

\$13,900 OTF Grant Supported 'Coordinated Food Access Hubs'

Hamilton, ON (May 6, 2021) – On Friday, Banyan Community Services celebrate the successful implementation of their **'Coordinated Food Access Hubs'**. Thanks to a \$13,900 Seed grant awarded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) in 2020, this program has been able to provide food deliveries to 45 seniors improving their food security and reducing social isolation through improved connections.

“The past year has been especially difficult for seniors in Hamilton. With food insecurity and social isolation on the rise, I know our community is grateful for Banyan’s vital services,” said Monique Taylor, MPP for Hamilton Mountain. “Banyan Community Services, with the support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, is helping lift our community up in this challenging time.”

This ‘hub’ model brought together seniors and community agencies to help engage and serve at-risk seniors who lack resources to maintain a nutritious diet. Multiple organizations also helped to coordinate services that provided regular food bank deliveries to at-risk isolated seniors. One client said, “I have not left my home in over a year, so I am very grateful for this program”, while another said that without this program, they would have had limited access to fruits and vegetables. The OTF grant was used to help with staffing, developing information and promotional materials, and some administrative costs as well.

Mr. Smith’s Story (name has been changed to protect privacy) While a Banyan employee was delivering food to clients at a local apartment building, a gentleman approached him and asked how he would get food. He had just moved to Hamilton and had no family to help him. The Banyan employee listened to Mr. Smith and discovered he had no food at home or money to buy it until his cheque arrived at the end of the month. He spoke of his urgent need for help, and being new to Hamilton, he didn’t have community connections or access to a phone. The Banyan employee made sure Mr. Smith had fresh food by connecting him with Salvation Army and was enrolled with the Food Bank. Banyan linked Mr. Smith with other local agencies and within a week, he had received help with his move to Hamilton.

“We know that food insecurity is a growing problem among older adults in Hamilton, and programs like the ‘Coordinated Food Access Hubs’ are valuable because it improves access to food for those who live in extreme isolation, while at the same time providing them with meaningful connections within their community,” said Kim Ciavarella, Banyan CEO. “This would not have been possible without the generous support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation grant.”

Banyan is a not-for-profit organization that has provided quality services to the youth justice, children’s, and senior’s community support sectors since 1978. Banyan is committed to improving the mental, physical, and social well-being of at-risk populations in our service areas of Hamilton, Niagara, Brant, Haldimand, Norfolk, and Wellington.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada’s leading granting foundations. OTF awarded \$115 million to 644 projects last year to build healthy and vibrant communities in Ontario.

MEDIA:

Betty Mortensen, Executive Assistant / Banyan Community Services 905.545.0133 Ext 2237 /Toll Free: 1.866.545.0133
bmortensen@banyan.org