

**where art + design  
meet across the city:**

**Design  
TO** Festival

# **DesignTO 2026 Festival**

## **“Design for Dignity” Campaign**

**Integrated Marketing Campaign - Event**  
**Fiona Fang**  
**January 10, 2025**

**Unionville High School**  
**201 Town Center Blvd**  
**Markham, ON, Canada L3R 8G5**

I.	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
II.	DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT, PRODUCT OR SERVICE	2
III.	CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES	3
IV.	CAMPAIGN TARGET MARKET	3
V.	CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES AND SCHEDULE	3
VI.	BUDGET	7
VII.	KEY METRICS	9
VIII.	BIBLIOGRAPHY	10

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Campaign Outline:** In today's rapidly changing society, there is an increased need for accessible architecture and design. Our 45-day "Design For Dignity" campaign aims to empower the next generation of designers to innovate living spaces to be more inclusive. We can position DesignTO as a leader in this change by partnering with Easter Seals, one of Ontario's largest charities supporting youth with physical disabilities.

**Event Description:** The DesignTO Festival, is a 10-day long event recognized as Canada's largest annual celebration of design, held across downtown Toronto. Featuring over **1,200 exhibitions, 6,500 artists and designers**, and over **800,000 attendees** since **2011**, DesignTO's mission is to bring people together, to design a better future.

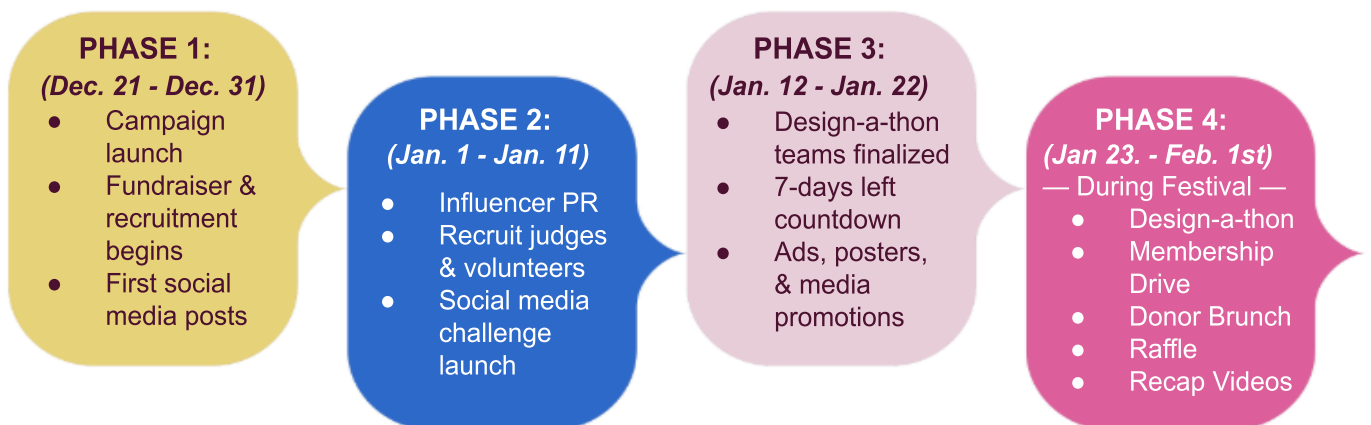
### Campaign Objectives:

Raise awareness and funds for disability support
Empower young artists to build accessible solutions
Grow DesignTO's digital presence

### Target Market:

<u>Primary:</u> <b>Ages 15 to 25</b> → Interest in art and architecture  → Attending local design schools	<u>Secondary:</u> <b>Ages 25 to 55</b> → Socially conscious individuals and advocates  → Local business owners, and investors
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### Campaign Activities & Schedule:



### Budget:

Expenses: **\$16,982.70 USD**

Revenue: **\$20,765.00 USD\***

*\*Profits will go towards donations*

### Key Metrics:

- Increase Members from **687 to 800**
- Reach **55,000** Instagram followers
- Raise **\$7,500 USD** in Easter Seals donations

## I. DESCRIPTION OF EVENT

The **DesignTO Festival** is organized by DesignTO, formally known as Toronto Design Offsite, a non-profit arts and culture organization co-founded in 2011 by Jeremy Vandermeij and Deborah Wang, created with the goal of “bringing people together to design a better future.” In 2024, the festival welcomed over **170,000 visitors**, featured over **500 artists and designers**, and **reached over 197 million brand impressions** through media operations.

The festival transforms Toronto into a vibrant community for **contemporary design and creativity** by showcasing the works of emerging and established designers through galleries and museums, curated exhibitions, and educational programming. Although a majority of the festival’s events are free to attend, select workshops, tours, and panels require a purchased ticket. **The DesignTO Festival is not just an event**, it is a cultural celebration and a platform for the **flourishing design community**.

### SWOT Analysis: DesignTO

#### STRENGTHS

- Widely recognized as Canada’s premier design event
- 100+ free events, making the festival widely accessible
- Collaborative environment, with over 800,000 attendees since 2011
- Strong partnerships with local organizations

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#### WEAKNESSES

- Underdeveloped digital and social media presence (e.g. less than 50 likes on each Instagram post, only 40 TikTok followers)
- Critiqued for having yet to spotlight disability-centred design

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#### OPPORTUNITIES

- More than 27% of Canada’s population have disabilities, with growing demands for inclusive design. DesignTO can position itself as a leader in this venture.
- Partnering with organizations like Easter Seals can strengthen social impact and attract new audiences.

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#### THREATS

- Most design exhibitions focus on aesthetic rather than accessibility
- In a society driven by profit, designers often prioritize cost-saving over inclusive solutions
- Rapidly changing media trends make it difficult to sustain engagement

## II. CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspire and <b>empower young artists</b> to prioritize accessibility and social impact in their future works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase brand awareness and sponsorships through engaging and non-profit-driven events</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase DesignTO's digital and social media presence on platforms like TikTok and Instagram</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grow DesignTO's membership base to foster a long-term community of design-lovers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise donations for accessibility organizations like Easter Seals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise awareness of the importance of <b>disability-friendly architecture</b></li> </ul>

## III. CAMPAIGN TARGET MARKET

Target Market	Demographics	Psychographics
<b>Primary Market</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emerging designers and architects, <b>aged 15-25</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generation Z</li> </ul> </li> <li>Highschool students</li> <li>University and college students attending <b>nearby design programs</b> (e.g. OCAD U, TMU, UofT)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Passionate about <b>art, architecture, and design</b></li> <li>Looking for opportunities to showcase their works and build their portfolio</li> <li>Seeking mentorship from professionals in the industry</li> </ul>
<b>Secondary Market</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Ages 25-55</b></li> <li>Local business owners, policymakers, and investors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Socially conscious and <b>disability advocates</b></li> <li>Interested in <b>supporting accessibility causes</b></li> </ul>

## IV. CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES AND SCHEDULE

With a growing population of disabilities, there is an increased need for accessibility in design, whether it be Braille-friendly interfaces, wheelchair-accessible spaces, or adaptable and assistive technologies. The DesignTO Festival 2026 runs from **January 23rd to February 1st, 2026**. Our 45-day campaign will run roughly a month before the launch date, on **December 21, 2025**, and end on **February 3, 2026**, inclusive. Our goal is to empower the next generation of designers to innovate for social impact and change lives.

### “Blueprint for Change” Design-a-thon (January 23 - February 1st)

**Easter Seals** is an Ontario-based charity that supports children, youth, and young adults with physical disabilities through equipment funding and recreational camp programs. In 2023, they provided more than \$1.72 million across 963 funding requests. To introduce the 2026 festival, DesignTO will introduce the “Blueprint for Change” Designathon challenge. Ten teams will have to build and design a **prototype** with the theme: **Accessible Living Spaces**. Participants will get the opportunity to work closely with mentors and disability advocates.

The actual competition will occur during the 10-day event, with a set budget of **\$500.00 per team**. Participants will have seven days to create their project and then will pitch it to a panel of five judges who will then choose the winners. The last three days of the event will be for showcasing their projects to the public. The usage of sustainable and affordable materials will be encouraged to ensure prototypes are cost-effective and scalable.

#### a) Team Budget Breakdown

Category	Budget (USD)
Equipment (split between 2 teams) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 3D Printer: \$100.00</li><li>• Laser Cutter: \$170.00</li><li>• Filament: \$30.00</li></ul>	\$200.00
Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plywood</li><li>• Clay</li><li>• Velcro Strips</li><li>• Recycled Plastic</li><li>• Metal Sheets (aluminum, fiberboards)</li><li>• Magnets &amp; Hinges</li></ul>	\$150.00
Tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Basic craft tools (saw, drill, screwdriver, scissors, rulers)</li><li>• Paint, finishes, and glue</li></ul>	\$50.00
Additional Materials (Remaining budget for teams to buy extra materials)	\$100.00
<b>Total Allocated Budget Per Team</b>	<b>\$500.00 USD</b>

#### b) Recruitment Stage (December 22 - January 18)

DesignTO will go through a selective application process to find 10 teams, of up to 4 committed designers. Applications will be released on DesignTO’s website and social media. This includes contacting nearby design and architecture programs to be placed on a bulletin board and promoted through their respective clubs, such as the University of Toronto’s Daniels Society and OCAD University’s Student Association of Industrial

Designers. Participants will submit a team portfolio and enter a multi-step interview process. Our challenge will be marketed as an opportunity for students to build their portfolios, connect with professionals, and win awards.

To recruit mentors, we will send out volunteer and judge applications. We will directly reach out to potentially qualifying individuals through platforms such as LinkedIn and will work closely with Easter Seals representatives through this process.

**c) Judging Criteria & Prizes:**

Participants can qualify for multiple categories, instead of just one grand prize. All winners will be featured on the official website and our Instagram page.

<b>Best Design: \$2,000.00</b>	Demonstrates social impact, exceptional functionality, and aesthetics.
<b>Best Furniture: \$1000.00</b>	User-friendly, practical, and can be implemented in schools, homes, and indoor spaces.
<b>Best Recreational: \$1000.00, Easter Seals Internship Interview</b>	Best tackles comfort, play, or leisure with a focus on public spaces.

**Easter Seals Fundraiser & Membership Drive**

Starting December 20, 2025, DesignTO will begin its partnership with Easter Seals, raising money for equipment, enrichment programs, and financial support for families with children with disabilities. The following activities cover both fundraising and fostering creativity goals. Public donations will be open on our website and through our in-person events.

- a) Donor-Only Access Brunch:** The first 30 people who donate over \$250 will be invited to an exclusive pastry brunch catered by our partner The Tempered Room. This will be held on the last day of the festival, February 1st.
- b) Raffle:** Participants will be able to enter a variety of raffle prizes from our sponsors. All of our profits will be donated to support Easter Seals. Entries will be priced at \$10 each, \$25 for three, or \$75 for ten. Winners will be announced on the last day and on our social media platforms. (see brochure for potential prizes)

To increase the number of subscribers to 800, we will set up a “**DesignTO Insider Booth**” at the festival. Attendees can subscribe to a membership on the spot and immediately receive



perks. The first 50 members to subscribe in person will receive a 2026 tote bag with DesignTO swag, including shirts, and exclusive gifts from our sponsors. All members will receive five complementary bonus entries to the raffle.

## **Social Media Promotions**

- a) #ReDesignYourRoom Challenge (January 2 - January 22) —** To engage Gen-Z audiences, DesignTO will host a social media design challenge where participants will film a short, minute-long video upcycling a component of their room. This “Before & After” trend, which is often popular within the arts is often paired with a time-lapse and a trendy song, posted on Instagram or TikTok. This will be our opportunity to gain global recognition while increasing engagement on social media through user-generated content. The video with the most likes under the hashtag will win a \$100 gift card of their choice, incentivizing entries.
- b) Countdown: 7 Days of Design —** Counting down a week before the event, DesignTO will have a different executive takeover on each day using the story feature on Instagram. This involves a Q&A session, where viewers can get to know the people working on organizing DesignTO. Daily interactive content will be posted for each day, including polls, and swipe-up content (e.g, “Tag a friend who needs to see this!”, or “Guess the design solution!”)
- c) Engaging Posts —** Although DesignTO’s current feed on Instagram leverages clean, modern, and highly curated aesthetics, it does not appeal to younger audiences as abstract visuals often feel cold and distant. In this age of digital media, we propose to incorporate more colorful and engaging graphics that highlight challenges, membership benefits, events, and key milestones. This can be done through banner posts, and large text while keeping the minimalist themes. Viewers will feel more inclined to click on the posts, making it easier to share across Instagram stories. We will also post content on TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram to summarize each event and day.
- d) Influencer Promotions —** By inviting and sending PR to influencers based in the GTA, we can market DesignTO as not just a niche festival but a celebration of art for all. Promotes vlog content such as “My Experience at Canada’s Largest Design Festival”. Influencers include but are not limited to DIY Danie, TheSorryGirls, and Phoenix Gray.



## V. BUDGET

Promotional Activity	Expense Breakdown	Subtotal (USD)
<b>Blueprint for Change Designathon</b>	<u>Team Materials</u> (machines, equipment, tools): \$500.00 x 10 teams	\$5,000.00
	<u>Studio Space Rental</u> (1,000 sq. ft) \$330/day x 10 days * This expense may be waived up to 100% if secured sponsors	\$3,300.00
	<u>Cash prize</u> for winning teams \$2,000.00 + \$1,000.00 (2x)	\$4,000.00
	<u>Judges &amp; Mentors</u> (volunteer basis, free)	\$0.00
<b>Subtotal:</b>		<b>\$12,300.00</b>
<b>Additional Event Costs</b>	<u>Donor Access-Only event</u> Catering from The Tempered Room (pastries, coffee, tea) *Venue is sponsored <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$500.00 to cover 30 guests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(approx. \$17.00 per guest)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	\$500.00
	<u>Membership Drive Insider Booth</u> Raffle prizes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gift cards: \$25.00 x 5</li> <li>Sponsorship items: free</li> <li>Table and set-up: \$35.00</li> </ul>	\$160.00
	<u>DesignTO Swag Bags</u> *bought in bulk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Custom shirts by T-Shirt Elephant: \$13.50/each with sponsorship</li> <li>Tote Bags: \$5.00/each</li> <li>Lanyards: \$3.00/each</li> <li>Designer prints: \$2.50/each</li> <li>Additional sponsorship items: free</li> </ul> (\$13.50 + \$5.00 + \$3.00 + \$2.50) x 5 bags	\$1,200.00
<b>Subtotal:</b>		<b>\$1,860.00</b>
<b>Media Promotions</b>	<u>#ReDesignYourRoom Winner Prize</u> Gift Card: \$100.00	\$100.00
	<u>Instagram Feed</u> Freelance Graphic Designer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$25/post x 10 posts</li> </ul> Canva Pro Subscription: \$120.00/year (x1)	\$370.00

	<u>Printed Marketing Materials</u> *Placed in nearby design schools and cafes around Toronto <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standard print posters (\$5.00) x 20</li> <li>• Retractable banner stands (\$50.00) x 10</li> <li>• Medium-sized billboard (\$550) x 1</li> </ul>	\$1,150.00
	<u>Influencer Promotions</u> Event-specific gifts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gadgets, 3D models, collectibles             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ \$35.00/per set</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Additional swag bags:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ \$24.00 each</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Shipping: \$10</li> </ul> (\$35.00 + \$24.00 + \$10) x 10 influencers	\$690.00
	<u>Media Advertisements</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YouTube Ads: \$0.20/view x 1,500</li> <li>• TikTok Ads: \$4.20/1,000 views x 30</li> <li>• Instagram Ads: \$8.58/1,000 views x 15</li> <li>• Google Media Partnership: free</li> </ul> \$300.00 + \$84.00 + \$128.70	\$512.70
<b>Subtotal:</b>		<b>\$2,822.70</b>
<b>Emergency Fund</b>		\$1,000.00
<b>Total Estimated Expenses</b>		<b>\$16,982.70 USD</b>

Revenue Stream	Revenue Breakdown	Subtotal (USD)
<b>Additional Membership Subscriptions</b>	<u>New Memberships</u> We anticipate 113 new memberships to be purchased, and distributed across multiple plans. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 45 Individual plans (\$35.00/year)</li> <li>• 15 Youth/Senior plans (\$18.00/year)</li> <li>• 15 Dual plans (\$56.00/year)</li> <li>• 20 Friends/Family plans (\$105.00/year)</li> <li>• 13 Premium Plans (\$210.00/year)</li> <li>• 5 Company plans (\$350.00/year)</li> </ul>	\$9,265.00
<b>Additional Sponsorships</b>	DesignTO currently has a wide network of funders and sponsors, including Ontario Government organizations, wineries, the George Brown School of Design, Google Media, and the Urbanspace Property Group.	\$6,500.00

	Additional sponsors we hope to secure include RBC Future Launch, EQ3, Best Buy, IKEA, Tangerine Bank, and more local businesses. This will provide us with funding, raffle prizes, gift cards, and catering.	
<b>Raffle</b>	<u>Raffle Ticket Sales</u> We project at least 200 participants will purchase raffle entries, with an average of \$25 per person.	\$5,000.00
<b>Total Estimated Revenue</b>		<b>\$20,765.00 USD</b>

## VI. KEY METRICS

**Media Impressions:** DesignTO had a total of **197 million** media impressions in 2024. We aim to increase this number to at least **210 million** impressions. We can measure this through Google Alerts, a free-to-use tool to log for coverage and news articles mentioning our campaign activities. We can estimate impressions by researching the audience size of media outlets.

**Social Media:** To measure our digital presence, we aim to reach at least **55,000 followers** on Instagram and **5,000 followers** on TikTok. By using internal tracking tools such as Instagram Insights, TikTok Analytics, and submissions under our hashtag #ReDesignYourRoom, we can track engagement.

**Fundraiser:** Our goal is to raise at least **\$7,500.00 USD** to support equipment funding and support services for Easter Seals. We will track this through event donation records on our website and raffle ticket sales reports.

**Gain in Memberships and Event Engagement:** Our goal is to attract at least **5,000** additional attendees to DesignTO events. Additionally, we anticipate the number of paid memberships to increase from **687 to 800**. This will be tracked through logging RSVP and check-in records. We will also release feedback surveys which will allow us to see what attendees would like to see for DesignTO 2027.

**Gain in Revenue:** As DesignTO is a non-profit organization, we will not be keeping any revenue but will be put towards Easter Seals donations, and budgeting of future promotional activities in order to increase our reach for years to come.

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