

Central Eglinton Community Centre

160 Eglinton Ave. East (2 blocks east of Yonge St.)

Tel: [416-392-0511](tel:416-392-0511)

Website: www.centraleglinton.com

This centre, supported by volunteers, offers a wide variety of programs for babies, children and adults throughout the year, including summer day camps. Register for programs in-person. The centre also has a birthday-party room available for rent, a drop-in centre, and a toy-lending library

A History of The Central Eglinton Community Centre

Originally known as The Third Floor, the Central Eglinton Community Centre (CECC) was developed in 1976 by a group of citizens and community groups concerned about the conservation, protection and improvement of their community. After community needs were researched, it was concluded that a focal point for community activities was needed.

The Centre was first established on the third floor of the old Eglinton Public School and was designated by the Neighbourhoods Committee, City Council, City of Toronto, as the community centre to provide services to this neighbourhood. Under the Municipal Act, a Board of Management (11 Directors) was appointed by City Council and an administrative budget was allocated.

Initially, the Centre focused on parent/child activities. Over the years, and in response to a variety of needs expressed by the community, the Centre's objectives expanded to provide a variety of programs and services for people of all ages including a range of social, recreational and leisure programs for older adult/seniors.

A non-profit organization, the Centre's core administration budget is provided by the City of Toronto. Support for programs and services offered comes from Centre membership fees, program fees, donations, fundraising events and relevant government grants.

In December 1992, the Centre relocated to its permanent location at 160 Eglinton Avenue East where all programs and services could operate in one central location.

In 1999, the City leased 3,201 square feet of additional space on the 2nd floor of the office building. The Centre's administration moved upstairs enabling additional program space to be made available on the ground floor. In 2006, the City of Toronto, after a governance review and the passing of the new City of Toronto Act, developed a written relationship framework

that clarifies the roles and describes the relationship between the City and the Centre.

Programs are offered for:

- Families and Caregivers with babies and young children
- Older adults (50+ years)
- March Break Camp and Summer Day Camp for school-aged children
- Lunch-time, Evening and Saturday programs for adults (18+)
- After School Program

Services provided include:

- Income Tax Clinic (March & April)
- Financial Planning Clinic
- Legal Advice Clinic
- Childcare Registry
- Children’s Clothing Closet
- Community Bulletin Board
- Employment & Training Information/Opportunities
- Food Bank Box
- Computer Lab Drop In

Volunteers are essential to CECC, and are involved at all levels, from the Board of Management to direct service volunteering in programs and fundraising ventures. CECC holds many special events, such as an annual auction, spring and fall craft markets, and holiday parties.

CECC is truly a place “where new friends meet.”

and here is something I found when I googled community centres run by Volunteers:

Association of Community Centres (AOCCs)

- [519 Church Street Community Centre](#)
- [Applegrove Community Complex](#)
- [Cecil Street Community Centre](#)
- [Central Eglinton Community Centre](#)
- [Community Centre 55](#)
- [Eastview Neighbourhood](#)



Community Centre

- [Harbourfront Community Centre](#)
- [Ralph Thornton Community Centre](#)
- [Scadding Court Community Centre](#)
- [Swansea Town Hall](#)

The Association of Community Centres (AOCCs) is comprised of 10 volunteer board-run multi-purpose facilities providing a broad range of community, recreation and social service programs to residents in the local community.

The AOCC model is a hybrid between a City agency and an independent, not-for-profit, community-based organization. The core administration activities are funded by the City and treated like a City agency. The program component is funded through fees, donations and grants, and is treated like an independent not-for-profit community-based organization.

Boards of Management

Learn more about the boards of management: [board responsibilities and composition](#).

In addition to these board-run community centres, the City's Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff operate many community and recreation centres throughout the city. See a listing of [City-run facilities](#).

Community Centres - board operated

519 Church Street Community Centre

Phone: [416-392-6874](tel:416-392-6874)
Fax: [416-392-0519](tel:416-392-0519)
E-mail: info@the519.org
Address: 519 Church Street
Toronto, ON M4Y 2C9
Website: [519 Church Street Community Centre](#)

Applegrove Community Complex

Phone: [416-461-8143](tel:416-461-8143)
Fax: [416-461-5513](tel:416-461-5513)
E-mail: applegrove@applegrovecc.ca
Address: 60 Woodfield Road
Toronto, ON M4L 2W6
Website: [Applegrove Community Complex](#)

Cecil Street Community Centre

Phone: [416-392-1090](tel:416-392-1090)
Fax: [416-392-1093](tel:416-392-1093)
E-mail: info@cecilcommunitycentre.ca
Address: 58 Cecil Street
Toronto, ON M5T 1N6

Central Eglinton Community Centre

Phone: [416-392-0511](tel:416-392-0511)
Fax: [416-392-0514](tel:416-392-0514)
E-mail: info@centraleglinton.com
Address: 160 Eglinton Avenue East
Toronto, ON M4P 3B5
Website: [Central Eglinton Community Centre](#)

Community Centre 55

Phone: [416-691-1113](tel:416-691-1113)
Fax: [416-691-8269](tel:416-691-8269)
E-mail: centre55@web.ca
Address: 97 Main Street
Toronto, ON M4E 2V6
Website: [Community Centre 55](#)

Eastview Neighbourhood Community Centre

Phone: [416-392-1750](tel:416-392-1750)
Fax: [416-392-1175](tel:416-392-1175)
E-mail: info@eastviewcentre.com
Address: 86 Blake Street
Toronto, ON M4J 3C9
Website: [Eastview Neighbourhood Community Centre](#)

Harbourfront Community Centre

Phone: [416-392-1509](tel:416-392-1509)
Fax: [416-392-1512](tel:416-392-1512)
E-mail: hcc@harbourfrontcc.ca
Address: 627 Queen's Quay West
Toronto, ON M5V 3G3
Website: [Harbourfront Community Centre](#)

Ralph Thornton Community Centre

Phone: [416-392-6810](tel:416-392-6810)
Fax: [416-392-0025](tel:416-392-0025)
E-mail: info@ralphthornton.org
Address: 765 Queen Street East
Toronto, ON M4M 1H3
Website: [Ralph Thornton Community Centre](#)

Scadding Court Community Centre

Phone: [416-392-0335](tel:416-392-0335)
Fax: [416-392-0340](tel:416-392-0340)
E-mail: info@scaddingcourt.org
Address: 707 Dundas Street West
Toronto, ON M5T 2W6
Website: [Scadding Court Community Centre](#)

Swansea Town Hall Community Centre

Phone: [416-392-1954](tel:416-392-1954)
Fax: [416-392-1955](tel:416-392-1955)
E-mail: frontdesk@swanseatownhall.ca
Address: 95 Lavinia Avenue
Toronto, ON M6S 3H9
Website: [Swansea Town Hall Community Centre](#)

Related links

- [Community Centre Boards of Management](#)
- [Listing of City-run facilities](#)
- [Relationship Framework](#) (PDF)
- [Memorandum of Settlement](#) - between the City of Toronto and the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 2998 representing unionized employees of the Association of Community Centres
- [Board-specific processes and requirements](#)

<http://www.the519.org/about/history>

How The 519 came to be the Community's Centre

The neighbourhood east of Yonge Street and north of Carlton in Toronto was a meeting place for gay men in the late 1700's **Statue Honoring Alexander Wood Unveiled Photos of Alexander Wood Statue in Toronto.**

In subsequent years, many gay men and lesbians migrated to large cities like Toronto, where they would not be under such scrutiny. By the time The 519 Community Centre was established in 1975, a sizable population of gay men lived in the Church and Wellesley neighbourhood. Most lived "in the closet" to avoid arrest (prior to Pierre Trudeau's

statement that “The state has no place in the bedrooms of the nation.” **See Trudeaumania section.**

Dedicated neighbours in the North Jarvis Community Association blocked the building of a high rise apartment building in the place of the City of Toronto owned building at 519 Church Street. They lobbied for a meeting place to be established for the underserved neighbourhood.

Progressive members of Toronto City Council and City staff developed a formula for community control of a City-funded facility. Board Members would be elected from amongst the membership of the fledgling community center, so some Board Members were gay men. In those days, most people were presumed to be **straight** by the straight community

The mix of all communities led to the establishment of exciting programs in the new space:

- Dancesphere (a community dance ensemble, mostly gay, though not openly so)
- Fingerboard Café (a jazz club)
- Yuk Yuks (a free amateur comedy night, which went on to become a successful franchise)
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- City Chess Club
- Central Club (a senior’s social club)

The moment of change for The 519, which defined the new community centre as a LGBTTQ friendly space, came in the late 1970’s. A group of young gay men approached the Board with a proposal for Gay Youth Toronto meetings. According to a bisexual board member (now deceased), the straight people on the Board were appalled at the idea of people as young as fourteen “deciding” to be gay. Some thought it was a recruitment club. That particular board meeting is reputed to bring out everyone’s fears and hopes. The bisexual man’s wife was also on the board, but didn’t know her husband was bisexual. He counted the votes around the room, which he could do because he knew who was gay and who was straight. The room was equally divided and he realized that his vote would decide the matter.

He voted in support of the group and his decision opened the door for LGBTTQ groups to feel at home at The 519. The new community centre continued to serve the local community with programs for families, homeless people, and anyone else needing support. However, it also became the meeting place of choice for groups fighting for gay rights.

The Board couple separated and remained friends for life. Their daughter, five at the time that her father came out, continued to grow up at The 519, going to children’s programs, becoming a camp councilor as a teenager, and bringing her baby to the Moms and Tots (now the Family Resource Centre).

In 1982, after the infamous bath house raids, the Right to Privacy Committee and Gaycare were developed to deal with the aftermath. The following is just a sample of the LGBTTTQ groups which made their home at The 519:

Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Ontario
Committee to Abolish the Bawdy House Law (look for the correct name)
Polish Gays and Lesbians
Khush (South Asian Gays and Lesbians)
Zami (Caribbean Gays)
Avanti (Italian Gay and Lesbian Association)
Gays Lesbians of African Descent
Salaam – Queer Muslim Community
Pride Uganda Toronto
American Express Employees for Equal Rights
Canadians for Equal Marriage

And hundreds of others.

Another story: AIDS and the straight community

In the early days of the AIDS epidemic, newspapers often reported that children with AIDS were not welcome in their schools. The stigma experienced by people with AIDS was devastating. At The 519, we welcomed a yoga class for People Living With AIDS which was offered by the Toronto People With AIDS Foundation. By chance, the group was scheduled in the afternoons in a room that children played in each morning. Never a word was said by parents regarding the risk to children, as there was indeed no risk.

This illustrates the value of serving all parts of the community – gay and straight. Over the years The 519 has heard hundreds of stories of increased understanding amongst people because of the integration experienced at The 519.

Origins of the Family Resource Centre

Children's programs at The 519 started one rainy day when a group of mothers with their young children asked the director of the time if they could come inside to play. Out of this humble beginning grew first the Mums 'n Tots, a morning drop in for mothers with pre-school children. Staff were hired to coordinate the program, and it became one of the most popular at the Centre. Years passed and demographics changed. Grandparents, fathers and nannies all came to the drop in, and the name was changed to reflect this trend and to synchronize with similar programs across the City. The Family Resource Centre was born.

The 519 has had a somewhat rare historical roll in supporting queer families in Canada due in large part to the history of the LGBTTTQ communities, both locally and from afar, finding the community centre to be a safer haven. A more complete history of the 519's Queer Parenting Programs can be found by clicking here. [Queer Parenting Programs - History (4.4.2.3)]

Origin of the Homeless and Anti Poverty Programs

Homeless and anti poverty programs were some of the earliest activities at The 519. In the days when 519 Church Street was home to the **48th Highlanders**, the World War II veterans enjoyed it as a clubhouse.

Some WWII Veterans may have had what is now called Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Unable to find jobs on their return from the battlefields of Europe, North Africa and Japan, they lived on the streets. Every Sunday the 48th Highlanders would invite their homeless buddies inside for a beer.

When The 519 Community Centre was established in 1975, homeless people gathered on Sundays, hoping for the same. The new community centre began serving coffee on Sundays. A neighbour on Monteith Street, Jean DeBoerr, began cooking soup on Sundays and she invited the homeless people to pick it up from her apartment and serve it. Thus began the Sunday Drop In program, which continues to offer nutritious meals and a warm place to relax to homeless people today.

Although the demographics for homeless people have changed and the days of the World War II Veterans have faded, generosity towards people in need will never go out of style.

We at The 519 look forward to the day when adequate affordable housing is available for people who have mental illnesses, addictions, or who have been dealt a difficult hand in life and as a result are living outdoors.