Cecil Community Centre

Strategic Plan

2016 – 2020

...fostering community and enhancing quality of life

Background

Cecil Community Centre is a not-for-profit, multi-service neighbourhood centre that offers a broad range of recreational, educational, social, cultural and capacity-building programs to local area residents. For almost 40 years, the Centre has played a vital role in the lives of community members of all ages. Our centre provides programs and services for children, youth, adults, and seniors. Programs include a Family Resource Program, Community Drop-in, Homework Help, English as a Second Language (ESL), Tutoring Program, Free Clothing Project, Youth Program, and Sunday Children's Program. The Centre partners with a variety of community organizations to provide services to the community, e.g. seniors' health and fitness classes, English language instruction for newcomers, and tax clinics for people who are low-income. The Centre is an accessible, multi-functional facility that provides program and activity spaces to the community at large. Over the years, Cecil Community Centre has been used by a variety of different groups to hold community forums, conduct professional development workshops, health fairs, and convene meetings, courses, tournaments, performances and special events.

History

The building now known as Cecil Community Centre was built in 1890 by architects Knox & Elliott as the Church of Christ. By the 1920s, it was converted to a synagogue for the Ostrovtzer congregation, with substantial renovations, including demolition of the original church spire and the addition of marble tablets and a brass chandelier with a Star of David – features which remain to this day. By the 1950s, the congregation had moved and the building changed hands again; over the next 20 years, it was variously a Chinese Catholic centre and the first home of the Community Homophile Association of Toronto, among other community uses, before falling into disrepair. In the 1970s, the building was acquired by the City of Toronto and restored for community purposes. It opened as the Cecil Street Community Centre in March 1978.[1]

Vision Statement

All residents living in the Spadina and College (Chinatown) neighbourhood enjoy a high quality of life, are able to achieve their economic, social and educational goals, and are part of a strong, prosperous and caring local community.

Mission

To foster a sense of community and enhance the quality of life through the development, encouragement, and support of programs and activities responsive to local needs.

Core Values

The six core values that drive the mission of Cecil Community Centre are:

- o **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion** – We are committed to ensuring that the programs, services, and policies of Cecil Community Centre are responsive to the needs of our diverse community.

- o **Integrity** – We are committed to operating this Centre with integrity and transparency in all our partnerships, relationships, and operations.

- o **Accountability** – We are committed to full accountability to the community and our partners in our financial, operational, and governing responsibilities for this Centre.

- o **Sustainability** – We are committed to ensuring fiscal and social sustainability of this Centre.

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[1] *Historicist: The Church on Cecil Street, by Kevin Plummer*

- o **Creativity** – We are committed to the encouragement of creative expressions of community, culture, arts, leisure, and health and wellness programs within this Centre.
- o **Service** – we are committed to serving the community in all the operations, programs and events that take place within this Centre.

Governance

Cecil Community Centre is governed by a 12-member volunteer Board of Management, a diverse group of community leaders and key decision makers who provide vision, strategic leadership, advocacy, accountability, and stewardship. The members of the board are elected at the Annual General Meeting held in October and include one appointed City Councillor.

To stimulate our thinking in preparation for our Strategic Plan, Cecil Community Centre will need to reframe our governance model to include *"Generative Governance"* in the traditional modes of governing:

- o Fiduciary - *legal responsibilities of oversight and stewardship*
- o Strategic - *major decisions about resources, programs, and services*
- o Generative - *deeper inquiry, exploring root causes, values, optional courses and new ideas*

Generative governance engages and challenges the trustees intellectually. It's what leaders do best.[2] "Generative thinking" is vital to the success of Cecil Community Centre. Generative thinking is taking a critical look at fixed data and situations in a more subjective, retrospective way. This, in turn, will allow the Board of Management to go beyond simple problem solving and begin "problem-framing."

The Need for Strategic Planning

Cecil Community Centre is at the *Growth Phase* in its organizational life cycle. Organizational life cycle (OLC) is an important model because of its premise and its prescription. The model's premise is that requirements, opportunities, and threats both inside and outside the organization will vary depending on the stage of development in which the organization finds itself. The OLC model's prescription is that the organization's managers must change the goals, strategies, and strategy implementation devices of the business to fit the new set of issues. Thus, different stages of the company's lifecycle require alterations in the organization's objectives, strategies, managerial processes (planning, organizing, staffing, directing, controlling), technology, culture, and decision-making.[3] In the growth phase, one expects to see revenues climb, new services and programs developed, more employees hired and so on.

As a result of these driving forces, we are required to adopt a "new paradigm," or view of how we carry out our work, to be more sensitive, flexible and adaptable to the demands and expectations of stakeholders. As an organization, we must deal with continual, rapid change, not only in external environmental factors but internally as well. When faced with major decisions, we can no longer refer back to past practice or an earlier developed plan for direction. Management techniques must continually notice changes in the environment and organization, assess this change and manage the change. Managing change does not mean controlling it, rather understanding it, adapting to it where necessary and guiding it when possible.

We need to re-evaluate our priorities and set a course for the future. We need to look at the way we are delivering our programs, the policies and systems that are in place, our governance and leadership models and redefine our "niche". No longer can we rely solely on the historical perspective or our "good name", we must develop a strategic vision and mission for the future. We must become advocates of change in order to facilitate the creation of a vibrant, dynamic community asset. The impact of Cecil Community Centre's programs needs to be felt in a

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[2] *Governance as Leadership: Reframing the Work of Non-Profit Board* by Richard P. Chait, William P. Ryan and Barbara E. Taylor is published by BoardSource and Wiley.

[3] Encyclopedia of small business / Kevin Hillstrom, Laurie Collier Hillstrom.—2nd ed.

broader way and affect more people. Changing the organization will probably be the most significant challenge that we will face over the next 3 to 5 years. In order for us to remain relevant and competitive, we must take a good look at the culture of the organization, including our values and beliefs, and the way we execute these values and beliefs.

Advocacy

Cecil Community Centre needs to be more active in our discussion and analysis of the issues in our society, and the policies and practices that address these issues. Advocacy is a set of hands-on technical skills and practices needed to effectively press for change. It is also the foundation of active citizenship, a process through which ordinary people learn to participate in decision-making at all levels. Identifying priorities, crafting a strategy, stepping forward, taking action, and achieving results are critical steps to finding one's voice, making oneself heard, and shaping one's future.[4]

Simply put - it's telling our story to someone (a decision-maker), through various means, with the express purpose of compelling that person to do something

Three-step advocacy process required to be heard:

1. Educate: Be able to describe who we are, who we represent and what our issues are to the decision-maker

2. Demonstrate: Be able to demonstrate why our issues matter to the decision-maker and why they should listen to us

3. Advocate: Be able to articulate exactly what we need the decision-maker to do to further our issues

Decision-makers react to those who can most effectively bring their issues to the forefront of the public agenda. We have the power to affect change around the issues of youth engagement, poverty and the issues facing an aging population; therefore, Cecil Community Centre should develop the core elements of an impactful advocacy strategy.

We should develop 2-3 key messages that are clear, compelling and concise, and be able to deliver these key messages through focused communication tools. This should be achieved in collaboration with our AOCC partners and other organizations with similar goals.

Partnerships

A partnership is defined as a relationship where two or more parties, having compatible goals, form an agreement to share the work, share the risk and share the results or proceeds. Having the right people at the right time doing the right things together is what we strive for when creating partnerships. Partnerships are about people working together.

There are many advantages to partnering; finding creative solutions, improving diversity, exploring holistic approaches and increasing or improving business, are but a few. Partnerships build on what is already being done while avoiding duplication and fragmentation of services. Of course, drawbacks also exist in partnering. For example, clashing values or interests, perceptions of unfair advantage or fear of change can be problematic as can issues around displaced power, influence and status.

Before agreeing to be involved in a partnership, it is important that we determine our own readiness to participate, the organization's interest and ability to be a good partner and the preparedness of the community in which the partnership will operate. Most importantly, however, the partnership group itself will need to determine its interest and ability to partner.

Having a common purpose and starting with willing and able people forms the "nuts and bolts" or prerequisites for effective partnerships.

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[4] Institute for Sustainable Communities, 2008

Strong, viable partnerships don't just happen. They need to be understood, properly developed and well maintained. Skills, knowledge, and experience are required when we bring people together to form useful and productive partnerships.

Experience tells us that partnerships are a good way to reach long-range, encompassing goals. As a result, they are becoming increasingly important. Things which cannot be achieved alone can be addressed by a partnership group that is dedicated to the cause and has the skills and resources needed to see it through. Below are some examples of why partnerships are an important consideration for Cecil Community Centre:

- They might be the right choice for taking needed action, solving problems or sharing limited resources.

- Partnerships are sometimes the logical next step which builds on activities or projects that have already been successful.

- Partnerships are formed when things need to be done and when there is a desire to avoid duplication, to share clients or customers or to simplify access.

- They are also formed when there is a desire to share the load when improving service without significantly increasing cost.

- Very often partnerships come into existence when there is a need for action or activity that would be difficult to undertake on our own.[5]

Building the resources needed to raise funds

To significantly grow our programs and to ensure long-term sustainability (i.e. programs and services continue to operate effectively and we have sufficient resources to carry out our mission) we need a fund development plan that not only builds on our past accomplishments but incorporates new approaches to move us to higher levels of fundraising. **The question becomes how do we move from raising $120,000 a year to more than $500,000 a year?** What strategies do we need to develop and what resources will it take to activate the plan?

Currently, approximately 84% of our revenue comes from the City of Toronto Core Administration Transfer. The balance of our revenue is from our own fundraising activities (including donations, membership and registration fees, tenants, occasional rentals and the Early Years Centre funding), with less than 1% from smaller individual gifts. A consideration for growth is how to build new individual and major donors while developing the size of gifts and sustainability of current supporters.

Human resources including professional fundraising staff, active board members, committed volunteers and committee members will be the backbone of the Centre's fund development plan. Ensuring the appropriate match is made between "resources" and "work plan" is essential to the success of each fund development approach identified. For targets to be attained effort must be directed towards building a support system.

In addition, communications systems must be layered into each fundraising vehicle. Three areas of focus include:

- **Donor communications** (courtesy reports to funders, Program Updates, etc.)

- **Internal communications** (the flow information between programming, administration and resource development)

- **External communications** (Newsletter promoting the Centre's programs and services and, creating awareness, etc.)

Finally, Cecil Community Centre will need to have its own Charitable Registration Number in order to successfully acquire new donors (we are currently not able to issue tax receipts for gifts).

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[5] The Partnership Handbook, Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997

The focus for the next five years will be to identify initiatives for consideration that will impact all areas of fundraising, as well as specific strategies for each source of revenue. All areas will need to be enhanced. It will be necessary to implement new approaches that have the potential to generate significantly more funds.

Opportunities for growth

1. Communications

Develop a system for the flow of information from our program department - to fund development - to our stakeholders. It is important to ensure we can appropriately showcase our achievements and impact. Program highlights and compelling client stories can be shared through e-blasts, mailings, exhibits, program "open house" for stakeholders and special events.

2. Media Plan

Creating a media plan or social marketing plan will help take Cecil Community Centre to the next level.

Finding a media partner will help us to promote our events, showcase our work (with clients and in the community) and advertise our accomplishments. A good starting point is a community newspaper such as the Metroland daily papers, as they frequently will donate space to charities.

3. Board Commitment

A strong active board is an essential component of fund development. In order for Cecil Community Centre to raise our profile in the community and raise the necessary funds for our sustainability, we need to ensure that our Board of Directors and volunteers are enthusiastic, informed and engaged. Board members and volunteers need to have the skill-set and commitment needed to develop the strategies presented and play an active role in implementing them. All Board members should sit on a Cecil Community Centre committee and report their progress at each board meeting.

Strategic Goals

The following *Strategic Goals* will be pursued by Cecil Community Centre from January 2016 to December 2020. Details of these Strategic Directions including *activities*, *timelines*, and *lead persons* can be found in the Work Plans:

Strategic Goal 1: **Governance and Leadership**

The Board of Management of Cecil Community Centre is engaged and representative, with defined governance practices. They effectively oversee the policies, programs, and organizational operations including a review of achievement of strategic goals, financial status, and Executive Director performance. The organization is accomplished at recruiting, developing, and retaining capable staff and technical resources, and the leadership is alert to changing community needs and realities.

Objectives	Strategies
To meet our goal we will:	We will achieve our objectives by:
• Reframe the Centre's governance model to include *"Generative Governance"* in the traditional modes of governing	• Creating a Governance Committee of the Board to review and make recommendations to enhance the quality and future viability of the board
• Ensure that the Board is diverse, representative of the community and possesses appropriate skills and experience	• Restructuring the Board Meeting Agenda and timetable to facilitate the new model
• Develop Board Committees that support the strategic plan (e.g. Fundraising, Governance, etc.) and include more community members and identified groups on these committees	• Creating opportunities for community members and identified groups to participate in governance activities such as *Planning Tables* and *Committees*
	• Reviewing the Constitution to ensure that there are no barriers to participation for community members and identified groups

Strategic Goal 2: **Program Delivery and Impact**

Cecil Community Centre operates programs that demonstrate tangible outcomes commensurate with the resources invested. Programs are high quality and well regarded. The organization utilizes program evaluation results to inform its strategic goals and objectives. The organization also has formal mechanisms for assessing internal and external factors that affect achievement of its goals.

Objectives	Strategies
To meet our goal we will:	We will achieve our objectives by:
• Create programs that reflect the needs of the changing demographics of the neighbourhood	• Reviewing the Terms of Reference of the Program Committee to ensure that it includes an evaluation component
• Ensure that Centre participants and volunteers are actively involved in program planning and evaluation	• Creating *Logic Models* for all programs
• Demonstrate and report our social impact	• Reviewing our programs and creating an evaluation process to measure the impact of programs
	• Creating a *Needs Assessment* process

Strategic Goal 3: **Strategic Relationships**

Cecil Community Centre is a respected and active participant and leader in the College and Spadina (Chinatown) neighbourhood, and maintains strong connections with its constituents. It participates in strategic alliances and partnerships that significantly advances mutual goals and expands the organization's capacity and influence.

Objectives

To meet our goal we will:

- Develop new, and manage existing strategic partnerships
- Develop 2-3 key messages that are clear, compelling and concise on issues that are important to our constituents
- Ensure that the Centre optimizes its assets and resources in response to identified needs

Strategies

We will achieve our objectives by:

- Setting priorities for programs and space use based on the dynamic demographics of the neighbourhood
- Creating standard "Use of Space" agreements with our partners that ensures optimal space use, community impact and revenue generation
- Partnering with local businesses and other entities to develop and deliver innovative "best practice" programs (e.g. social enterprise)
- Collaborating with our AOCC and other partners to develop and deliver the key messages through focused communication tools

Strategic Goal 4: **Fiscal Sustainability**

Cecil Community Centre successfully secures support from a variety of sources to ensure that the organization's revenues are diversified, stable, and sufficient for the mission and goals. The resource development plan is aligned with the mission, long-term goals, and strategic direction. The organization has high visibility with key stakeholders, and links clear, strategic messages to its resource development efforts.

Objectives

To meet our goal we will:

- Develop a diversified funding base for maximum program delivery
- Raise the Public Profile of the Centre and increase awareness of its programs, resources, services, and impact
- Create one *Signature Event* as a fundraising vehicle for the Centre

Strategies

We will achieve our objectives by:

- Creating a 3-year *Fundraising Plan* that will externally reposition fundraising activities to increase the Centre's exposure to key audiences
- Creating a Fundraising Committee of the Board to oversee the Fundraising Plan
- Creating a staff lead position (Fundraiser) who plans, coordinates and provides follow-up and evaluation for the entire fundraising program
- T2050 Application for a *Charitable Registration Number*

Cecil Community Centre Organization Chart – September 2016

Organization Chart (Top)

- **Toronto City Council**
- **Local Community**
- City Counsellor (Ward 20)
- **Board of Management**
- Committees
- Executive Director
- Business Manager
  - Reception Staff
  - Custodial Staff
- Program Director
  - Youth Program
  - Volunteer Coordinator
    - Volunteers
  - Program Coordinator
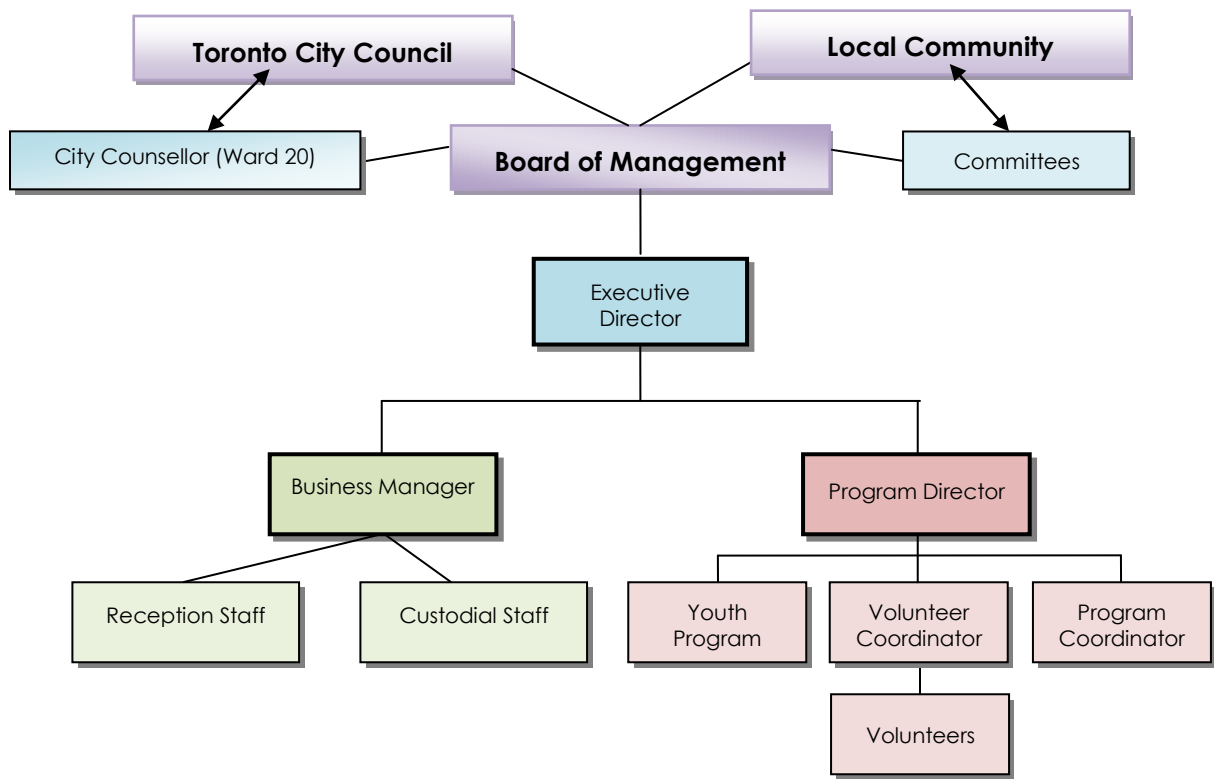
Cecil Community Centre Organization Chart January 2020

- **Toronto City Council**
- **Local Community**
- City Counsellor (Ward 20)
- Youth Advisory Committee
- **Board of Management**
- Program Advisory Committee
- Board Committees
- **Executive Director**
  - **Director, Finance and Operations**
    - Office Manager
      - Reception Staff
    - Custodial Staff
      - Volunteers
    - Administrative Assistant
  - **Director, Programs & Community Services**
    - Child/Youth Coordinator
      - Program Assistant(s)
    - Volunteer Coordinator
      - Volunteers
    - Seniors Coordinator
      - Program Assistant(s)
  - Fundraising Coordinator