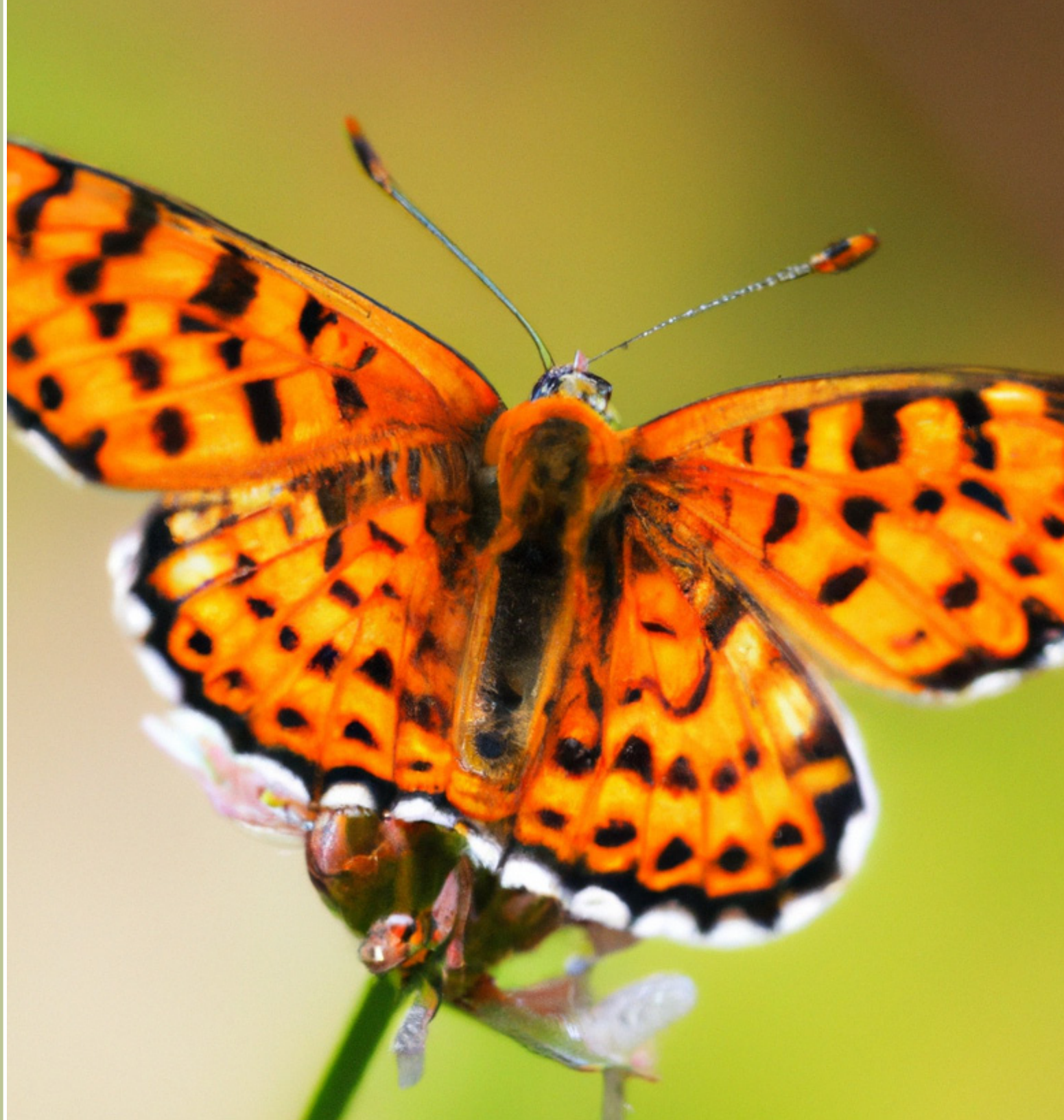


Bereaved
Families
of Ontario
- Toronto

2022
Annual
Report



Bereaved Families of Ontario Toronto 2022 Annual Report

BFO-Toronto is the founding affiliate of Bereaved Families of Ontario, a provincial charitable organization, established in 1978 to support the grief a person, family, or group experiences from the death of a loved one. Now one of 11 affiliates, BFO-Toronto offers support within the city of Toronto.

Our Vision

Create a community of support in the city of Toronto where no citizen is alone in their grief.

Our Mission

Inspire hope and healing for those in grief through peer-to-peer support.



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A message from our Chair and Executive Director

Over the course of 2022, we saw the global pandemic continue and shift to a “new normal.” However, on-going isolation and complicated grief continued for Torontonians. The need for BFO-Toronto to offer a variety of support was crucial to the grieving process for the over 2,500 group participants served this past year. Our investment in the capacity of our staff and volunteers continued to pay off as we successfully responded to a 20% increase in demand. Our volunteers and staff completed 330 one-to-ones, over 900 intakes and offered over 2,000 hours of support through programming, events and opportunities to connect with one another.

This past year our volunteer community stayed strong and continued to grow through the delivery of 2 volunteer training sessions. Volunteers continued to meet the needs of our community members with empathy, patience, grace, kindness and dedication offering our core programming as well as specialized events and groups. They gave their hearts and time to ensure that those grieving found community and understanding when they needed it most. For this and so much more we are continually impressed with our volunteer community and are proud to work alongside them. What they continue to achieve is awe-inspiring under continued uncertainty and stressful times.

We know that for many, their connection with BFO Toronto leads to lifelong friendships and support networks and we continued to build community by coming together and to honour our loved ones virtually and in person. In 2022, we held our first Garden Party, continued with our Butterflies of Hope and Trees of Light ceremonies. We also held our second annual 5K Memorial Walk (in partnership with BFO-Halton/Peel) which raised over \$50,000.

We are optimistic that in adjusting to our “new normal” in 2023 we are well positioned to move ahead with some important planning, stabilization and growth. Along with continued and growing in-person support and events we anticipate an increased focus on partnerships and fundraising. We are confident that we are entering this new phase as an even stronger, more effective organization. We owe this to our staff, volunteers and our generous donors. We are truly grateful to have the opportunity to continue to thrive together. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Allan Cole

Allan Cole
Chair, Board of Directors

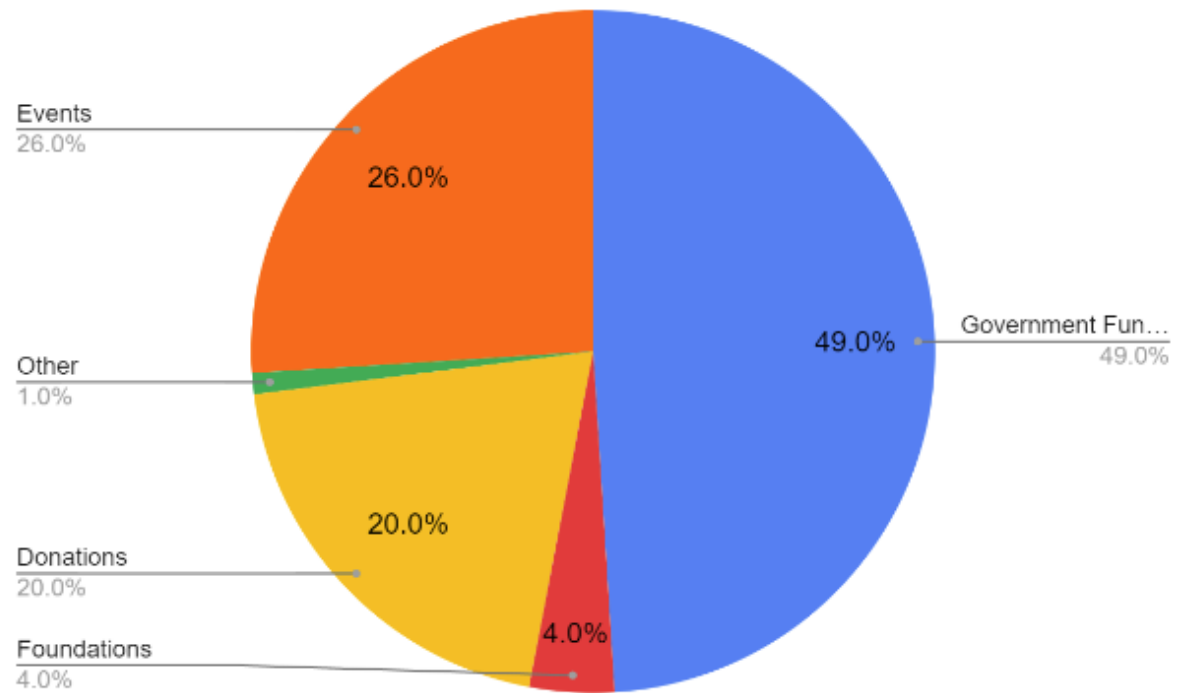
Sarah Garcia-Heller

Sarah Garcia-Heller
Executive Director



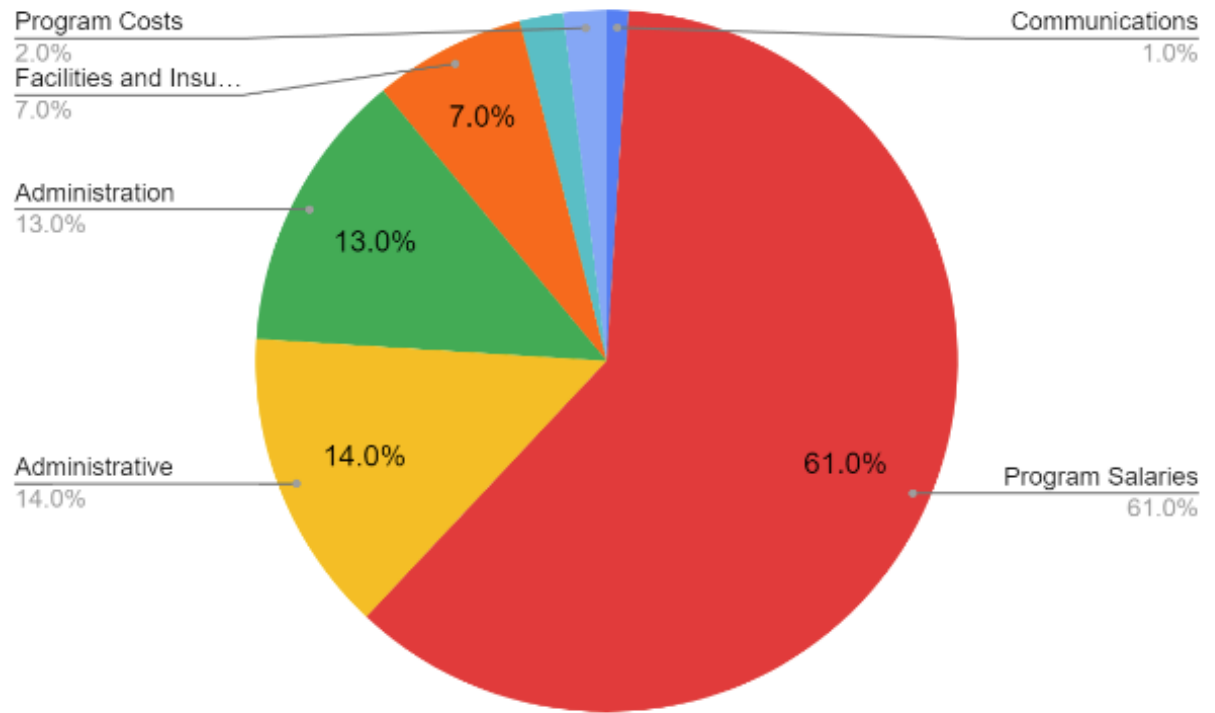
2022 Financial Report

BFO Toronto was successful in maintaining revenue levels in 2022. We continued to have generous support from both corporate donors and individuals. We also received support from the provincial and municipal governments. Our events were a success and contributed more than a quarter of our revenue. Overall, the revenue is well-balanced and healthy providing stability and a good financial foundation for programs.



Expenditures: \$299,756

BFO Toronto had the support of several students and staff (permanent, contract and interim) over 2022 to help to meet the on-going demand for programming and administrative support. The last year at the new office has allowed for partnerships and collaboration that have reduced our overall expenses on facilities and space, and we expect small incremental increases over the course of our lease.



2022 Impact

BFO Toronto's reach and the need for its services continued to grow this past year. Between the end of 2021 and the end of 2022, enquiries for support had grown by 43% to over 1,400. While the need for our services was apparent we met it by expanding our services. The number of support groups offered grew by 16% and the hours of individual support provided increased as well.

YEAR	2020	2021	2022	Growth from 2020 to 2022
Number of Enquiries for Support	847	1024	1466	43%%
Hours of Individual Support	335	544	668	22%%
Number of Support Groups Held	197	270	313	16%
Number of Active Facilitators (within last 12 months)	87	112	119	6%



Access to Service

As we continue to consult with our client stakeholders there is still an overwhelming need and request for virtual support, eliminating many of the barriers that Torontonians face in accessing most programming (financial restrictions, hours that groups are offered, general safety concerns around travelling in the evening, etc). While remote groups have their purpose and the feedback has been positive, we did also return to running in-person groups and opportunities to gather. This received positive feedback and in-person groups continue to grow. Change of

venue to a more central location and closer to public transportation has proved to be a good decision that ensures more equitable access to programming. If we are to support all Torontonians, we need to ensure that every resident can access our services. And, we must offer opportunities to grieve and connect that align with their own language, experience and interest. This vision was central to our program planning throughout 2021 and was able to be carried out in 2022 with the support of staff, volunteers and partner agencies.

Support Groups

We continued to expand our support group and one-to-one offerings in 2022. They include:

Young adult - anyone between 18 to 29 who has experienced a life changing loss.

Spousal/partner loss under 55 - anyone who has lost a partner and is under 55.

Spousal/partner loss over 55 - anyone who has lost a partner and is over 55.

Child loss - a parent or parents who have lost a child.

Friend & family loss - anyone 30 or older who has experienced a life changing loss of either friend or family.

South Asian group - anyone who identifies as South Asian who has experienced a life changing loss.

Hindi/Urdu Group - anyone who has experienced a life changing loss and would like to participate in Hindi or Urdu.

IDD- adults with intellectual or developmental disability grieving the death of a loved one

Special Interest

Many of our participants wish to continue exploring their grief after attending an initial support group. In response to this, we ran writing workshops, yoga sessions and a bookclub. These opportunities to continue exploring their grief journey through alternative modalities ensured that participants had alternate tools to process and express their grief. This programming was well received by all and will continue as a part of our program offerings in between groups.



2022 Events



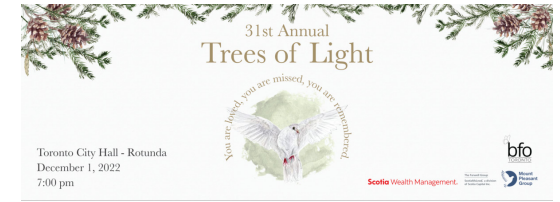
Butterflies of Hope

The previous year was our inaugural year for the Butterflies of Hope event (previously our butterfly release). In the fall of 2022 we were able to continue building on our prior success and offer an online event. Our virtual event consisted of original performance pieces from members of our community. We were able to come together as a group to continue this meaningful tradition and ensure that our loved ones were honoured both with a virtual page as well as the opportunity to provide a healthy habitat to see our butterflies flourish with a package with wildflower seed paper to plant.



BFO Toronto 5K Memorial Walk and Silent Auction

This was the third annual Memorial Walk and silent auction but the first time partnering with the Centre for Grief and Healing (BFO Halton-Peel) combining CFGH's Walk to Remember and BFO-Toronto 5K Memorial Walk. The BFO 5K Memorial Walk was held on October 15th at Sir Casimir Gzowski Park. Approximately 50 community members attended the event, despite the weather conditions. Together, we raised over \$50,000 to support our on-going efforts to provide much needed peer based grief support to others.



Trees of Light

2022 marked our 31st Annual Trees of Light and we were able to return to the City Hall rotunda once again. Being able to gather again was truly special and we were thrilled to welcome back past and newer BFO-T community members and sponsors. The evening was filled with music, spoken word performances, poetry, candle lighting and the unveiling of our 2022 Tree of life and light. We were fortunate to raise \$20,000 from this meaningful event. Trees remained up into the first week of January and visited several times by family members and friends who were touched to find their loved ones tags.



Thank you to our Financial Supporters

BFO Toronto's vision is to create a community of support so no Torontonian is alone in their grief. To move towards this we need to provide a diversity of programs that are free of charge and accessible to all residents. This would not be possible without the support we received from foundations, government, corporations and generous individuals. We thank every one of them.

Platinum (Over \$20,000)

Darren Farwell and the Farwell Group-
Scotia Wealth Management

Ontario Trillium Foundation



City of Toronto



Gold (\$5,000-\$20,000)

Bereaved Families of Ontario



Government of Canada



Mattamy Homes Limited



Cormark Securities Inc.



TD Securities



Canaccord Genuity



Silver (\$1,000-\$5,000)

Allan Cole

Jay Branton and Dignity Memorial



Leah Boyd

Barbara Gill-Lazroe

BMO Nesbitt Burns



Catherine Ince

E. Ann Westlake

Evergreen Crematorium



F2 Integrated Solutions Inc.

Imelda Tan

Jane Smart

Lydia Novak

Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries 

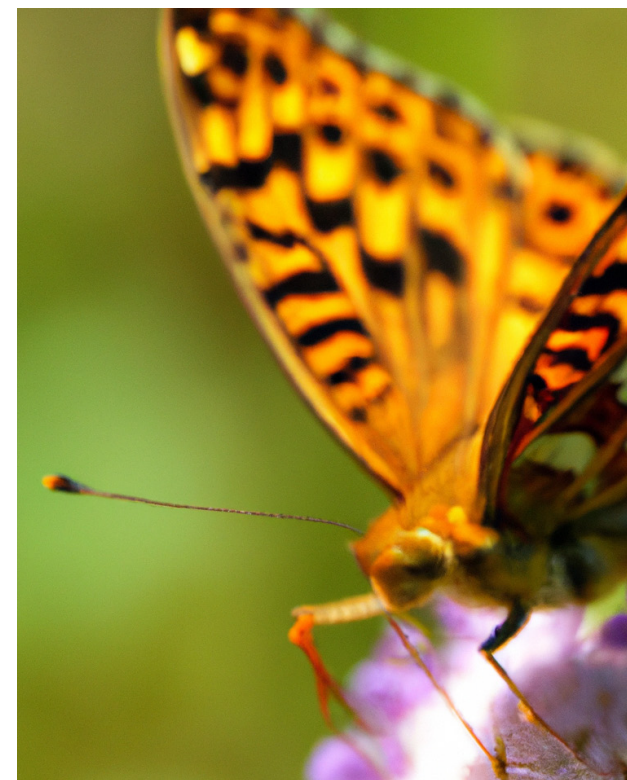
Ralph Hicks

Thorek/Scott and Partners 

U-Neek General Contracting Co. Ltd.

Bronze (Under \$1,000)

Every dollar donated contributes to the work we do. We are fortunate that there are too many individual donors to be named here. We thank you all!



Thank you to our 2022 Staff Students and Volunteers

Thank you to our staff and students for
their tireless work and dedication



STAFF AND STUDENTS:

Meredith Cochrane
Jane Smart
Carissa Parsons
Katrina Buchanan
Antonietta Guttierrez
Minahail Hanif
Evan Wong
Sophia Yang
Eve Kasakevich
Tamara Sandor
Kennedy Byron
Chadimha O
Patrick Lopez

VOLUNTEERS:

Andrew Chunoo
Amy Manusov
Arielle Sugarman
Barb Gill-Lazroe
Barbara Thompson
Christine Raissis
Clara Ho
Dana Dodge
Donald Eckler
Edel Buggy
Gilda Ackler Sefton
Grace Duong
Hana Snir
Heather Medhurst
Heather Thompson
Janet Shacter
Jason Smith
Jenn Soutar

Judith McCaffery
Judy Fantham
Judy Kane
Kelly Broadhurst
Laura Foran
Larry Konyu
Laura Durant
Laurie Taniguchi
Lesley Parrott
Mary Muir
Michael Chiu
Michael Loader
Monica Vera
Nancy Shortell
Nikita Dhawan
Nathalie-Roze Fischer
Patrick de Belen
Peggy Shkuda
Peggy-Gail DeHal Gunraj

Rachelle Allen
Ryan Kram
Sany Guest
Sanjay Yagnik
Tyler Mather
Qaid Silk
Allan Cole
Benjamin Thorek
Aimee Bruner
Alyson Roberts
Catherine Ince
John Bacon
Anjali Aggerwal
Isabel McKechnie
Lori Ives-Baine
Margot Marcus
Rena Arshinoff
Asma Tareen
Heather Hewitt



What's in store for 2023

In 2022 we emerged as a stronger, more resilient organization with wider reach thanks to the technology employed to deliver groups and the work of our volunteers and staff to begin offering services and events in

Growing our Team

This year we are looking forward to growing our staff to meet the needs of the organization and our community. Through the support of different grants we have been able to hire a special projects coordinator, fundraising consultant, communications lead and intake coordinator. We have continued working with our bookkeeper who is essential to supporting us in our goals. As we move towards growth systems we also have been able to hire staff to support a special data project and look forward to growing the team with an outreach worker in the fall. We are looking forward to being able to support staff in their professional growth through internal and external opportunities.

Working in Partnership

At BFO Toronto we value the partnerships created and plan to develop and grow meaningful partnerships in 2023. These partnerships help us create awareness of our service, deliver higher quality programs, and ensure that our clients can access the services they need. We continue to leverage our local partners to support us in promotion of our services and as consultants to ensure that we are providing relevant programming that meet the needs of our community. We plan to grow from 20 to 25 secured partnerships in 2023. Being part of the Citywide Commons has allowed partnerships to flourish as we are working closely with the 5 other social service organizations to ensure that we are receiving referrals to our programs and we are helping group participants access continued and relevant support. In 2023 there is opportunity for cross-organization planning for staff training and program delivery.

person again. While the overarching themes for 2022 were resilience and recovery, our focus for 2023 are stability and growth.

Building our Volunteer Capacity

In 2022 we reached our target goal of new volunteers to add to our community of support. We know that at times the role of volunteer facilitator can be an enriching but challenging experience and are looking forward to recruitment and training of at least 35 new volunteers in 2023. We are focussing on recruitment of volunteers with a variety of lived experiences and skills so that our volunteer base can accurately reflect those that are seeking our services. It is our goal to be able to continue to offer grief groups and one to one support in different languages and support those who are facing systemic barriers that may complicate their grief further.



Volunteer Opportunities

Participants and funders often comment that BFO Toronto has an incredible impact, particularly for an organization of its size. The secret behind this is our volunteers. BFO Toronto has a large group of committed volunteers who find satisfaction from the contributions they

make, and community in the volunteers they meet. While the role of volunteer facilitator is often the first that comes to mind, it isn't our only opportunity! We are always looking for new and enthusiastic volunteers and would love to hear from you.

Board Members

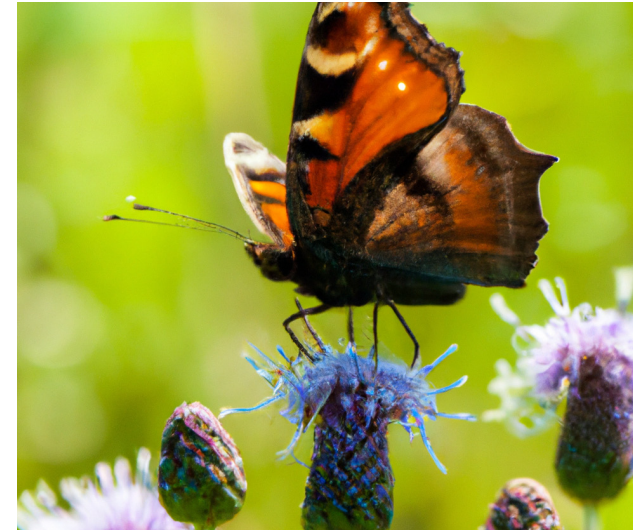
BFO Toronto has a working board. It is made up of people with a variety of professional skills and personal experiences who roll up their sleeves and help take fundraising, events, and programs forward. The board meets monthly with committees working in the interim. We are often looking for new members so if this interests you, please watch the newsletter for opportunities.

Volunteer Facilitators

Peer volunteer facilitators participate in a 25-hour training program that provides information on grief, mental health and self care, as well as exercises to develop skills in active listening, conflict management, and communication. Our trained facilitators provide one-to-one support and group facilitation. We are particularly interested in hearing from you if you have culturally specific experience or can communicate in another language. This helps us to ensure we can serve all Torontonians.

Event Volunteers

Our three flagship events allow over 500 people to honour their loved ones. This year they are targeted to raise over \$100,000, allowing us to deliver our services free of charge. There is always a team of volunteers behind these events to make them a success! Get in touch to find out more about everything from finding sponsors to event planning to mailing out packages.



Support BFO Toronto

BFO Toronto is able to provide its service free of charge in large part due to financial support that comes from our community.

\$50 will send an individual to a group support session.

\$100 will fund an online community event.

\$350 will pay for a support group session for all attendees.

\$1,000 will train a volunteer facilitator.

One-time donations can be made anytime on our website or by phoning the office. Please consider setting up a monthly donation as this can help us plan for the year ahead. Some workplaces also have matching donation programs where they will match a monthly

or one-time donation for your chosen cause. We hope you will consider donating if you are able. However a cash donation or purchase of a butterfly or dove are not the only ways to support us financially.

Participate in our 5K Memorial

Participate on your own or start a team in memory of your loved one. It is a fun day out and you can fundraise through friends, family or coworkers. This has the added bonus of letting more people know about BFO Toronto!

Introduce Us!

BFO Toronto is keen to build corporate support. This might be through donations, sponsorships or partnerships. If you work for, or have a connection with a company that you think might be interested, please consider making an introduction. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Sarah Garcia-Heller

Donations In-Kind

BFO Toronto welcomes donations that we can use either as prizes at events or as a part of our silent auction. This could be a gift card from a favourite local business, a product that has been purchased or procured through a workplace, or a service that can be donated.

Sharing Our Impact

"I'm very grateful for the group support I have received from BFO. It is such a valuable service."

"It really helped me to hear from others around my age going through similar things as me. Hearing their stories and getting to complain about the same things together was very cathartic and helped me feel less like I was alone going through this terrible time."

"It was a blessing to have my grief held in a supportive setting, and to be a part of others' healing journeys as well."

"I feel that we have been helping each other get through some hard times. The leaders made it possible for us to share our stories and set important boundaries to prevent conflict."

"My experience was invaluable. It has helped me cope and helped me create a support system by meeting others who are going through loss. Really appreciated the group being in person as it really helps to make connections."

"Invaluable. I'm grateful this service exists and once I am ready, I would definitely give more thought to becoming a facilitator myself. Our group still keeps in touch and meets every once in a while."

