

Toronto  
Community  
Housing



## **TCHC's 2023 Strategic Communications Plan**

Item 8B

June 27, 2023

Board of Directors

**Report:** TCHC:2023-29

**To:** Board of Directors (the "Board")

**From:** Governance, Communications and Human Resources Committee ("GCHRC")

**Date:** May 17, 2023

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Directors (the "Board") with Toronto Community Housing's ("TCHC") Strategic Communications Plan for 2023.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that the Board receive the 2023 TCHC Strategic Communications Plan for information.

### **GCHRC:**

This report was received by the GCHRC on May 17, 2023.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

This report provides a reflective view of TCHC's achievements against the 2022 Strategic Communications Plan as well as a forward-looking view for 2023 that aims to continue building TCHC's image and reputation as the largest social housing provider in Canada.

Toronto Community Housing used a range of strategic communications approaches and products in 2022 to build trust and confidence in its strategic priorities and business goals with tenants, employees and stakeholders.

In 2022, we continued to strengthen our engagement with media in TCHC's market. Increased levels of transparency and responsiveness created better working relationships with reporters because TCHC was able to earn credibility through its actions. TCHC's social media presence deepened, as well, supported by a creative and exciting calendar of community stories and updates numbering in the thousands. TCHC also continues to build and establish new digital communications channels.

The Strategic Communications team will continue to deliver strong results in the coming year by implementing the 2023 Strategic Communications Strategy. The four main strategy areas will inform the audiences that TCHC focuses on engaging and identifies new approaches to reaching them. TCHC will remain focused on transitioning to a digital-first approach for all internal and external communications, supported by the upcoming launch of a new public website in May 2023.

#### Strategy Areas in 2023:

- Tenant focus: Deliver tenant communications that are service focused, impactful and inspirational.
- Digital first: Continue to engage tenants and business units to develop and implement user-friendly and future-ready digital channels.
- Active storytelling: Tell our story to the public, finding examples of TCHC in action and elevating them. This includes People and Culture campaigns to attract new talent.
- Celebrating staff: Highlight the goodness and ability of TCHC staff, because when people feel good, they produce good results.

The organization's storytelling features a strong element of focus on the experiences of all tenants and staff. Our aim is to shine a light on the positive actions that happen within TCHC communities every day.

In equal measure, our ability in times of crisis to provide a reassuring, informed voice to tenants and staff, and transparent engagement with media and stakeholders is critical to maintaining trust and confidence. We will continue to learn from each event, driving towards balanced coverage and supporting tenants and staff.

Overall, we have started to change the narrative in a positive way, but we are mindful that there is more to be done.

**IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS:**

As always, the deciding factors in the success of TCHC's communications are whether we can be timely, on-target and engaging. Applying these qualities to the 2023 TCHC Strategic Communications Plan, the organization and communities we service will be able to build a deeper understanding of our work and confidence in our abilities.

**SIGNATURE:**

*"Paula Knight"*

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Paula Knight  
Vice President, Strategic Planning and Communications

**ATTACHMENT:**

1. 2022-2023 Strategy: Strategic Communications Presentation

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2022-2023 Strategy

# Strategic Communications

Report to Board: June 2023



# 2022 Strategic Areas

- ▶ Build and extend digital strategies to improve tenant communications
- ▶ Create consistent tenant communications across channels
- ▶ Achieve balanced and positive media representation through proactive pitches and engagement
- ▶ Strengthen employee engagement through innovative internal communications
- ▶ Be a valued and strategic business partner for all strategic communications



# Digital Communication Channels

We have firmly established three new digital channels in 2022-2023 to deliver targeted communications to tenants.



## New Website

- New website scoped and developed in 2022 and 2023
- Tenant inputs through focus groups, surveys, content and UX feedback
- Staff and business unit consultation
- Soft launch in early May 2023, Full launch in July 2023



## Email

- New portfolio wide email list of over 6000 tenant emails
- Monthly Tenant email bulletin introduced in 2023 with a 75% open rate (3 times higher than avg. email campaigns)
- Focus on continued growth and sign-ups and segmentation of lists

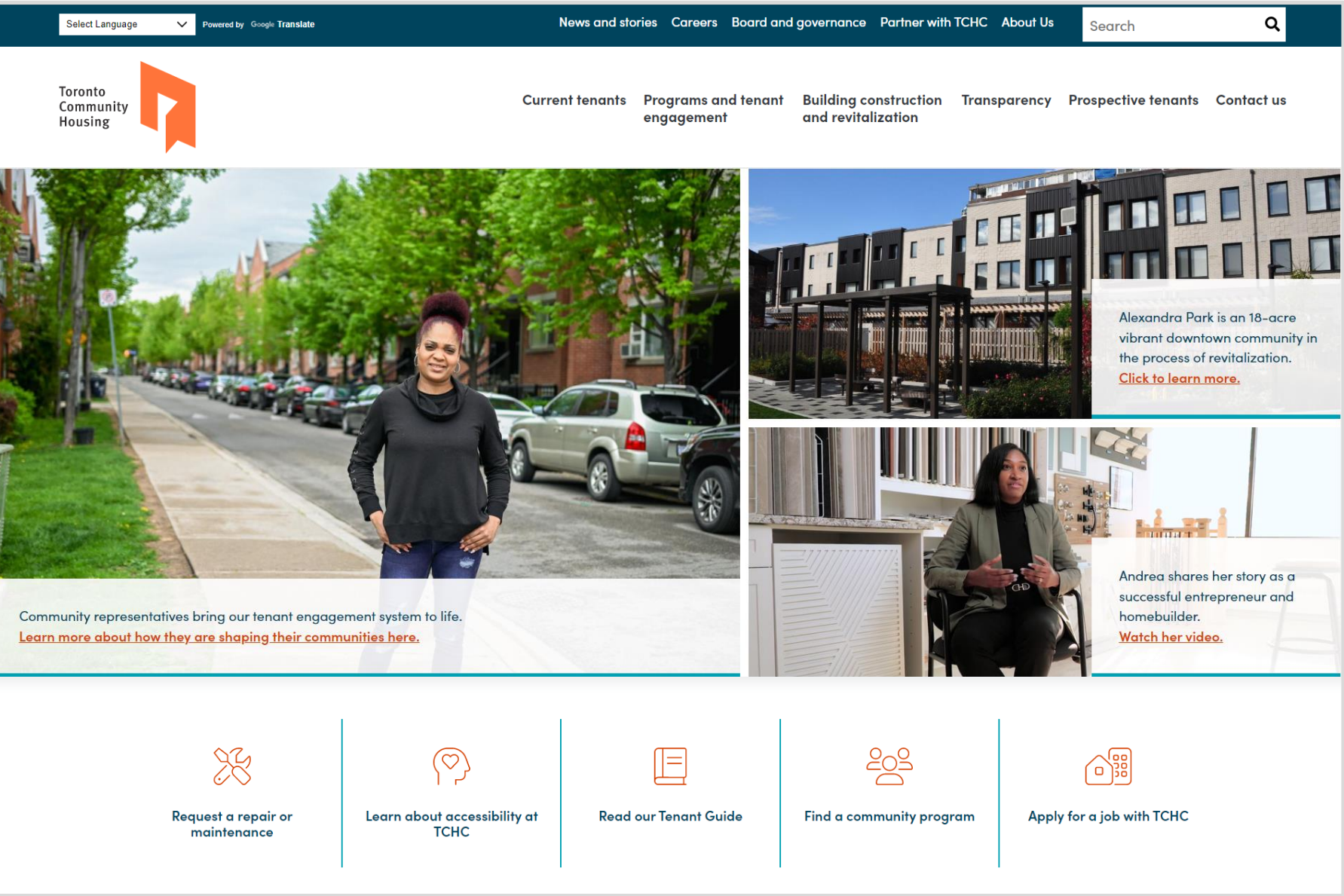


## Text Message

- Text message campaigns piloted with tenant engagement, capital engagement and revitalization communications.
- Consideration of possible additional use cases and scalability based on resources

# New TCHC Website

TCHC’s new digital “front door” welcomes all tenants with the information they need in a user friendly and simplified digital experience.



## Current reach

43,000 unique visitors per month

## Key features of new site

Tenant focused menus and content, simplified user friendly organization, visual storytelling, future-growth ready

## Strategic growth in 2023-2024

Improve integrated communication campaigns, integrations to reduce manual administration, reduce duplicate platforms, preliminary scope to improve services, improved data and metrics about usage

# Social Media Growth

TCHC’s four primary social media channels - Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram - grew by 18.7% (total net audience growth) in 2022-2023.

Year	Audience	Impressions	Engagements	Post Link Clicks	Engagement Rate
2021-2022	34,280	2,180,317	88,057	28,907	4%
2022-2023	38,380 (+11%)	2,073,430 (-5%)	108,817 (+24%)	54,189 (+87%)	5.2% (+1.2%)

## Highlights:

- Audience growth continues to be steady across all channels, with Instagram, LinkedIn and Facebook seeing between 18-20% audience growth per channel
- Engagement and post-link clicks both saw significant growth on TCHC channels in 2022-2023. Highest engagement is currently on LinkedIn.
- The 5% decrease in impressions is due to an active decision to publish fewer posts to improve visibility of strong content to improve engagement

## Strategic growth in 2023-2024

- Youth focused campaigns on Instagram
- Continued customized content on different channels to increase engagement and drive business needs and objectives
- Full integrated campaigns utilizing TCHC’s new website as a landing point
- Collaboration and partnership with TCHC stakeholder community to increase reach and generate new content ideas



# Tenant Content Strategy

Strategic Communications delivered timely, informative, engaging and inspirational stories to our tenants and stakeholders using a range of different channels.

13  
Digital tenant stories

3379  
Social Media Posts

12  
Videos Produced

10  
Publications for tenants

## Tenant Awareness and Education

In collaboration with subject matter experts on TCHC's conservation team, we created two illustrated videos to raise awareness and education about conserving electricity and waste management in TCHC buildings.



Learn about waste management



How to help conserve electricity in your building

# Accessibility and Communications

In 2022-2023, in collaboration with the Responsible Personal Accessibility in Toronto Housing (R-PATH) tenant-led committee, we delivered an impactful series of communications (print and digital) to provide information and raise awareness about unit modifications and build accessibility standards in TCHC buildings.

## Video campaigns

In collaboration with R-PATH, two videos were created to provide information to tenants about unit modifications and build standards in TCHC spaces. The highly successful videos were well received by tenants. The Build Standards video series had over 10,000 impressions since it was first posted on our social channels in late 2022.



7 Questions about Unit Modifications



TCHC's Accessibility Build Standards





In 2022 - 2023, Strategic Communications continued to focus on reflecting the lives and successes of TCHC tenants on all our channels.





# 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Campaign

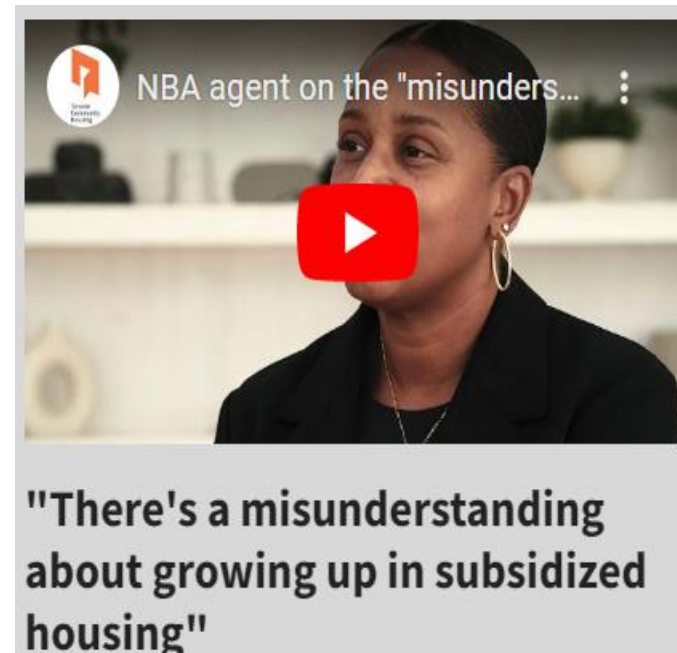


Opening doors  
*for the future*

Strategic Communications delivered a multi-channel campaign to celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The campaign captured the *past, present and future* of TCHC. We engaged youth, tenants and stakeholders to share their stories with us.

## Legacy from our Past

Leisa Washington (Swansea Mews), Minister Ahmed Hussen (Regent Park), and Andrea Dixon (Chester Le) share about how their history and past in TCHC communities influenced their drive and will towards their current career success.



## Community in the Present

We invited tenants to nominate each other and share how Random Acts of Kindness (R.A.C.K.) are transforming their communities and helping everyone to stay connected. We selected eight stories for publication on social media.





# 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Campaign



Opening doors  
*for the future*

Strategic Communications delivered a multi-channel campaign to capture the *past, present and future* of TCHC. The campaign engaged youth, tenants and stakeholders to share their stories with us.

## Vision for our Future

Youth essayists were invited to write about the strengths in their community and how they might solve some of the challenges. TCHC received 70 submissions and selected three winners of the competition. Winners received prize money from Wealthsimple Foundation.



All 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary campaign stories and youth essays were published on a microsite and re-shared on social media: <https://stories.torontohousing.ca/20-years/>

# Thought Leadership Strategy

As a global leader in community housing, TCHC has an opportunity to share our expertise, build our reputation and rally our peers to common causes. In 2022 and 2023, TCHC participated in a number of industry events, including:

- ▶ **IHP's 2022 International Leadership Exchange**  
Jag Sharma led an EDIB workshop and TCHC staff hosted 60+ international CEOs in Regent Park for an afternoon panel discussion on the future of housing.
- ▶ **Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association, 2022 ONPHA Conference**  
Jag Sharma joined Ottawa Community Housing and Victoria Park Community Housing CEOs on-stage for a "CEO Perspective" panel
- ▶ **Scotiabank Affordable Housing Summit, Intelligent Cities Summit, CityAge Conference *and others...***  
TCHC continues to seek out and respond to invitations to smaller industry events where our knowledge and experience offers value.

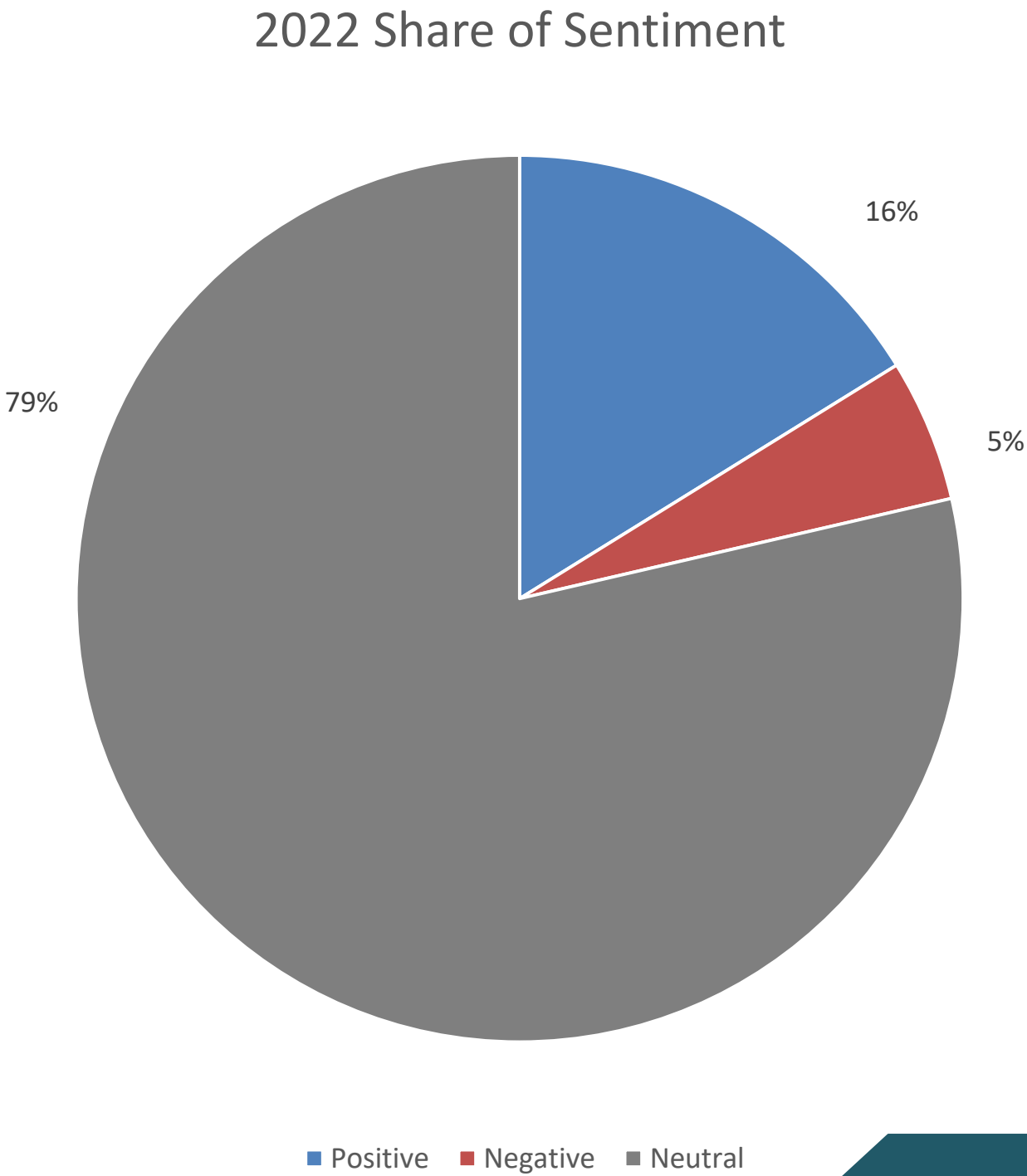




# Media Sentiment Analysis

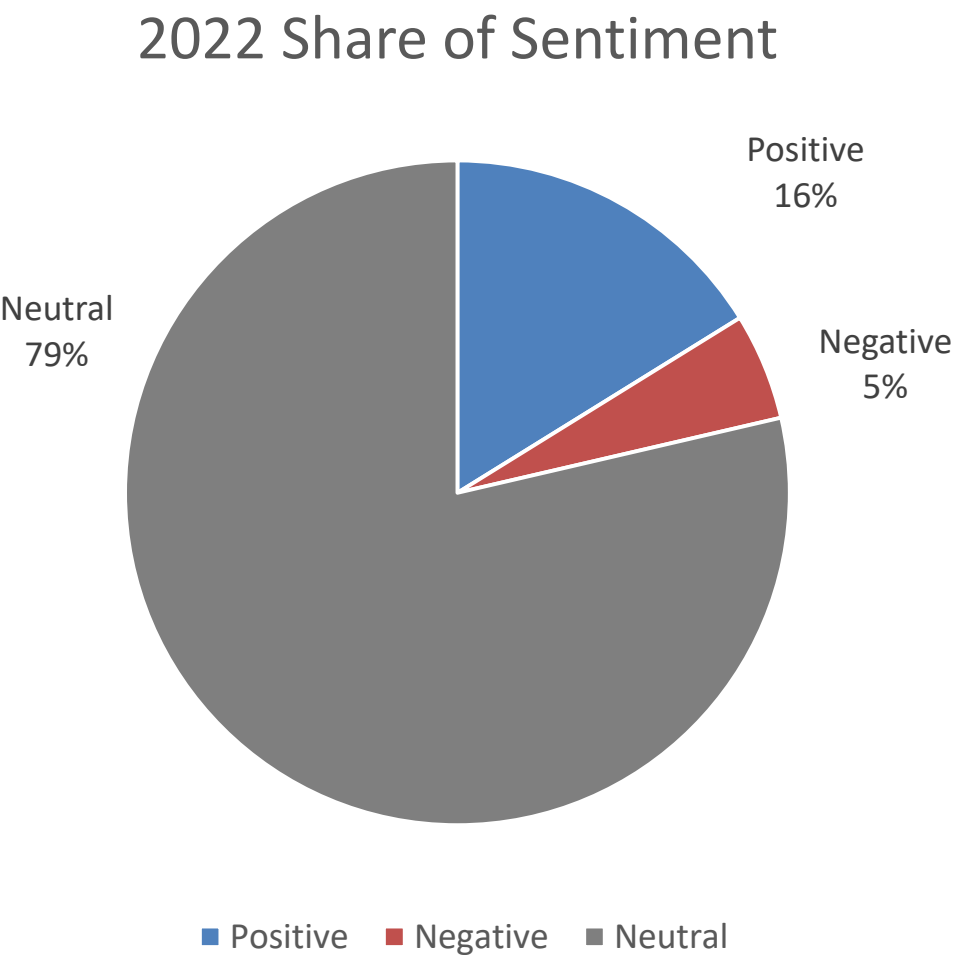
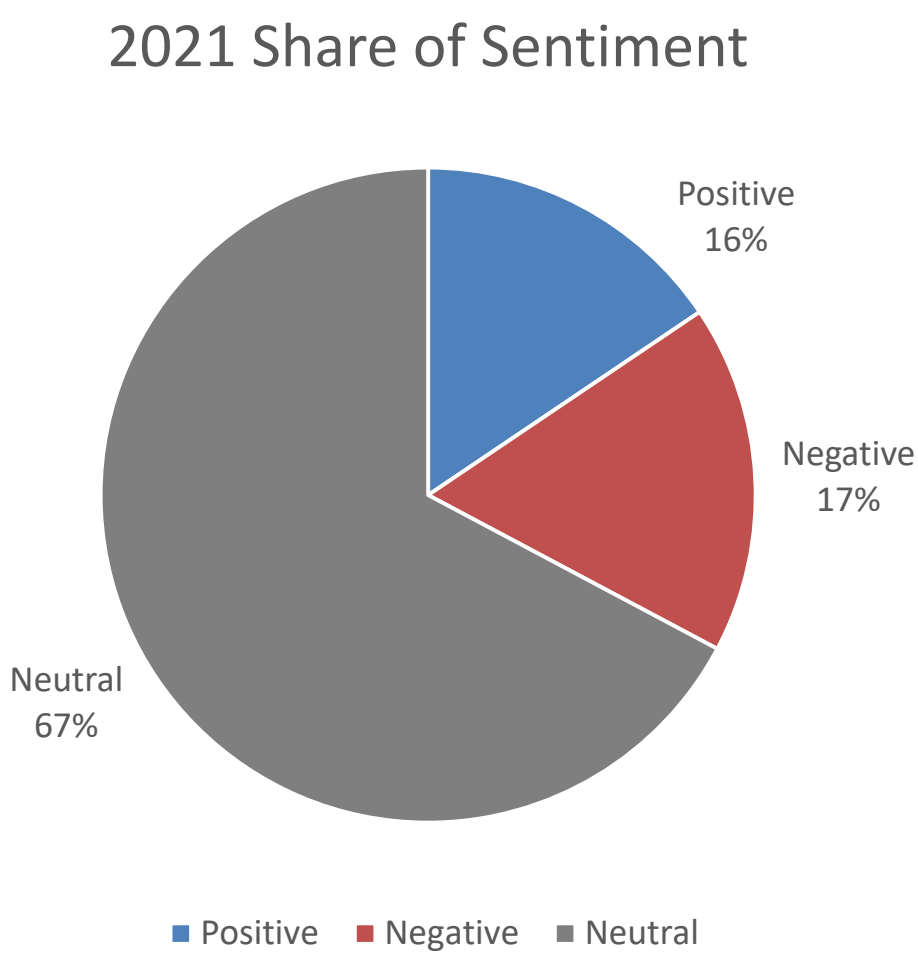
2022 data was collected using a combination of Meltwater and Cision media monitoring tools.

Reporting collected approximately 2,700 stories referencing TCHC in 2022 print, broadcast and online media.



# Media Sentiment Analysis

Analysis found that in comparison to 2021, there were more neutral stories (increase from 67% to 79%) and fewer negative stories. TCHC assesses an increase in neutral coverage, rather than growth in negative coverage, to be an indicator of the organization’s successful efforts to engage proactively in Swansea Mews coverage and provide a balanced perspective on a very difficult situation for the community and TCHC.





# Media Sentiment Analysis

## Breakdown by outlet tier

Top Tier outlets reach audiences +100,000

*Toronto Star, City News, CTV News,*

Mid Tier outlets reach audiences 50-90,000

*Toronto.com, AM900 (Hamilton)*

Low Tier outlets reach audiences under 50,000

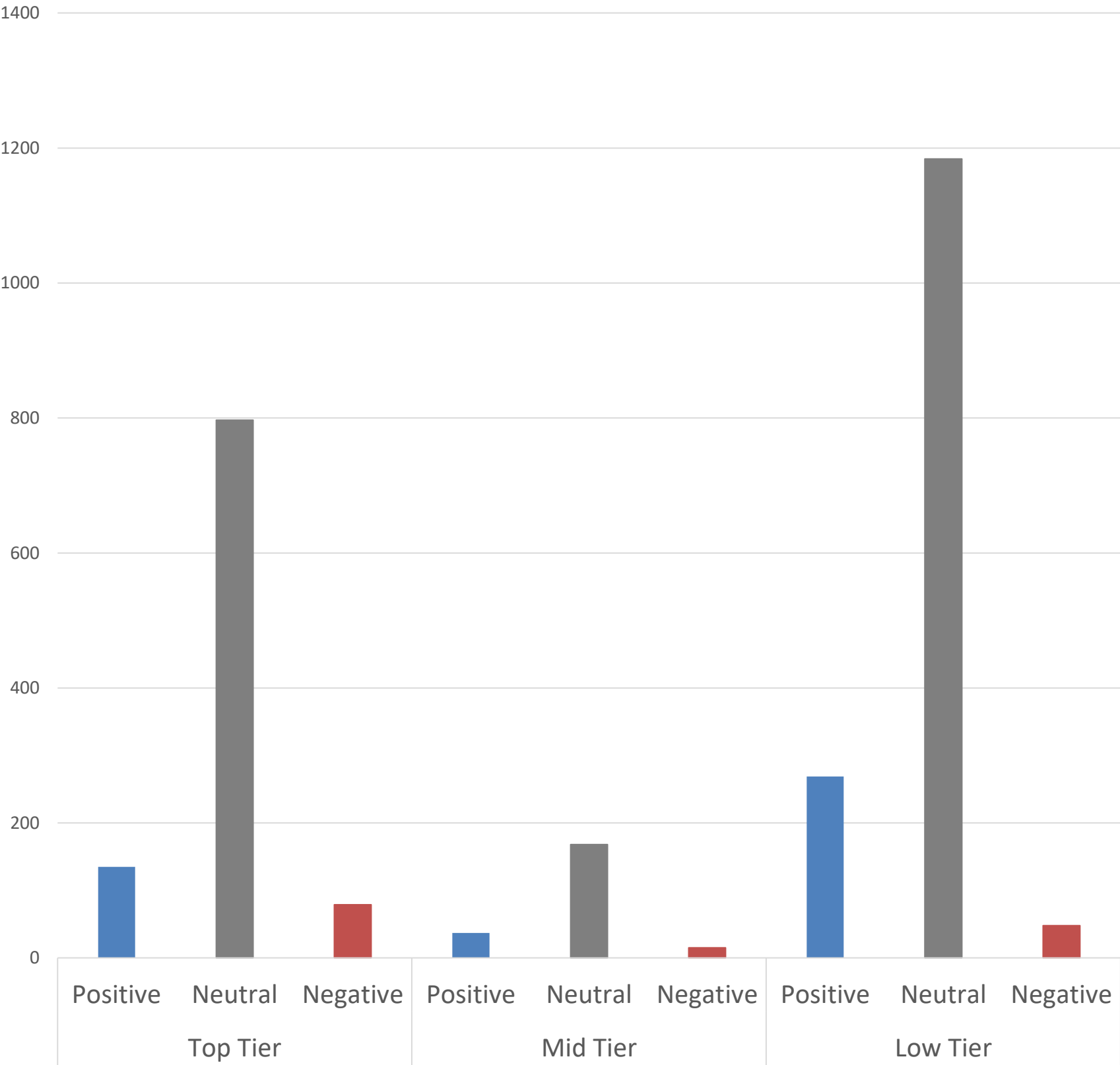
*Beach Metro Community News, Spacing Magazine*

### Top Tier Impact

The greatest number of positive stories come from Low Tier outlets, but positive stories in Top Tier outlets have significantly larger audiences, reaching more readers, cumulatively.

### Swansea Mews

Given the attention of Top Tier outlets on the Swansea Mews crisis, a majority of neutral coverage is an indicator that TCHC was able to maintain balanced coverage as a result of transparent engagement with media.



# Sentiment by Story Category

**Service Excellence & Innovation:** Program related updates, including TCHC’s “Connected for Success” program with Rogers, seniors housing transition, recognition of R PATH Chair.

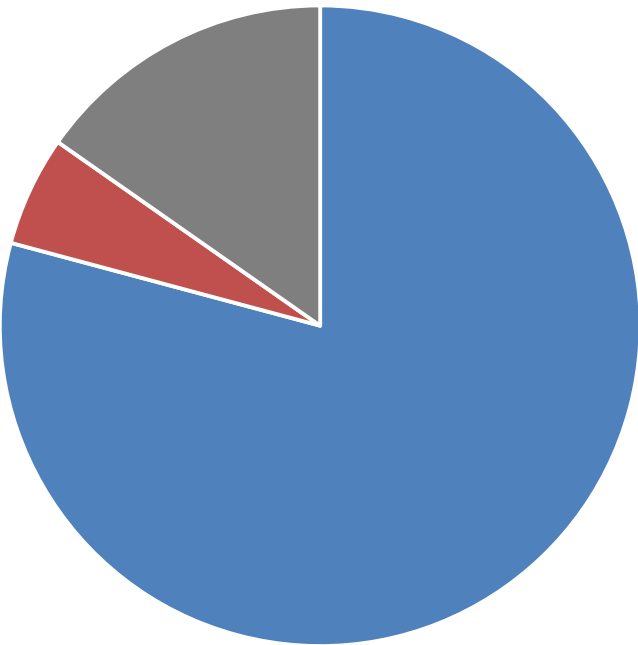
**Health, Wellness and Active Living:** COVID-19 clinics and vaccination were the main driver of these stories.

**Corporate:** Speeding tickets attributed to CSU vehicles responding to emergencies, TCHC’s vaccine rollout.

**Revitalizing Communities and Enhancing Infrastructure:** Rezoning of Regent Park, broad discussion of development in Toronto, revite-driven social programming.

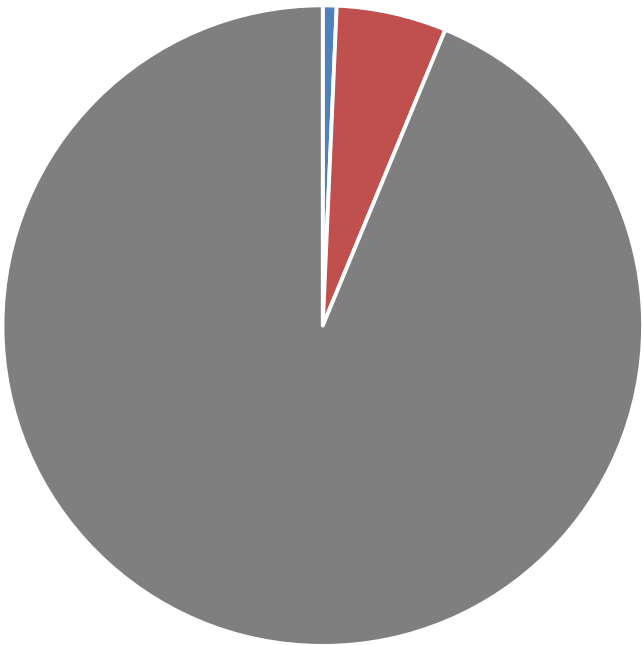
**Sustainability & Climate Change:** TCHC’s Enbridge retrofitting incentive grants receiving grants for building refits.

Service Level Excellence & Innovation



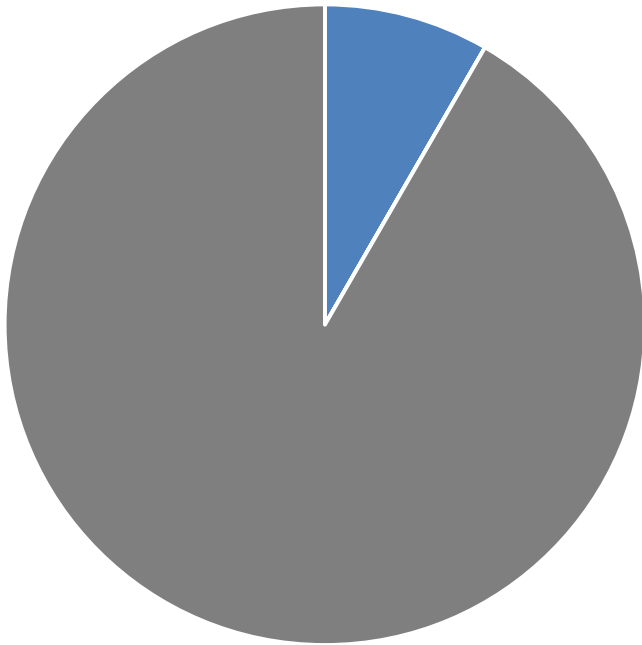
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Health, Wellness & Active Living



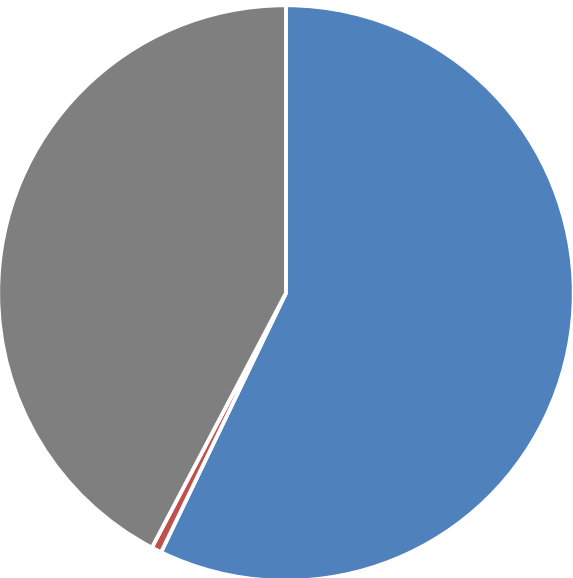
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Corporate



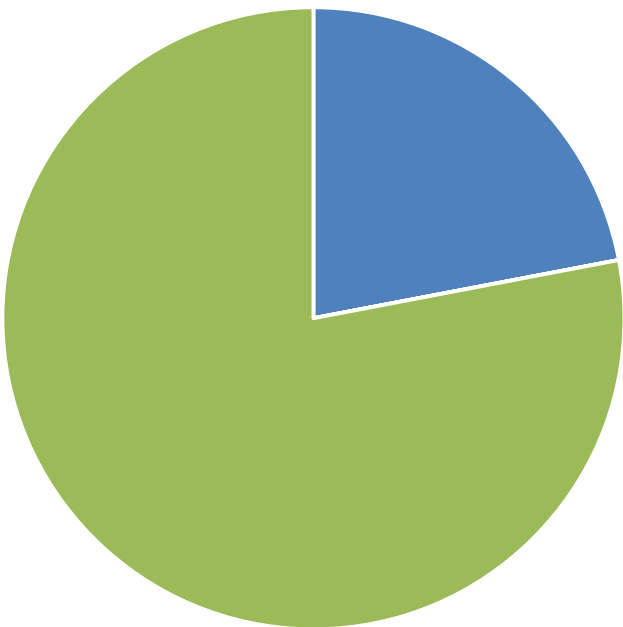
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Revitalizing Communities & Enhancing Infrastructure



■ Positive ■ Negative ■ Neutral

Sustainability & Climate Change



■ Positive ■ Negative ■ Neutral

# Media Deep Dive

## *Regent Park Rezoning*

TCHC provided exclusive access to CBC Toronto in the lead-up to a rezoning application in Regent Park.

The story pulled back the curtain on the Development team's positive intentions in Regent Park, detailing the opportunities that could be realized for residents if the rezoning is approved.


- 30+ pieces of coverage
- Radio, television and online stories
- 10.8 million readers and viewers


Toronto

### 'We need to get it right': Application for final phases of Regent Park revitalization filed with city

[f](#) [t](#) [e](#) [r](#) [in](#)

Rezoning plan includes more density, more affordable housing, new library, community hub

 [Farrah Merali](#) · CBC News · Posted: Apr 15, 2022 5:00 AM EDT | Last Updated: April 15, 2022



Families walk through Toronto's Regent Park neighbourhood. The Toronto Community Housing Corporation is working to complete the final two phases of a decades-long revitalization project in the area. (Evan Mitsui/CBC)



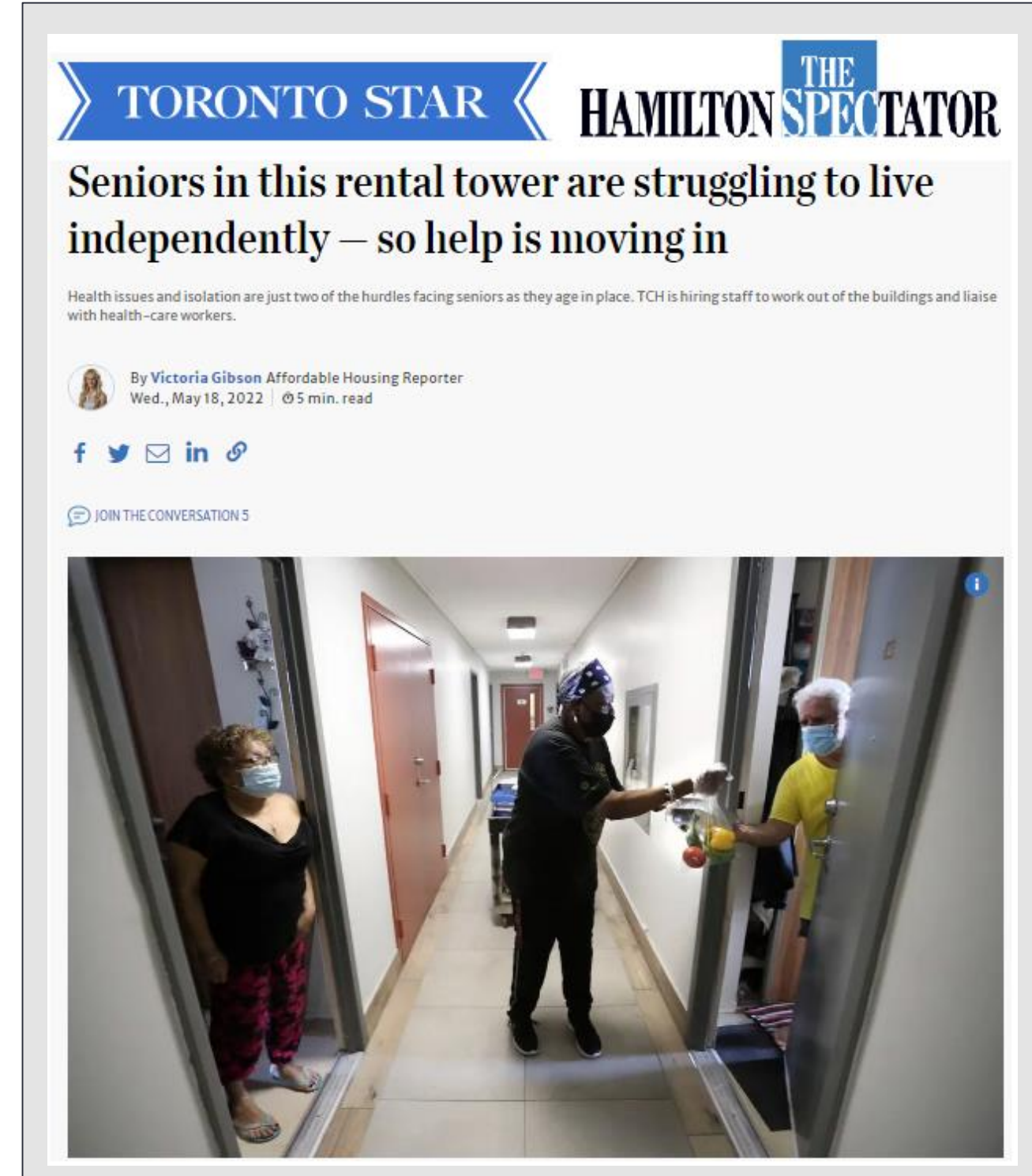
# Media Deep Dive

## *Toronto Seniors Housing Launch*

In the lead-up to the TSHC launch, TCHC offered the *Toronto Star* an inside look at the Integrated Service Model and the challenges facing seniors in a West Region building.

The story was published in both the *Star* and the *Hamilton Spectator*, calling attention to the needs of seniors and showing TCHC's role as part of the solution, delivering on the Tenants First plan.

An estimated 6.5 million readers were reached by the story.

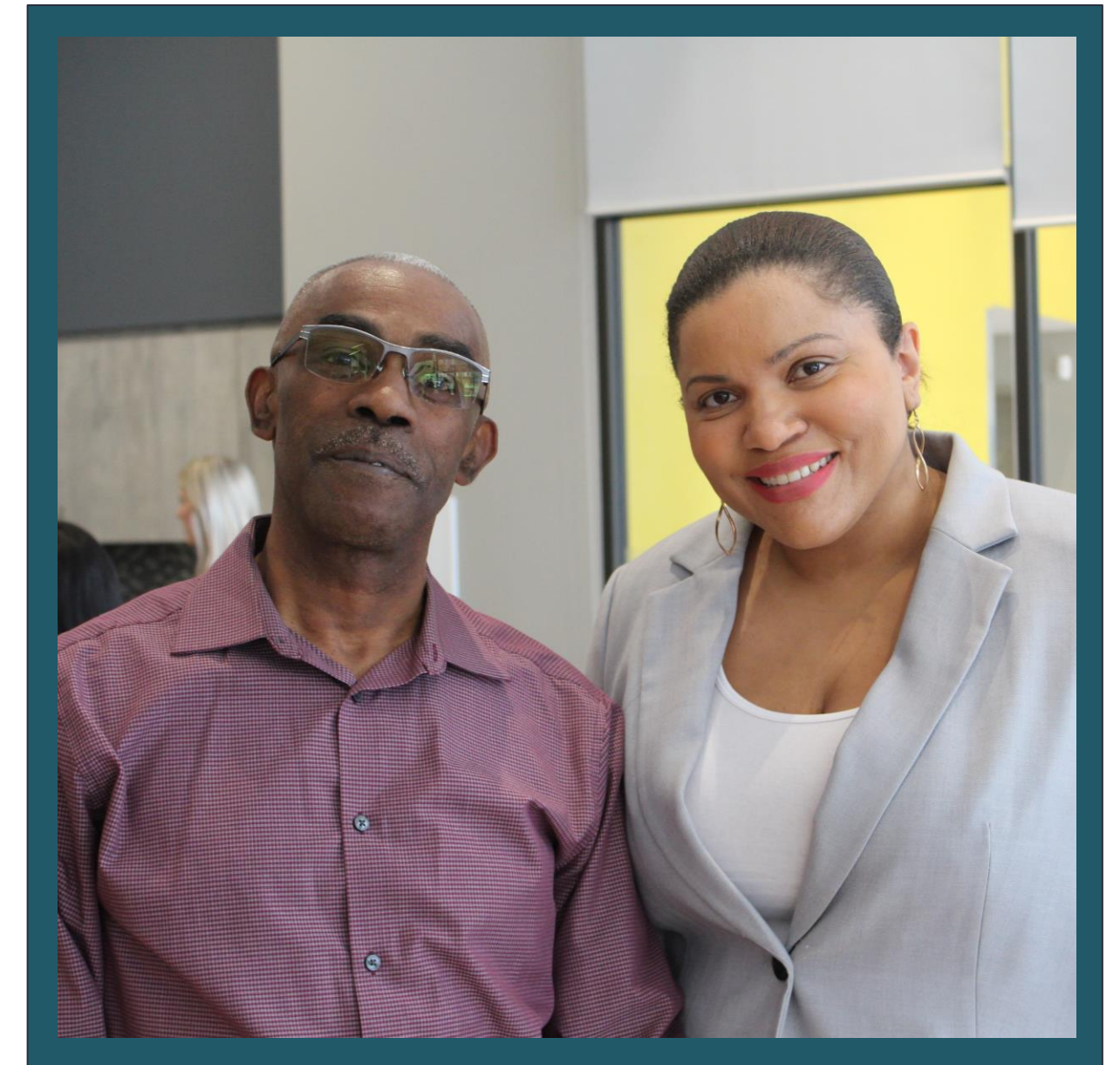




# Employee Engagement

Strategic Communications is using a combination of new and tried and true tactics to engage staff, as well as a closer working relationship with our partners in the People & Culture division.

- All Staff and People Leader emails continue to show their effectiveness at reaching employees
- New motivational employee engagement plan (*Momentum 2023*) to share positive staff stories
- Closer collaboration between People & Culture on their weekly *HR Newsletter*, as well as the launch of new leadership content for People Leaders.
- Return of the Long Service Awards program in Spring 2023, as well as consideration of new employee recognition opportunities.



# 2023 Strategic Communications Strategy

The department will focus on the four main strategy areas below.

## Tenant focus



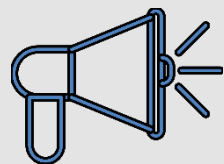
Deliver tenant communications that are service focused, impactful and inspirational.

## Digital first



Continue to engage tenants and business units to develop and implement user-friendly and future ready digital channels.

## Active storytelling



Tell our story to the public, finding examples of TCHC in action and elevating them. This includes People and Culture campaigns to attract new talent.

## Celebrating staff



Highlight the goodness and ability of TCHC staff, because when people feel good, they produce good results.



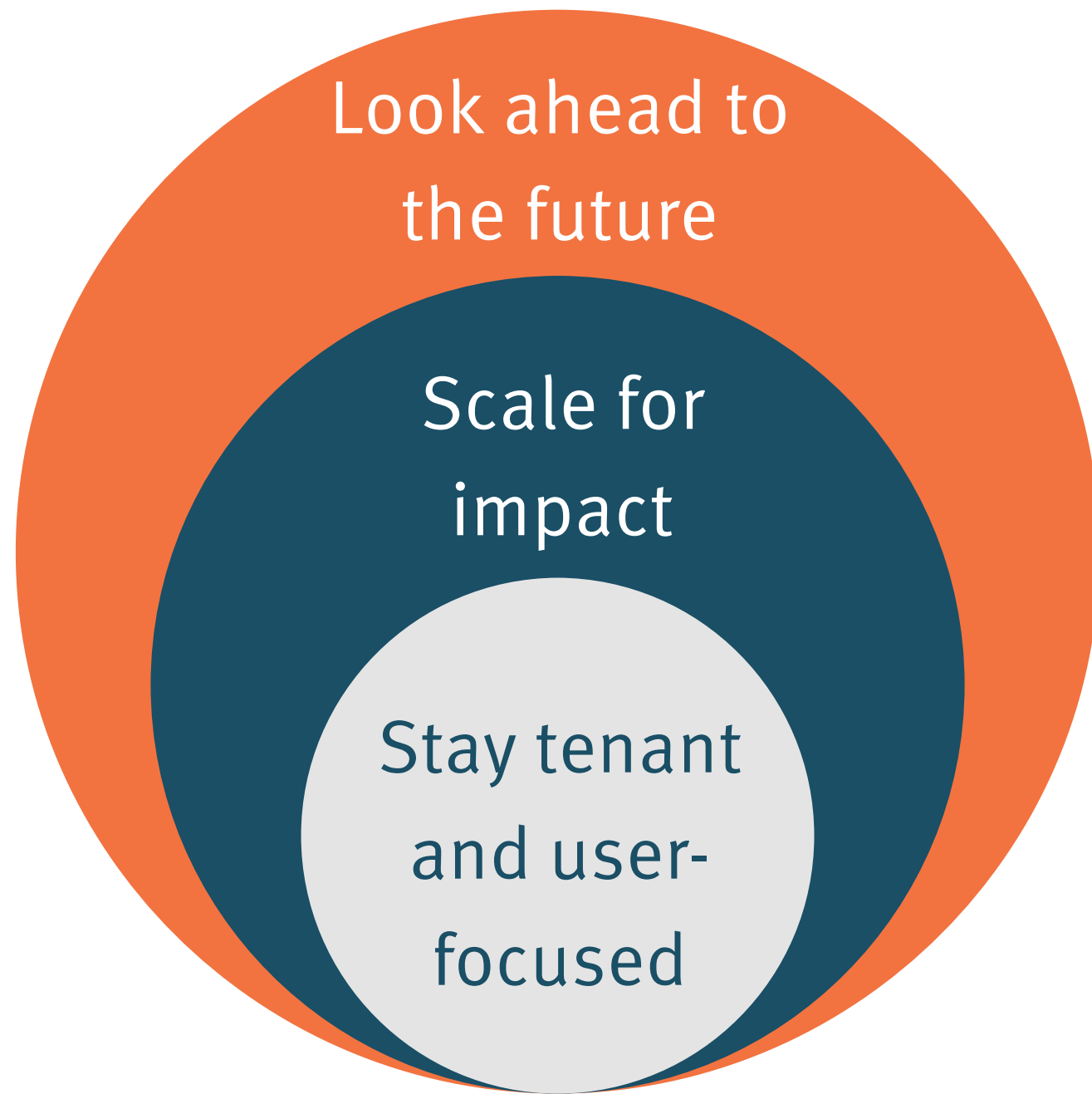


# Tenant Focused Communications

In 2023, we will focus on the following strategies:

- Deliver timely, relevant and informative tenant communications that improve service delivery
- Segment and customize communications for specific tenant audiences to improve effectiveness and reach business goals.
- Continue to improve and extend tenant communication channels (digital, print and in-building).
- Raise awareness about the ways that TCHC partners with tenants and organizations to deliver wraparound services.
- Develop a series of targeted multi-channel campaigns to deliver impactful messages supporting overall tenant education or engagement.

# Digital Strategy



**Determine what tenants and users want from us:** Identify areas where technology will make a service difference and engage users in design and feedback.

**Scale existing channels to be more impactful:** Now that we have established new digital channels, how do we ensure their continued success and scale to new use cases.

**Look ahead to the future:** Plan for the future by upskilling the current team, phasing new platform development based on foreseeable need and selecting solutions that allow for flexibility.



# Active storytelling in 2023

Media strategy to drive positive, constructive coverage for TCHC

## Pitching Great Stories

Turn interesting story leads into effective media pitches, supporting subject matter experts with media preparation to confidently tell TCHC's story and show the positive community impact.

## Leveraging Strategic Partnerships

Coordinate with corporate and community partners to create positive news stories that show TCHC in action, collaborating with other agencies and organizations.

## Strengthening Media Relationships

Media relationships based on trust and transparency lead to better outcomes for TCHC, both in responding to incoming requests and pitching story ideas.





# Calm Under Pressure

Meeting reputational risk and issues with transparency and adaptability

2023 saw significant gains in the team's ability to respond well under pressure.

These gains came from improving our processes and plans, as well as real-world learnings from the response to Swansea Mews, as well the Ontario Trillium Benefit.

Despite our preparation, these situations can be unpredictable and there is always more to learn. The team continues to build its practice and evolve our response with new experiences.

# CABR Content Strategy

Strategic Communications has a defined strategy for seeking out stories that highlight TCHC staff in action to deliver on the CABR plan.

In 2023, the team has already delivered a number of stories, including:

- ▶ **TCHC's 2022 CABR Strategy Year in Review**  
Supported a full-day video shoot and script writing to Produce multiple pieces of video content
- ▶ **Supported The Centre team in developing staff messages in response to world events**  
As a company-wide priority, we must respond to incidents of racism in the world around us, putting them into context with our commitment to the CABR Strategy
- ▶ **Support the roll-out of CABR Action Plan deliverables**  
Strategic Communications provided support to promote multiple programs, including Black History Month events and the CSU Cadets



**Confronting Anti-Black Racism Strategy:  
2022 Year in Review**



# Celebrating staff

## Momentum 2023 Campaign

- In 2023, Strategic Communications launched a new concept for employee communications: **Momentum 2023**.
- The campaign takes control of the story we tell about ourselves, celebrating achievements and showcasing potential.
- Momentum uses anecdotes and shout-outs from across the employee community to show TCHC's goodness and potential, building our momentum as we head into TCHC's next twenty years.
- Tactically, the campaign is a thematic device that is used in ELT speaking remarks, All Staff emails and it became the design theme for the renewed Long Service Awards this past Spring.



In last month's Tenant Services Committee, I was happy to deliver some incredible news about our vacancy rates.

In January 2023, the Operations team made TCHC history by reaching a vacancy rate of 1.67%, a level of efficiency and effectiveness that we have only reached once before. That achievement is enough to make all of us proud, but you didn't stop there.

Two months later, our vacancy rate remains below 2%. We've been able to get to this point because the Operations team has coordinated closely from top to bottom, carefully managing our vacancies, turning over vacant units quickly and seamlessly guiding new tenants through the process to sign their lease. By working together, we are sustaining our momentum, keeping the numbers down and showing an unbroken streak of consistency that is another first in our history.

I'm not the only one that sees this achievement, either. John Campbell, Board Director and Chair of the Tenant Services Committee had this to say when we asked him for his reaction to your achievement:

*"We were all very pleased to learn that TCHC's vacancy rate has dipped below 2%. Staff have obviously worked very hard to fill unoccupied units and assist people to meet their housing needs. We are excited for those who have new homes and grateful to the staff who made this happen."*

- John Campbell





# Celebrating Staff Long Service Awards

In Spring 2023, TCHC recognized hundreds of staff who reached 15 to 40 years of service between 2019 and 2022.

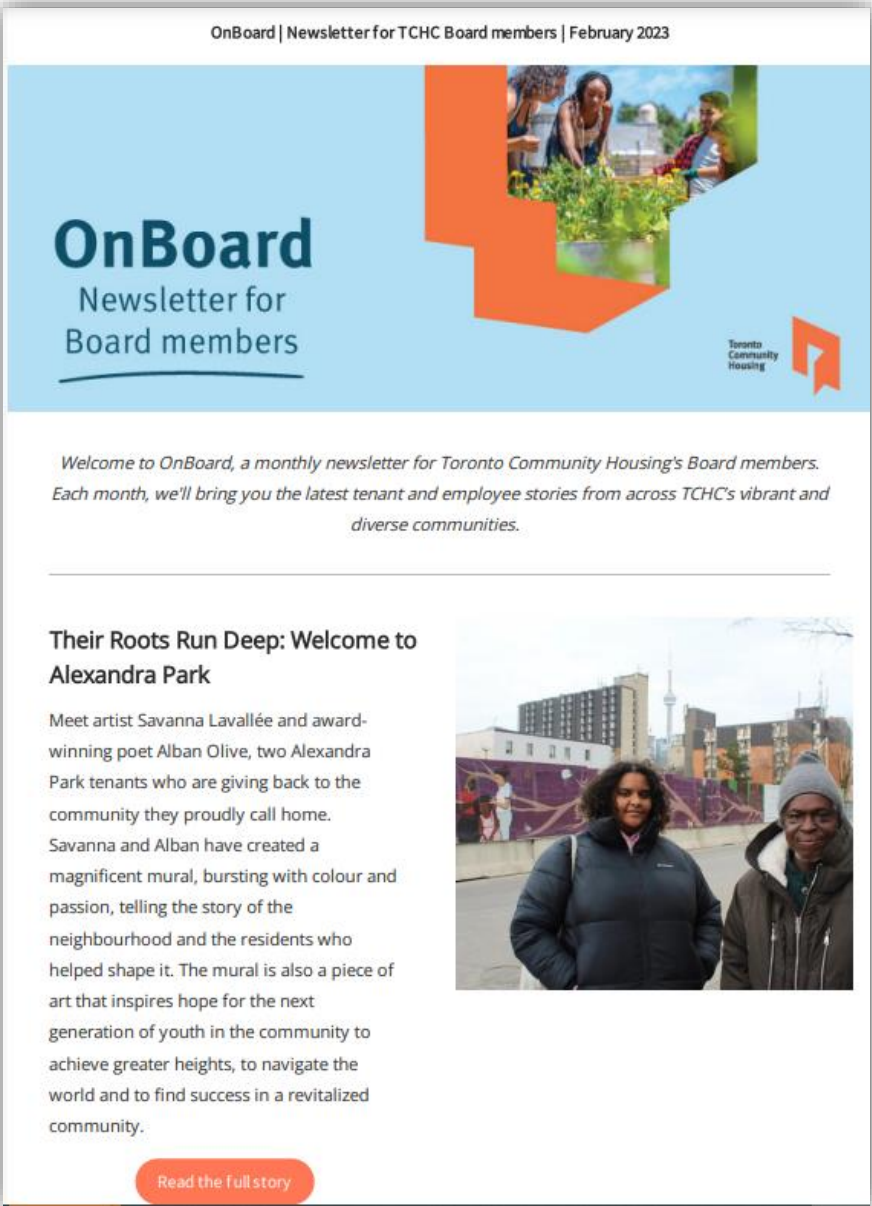
2023 recipients will be celebrated in Fall 2023.



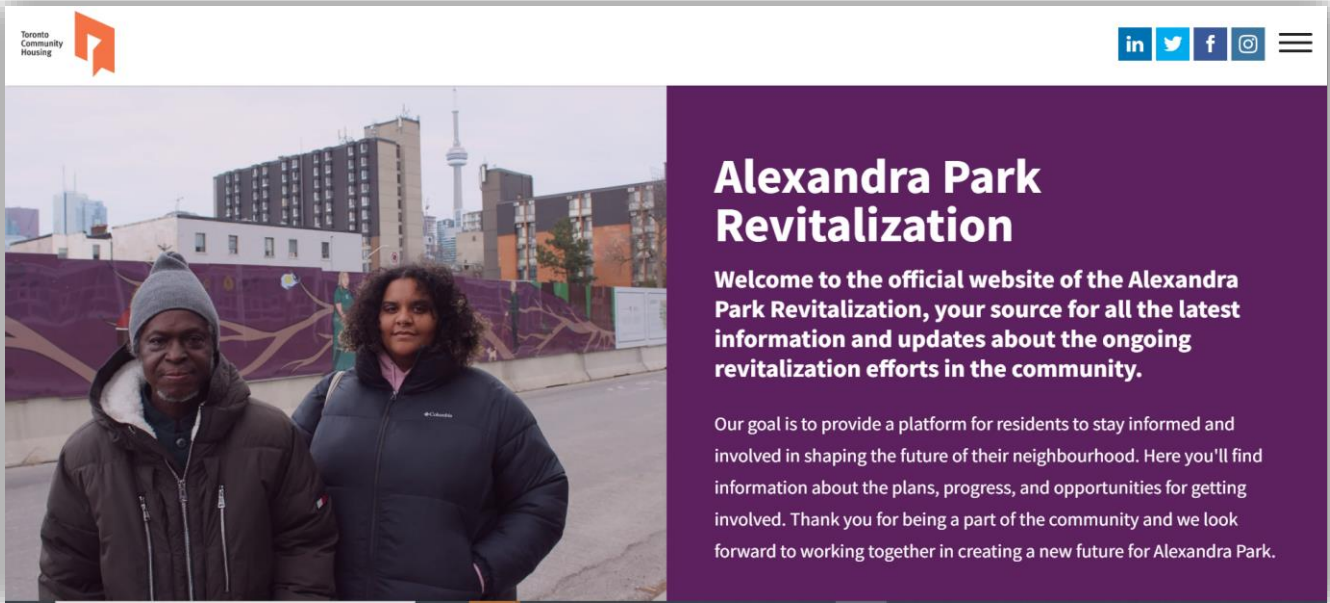


# Sneak Peak for 2023

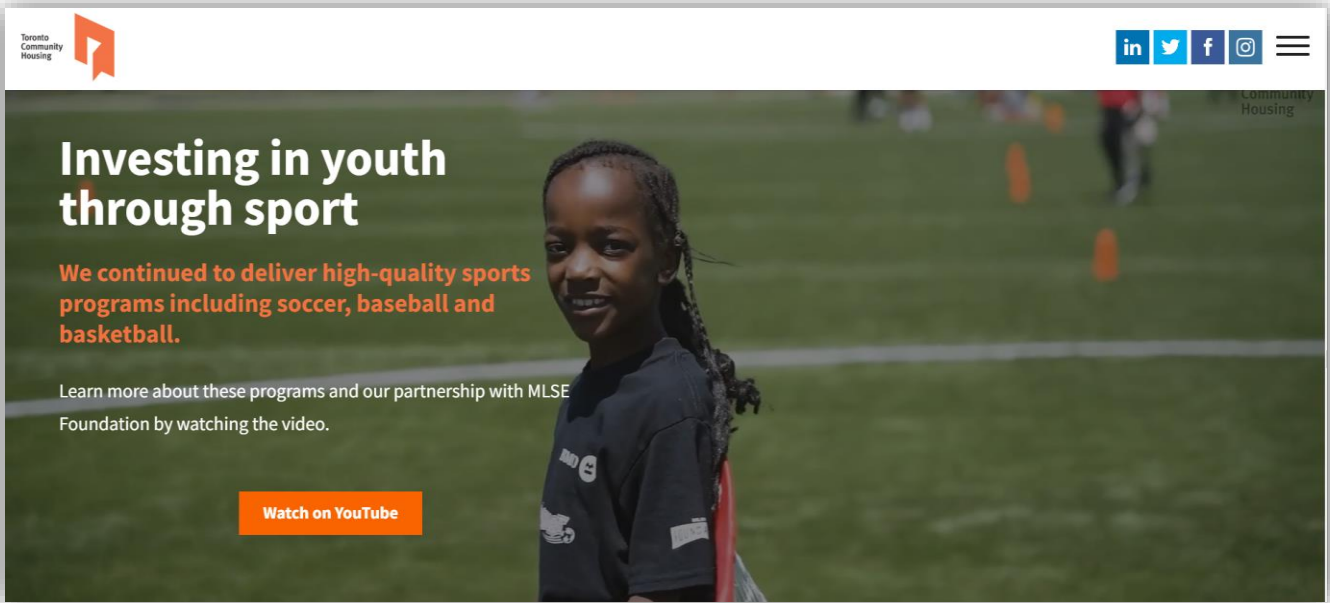
Here are a few new communications that have launched in 2023.



OnBoard is a new e-newsletter for members of the Board of Directors



Alexandra Park Revitalization Microsite



2022 Digital Annual Report Microsite



2022 Annual Report – Print Version



**Thank you to all the individuals, employees and partners that generously shared their stories with us this past year. You bring life and inspiration to the TCHC community.**

**Strategic Communications 2023**

