

IMPACT REPORT 2024

THE
LOCAL





MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND PUBLISHER

It was a milestone year for *The Local*. In 2024, we celebrated our five-year anniversary as a publication. The quality of our journalism continued to be recognized nationally, with another National Magazine Award and two more Digital Publishing Awards. Our issues delved into vital and under-reported topics, from the city’s precarious arts sector to its alleged “green economy.” Our all-encompassing examination of Toronto’s public school system revealed what a decade of underfunding has meant for students, teachers, and their classrooms. Our unprecedented look at urban inequality revealed stark divisions never-before reported, including a nearly 12-year gap in life expectancy between neighbourhoods.

Even as the journalism industry continues to face uncertainty, *The Local* is diversifying its revenues and building a solid financial base so we can continue to deliver exceptional reporting and storytelling. In 2024, we had more donors giving more, a response to the fact that good, responsible journalism is under threat and a testament to the vital role *The Local* plays in delivering valuable, paywall-free information to all. Our stories had close to 50,000 average monthly reads. Our contributors—comprising nearly 40 writers, editors, photographers, and visual artists—were 53 percent non-white, which was significantly higher than the Canadian industry average of 33 percent. And we continued to create opportunities for young journalists from communities under-represented in Canadian media through the fifth edition of our Local Journalism Fellowship.

We are proud of what we were able to accomplish this past year and look forward to a chaotic 2025 when *The Local*’s in-depth, non-profit brand of journalism will be called upon to make sense of the rapidly changing political climate.

Chris Ellis
Chair,
Board of Directors

Tai Huynh
Editor-in-Chief
and Publisher



OUR PURPOSE

The Local is a non-profit online magazine covering urban health and social issues in Toronto.

We are unabashedly Toronto, reporting from corners of the city that are too often ignored or misunderstood, with bylines as diverse as the city itself. We aim to fill a role that traditional media neglects—turning complex policy issues into compelling narratives, and addressing problems that are systemic and ongoing, even if they don't have a news hook.

We publish four quarterly issues a year, as well as regular one-off features and investigations tackling a range of social issues—from housing and transit to public education, labour, and urban health.



OUR JOURNALISM IN 2024

The Local turned five in 2024 and we kept busy doing what we do best—churning out in-depth, timely stories about Toronto’s communities readers can’t find anywhere else.

In spring 2024, amid a cascading series of bad news stories about the city’s major arts institutions—with Artscape in receivership, Hot Docs broke and in disarray, local theatre companies in crisis, the Fringe Festival struggling, the Just for Laughs Toronto festival closing, and TIFF and Contact looking for title sponsors—we launched the “Art + Money” issue. It was a perfectly timed package that examined the arts sector’s most existential question: Can you make art and still make a living in Toronto? To answer that question, in usual Local fashion, we went to the people closest to the situation by assembling a team of writers that included local playwrights, as well as arts workers, journalists and critics. The nine-story package was one of our most widely read issues all year, with close to 150,000 reads.

“Thank you for the work you are doing. I am an arts worker and have not read such on-point analyses of the current state of the Toronto arts scene. That’s why I became a donor! Keep it up. Independent journalism is everything.”

— Allie Caldwell

In summer 2024, we once again got together with our friends at *The Narwhal* to co-produce a package of stories, “The Green* Economy,” about the shady side of the environmental sustainability movement. The eight-story issue examined the companies working to get us to a net-zero future as well as those trying to

undermine it. We investigated corporate greenwashing at some of the GTA's biggest corporations, from GFL to RBC, and visited auto repair shops where local mechanics are wrestling with global manufacturers and dealers over the right to repair EVs.

“Divided City,” our anniversary issue in fall 2024, was our most ambitious undertaking to date. The issue melded together exquisite writing, photography, and data to paint a picture of Toronto never before seen. It showed how neighbourhoods separated by just a few TTC stops have a 12-year difference in life expectancy, how widespread encampments have become, and how the City’s clearing efforts simply pushed unhoused Torontonians from one park to another. “Divided City” echoed the urban disparities we initially examined in *The Local’s* very first issue “The Geography of Difference” five years earlier, and revealed just how entrenched those divisions have become.



YONGE-DORIS

86.2 YEARS

Hwy 401

BRIDLE PATH-
SUNNYBROOK-
YORK MILLS

84.4 YEARS

CASA LOMA

84.6 YEARS

ROSEDALE-
MOORE PARK

83.0 YEARS

Bloor St

NORTH ST. JAMES TOWN

77.1 YEARS

MOSS PARK

74.8 YEARS

OUR IMPACT

In 2024, *The Local's* journalism filled important gaps into the city's information ecosystem. When Scarborough South West held its by-election after the death of long-time councillor Jaye Robinson, *The Local* jumped in full-force to provide residents with the most comprehensive package of candidate information available anywhere. We fired up Candidate Tracker which was the only place to find fact-checked biographies and election platform summaries for all 16 candidates. We partnered with the Toronto Public Library to disseminate the information in all five TPL branches in the district. In the end, our reader data suggests that one in four voters used *The Local's* coverage in the days leading up to the by-election.

“Thank you and everyone at *The Local* for Candidate Tracker and all the great, in depth, informative articles. We need this type of reliable information in the sea of misinformation and sound bites.”

— Wanda Jurashek

Our fearless investigations in 2024 exposed corporate polluters and unscrupulous landlords while our in-depth analyses sought government accountability on a range of issues affecting life in the city, from homelessness to climate change and public education.



WHO'S RUNNING

IN THE DON VALLEY WEST BY-ELECTION?

Fact-checked biographies and platform
summaries for all candidates

Prepared by journalists at The Local Magazine

ELECTION DAY:
NOVEMBER 4, 2024



ADVANCE VOTING: OCTOBER 26/27

[THELOCAL.TO/DVW2024](https://thelocal.to/dvw2024)

THE LOCAL

Shortly after the publication of the trio of stories about the disparity in life expectancy across neighbourhoods, Toronto's public health officials reached out to discuss how such information could become a regular part of how the city monitors progress. Importantly, it could give rise to initiatives to tackle urban inequality in the years ahead.

In 2024, *The Local's* stories were read a total of 581,976 times (48,498 per month on average). Our stories were also republished by *The Walrus* and *The Narwhal*, further extending our reach.

The quality of our journalism continued to be recognized nationally, with another National Magazine Award, for best photojournalism, and two more Digital Publishing Awards for best news coverage for a community publication and best editorial package for a small publication.

| *The Local's* Inori Roy at the
2024 Digital Publishing Awards



INDUSTRY AWARDS

2020

Digital Publishing Awards



2021

Digital Publishing Awards



2022

Digital Publishing Awards

National Magazine Awards

Press Freedom Award



2023

Digital Publishing Awards

Alliance for Healthier Communities Media Award



2024

Digital Publishing Awards

National Magazine Award

Canadian Association of Journalists Awards



STAYING RESILIENT

The Canadian journalism landscape continued to be on shaky ground in 2024. *The Local*, along with every other outlet in Canada, remained absent from Facebook and Instagram due to Meta's ban in response to Bill C-18, the Online News Act. The silver lining is that Google is complying with the Act, and is paying \$100 million to compensate journalism in Canada, to be distributed in early 2025 in amounts proportional to newsroom staff complement.

To stay resilient in the changing environment, *The Local* has focused on diversifying its revenue mix. When we began in 2019, 100 percent of *The Local's* funding came from philanthropic grants. In 2024, this made up 72 percent of our revenues, with the remainder coming from increasing reader donations, as well as government grants and tax credits.

“*The Local* in Toronto adopted a philanthropic model from the start and is doing important local coverage in underserved neighbourhoods of the country’s biggest city.”

– “*The Lost Estate*” report by Public Policy Forum/
Rideau Hall Foundation/Michener Awards Foundation

While revenue diversification is important, *The Local* has also been actively working to raise awareness about the importance of non-profit journalism and the role of philanthropy in supporting it. For *The Philanthropist Journal* in May 2024, *The Local's* Tai Huynh wrote about how the economics of traditional media are failing to produce quality journalism in the public interest and how philanthropy can fill the gap. This theme was repeated in a major report by the Public Policy Forum/Rideau Hall Foundation/Michener Awards Foundation which profiled *The Local* as a leading example of a non-profit journalism model that is working.

OUR EQUITY COMMITMENT

As a publication focused on the issues affecting Toronto, our goal is to make sure our contributors reflect the diversity of this city, and that the people we platform are also connected with the communities on which they report.

That's why every year, *The Local* conducts a diversity survey among our staff and freelance contributors as part of our ongoing commitment to race, representation, and diversity. In 2024 we sent our survey to 39 contributors and received 30 responses, a 77 percent response rate.

In 2024, 53.3 percent of our respondents identified as non-white. This is higher than the Canadian industry average of 33 percent.

The Local's 2024 Contributors and Staff, by Race

	The Local	Industry Average
White	46.7%	77.0%
Non-White	53.3	33.0%

Source: [Canadian Newsroom Diversity Survey, CAJ](#)

In terms of gender representation, 46.7 percent of our contributors identified as female, slightly lower than the industry average of 49.3 percent, and 10 percent of our contributors identified as non-binary, which is higher than the industry average of 0.7 percent for non-binary.

The Local's 2024 Contributors and Staff, by Gender

	The Local	Industry Average
Male	43.3%	50.0%
Female	46.7%	49.3%
Non-binary	10.0%	0.7%

Source: [Canadian Newsroom Diversity Survey, CAJ](#)

This year, we also surveyed our contributors to determine the number of journalists we work with who identify as living with a disability. Among our contributors, 10 percent identify as living with a disability. *The Local* is among a handful of outlets that collect this data and national numbers are not reported widely, so there is no industry average for comparison.

The Local's 2024 Contributors and Staff, by Disability

	The Local	Industry Average
Disability	10.0%	-
No disability	83.3%	-
Prefer not to answer	6.7%	-

Source: [Canadian Newsroom Diversity Survey, CAJ](#)

The Local is also committed to creating scholarships and mentorship opportunities for aspiring journalists of colour. In 2024, we held the fifth edition of our Local Journalism Fellowship—a paid 15-week opportunity for aspiring and emerging journalists from communities underrepresented in Canadian media to learn the craft of magazine-style community journalism and make important industry connections. Thanks to the generous support of Journalists for Human Rights and Maytree, we were able to offer fellowships to Alice Boyle, Matthew Molinaro, Mzwandile Poncana, and Sam Rosati Martin.



**Matthew
Molinaro**



**Alice
Boyle**



**Sam
Rosati
Martin**



**Mzwandile
Poncana**

WHAT'S AHEAD IN 2025

With Trump back in the White House and provincial and federal elections on our side of the border, 2025 promises to be a chaotic year for Canadians and our newsroom. In 2025, readers can expect deep dives into things like immigration, and Ontario and national politics—big and often polarizing issues that we want to unpack with nuance and cover from uniquely local perspectives. After what will undoubtedly feel like an eternity covering snap elections, summer 2025 will see *The Local* turn our attention to something even more untamed—Toronto's urban wildlife.

Readers can also expect more inter-issue content from us in the form of one-off features and investigations on beats like health and public education. In 2025, we will also be expanding our groundbreaking life expectancy work beyond Toronto to include the surrounding cities in the GTA.



FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS IN 2024

As a non-profit, *The Local* relies on various sources of revenue to pay our staff and contributors, and to offer high-quality content that is freely accessible to everyone. Vital to keeping *The Local* operating as an ad- and paywall-free publication is our growing community of generous supporters who believe in what we do.

As part of *The Local's* [transparency policy](#), we make public all sources of funding above \$5,000 per year.

\$25,000 or more

Atkinson Foundation
Canadian Periodical Fund/Government of Canada
Inspirit Foundation
Metcalf Foundation
SE Health
Toronto Foundation
United Way Greater Toronto
Vohra Miller Foundation
Wellesley Institute
WES Mariam Assefa Fund
YMCA of Greater Toronto

\$5,000 to \$24,999


Ben and Hilda Katz Charitable Foundation
J.P. Bickell Foundation
Maytree
Omar Khan
The McLean Foundation
Toronto Arts Foundation

Up to \$4,999

In addition to the financial contributors above, *The Local* is supported by hundreds of individual readers who have generously donated various amounts—one-time, monthly, or yearly.

“I’ve really appreciated *The Local’s* dedication to doing deep dives and focused topics. I discovered your publication during the re-election of John Tory but have been pleasantly surprised by the breadth and depth of issues you cover since while still being Toronto specific. You have done a lot to expand my understanding of not just the conditions of the city but also the systems and histories that have created those conditions. In an era of articles that just cram a bunch of social media posts together, or influencers making summaries of summaries, in depth journalism like yours is sorely needed. I’ll gladly increase my support.”

— *Terry, a Local supporter who increased their monthly donation from \$10 to \$25 in 2024.*



LOCAL
JOURNALISM
MATTERS.

THE TEAM

Staff

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Nicholas Hune-Brown, Executive Editor

Inori Roy, Associate Editor

Wency Leung, Reporter

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The Local is a Registered Journalism Organization.

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