

Housing Services and Community Engagement Annual Report

2023-2024

Georgian College provides housing services to students and communities across our seven campus locations. This report details the scope and impact of the housing services provided.

In 2023-24, the housing services team accomplished significant impacts and navigated pivotal changes to better serve Georgian's student population and local communities.

Georgian College signed on to the [United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals \(UN SDGs\) Accord](#) in December 2021. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are an urgent call for action by all countries – developed and developing – in a global partnership to end poverty, improve health and education, tackle climate change and more. Georgian's housing strategy supports UN SDGs #3 – Good Health and Wellbeing, #11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities, #12 – Responsible Consumption and Production, and #17 – Partnerships for The Goals.



Georgian College housing and accommodations

Residences, purpose-built housing, homestay and home share opportunities provide over 2,200 beds for Georgian College students.

Residences

Georgian partners with Campus Living Centers to offer student residences in the [Barrie](#), [Orillia](#), and [Owen Sound](#) communities, housing over 775 students.

Purpose-built student housing

Georgian works alongside local Barrie purpose-built student housing to promote housing options, help with rental applications and mediate concerns in the living environment.

There are three purpose-built housing options located within a fifteen-minute walk to the Barrie Campus. Together, these purpose-built housing options provide accommodations for over 850 students.

Homestay and home sharing

In April 2023, Georgian was the first postsecondary institution to sign a partnership with [SpacesShared](#), an innovative home sharing program matching students looking for affordable room rentals with older adults in the community. Students may agree to rent reductions upon the completion of household tasks and chores.

Not only does SpacesShared provide affordable accommodations for students, but the arrangement also combats a loneliness epidemic among the elderly in our communities and [facilitates valuable intergenerational relationships](#).

As of April 2024, 32 seniors have listed their homes on SpacesShared. Expansion to Orillia, Owen Sound and Orangeville communities is planned for 2024.

Strategic outreach to other local homestay and home sharing organizations, and community organizations supporting retirees, resulted in increased homestay and home sharing opportunities for Georgian students. An additional 575 student accommodations are available to students through these partnerships.

Rental market access

Georgian is actively reducing barriers for students renting in our communities.

The housing services team strives to ensure Georgian students are knowledgeable consumers and good neighbours. The team leverages community partnerships and digital tools to facilitate student connection to local rental markets.

Digital tools

Places4Students is a comprehensive online platform dedicated to simplifying the housing search for students through advanced intuitive search features. Over 7,000 landlords have created a Places4Students account in the Georgian College catchment.

The housing services team gathers rental listings from local community partners and posts them to a dedicated housing portal for students. Students can trust these listings are up-to-date, relevant and secure. The [housing services webpage](#), offers resources for students, landlords and community partners.

Community partnerships

Georgian's partnership with AG Secure, a local Barrie property management company, has simplified the rental process for mature international students arriving to Canada with their families. AG Secure has committed to evaluating rental applications from mature international students based on personal and

financial information available to them from their home country instead of relying solely on previous Canadian rental and credit history.

The Simcoe Urban Native (S.U.N.) Housing Inc. addresses housing needs of low- to moderate-income Indigenous families in the Barrie area. As of January 2024, four Georgian students have benefited from S.U.N. Housing Inc services.

Supporting flourishing communities

Georgian's housing services team helps our communities flourish through changemaking and community building.

Changemaking

Student Housing Champion peer educators facilitate the Neighbourhood Impact Project. Housing Champions deliver peer-to-peer education about city bylaws, represent the college's housing services at community events, and engages students in weekly campus events. Over 234 students engaged in the Neighbourhood Impact Project's educational programming in February 2023 alone. The Neighbourhood Impact Project's winter 2024 social media posts have gained over 20,000 combined views.

Rentville is an affordable housing "lab" supported by a collaboration between Georgian's Community Impact Lab and the County of Simcoe. Georgian's Community Impact Lab is an initiative run out of the Social Innovation department. Rentville will support affordable and suitable housing strategies in our region by crowdsourcing relevant market data from landlords and renters.

Community building

Georgian in collaboration with the Ethnic Mosaic Alliance and the Ward 1 Property Owners Association, invited its Barrie Ward 1 neighbours to the Connecting Neighbours event on campus in October 2023. Students, landlords, neighbours and local organizations shared information relevant to community members and students, and built connections to support safe and supportive community housing experiences.





The Housing Champions will launch Two Driveways, a donation drive to collect snow shovels and educate new students about winter driveway maintenance in Winter 2025. Two Driveways was inspired by SnowAngels Canada, a social enterprise that helps clear driveways for vulnerable people.

Student transition support and campus engagement

A strong start and a strong sense of belonging at college, are the foundations for student retention and satisfaction.

Student transition support

The housing services team participates in all transition-related events at Georgian. Students are introduced to the Housing and Outreach Coordinators during HeadStart, a part of new student orientation programming; International Education Week, an online event hosted for international students studying at Georgian in the upcoming semester; and Georgian’s Open House, a key recruitment initiative for prospective students.

Housing Awareness Week is hosted at the Barrie Campus approximately four weeks prior to the start of each semester to support new and current students in their housing search. The week is a strategic collaboration among the college, city and municipal partners, and local housing vendors. A collaborative approach to Housing Awareness Week is an opportunity for students to meet their future neighbours and community leaders.

Selected presentations are listed below:

Session	Description	Strategic partners
Ask An Expert	Community experts advise on municipal by-laws, including noise and garbage ordinances.	Barrie By-law Enforcement Services
Safe at Home	Local fire fighters teach students how to react swiftly and	Barrie Fire and Emergency Services

	effectively in case of a fire emergency.	
Housing 101	Facilitators introduce students to key terminology, rights and responsibilities, and understanding Ontario leases.	Housing and Outreach Coordinators
Housing Partner Showcase	Students are introduced to local housing options.	Georgian residences, purpose-built housing vendors, and homestay and home share partners.

Campus engagement

“Home” refers to more than an address, it refers to place where one belongs. Georgian’s Housing and Outreach Coordinators and the First Year Experience and Transition Officer delivered a Black Student Social in response to advocacy from Georgian’s Black students. The event was designed to facilitate connection among Black students and strengthen a sense of belonging at Georgian College.

Student advocacy

Coordinated care keeps our students safe, housed and thriving.

Navigate360

Navigate360 is a student information system that links Georgian’s robust student services together to provide coordinated care for students. Coordinated care means that students receive support from everyone on campus who could help them.

The Housing and Outreach Coordinators leverage Navigate360 to assess the real-time housing needs of Georgian students. 20 per cent of respondents received triaged housing support following a housing survey in Fall 2023.

Faculty and employees who are concerned about a student’s housing situation can submit alerts to housing services via Navigate360. Employees respond to all housing alerts within 24 hours. Utilizing the coordinated care network, housing services employees can refer students for further assistance from other departments after their housing concerns are resolved.

Legal services

The Housing and Outreach Coordinators routinely direct students to the Community Legal Clinic, located in Barrie and Orillia, for thorough legal advice. The Community Legal Clinic provides community members access to lawyers, legal workers, paralegals and administrative staff dedicated to resolving housing concerns.

Student testimonial

"I wanted to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude for your unwavering support and invaluable assistance in helping me settle and transition smoothly to life in Canada.

Your relentless efforts, guidance, and warm assistance in finding suitable housing have made a significant impact on my journey.

The ease with which I could navigate the initial challenges, thanks to your help, has been truly remarkable. Your dedication has not only facilitated a smooth settlement but has also contributed to my peace of mind during this transitional period.

Your kindness and support have made a world of difference, and I am truly grateful for the exceptional level of assistance you both have provided.

I look forward to the opportunity to express my appreciation in person. Until then, please accept my heartfelt thanks for your exceptional support."

The Georgian College housing services team continues to deliver an unrivaled student experience daily.