

# AN HONEST FAREWELL REPORT: DEEP DIVE

*An Honest Farewell was a 4-day festival inside, and in honour of, the Honest Ed's building. This event was put on by Toronto for Everyone — a project of the Centre for Social Innovation (CSI).*

*The document that follows is a deep dive on our learnings from the event. To read a short overview, you can also check out our Key Learnings document [here](#).*

## INTRODUCTION

**The Toronto for Everyone Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Committee was based off of CSI's IDEA model to oversee the event planning of An Honest Farewell and to hold the event accountable to its inclusivity goal.** The Toronto for Everyone IDEA Committee aspired to support the creation of space and programming that would indeed be “for Everyone;” one that would reflect the diversity of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) population by way of honouring and keeping the memory of Honest Ed's alive to its community and to Toronto.

**Our hope with this expanded report is to celebrate our successes, be accountable to our mistakes, and share our learnings so that people who are considering inclusion in their event-planning can consider these stories.** Given the enormous scope of the event, we decided to co-develop an Inclusion Checklist (Appendix 1) with the support of consultants and experts with lived and professional experience (Appendix 2). The checklist was shared with the numerous event planning departments to complete, which they did: once prior to the event and then a second time post-event to identify areas for improvement and measure progress. This checklist was our main method of considering inclusion in the event planning and, in hindsight, we realize the checklist alone didn't adequately support this work.

**It's important to note that CSI is not the expert in this work and we are eternally grateful for consultants, volunteers, participants, and organizers who kept us honest with feedback throughout this process.** This report is informed by various feedback channels:

- 2 online surveys (an on-site volunteer general survey filled out by 138 people, as well as a feedback survey that was sent to the public filled out by 157 people - Appendix 1)
- 4 in-person deep dive conversations with CSI staff (10 attendees), organizing team (50 attendees), volunteers, artists, and partners (15 attendees).
- Feedback from our Inclusion Checklists that 8 different departments completed
- An analysis of social media feedback: 336 tweets on Twitter, 152 Facebook posts and 63 Facebook comments between November 7, 2016 to July 24, 2017
- Feedback given via the *Toronto for Everyone* public email account and phone inquiries

## **Research limitations**

We did not measure demographic survey on the attendees so we don't know the demographic diversity or their relationships to Honest Ed's (eg, we do not know whether they were store owners, employees, vendors, customers, etc). This was a missed opportunity to produce tangible data. While there are logistical challenges for collecting this kind of information, this data would have created a quantifiable measurement to better understand where we did not meet our goals.

While we wanted to include everything, we had to summarize key findings relevant to creating an inclusive event to ensure the report stayed at a manageable length

The attempt to distill all of this feedback was a difficult and ambitious one, but a necessary and important step in this work. The learnings can be laid out in the following categories:

<b>1. MEANINGFUL INCLUSION</b>	<b>3. COMMUNICATION &amp; OUTREACH</b>
<b>2. TIME, MONEY &amp; CAPACITY</b>	<b>4. PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY</b>

# 1. MEANINGFUL INCLUSION

**Ensure that there are diverse voices who provide input and/or co-create this vision around *who* 'Toronto for Everyone' includes and *how* the vision will be implemented.**

The *Toronto for Everyone* concept brought together many people from different lived experiences; there are several anecdotes of people wanting to donate their time or money to the cause based on this spirit of inclusivity. While the vision of *Toronto for Everyone* was always aspirational, people had different perspectives on what "Toronto for Everyone" meant, and divergent views on questions such as: *Who is included when we say 'Toronto for Everyone'? Who is this event not accessible to and, in that case, how can you say it's 'for everyone'?* In our case, had there been a clearer statement of what the vision for *Toronto for Everyone* was aspiring to be and the values we stood for, we would have better expressed and planned for the implementation of our vision. This would have allowed us to provide measurable goals that would enable the organizing team to be proactive as opposed to reactionary whenever inclusion considerations came up. ***An important piece of this process would be to ask the question: "Who is missing and why?", and ensuring these folks are invited to the table when developing the vision, design and planning process.***

## **What we did:**

- We established an IDEA Committee, the members of which also sat on various Toronto for Everyone event departments
- There was an Inclusion Checklist (Appendix 1) for event planning departments to consider in their event-planning
- Anti-oppression training took place for on-site volunteers
- An Equity Statement (Appendix 1) was added to all Letters of Agreements, for partners and volunteers to sign

## **Learnings:**

- **Asking the Question: Are we the right group to host this?** The Centre for Social Innovation has been a community hub in the Annex area for the last 7 years, has been a part of the neighbourhood changes, and have partnered with Westbank in the creation of micro-retail space for entrepreneurs as a part of their future developments. With that said, when reflecting on our intention to pay homage to Honest Ed's and put on one heck-of-a-party with this farewell event, we were prompted to ask the question of whether we were, in fact, the right group to host

this event. One of our main takeaways from our post-event reflections was that **creating an inclusive space that embodies a 'Toronto for Everyone' also means intentionally stepping back and following the lead of those with lived experiences from historically excluded communities in Toronto.**

- **Shared leadership among diverse groups will reflect diverse participants.** When the organizing team filled out a demographic survey, the results showed that while we reflected some diversity in sexual orientation compared to Toronto statistics (5% bisexual, 7% gay, 9.5% queer), we were not racially diverse (59% White, 21% South Asian, 2.4% Black) and did not have any representation from First Nations, Metis or Inuit communities on the planning committee. Additionally, we were not reflective of the Greater Toronto Area, as 95% of our organizing team members lived in the City of Toronto; and we were not diverse in age representation as the majority of our organizing team volunteers were between the ages of 26-45. While we prioritized involvement of folks most impacted by the redevelopment given the context of Honest Ed's (e.g., store employees, vendors, customers who frequently shopped at Honest Ed's), ideally we would have developed a clearer strategy to ensure these folks were part of the designing and planning process. While we were unable to capture the same demographic information on partner, artists, and attendees due to capacity constraints, **having a more diverse organizing team with varied lived experiences can better ensure inclusivity considerations are embedded throughout the event planning process, and by extension, better reflect the diversity of who we invite to participate and/or attend the event.**
- **Communicate the vision around inclusion and equity with all partners and volunteers.** We developed an Equity Statement (Appendix

1) that all partners, vendors and presenting organizations had to sign as part of their Letters of Agreement with Toronto for Everyone. However, we introduced the Equity Statement later in the process and therefore some key people involved did not receive it; these expectations could have also been covered more during the recruitment process, and at all info sessions, on-boarding and training opportunities. As a learning, it's important to offer the event vision and goals to partners as well as engage in a collaborative process with key stakeholders to develop a community agreement. **Developing and affixing a community agreement/equity statement to all Letters of Agreement and onboarding processes can help to ensure that everyone involved shares the event's goal of prioritizing inclusion and equity.**

- **Everyone needs to be a part of the solution.** The IDEA Committee and the Inclusion Checklists (Appendix 1) were established to help guide and consult with the various departments in the organizing team. This inadvertently put the responsibility of meeting inclusion considerations on a few to implement in a top-down structure, rather than a collaborative process. **A better solution would have been to ensure that the whole team was working collaboratively to enable and empower one another towards our shared inclusion goals, thereby embedding that work fully in all day-to-day considerations.**
- **Provide the appropriate tools and resources for collective learning.** Facilitating the visioning and values around the event, and providing training and space for conversations as part of the on-boarding and team-building for all involved would have helped create a culture of continuous and collective learning around inclusion. There was one Anti-Oppression training scheduled for on-site volunteers one month prior to the event, but **offering multiple**

**training opportunities for everyone involved in the event, would have ensured that all were more equipped with the appropriate tools and knowledge to build an authentically inclusive event. Other pieces to consider - and ones that are often overlooked - are the need for a budget (see: Budget section below) to appropriately compensate trainers and facilitators, as well as having mediators available who can help to work through issues as they arise.**

- **Checklists are good in theory, but not in practice.** The checklists were created as a guiding document meant to help each department take a lead on these pieces individually. However, we found that **without adequate budget and capacity (e.g. training and lead-up time), the checklists alone were not as effective as they could have been.** Some were filled out in great detail while others were scant; some inclusion considerations were covered to a large extent while others only considered a few; reporting on checklists became an onerous task due to already very full plates. Had we instead created these checklists in collaboration with the various organizing team members, we believe this may have been more effective in ensuring there was a sense of ownership and responsibility to the goals that were being set. This, of course, takes a lot of **advanced planning and lead-time to coordinate across departments**, and follow up via in-person meetings to check-in regularly on their status.
- **Accommodation requests.** For ticketing, ensure you have a section to collect accommodation requests<sup>1</sup>. We did not leave a minimum time frame for requests during *Toronto for Everyone*,

which meant that there was sometimes a disconnect between expectations and delivery of these requests; having an appropriate system in place to respond to these requests and providing a realistic timeframe for accommodating them (e.g., “We require at least 72 hours notice”) allows attendees and event organizers to plan appropriately. It is also important to clearly communicate where attendees can find these accommodations on-site (e.g. an Info Table on-site where requests can be accommodated in-person). **Thinking through all angles of how accommodation requests can be made and fulfilled in a dignified manner is key to meaningful participation for attendees.** In our case, most of the accommodation requests we received (and the ones that were hardest to address) were around physical accessibility for those to whom stairs are a barrier. The limitations of the venue made it impossible to fully accommodate some of these requests (see: “Physical Accessibility” section below). Our learning: when organizing an event - especially one that is meant to prioritize inclusion - it is better to choose a venue that enables automatic inclusion.

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<sup>1</sup> Toronto for Everyone’s wording for accommodation requests, developed with a consultant: “Do you require any specific accommodation on-site to fully participate in this experience?”

## 2. TIME, MONEY & CAPACITY

### **Cost is one of the biggest barriers for participation.**

We had originally intended to have ‘something for everyone’ by offering a selection of events, but we learned that there was a fundamental tension in suggesting our event was “for everyone” while the cost of some events acted as a barrier of entry to many. This tension was even more apparent to us when you consider Ed’s legacy as a beacon of affordability, especially at a time when our city is becoming less and less affordable. **Considering cost as a barrier in and of itself is important in building an accessible event.**

### **What we did:**

- We held various events at different price-points, some of which had free entry (i.e. The Community Hub and The Marketplace), with the ticketed events priced to compensate artists fairly and/or to cover costs associated with making the event more accessible.
- We had 200 free tickets to the aMazement Art Maze available to distribute to Community Centres and available at the Box Office for people to whom the cost of entry was a barrier
- Entry to the aMazement Art Maze was free to: seniors, children 12 and under, and for people using mobility devices

### **There were many takeaways from our ticket-pricing strategy:**

- **Free events = main events.** Even though there was some free access, free programs were not front-and-centre of communication efforts, and could have been promoted more centrally. Instead, the most expensive event - the Gala fundraiser - was perceived to be the main event because it was the opening act and, in hindsight, **organizing this fundraising event earlier and**

**separate from the larger festival, rather than it being the opening event, may have reduced the confusion and ensured free events didn’t get squeezed out from the 4-day festival promotions and advertising.**

- **Better yet, ensure the quality and experience of events are the same, regardless of if they are ticketed or free.** By charging a ticket for some events and not others throughout the weekend, it resulted in creating a hierarchy of event experience based on who could and could not afford each event. **Offering the same programming, once at a cost and another time for free (eg, on different nights), can help to avoid this hierarchy of experience.**
- **Even better: offer PWYC or completely free events.** To make events as financially accessible as possible, it is better to either **have a “Pay What You Can, If You Can” option, or secure sponsorships well ahead of time, so that all the events can be free for entry while ensuring that you can still appropriately compensate those involved.** The challenge around sponsorships is in ensuring that those sponsors share your team’s values and priorities. This can prove difficult, but is an important consideration

in ensuring your team is living their values and “putting their money where their mouth is.” As with many of the learnings in this report, leaving yourself plenty of time to explore sponsorship opportunities and/or to secure funding is key.

- **Provide choice for different forms of payment.** If you are charging a fee for entry, make sure that payment methods are accessible. People could purchase An Honest Farewell tickets on our website using a credit card and at our Box Office in-person using either credit card or cash, but we did not provide interac or visa-debit as alternative modes of payment. **Make sure the information on the various modes of purchasing tickets is clearly laid out in all communications.**
- **Transit accessibility.** While we attempted to look into shuttle buses for our event, timing and monetary constraints unfortunately made this impossible. (see: Inclusivity Budget section below). **Provide free TTC (Toronto Transit Commission) tokens or other free transit options for folks to whom travel-cost is a barrier. Explore possible partnerships with local transit authorities.**
- **Create a fair, transparent, and easy free-ticket distribution system.** For free ticket distribution, **develop a fair way to ensure that the tickets reach the people who need them most by: identifying who are typically excluded from this kind of event/ who you want to invite, reaching out to the community organization where this group accesses services or programs, and working with them to develop an easy distribution system among the communities they serve.** We attempted to take this approach and managed to reach many community centres, but our process was not as clear or comprehensive as it ideally could have been.

- **Empower Box Office to give away tickets for free.** We had set aside free tickets at the Box Office for those who could not afford entry to the aMazement Art Maze. However, having only a limited number of free tickets set aside for this and not having properly communicated to the public that these free tickets were available ahead of time, made some of the volunteers feel awkward and uncomfortable about how to determine who to offer the tickets to. It’s better to **empower folks at the Box Office to make “good-will calls” or, even better, apply the philosophy of “No one will be turned away due to lack of funds” for the event, and to ensure that this is properly communicated well-ahead of time on all public promotions.**

One member of our Box Office team shared the following story of a ‘good-will call’:

 *The box office was SLAMMED every day... a couple of shy youth were coming in to buy tickets to the Amazement [Art Maze], they were so excited, and it seemed as though the \$32 in coins and bills they were pulling out was a lot. I made a call, and let them know that the tickets were on us (complimentary), as we really wanted to make this event for everyone... [He] was so happy.”*

- **Make sure you have an Inclusivity, Accessibility, and Equity Budget.** While we had made efforts to consider inclusivity in our planning, we did not allocate separate budgets for inclusivity and accessibility and this impacted our ability to plan for accommodation requests. **Inclusion and accessibility can be expensive but it’s worth the investment as it means further reach, greater participation and meaningful relationship-building!**

## What we did:

- We reactivated an elevator and built ramps for certain floors and entrances
- Our mighty volunteer team cleared the space of hundreds of large wooden grocery bins. We were able to transform a physical space that was infamous for being maze-like -- one filled with lots of clunky, large furniture, stairs and other physical barriers -- into a spacious venue.
- We hired American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters, Live Captioners, and utilized an assisted listening device for certain activities (generously donated by [POW Hearing](#))

## Learnings:

- **Budget for inclusive accommodations prior to (and for) requests.** There was no initial budget for inclusivity costs, which made it more difficult to plan in advance and have services like ASL, live transcription, and ramps more widely available and be able to promote the event better (for example, listing these services in all of our communications and using braille for signage and wayfinding). ***With a budget set aside for accommodation, we could have better secured accommodation considerations such as transit tokens, child care, etc.***
- **Budget for equitable compensation:** While we were able to compensate some, we were not able to compensate all of the folks involved and, in hindsight, ***we could have prioritized compensating those who live in poverty and/or are historically marginalized, for their time and work with the event.***
- **Budget for paid programming:** Some of the Toronto for Everyone programming team members were put in an awkward position at times because the budget for artists was not confirmed, and fluctuated based on changing sponsorship dollar amounts. They were therefore

asked to renege on a few applications after they had already accepted them. While this did not impact the majority of the artists, it did impact a few artists who had already started working on their projects at this point, which was problematic on many fronts, especially given that many artists work on precarious income.

***Ensure budget is confirmed before reviewing applications and pay artists upfront or as soon as the event is over, as budget permits.***

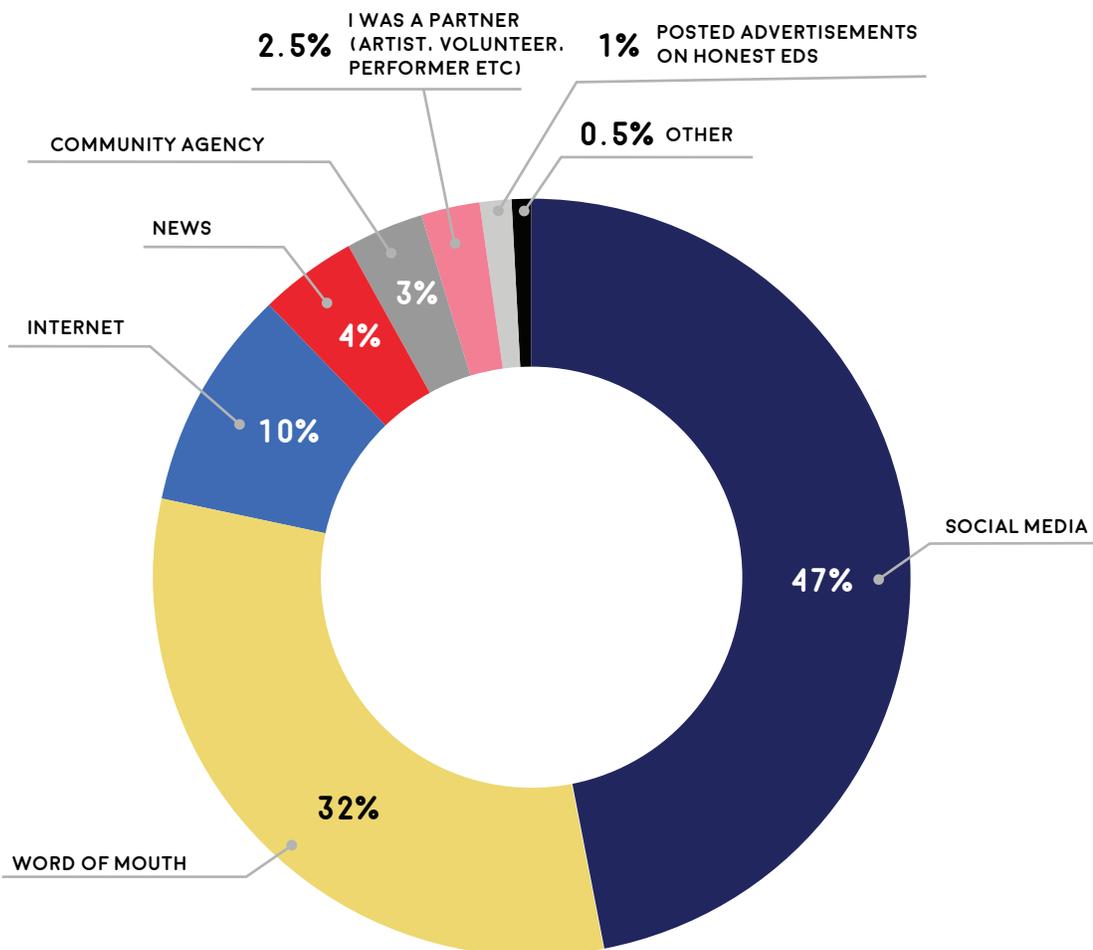
- **Budget for free programming:** It is also important to keep in mind that, even if the event you are offering has free entry, it will still require a budget to cover associated costs. ***An event that is free for the public still costs money to put on, and deserves the same resources and attention as any ticketed event.***

# 3. COMMUNICATION & OUTREACH

**Marketing & communications are invitations to the party. Make sure the invitation is clear and that it is received.** A wide-reaching invitation gives the choice for people to opt in to help plan or attend the event. The opportunity to make that choice is important when focusing on meaningful inclusion.

## What we did:

- There were several community outreach and street teams, multiple media articles, television and print outreach, as well as online marketing efforts (website and social media).
- The small, but mighty, outreach team travelled to different neighbourhoods outside of those in the downtown core, visited religious institutions, artist spaces, libraries, social service organizations and schools, to get the word out far and wide.
- Most *Toronto for Everyone* attendees who provided feedback indicated that they heard about the Honest Farewell through Social Media and Word of Mouth.



## Learnings:

- **Offline marketing is as important as online and well-supported street teams are key!** Street teams and in-person outreach were invaluable because conversations in different neighbourhoods helped to: get the word out, gather feedback, and receive accessibility requests. Our small outreach team did an amazing job with the limited resources and capacity available to them. Having a bigger outreach team and longer lead-up time could have resulted in an even broader reach, which was important with an event of this nature. Using online marketing as a main method of promotion means that recruitment and outreach efforts - on everything from artists and panelists to volunteers and event attendees - may cater only to certain demographics and networks, thereby excluding, for example, folks who did not have access to internet or do not use social media for information gathering. ***A combination of poster, media, online and in-person street outreach (with appropriate resources given to each) is ideal for effective and inclusive marketing.***
- **Diverse team and relationships are important in ensuring effective outreach.** Given that word of mouth was key for this event, ***ensuring that people who were organizing or involved with the event came from diverse backgrounds and personal networks would have allowed for the invitations to reach a broader audience.***
- **Be broad and strategic in your outreach and avoid tokenizing<sup>2</sup>.** If outreach for volunteers and artists is not initially broad enough, reaching out directly and inviting certain underrepresented groups to be involved in the event, in the name of diversity, runs the risk of tokenizing these individuals/organizations. It's also important to reach out to communities that are often excluded from events like this and, in our case, while we provided ASL and Live Captioning to certain

events, we could have done more to reach out to deaf communities and include these symbols in all of our marketing material for events that provided ASL and Live Captioning. There are services like **Deaf Spectrum** that organizations can partner with for outreach to these communities. ***For an event of this nature, be broad-reaching and prioritize your outreach efforts to folks who are typically excluded from events like this.***

- **Create websites and posters that are easy to understand.** We received feedback that our website could have been easier to navigate and, in particular, that it was difficult to find information about access to free events. Additionally, for folks who do not use or access internet, our print marketing were missing key details, such as: where to purchase tickets in-person (eg, Box Office hours), contact information for inquiries, and accessibility information. ***Consider the various audiences you would like to invite when producing posters (perhaps even invite them to review it before you go live!), and make sure that there is clear and straightforward communication on posters and websites for easier navigation.***

**Partner support (artists, volunteers, panelists, sponsors, etc) & Planning:** Toronto for Everyone engaged with multiple partners and artists to put on An Honest Farewell; what everyone involved was able to co-create together is beyond what we could have imagined. However, there were some instances where partnerships and relationships could have been better supported.

## What we did:

- We marketed opportunities to participate through our channels, through poster, in community spaces and we hosted information meetings at all 3 CSI locations.

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<sup>2</sup> "the policy or practice of making only a symbolic effort"  
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tokenism>

- In our calls for submission, we included specific calls for partners and co-creators who shared our vision for an event that prioritized inclusion and diversity.
- We designed multiple experiences to ensure we were accessible to a wide variety of partners (e.g. everything from micro retail to visual artists to community groups) rather than just targeting one group or segment.
- We said no to partners and financial support when there was not mission alignment. In one case, we returned sponsorship dollars to a partner.

## Learnings:

- **Ensure that the application process considers diversity and accessibility.** While the checklist included in this report includes considerations on diversity and accessibility, **a more comprehensive plan on outreach, application, and a selection process that prioritizes diversity and accessibility may have resulted in an even greater diversity of artists.**
- **On-site support.** Some partners - such as: market vendors, panelists and artists - indicated that they would have appreciated further support on-site after they were accepted, i.e. throughout the planning and execution of their activations. It was suggested that **we could have created a mentorship program to connect more experienced partners with novice partners to allow for effective support among those involved.**
- **It is important to have a constant, clear and open line of communication with partners.** There were many uncontrollable variables in the preparation of the event; limitations brought on by the fact that the space was in transition of ownership meant that we could not get into the building until 3 weeks before the event was

set to happen. There were therefore various unknowns around timing for artist site-visits, logistics, move-in dates, and areas allowed for programming (due to safety concerns, for example). This translated to a chaotic few weeks leading up to the event. **Communicate proposed timeline with partners; when changes occur, make sure that notifying partners is a top priority.**

- **Create a platform that amplifies partners.** We invited Erin Kang, Bear Standing Tall, Luke Anderson, and Denise Pinto to speak about their work in building an inclusive city, which was translated through ASL Services, coordinated through **Deaf Spectrum**. However, these city-builders had to speak against the backdrop of attendees' chatter and the ASL translators were only partially visible to the audience's purview; the ASL interpreters were hard to see, as they were not positioned on the stage alongside the speakers. **When amplifying voices and topics of inclusion, it is important that the platform (mic, room set up, decor, event flow, ASL and/or Live Captioning services, and ensuring that the bar or food stations are closed while speeches are happening) is designed in a way that allows those messages to reach everyone in the room.**

**Attention to details and a dedicated budget ensures that volunteers feel well-supported and appreciated.**

This event would not have been possible without the incredible volunteers who put in hundreds of hours of cleaning, putting up installations, decorating, meeting, designing, greeting, feeding people, and the list goes on! They literally gave their sweat, love, and tears to this event. Due to capacity issues, a few volunteers expressed that they felt pressured to extend their hours on their shift and there weren't regular check-ins to relieve them

when needed. Some received volunteer t-shirts while others didn't; details like this are significant to ensure that volunteers feel that they are a part of the team and recognized for their invaluable contribution!

## What we did:

- 94% of volunteers who filled out survey said they had fun as a volunteer.
- 85% of volunteers who filled out survey said they would recommend the experience.
- Many said that what they enjoyed the most about volunteering was: meeting other people, the sense of community and purpose, and the creativity and variety of events.

## Learnings:

- **Details, details, details.** Our team was great at being thankful - the Head Volunteer Coordinators even came in early to make breakfast for their volunteer teams one morning to thank them! But due to a lack of capacity, there were shortcomings, including some volunteers not receiving pertinent information such as program schedules and changes. **Provide volunteers with all the details they need in order to excel at their jobs; inform them promptly of changes, and be available to support them as needed.**
- **Budget, budget, budget.** As with so many learnings in this report, **a dedicated budget for volunteer materials, resources and recognition, would have allowed for us to better support the volunteer team.**
- **Long lead-up time for better planning and organization.** Aside from ensuring that the Head Volunteer Coordinators are brought on early in the process to allow for plenty of time to dig into the volunteer coordination, it is also important to ensure communication with volunteers is clear. Some volunteers

expressed frustration around not being able to plan in advance for their volunteer schedules; impromptu scheduling can inadvertently bias towards people who are more flexible in their time commitments (e.g., people without caregiving responsibilities). **It's important to clearly explain expectations around time commitment, to schedule volunteer shifts in advance, and to outline what the value exchange for volunteers will be (e.g. free tickets) in order to make the event more accessible and to respect their time.**

- **Volunteer runners.** In any event of this scale, you will find that you are short on volunteers on certain days, and this may cause some volunteers to feel they need to stay on longer or that they cannot leave their post to take water or washroom breaks. While dedication is a wonderful trait of amazing volunteers, their own self-care is of course as important as anything else, and needs to be kept front of mind. Especially given their short-term position, on-site volunteers may not feel that they can ask for these things and so it is extra important that they be supported in knowing that their well-being is your goal as well. **This issue can be partially addressed by having a few people on site whose job it is to specifically check in on volunteers and to be a runner to replace those on their volunteer shifts, to allow for relief as needed.**

## 4. PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

While we were able to create more space for people using wheelchairs and mobility devices, we could have done more around: wayfinding, accessible portable washrooms, and transit cost.

### What we did:

- We decided to have a separate entrance for folks who use mobility devices, as the general entrance was not wheelchair accessible. We labeled this entrance as a “Priority Entrance” so that it didn’t stigmatize those who used it, and so that it could be used for anyone who needed to skip the line (e.g., people using wheelchairs, school groups, senior citizens etc).
- Part of the fun of being in the Honest Ed’s building was to pay homage to its spirit of getting lost. We tried to balance this with the ability to ensure that attendees found their way around the space through signs and wayfinding maps (in particular, to critical amenities like the portable washrooms, emergency exits, prayer and quiet room etc.), as well as a staffed Information Booth placed in a high-traffic area to direct anyone with questions around accessibility and wayfinding.
- We had 3 gender neutral wheelchair accessible portable washrooms
- We had a site-visit with a consultant on physical accessibility of the building to identify major barriers before the event opened.

### Learnings:

- **Let folks define whether or not something is physically accessible on their own terms.** Unfortunately, the name “Priority Entrance” confused a lot of people. Moreover, we labelled parts of the building as “accessible” or “partially accessible” based on whether there were stairs

or elevator access. Instead of assuming for others what is and is not physically accessible for them, we learned **it’s better to communicate and explain in detail the different infrastructure, barriers, and options for folks so that they can then determine for themselves whether the building is physically accessible to them or not.**

**Site-visits (once far ahead of time to inform the creation of any maps, signage or comms materials, as well as a second visit days before the event opens its doors to adjust for any possible changes) with some volunteers from diverse lived experiences around access is a good way to flag any issues or gaps in wayfinding.**

- **Prioritize wayfinding, general signage and access to important amenities,** such as: washrooms, accessible entryways, water & exits. Even with the challenge that the maze-like Honest Ed’s presented, we could have done more to make the wayfinding signs more visible and for all volunteers to be equipped with the tools needed to navigate the complex maze that was Honest Ed’s. **Communicate any and all possible barriers and critical amenities clearly and use imagery to communicate this, where possible. A picture can speak a thousand words and is an effective way to communicate to a large number of people (example - see Appendix 3).**
- **Accessible washrooms.** The wheelchair accessible portable washrooms were unfortunately hard to find, they did not have

appropriate signage, were placed too close to an adjacent fence (making the doors hard to open all the way), did not have automatic door openers, and were incidentally placed near a pothole. While the signage and pothole were addressed promptly after it was brought to the team's attention, it caused hardship for some of the first attendees using wheelchairs. **Site-checks, combined with confirming the details with the company supplying the portable washrooms (eg, confirming if the doors are automatic, and that they will be placed in an accessible location when delivered), may have helped to avoid this issue.**

- **Location, location, location.** While the location of *An Honest Farewell* was set in stone (quite literally) having an event that was aspiring to be “for everyone” set in the downtown core, created an obvious tension and lack of inclusivity of those who lived in the surrounding Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Wherever possible, and ideally if you host many events, **keep in mind that hosting them across the GTA (or in varied neighbourhoods specific to your region) is a great way to get more people involved and have a larger reach.**

# Conclusion

We tried our best to reflect common feedback that we received from the Toronto for Everyone organizers, consultants, partners, and the public at large, and we want to thank each and every one of them for their time and effort! While various suggestions made in this report (and others - see Appendix 3: Resources) can help as a guide (eg, training, clear communications on vision and values etc), it is important to note that there is no “one size fits all” for all events and programs. We are always looking to improve; if there’s something you think is missing here, or if you have any questions or feedback, please contact CSI’s Executive Director, Adil Dhalla ([adil@socialinnovation.ca](mailto:adil@socialinnovation.ca)).

While many of the points you read in this report may seem obvious, we’re learning that the considerations for creating a diverse and inclusive event are often obvious in hindsight when the voices of diverse folks with diverse lived experience are included. Hosting this event was also a learning opportunity for many of us involved in this project, enabling us to apply some of our learnings around inclusion into our everyday life and work.

CSI made mistakes along the way, but trying to embody the spirit of *Toronto for Everyone* through this event was worth every effort because, even with our shortcomings, we witnessed what is possible when hundreds of citizens come together to co-create. We will continue to learn from our mistakes and continue to do this work by supporting city-builders and social mission organizations who are actively trying to make Toronto a city for everyone. Thank you Toronto, and thank you Honest Ed’s for what you represented to so many of us.

## Appendix 1

- **Inclusion Checklist**
- **Equity Statement**
- **An Honest Farewell Feedback Survey (Sent to Public)**

## Appendix 2: *Toronto for Everyone* Event Report Team

- *Toronto for Everyone* Event Producers: Hima Batavia and Negin Sairafi, **NEMA Productions**
- *Toronto for Everyone* Event Report Producers: Shilbee Kim and Timna Ben-Ari
- *Toronto for Everyone* IDEA Committee: Chana Weinstein, Raad Seraj, Sarah Luca, Shilbee Kim and Timna Ben-Ari
- *Toronto for Everyone* Anti-Oppression Trainer: Rania El Mugammar
- *Toronto for Everyone* Event Report Survey Researcher: Ashraful Hasan, **Impactrio**
- *Toronto for Everyone* Event Report Strategic Organizer and Facilitator: datejie cheko green
- *Toronto for Everyone* Inclusion Checklist Consultants: Denise McLeod Booth, Karen Lewellen, **POW Hearing Solutions**, and Rania El Mugammar
- *Toronto for Everyone* Event Report Reviewer: Erin Kang, Mathura Mahendren and Rania El Mugammar
- *The Centre for Social Innovation* Executive Director: Adil Dhalla
- *The Centre for Social Innovation* Director of Communications: Jamie Biggar
- *The Centre for Social Innovation* Design and Communications Specialist: Yuliya Tsoy

## Appendix 3: Resources

- **Change Together** (TechGirls Canada & TWG)
- **Inclusive Learning and Teaching Handbook**
- **IDEO.Org Impact Design Report**
- **Neighbourhood Arts Network - Arts Equity Toolkit**
- **Fail Forward report guidelines**
- **Access 4 All, Accessible Icon's Project**