

Dear Bloor-Yorkville BIA Members and Property Owners,

We have been working, in partnership, with a Toronto-based technology firm to build a tool to help our small business owners alleviate overwhelming expenses, such as rent and payroll, during these tough and unexpected times amidst COVID-19. We continue to lobby the government, on your behalf and recognize that the relief offered to date, may not be enough.

Essentially, this is a crowd funding tool which has been created for businesses, so that your customers and clients can send donations directly to you. Our office is being contacted by the public who are concerned that their favourite salons, yoga studios and restaurants etc. who are closed, may not be able to reopen. We recognize that take out, delivery and online options may not be possible for some of our members. It may take a while to achieve responses/funds, so please be patient. The word will be getting out soon.

The tool is called www.Distantly.ca.

Distantly is an online directory that includes all the small businesses that have made Toronto and Bloor-Yorkville such a vibrant place full of taste, colour, style and diversity, like our restaurants, clothing stores, salons, coffee shops, etc. Our BIA members are being given the first opportunity to enroll in this program and we encourage you to sign up as soon as possible.

Three Toronto businesses have already been set up as a trial, so you can see some examples. www.distantly.ca/totum. If you'd like to connect with other Distantly users Stacy and Tim Irvine, co-owners of Totum Life Science, please contact stacyirvine@totum.ca

You can sign up by creating a business profile, which is a brief way to tell your clients about your current situation related to COVID-19 and then you can securely connect your bank account. Once your account is created, you'll be able to share your page, via email and social media, to your client base. Contributions can be as low as \$1 and as high as your community is generous, while all contributions are deposited directly to your bank account securely within 48 hours or less.

As mentioned, Bloor-Yorkville BIA members are being given the first opportunity to sign up for this program. More fanfare and media attention will start next week with a press release and a shout out from the Mayor's Office. Our office will certainly get the word out via our social media channels, our resident contacts and our consumer database. We are also looking to make some temporary changes for easier access to this sort of information on our website. The opportunity will then open to many more businesses in other BIAs throughout the city.

STEPS TO ADD YOUR BUSINESS

You can activate your own Distantly page by following these instructions:

1. Go to www.distantly.ca and click 'Add my business' in the top right corner of the website
2. Follow the steps on the screen by searching for your business and adding your account/bank information. We will note that when asked for a Routing number, that this is your Bank Transit number, as it was noted that this can be confusing.

3. Once finished, your page will be activated. Share it with everyone! The address will be: www.distantly.ca/yourbusinessname

If you need any help along the way, please contact support@distantly.ca

PROPERTY OWNERS AND LANDLORDS

While the BIA staff, in our office, work hard to keep a current database, we may not have all of your tenants email addresses and ask that you distribute this to those who may be interested. We also encourage your tenants to enroll on our mailing list by contacting: info@bloor-yorkville.com.

For our members who would not need to sign up for this service, we would ask you support it and make your staff members aware of how they can support their local businesses and neighbours.

Thank you and we wish you every success with this endeavour.

Briar de Lange
Executive Director
Bloor-Yorkville BIA
1200 Bay Street, Suite 310 Toronto, ON,
M5R 2A5
(416) 928-3553 ext. 25
www.bloor-yorkville.com
briar@bloor-yorkville.com

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