



YWCA
CAMBRIDGE

NATIONAL ADVOCACY.
COMMUNITY ACTION.



**2024
ANNUAL
REPORT**

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

YWCA Cambridge is located on the Haldimand Tract, land promised to the Haudenosaunee people of the Six Nations, which includes six miles on either side of the Grand River. This unceded territory is the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnaabeg and Haudenosaunee Peoples.

We acknowledge the rich histories and ways of knowing of the Indigenous peoples of these lands who lived on them and had their own governance structures and ways of knowing for thousands of years before European colonizers arrived. We acknowledge that colonization was a genocidal practice and that Indigenous peoples were not in need of “civilizing” by colonizers. We acknowledge that a part of colonization was murdering and displacing Indigenous peoples from their lands and their communities, from their languages and ways of knowing, from their families. We acknowledge the enduring richness of Indigenous cultures despite the colonial project, and we honour that resilience and power.

We commit to using this understanding to inform our work to ensure we do not perpetuate the harms of colonization and instead work to repair them. We commit to continuously investigating our policies, practices and our long history to come to terms with and acknowledge the harms we’ve participated in or even propagated, and to truly, intentionally and genuinely do the work of reconciliation. **We commit to being a part of a society that creates a roadmap to reconciliation.**

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WHAT GETS US OUT OF BED IN THE MORNING

As a member agency of YWCA Canada, YWCA Cambridge is part of a national movement known as the country's oldest and largest women's multi-service organization, the largest national provider of shelter, literacy, life skills, employment and counselling programs, and is the second largest provider of child care services in Canada. For over 75 years, YWCA Cambridge has been a respected leader on issues that impact women and girls in our community.

MISSION

YWCA Cambridge, a trusted community leader, gives a voice to the needs of women, girls and gender-diverse individuals through innovative and responsive programs, services and advocacy.

VISION

Through leadership, advocacy and program and service delivery, YWCA Cambridge will influence communities to ensure all cis and trans women and girls and non-binary and two-spirit individuals are respected, valued and equal.

WHAT WE VALUE

ACCESSIBILITY

ACCOUNTABILITY

SELF
DETERMINATION

COMMUNITY
MINDEDNESS

EQUITY

INCLUSION

OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Chief Executive Officer

Kim Decker

Director of Finance, Administration

Mary Wright

Director of Communications and Advocacy

Roz Gunn

Director of Philanthropy

Nataleigh Ballantyne

Director of Programs

Kate Taylor

Director of Child Care Services

Kristina Lyman

Director of Summer Camp

Fatma Elhefney

Shelter Manager

April Turner

CORE SUPPORT TEAM

Project Manager

Zoe Whitman

Wigg Coordinator & Graphic Designer

Kristen Gaudet

Social Media and Communications Manager

Clare McClung

Manager of Advocacy

Jennifer Gordon

CHILD CARE LEADERSHIP

Assistant Director

Laura Einwechter

Supervisors

Kim Whalen

Gillian Fiander

Susan Mathers

Fatma Elhefney

Ashley Di Biase

Wendy Gilchrist (retired June 2024)

FROM THE CHAIR & CEO



GROWTH | LEADERSHIP | INNOVATION

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with gratitude for the remarkable progress and milestones achieved by YWCA Cambridge in 2024. Together, we have made significant strides in empowering women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals in our community.

In 2024, YWCA Cambridge continued its mission of responding to the changing needs of women, girls and gender-diverse individuals through offering critical programs and services, support, and advocacy to and for women, girls, gender-diverse individuals and their families. With the ongoing challenges of economic inequality, gender-based violence, and homelessness, our work has never been more vital. Over the past year, we have made significant strides in expanding our programs, increasing our reach, and deepening our partnerships within the community.

Our commitment to addressing systemic inequities through intersectional feminist and anti-oppressive practices remained the cornerstone of our work.

This year, we saw increased demand for services, particularly in our child care and women's employment programs, as well as growing interest in our youth programming aimed at preventing gender-based violence. We also deepened our efforts in advocating for long-term policy changes, specifically related to women's homelessness, economic security, and gender equity more broadly.

As we move forward, we remain committed to our mission of responding to the changing needs of women, girls and gender-diverse individuals and relentlessly advocating for gender equity at every level of government as well as in our communities. The achievements of 2024 have laid a strong foundation, and with your continued support, we are poised to make an even greater impact in the years to come.

Thank you for being an integral part of our journey. Together, we are creating a community where every woman, girl, and gender-diverse individual is respected, valued, and equal.

Stacey Colliver
Board President

Kim Decker
CEO

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Stacey Colliver

Past-President

*Norma McDonald
Ewing*

Vice-President

Christine Vigna

Treasurer

Darlene Sigel

Secretary

Sue Sturdy

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*Ailish McIntyre
Valerie Pollard
Lauren Reny*

*Meagan Swan
Naomi Ma
Melissa Kennedy
Fope Nkwocha
Deanna Riese
Bailey Howell
Eunice Abossey*

BREAKING RECORDS



RAISING CRITICAL FUNDS TO SUPPORT CAMBRIDGE'S FIRST WOMEN'S EMERGENCY HOMELESS SHELTER



LOCAL BUSINESSES & SERVICE GROUPS STEP UP FOR CHANGE

Our collaboration with **Greentec** led to a matching donation initiative, amplifying community contributions. This campaign successfully exceeded our goal, raising over **\$170,000** to furnish and supply our new women's emergency shelter, providing a safe haven for vulnerable women in Cambridge. And, inspired by Greentec's leadership, **Soroptimist International of Cambridge** and the **Galt Cambridge Lion's Club** each joined as matching partners, contributing another **\$10,000** each to our campaign.



BECAUSE OF YOU

At YWCA Cambridge, our mission to empower women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals is made possible through the unwavering support of our community partners, donors, and volunteers. This year, we are proud to highlight the significant contributions that have driven meaningful change in the lives of our participants and service users.

THANK YOU, NEIGHBOURS!

Over 2024, we saw an explosion of support for our work. We watched as the community stepped up and wrapped its arms around us while we ventured into all-new territory for us, opening Cambridge's first women's emergency homeless shelter. The collective efforts of our partners, donors, and community members have been transformative. Your generosity has not only provided financial support but has also fostered a community of care, empowerment, and resilience. Together, we have made a tangible difference in the lives of women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals in Cambridge. We extend our heartfelt gratitude and look forward to continuing this impactful journey together.

THANK YOU, ANN VAN NORMAN AND THE PEOPLE OF BLAIR!

Ann, a community champion and long-time supporter of YWCA Cambridge: Spearheaded by Ann Van Norman, the Blair community raised \$20,000 to help us outfit and furnish our new shelter's kitchen, demonstrating the power of collective grassroots efforts





2024 EVENTS

30TH ANNIVERSARY WOMEN OF DISTINCTION AWARDS

Our 30th annual Women of Distinction Awards gala celebrated the achievements of six remarkable recipients, celebrated by more than 200 attendees. Hosted at the beautiful **Whistle Bear Golf and Country Club**, The evening featured a live auction that raised \$3,600, and a captivating opening performance by the **Cambridge Youth Orchestra**. We were also honoured to have Canadian singer-songwriter **Jully Black** grace the occasion for a fireside chat with our Director of Philanthropy, Nataleigh Ballantyne.

Event Partners:



GrandBridge
ENERGY

Media & Creative Partners:



SHE TALKS: STORIES OF TENACITY & GRIT

After a 5-year hiatus, She Talks made its return to Cambridge! This intimate event hosted 45 guests and featured speakers **Kris Ejem, Mallory Green, and Cera-Lys McArthur**, who each shared their personal stories of their personal and professional journeys. The evening served as a platform for meaningful conversations and networking, furthering our mission of empowerment and community building.



**In Cambridge, there is only one
emergency shelter for women
experiencing homelessness.
Just one place offering safety,
warmth, and dignity.**

**Your donation today can mean a safe
bed, a hot shower, and a new
beginning for someone in our
community.**

WWW.YWCACAMBRIDGE.CA

**BECOME A
MONTHLY
DONOR TODAY**

ADVOCACY

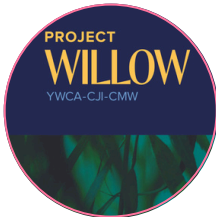


2022



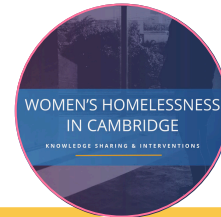
We spent hundreds of hours making the case to elected representatives.

2025



We conducted research with women experiencing homelessness, publishing a powerful report often cited by local advocates.

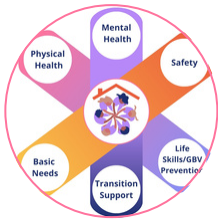
2022 -
2024



We did more research! This time, with service providers in Cambridge to map the service gaps for women experiencing homelessness.

A core pillar of our work is **advocating for systemic change**. This year, we continued to advocate for policies and programs that support **women's economic wellbeing, address gender-based violence**, and ensure **safe, affordable housing** for **women facing homelessness**.

ACTION



With what we learned, we developed a new model of emergency shelter - 24/7, small, on-site services.

2022 -
2024



In February, 2025, we opened the doors to Cambridge's first women's emergency homeless shelter.

2022



Grace Bible Church stepped up as a temporary shelter. Regional Council believed in our vision and voted in favour of funding renovations and operating funding.

2025

A defining moment of 2024 was the advancement of our mission to address women's **homelessness in Cambridge**. In October 2023, we published our research report, *Women's Homelessness in Cambridge: Knowledge Sharing and Interventions*, shedding light on the urgent need for dedicated services. This research, along with collaborative efforts, led to the establishment of **Cambridge's first women's emergency homeless shelter**. Located at Grace Bible Church, the shelter officially opened its doors on February 24, 2025, and is currently operating at full capacity, serving 20 women and gender-diverse individuals 24/7, with on-site physical and mental health support, as well as other supportive programming and services.

BUILDING BRIGHTER FUTURES



Very grateful to have people in our lives that want the best for my son, and [who] help me find resources.

- LINC Preschool parent

PROVIDING HIGH QUALITY CHILD CARE IN CAMBRIDGE FOR OVER 60 YEARS!

In 2024, we provided high quality, licensed child care to more than **450 children** in **five licensed child care centres** across Cambridge!

This year, we also entered into a unique partnership between the public and Catholic school boards to be the operator of **88 NEW child care spaces** at a school to be built in South Galt. The ground has been broken and we're looking forward to opening our **sixth** child care centre in **2026!** We know how important access to affordable child care is and that, while parent fees have reduced significantly as a result of the National child care plan, there are still too few spaces available to families needing them. We're proud to be a part of child care's expansion!

SUMMER CAMPS



CREATING LASTING MEMORIES AND NEW FRIENDSHIPS

Our summer camp program for children provided a transformative experience for over 480 young campers this year. Our high-quality, affordable camp programming is guided by best practices in early learning and is High Five certified. Programming focuses on building self-esteem, fostering creativity, and encouraging teamwork.

Unique to our camps is an on-site behaviour and inclusion expert who works with parents right at registration to plan for any tailored needs of campers to ensure they have the best possible time at camp!

NEW CAMPS ADDED IN 2024

In 2024, in partnership with Wesley United Church, and in response to increased demand for camp spaces, we open a brand new summer camp program! Indoor summer camp at Wesley United (downtown Cambridge) is now offered each year and guarantees the same high quality care, loads of fun, and plenty of outside activity, too!

486 individual campers!
1,000+ spaces!

THE W



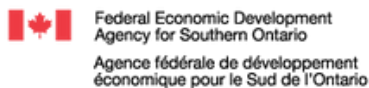
The W is a community-based program space, home to **women's employment** and **financial literacy** programs and various **youth programs** and **camps**, including **SHYFT**.

The W offers programming, **builds community** and hosts events that **spreads awareness of gender-based violence** and its impacts.

It's a space that requires safety in order to address biases, dismantle stereotypes and ensure the folks feel heard and valued.

This special space relies on successful grant writing, fundraising and donation to keep the space and programs accessible in the Cambridge community.

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS



105 PROGRAMS & WORKSHOPS
2,320 PARTICIPANTS





WOMEN'S PROGRAMMING

ADVANCING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Women's employment programming remains at the heart of our mission to empower women economically. We provided **job training, resume building, interview coaching, connection-making** opportunities and **lunch and learns**, to over **260 women** this year, with a focus on women facing barriers to employment, such as racial discrimination, caregiving responsibilities, and past experiences of violence.

FINANCIAL LITERACY PROGRAMMING

In partnership with YWCA Canada and member associations across Canada, **YWCA Cambridge took part in two national projects aimed at providing economic empowerment through financial literacy training and education.** The Dollars & Sense program and Next Accelerator Project provided more than **20 programs**, reaching **230 women** and gender-diverse individuals in **2024**.

Next Accelerator helped families across Canada gain access to Canada Learning Bonds in order to start saving toward their children's futures. This project ended in 2024 reaching more than **480 families**.

The **Dollars & Sense** program continues to work closely with fixed/low income women and gender-diverse individuals, those leaving violent situations, racialized women and newcomers fostering a sense of financial confidence and empowerment. To date, the program has reached more than **700 participants**.



Thank you so much for everything you do the group had an everlasting impact on my life and gave me the confidence and self-esteem boost I needed.

- Small Steps to Success Participant

W PROGRAMMING TEAM

Small Steps to Success: Terra MacDonald, Sara Hohenadel, Gail Thomson

Uplift: Ashley Locke

Youth Programs: Shannon Thoms, Caitlyn Jaipersaud, Alana Decker

Roots of Empathy: Lili Galbraith

WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMING

UPLIFT RE/UPSKILLING

YWCA Cambridge's Uplift program provides women and gender-diverse individuals the opportunity to reskill or upskill in the specialized technology fields through certification training and additional supports related to job development and navigating traditionally male-dominated workplaces.

Participants gain certification training with a provincially recognized institution, tuition fees entirely covered by our program funder, FedDev Ontario. This program includes wraparound supports and programming such as career coaching, mock interviews and resume-building.

25 YEARS OF SMALL STEPS TO SUCCESS

2024 marked the 25th anniversary of our pre-employment and life skills program for women, Small Steps to Success!

Small Steps to Success is a 12-week holistic pre-employment and life skills program for women and gender-diverse individuals. This program, aimed at supporting women throughout the Region of Waterloo, provides the flexibility for participants to learn within a safe and supportive environment. Participants boost their confidence and skills, identify new strengths and goals, receive support in managing stress and budgets, and learn how to navigate interpersonal relationships in the workplace and beyond daily life.

This program provides foundational skills and support to help women overcome barriers and enter or re-enter the workforce. This program changes lives, and we know that because that's what our participants tell us!

We are grateful to the Region of Waterloo for their continued support.



YOUTH PROGRAMS



YOUTH PROGRAMMING AT THE W

Our youth-focused programming continues to address the critical need for **prevention** and **awareness** around **gender-based violence** (GBV) in schools and communities. We provided education, resources, and workshops for over **1,827 youth** this year through programming at The W and in the community, including in classrooms, focusing on **consent**, **healthy relationships**, and **bystander intervention**. We also continued building empathy among young children through our in-school **Roots of Empathy** programming.



My mental health isn't great but being here calms me down and makes me happier.

- SHYFT Participant, age 13

SHYFT

SHAPING AND HELPING YOUTH FORM TOMORROW



SHYFT is offered in two formats: as a 12-week in-centre program and as a tailored in-school workshop. The program aims to develop increased **belonging, communication** and **problem solving skills**, while building **resilience** and **self-esteem/confidence**. It provides outlets for youth to engage in open dialogue and create their own social justice-based media-arts projects, encouraging change and awareness in their communities.

As an in-school program, SHYFT is open to all genders and builds on gender-based violence prevention topics, such as **healthy relationships, conflict resolution, consent** and **bystander intervention**, based on current research on promising practices and public education around equity and gender-based violence.

Why SHYFT? We asked our partners.

What motivated you to advocate for a group specifically for the girls in your neighbourhood?

"I noticed that there seemed to be a gap where there girls felt they were too old for some of the craft clubs and after school programs and not quiet old enough for our youth [programs] at the time and so I brought it the Recreation Coordinator...I really felt that it would be so beneficial to help them to see that they are seen and heard and that their voices matter and boost there confidence and self esteem."

In your opinion, why is it important for The W to continue operating in the Kinbridge space?

"Cause it takes a village to promote change in the community and what's a better partnership than to have a group of women supporting women and girls within our community - there's a power in that."

ROOTS OF EMPATHY

The 2024/2025 Roots of Empathy program welcomed four new accredited ROE instructors to our roster!

We offered **17 programs in 17 different schools**, across five school boards in Cambridge, Guelph, Kitchener, Waterloo, Fergus, Elmira, Orangeville and Linwood!

Roots of Empathy also has had the support of **17 partner families** with babies participating who were born between June and September 2024.

This incredible program is reaching approximately **500** students in the region this school year.



We know our work changes lives.

But with no core funding to sustain our community programming, we need you to help ensure we continue.

Give Today.



www.ywcacambridge.ca



WIGG



WINDING DOWN OUR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

In **2010**, the WIGG boutique was born out of a need to generate funding to support YWCA Cambridge programming and services.

In **2020**, the boutique quickly went online as lockdowns prevented us from offering in-store shopping and we'd only just gotten in our spring inventory! This move online meant expanding our reach across North America. The move online also became a double-edged sword when managing the store became too cumbersome for staff to manage off the sides of their desks without putting at risk YWCA's core programming.

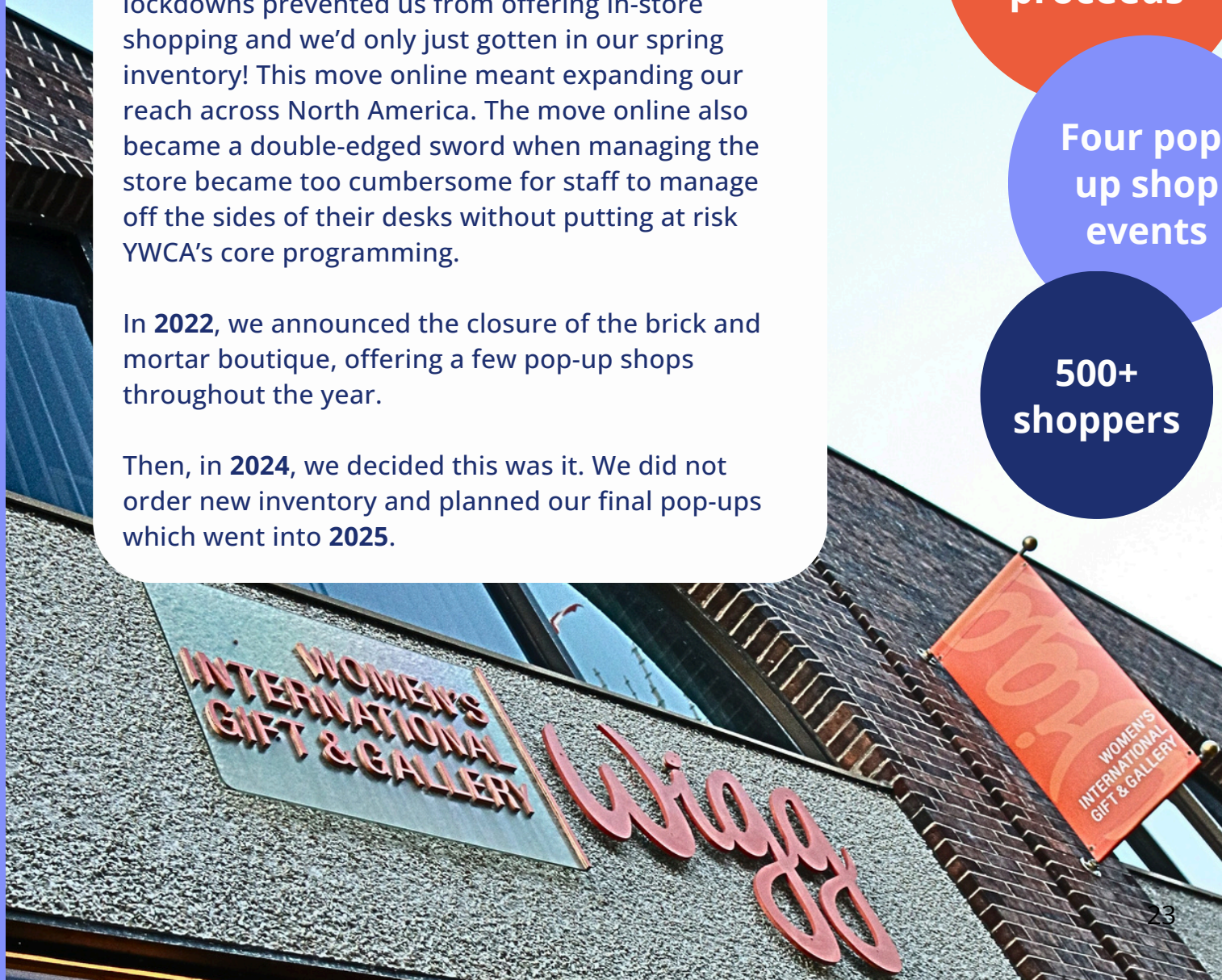
In **2022**, we announced the closure of the brick and mortar boutique, offering a few pop-up shops throughout the year.

Then, in **2024**, we decided this was it. We did not order new inventory and planned our final pop-ups which went into **2025**.

**\$62,000+ in
WIGG
proceeds**

**Four pop-
up shop
events**

**500+
shoppers**



OUR WORK CONTINUES TO BE POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF INCREDIBLE SUPPORT. THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS.



Ontario
Trillium
Foundation



Fondation
Trillium
de l'Ontario

An agency of the Government of Ontario
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario



United Way
Waterloo Region
Communities



WATERLOO REGION
Community
Foundation



LYLE S. HALLMAN
FOUNDATION



Region of Waterloo



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada



Employment and
Social Development Canada

Canada



SOROPTIMIST®
Investing in Dreams



GrandBridge
ENERGY



Ontario
REALTORS Care®
Foundation



TURKSTRA LUMBER



WHAT'S YOUR WHY?



At the very beginning of the inception of the YW in 1948, my 16-year-old Mother took up residence in the Women's Residence on Cambridge Street. This allowed her to attend school and then work to provide for herself before marrying my father. As our family grew, the YW provided us with programmes in health, fitness, and recreation. When I became a parent, it was the place to go for excellent preschool care. That is when I became a volunteer instructing sessions for Exploring Nature with Children, serving on the YW Board and becoming a YW Board Chair. Our daughter also served on the board.

Ann Van Norman

2024 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

As of December 31, 2024

BALANCE SHEET

ASSETS

Cash	\$1,563,540
Marketable Securities	\$1,195,012
Accounts Receivable	\$197,329
Inventory	\$17,382
HST Recoverable	\$81,324
Prepaid Expenses	\$226,661
Capital Assets (net of accumulated amortization)	\$200,440
TOTAL:	\$3,481,688

Liabilities & Net Assets

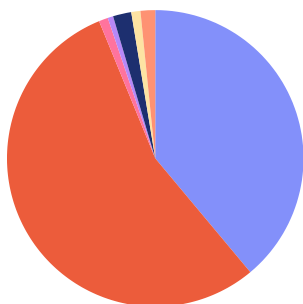
Accounts Payable	\$442,418
Government Remittances	\$2,117
Deferred Revenue	\$909,506
NET ASSETS	2,127,647
TOTAL:	\$3,481,688

NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR

Excess (deficiency) of receipts over expenses	\$(252,553)
Transfers	-
TOTAL:	\$2,127,647

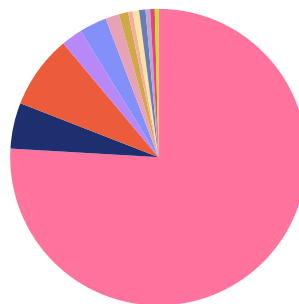


REVENUE



- Grants & Subsidies: 39%
- Program Fees: 55%
- Retail Sales: 1%
- Contributions: 1%
- Other Receipts: 2%
- Fundraising: 1%
- Investment income (loss): 1.6%

EXPENSES



- Salaries & benefits: 76%
- Supplies: 5%
- Rental & Occupancy: 8%
- Sub-Contracts: 2.3%
- Office & Admin: 3%
- Consumables: 1.5%
- Travel: 1%
- Recruitment & Ed: 0.5%
- Interest & Bank Charges: 0.7%
- Amortization: 0.7%
- Promotion & Publicity: 0.5%
- Professional Fees: 0.5%
- Productive Enterprise: 0.4%

REVENUES

Grants & Subsidies	\$2,366,986
Program Fees	\$2,911,485
Retail Sales	\$102,035
Contributions	\$30,835
Other Receipts	\$87,036
Fundraising	\$56,426
Investment Income (loss)	\$53,546

TOTAL: \$5,608,349

Government Rebates -

**EXCESS (deficiency) OF
RECEIPTS OVER
EXPENSES \$212,867**

EXPENSES

Salaries & Benefits	\$4,160,413
Supplies	\$301,392
Rental & Occupancy	\$421,175
Sub-Contracts	\$89,737
Office & Admin	\$117,875
Consumables	\$78,228
Travel	\$64,739
Recruitment & Education	\$73,456
Interest & Bank Charges	\$12,970
Amortization	\$33,944
Promotion & Publicity	\$16,236
Professional Fees	\$10,365
Productive Enterprise	\$14,943

TOTAL \$5,395,473

YWCA CAMBRIDGE



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Charitable Registration #: 11930 7387 RR0001