

# camh connexions



## Welcoming light and connection at CAMH

At CAMH, we know how important a sense of joy and belonging is for our patients, staff, and community. During the shortest days of the year, we focused on creating warmth, connection, and celebration.

### Celebrating together at the Festival of Lights

The holiday season at CAMH began with the Festival

of Lights, which honours various traditions, including Kwanzaa, Diwali, Christmas, and Hanukkah. Held in TD Commons, this event created a welcoming space for patients, staff, and community members to gather and celebrate. The evening was filled with live music, community performances, arts and crafts, and festive treats—all leading up to a magical tree-lighting moment.

*"What started as a simple tree-lighting ceremony has grown into a celebration of the many ways our patients honour light, warmth, and connection during the holidays"*

*– Johnathan Pathmanathan, Gifts of Light, Interim Manager*



(Cont'd)

### Spreading joy with CAMH's Gifts of Light

Each holiday season, our Gifts of Light staff, supported by corporate volunteers, create personalized holiday cards and hand-wrapped gifts for more than 4,500 CAMH patients, reminding them they are not alone.

Our Gifts of Light program works diligently to fundraise gift donations for patients ahead of the holiday season to bring joy and a sense of belonging to people in our care. In the weeks leading up to the holidays, compassionate volunteers and staff participated in a celebration called "elves wrapping," where they packaged each Gift of Light in large, colourful gift bags adorned with ribbons.



***"We've heard stories of clients carrying around their holiday card with them to appointments and posting it on their walls for a year-round reminder that they're deserving, important, and strong."***

*– Astrid Marschall, Gifts of Light, Inventory Specialist*

This program is only possible because of the generosity of our community—including many of you. Thank you for making the holidays brighter for people in our care.



## About Gifts of Light

CAMH's **Gifts of Light program** is funded entirely by donations and designed to address patients' wellness needs beyond clinical care. We collaborate with patients, families, and clinical staff to provide enriching activities, creating a safe space to foster supportive connections and help patients experience a sense of fulfillment.

### Bringing holiday cheer to our neighbours

In recent months, our construction partners at PCL noticed several families and neighbours showing interest in our construction project and chatting with our team at the gate on Shaw Street. This kindness has meant a great deal to us. To express their appreciation for the community's understanding and welcoming response to our redevelopment, over the holiday season, the team shared small gifts, like squishy hard hat stress balls, with passersby as a token of thanks.



Thank you to everyone who contributed to making this holiday season at CAMH special. Your kindness and creativity helped bring warmth and joy to so many.

# CAMH announces Waverley House Secure Care & Recovery Building

CAMH is proud to announce the new **Waverley House Secure Care & Recovery Building**, recognizing a historic **\$203 million donation, from Bruce McKean and the Waverley House Foundation**. This life-changing contribution to CAMH marks the largest cumulative donation to mental health in Canadian history.

Currently under construction at CAMH's Queen Street West site, the Waverley House Secure Care and Recovery building will replace and modernize CAMH's existing forensic facilities for patients with mental illness who have encountered the legal system. This state-of-the-art building will allow us to better support patient recovery and advance community safety. It will house 214 inpatient beds, outpatient clinics, recovery-based therapeutic spaces, Ontario Review Board hearing rooms, and secure outdoor areas.



Bruce McKean established the Waverley House Foundation in 2017 to support high-impact research initiatives that help to identify and treat mental illnesses.

## McKean's cumulative giving to CAMH includes:

- A **\$100 million donation** in 2018 developed the CAMH Discovery Fund, investing in research to better understand the causes of mental illness and find effective treatments.
- A **\$100 million donation** towards CAMH's fourth and final phase of redevelopment.
- A **\$3 million donation** towards CAMH's Research Chair in Forensic Psychiatry, to deepen global understanding of a historically understudied and underfunded area of mental health.

## Celebrating 10 years of the Forensic Early Intervention Service

In November, CAMH marked 10 years of the Forensic Early Intervention Service (FEIS) with staff, representatives from the Toronto South Detention Centre, and provincial officials.

FEIS was created to ensure people entering correctional facilities can access timely, effective mental health care. By working with correctional institutions, government partners, and mental health professionals, FEIS provides early mental health screening and ongoing support as needed.

Initially aiming to reach 15% of people entering custody, the FEIS team now connects with more than 30%, providing care to more than 16,000 people. As momentum builds to expand the program, CAMH remains committed to improving access to mental health care for people who need it most.





# An update on our redevelopment

In January, CAMH celebrated one year since we began the construction process for the fourth and final phase of our historic redevelopment! This last stage involves constructing two new buildings at our Queen Street West site.

- The **Temerty Discovery Centre**, a state-of-the-art facility, will be dedicated to housing CAMH's groundbreaking research. This building is expected to be completed in 2027.
- The **Waverley House Secure Care & Recovery Building** will replace our current facilities for patients with complex mental illnesses who have encountered the legal system. This building is expected to be completed in 2029.

You can learn more about upcoming events, community meetings, and redevelopment updates on our dedicated webpage for our local community members. Check it out at [camh.ca/neighbours](https://camh.ca/neighbours).

## Recent construction highlights:

- On January 21, we installed the fifth and final crane tower at the Waverley House Secure Care & Recovery building site.
- In December, we began redirecting the perimeter safety lighting to the project zone and turning off the tower crane lights at night. Our aim was to reduce lighting impact in response to community feedback. We will continue these practices moving

forward. Thank you for your input; we appreciate your collaboration in finding a solution.

## Upcoming construction activities scheduled for the coming months:

- We will continue with forming, rebar, and concrete activities as we develop the structure of each building. This process involves creating molds for the concrete to be poured into.
- We will start to install subdivision utilities, including gas lines, hydro, cable, and telephone wires.
- We will continue excavation related to the underground mechanical and electrical installations and backfill activities.

We are excited to be one year closer to transforming our Queen Street West site into a more integrated and welcoming space, bringing together research and care while promoting compassionate attitudes toward mental health.

**Feedback? Please email [redemption.feedback@camh.ca](mailto:redemption.feedback@camh.ca).**

We appreciate your understanding and patience during this exciting time of transformation at CAMH.

# 175 years of mental health care at CAMH's Queen Street West site

January 26, 2025, marked 175 years since the first dedicated mental health facility opened on what is now CAMH's Queen Street West site. Since then, the hospital has undergone incredible transformation—both in our buildings and spaces, and in the care we provide for our patients and their families.

Here's a look at some key moments in our history with images pulled from the CAMH Archives:

## 1850: Provincial Lunatic Asylum opens

The first building dedicated to mental health care in Canada opened with 211 patients. It was enclosed by masonry walls—built by patients—sections of which remain as heritage structures today.



## 1950s: Expanding facilities

This photo of a ward-style room was taken in the 1950s when the hospital was approximately 100 years old. As you can see, even then additional space was needed.



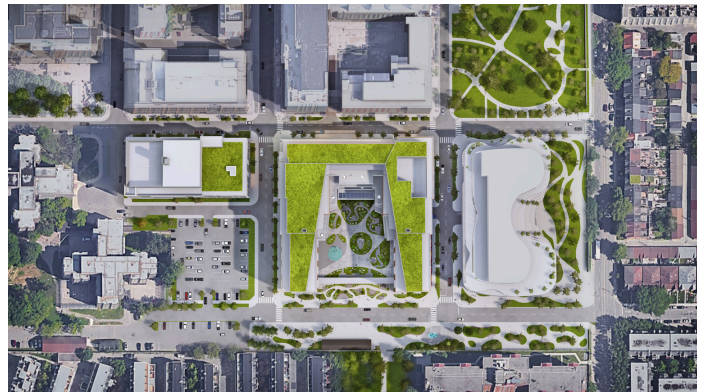
## 1976: Demolition of the 1850 Asylum

As part of a major redevelopment, patients moved into four newly built treatment units, and the original asylum building was demolished to make way for more modern structures.



## Today: A new era of mental health care

CAMH's ongoing redevelopment reflects our commitment to recovery, community, and innovation in mental health care.



## CAMH has once again been ranked Canada's top mental health research hospital

This recognition comes as **CAMH surpassed \$100 million in research spending in 2022 to 2023**. This investment directly fuels groundbreaking discoveries in mental health and addiction, driving innovations that improve care for patients today and shape the future of treatment.



# Help us change mental health forever

Individual and community support is driving meaningful change and building a more inclusive society. But we still have a long way to go. In these cold winter months, your support brings warmth and hope—a reminder that we are stronger together. It's more than a donation. It's a bold statement that mental health matters.

Make a one-time donation or a gift in tribute to honour someone dear to you at [camh.ca/donate](https://camh.ca/donate).

## Swim for mental health

Jason Kloss has attempted to swim across Lake Ontario twice in memory of his grandfather, who died from Alzheimer's, and a friend who died by suicide. These personal losses motivated him to swim again and launch a fundraising campaign for CAMH. Supporters joined him by dedicating segments of his swim to their loved ones, helping Jason exceed his \$50,000 fundraising goal, with more than \$75,000 raised to date.

If you'd like to host a fundraiser of your own, reach out to [fundraise@camh.ca](mailto:fundraise@camh.ca) to get started.



Source: Vuk Dragojevic

## Continue the conversation online

Visit [camh.ca/neighbours](https://camh.ca/neighbours)

Send your feedback on redevelopment to [redvelopment.feedback@camh.ca](mailto:redvelopment.feedback@camh.ca).

To join our local community email list, please reach out to [communityevents@camh.ca](mailto:communityevents@camh.ca).

