorities, in partnership with other levels of government, to fulfill their obligations to encampment residents and stop forcibly evicting them without regard to their legally protected human rights.

*Note that this article has been shortened from its original 2024 publication.*

Sharon just celebrated her 49th birthday. She's lived in Canada for 38 years. For the last six, she's been in a cycle of homelessness, moving from place to place.

"It started after my mom passed away. Shortly after that, my marriage broke down, and then I was on my own," Sharon says. "Since I was young, I worked and I saved my money. My eyes were never open, nor did I have the knowledge or awareness of homelessness or poverty."

The breakdown of her marriage affected her ability to function in her job. She left work. Sharon also found support in God and Christianity, which helps her daily.

"When things really got real in my life, I realized I needed more than just a friend to talk to. I needed divine help," she says. "I needed God to help me through each step and phase of my life."

She and her ex-husband had a house in Streetsville. When they divorced, she couldn't handle the mortgage on her own. She had to sell the house.

"I got a little inheritance, so I was paying the bills off that. Unfortunately, things were just getting worse. I had an addiction. I was drinking and smoking daily. I was hitting the bottle hard, I was depressed; I was becoming suicidal."

"I've never been so low, but I know God is teaching me something and giving me the desire and passion to help others." Sharon and her son moved to a condo. The money from the house ran out, and her addiction ate away her savings.

"I had to sit with the Word of God and say, I need you to help me through this, because I can't keep drinking, having this little child in the house." Sharon sent her son to live with his dad, she moved in with her aunt, taking the opportunity to work, sort out her debts and treat her addiction.

Her aunt told Sharon she needed to start saving up and find a better job or leave. Sharon found it an impossible task. She moved out. She lived in her car. She took out a small loan and rented a hotel.

"I didn't know that I could ask the government for assistance. If I knew, I probably wouldn't be where I am now," she says. "Nevertheless, I know it's part of God's plan, so I can be aware of what's happening in society."



// WE'RE  
SQUISHING  
PEOPLE  
DOWN ON  
THE BOTTOM //

In one home she and her son lived in, Another young man in the house was involved in 'guns and gangs'. She hadn't understood the severity until her son was misidentified while headed to school. "There were undercover cops watching the house," she says. "That made me run, next time it might not just be a grab."

Her son again returned to his father, and Sharon found herself in a shelter she only knew about because of outreach she'd done with her church.

"Through everything that I've been through, it's him. It's being based

on the Word of God that pulled me out of all the pits that I've been in, including right now."

Sharon maintains a brightness that even the shelter staff notice. She walks up and down the street, asking people if she can keep them in her prayers. "This is why I know the Lord allowed me to come into the shelter."

After buying cars, a house, paying taxes and working since 15 years old, Sharon doesn't understand how a few moments made and kept her homeless. She says something has to change. "How can I start back at 49? There's no way I can get there without help."

"If we work together, we all do better. We're squishing people down on the bottom. I choose to speak up and pray somebody with the right ears will hear."

12.6-28

## SHELTERS IN PEEL

INTAKE LINE: 905-450-1996

If you need an immediate place to stay there are shelters available for youth, families, adults and people fleeing violence or abuse.

Due to high demand, priority for shelter placement is given to Peel Region residents when possible.

Shelters in Peel have 24-hour staffing and support from qualified professionals.

## YOUTH 16 TO 24 YEARS

Our Place Peel  
3579 Dixie Road, Mississauga  
[ourplacepeel.org](http://ourplacepeel.org)

## ADULT MEN 25+

Wilkinson Shelter  
15 Wilkinson Road, Brampton

## ADULTS 25+

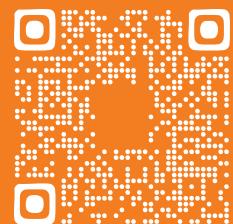
Cawthra Shelter  
2500 Cawthra Road, Mississauga

## ADULT WOMEN 25+

Haven House, Brampton  
Call 437-688-263

## FAMILIES WITH DEPENDENTS AND COUPLES

Surveyor's Shelter  
2420 Surveyor Road, Mississauga





Looking for a reason to get out, laugh, and support a great cause?

The Giggles for Good 19+ comedy night FUNdraiser will be hosted by Andrew Chapman and feature performances by DK Phan and Hershawn Arora.

Enjoy a night of stand-up, tasty bites, and exciting raffles — all while supporting the Boys and Girls Club of Peel youth programs that build brighter futures.

Corporate and Local Business Table Sponsorship (8 Tickets) Available. In-Program and Social recognition will be provided. Please email Michael at [mgyo vai@bgcpeel.org](mailto:mgyo vai@bgcpeel.org)

**PURCHASE  
TICKETS**



Giggles for Good will take place at 6:30pm on September 20, 2025 at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 139 (101 Church Street).



**By: Josslyn Johnstone  
(Originally Published by UofT News)**

Having never taken the conventional path, Youness Robert-Tahiri is using an unexpected tool to support children who have experienced adversity – comedy. He believes it can help them build resilience and develop coping skills.

“I grew up in an abusive household and became homeless in high school trying to escape it,” says Robert-Tahiri, who is graduating from the University of Toronto with a bachelor’s degree in psychology.

“Making people laugh helped me cope with what was happening in my life. Then in my 20s ... I committed to therapy and started to really understand how my upbringing affected my mental health.”

Before returning to school in his 30s, Robert-Tahiri spent a decade as a comedian and theatre actor. His entry point was an audition for a high school play, encouraged by his teacher Michelle Vingada – who remains one of his mentors.

To his surprise, he landed the lead role and discovered a passion that led him to theatre school in New York City. He specialized in performing and teaching improv comedy, later honing his skills back in Toronto at Bad Dog Theatre Company and The Second City Toronto. Today, he’s a burgeoning scientist who values curiosity and creativity.

12.6-29

UofT has an impressively comprehensive psychology program and the quality and variety of research opportunities available are unmatched,” says Robert-Tahiri, a member of Woodsworth College.

During his studies, he worked as a research assistant in Professor Jessica Sommerville’s Toronto Early Cognition Lab in the department of psychology in the Faculty of Arts & Sciences, as well as in the lab of Amanda Sharples, an assistant professor, teaching stream.

He also worked as a research assistant in Professor Becky Chen’s Multilingualism and Literacy Lab at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE).

“I started connecting the dots between comedy and psychology, exploring how humour could help kids work through trauma.”

With guidance from Ruth Speidel, assistant professor of developmental psychology and managing director of the Centre for Child Development, Mental Health, and Policy at U of T Mississauga, Robert-Tahiri designed a comedy-based mental health program for children.

It combines psychological themes with improv exercises to help kids facing adversity build confidence and emotional regulation skills.

With support from the Laidlaw Foundation, he piloted the project last summer with orphaned, abandoned and precariously housed youth at SOS Children's Villages in South Africa.

"In the program, there are psychoeducational components where we discuss concepts like hostile attribution bias and empathy. I'll ask kids, 'Why did your character feel that way? What does it remind you of in your own life?'" says Robert-Tahiri.

This is where acting comes in as a tool for reflection and understanding." He likens leading scientific research to directing a play – whether it's working with a standardized method, referencing a script, analyzing data or assessing feedback.

"Experimentation is what it's all about, in science and in art – you don't have to know every little step all the time. What's important is keeping an open mind and seeing where it leads."

Throughout his time at U of T, Robert-Tahiri looked for more ways to give back. He volunteered as a mentor with the

Woodsworth College Students' Association Mental Health and Equity Committee and the Psychology Students' Association, among others.

"I want to help students take advantage of the unique experiences that I've had during my undergrad," he says. "One of my most fulfilling experiences was a global mental

// YOU DON'T  
HAVE TO KNOW  
EVERY LITTLE  
STEP ALL OF  
THE TIME. //

health Summer Abroad course in Athens, Greece, which opened my eyes to different ways of healing, and scaling interventions."

As a mature student, Robert-Tahiri brought a unique perspective to his friend group, most of whom are in their early 20s. "Some of my friends struggle with balancing what

they should do and what they want to do," he says. "My advice to students who are figuring out their path is to keep that path flexible – and follow your interests."

It's the same advice that his high school mentor Vingada gave him years ago when he needed direction.

"Youness has this innate drive in him to find a way to make other people's lives better," Vingada says. "I'm so in awe of the genuine, positive person he's become."

After his convocation, Robert-Tahiri is heading back to Cape Town for the summer to continue working with SOS Children's Villages and mentor other Laidlaw scholars. He then plans to teach abroad for a year before pursuing graduate studies in clinical psychology and expanding his trauma-informed comedy program.

Robert-Tahiri says the lessons he's learned from improv continue to guide him.

"Improv is about possibility. It teaches you to say, 'Yes, and ...' – to take risks and get outside your comfort zone. That's where the real growth happens."

## BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB OF PEEL

The Boys and Girls Club of Peel is preparing for a successful 2025-2026 After School Program, in partnership with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport, beginning in September. All other programs will start in October 2025.

**August - September:** BCG Peel is looking for school Supplies, Backpacks, and food gift cards.

**October Food Drive:** Food and Gift Cards welcome. Ideally \$25-50.00 per card.

Boys and Girls Club of Peel works to provide a safe, supportive place where children and youth can experience new opportunities, overcome barriers, build positive relationships, and develop confidence and skills for life.

For more information, contact Michael J. Gyovai, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director at [mgyovai@bgcpeel.org](mailto:mgyovai@bgcpeel.org).

**BACK 2 SCHOOL IS COMING**

Corporate & Local Businesses Sponsors Needed

AUGUST BACKPACK / SCHOOL SNACK DRIVE  
SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER FOOD DRIVE  
NOVEMBER-DECEMBER HOLIDAY HAMPER

Contact Michael at [mgyovai@bgcpeel.org](mailto:mgyovai@bgcpeel.org)



**By: Jessica Chiang and the Family & Child Health Initiative**



What does belonging mean to you?

You might answer this in a few words, or perhaps you have a story that goes with it. Reflexively, I answered this as “community and connection,” but reflecting deeper from the many identities I hold, it’s much more than that. What do those words really mean?

People are complex and we all have different parts of our identity that influence who we are. Understanding where our feelings of belonging come from can be important to shaping effective activities and changing narratives to be more inclusive and accessible.

I had the opportunity to work on a research project titled “Enhancing a sense of belonging through physical activity: “Active Community, Connected Community” with the Family and Child Health Initiative (FCHI). FCHI aims to improve the health and well-being of children, youth, and families in Peel region by centering community voices.

Our project aimed to understand what makes youth feel a sense of belonging and how to increase feelings of belonging, specifically in connection to physical activity opportunities for youth within Mississauga Valley’s schools and community spaces. We used a community based participatory research (CBPR)

approach, where we engaged community members like parents, caregivers, youth, and teachers, as well as community partners including Peel Public Health and the City of Mississauga.

Youth had the opportunity to reflect on what belonging means to them and expressed their perspectives by capturing photos and writing captions. They came together as a group and came up with 18 themes to summarize their findings: nature, food, animals, religion, self-care, hobbies, feet, relaxed, hanging out, special memories with friends/family /loved ones, family time, people spending time together, travel, home country, country, passions, favourite sports and fun times

To further engage community members, we held an event at the Valley’s community centre that centered around an exhibit featuring the youth’s photos and narratives, community partners and an activity that encouraged the community to share their ideas.

The research team found similarities and differences between these and the youth’s themes and brainstormed recommen-

dations with different groups in mind, with the goals of turning research into action.

One main recommendation is continuing to offer a variety of activities in the community centre that can also be done at home or in different spaces with others or independently. Incorporating the 18 themes into a guided story walk with a literal path and the imagery of journeys, memories, experiences and the future was also a major suggestion.

**“ EVERYONE’S  
JOURNEY TO  
BELONGING IS  
DIFFERENT. ”**

Next steps will see this work co-designed with community organizations to cascade the work anchored in the youth’s photos and themes, continuing to develop their own paths, but also their community’s.

Have your thoughts on belonging changed? In the end, there is no right

answer. Everyone’s journey to belonging is different, and that journey can change as we grow and interact with different environments and others around us.

If you’re interested in learning more about this project, FCHI or getting involved, reach out to [dianne.fierheller@thp.ca](mailto:dianne.fierheller@thp.ca)

**1 NEED**



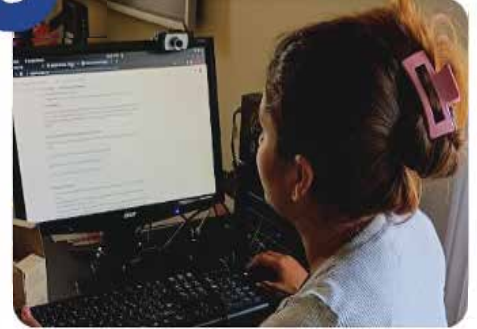
I need access to a computer to handle various tasks.

**2 ACTION**



LGT provided us with a computer to help us with our important tasks.

**3 OUTCOME**



A computer helped my family with school registration and job application more effectively.

Let's Get Together (LGT) repurposes donated technology to provide computers and devices to individuals and families who need them most. It benefits people who need access to technology and reduces the environmental impact of electronic waste.

"Tech equity in Canada starts with every person," says LGT founder Alison Canning. "Getting every person on the same roadmap and pointing in the same direction."

In the late 2010s, Alison was working with a high school volunteer during a backpacks for the community drive.

"I found out that she had a phone and was doing an 800-word essay and research on that phone, and didn't have an internet connection at home, so she relied on school or the library," she says. "That didn't set her up for success."

**APPLY**



**DONATE**



"That's when we switched to computers being the new backpacks," she says. "We have a responsibility to make sure that the pathway to education is as barrier-free as possible."

Everyone has an impact at Let's Get Together, whether that's as a volunteer or a partner. Choose Empathy over apathy. Learn, expand and make mistakes to build yourself and others.

You can make an impact now and make it last long.

Visit [letsgettogether.ca](https://letsgettogether.ca) to learn more or volunteer.

*By a student, for students*

## LET'S GET TOGETHER *presents* BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS!

- 1** Continue to **encourage your child or youth to stay social with their friends and peers**. This will help them feel more connected by the time they get back to school.
- 2** Gradually **get back into school year structure and routines**. Bring up the topic that summer is coming to an end and that school will be restarting.
- 3** Consider posting a **family calendar with the school start date marked down**, to help your family see how many days are left until school starts.
- 4** **Set a screen curfew** (a "downtime" after which point there are no screens). For example 8-9 p.m. for school-aged kids and 8:30-9:30 p.m. for high-school aged kids.

**FOR MORE TIPS, READ THIS PDF:**  
<https://www.cheo.on.ca/en/resources-and-support/resources/P6225E.pdf>



**#LGTTechCollect  
Green Planet**



**#LGTTechandMe  
Digital Skills**



**#LGTTech4AllYouth  
Life Skills**



**#LGTTech4All  
Tech Equity**

12.6-32



Health Coalitions across Canada want our provincial and federal leaders to succeed in the new international context dealing with the Trump presidency.

At this time, we urgently remind our political leaders that access to universal, comprehensive public health care is a core foundation of any just economy. Any governments that claim to prioritize the economy while ignoring the collapse of health care have lost their moral compass.

We remind our political leaders that the economy exists to serve people, not the other way around, and the economy is more than militarism and private sector projects. If a person falls ill or is injured and cannot access health care or mental health care, there is no economy for them.

If a 70-year-old goes to a private clinic and is forced to use their life savings and pay thousands of dollars for their surgery, what chance do they have to get out of poverty for the rest of their life? If a person has diabetes and cannot afford their insulin and supplies, what economy is there for them?

Our public health care is a nation-building success, still a source of national pride – and rightfully so. It is a cornerstone element of our public services that Canadians have built over a century to ease suffering and need, and to support people to live to their human potential.

The values of equity and compassion that underlie our public health care for all are foundational principles for our society. We expect our political leaders to champion these values while we reforge our national identity in the new international context.

As Canada's leaders meet, our public health care system is, without exaggeration, in

open crisis. Runaway privatization is taking funding and staff away from public health care services.

Staffing shortages are a national catastrophe, forcing emergency departments to close and leaving health care workers with impossible workloads while patients wait longer and suffer more.

**// ANY GOVERNMENTS THAT CLAIM TO PRIORITIZE THE ECONOMY WHILE IGNORING THE COLLAPSE OF HEALTH CARE HAVE LOST THEIR MORAL COMPASS. //**



Private clinics are violating the Canada Health Act, charging patients hundreds to thousands of dollars for surgeries and diagnostic tests in illegal user fees and extra-billing.

Seniors can't access the care they need. Mental health and addiction services are underfunded, subject to privatization and cuts, or are simply unavailable.

Millions still do not have access to family medicine. The implementation of the first

phase of pharmacare (drug coverage for all) has stalled.

All this is happening as billions are poured into militarization and border enforcement — billions earmarked for Donald Trump's priorities while the urgent daily health care needs of people across Canada are not being addressed.

While our political leaders talk about new "nation-building" plans, those things that have created equity and a more just society in our nation-building over the last century are at risk: a world class public health care system; environmental and labour protections; and, the first steps toward reconciliation with First Nations and Indigenous Peoples.

If the only pressure our governments feel comes from Donald Trump and the corporate agenda, we will lose what we value most.

We reject expanding war budgets and gutting regulatory protections while patients and health care workers are left to beg for care.

We demand adequate funding for public health care, action to safeguard and uphold the Canada Health Act, an end to rampant privatization schemes and deregulation of public interest protections led by the governments in Ontario and Alberta, and true public solutions to the crisis.

Now is the time to stand up for public health care and the values it represents: equity, compassion, dignity, and care for all.

Canadians overwhelmingly support our public system. It cannot wait. It's time for governments to listen — and act.



On July 22, 2025 Mississauga Health Coalition joined hundreds of public health care advocates from across Canada in a "Shadow Summit" to send a message to all of Canada's premiers: Keep Healthcare Public.

The Premiers from across Canada and Prime Minister Carney were meeting just down the road from Huntsville, at Deerhurst Resort, for the annual meeting of The Council of the Federation.

At the Shadow Summit, advocates from across the country shared updates about the open crisis in public health care and how it is being experienced in different provinces, the privatization being pushed by premiers like Doug Ford and Danielle Smith, and where the fightback to stop privatization has succeeded.

In the context of US tariffs, budget deficits and increasing international militarization, the "Shadow Summit" coalition called on

premiers not to lose focus on public health amid trade talks.

"At issue is the proposed \$25 billion in cuts to federal funding for public services like health care that would be devastating to those things that make Canada better and unique from the U.S.," ran a joint statement from the Ontario and Canadian Healthcare Coalition with the Ontario Federation of Labour.

"All of us want our country to do well," said Ontario Health Coalition executive director Natalie Mehra, reported by The Trillium.

"Without a healthy population, we're never going to have a healthy economy," said Jason MacLean, chair of the Canadian Health Coalition, as reported by MyMuskokaNow. "We need universally accessible, publicly funded, publicly delivered health care. And that's what's needed here in Canada today."





**By: Catherine Sople**

"It was March 26, 2020 that we set up our first Free Food table - a wintry day, 2 weeks into the COVID lockdown", says Mr. William Graham, MS E.d.

Graham, an octagenarian Veteran who saw WWII combat action, and his wife Shirley, a retired educator, set up two "Free Food" tables on Dundas Street in Cooksville.

Then they started to deliver food and necessary supplies to those they knew were in encampment areas or stranded in other outside areas, unable to access Region of Peel's over-capacity shelters.

"By taking food to folks where they are, we can serve some of the people that Food Banks Mississauga and Regeneration Outreach Community cannot reach," says Graham. Information about these and other vital organizations are made available to service seekers.

In 2020, the first food contributions came from individuals in local churches, members of Royal Canadian Legion - Cooksville Branch 582, members of Knights of Columbus Council 12706 and Regeneration Food Bank. As COVID relief established, Mississauga Food Bank became a provisioner.

To this day, each Saturday Cooksville Legion Ladies Auxiliary prepares fresh sandwiches that are set out on the Free Food tables. Peel Helping Hands network also sets out meals.

Tables are not monitored, but replenished at least once per day. Local anonymous donors bring water bottles or unopened food with current expiration dates directly to the tables.

Through regular outreach via e-mail, since 2020 Graham sends updates to the Free Food table supporters network. He writes of of need witnessed- a young woman sleeping in a park for 10 days -- , and the folks for whom food supply made all the difference - a grateful middle-aged ODSP recipient had no money left for food at the end of the month found a meal that got him through the night.

Graham's observations have been since July 2023 backed up by Free Food table monthly data reports.

There is more people in need. Donations are levelling off and dipping somewhat and -- winter is coming.

July 2023 reported over 8 thousand pounds of food collected and over 1,000 people served. November 2024 numbers jumped to more than 20,000 pounds of food collected and 3100 people served.

Now, in July 2025 there was 22,000 pounds of food collected and 3440 people served. Over the past 5 years, Graham has drawn his narrative and his numbers to the attention of local politicians and services providers in delegations and letters to City and Region of Peel Councils .

He is deeply frustrated by the gaps for housing and homelessness solutions that are overextending the Cooksville Free Food tables intended as a temporary COVID emergency response.

"Leave no Neighbour behind" is the motto of Knights of Columbus, a faith-based community service organization of which Graham is a member. "We (Shirley and myself) are honored and privileged to be able to serve our neighbors in need in this way," he says.

"However, we are just the delivery people and could do very little without the magnificent support in this community. We are grateful for their help."

If you are part of a Church, School, Store or Social group or just an individual, and want to help, your help is needed and appreciated by ourselves and those who we are privileged to serve. You might decide to have a food drive at regular intervals.

The mandated pandemic lockdown shuttered all food banks, shelters, public access to warming spaces and wi-fi such as public libraries, community centers, faith and cultural centres and even take-out restaurants. COVID lockdowns continued intermittently for 27 months until June 2022 when emergency restrictions were lifted. Even lifted, conditions have nonetheless worsened.

Since fall 2023, at least once daily Graham and Shirley fill five Free Food tables spanning Dundas Street from east of Dixie Road Erindale Station Road, close to bus stops.

## JULY 2025 REPORT: FREE FOOD TABLES

Five tables on Dundas St. filled one or more times per day.

**Food received:** 13,836 pounds.  
**Estimated persons served:** 2,161  
**Sandwiches:** 730 + 360 Meals

Added to tables without their knowledge (approximations):

**Food:** 8,200 pounds  
**Meals + Sandwiches:** 820



### By: Food Banks Mississauga

Luis worked in the corporate world for almost 35 years and did "everything right". He describes his life as comfortable – he provided for his family and made "astute, prudent financial decisions", paying off his house and saving money in his nest egg for retirement.

His career was demanding, and he loved it. He felt fortunate to be able to provide for his family and couldn't have imagined what his later years would hold.

All of a sudden, it seemed that Luis was getting hit with one difficult event after another: a breakdown of his marriage, the passing of his mother, a poor health diagnosis for his father and the difficult and expensive decision to put him in a seniors home.

"A lot of events happened, one after the other. It was like I was getting over one thing, and then something else would happen."

With the stress of all these events, something was triggered in Luis. "I got extremely ill, extremely sick to the point where I couldn't function. I was falling apart... when you have a broken arm or a broken leg or a scar, people can see it, and the thing is, you know what? When it's here-" Luis points

to his head. "People don't see it." Although Luis started receiving much-needed medical help, he was off work on disability. He received a portion of his salary during this time, but it wasn't enough to keep up with his existing payments and bills.

"I mean, my car payments are still the same, the insurance is still the same, electricity is still the same, that never changes, right? I ended up going through my savings. I used my nest egg and my savings just to kind of keep afloat... It's almost like you're running in place, like you're going nowhere fast."

Eventually, Luis lost his house, and that's when he finally turned to his neighbourhood food bank for support. Stories like Luis' unfortunately, aren't uncommon. There are a multitude of different reasons why someone might need to turn to a food bank, and every single one of those reasons is valid.

Food Banks Mississauga leads a network of 60+ food programs across Mississauga, and through this network, they provide food for almost 10 million meals each year to over 56,000 neighbours living with food insecurity in all corners of the city.



If you would like to support neighbours like Luis in need, visit [foodbanksmississauga.ca/donate](https://www.foodbanksmississauga.ca/donate)

12.6-36



Every week, Sai Dham Food Bank's Homeless program, through its mobile stations, distributes hampers to address hunger relief and food insecurity.

Each hamper offers essential nutrition and supplies for those in need, including:

- Fresh and frozen food items
- Baked goods
- Fruits
- Hygiene products
- Ready-to-eat hot meals
- Water and beverages
- Seasonal essentials like sleeping bags
- More

These hampers provide nutritious meals and basic support, empowering recipients with a sense of dignity. Donate today to help end hunger, support local food banks, and create lasting social impact. The program is available 24/7 and year-round. It's designed to support low-income families, people with disabilities, seniors, and those in urgent situations. You can register to request a hamper by calling 437-988-4422.

Sai Dham also offers a student grocery program for full and part-time students at Ontario colleges and universities who hold a valid student ID.



### REGISTER FOR THE STUDENT GROCERY PROGRAM

Every three months, registered students under this program receive a carefully curated hamper, designed to provide essential nutrition and support for a balanced lifestyle. The quantities provided ensure that students are sustained until the next hamper is available for pick-up. The program currently serves over 10,353 registered students across 49+ colleges and universities in major Ontario cities.



ACORN members took a break in welcome shade at Port Credit public library in July at a Speak-Up held in the nearby park to introduce Indoor Inferno Challenge.

Is it dangerously hot in your home? Is cooling inaccessible, too expensive or downright ineffective in your apartment? Ontario ACORN is launching a contest to see just how bad it gets!

Heat complaints are a health and safety issue, connected to EMS Emergency Medical Services calls. Prevention with cooling is way cheaper on city budgets, and better life for you.

Share photos that show how hot it is inside your apartment. Need some ideas?

The Peel ACORN Tenant Survey Report will be presented to Brampton and Mississauga when City Council resumes in September.

- Take a pic of you holding up your thermometer (with the temperature visible and legible)
- Show your elaborate fan set up
- Take a selfie with your icepacks, cold towels and whatever else you use to stay cool in a heatwave!

ACORN encourages all residents to get on the record when you experience extreme heat. Make a confidential complaint to the City by calling 311.

**ENTER THE CHALLENGE**



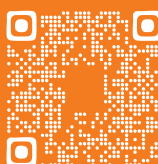
**FORM LINK**

**HEAT RESOURCES IN THE REGION OF PEEL**

MISSISSAUGA



CALEDON



BRAMPTON



**STAYING SAFE DURING A HEAT WAVE**

High temperatures can be deadly. The risk of heat-related illnesses increases with the temperature, time spent indoors, and individual sensitivity.

This includes shopping centres, community centres, libraries and homeless shelters.

Children, seniors, and those with chronic illnesses are most at risk.

Heat warnings are issued when, for two consecutive days, temperatures are expected to be above 31C in the day, 20C overnight, or a reach a humidex value of over 40C.

During heat warnings, the Region of Peel encourages individuals to seek shelter in public spaces with air conditioning.

In extreme heat, Peel municipalities will open cooling centres and public spaces to offer heat relief.



The Peel Youth Charter was created in October of 2007. Eleven signatories unanimously adopted the Charter on behalf of civic and policing partners. In 2018, the Peel Poverty Action Group advocated for a re-endorsement of the Charter, with greater youth involvement. Mississauga Ward 9 Councillor Martin Reid says that he wants to revisit and update it based on the changing needs of the community.

#### How far along are you in the process?

Really, really early. I've started to kind of plant that seed with people, and other people are starting to ask the same questions. We just approved the new Community Safety and Wellbeing Framework at Council and that was done very well. We had the right people at the table through the process. Now we can look at how we're going to engage the charter off of that document. Everyone has all these strategy documents, so I want to bring them all together to form this new charter.

#### The original Youth Charter didn't have much input from actual youth. Will it be different this time?

Definitely. Part of it will be having the voice of youth at the table. The other part of it will be the agencies, the people who are trying to guide the youth into their potential. We sometimes get criticism for not having youth at the table, but we have the people who serve them. Both voices need to be heard.

#### What's being done to prevent having one person from a group asked to speak on behalf of their entire community?

Building a bigger table. That's really it, and not gatekeep who can be there. People come to council, or see me in the street or at events, and say that people weren't heard. There's a part of me that's upset because I know those voices were represented but we didn't do a good job telling the story of who was there. So people assume it's been business as usual when that wasn't the case this time around.

#### There's an election in just over a year. Is this as a post or pre-election goal?

I want to do it as soon as possible, but as thoroughly as possible. If it rolls into the next term of office. I'm fine with that, because I want the document to outlive me. This is a my pet project, and this isn't something that I want to make an empty campaign promise with. I want it to be something embedded in how we work and is informing how we do things in the recent field, and that has to live longer than me. So it really isn't a campaign based thing. Just like, start it when it's ready and do it right.

#### Why do we need the Youth Charter?

We need to have some common language. We need to have a common marching order to be able to do this work, because otherwise, people work in silos, and get burnt out.

**// I WANT IT TO BE SOMETHING EMBEDDED IN HOW WE WORK //**

#### We believe all Peel youth have the right to:

- Safe and supportive environments at home, in school, in workplaces and throughout the community.
- A standard of living adequate to ensure healthy physical, intellectual, emotional and social development, well-being and a good quality of life.
- Be served by governments which acknowledge their responsibility to improve the safety of young people, and to work cooperatively with the community to ensure adequate and equitable funding for youth violence prevention programs.
- Have access to relevant, youth-centric health supports that help build a foundation of respect for healthy personal choices throughout the lifespan.
- Access to relevant and responsive education and training.
- The best efforts by the community-at-large in creating career employment opportunities for young people.
- The availability of recreational and leisure activities in the form of play, creative expression or skill development opportunities.
- Access to a region-wide network of information and resources to support youth.
- Be supported and encouraged to be active citizens regarding issues that concern them.
- Be involved in policy, program and service development on issues that affect young people.
- Advocate, or to be advocated for on their behalf, on issues that affect young people.



Vote PopUp is a toolkit to help demystify Canada's voting process. It was launched in 2015 by Samara Centre for Democracy to make it easier to talk about - and participate in - politics. PPAG - Peel Poverty Action Group - wants to help you and your friends to be election-ready, in a fun social and meaningful way.

Local Government Week (LGW) in Ontario was first established in 1983 under the William Davis government. In 2025, LGW runs October 13-19. This corresponds to the same third-week of October slotted for the Ontario General Election held every 4 years, to elect municipal mayors, councillors and school board trustees.

2026 is Ontario's next general election for local governments. PPAG has always been a proponent for democratic engagement. Not yet having the privilege of a vote - eg. as a permanent resident or youth - does not deny your views and lived experience from getting your solutions to work on issues. We need all hands on deck for our communities.

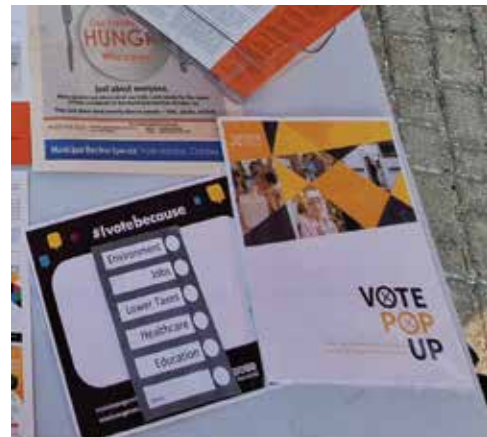
The Vote PopUp kit is designed to engage smaller classroom-sized groups in a comfortable social setting, such as a public library or community centre. To open the 90-minute session, guided non-partisan information introduces the structures in Canada's voting system.

Instead of named candidates, the role-play ballot lists local issues that matter. This offers an opportunity to invite subject experts in for a brief exploration and conversation - and sparks the "why" empowerment to vote for the change you want to see in the world.

A poll station simulation uses Election Canada set-up, and guides voter role play through on-line registration, understanding and marking the ballot, then casting the secret vote. In opening and counting ballots, the Vote PopUp session can choose to compare first-past-the-post vote to a ranked ballot result.

Get in touch with [info@PPAG.media](mailto:info@PPAG.media) so we can schedule your Vote PopUp session.

PPAG in 2015 was an early adapter of the Vote PopUp kit. Look at issues on the ballot in the photo. Has anything changed for the better?



### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

DEMOCRATIC EXCHANGE TMU



INSPIRE DEMOCRACY



AMO: HEALTHY DEMOCRACY



## REFUGEE RECEPTION CENTRE OPENS IN MISSISSAUGA



Mzwandile Poncana/Metroland

### By: Tough Times

The Polycultural Reception House has opened in Mississauga. It's the first dedicated shelter and service hub for refugees in the city. Located at 73 King Street West, it is operated by Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services, a not-for-profit that has been providing immigrant support since 1973. The new facility currently has 75 rooms, which can hold up to three people. The facility provides temporary housing, meals, information on Canadian law, taxes and political system, assistance with navigating employment, health care, language services and will help ensure children are enrolled in schools.

## CALEDON LAUNCHES LOBBYIST REGISTRY



Photo Via Town of Caledon Facebook

### By: Town of Caledon

The Town of Caledon has launched a Lobbyist Registry to document who is lobbying public office holders. The registry is available online and provides residents with information on who is lobbying, who they're lobbying to, the subject matter and when they did so. The registry applies to individuals and organizations who communicate with members of Council or senior staff to influence legislation while representing a business or financial interest. Any lobbyist as defined by the by-law must register within ten days of communication with a public office holder.



12.6-39

## TMU WELCOMES FIRST CLASS OF RESIDENT PHYSICIANS



Anna Maria Li / TorontoMet Today

### By: TorontoMet Today

On June 27, 2025, nearly 200 attendees gathered in Brampton to celebrate the launch of TMU School of Medicine's inaugural postgraduate medical education programs. The event welcomed TMU's first class of resident physicians, key partners from community and hospital sites and representatives from community advocacy organizations. Speakers reflected on the historic nature of the inaugural class of residents, the significance of this achievement for Brampton and surrounding communities and the importance of advocacy and wellness in medical training.



Knight Table's Back 2 School Backpack Program requires your support!

Many families cannot afford much of the school supplies. required for the year.

Through donations, Knights Table supports families and their children with backpacks and school supplies to get their school year off to a great start.

Because of the generous donations from the community last year, we were able to provide 250 children age 4 – 14 with backpacks and school supplies.

Donate to help a child start strong!



### DUFFERIN-PEEL CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARD TAKEN OVER



Graeme Frisque/Metroland

#### By: Tough Times

In late June, the Government of Ontario announced the takeover of four school boards, citing 'mismanagement'. This includes the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board. Attempts to fix the deficit - not helped by underfunding that often doesn't allow boards to fully cover their operational costs and vital repairs - will likely see special education, mental health support and arts programs cut. The province assigned former conservative MPP Rick Byers as the supervisor of the board, who will effectively replace the 11 elected school board trustees.

### BRAMPTON WOMAN TO PLAY AT HOMELESS WORLD CUP

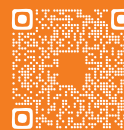


Photo via Pexels

#### By: Tough Times

From August 23 to 30th, the Homeless World Cup will be taking place in Oslo, Norway, with 48 countries and 500 players attending. At a tournament in mid-June, the Canadian Street Soccer Association (CSSA) selected six of the eight players for the Canadian team. The CSSA doesn't choose based on skill alone, but who will benefit the most from the opportunity, preferring individuals who are in transition and working towards employment, housing, or recovery. Among the selected players is Emma Bellante of the Brampton team.

### FREE YOUTH PROGRAMS IN PEEL



#### SAUGA AT PLAY

Drop-in after school program offered during the school year at various community centres in Mississauga. Open for 10 to 18-year-olds.



#### YOUTH HUB PROGRAMS BRAMPTON

An updating list of registered and drop-in programs in Brampton for youth.



#### AFTER YOU-TH PROGRAM

Program for 12-18 year olds. Focused on physical activity, life skills and leadership. Runs Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 3-6pm from September to June at the Susan Fennell Sports Complex.



#### YOUTH HUB MALTON

Offers integrated youth services for young people aged 12 to 25 and their families. In addition to clinical and support services, their "Youth Chill Zone" is open Monday to Friday 3:30 - 6:30pm and hosts social activities.

## REGIONAL HOMELESSNESS SERVICES IN PEEL

In Peel there are many programs available to support housing, shelter and fundamental needs. Please visit [www.peelregion.ca/housing](http://www.peelregion.ca/housing) for more information.

### Street Helpline Peel - 1-877-848-8481

- Offering 24/7 support for urgent homelessness needs, food, shelter access, referrals and more. The Street Helpline connects you to our mobile Street Outreach team who can often come to your location to help. If you're in crisis or face an urgent need, call us.

### Shelter Intake Line - 905-450-1996

- We can help you find the best option in any Peel shelter, including in adult, youth and family shelters.

### Mental Health Support

- Distress Centre Peel – 905-278-7208
- Kids Help Phone – 1-800-668-6868
- Mental Health Mobile Crisis Centre of Peel – 905-278-9036
- Youth Mental Health Crisis Response Service – 416-410-8615

### Regeneration Meal Program and Supports -156 Main St N

- Facilities and food for people in need
- Showers and laundry
- Phone and computer
- Staff support
- Clothing
- Breakfast - 8a.m. to 9:30a.m. (9:15 a.m. on Sundays)
- Lunch - 11:30a.m. to 12:30p.m., Monday to Thursday
- Hours - Monday to Friday 7a.m. to 3p.m., Saturdays 7a.m. to 9:30 a.m., Sundays 7a.m. to 9:15 a.m.

### City of Mississauga

- Services are available to support at-risk individuals and the homeless in Mississauga, including free hot meals and shower access.
- Visit [mississauga.ca/recreation-and-sports/sportsand-activities/assistance-programs/help-for-thehomeless/](http://mississauga.ca/recreation-and-sports/sportsand-activities/assistance-programs/help-for-thehomeless/)

**Call - Street Helpline Peel Team at: 1-877-848-8481**

Call if you are homeless, or at risk of being homeless, or know someone who is in need. Get help to access emergency and transitional shelters, street outreach, support services and finding permanent housing



Photograph via The Region of Peel

The **Peel Food Map** provides updated hours and information on donations, through the Emergency Donation Centre.

Call 211 if you can't access the online food map.



### Visit PPAG's Website



[ppag.media](http://ppag.media)

**Are you a person with lived experience who likes to write?**

**Tough Times is looking for content providers for its upcoming editions.**

**Please contact [info@ppag.media](mailto:info@ppag.media) if you are interested.**

Want to advertise with us? Contact [admin@ppag.media](mailto:admin@ppag.media)