



## Neighbourhood Link Support Services

Neighbourhood Link Support Services is an innovative community based agency that actively promotes the independence and dignity of seniors. With a history of cutting edge advocacy work that has strong roots in its' community, Neighbourhood Link Support Services has served the needs of senior citizens for over 30 years.

Neighbourhood Link Support Services successfully combines research and advocacy initiatives with responsive community services. We provide or arrange any reasonable service requested by a senior, including home help and maintenance, assistance with bathing and personal grooming, help with "red tape," drives and escorts, shopping, friendly visiting, social and recreational programmes. Neighbourhood Link Support Services also provides alternative housing and Crisis Intervention Aid to those "at risk" seniors, whose social isolation or physical and emotional debilities require more concentrated attention.

If you are interested in the *Akwasti Project*, please contact:

The *Akwasti* Community Worker

Neighbourhood Link Support Services

3036 Danforth Avenue Toronto, ON M4C 1N2

Tel: (416) 691-7407 Fax: (416) 691-8466

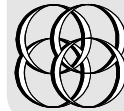
E-mail: [mail@senior-link.com](mailto:mail@senior-link.com)

Web site: [www.neighbourhoodlink.org](http://www.neighbourhoodlink.org)



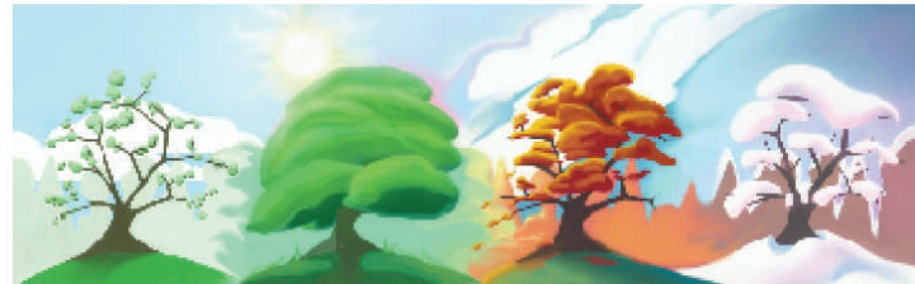
United Way

The hand that helps the most.



## Neighbourhood Link Support Services

*Independence, Dignity, and Community*



# THE AKWASTI PROJECT

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*Ondakwastakwi Onteskwet*

*"In the inner beauty of  
happiness they grow old."*

# *The Akwasti Project*

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The Akwasti Project has been designed to help those extremely frail and vulnerable elderly, who would qualify for extended care in an institutional setting, but have the desire to maintain their independence at home. Taken from Huron-Wendat culture, the name of the project reflects the spirit of community present in Neighbourhood Link Support Services.



## *History of The Akwasti Project*

The *Akwasti* Project, which began in 1995, enables frail elderly clients, *whose case management needs are so great that the only other option is placement in a long-term care facility*, to live with independence and dignity in their own communities through intensively enhanced personal support services. Neighbourhood Link Support Services developed this programme in response to clients, who appreciated the benefits of supportive housing, but wanted to remain living in their own homes with a higher level of independence.

Neighbourhood Link Support Services innovative approach to services for seniors greatly improves quality of life, is highly cost effective and has allowed all clients to live in their own homes to within 6 weeks of their death.

The strength of the programme rests on the commitment and skills of staff and volunteers, who respond to the needs of the elderly, whose only other option would be institutional care.

## *Criteria for Placement in the Akwasti Programme*

Neighbourhood Link/Senior Link's trained professional *Akwasti* Community Worker uses the following criteria to determine whether a client may be suitable for the *Akwasti* Programme:

- ✓ The client may be at risk if he/she stays at home (falling, malnutrition etc.)
- ✓ The client may be isolated, depressed, and find it difficult to manage on his/her own
- ✓ The client has become frail and may be considering placement in a nursing home
- ✓ The client must have a real desire to stay at home, and/or refuse to move to a long-term care facility
- ✓ The client must accept that there is a risk involved in staying in his/her own home.
- ✓ The client must be able to accept help from volunteers to benefit from the programme.

“I'd have to be put in a Nursing Home without the *Akwasti* Programme and Neighbourhood Link Support Services. I don't think I'd be here without them.”

## *Volunteer Commitment for the Akwasti Project*

Volunteers who contribute their time are very special people, who have patience, initiative and good common sense. They are part of a team, who focus on one frail, elderly individual. Continuity and consistency of high quality care are essential aspects of the project and *Akwasti* volunteers commit to the project for a minimum of six months on a regular basis.

Some of the many challenges volunteers face include: providing help with getting up in the morning, making lunch or dinner, or assisting with bathing and changing clothes. For some clients this is their last fight for independence and dignity.