

In 2006, **Phil Chiappetta** and **Maria Vigna** became Executive Co-Directors. Both had already spent many years at Rossbrook House in a variety of roles.

Phil Chiappetta

In 2022, after 42 years with the organization and leading the team as Executive Director since 2016, Phil Chiappetta retired from Rossbrook House although he is never further away than an email, text or phone call.

During those many years, Phil wore a variety of hats- he has been a mentor, confidante, friend, and fearless leader. His relaxed style, sense of humour, and kindness made him beloved.

At his retirement party in September 2022, then Board President Brenda Hasiuk said:

“For his entire career, Phil devoted his enormous heart and gentle but formidable leadership skills to the young people of Rossbrook House. He has been an essential part of our drop-in centre’s long history and ongoing success while also lending his talents and experience to other community initiatives. Whether it’s as a board member of The Winnipeg Foundation or End Homelessness Winnipeg, Phil has touched so many with his wisdom, warmth, and tireless dedication to our city’s charitable sector.”

“When I first came to Rossbrook House it was to help with the first iteration of Elgin House which was a residence for young staff and attenders who needed someplace to stay. In 1991, this residence was torn down and rebuilt to be a more functional home for our alternative high school, Rising Sun.

Back in 1980, a neighbourhood improvement program restored an old house on Elgin for a core group of young male residents, as well as those who needed a temporary stay. I slept overnight at Elgin House while also working some shifts at the drop-in centre. Rossbrook House soon needed a program director and my background with recreation and sports made me a fit. I became attached to the Rossbrook House van, driving youth home after closing and often finding a place for some to stay who had no place to go. I soon knew every street and housing complex over the bridge into the North End, Point Douglas, the Centennial area and West End. We often had kids coming from placements in St. Vital and beyond.

During programming hours there was always a line-up for van rides around the city, listening to music and stopping for something to eat at McDonald's or 7-11. There were also floor hockey games, hockey and baseball games in and around the city as well as many out-of-town games and Pow Wows on reserves connected with participants. The van was seldom still and always loaded to capacity.”

-Phil Chiappetta, Former Executive Director

Maria Vigna

In 2016, Maria Vigna returned to her home in Toronto. Well before that, Maria brought her compassion, warm spirit and kindness to the students of Eagles' Circle as a teacher until 2006 when she became Executive Co-Director with Phil Chiappetta.

“Maria Vigna and I took over as co-directors of Rossbrook House in 2006 and had ten wonderful years working together before Maria retired to return to her hometown of Toronto. I cannot imagine a better person to work with than Maria - we made a good team as we learned about leadership together and picked each other up after every fall. Maria's gifts of empathy, compassion and humour continued the legacy of presence and solidarity Sister Lesley and Sister Bernadette brought to children and youth coming through the doors of Rossbrook House. Maria was also a gifted writer and educator who was able to communicate the depth of the mission of Rossbrook House to our supporters and the wider community. She was an awesome cook and intuitively knew how to use hospitality to build community.”

-Phil Chiappetta