



# Durham Regional Local Housing Corporation

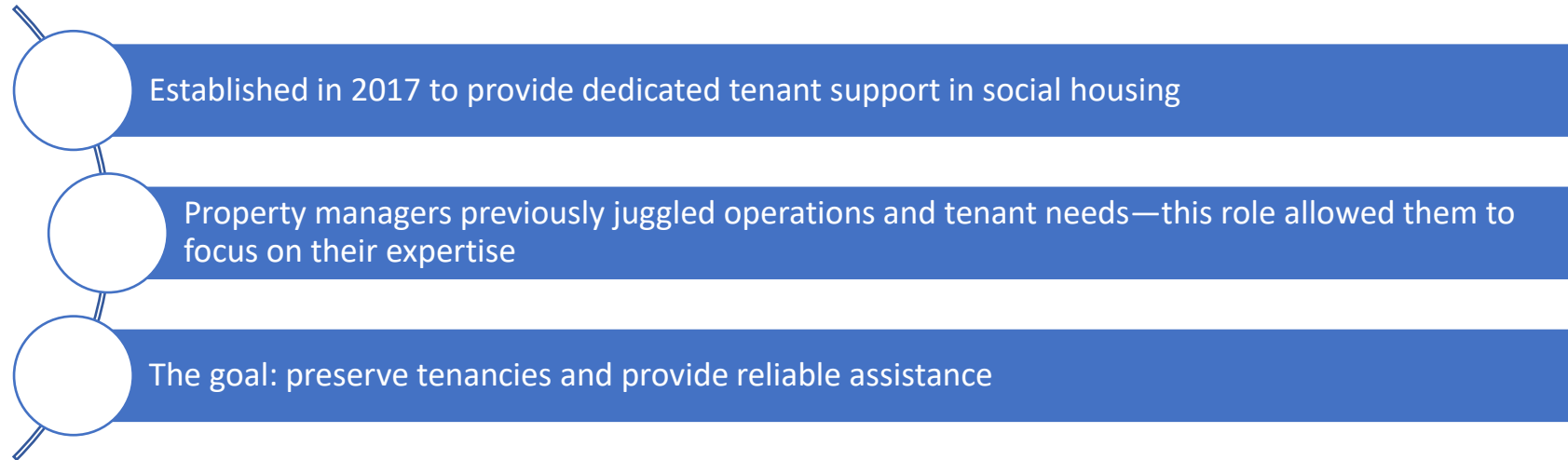
Supporting Tenants,  
Preserving Tenancies.

# Durham Regional Local Housing Corporation

- DRLHC is Durham Region's largest community housing provider.
- 1300 units across 23 properties in Ajax, Pickering, Whitby, Oshawa, Bowmanville, Port Perry, Uxbridge, Cannington and Beaverton.
- Currently units are 100% Rent-Geared-to-Income and filled through the Durham Access to Social Housing (DASH) wait list.
- There are 3 Property Managers who manage the DRLHC properties
- There are 2 Housing Program Coordinators who support DRLHC tenants



# Housing Program Coordinators: Bridging the Gap



## Shaping the Role

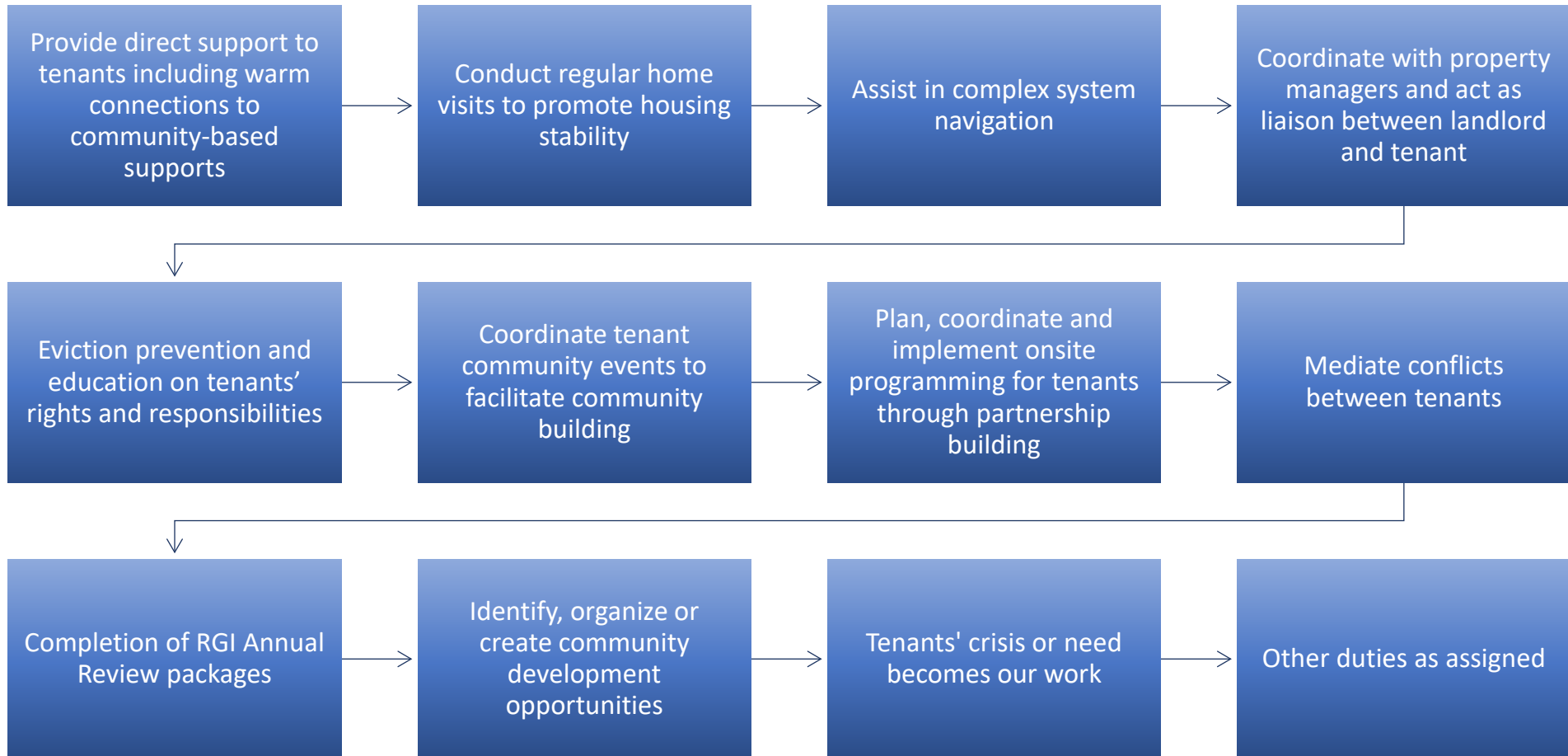
- One of the first hires—helped define how the role best serves residents
- Faced challenges, but the impact has been undeniable
- Preventing evictions, strengthening community connections

## Learning & Growing

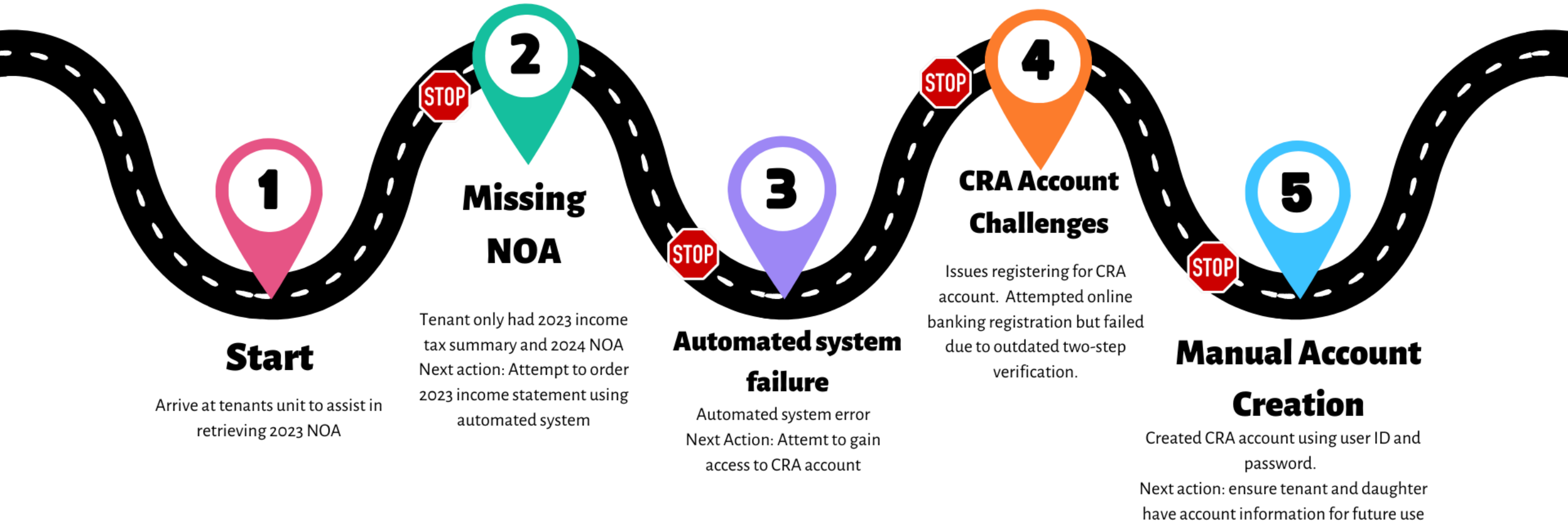
- Recognized need for community development expertise
- Visited other regions and municipalities to learn best practices
- Partnered with organizations specializing in community engagement
- Led to a successful project at Lakeview Harbourside (to be discussed later)



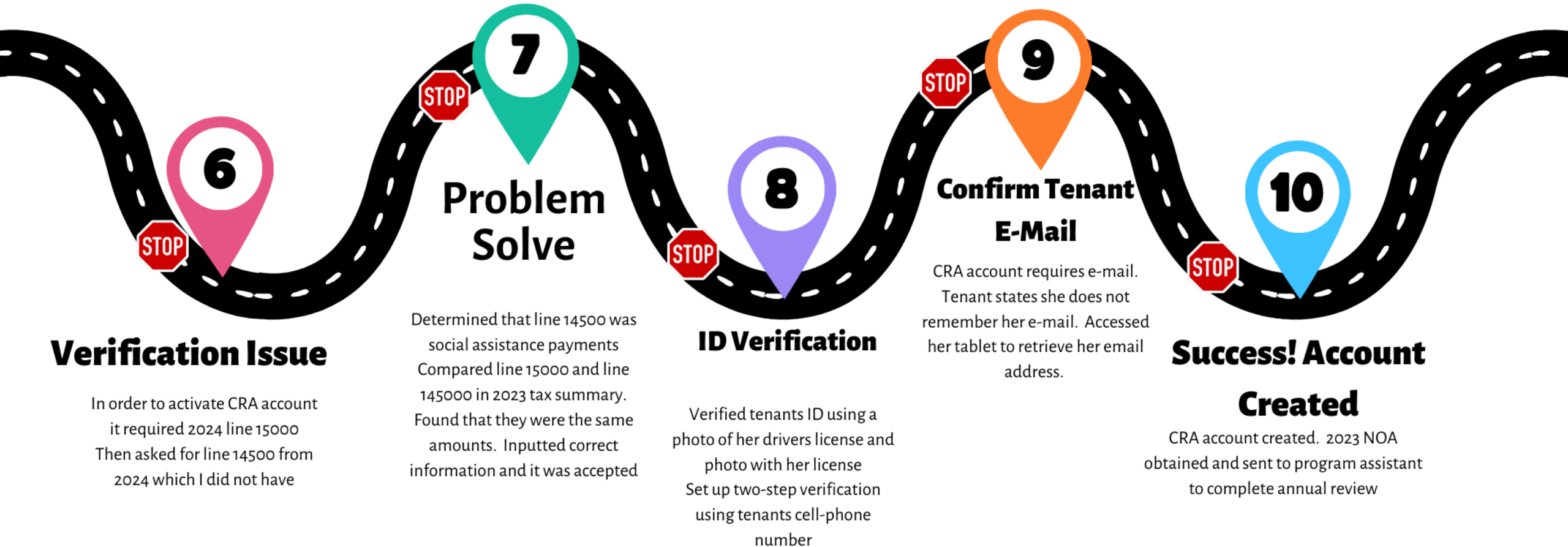
# Day in the Life



# REAL LIFE ROAD BLOCKS



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# Breaking Barriers: Why is it so important to support our residents?

## Financial Stability

Timely NOA access ensures correct income reporting, stable rent, and continued RGI housing eligibility

## Accessibility Challenges

Hands-on support helps tenants overcome barriers and access essential services like CRA account setup

## Equity & Support

Personalized support ensures equity and acknowledges the systemic challenges faced by vulnerable tenants

## Reducing Stress & Anxiety

Guiding tenants through institutional hurdles reduces stress and ensures security

## Long-Term Benefits

Helping the tenant navigate barriers builds resident skills, and can empower them to solve their own issues in the future

## Preventing Housing Issues

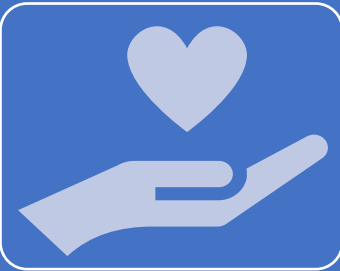
Timely NOA access ensures correct income reporting, stable rent, and continued RGI housing eligibility

# Challenges



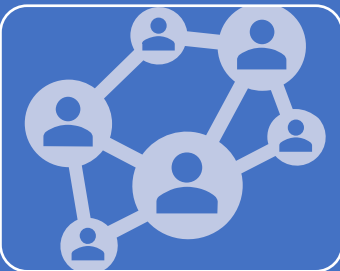
## System Navigation & Digital Literacy

- Applying for ID and replacement ID
- Assistance applying for and understanding income sources
- Advocacy and intensive service navigation support
- Assisting with annual reviews and creating opportunity to simplify this for tenants



## Health Supports & Social Supports

- Tenant need complex and often needs multiple supports
- Facilitated referrals for mental health & counselling supports
- All challenges exacerbated by any mental health concerns



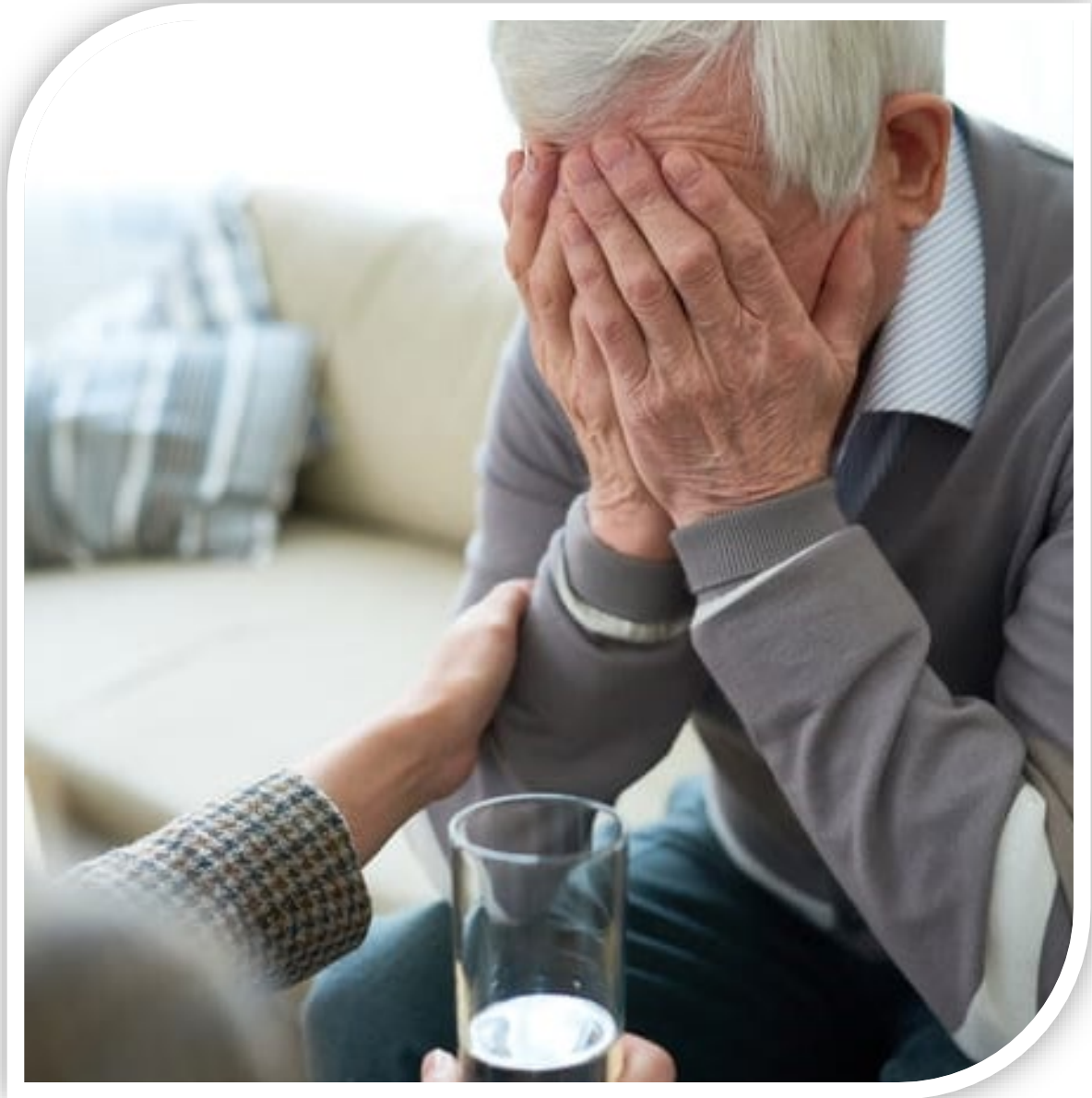
## Tenant Dynamics & Pest Control

- Senior bullying
- Changing tenant landscape/dynamics
- Pest control process plagued by lack of cooperation, unprepared residents etc.
- Tenants often require one on one assistance



# Senior Bullying

- Often-overlooked issue affecting older adults
- Forms: verbal harassment, social exclusion, intimidation
- Contributing factors: loneliness, cognitive decline, unresolved conflicts
- Victims experience isolation, emotional distress, and reduced well-being
- 57% of seniors report bullying; 70% find it highly upsetting
- Solutions: foster respect, provide education, offer conflict resolution resources
- Communities must take proactive steps to ensure inclusive and safe environments
- Not traditionally a role of the landlord however it is becoming increasingly problematic



# Pest Control

**Mobility Barriers** – Seniors may struggle to move furniture or declutter for treatments.

**Hoarding Complications** – Creates environments where pests thrive and limits accessibility for professionals.

**Resident Cooperation** – Privacy concerns, stigma, or lack of awareness can hinder participation.

**Compassionate Approach Needed** – Assistance, education, and open communication are key to effective pest management.

**Role of Housing Program Coordinators** – Act as the link between pest control, property managers, tenants, and families.

**Creative Solutions** – Inspections, follow-ups, and partnerships with community agencies help clear units.

**Community Impact** – Pest control benefits not just affected tenants but also their neighbors.



# Shifting Tenant Landscape in RGI Housing

## **Key Trends:**

- More younger seniors (early 60s) entering RGI housing
- Economic instability, rising housing costs, and gaps in social services contribute to this shift
- Unlike older seniors, many transition from homelessness, shelters, or precarious living situations

## **Challenges Faced by Younger Seniors:**

- Chronic health conditions and limited healthcare access
- Employment barriers and financial instability
- Psychological impact of long-term housing insecurity

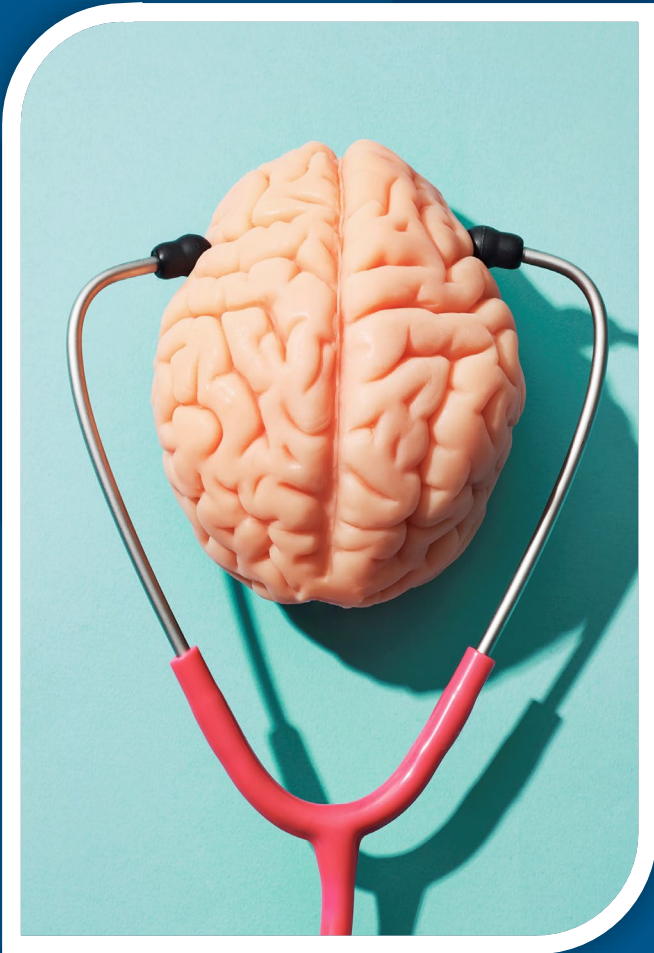
## **Impact on Housing Program Coordinators & Property Managers:**

- Balancing individual tenant needs with overall community well-being
- Not traditionally the role of the landlord to involve themselves in interpersonal issues
- Addressing mental health, addiction, and employment support
- Managing conflicts and integration among residents

## **Solutions & Support Strategies:**

- Tailored services (mental health care, addiction support, employment assistance)
- Community partnerships to provide additional resources
- Proactive engagement to foster stability and independence

# Mental Health & Addictions



- Increasing among tenants
- Financial instability, lack of healthcare access, and social isolation exacerbate challenges
- Addiction often used as a coping mechanism for stress, trauma, and homelessness
- Mental health issues can strain cooperation with housing rules and services
- Perceptions of interactions can become skewed, affecting neighbor relations
- Provide mental health and addiction resources alongside housing support
- Strengthen community programs that promote well-being and stability
- Housing coordinators play a crucial role in connecting tenants with the support they need





# Community Partnerships & Collaboration



# Strengthening Communities Through Collaborative Partnerships



- Connecting tenants with vital services and support.
- Partnering with agencies for tailored solutions.
- Building resilient, stable communities.
- Collaborative efforts for lasting impact.
- Tenant-driven programs based on real needs



## Health & Wellness

- Vision & dental care
- Health fairs
- Mobile vaccination clinics
- Nurse Practitioner clinics
- Paramedicine program
- Exercise classes

## Food Security & Basic Needs

- Food security programs
- School lunch programs
- Backpack & school supply drives

## Community Building & Social Events

- Community clean-ups
- Holiday events & social activities
- Community building events
- Supporting tenant-led initiatives

## Education & Financial Support

- Tax clinics
- Learning Bond events
- Babysitting courses
- Service Canada information booths
- Employment assistance
- Wills & Powers of Attorney

## Arts & Culture

- Performance arts programs
- Paint nights
- Mobile library programs

## Recreation & Physical Activities

- Jiu Jitsu
- Community gardens

# Community Volunteer Income Tax Program



- **Established in 2019** – Now in its seventh tax season.
- **Year-Round Free Tax Filing** – Supporting residents with annual renewals and financial benefits.
- **Dedicated Volunteers** – Returning year after year to serve the community.
- **In-Person Clinics & Drop-Off Service** – Clinics at multiple buildings plus ongoing drop-off convenience.
- **COVID-Era Innovation** – Started drop-off service during the pandemic, now a popular option.

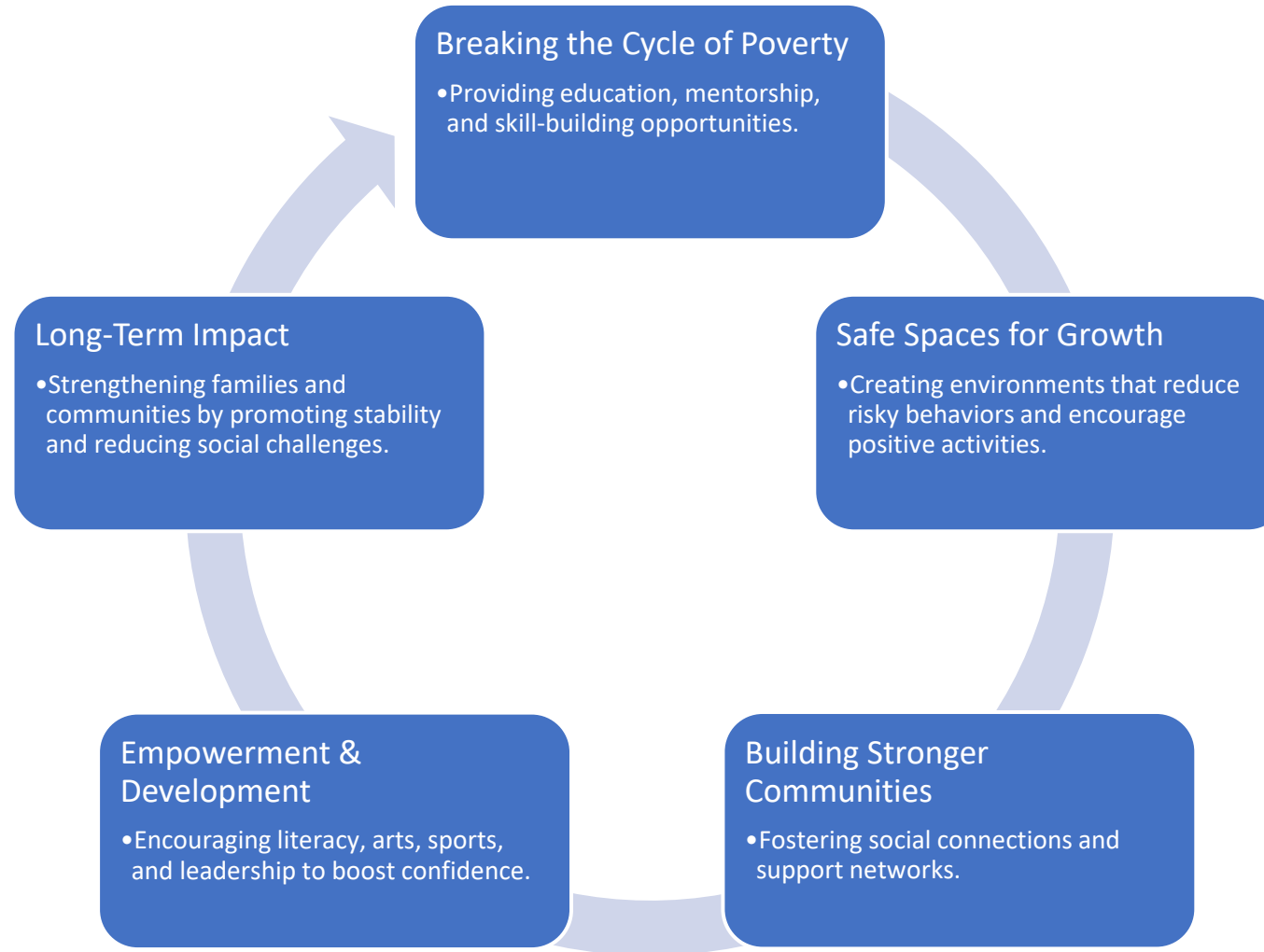


# Financial Stability Starts Here: Why Free Tax Clinics Matter

- **Financial Support** – Helps access tax credits like CCB, GST/HST, and income benefits.
- **Accessibility** – Assists individuals lacking resources or tax expertise.
- **Compliance** – Ensures accurate tax filings, preventing penalties and missed benefits.
- **Education & Empowerment** – Builds financial literacy and confidence.
- **Community Strength** – Supports vulnerable populations and fosters collective effort.
- **Stress Reduction** – Simplifies tax filing, easing anxiety and ensuring accuracy



# Empowering Youth Through Community Initiatives



# Spotlight on: The Travelling Stage



*“The Travelling Stage, where arts education takes center stage! With a proud legacy spanning 22 years, we were founded by Toni Grates and have since become a leading organization in the field. Our team of dedicated professionals is committed to nurturing young minds and fostering self-confidence through the power of arts education.”*

## **DRLHC Partnership with Travelling Stage**

- Ongoing since 2022.

## **Youth Arts Opportunities**

- Open to students from kindergarten to grade 12.

## **Inclusive Access**

- Available to Lakeview Harbourside and the surrounding community.

## **Leadership Development**

- Young participants have grown into senior leaders.

## **Continued Success**

- Proudly bringing the program back in summer 2025.

# Spotlight on: Project X-Guard

- Provides free Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ) training for at-risk youth.
- Builds confidence, life skills, and anti-bullying techniques.
- Year-round program since 2019, fostering community connections.
- Success story: Former participant now teaches Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu
- Lasting impact—program strengthens bonds beyond the community.

*“To use the art of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu to effect positive change in our communities, while providing invaluable life skills to the children, youth and instructors.”*

# Building Community at Lakeview Harbourside

## Building a Connected Community at Lakeview Harbourside

- Our largest family-focused site: 173 townhomes + 15-unit apartment
- More than just housing—it's a place for community to grow
- Home to impactful programs like the Travelling Stage & Project X-Guard

## Strengthening Connections

- Partnered with Tamarack Institute in 2018 to bring people together
- Local Deepening Community Initiative: making engagement easy and meaningful
- Conversations, resident-led projects, and partnerships that build trust

***"Progress moves at the speed of trust" – Steven Covey***

## The Power of Community

- "Harbour Love" tenant association leads events and fosters real connections
- Residents step up, engage, and make this place feel like home

## Key Takeaways

- Relationships matter—trust and reliability are everything
- Success comes from working together, learning, and growing







# Building Forward: The Next Steps in Tenant Support



# Where do WE go from here?

- Expansion is essential to strengthening tenant support.
- Stable housing requires more than just shelter—it needs proactive resources.
- Tenant support includes: conflict resolution, financial guidance, health & well-being, and tenancy navigation.
- Durham Council recognizes the value of tailored, in-home assistance.
- DRLHC's growing tenant base needs adaptable support systems.
- Current model relies on just two Housing Program Coordinators—more resources are needed.
- Scalable framework ensures all tenants receive critical support where they live.
- Investing in tenant support builds stronger, more resilient communities.



# Where do YOU go from here?



- **Focus on Strengths:** Shift perspective from problems to opportunities within your community.
- **Leverage Existing Resources:** Identify underutilized spaces and agency partnerships to enhance programming.
- **Create Mutually Beneficial Opportunities:** Offer common rooms for programs benefiting both tenants and the broader community.
- **Funding & Collaboration:** Secure funding by providing space and clientele; partner with agencies for joint proposals.
- **CVITP Clinics:** Establish in-house tax clinics for tenant convenience—grants available for setup costs.
- **Rethinking Tenant Engagement:** Encourage a supportive “good cop” role, improve customer service, and build trust.





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