

ONE PEOPLE, ONE VOICE, ONE COMMUNITY



ANNUAL REPORT 2016 - 2017

Message from the President

I am pleased to report that 2016/2017 at Midaynta Community Services has been a year of change and progress, accompanied with great energy and enthusiasm. This year we saw significant progress in the strategic plan that was set by the board from the previous years. Our priority was to meet key objectives in our journey towards growth and development by increasing our funding effort and applying for new and further government funding. This effort has been successful and Midaynta has increased its clients, organizational membership, funding partners, agency partners and a large service provision for our community.

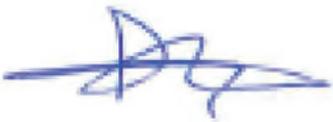
With the help of a legal advisor we have revised and updated our policies and procedures in order to be able to meet the services needed in the community. The board has also initiated a board governance review, risk mitigation planning, and the development of a succession plan for members of the board and staff in key positions. Members of the board have also been fully engaged in Midaynta's visioning process with the assistance of a hired consultant.

Adapting to change and responding to the needs of the community has always been our strength. The board of directors, staff and volunteers have worked tirelessly to ensure progress and development on Midaynta's mission and vision statement. We will continue our dedication effort into addressing the crisis of youth violence, poverty, justice issues, educations issues, trauma, mental health and systemic racism that affect our community so deeply.

As an organization, Midaynta has always strived to meet new challenges with effective and supportive services. Identifying the need for change and responses to challenges, the Board of Directors embarked on a strategic planning process which will also be reviewed in planning sessions in 2018. Revitalized by its commitment to meeting community needs, the board is excited to lead the organization into a year with a sense of renewed hope, leading the way with new initiatives that will provide opportunities for success.

We the Board of Directors at Midaynta are proud of the organization that we have become, and are looking forward to what exciting challenges and opportunities are coming next. Midaynta has grown through the immense dedication and passion of staff, volunteers, students, community members and fellow Board members. The growth has brought Midaynta to new heights and we are so happy to see what the future of Midaynta has in store! A huge thank you to our funders, partners and collaborators who have supported and had faith in us, your generous help will never go unnoticed and helps tremendously in providing the best services and supports for our community.

Thank You,



Abdirahman Dhor
President

Message from the Executive Director

I am pleased to report that Midaynta Community Services this year has been stabilized, strengthened and further developed. This has been not only a challenging year but also a year of visioning and a turning point for Midaynta Community Services. With the difficulties and challenges Midaynta faced in these past years, we still turned around more motivated and determined. This was a result of the tireless dedication of our staff, volunteers and board members for their continuous support and commitment to our organization.

Over the years, Midaynta has taken an active role to advocate and raise awareness on issues affecting black youth in Toronto and provide quality service that help address these issues. The organization has grown from delivering family settlement services to providing a wide range of youth-targeted and community programs that rely on evidence-informed solutions and strategies. Particularly, Midaynta is at the forefront of addressing gang activities and gun violence in our community through Project Turn-Around.

We released our second report on the Youth Radicalization Conference: New and Emerging Challenges, which took place on November 16-17, 2016 at the Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto. This conference was organized through the partnership of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education University of Toronto, The Mosaic Institute, Council of Imams, Midaynta Community Services, and the Office of the Consulate General of the United States.

The over-representation of Somali youth in the correctional systems as well as the increase in violence in the Somali community continues to be alarming. This year, the Somali community faced an unfortunate number of events that resulted in the meeting between Somali mothers and Ontario Provincial Ministers' on February 19, 2017, with hopes of securing government support and resources to implement a community focused action plan entitled "Mending the Crack in the Sky". The mother's set out priority requests that included funding and developing a comprehensive legal team to serve Somali communities, create targeted mental health counseling and fund research to support evidence based services for Somali community.

Midaynta also held community consultation meetings with parents and youth to come up with a community action plan in solving community issues as a collective and to address systemic barriers present in city policies, programs and services. The community is in high need of cultural response trauma and mental health targeted programs to address the social realities of immigration, islamophobia, racism, poverty, stereotypes, and unemployment.

We have also expanded our partnerships with Canadian Training Institute, 360° kids and Brampton Multicultural Community Centre. This is a collaborative effort to support our organizations, specifically, our GPIP programs in order to maintain best practice approaches and continuous support to our client populations and communities.

On behalf of Midaynta, I would like to thank our dedicated staff, board as well as our partners and collaborators, Jamaican Canadian Association (JCA), BADC, Northwood Neighbourhood Services, Somali Immigrant Aid Organization, U.S. Consulate, The Heart & Stroke Foundation, Northwood Neighbourhood Services, University of Toronto, OISE, ACCO, Canadian Training Institute, 360° kids and Brampton Multicultural Community Centre. Special thanks to our funders in the Ontario Government and the City of Toronto, whose support has been indispensable to our community.

Thank you!



Mahad Yusuf
Executive Director



Midaynta History and Mission Statement

Midaynta Community Services is a registered Canadian charitable organization that provides settlement services and community development programs such as educational courses, seminars, workshops, community events, counselling and other support services for refugees, immigrants and youths in needs. We are a social and settlement service agency, working hard to improve the quality of life of newcomers in Toronto and vicinity.

Midaynta was established in July 1993 as a family reunification project, and incorporated in August 1995 as a non-profit organization that is committed to identifying and responding to the needs of the community. Midaynta abides by a policy of non-discrimination and equity, and our services are open to everyone and are free of charge. We are a team of professionals who are committed and passionate about the community as a whole.

Midaynta's success is built on strong working relationships with its stakeholders. Due to our diversified services, Midaynta is able to assist newcomers from their initial start-up process upon arrival until their full integration into Canadian society. We are striving to provide services that promote accountability, transparency, social justice, equality and equity, partnership and diversity.

Midaynta is committed to building vibrant communities in which social and economic developments are central to all aspects of individual and family life.

- We believe in and value the provision of high quality community social services that promote and build a better and prosperous society;
- We are accessible, equitable and accountable to the community;
- We provide free and friendly settlement and community development services, and continue to advocate for a largely underserved and marginalized communities;
- We believe in working in partnership and collaboratively with other service providers to make a difference in developing the community and society;
- We serve clients regardless of race, national origin, ethnicity, culture, gender, sex, sexual orientation, age, ability or religion; and
- We endeavour to unite the communities by creating a socially cohesive environment under the roof of a "Community Centre".



We strive and provide services that promote accountability, transparency, social justice, equality, equity, partnership and diversity.



Project Turn Around

Project Turn Around (PTA) will be completing its second year as a prevention/intervention program whose services support gang involved youth and/or high-risk youth at risk of gang involvement. The program is designed to support youth aged 12-20 who are involved and/or at risk of gang involvement which includes but not limited to youth:

- Who may be at risk of gang involvement or who are in conflict with the law, and/or;
- Have been sentenced and are at risk to reoffend, and/or;
- Are at higher risk of criminal/violent behaviour and poorer outcomes and/or reside in a high needs community that further increases exposure to risk factors, and /or;
- Have multiple risk factors and challenges and/or have experienced specific incidents that increase their risk, such as a sibling in conflict with the law.

This year, PTA caseworkers connected with Peach's pre-charge divergence program where pre-charge youth are given alternative channels to address their challenges. Also, PTA has become an active member of F.O.C.U.S Rexdale, which is a collaborative situation table organized by United Way, City of Toronto and The Toronto police. Many organizations sit on this table and bring situations and client referrals. PTA was a part of over 150 service providers and agencies that attended F.O.C.U.S Toronto's collaborative risk driven approach annual event. This event was to let the community know of the successes the F.O.C.U.S on Rexdale table has had and to announce the addition of three similar tables in the downtown core and in Scarborough.

Project Turn Around's outreach efforts increased this year, with the establishment of the better working relationship with the various Probation Offices in the city's Northwest. We can report an increase in the referrals made by probation officers and other youth justice officers and workers.

Similarly, PTA caseworkers have built relationships with Black Creek Community Collaborative and presented them an info session on the Project Turn Around GPIIP Program. The Black Creek Community Collaborative is a network of residents, service-providers, and community stakeholders whose mission is to build community capacity, promote self-sufficiency, sustainability, and enhance the quality of life for all in the Black Creek Community.

Connections have also been secured with Community Services Coordinators at SPIN the Toronto Community Housing. SPIN has been working with the Scarletwoods community and has successfully applied for the Toronto Community Safety Fund.

Our next steps for the remainder of the year, is to work diligently with the many neighbourhoods who have experienced high levels of the gun violence including the Dixon and Rexdale area. Project Turn Around is committed and intends to run two workshops per month, outreach to Toronto youth shelters for possible new clients, improve our visibility with our partner agency offices, and have staff members work out of probation offices so that we can build a relationship.



Youth Mentorship Program- Rites Of Passage

The Rites of Passage Youth Mentorship Program is a locally developed, culturally relevant Mentorship initiative aimed at supporting the positive development and success of African and Caribbean Canadian at-risk youth ages 12-16, who reside in the Northwest Quadrant of the City of Toronto. The Rites of Passage Youth Mentorship Program aims to support and encourage the youth through a series of culturally appropriate and relevant workshops, as well as providing consistent, caring adults, who will support youth participants to pursue and achieve goals. The Rites of Passage Youth Mentorship Program seeks positive outcomes for youth participants in leadership, civic engagement, educational achievement, employment and training opportunities, as well as fostering a positive self-identity, self-esteem and sense of community and inclusion.

The Rites of Passage provides youth the opportunity of one to one mentoring with an adult professional, elder, and or advanced university student. The mentors are highly specialized in areas of education, community engagement, science, and law. These dedicated professionals have taken the lead in supporting a young person through an ongoing, one-to-one relationship with 5 key tenets:

- Serve as a positive role model
- Build the relationship by planning and participating in activities together
- Strive for mutual respect
- Build self-esteem and motivation
- Help set goals and work toward accomplishing them

Some of our highlights this year have been the weekly Mentorship Group Workshops at Kipling Collegiate Institute, providing one on one mentorship as well as group mentorship opportunities to black youth, the organization of the Midaynta Movie Nights, Field Trips to the Ontario Science Centre, Raptor 905 Games and Henna Party. As well as working with the Somali Heritage Month Planning Committee to deliver Somali Panel Discussion at various high schools across the TDSB with the volunteer Rites of Passage mentors and Somali Story telling Sessions at the Elementary and Middle School Levels.

We would like to thank the Ministry of Child and Youth Services for their support. The Partner Organizations; The Jamaican Canadian Association, Somali Immigrant Aid Organization, Black Action Defense Committee, CAFCAN: Caribbean African Canadian Social Services, and Northwood Neighborhood Services. Most importantly we would like to thank the Parents, Youth and Mentors for their commitment, resilience and enthusiasm for the program!

“Our mentors are highly specialized in areas of education, community engagement, science, and law”



Youth Outreach Worker

Midaynta currently offers three Youth Outreach Workers (YOWs), two are targeted to Somali youth and one based in the Lawrence Heights community. The Youth Outreach Workers offer comprehensive outreach services for marginalized youth in underserved neighbourhoods and special populations in the West of Toronto. Our YOWs engage youth between the ages 12-21 years old to help them better navigate and connect with services and supports in their communities. They collaborate with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), the Toronto Police Service (TPS), City of Toronto, Toronto Community Housing and other agencies to create programs and hold events that reach the wider community. Services such as pre-employment, skilled trades & pre- apprenticeship programs, conflict meditation, community crisis response, parent education, and more are offered by our YOWs. As a unit, they continue to work within the educational system, youth justice system and other institution to support youth. As youth advocates they aim to raise awareness of the challenges facing Somali youth by engaging key stakeholders, including youth, parents and the community-at-large.

Midaynta Community Services' has established a strong working relationship with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) to support Somali students. We collaborated with TDSB 'Focus on Youth' Program to outreach to Somali students, by getting them to apply for summer jobs. They hosted and trained the TDSB Focus on Youth Future Leaders Student counsellors at our annual summer camp.

Moreover, our YOWs have worked with courts and detention facilities by referring young people to get their community service order requirements, connecting them to volunteering, educational and employment opportunities. They have also connected with several referred young people in transition from detention to community release with finding access to education

and employment services. Currently, there are no reintegration programs specifically for Somali youth and this is an area of emerging concern.

Youth Outreach Workers also serve on various community planning tables, including the Ward 1 & 2 Safety Committee, the Ward 11 & 12 Safety Committee, Quarterly Roundtable on 'Youth Radicalization' with multiple stakeholders, African Canadian Coalition of Community Organizations (ACCCO) & TDSB Roundtable. Midaynta YOW's are serving the needs of young people, working with them to build their resiliency, access opportunities in education and employment and overcome challenges and barriers to access to services and programs.

ENHANCED YOUTH OUTREACH WORKER

Midaynta is pleased to announce that we have acquired an Enhanced Youth Outreach Worker (EYOW) through the newly proposed Ontario Black Youth Action Plan funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

The Ontario Black Youth Action Plan Enhanced Outreach Worker is based on the principals of harm reduction, focusing on East African, Muslim and Black youth who are at-risk and high-risk by providing support to them and their families to better navigate and connect with services and pro-social opportunities.

The program will identify and target youth ages 12-21 who face multiple barriers to wellbeing and success and/or disengaged from their communities. The EYOW provides intensive one-on-one support to high-risk youth to prevent youth from further risk/violence.



Breaking Down The Barriers

Midaynta Community Services offers the 'Breaking the Barriers' seniors support program. The Multi Agency Partnership Project (MAPP), in partnership with St. Clair West Services for seniors (SCWSS) and Isra, provide programming that is culturally relevant to Muslim and Caribbean seniors living in the Weston-Lawrence area. On April 2017, SCWSS merged with Reconnect Community Health Services (Reconnect).

Through this program, seniors have access to recreational and educational programs, community meals, various health related services, transportation and escort, home help/home-making, respite care, adult day programs and seniors' case management (information and referral, crisis intervention and assistance).

Programming is once weekly, held every Wednesday and has become extremely necessary, popular and in demand amongst the Somali senior population. The need for creating a larger network of services aimed at the specific and unique needs of our clients is becoming more essential, as proven by the overwhelming demand and positive response to our existing seniors program.

Many seniors in our community are living in poverty, and are often isolated from the society at large. There are also many language and literacy barriers that create difficulties in accessing many services and programs. Our 'Breaking Down the Barriers' program is a culturally and linguistically relevant and accessible program, and Midaynta is seeking to expand on this very successful model in the upcoming years. This is a very important program to us as we see daily the struggles that

many of our seniors are facing, and are committed to expanding our reach within this community. Going forward, Midaynta will be seeking ways to expand upon our funding to create a more comprehensive approach to providing much needed services to this often isolated and underserved clientele.



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Housing and Homelessness Program

Midaynta' Housing program is designed to meet the needs of our clients by providing safe, affordable and adequate housing. Our housing team works with low-income individuals and families who face many barriers and challenges in finding and maintaining appropriate and affordable housing and who are struggling between paying the rent and feeding their families. Midaynta Community Services is continuing to strengthen our delivery of efficient and effective services that will meet the varied and unique needs of our clients.

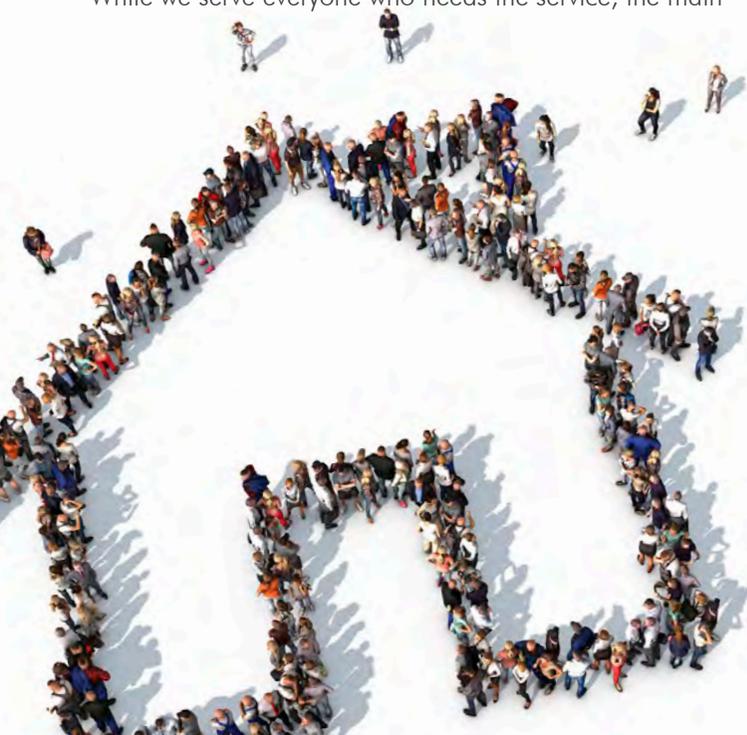
In this program we take a holistic approach and look at a number of factors that might contribute, such as family size, financial status and the neighbourhood that one resides; health issues with mental health challenges, all of which tend to have a negative impact on our client's housing status. While we serve everyone who needs the service, the main

emphasis of the program is to provide culturally sensitive assistance to prevent homelessness in the Somali Community. Services also include assistance to find and maintain affordable housing, information, referral, eviction prevention, housing stabilization and counselling, mentoring programs and peer-support initiatives. In order to provide appropriate support to clients, we work in collaboration with a number of other service providers including Toronto Community Housing Corporation who provides social housing and Housing Connections who looking after the central wait list process and also provides educational workshops for housing help centres like Midaynta.

The housing project outreach efforts increased this year with the establishment of the better working relationship with variety of Community Legal Clinics who provides conflict resolution and eviction prevention support for tenants that are facing housing challenges;

Midaynta is also a member of Landlord Connect who provides to our clients' vacancy listing for affordable private market units.

The housing program conducted a variety of educational workshops, which ensured that our clients were well informed about their rights and responsibilities as tenants. Similarly we will establish more partnerships and collaborate with other service provides to support our clients.





Somali Canadian Week Festival / Ontario 150th Anniversary

Somali Canadian Week Festival included a series of events that celebrated the 150th anniversary of Canada in conjunction with Somali Independence Day. Midaynta Community Services showcased the Somali Canadian culture through events such as: Somali Flag Raising Day, Somali Canadian Gala, and Somali Soccer week. The Sub-Working Group (SWG), which consisted of Midaynta staff, youth volunteers, community members and elders started the planning in early February meeting two times a month. Members participated in strategic planning session to finalize logistics for the series of events. SWG formulated a roll out plan that would be implemented in June 2017 with venues, performers, and tournaments all in place.

On June 29, 2017 in Queens Park Legislative Building, Somali Canadian Week Festival kicked off with the raising of the Somali Flag. MPP Ted Arnott First Deputy Chair gave welcoming remarks on behalf of the Legislative Assembly and all Members of Provincial Parliament were invited to attend and give remarks. Both the Canadian National anthem and Somali anthem played over the ground speakers as the flag was raised and a special performance from elder and prominent Somali singer Khadijo Amay took place by the courtesy flagpole. Attendance of 150+ people included children/youth, adults, seniors, multicultural communities and persons with disabilities. Street traffic also contributed to attendance as bystanders celebrated the Canadian and Somali heritage together. Participants were later invited to a light

reception in the Legislative Assembly building where speeches were given from Hon. Laura Albanese, Hon. Borys Wrzesnewskij, Executive Director of Midaynta Community Services Mahad Yusuf, and Representative from the Kenyan High Commission in celebration of 150th anniversary of Canada.

June 30, 2017 the annual Somali Canadian Independence Day Gala was held at Rose Garden Banquet Hall with 350 guests. This included Members of Provincial Parliament, community members, youth, multicultural community, and seniors. There were also cultural dance performances, singers and surprise guest from Juno Award winner K'naan. Hon. Laura Albanese spoke to the heritage of Canada and elder Khadija Amay to the Somali history.

July 8, 2017 was the official start date of Somali Soccer Week. Events took place in three stadiums throughout the city of Toronto. Centennial Stadium and Esther Shriener Stadium hosted teams locally in Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, Ohio and Minnesota. There were over 3000 participants and spectators throughout the week of July 08-16, 2017. The Youth Soccer Skills Tournament was held at Weston Lions Park in Toronto.

Midaynta Community Services is overwhelmed with joy with this years participation from community members and leaders but more so the unprecedented level of engagement from our young Somali-Canadians. We hope our legacy leaves the young generation of Somali-Canadians to remember to celebrate their country's rich history and culture while commemorating Canada's 150th anniversary.



Youth Radicalization – New and Emerging Challenges

For the past three years, Midaynta Community Services has addressed the need for more communication, dialogue, and discussion on youth radicalization among educators, faith leaders, community members, and law enforcement. Midaynta Community Services has responded by holding roundtable discussions across Canada that bring these key stakeholders together.

As a community, we recognize the urgency of tackling this increase. However, implementing policy changes requires significant analysis and dialogue. At Midaynta, we felt the need to gather diverse experts- community faith leader, law enforcement, academic researchers, and government officials- in one setting to investigate the new and ongoing challenges facing youth in dealing with Radicalization. This aim inspired our second annual conference- Youth Radicalization: New and Emerging Challenges- at the Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto (UofT), on November 16-17, 2016.

The conference was organized through the auspices and collaboration of Midaynta Community Services, the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education (OISE/UofT), the Office of the consulate General of the United States, the Canadian Council of Imams, and the Mosaic Institute. It brought together policy-makers, educators, law enforcement, academics, and women and youth leaders from across North America. It gave us the opportunity to explore the causes of youth Radicalization as well as strategies for preventing young people from joining extremist groups both globally and domestically.

The interactive discussions of the two-day conference resulted in a very fruitful analysis that highlighted the need to increase community involvement and increase awareness of mental health in relation to youth radicalization. In this section, we provide recommendations that emerged from the conference and that address some of the root causes of violent radicalization among youth in Ontario and Canada, many of whom experience alienation, challenges to opportunities, and predatory recruitment strategies by extremist groups.

The recommendations that resulted from the conference included:

1. Increase in Collaboration
2. Settlement and Integration
3. Mental Health
4. Creating Safe Spaces for Youth
5. Safe Internet and Social Media training for youth
6. Education
7. Creating an overreaching network/alliance of community organizations in North America
8. Create multi-stakeholder partnerships

On April 25th, 2017 the 2nd Annual Conference on Youth Radicalization: New and Emerging Challenges Report was released.

**Please find the link to the full report below:
http://midaynta.com/youth_radicalization/**







Thank you

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PARTNERS:

- African Canadian Community Organizations (ACCO)
- African Canadian Legal Clinic (AFLC)
- Black Action Defense Committee (BADC)
- Canadian Labour Congress
- Jamaican Canadian Association (JCA)
- Northwood Neighbourhood Services
- Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL)
- Somali Immigrant Aid Organization (SIAO)
- KIDS UPFRONT TORONTO
- COSTI
- MOSAIC Institute
- The Heart and Stroke Foundation
- University of Toronto (Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, Munk School of Global Affairs)
- U.S Consulate
- RECONNECT Community Health Services (formerly St.Clair West Services for Seniors)
- Islamic Social Service and Resources Association (ISSRA)
- Black Experience Project

WE ARE EXTREMELY GRATEFUL TO OUR FUNDERS



On behalf of the community we serve, Midaynta Community Services would like to express our gracious gratitude to all our funders, partners, supporters, individual donors, community members, staff, volunteers, and placement students. Together we are 'One people, One voice, One community'.

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