

BILD members are committed to bettering their communities through philanthropic contributions

Whether it's contributing to health care or affordable housing, BILD members take their commitments to their communities very seriously, writes David Wilkes.



Mackenzie Richmond Hill Hospital is among the many community recipients of BILD members' financial contributions. (Rene Johnston / Toronto Star file photo)

By David Wilkes BILD President & CEO
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One of the many things that truly inspire me about BILD member companies and the people behind them is their commitment to making the GTA a better place to live through their philanthropic contributions. They care about the community because they live here too. Let me provide a few examples of how that caring is turned into tangible action.

Thanks to our members, health care in the GTA receives a much-needed boost. For example, St. Joseph's Health Centre in Toronto's west end will be better able to meet its goals of improving spaces for patients, purchasing new technology and delivering specialized care because the owner of a BILD member company contributed a significant amount to its Promise Campaign.

In Vaughan, our members' donations to Mackenzie Health Foundation are helping to enhance care at Mackenzie Richmond Hill Hospital as well as helping to build and equip Mackenzie Vaughan Hospital, which is expected to be completed in 2020. It will be the first hospital to be built in the York Region in 30 years. At last count, the owners of at least six BILD member companies had given generously to ensure that residents of York Region have access to excellent health care close to home.

Thanks to our members, education in the GTA receives generous support. In November, the University of Toronto officially opened the new home of the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design at One Spadina Crescent, which will house undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as research and public outreach programs. The renovation and expansion of the heritage building on the site had been made possible with a substantial gift from the founder and CEO of a BILD member company and numerous contributions from other BILD members.

Thanks to our members, people in need get a greater number of safe, affordable places to live. Recently, several BILD member companies helped raise money for a housing project by St. Clare's Multifaith Housing Society, as part of an initiative spearheaded by the Residential Construction Council of Ontario. The project, which broke ground in December, will provide 22 new apartments in Kensington Market for people experiencing homelessness.

Many of our members also help provide affordable [housing](#) by partnering with Habitat for Humanity Greater Toronto Area. Just in time for the holidays, four families received new homes on Kennedy Road in Caledon, a Habitat project that included seven BILD member companies as sponsors and partners.

I could give many more examples of the ways our members demonstrate their caring for the communities where they live. The only limit is the space I have for this column. If you would like to see more examples, follow BILD on Twitter, @bildgta, where we regularly share about our members' philanthropic work.

Whether it's contributing to health care, education, affordable housing or other community needs, our members take their commitments to their communities very seriously. Their ability to fulfil these commitments depends on their own health as businesses, which is why BILD will always advocate for fairness, accountability and transparency when we look at the taxes, fees and charges that our members pay to municipalities. When our members thrive, they can continue to contribute to the health and vitality of our GTA communities.

As this year's elections approach, BILD will be front and centre on a number of issues that are important to our industry. I will write about some of these in future columns.

Dave Wilkes is President and CEO of the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD), the voice of the homebuilding, land development and professional renovation industry in the GTA. Follow BILD at twitter.com/bildgta, facebook.com/bildgta and bildblogs.ca.