



Creating Community Connections

ANNUAL REPORT 2016/2017



Humberto Carolo
Board Chair

A Message from the Board Chair and Executive Director



Ed Graça
Executive Director

It is our pleasure to present to you on behalf of the Abrigo Centre's Board of Directors and staff, our agency's 2016/17 Annual Report.

For more than two years now, Abrigo's tagline of "Connecting People to Possibilities" has moved the organization forward not only in our marketing initiatives but also in the mindset of our staff members and volunteers. In addition to Abrigo staff being well versed in providing traditional options of support, they have the vision and skills to see beyond the mainstream and find unique ways to address a client's need. This ability translates to a more impactful experience for our clients.

In this edition, you will meet just a few of Abrigo's wonderful clients. Their stories will inspire you and provide insights on why the Abrigo Centre is one of the GTA's most respected social service agencies, as our reputation extends well beyond our work in the thriving Portuguese community around us.

In this fiscal year, Abrigo was one of 62 social service agencies selected to become an "Anchor" agency of the United Way Toronto & York Region. That means that starting in fiscal 2018/19 Abrigo will receive five years of committed and stable funding to run a number of our programs and services. That financial stability significantly helps our agency to better plan to meet the needs of our growing client base. The competitive process to achieve this highly sought after designation was rigorous and securing this funding is a testimony to strong work performed by our staff members and the agency as a whole.

Each year, the Abrigo Centre helps more than 6,600 unique clients but the core work we do on a daily basis has been our mandate from day one; keep laser sharp focus on women and children who

are experiencing domestic violence. Despite all the attention brought to bear on the issue of domestic violence, an agency like Abrigo still annually sees over 775 clients who face this issue. There are no easy answers. Individual lives are layered and complex. Our counsellors work with each woman to find the right path for that individual.

We extend our thanks to Abrigo's outstanding Board of Directors for their exceptional leadership guiding the organization. Skilled and dedicated, during the year they took on the huge task of a complete update of Abrigo's Policies and Procedures manual and their commitment to be more active in the area of philanthropy yielded excellent results and laid the groundwork for future success.

Of course, Abrigo could not function on such an effective level without the support and dedication of a skilled team of youth and adult volunteers. Thank you!

Abrigo's loyal donors, including individuals, corporations, community groups and funders at all government levels provide the energy and commitment needed to keep our diverse programs and services operating at the highest level possible. We thank every one of you for your generous financial support!

"Go to Abrigo" has been a common refrain repeated thousands of times over the years to individuals in need of assistance. We are proud that Abrigo's skilled and talented team has earned your trust and respect. Please know that we will continue the tradition of always being there for you in your time of need. Thank you again for your ongoing support.

Who We Are

The mission of the Abrigo Centre is to build community capacity in west Toronto by helping individuals and families achieve their full potential. Abrigo connects people to possibilities by presenting clients with the best options available to resolve their issue or concern. The client then decides which direction to choose. It's a simple concept but one that has time and again proved to be highly successful.

Abrigo's open intake process, where you can drop in or call any weekday afternoon and speak to a counsellor, has been a boon for new clients. Funding from our partners at the United Way Toronto & York Region help keep this important service open. Days or weeks need not pass by before you can speak to someone capable of providing help. Abrigo's services are immediate and if we do not provide the specialized counselling you need, a referral is made to an appropriate resource.

Each year Abrigo sees it reach grow beyond the Portuguese community. Now in the sixth year at our St. Clair and Dufferin location more and more local residents are turning to Abrigo for assistance. Approximately 70 per cent of our clients are Portuguese-speaking and the remaining from a wonderful mix of cultural backgrounds. It is Toronto and the GTA at its finest. As a cornerstone of community care, Abrigo is always ready to serve you and provide the help you need. Abrigo is continually growing and evolving to keep pace with your needs.

Our Strategic Priorities for Fiscal 2017/18

- Develop a new Strategic Plan for 2018 through 2021
- Confirming Abrigo's United Way "Anchor" designation responsibilities and re-positioning funding from 2018 through 2023
- Raise Abrigo's profile in the community and further support the agency's fundraising and donor engagement efforts

Abrigo By The Numbers

6,706	Total number of clients served (includes school outreach)
3,402	Number of clients served by the Community Development and Integration Program (CDIP)
1,508	Number of clients served by the Youth Outreach program
788	Number of clients served by the Violence Against Women program
663	Number of clients served by the Partner Assault Response (PAR) program
121	Number of volunteers donating their time to Abrigo
15,205	Number of hours donated by Abrigo's volunteers
180	Number of clients served by the Life and Hope Seniors group
194	Number of clients served by Parenting groups



Volunteers Take Centre Stage at the Imagine the Possibilities Gala

Abrigo Centre's annual signature fundraising event held in March at LiUNA Local 183's Gerry Gallagher Hall in Toronto featured a tribute to the 120 plus volunteers who help ensure that our clients get the best care and service possible.

Mr. Manuel DaCosta, owner of Viana Roofing & Sheet Metal Inc. and the Platinum Sponsor of this year's gala, recorded a heartfelt video tribute to the Abrigo volunteers with a call to action to support both Abrigo and other community services that help those less fortunate.



Following Mr. DaCosta's video, the highlight of the night was an incredible speech delivered by 12-year Abrigo volunteer Donzilia Veiga. Mrs. Veiga brought the house to its feet with inspiring remarks about what it means to be a volunteer at Abrigo.

The evening started with a wonderful performance by fado guitar duo Nuno Cristo and Pedro Joel. They beautifully serenaded guests throughout the reception hour and later during dinner. Co-MC's Telma Pinguelo from Camões Radio and media personality Mo-D guided the evening with both humour and a steady hand.

The Abrigo gala would not be possible without the support of our corporate sponsors. In particular, our sincere thanks to our returning Presenting Sponsors LiUNA Local 183 and LiUNA OPDC under the leadership of Mr. Jack Oliveira and the Canadian Council of Construction Unions. Thank you again for your ongoing support!



In total, a record \$43,500 was raised for enhancing the programs and services delivered to Abrigo clients. Thank you to all our corporate sponsors, silent auction donors and guests for your generous support!



Spotlight on Abrigo Programs

Abrigo Centre's programs and services make a positive impact on thousands of clients each year. In this year's Annual Report, one program profiled provides clients with a path to life success and the other a path out of isolation and into a warm and welcoming environment.

Community Development and Integration Program

Abrigo Centre's Community Development and Integration Program (CDIP) assists more than 3,400 people a year. Abrigo's open intake system, funded with the assistance of the United Way Toronto & York Region and the City of Toronto, allows any new client – either in person or by telephone – to speak to a counsellor for the first time any weekday between 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Clients can ask our counsellors any question that they feel is important. This service is provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Priority is given to women experiencing abuse.

For decades Portuguese-speaking individuals, families and seniors have turned to Abrigo to access information and basic resources such as social assistance and pensions due to language barriers, computer illiteracy or isolation.

This program serves as a portal into all of Abrigo's services and addresses the needs of clients of all ages. It encourages individuals to develop and change at their own pace according to their needs and priorities. Clients work to become better equipped to help themselves and move toward self-reliance.

Community development is about the active involvement of people on the issues that affect their lives. Newcomers from Portugal, Brazil and African Portuguese-speaking countries, although eager to integrate into society, often require support to access services and resources. Abrigo accommodates their needs and creates a welcoming and inclusive community that results in their successful adaptation and integration.

Seniors Recreational and Education Program (Life and Hope Group or Grupo Vida e Esperança)

A small group of volunteers started Abrigo's *Life and Hope Group* in 2010. They realized the urgent need in the community for a peer-to-peer support group. The idea of reaching out to seniors living in isolation and offering companionship and support has changed so many lives and has become a huge part of Abrigo's success.

Membership in the *Life And Hope Group* totals over 180 registered participants and is growing rapidly. Located on Abrigo's second floor, the program runs Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week. On average, 80 to 100 seniors participate in each session and the programming includes a variety of social and recreational pursuits. Activities available to participants include exercise classes, computer classes, art classes, singing, dancing, health and financial information sessions, games such as bingo and field trips to local and regional attractions.

One current strategic priority of the Abrigo Centre is to focus our efforts on assisting the growing senior population in our community. Perhaps the ingredient most important to the success of this program is the opportunity to spend quality time with peers and build life-long friendships. Many members of the *Life and Hope Group* actively give back to the community as well. They visit nursing homes during the holiday season to sing, dance and entertain residents. They also perform at local arts events including Toronto's Portugal Day parade activities.



Community Development and Integration

Providing a Blueprint to Success

Maria Cabral worked in the retail industry in both her native São Miguel, Portugal and in Toronto for decades. As a single mom of two struggling to get by, the hours were long but work was an important part of her life and her identity.

In 2015, the US-based company she worked for here in Toronto laid her off. It was a difficult blow, made worse by her former employer routinely failing to provide Maria with a record of employment when asked. For three months, Maria repeatedly tried to obtain the document without success.

With the holidays fast approaching, it was a dark period for Maria. Health issues, both for herself and one of her sons, played a part. Normally upbeat and happy, she felt she had little to offer friends and family. With her finances running low and her frustrations running high, she turned to Abrigo for help.

Maria saw a counsellor during Abrigo's open intake program hours. Funded by the United Way Toronto & York Region and the City of Toronto, this service, part of Abrigo's Community Development and Integration Program, allows anyone to drop in between 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. each workday and talk in person to a counsellor.

A sense of relief poured over Maria when Abrigo staff member Liliana da Cunha informed her that Abrigo would assist with obtaining the document and that she was entitled to Employment Insurance (EI) benefits as well. "I'm very happy with the service I've received. I was surprised at how friendly and nice everyone is. Other agencies are not like that," says Maria.

Eventually, the record of employment was obtained and provided to Service Canada. During the wait period for EI benefits, Abrigo worked with her to apply for Ontario Works until she started to receive her EI. Maria was very thankful that with persistence, she was able to get the benefits she was entitled to. "I tell people to go to Abrigo. I hear people talk and everyone is happy with the service they receive."

Unable to afford her rent any longer, Maria was desperate to leave her basement apartment. She was

on a 9-year waitlist for a one-bedroom apartment with Toronto Community Housing. Her Abrigo counsellor suggested that Maria consider switching her request to a bachelor unit to reduce the wait time. She did and Maria was able to secure her "Barbie unit" as she calls it – small but cute – within walking distance from Abrigo in a few months.

Since then, Abrigo has helped Maria, now 65 apply for her Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security. She has also joined Abrigo's *Life and Hope* seniors program. That group meets three days a week and helps break

the cycle of isolation that many of Maria's peers face daily.

In the last year and a half, Maria has used the services of the Abrigo Centre as needed and has seen a dramatic and positive turnaround in her life. She truly enjoys spending time with her family and new Abrigo friends. Maria resolutely states, "Abrigo is amazing. I think it's the best agency in Canada!"



Youth Programs

Navigating Life Day by Day

Michelle Daniel, now 24 years old, first came to Abrigo Centre in the summer of 2013. By anyone's measurement, the road map of her life has been a journey dotted with challenges and hardships that she and others have faced, but no one should have to endure.

Her larger than life personality hides the wounds she carries from growing up in a family ransacked by alcohol, divorce and multiple forms of abuse that started when she was just a child.

Michelle's story is one of resiliency, strength of character, forgiveness and a belief that each new day provides the opportunity for self-improvement.

"I've been through some tumultuous times and moments in my life. I have learned lessons the hard way. But I feel that I've grown as a person from what I've been through. Every day is now a blessing."

As a youngster, Michelle sought the attention of her parents, who were going through some difficult times, and others around her. She turned to stealing from neighbours and family members to gain it. Her older sister soon became her mother's favourite and there was a line of division within the family. Michelle's father was her confidant and the one person, she believes, who has always loved her unconditionally.

When she was eight, Michelle's parents separated and her father left the family home. During this turbulent time, "I did not want to have anything to do with my mother," says Michelle. She also was confronted with the harsh reality of sexual abuse at a young age. Attendance at school soon became sporadic and she started using drugs. Dropping out of school eventually followed as did a stint in foster care, and later as a young adult, an addiction to cocaine.

After three months of rehab in a Quebec facility, Michelle's life slowly began to change. Referred from another social service agency, Abrigo Youth Counsellor

Maggie Batista has been supporting Michelle as she navigates through life's challenges. "I truly love the people who work at Abrigo, they have helped me so much... you feel so much better to talk to someone. Just to be listened to makes me feel better," says Michelle.

Abrigo has helped her identify and understand the different forms of abuse and its impact. She had the strength to leave an unhealthy relationship with the support of her father and stepmother. Today, she has a healthy and beautiful 22-month old baby girl and Michelle is committed to being a positive role model for her daughter Nova.

Michelle has had a number of other successes recently. She has worked diligently to build healthier relationships, most importantly with her mother. "When I had my baby

we didn't really have a relationship but today, with Nova in our lives, we call or face-time each other every day."

Michelle currently is in a strong and healthy relationship, has a job and is going to college in the fall to study fashion with the hopes of starting her own clothing line someday. "It's been 10

years since I was last in school. It's bitter sweet really, but I want to show Nova that you have to work hard for things in life, every single day. Perseverance is key, that's what is going to get you to the next step and the step after that."

Her belief in Abrigo's work is unwavering. "I want to express how great Abrigo is because the counsellors have honestly helped me so much. No other agency gave me the confidence and the power within myself to wake up in the morning, hold my head up high and say, 'I've made mistakes, but this isn't who I am or what I am going to be for the rest of my life.' I am where I am today because of Abrigo... That's what makes them so amazing."



Our Board and Staff

Membership of Abrigo's Board of Directors

April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017

Claire de Oliveira
Diana Da Silva
Humberto Carolo, Chair
Ilda Januario
Lisa Melo
Michael Borrelli, Vice Chair
Miguel Mendes
Patricia Harper
Paula Oliveira
Sandra Gamboias

Abrigo Staff Members

Ana Machado
Ana Marques
Anderson Salvador
Ashley de Souza Bannon
Cidalia Pereira
Diana da Costa Correia
Ed Graça, Executive Director
Gerry Luciano
Hugo Mestre
Liliana da Cunha
Maggie Batista
Marilia Dos Santos
Marisa Gomes Marques
Raji Choudhury
Rosane Fernandes
Teresa Emmanuel
Valeria Sales



Services

Violence Against Women Counselling
Youth Services
Individual Counselling
Seniors Educational & Recreational Group
Community Development & Integration Program
Government form filling
Newcomer Services
Partner Assault Response (PAR) Program
Volunteer Opportunities

Success by Six (parenting group for mothers)
P.A.I. (parenting group for fathers)
Teens Against Gender-based Violence (TAG-V)
Family Counselling
Annual Income Tax Clinic
Seniors Assisting Seniors
Comprehensive Needs Assessment
Information and Referral Services

Volunteers: The Cornerstone of Our Community



Organizations such as the Abrigo Centre rely on the contributions of our volunteers to ensure that our clients receive the best service and care possible. Whether it is helping an aging client fill out a government form, a student providing an evening of assistance at a fundraising event, or a senior babysitting a toddler while the infant's mother takes a parenting class, our volunteers play a critical role in our agency's daily success. Abrigo volunteers hold a wide array of interests and abilities but they are tireless, enthusiastic and devoted to the cause – a perfect combination for success. In fiscal 2016/17, 121 devoted volunteers cumulatively provided 15,205 hours of service to our clients and the community.

Thank you to all the volunteers listed below for providing your time, energy and passion to improve the lives of others in need.

Alice Brites
Alicia Pacheco
Aparicio Rodrigues
Amanda Patricia Rozati
Amelia Moreira
Ana Claudia Valois F. de Oliveira
Ana Rodrigues
Adriano Morais Monroe
Alice Ferreira
Amanda Baptista
Andrew Alexandre
Anthony William Harker
Bianca Fernandez Pereira
Candida Rodrigues
Carla Madureira
Carlos Alberto Melo
Carmina Pereira
Claudio Hira
Cristina Pinto Gonçalves
Darcia Mota Fragoso
Dimitria Mendes de Paula
Dimas Aloisio
Dina Guarda
Donzilia Veiga
Eliana Ferreira
Emilia Camara
Emily Dias
Elisabete Dias
Eric Alexandre
Enir Bassani
Fabiano Sales
Fatima Silva

Felismina Pires
Fernanda Couto
Francisco Ferreira
Francisco Leite
Filipe Santos
Gillian Day-Lopes
Georvina Bandeira Gomes
Helena Lopes
Iamara Veloso Sousa
Isabel Mateus
Giulia Veiga
Glenn Marques
Iva Barcelos
Isabel Pereira
Isabela Tingão
Isaias Gomes
Joana Filipa Sousa Nunes
João Almeida
João Pires
Joaquina Vieira
Jaqueline Rodrigues
Jofre Nganga
Jordan Bannon
José Manuel
José Manuel Costa
Julia Luciano
Julie Lam
Julieta da Cunha
Larissa Fernandez Pereira
Laura Galeazza
Leonilde Marques
Lia Soares Costa

Ligia Sardo
Liza Bourguignon
Lisete Ribeiro
Lisiane Vilhalba Prestes
Luan Borges
Luis Alexandre
Lurdes Jesus
Manuel Rafael Prudencio
Serralheiro
Margarida Pedro
Maria Conceição Veloza
Maria Almeida
Maria de Deus
Maria Eduarda Silva
Maria Isabel Semedo
Maria Medeiros
Maria Medeiros Seniors
Maria Odete Melo
Maria Resendes
Maria Silva
Maria Teresa Moura
Maria Zelia Tavares
Marilene Pereira Silva
Marlucy Mandarino da Silva
Messias Medeiros
Natalia Cristina da Silva Oliveira
Natividade Lobo
Nicholas Luciano
Otilia Leite
Palmira Costa
Paula de Medeiros
Paulo Luis

Perpetua Borges
Priscila Correia
Ricardina Nogueira
Rosaria Pacheco
Rivka Lopes Pereira
Sabrina de Medeiros Gamboias
Sergio Sarmiento
Sharon Weisbaum
Sinara Pontes Gomide Alves
Sofia Dias
Steven Dias
Sunamita Desjardins
Thalita Araujo de Paula Costa
Tina Ferreira
Urania Silveira
Vanessa Dias
Venilde Ferreira
Vivalda Silva

PLACEMENT STUDENTS

Ana Paula Correa Lauer
Angela Kanayama Hira
Arvin Ighani
Caithy Hui
Dazy Pimentel
Eunice De Almeida
Linda Cardoso
Michael Ribeiro
Skylar Eustaquio

Thank You to our Donors!

Abrigo Centre gratefully acknowledges the generous financial support received from our funding partners, corporate donors, community groups and individuals. Your commitment allows our staff and volunteers to deliver outstanding programs and services to thousands of individuals and families each year.

Funding Partners

Canadian Women's Foundation
Catholic Children's Aid Society
City of Toronto
Ministry of the Attorney General
Ministry of Children and Youth Services

Ministry of Community and Social Services
Região Autónoma Dos Açores
Service Canada
United Way Toronto & York Region
University Health Network

Corporate and Community Partners

17 Designs
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BMO - Bank of Montreal
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CHUM Charitable Foundation
Consulate General of Portugal
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LiUNA Ontario Provincial District Council
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Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment
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Neinstein Personal Injury Lawyers
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Royal LePage Supreme Realty
Somerset Wallace Developments Inc.
St. Clair Simply Pharmacy
Toronto Seventh Day Adventist Portuguese Church
Viana Roofing & Sheet Metal
Woodbine Entertainment Group
York Lions Club



Individuals

Amelia Moreira
Americo Santos
Ana Machado
Ana Marcos
Ana Marques
Ana Paula Lopes
Anderson Salvador
Anisa Sala
Antonio Torres
Arnold Santos
Ashley de Souza Bannon
Bryce Eric Bursey
Camila Andrade
Candida Rodrigues
Cesar Palacio
Cidalia Pereira
Claire de Oliveira
Decio Alto
Diana Correia
Diana Da Silva
Donzilia Veiga
Ed Graça
Edilma Souza
Eduarda Cade
Elaine Adam
Elisio Jordão
Emanuel De Melo

Etelvina Francisco
Fr. Fernando Couto
Fernando Nunes
Francisco Leite
Francisco Varela
Gerald Luciano
Gisel Bettencourt
Helen Filipe
Helena Pereira
Hugo Mestre
Humberto Carolo
Ilda Junuario
Iria Barcelos
Isabel Maria Sales
Isabel Vieira
Janis Alton
Jeffery Mackintosh
Jennifer Ross
João Antunes
João Azevado
João Trota
João Nunes
José Manuel Simões
José Melo
José Silva
José V. Silveira
Kate Bazydlo

Laura Galeazza
Laurel Mercer
Leonilde Marques
Liliana da Cunha
Lisa Anne Jacek
Lisa Melo
Luis Meranda
Luisa Disimone
M. José Tavares
Maggie Batista
Manuela Marujo
Margarida Martins
Maria Benevides
Maria C. Melo
Maria Coelho
Maria Conceição Fernandes
Maria Couto Rodrigues
Maria Cristina Alves
Maria Helena Da Silva
Maria Herminia Melo
Maria Melo
Maria Nazaré Silva
Maria Odete Cerqueira
Marilia dos Santos
Marisa Gomes Marques
Marleide Feitosa
Martina Faria

Matthew Graça
Mazyar Mortazavi
Monika Altieri
Nathan Conley
Nelia Da Silva
Norm Jurgen
Patricia Harper
Paul Azevedo
Paula De Jesus
Paulo Junior Pereira
Ricarda Ventura
Rosa Azevedo
Rosane Fernandes
Rosy Melo Shushkevich
Ruth Fernandes
Ruth Jamie Lee Bannon
Samantha Graça
Sandra Gamboias
Stella Jurgen
Susan Da Cruz
Susan Metzler
Teresa Emmanuel
Tomas A. Fagundes
Valeria Sales
Virginia Luis
Vivalda Silva
Wai Y. Lai

Statement of Operations and Expenses for the year ended March 31, 2017

2017 2016

Revenue

Ministry of Community and Social Services	\$ 425,671	\$ 418,671
United Way Toronto & York Region	261,783	267,083
Ministry of the Attorney General	166,537	166,537
City of Toronto - Community Service Partnerships	105,305	103,055
Service Canada	39,683	32,868
Ministry of Children and Youth Services	37,332	37,332
Canadian Women's Foundation	42,000	50,000
United Way "Success by Six" program	19,443	19,443
Região Autónoma Dos Açores	10,315	9,965
Interpretation reimbursement	39,264	11,098
University Health Network Project	13,500	13,500
Catholic Children's Aid Society	25,900	20,375
Fees	51,164	41,686
Donations and fundraising	131,176	101,650
Other	10,891	9,404
	1,379,964	1,302,667

Expenses

Salaries, benefits and training	1,005,723	971,100
Occupancy costs	211,516	199,453
Program costs	54,245	49,421
Professional fees and insurance	36,396	36,612
Communication and technology	16,652	15,361
Interpretation costs	39,264	11,098
Fundraising	18,902	16,595
	1,382,698	1,299,640

Excess of expenses over revenue

\$ (2,734)	\$ 3,027
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(Excerpted from Abrigo Centre's audited financial statements which were prepared by Dixon, Gordon & Co. LLP, Chartered Accountants with an Auditors' Report dated June 15, 2017. Full audited financial statements available upon request)



Abrigo Connects People to Possibilities



Your support makes a difference.
Please donate today.



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Telephone: (416) 534-3434
New Client Drop-in Hours: Weekdays 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
On the Web: www.abrigo.ca Twitter: @abrigocentre
Facebook & Instagram: /abrigocentre
Charitable Number 129515284 RR0001



United Way
Toronto & York Region