



May 11, 2026

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of Progress Place, I am pleased to offer our strong support for the proposed **Church Street Pedestrianization Pilot** proposed to take place from June 19 to August 21, 2026, in partnership with the Church-Wellesley Village BIA.

For more than 40 years, Progress Place has been dedicated to improving the lives of people living with mental illness through community-based, recovery-focused supports grounded in dignity, inclusion, and belonging. Located at 576 Church Street, directly across from The 519, our organization is deeply connected to the Church-Wellesley Village community and witnesses every day the importance of accessible, welcoming, and people-centred public spaces.

The proposed transformation of Church Street into a pedestrian-friendly gathering space reflects many of the values that guide our work every day. By prioritizing accessibility, safety, social connection, and community participation, this initiative will create opportunities for residents, families, visitors, and vulnerable community members to engage with one another in meaningful and affirming ways.

We are especially encouraged by the project's recognition of the Church-Wellesley Village as a vital cultural and historical centre for Toronto's 2SLGBTQ+ communities. The timing of this initiative alongside the 50th anniversary of The 519 and the forthcoming Cultural District designation represents an important investment in a neighbourhood that has long fostered inclusion, advocacy, and care.

At Progress Place, we see every day how community connection, recreation, supportive environments, and opportunities for participation contribute to recovery and improved quality of life for people living with mental illness. Creating more accessible and walkable public spaces aligns closely with our mission to provide opportunities for recovery through friendship, recreation, and community engagement in an environment of support, respect, and dignity.

We believe this pilot project will not only support local businesses and activate public space, but also strengthen social inclusion and community wellbeing across downtown Toronto. We are proud to support this initiative and the vision of a more connected, accessible, and vibrant Church-Wellesley Village.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Criss Habal".

Criss Habal
Executive Director,
Progress Place

PROGRESS PLACE: 576 Church Street, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2E3 Canada

Tel 416.323.0223 Fax 416.323.9843 www.progressplace.org

CHARITABLE NUMBER 10786 1155 RR0001

PARTNERS IN RECOVERY