

HERITAGE TORONTO

Annual Report 2020



LITTLE JAMAICA

ALLEN ROAD

TTC

Heritage Toronto

Heritage Toronto is a charity and agency of the City of Toronto that celebrates our city's rich heritage and the diverse stories of its people, places, and events. Through our programs, including tours, plaques, State of Heritage Report, and online exhibits, we engage the public to reflect on the past—both to make sense of our present and to inform our future.

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Councillor Paula Fletcher
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Mnawaate Gordon-Corbiere, *Indigenous Content Coordinator*
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Amanda LeClair, *Operations Coordinator*
Natalie Lem, *Manager, Community Engagement*
Candice McCavitt, *Manager, Development*
Kristen McLaughlin, *Plaques Coordinator*

COVER

[Eglinton West: Little Jamaica](#), an online exploration of a cultural hub.



Message from Executive Director & Board Chair

The realities Heritage Toronto faced during 2020 could not have been foreseen by any of us. The challenges experienced were momentous, testing our best laid plans. We cancelled all in-person programs to ensure the health and safety of our supporters. Although the right decision to make, it had a huge impact on our charity which lost over a quarter of a million dollars in self-generated revenue and a significant portion of its staff.

Yet, the story of 2020 is not about perseverance or even resilience, it is one of unexpected success. With the commitment of City Council, sponsors and donors to keep our charity sustainable, we posted a year-end balanced budget.

The strength of our Plaques program continued, with 51 new commemorative plaques produced, including our first curated plaque on Chief Wabakinine. We prioritized our commitment to the Emerging Historians program and worked with 19 young people throughout the year.

We leapt into online programming, developing Heritage at Home, a new series which used different formats ranging from live streaming, self-guided tours, and registered online events, to ensure continued public engagement with the city's heritage.

In developing this digital program, Heritage Toronto profiled new stories that reflect the diversity of Toronto's heritage and recent lived



experiences, and those that provide historical context to some of our current challenges. Among these important stories, we tackled Indigenous history, Black Heritage, LGBTQ2S+ activism, and public health lessons from the past.

Although, we were pleased that this digital work won the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award, we are foremost proud of our staff, partners, donors and volunteers, whose passion and commitment to our city's heritage allowed our organization to excel even during such challenging times.

With your continued support, we very much look forward to seeing you all again soon.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Allison Bain".

Allison Bain
Executive Director



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard Moorhouse".

Richard Moorhouse
Chair, Board of Directors

Supporters

Thank you to our 2020 supporters and heritage champions.



\$30,000+



**TD READY
COMMITMENT**



Digital
Museums
Canada

\$10,000+



MIZIWE BIIK



DOWNTOWN



ANDREW AND
SHARON HIMEL
AND FAMILY



\$5,000+

Joan Bosworth
Carpenters and Allied Workers,
Local 27
Clifford Restoration Limited

The Dalla Lana School of Public
Health, University of Toronto
Department of History, York
University
The Estate of James A. Metcalfe

Ontario Association of Architects
Toronto and Region Conservation
Authority
Toronto Transit Commission
York Pioneer Historical Society

\$2,500+

Cadillac Fairview - Toronto
Dominion Centre
ERA Architects
Ministry of Heritage, Sport,
Tourism and Culture Industries

Georgia Hood
GreekTown on the Danforth BIA
Greenland Group Canada
Humbercrest Parent Council
Employment and Social
Development Canada

Alexandria Pike
Wawanesa Mutual Insurance
Company
Woodcliffe Landmark Properties

\$1,000+

Buttcon
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F. Leslie Thompson
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Hotel Victoria

\$200+

Elizabeth Adams
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Peter and Paula Berton
Christopher E. Binet
Fallon Butler
Camille Bégin and Nicholas
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Victoria Carley
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Gina Clark
Darryl S. D. Clarke
Claude Cormier + Associés
Laura Cowan
Bob Crawley
Alexa Daswani
Honor de Pencier and
Michael de Pencier
Deke Alumni Association
Lynne and Joe DiStefano
Tara Doyle
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Gandy Charitable Foundation
Hillary Ganek
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Patricia and Duane Lakin-Thomas
James Lane and Georgina Carson
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Helen Thompson
Toronto Public Library Workers
Union, Local 4948
Village of Islington BIA
Ruth I. Wahl
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Karen Whaley
Michael Woloszyk
David Wright

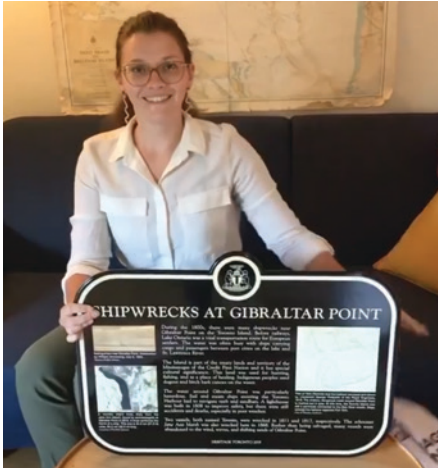
Community Partners

Bay Cloverhill Community
Association
Cossette
Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional
Studies, York University
Fairmont Royal York

First Nations University of Canada
Friends of EarlsCourt Park
International Union of Operating
Engineers Local 793
Mississaugas of the Credit First
Nation

Ojibwe People's Dictionary
Riverdale Historical Society
Shingwauk Residential Schools
Centre, Algoma University
St. Lawrence Neighbourhood
Association

Plaques



Plaque staff working from home: Kristen McLaughlin unveils a plaque on Instagram, and Chris Bateman previews plaques for installation that are stored at his house due to lockdown.

In this time of physical distancing, people have ventured outdoors to connect on city streets. Walking their local neighbourhoods, many have had unexpected encounters with our 800+ plaques. These experiences highlight a key benefit of our Plaques program during the global pandemic: while museums and

other heritage organizations cancelled their programs and had to shut their doors, our plaques remained on the street, accessible to all, 24 hours a day.

What a neat bit of history! It is nice to see such a well developed network to support immigrants, and very interesting to see how it relates to centralized transport systems.

— @archaeologyto (*Immigrant Sheds plaque*)

As curated interpretations, however, we also recognize that plaques have a difficult legacy and in some cases have perpetuated a narrow view of history. We have worked over the last few years to address this, presenting new subjects that reflect diverse histories and experiences. In 2020, our first self-funded plaque focused on Chief Wabakinine of the Mississaugas. Developed by an emerging Indigenous historian and produced with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the plaque describes the 18th-century chief's



A family affair, Chris Osbourne and his daughter Rebecca, installing The Guild of All Arts plaque, June 28, 2020. Images: Friends of Guild Park

leadership and role in the 1787 Toronto Purchase, his relationship with British officials, and the tragic circumstances of his death.

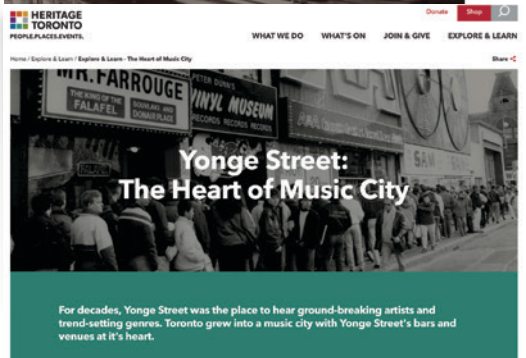
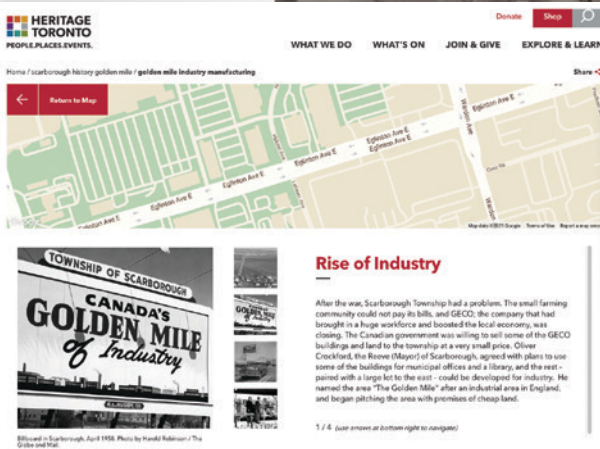
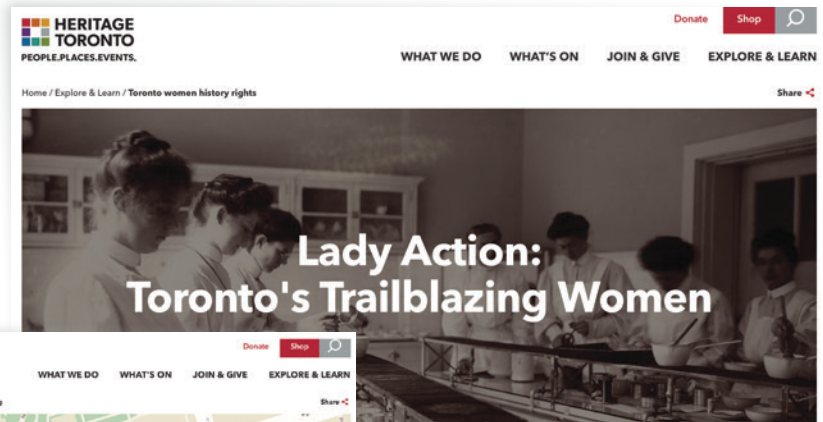
Plaques produced this year also commemorated the Phillips Garment Co. fire of 1950, which claimed the lives of nine garment workers and resulted in an examination of working conditions, and the lost waterway of Taddle Creek, a once-vital springtime gathering place for Indigenous peoples that later became a dumping ground and public health hazard in an expanding city.

These are just a few examples of the 51 plaques that we produced this year. We also installed another 44 historical plaques and

added another 31 Century House Plaques, highlighting 100+ year old homes, to our city's streets. With funding support from the City of Toronto, Heritage Toronto also replaced three dated and corroded plaques produced by the Toronto Historical Board.

In 2021, we are looking forward to plaques about prominent Black business owner and community leader Beverly Mascoll; the Black-owned Underground Railroad restaurant; and Joshua Glover, an Etobicoke citizen whose escape from slavery in Missouri caused a national sensation in the United States. We will also be producing plaques about Toronto's Indigenous and LGBTQ2S+ history.

Tours



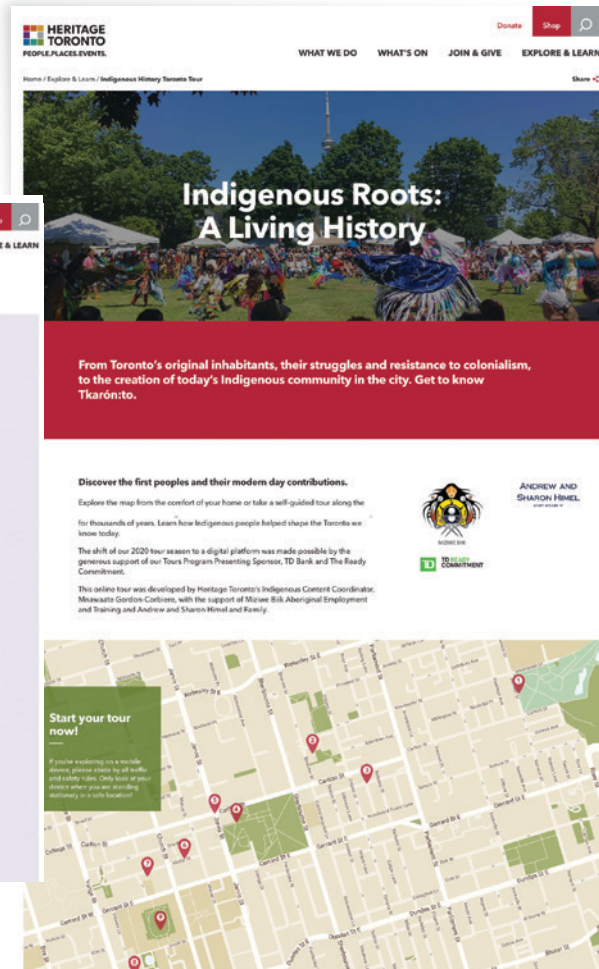
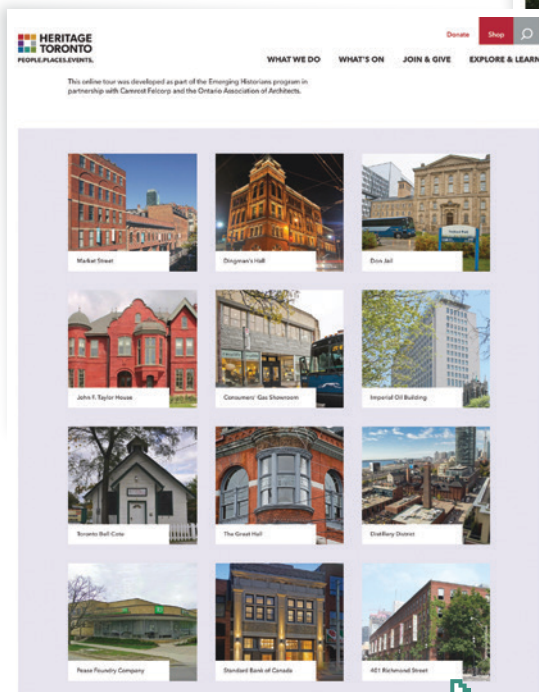
In 2020, we made the difficult decision to cancel our Tour season to limit the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead of in-person walks, we pursued other creative ways to celebrate and commemorate the city's heritage, leveraging the significant digital investments that Heritage Toronto had made in 2019.

Thank you. What an informative tour.
I have passed the mansion many times and did not know the history.
— Ruby Brett (*The Selby tour*)

In developing a digital Tours program, we were informed by the calls for change made by the Black Live Matter protestors, and the many issues the movement raised on BIPOC experiences. Guided by these events, Heritage Toronto chose to highlight new stories through our digital platforms and to work with under-represented voices to produce them.

Of the 11 digital tours created, we are especially proud of *Indigenous Roots: A Living History*, which was developed by a young Indigenous historian to highlight Toronto's earliest





inhabitants and the Indigenous leaders, artists, and community members who worked to ensure that Indigenous cultures thrive in Tkarón:to today. We also supported an emerging Black historian to produce *Eglinton West: Little Jamaica*, whose material was based on a 2019 walking tour, but was revised to include a focus on the compounding impacts of the global pandemic on the area's local businesses.

We were pleased by the positive reception of this work. Our success was also demonstrated by a staggering increase in engagement from

2,000 users of similar online programs in 2019 to almost 14,000 in 2020.

In the coming year, we hope to return to our in-person tours with a condensed and exciting offer that will focus on the natural heritage of our waterfront and the histories of Toronto's diverse communities. We are investing in new audio equipment to allow for physically distanced and safe experiences, and will continue to work with emerging historians to provide new perspectives on the stories we feature in these tours.

Heritage Toronto Awards



HERITAGE THRIVES
Perspectives on Toronto's Past and Present

HOST: Dwight Drummond
PANELISTS: Ilana Altman, Arlene Chan, Eve Lewis, Shawn Micallef, Terry White
October 28, 7:30 PM

Heritage Thrives event, hosted by Dwight Drummond, with panelists: Ilana Altman, Arlene Chan, Eve Lewis, Shawn Micallef, and Terry White.

The Heritage Toronto Awards showcase the positive impacts heritage makes on our city's diverse communities. While we were unable to gather together for the 2020 event, marking the first time in its 46-year history that it has been cancelled, work continued to protect and shape our city's heritage. To acknowledge this work and celebrate the legacy of the Awards, we produced *Heritage Thrives: Perspectives on Toronto's Past and Present*.

Thank you panelists, and Dwight, and Heritage Toronto staff and board. A great discussion.

— Erin Mackie

This digital program paid special tribute to 12 past Award winners highlighting their work on social media over a six-week period. This retrospective culminated on October 28 with [an online event](#) featuring sector leaders and innovators. Moderated by Dwight Drummond of CBC News Toronto, and attended by over 200 online guests, the event featured a lively conversation on topics ranging from the need for diverse representation in the sector, to façadism, and the evolving importance of public space.

The loss of the Awards as our largest fundraiser made a significant impact on our 2020 budget. We hope to welcome back our Awards supporters and event guests in 2021.

Education and Engagement



2020 Emerging historians (clockwise): Zainab Al Rawi, Channon Oyeniran, Emily Gwiazda, Tarasdeep Sekhon, and Mnawaate Gordon-Corbiere.

Emerging Historians

Heritage Toronto was able to face the challenges of 2020 in large part because of the Emerging Historian program, which provides meaningful experiences and support to young people building their careers in the heritage sector. Founded to engage youth, emerging historians bring new ideas, energy, and perspectives that will continue to drive and diversify heritage work.

In 2020, the program supported 19 young professionals. We thank our generous donors and Emerging Historian Champions who made it possible to prioritize these commitments to our emerging historians

in a very challenging year, and who have increased their giving to ensure this important work will continue in 2021.

I felt like the work I did was important and that my voice really mattered.

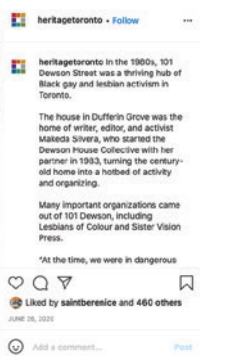
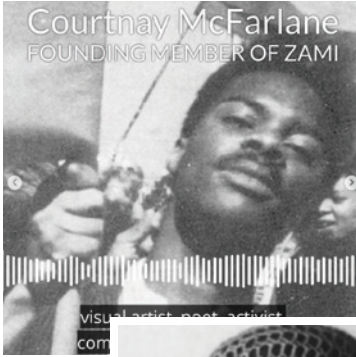
Thank you for making me a priority.

— *Tarasdeep Sekhon*

Through my time here, I learned many new skills practical in the heritage workforce that weren't taught in university.

— *Mnawaate Gordon-Corbiere*

Education and Engagement



#HERITAGEATHOME

Last Spring, along with the rest of the world, Heritage Toronto pivoted and adapted to a new normal. We developed #HeritageatHome, a digital program comprised of self-guided tours, engaging conversations, and playful tales meant to entertain and chase away any lockdown blues. Examples include an online story on gardening trends and a live stream

What an awesome way to tell the history of Black queer people in our city! I love this.

— Doug Kerr (101 Dewson Street post)

featuring the contentious redevelopment plans for Ontario Place.

We also did more on social media. We unveiled new plaques like the one on social activist and scientist, Ursula Franklin; highlighted our city’s public art; and developed new content based on original research like the story of 101 Dewson Street, a thriving hub of Black gay and lesbian activism in Toronto in the 1980s.

In the coming year, we plan to build on this success of this program, winner of the Lieutenant Governor’s Ontario Heritage Award.

Get Involved



Our past always lays bare our future. And especially during challenging times like we're all managing through, I believe active support helps with that future.

Onwards!

— *David Kincaid*



SUPPORTERS

In a year when one in five charities across Ontario had to suspend all programming or shut their doors permanently, we are proud to still be serving the people of Toronto.

In a typical year, we raise over 50% of donations and the majority of sponsorships through events like Tours and Awards. When those in-person programs were forced to shut down, we acted quickly to make fiscally responsible decisions. Our priority was to ensure the sustainability of our heritage work so it can recover and thrive in future years.

Glad I was able to add my donation to the good of Heritage TO. It is so important to have a vibrant and impactful Heritage TO as it is one reason why TO is such a great city. We just need to make sure it gets through these trying times.

— *Wayne Howell*



Although 2020 was not a typical year, heritage champions did not just stand by us, they stepped up. Our key sponsors, notably TD Bank, made digital tours possible. Our donors increased their average gift by 60%, monthly donors doubled, and donors raised a record breaking amount in support of emerging historians. As a result, more paid contracts were given to young people than ever before.

As we build back, please know we will continue to use your support wisely and transparently. Thank you for prioritizing heritage and making an investment in a more equitable and resilient city.



Get Involved



Emerging historian and volunteer, Irene Galea, on a tour of the CNE fairgrounds exploring the history of the fair and its importance to Toronto's heritage.

VOLUNTEERS

While we missed the 100+ people who normally work at our Tours and Awards events, we are grateful for the 75 volunteers who were able

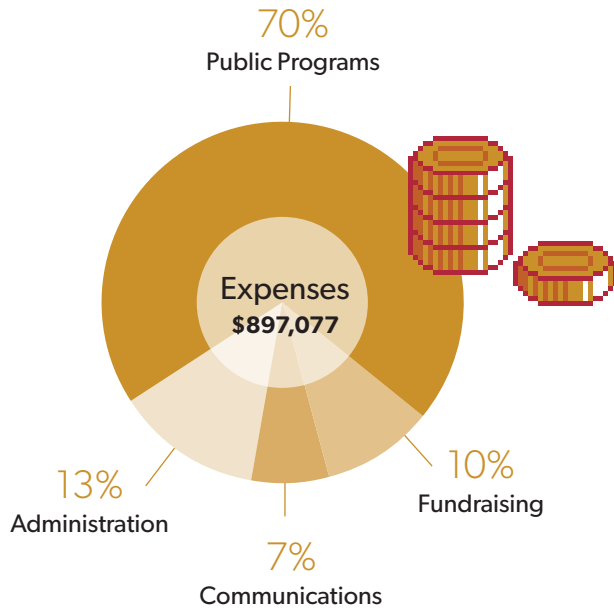
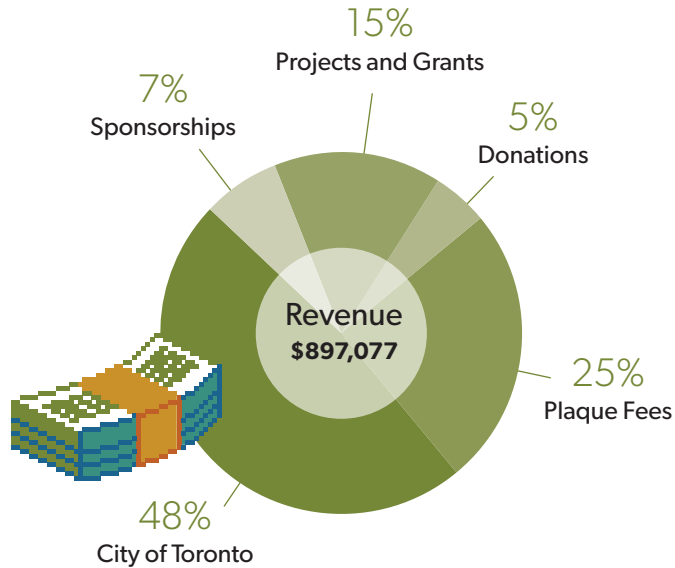
At a time when many felt isolated, it was an honour to bring a few moments of inspiration and joy to viewers who tuned in to #HTLive, while spreading awareness about Toronto's important historical landmarks.

— Irene Galea

to support us remotely in 2020. From writing social media content, helping to produce #HTLive events, and meeting regularly as Board and Committee members to guide us through the pandemic, our volunteers contributed over 1,375 hours of service last year, valued at \$40,369, to our charity.

We would like to take this opportunity to highlight the work of three exceptional volunteers: Irene Galea, Leslie Sinclair and Carly Wolowich. Working remotely on their own devices, they helped to ensure our digital content remained timely and relevant in 2020.

2020 Financials



Final 2020 Financial Statements, audited by Welch LLP, will be available at heritagetoronto.org on June 15, 2021.

PEOPLE.PLACES.EVENTS.



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Toronto, ON M5C 1G9

416-338-0684
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Heritage Toronto is a
charity and arms-length
agency of the City of
Toronto



EGLINTON AVENUE WEST

DAKWOOD
VAUGHAN

