

Blanket Coat Project returns this season

Published 11/17/2025 by [Deena Douara](#)

As the colder months approach, the Blanket Coat Project is once again stepping up to support Toronto's unhoused community. Now in its fifth year, this initiative led by Professor Philip Sparks and his studio, has provided warmth and dignity to those in need through handmade, high-quality wool coats.

The project is spearheaded by Craig Renaud, a graduate of Seneca's Fashion Arts program and a valued member of Sparks' studio team. Since its inception, the Blanket Coat Project has distributed 90 coats, along with other essential items, through outreach programs across the city. All work is done on a volunteer basis.

Drawing on their expertise in tailoring and garment production, the team chose to focus on a uniquely Canadian design: the blanket coat. This style has been worn for nearly 400 years and is known for its warmth, generous fit and simple construction, making it ideal for home sewers to assemble.

The Seneca community has played a vital role in the project's success, with students, faculty, technicians, and retirees all contributing their time and skills. This year, there are two ways to get involved:

- Sew from Home: Sewing bundles will be available for pickup starting Saturday, Nov. 8. Each kit includes written instructions, illustrations, and video guides
- Join a Studio Build Day: Volunteers are invited to gather at Sparks' Studio on Sunday, Nov. 23 for a day of collaborative coat assembly

If you're interested in participating, please email taylor@philipsparks.com with the subject line "Blanket Coat Project." Let the team know whether you'd like to pick up a kit or join the studio session.

Thank you for helping make a difference, one coat at a time.

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