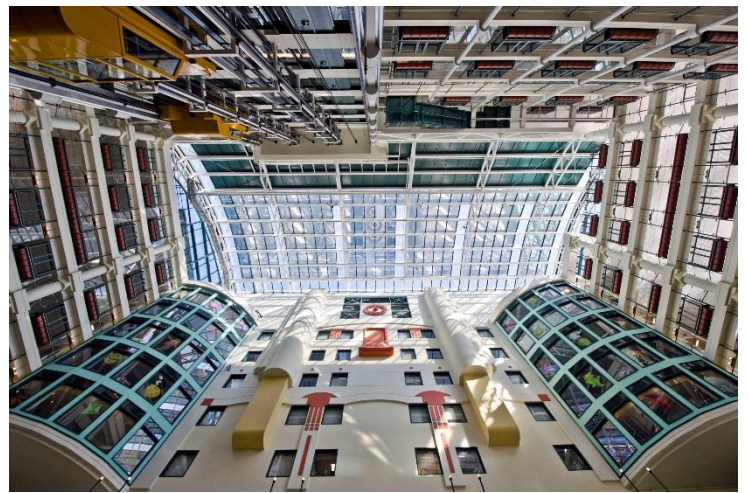


# Postdoctoral Fellowship in Paediatric Psychology

2024-2025



**Department of Psychology**  
The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, ON, Canada

Paediatric Psychology Fellowship Coordinator: Joel Tourigny, Ph.D., C.Psych  
Director of Training: Sharon Guger, Ph.D., C.Psych

**SickKids<sup>®</sup>**

## Overview

The Department of Psychology at The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Ontario is pleased to offer a postdoctoral fellowship in paediatric psychology. As one of the fastest growing sub-specialties in psychology today, paediatric psychology offers clinicians the opportunity to work in partnership with a wide range of professionals to enhance children's health and well-being at the intersection of mind and body. This is a 1.0 FTE position, primarily involving direct clinical service to the children, youth, and families served by the hospital. This one-year training position begins on September 1, 2024, (date negotiable).

Our program is a member of the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) and complies with the uniform notification date for applicants. The fellowship adheres to a scientist-practitioner model and training is intended to prepare fellows for registration with the College of Psychologists of Ontario (CPO) and sub-specialty practice in the area of paediatric health psychology.

The philosophy of the fellowship mirrors that of The Hospital for Sick Children in that the needs of the patient and family are primary. An evidence-based/best practice approach is used and fellows work closely with various members of the multi-disciplinary team. Conceptualizing the child's medical, psychological, social, emotional, and spiritual needs within a developmental framework is integral to practice.

The hospital staff and the administration are dedicated to developing greater mental health equity in accordance with SickKids' core values of compassion, integrity, collaboration, inclusion, innovation, and excellence. In addition to their primary focus on direct patient care, fellows will be offered additional opportunities to do this through engaging in research, advocacy, and/or engaging with community or inter-departmental partnerships. Fellows will have opportunities to participate in the maintenance and development of these essential collaborations.

The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids), affiliated with the University of Toronto, is Canada's largest paediatric academic health care institution and one of the world's leading children's hospitals. As innovators in child health, SickKids improves the health of children by integrating care, research and teaching. It is a centre of excellence in the delivery of cutting edge health care to the paediatric population, and is supported by Canada's strongest hospital-based Research Institute.

The Department of Psychology at SickKids exists as an independent department within a Child Health Services cluster model of service provision, and includes approximately 30 psychologists, 10 psychometrists, and numerous research staff and trainees providing services and conducting clinical research within the hospital. In addition to specialty training in Paediatric Psychology, the Department offers clinical training at the postdoctoral level in Paediatric Neuropsychology (2 positions), internship level (3 positions, accredited by the Canadian Psychological Association), and graduate practicum level. Several programs within the hospital secure independent grants for

clinical and/or research fellows from year to year which enriches the collegial atmosphere amongst trainees at all levels.

### **Goals of the Fellowship**

The goal of our program is to prepare fellows for independent specialty practice in paediatric health psychology. Fellows are exposed to a wide range of patient populations in both inpatient and outpatient settings. Each fellow will select major and minor rotations in accordance with their interest and with the guidance of the fellowship coordinator. Fellows will also choose from various 'exposures' to broaden their training experience. A primary goal of the fellowship is to develop a working model of psychological assessment, consultation, and intervention that allows for effective, thorough, yet efficient service delivery in the fast paced and complex setting of an academic health sciences centre. Complementary goals of the fellowship include obtaining registration as a psychologist with the CPO, becoming adept at working within a multi-disciplinary team, and developing sub-specialty expertise through depth rotations in specific areas such as pain, obesity management, or eating disorders. Graduates of our program have entered into positions in academic medical centers, private practice and multi-disciplinary community clinics.

### **Training Activities**

The fellowship offers clinical training in outpatient and inpatient psychological assessment, consultation, and intervention for children, youth, and families. Children and families served come from a wide range of paediatric medical clinics with the full-spectrum of medical, psychological, and social issues.

Upon completion of the fellowship, graduates will have developed specialty expertise in paediatric health psychology. They will be well versed in consulting with medical teams and educating team members on how health psychology can positively impact children's lives. They will be practiced in the art of conducting assessments and consultations in the hospital setting and providing effective direction to medical teams where appropriate. Graduating fellows will have had opportunities to develop a broad intervention skill set including individual, group, and/or family therapy skills.

They will have developed expertise in a variety of health psychology interventions, including:

- prevention of disease and injury,
- enhancing coping and adaptation to illness,
- improving adherence to treatment regimens,
- treating mental health disorders related to physical well-being,
- balancing family systems that have been disrupted by an illness or its treatment,
- harmonizing sleep, eating, and elimination irregularities,
- stress, pain, and symptom management, and
- treating somatic and conversion disorders.

### **Rotations**

Fellows have opportunities for paediatric health and clinical psychology training in a range of programs and clinics. Rotations are selected based upon fellows' interests, availability of supervisors and program capacity, and the goals of providing a range of clinical experiences including both depth and breadth, inpatient and outpatient contacts, and small and large clinics serving a varied patient population. In conjunction with the fellowship coordinator fellows will select from major rotations which will fill approximately 2 days per week of their time for the full year, and minor rotations which will fill approximately 1 day per week of their time for a full year or 2 days per week for a half year.

### **Major Rotations:**

#### **Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect Program (SCAN)**

The Suspected Child Abuse & Neglect (SCAN) program at Sickkids provides medical and psychosocial intervention for children, youth and their caregivers. The program is multidisciplinary and services 400-500 children/youth per year who have experienced physical abuse, sexual abuse/assault, neglect and/or emotional abuse. In addition, we offer specialized psychosocial services for children and youth who have experienced Internet sexual exploitation and sex trafficking. The program has expertise in complex trauma and is seen as a leader in the field. Clinicians engage in training, research and leadership activities.

#### **Healthy Living Clinic**

For an in-depth view of the Healthy Living Clinic, visit: <https://www.sickkids.ca/en/care-services/clinics/healthy-living-clinic/>. The program's multidisciplinary team assesses approximately 50 new patients annually. Its program offerings include:

- Teen Program: for teenagers with complex obesity aged 12 to 17.5 years.
- Early Years Program: for children living in the GTA aged six months to five years.
- Day Treatment Program: this new initiative is temporarily funded by an internal grant and explores the benefits of providing intensive day-treatment at SickKids.

#### **Chronic Pain Program**

The Chronic Pain Clinic at The Hospital for Sick Children is a specialized service for the assessment and treatment of children and adolescents with chronic pain. It is made up of an experienced team of anesthesiologists, advanced practice nurses, two psychologists, a psychiatrist and physiotherapists. They provide family-centered care and offer treatments and therapies based on the best evidence. For more information, visit: <https://www.sickkids.ca/Anesthesia/Chronic-Pain-Clinic/>. The Chronic Pain Program engages in:

- Multidisciplinary consults,
- Individual assessment and treatment,
- Group treatment programs.

#### **The Outpatient Psychiatry Program**

The Department of Psychiatry at SickKids provides psychodiagnostic assessment and evidence-based intervention for children, adolescents, and their caregivers, who present with anxiety and/or depressive disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorders, and somatic symptom and related disorders. Interdisciplinary team members include psychiatrists, clinical and health psychologists, social workers, therapists, nurse-practitioners, and medical trainees who engage in a breadth of clinical work, research, and training.

Common presentations include social and generalized anxiety, selective mutism, obsessive-compulsive disorder, low mood, suicidal ideation, and significant somatization. Patients may present with acute or chronic medical conditions, behavioural difficulties, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, parent-child relational challenges, and learning disabilities.

Residents work with school aged children, adolescents, and their caregivers in a combination of individual therapy and group interventions. Evidence-based treatment modalities are varied, with cognitive behaviour therapy being most widely utilized and other therapeutic modalities (e.g., acceptance and commitment therapy, dialectical behaviour therapy, interpersonal psychotherapy) incorporated as indicated. Group opportunities may include DBT-informed Multi-Family Skills Group, Mind Body Together Group (for Somatic Symptom and Related Disorders), and CBT Group for Mood and Anxiety Management. Opportunities may also be available for program evaluation research, education, multidisciplinary collaboration, as well as inpatient health psychology assessment, symptom management and consultation.

This rotation emphasizes developing proficiency in providing evidence-based interventions with school-aged children, youth and their caregivers across a broad range of psychiatric and health presentations. Strong candidates would have foundational training in CBT, familiarity with ACT/DBT, and an interest in intervention with youth with complex and comorbid mental and/or physical health presentations.

## **Minor Rotations:**

To broaden their paediatric psychology expertise fellows may select minor rotations from the following list of clinics with embedded paediatric psychologists. Options for minor rotations include:

- Ehlers-Danlos Clinic
- Oncology Clinics
- Inflammatory Bowel Disease Clinic
- Transplant and Regenerative Medicine
- A program of research, likely within one of the major or minor rotations listed above, but could include other clinics within the hospital
- A contribution to one of Sick Kids' in-house or community initiatives with a focus on equity, inclusion, and social justice. Options will vary from year to year, but may include experiences with interprofessional education within the hospital, contributing to community health care in areas of need, or others areas of social paediatrics.

Opportunities for training within the hospital are numerous and exciting. Fellows are often excited about the chance to participate in an interesting clinic or learn from experienced staff. To allow fellows the chance to explore some of these opportunities, fellows may opt to engage in some exposure experiences. Exposures are less time intensive than minor rotations, and are intended to offer the fellow some familiarity with a given clinic, an improved understanding of an issue within paediatrics, or provide some training in a given assessment or therapeutic modality. Exposure opportunities vary from year to year, but could include:

- A more narrow exposure to one of the rotations listed above,
- Participation in a group intervention in a given clinic such as a mindfulness group or a parent education group,
- Engagement in a therapy training program run by staff in any of the above departments for various trainees

## EDI at SickKids

Continuing the journey to become a more equitable, diverse and inclusive environment is a priority for the organization. Here is a snapshot of some of the committees, policies and initiatives that support EDI at SickKids.

### Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

The SickKids Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy will build a foundation to advance equitable inclusion of diverse people and communities across SickKids' care, research and education initiatives so that all can feel acknowledged, valued and respected. Aligned with our SickKids 2025 Strategic Plan, the EDI Strategy provides a path to boldly embed EDI in all that SickKids does and create safe and brave spaces for meaningful change. Developed through engagement and consultation with patients, families, staff and community partners, this plan set the stage for a more equitable and culturally safe future as SickKids. The SickKids EDI Strategy guides the work of various committees and is embedded in many initiatives, including:

- EDI Steering Committee: The EDI Steering Committee provides a platform for discussion and guidance regarding EDI initiatives, programs and policies across the organization with representation from across clinical, learning and research groups.
- Research Institute Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Office
- Black Experiences in Health Care Working Group
- 2SLGBTQIA+@SK Committee
- Accessibility Steering Committee
- Indigenous Health Strategy: The SickKids Indigenous Health Strategy developed five key guiding principles:
  - Self-determination
  - Truth and reconciliation
  - Cultural safety and sensitivity
  - Honesty and transparency
  - Efficient use of resource
- Land Acknowledgment
- Signing of the BlackNorth Initiative Pledge in 2020
- Adoption of the Inclusion Flag and 2SLGBTQIA+ acronym
- Preferred Name Initiative

## **Supervision**

Supervision is provided by senior staff in the Department of Psychology and involves observation, report review, and one-to-one supervision. Fellows will receive at least two hours of individual face-to-face supervision per week. Regularly scheduled, one-to-one supervision will include setting and monitoring of training goals, review of clinical cases, and issues related to professional development. Supervision follows a developmental model and fellows will work with a variety of faculty members throughout the fellowship for broad exposure to different styles of clinical practice and supervision. Regular meetings with the Fellowship Coordinator will allow fellows an opportunity to raise any questions or concerns that they may have regarding their fellowship or their experience integrating into the Sick Kids' community. These meetings also provide an opportunity to review the fellow's progress towards their training goals and ensure that their fellowship experience is meeting SickKids' high standards for training and clinical practice. Fellows often have the opportunity to supervise pre-doctoral interns and practicum students within their major rotation and will receive supervision on the training they provide.

## **Safe Consultation**

Integrating with the hospital culture of Sick Kids can be both a daunting and rewarding experience. The Department of Psychology is committed to ensuring fellows feel welcomed, included, supported and heard.

In accordance with this goal, fellows will have the opportunity to engage with staff mentors who are outside the evaluative structure of the fellowship and whose goal is to support the fellow in having discussions on any issues that may arise. Fellows will be offered the chance to indicate their preference for a mentor early in the fellowship and will be matched based on staff availability.

In addition to having access to the fellowship coordinator and their staff mentor, fellows will have access to Safe(r) Spaces at SickKids. This initiative comes from the EDI Office and the organization's EDI Steering Committee and is a part of our ongoing efforts to create positive environments through the EDI Strategy. Safer Spaces allow individuals who are members of specific communities, and allies, to network, establish a sense of community and create affirming spaces at SickKids. Safer Space sessions are available on a drop-in basis and are led by EDI Steering committees caucus. These caucuses are situated around identity and community groups including:

- 2SLGBTQIA+
- Accessibility, Access and Inclusion
- Anti-Black Racism
- Women in Science
- Indigenous Reconciliation Working Group (coming soon!)
- Racialized, Unity, and Solidarity (coming soon!)



## **Employee Wellness**

Sick Kids is committed to supporting its staff in their movement toward wellness in a variety of ways, including:

**Employee Assistance Program:** The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a confidential and voluntary support service that can help you develop strategies to help you with personal or work-related concerns, tensions and stress before they lead to more serious difficulties. EAP is available at no cost to employees and their families.

**Employee Relations:** The Employee Relations group provides support to all staff who work at SickKids when dealing with difficulties in the workplace such as interpersonal conflict or issues related to discrimination, breaches of the Code of Conduct, the Respect in the Workplace policy and the Prevention of Workplace Violence and Harassment policy.

**Peer Support Program:** A confidential resource, offering individual mental health outreach and trauma support 24/7 to staff in need. Peers can connect with their colleagues in a variety of ways, including meeting one-to-one or providing support via telephone, email or text.

**Spiritual & Religious Care Department:** The SickKids Spiritual Care Department Consists of Four Pillars: Chaplaincy, Clinical Pastoral Education, Counselling, and The Mindfulness Project. Visit the site to find information about the four pillars, religious observances and related events.

## Didactics

A rich array of didactic learning opportunities are available to fellows, residents, and staff at SickKids. Rotation-specific readings will be suggested by individual supervisors. More formal didactics are provided to ensure a broad knowledgebase in paediatric psychology. Fellows are expected to attend all of the health psychology didactics, while attendance at the neuropsychology offerings is optional. In addition to these seminars, other optional didactic opportunities exist within the psychology department and the hospital as a whole.

### Monthly Educational Curriculum:

- Professional Practice Seminar
- Clinical Didactic Seminar
- Clinical Neuropsychology Seminar and/or Health Psychology Seminar

### Additional Clinical Learning Opportunities:

- Psychology Department Rounds (monthly)
- Clinical Health Evaluative Science (CHES) Rounds (weekly)
- Brain and Behavior Cross-Talks (monthly)
- Neuroscience and Mental Health Symposia (SickKids Research Institute, monthly)
- Clinical and research rounds associated with individual rotations (e.g., Neurology, Eating Disorders, Hematology/Oncology, Palliative Care) Paediatric Mental Health Grand Rounds (weekly)
- Bioethics Rounds : Bioethics Grand Rounds hosted by the Department of Bioethics are intended to address relevant and timely issues. These Rounds accredited by The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, take place every third Thursday of the month from Noon to 1:00 p.m.

### Additional EDI Learning Opportunities:

- Tea with Tee: An opportunity for staff to come together in conversation to discuss equity, diversity and inclusion and how it can be further integrated at SickKids in an effort to create a safe space so everyone is acknowledged, valued and respected. Contact [ask.edi@sickkids.ca](mailto:ask.edi@sickkids.ca) for more information.
- EDI Champions Program: The EDI Champion program helps prepare EDI Champions at SickKids to engage in EDI conversations, share knowledge and create safe spaces for reflection and learning among their peers. Registration for upcoming cohorts is shared on DailyNews throughout the year!
- Health Equity Rounds: The Centre for Innovation & Excellence in Child and Family-Centred Care hosts a virtual “Health Equity Rounds” series for staff, providing a forum for discussions on disparities in health care and health outcomes experienced by certain groups based on race/ethnicity, and various other areas of discrimination. The Equity Rounds focus on learning opportunities

about health equity, the social determinants of health, and the impact of bias in health care as well as strategies to address health disparities and take action on inequities.

- **Dialogues in Diversity:** A series of conversations among leading academics, EDI practitioners, and social justice advocates discussing equity, diversity, and inclusion across a wide spectrum of topics. The series is intended to explore the various ways in which the application of an EDI lens, and engagement of EDI best practices and principles, can impact equitable health outcomes.

### Scholarship & Research



The Hospital for Sick Children is an active and exciting research environment. The program in Neuroscience and Mental Health within the Research Institute and the Brain and Behavior Centre integrate state of the art clinical, education, and research initiatives. Research at SickKids ranges from characterizing the impact of various adverse insults on development, to understanding the core neurocognitive deficits associated with neurodevelopmental disorders or acquired brain damage, to clinical trials of cutting edge interventions such as mindfulness informed group therapy for chronic pain patients and peer to peer mentoring offered to cancer survivors virtually. Fellows may opt to engage in a research project as one of their minor rotations.

Paediatric Health Psychology Fellows are required to demonstrate their knowledge, expertise, and scholarship by offering talks, didactics, and/or case presentations during their fellowship. These presentations may include provision of education on specialty topic areas to colleagues, presentations on broader topics of mental health to patients and families, and/or a review of research activities or activities with equity initiatives conducted while at SickKids.

## **Evaluation**

Formal written progress evaluations are introduced early on in the supervision process as the supervisor and the fellow discuss relevant past experience and their joint pedagogical goals for the fellow in that rotation. Supervisors provide feedback on a regular basis, but do so formally at the mid-point and conclusion of the rotation. At these times the fellow and supervisor will review progress to date, discuss any changes that may be necessary to keep the fellow's learning on track, and identify areas of strength and relative challenge for the fellow. Fellows whose performance is not at an expected level of competence will be advised regarding the problem areas in their performance, and a specific plan to remediate those weaknesses will be developed.

## **Stipend and Benefits**

The stipend for the 2024 -2025 year is \$58,000 plus an additional stipend of \$5000 for a total of \$63,000. Fellows are eligible for the modified SickKids benefits package (health and dental), 3 weeks paid vacation, and 5 days professional development leave.

Fellows have office space, a computer with internet connection, a private phone line and access to electronic medical journals through the University of Toronto Library.

## **Eligibility**

Applicants should be graduates of a graduate program in Clinical Psychology and have completed a pre-doctoral internship in clinical psychology. All degree requirements must be completed before the fellowship start date. Applicants who have successfully defended their doctoral dissertation are preferred. It is expected that the applicant will meet the requirements for issuance of a Certificate for Supervised Practice and pursue registration with the College of Psychologists of Ontario during the fellowship year. Applicants who bring diversity to the program (e.g., fluency in French or experience with under-served populations) are especially encouraged to apply.

Applicants who have had placements and / or requirements that were negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic are encouraged to have their Director of Clinical Training highlight the nature of this impact in their application. If placements were cancelled or prematurely terminated, applicants are encouraged to describe the training and hours that were anticipated in their cover letter. Please be assured that those situations will be taken into consideration on a case-by-case basis. As well, telepsychology interaction (telephone or virtual video conference) is considered equivalent to face-to-face patient/client contact.

## **Application**

## **To Apply:**

Interested applicants may contact Dr. Tourigny at the email address below. Applications are due by January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024.

The application requirements include:

- A letter of interest describing clinical training, teaching, and research/scholarly interests
- A curriculum vitae
- Three (3) letters of reference (preferably from two clinical supervisors and one academic/research mentor)
- Graduate transcripts listing courses, grades and degrees.

An offer will be made to the successful candidate in **late February, 2024.**

### **Contact:**

Joel Tourigny, Ph.D., C.Psych.,  
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## COVID-19 Impact on Training

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the training program and faculty have navigated the uncertain landscape with flexibility prioritizing clinical care, training and safety. Responses to the global pandemic continue to evolve and, at the time of writing this brochure, a hybrid model of care (combination of in-hospital and virtual) is being provided. It is unclear the degree to which similar arrangements will be in place for the 2023-2024 training year.

At the time of writing, the nature of clinical services remain altered due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has impacted the nature of training opportunities available to current residents and fellows, and their experiences were adjusted to meet training goals to the best of our ability. From mid-March until July 2020, all training took place remotely through secure videoconferencing technology. Activities included outpatient individual and group intervention, assessment, interviewing/feedbacks, research consultation, supervision, team meetings, didactic seminars and case presentations. As of July 2020, some face-to-face training has been available and steadily growing with patient, staff and trainee safety being paramount.

Current residents and fellows were also involved in hospital initiatives specific to the provision of care and support during the pandemic. These included:

- **Virtual Workshop for caregivers:** Emotion Regulation & Resiliency. The workshops provide space for caregiver self-care and compassion using mindfulness skills of emotional coaching of children/teens dealing with stressors
- **Virtual COVID-19 Brief Therapy Clinic** for patients & families. This clinic provides brief therapy treatment services, and resource counselling to patients and families.
- **Development of online resources for caregivers:**  
<https://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/covid-19>

The SickKids Postdoctoral Fellowship in Paediatric Psychology is committed to the training of future health psychologists, and high quality training experiences remain the priority. This brochure describes the intended program structure and rotation experiences, which may require modification depending on limitations imposed by COVID-19. While the program cannot predict with any degree of certainty how the pandemic may impact future training cycles, faculty and departmental leadership are committed to being transparent with information, collaborating with residents and fellows to develop disruption contingency plans guided by training goals, and to document adjusted goals and expectations (including supervision arrangements). Should disruptions to rotations occur in the future, potential and current fellows will be notified as soon as information becomes available.

Fellows are expected to comply with any and all federal, provincial, and Sick Kids organization regulations including but not limited to wearing Personal Protective Equipment, maintaining appropriate physical distancing, abiding by travel restrictions, quarantining, and other Infection Prevention and Control procedures within the context of providing clinical services, or otherwise.

## Information about SickKids and Toronto

The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids), affiliated with the University of Toronto, is recognized as one of the world's foremost paediatric health-care institutions. It is Canada's leading centre dedicated to advancing children's health through the integration of patient care, research and education. To learn about the SickKids Strategic Plan 2020-2025 "Unprecedented outcomes powered by Precision Child Health" please see: <https://2025.sickkids.ca/>

With a staff that includes professionals from all disciplines of health care and research, SickKids provides the best in complex and specialized care by creating scientific and clinical advancements, sharing knowledge and expertise and championing the development of an accessible, comprehensive and sustainable child health system. The Peter Gilgan Centre for Research and Learning is a hub where researchers and learners can congregate and share ideas to transform the current state of child health care since its 2013 opening.

SickKids is located in downtown Toronto, Canada's largest city. Toronto lies on the shore of Lake Ontario, the easternmost of the Great Lakes. Over 6 million people live in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Toronto is a clean, safe, cosmopolitan city with a wonderful network of parks, recreational, and cultural facilities. For more information: [www.seetorontonow.com](http://www.seetorontonow.com)

