

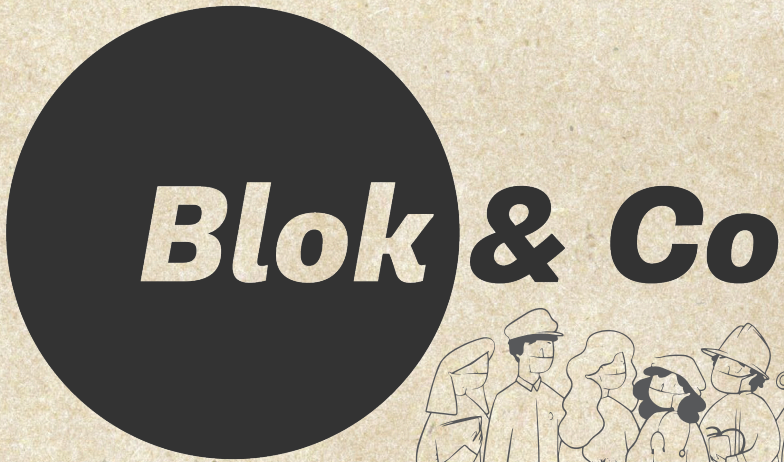
A stylized illustration of a hand holding a green plant stem. The hand is rendered in a textured, brownish-orange color, with fingers slightly curled. The plant stem is a vibrant green, with two leaves at the bottom. The background is a light, textured blue. The title 'BLOKTALK' is written in bold, yellow, block letters with a blue outline and a slight shadow, positioned at the top of the image. On either side of the title are blue, stylized arrow-like symbols pointing outwards.

BLOKTALK

ISSUE 1
JAN 2021

**Strengthening communities
one block at a time.**

In this edition...



BlokTALK is a monthly zine produced by Blok & Co(mmunity), a local non-profit that strives to broaden empathetic horizons and create authentic connections within communities. Visit our online community hub, BlokTO, to learn more and to access a network of community resources.

www.blokto.ca

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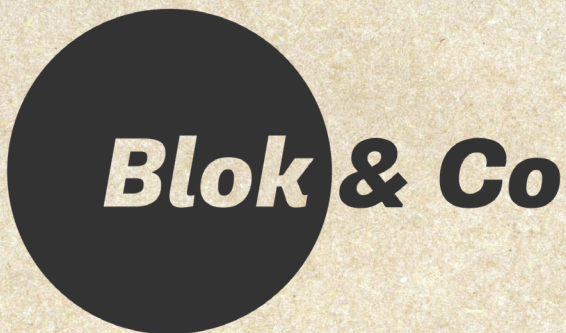
A note from our team:

BlokTALK is a monthly zine produced by Blok & Co(mmunity) to foster empathy and engagement in our community through art and storytelling.

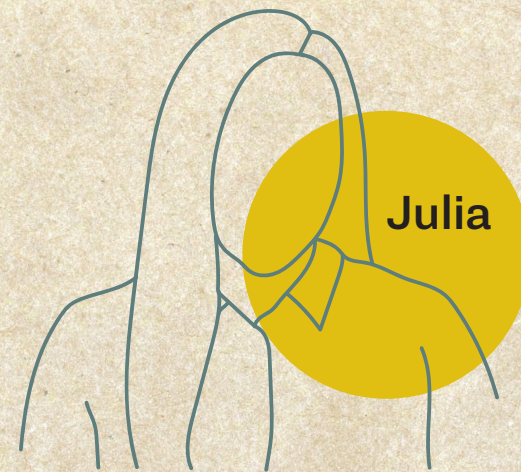
In this issue, you'll find local art and stories from the community, emergency shelter locations and our housing assessment tool, good news from the past month, upcoming events you may be interested in, ways to support local causes, and an update on Toronto's COVID-19 situation.

All the resources, information, engagement opportunities and more can also be found at our online community hub, BlokTO. Visit www.blokto.com to learn more.

Thanks for reading!



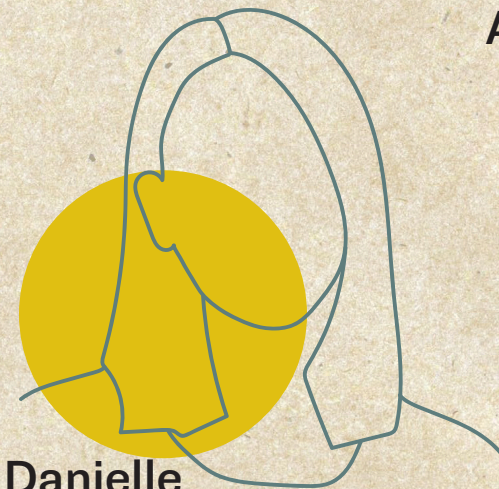
Meet the Team!



Julia



Amy

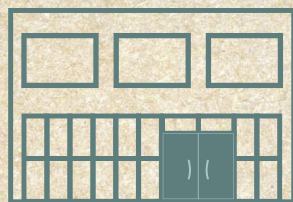


Danielle



Maggie

Need emergency shelter?



Cornerstone Place - Homeless shelter

Address: 616 Vaughan Rd, York, ON M6C 2R5 (Near Dufferin St & Eglinton Ave W)

Phone: (647) 346-0616

Hours: Monday 12-8a.m., 4p.m.-8a.m.
Tuesday- 4p.m.-8a.m.
Friday
Saturday 4p.m.-12a.m.
Sunday Open 24 hours

Eva's Phoenix - Youth homeless shelter

Address: 60 Brant St, Toronto, ON M5V 3G9 (Near Richmond St W & Spadina Ave)

Phone: (416) 364-4716

Hours: Monday- Open 24 hours
Sunday

Homes First Society - Homeless shelter

Address: 805 Wellington St W, Toronto, ON M5V 1G8 (Near Strachan Ave & King St W)

Phone: (416) 395-0928

Hours: Monday- Open 24 hours
Sunday

Covenant House - Youth social services

Address: 20 Gerrard St E, Toronto, ON M5B 2P3 (Near Yonge St & Gerrard St E)

Phone: (416) 598-4898

Hours: Monday- Open 24 hours
Sunday

Are you precariously housed?



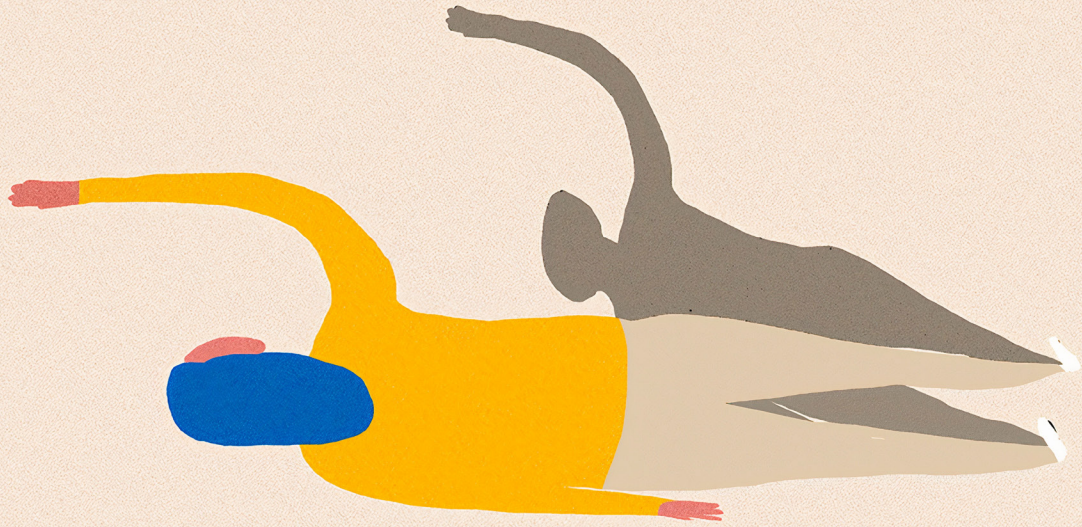
Answer "Yes" or "No" to each of the following questions. Each "No" answer is worth one (1) point.

- YES NO 1) Do you own your home?
- YES NO 2) Do you spend less than 30% of your income on housing-related costs?
- YES NO 3) Do you have at least 3 months' worth of easily accessible savings?
- YES NO 4) Are you able to pay your monthly credit card/loan payments?

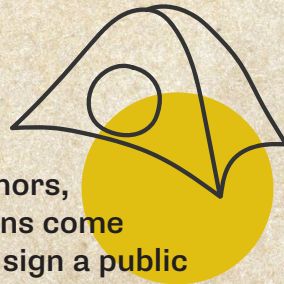
If you scored...

- 0 points - Your housing situation is STABLE
- 1 point - Your housing situation is SOMEWHAT PRECARIOUS
- 2 points - Your housing situation is PRECARIOUS
- 3+ points - Your housing situation is EXTREMELY PRECARIOUS

If you're in a precarious housing situation, know that you're not alone. Visit our website at www.blokto.com to use the full assessment tool and learn more about resources that can help meet your individual needs.



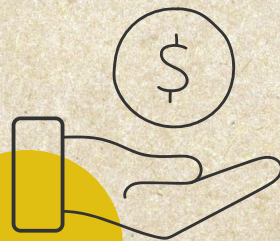
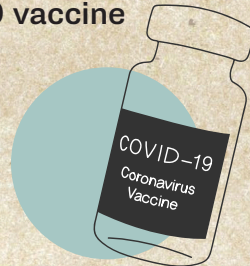
The Parkdale community fridge is back up and running, with a new paint job from local artists @babyjewish and @notcoolneverwas



Artists, authors, and musicians come together to sign a public statement against encampment evictions

Good news from December 2020!

Canada approves Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine



The Toronto Rent Bank is providing interest-free loans to eligible Toronto residents who are behind in their rent or need to move to more suitable housing



Community Profile - John from Parkdale

Hi, I'm John. I'm 65 years old and I've lived in Parkdale my whole life. I was laid off earlier this year and between my age and the pandemic, it's been impossible to find work. I was already living paycheque to paycheque and it wasn't long 'til I found myself on the street looking for a place to sleep. I was so embarrassed. No one prepares you for this. I had no family to turn to and I didn't know where to go.

I tried sleeping on benches, under an overpass; even in a parking lot. If I found a warm spot in front of a store though, it didn't take long for the owner to call the police on me. I get they don't want someone hanging around in front of their store, but you start to feel like you're less than a person. It's like people forget we're human too. I'm just trying to get through the day like everyone else.

Eventually I ended up at a shelter downtown. It was kind of clean but we definitely had no privacy - we were practically on top of each other. I wanted to leave when COVID hit because I heard it's harder on older folks like myself, but I heard from some people I know that the folks staying in parks were being forced out so I didn't think I had anywhere to go.

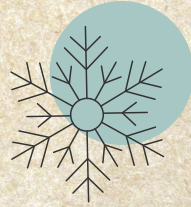
The City ended up moving me to a hotel uptown when things got really bad. Now I have my own room which is a nice change. The people living near the hotel though don't seem to like us very much though, so I just try to keep to myself most of the time. I try not to complain too much though - I feel like I'm one of the lucky ones, having a place of my own. Winters are so cold here and I don't know how an old guy like me would make it.

I heard there might be a vaccine coming out soon. I hope that'll help things calm down a bit at the shelter. Then I can get set up with a case worker to try to help me find a more permanent place. I used to be a pretty good cook back in the day; maybe I could get back into it, help feed folks who're going through the same things as me.

Every month, we share the story of one of our neighbours. Want to have your story featured or know someone with a story others need to hear? Reach out to us at www.blokto.com.

Upcoming Events

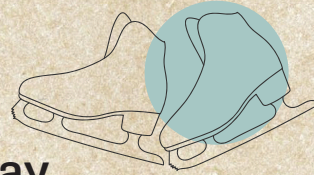
The Junction 1st Annual Window Wonderland



The Window Wonderland will transform our neighbourhood into an outdoor gallery that is interactive, engaging, and magical.

Runs through Jan. 31.

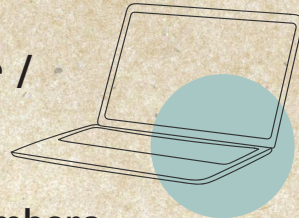
Winter Skating at The Bentway



Book a time for The Bentway's skate trail under the Gardiner for fun and safe skating this winter season.

Runs through Jan. 31.

ProjectCovid Virtual Job Fair / Career Expo



The Job Fair will help community members whose jobs were impacted by Covid19 outbreak find their next dream opportunity.

Jan. 8, 11:00 am - 2:00 pm.

Volunteer!

Plenty of local organizations could use some extra helping hands - try lending one!

Teach a community class

Have a skill you think others could benefit from? Sign up to share your skills by teaching an online class on the BlokTO website.



Ways to get involved in the community

Donate

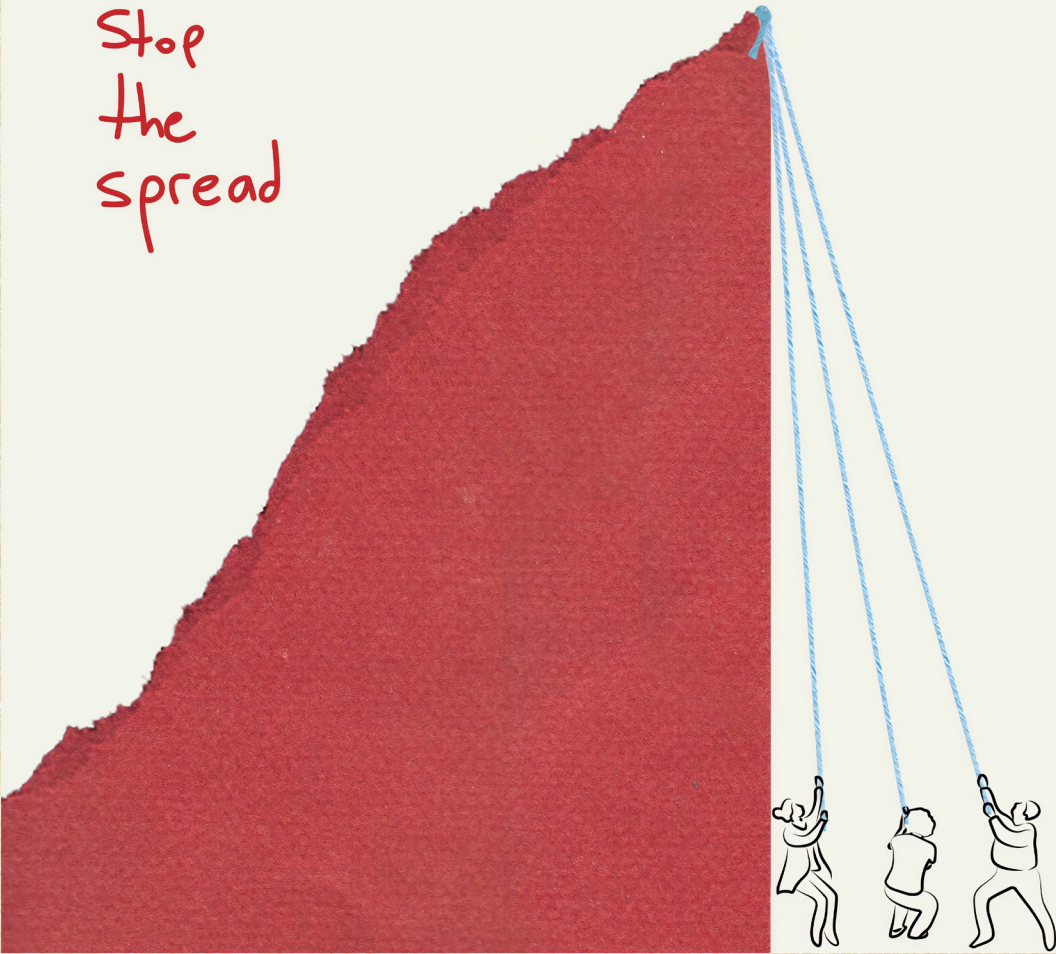
Our community organizations need money to provide their services. If you have a couple extra buck to spare, consider donating to a cause you care about!



Toronto is currently in the grey lockdown zone.

Help keep our community safe by staying home, practicing physical distancing, wearing a mask, and washing your hands for at least 20 seconds.

Stop
the
spread



To our donors - thank you.

We're able to offer BlokTALK for free thanks to the generosity of our donors - extraordinary but regular people in our community who care about their neighbours.

A very sincere thank you to everyone who made this issue of BlokTALK possible:

Amy Morrell
Danielle Lim
Julia Forrester
Maggie Kent

Cathy Crowe
Fred Victor
Helen Kerr
Zan Chandler

Gerrard King
Eva Brant
Wellington Homes
Vaughan Stone



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www.blokto.com

