

Ray of Hope



ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026

Anchored in Hope



“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.”

— Hebrews 6:19

Investing in People. Inspiring Hope. Transforming Lives.

A Message From the
CEO of Ray of Hope



Anchored, Even in the Storm



There is something profound about the image of an anchor. An anchor doesn't calm the water. It doesn't promise smooth sailing or clear skies. What it does is hold. Firm and secure, it keeps you from being swept away.

That image, drawn from Hebrews 6:19, is the story of this past year at Ray of Hope. We faced real storms. A dangerous drug supply led to a surge in overdoses. Shelter closures pushed more people toward our doors. Kitchen equipment failed. Floodwaters poured through our roof. And through all of it, we held.

We held because of a staff team that showed up, day after day, even when the work was heavy and the need felt endless. We held because of volunteers who poured coffee and carried boxes and simply sat with people.

We held because of donors and churches who kept giving, even when the ask was hard.

This year, Ray of Hope served more meals than ever before, dedicated resources for staff training, and expanded key supports including an onsite addiction treatment program. Youth found healing. Families found connection. Individuals found work, purpose, and a path forward.

None of this is our doing alone. This anchor holds because of you, the people who believe, alongside us, that every person deserves dignity, care, and a chance to rebuild. Thank you for keeping us grounded.

Anchored in hope, we move forward together.



Tonya Verburg
CEO, Ray of Hope

Community Centre

Anchored in the Everyday

Ray of Hope Community Centre: Where Dignity Is Served Every Day

The Community Centre is more than a place for a hot meal. It is a refuge where people facing homelessness, poverty, and addiction find care, connection, and the steady presence of people who see them as more than their circumstances.

This year, that steadiness was tested in ways we didn't anticipate. The drug supply in our region became especially dangerous, leading to a sharp increase in overdoses on and near our property. Staff stepped in with urgent, life-saving care and have successfully revived every person who needed it. The risk remains high. The work is urgent and ongoing.

When shelters in our community closed, more people arrived at our doors.

As jobs grew scarce for people facing barriers to employment, more families turned to us for food. And when two significant roof leaks caused major flooding, forcing months of renovations and disrupting our kitchen operations, our team didn't stop. They adapted, improvised, and kept serving.

What carried us through was not a perfect plan. It was people. A strong, experienced staff team that cares deeply for the guests they serve, and a community of volunteers and donors who refused to let the anchor drag.

**The anchor isn't the
absence of the storm.
It's what kept someone
from being swept away.**

This year, we launched an on-site addiction treatment program, adding a vital new layer of support for guests navigating recovery. Our on-site medical clinic expanded to six days a week. Programming remained strong throughout a year of significant disruption.



When the Storm Doesn't Let Up

He had been coming to the Community Centre for years, a familiar face navigating life with Huntington's disease. Over time, staff saw his condition worsen and recognized he could no longer manage on his own.

He needed more than meals and connection. He needed long-term care and someone willing to help him get there.

Staff coordinated ODSP and CPP benefits, resolved long-standing banking issues, and managed the complex logistics of his transition. They stayed with him through every step until he was settled somewhere safe.

There was no dramatic turning point. Just people who kept showing up, making calls, and pushing through bureaucracy because they believed he deserved better.

That is what being anchored in hope looks like.

They didn't let go until he was settled somewhere safe.

"Perseverance & faith truly anchored us and brought us through."

— Daniel Haner,
Outreach/Service Coordinator

Program Highlights 2025–2026

117,440
meals served

3,106
showers taken

3,475
marketplace hampers distributed

2,204
loads of laundry completed

7,035
people served through Marketplace, including 2,647 children

Up to 300
average guests per day



Volunteers

Anchored in Community



Hope doesn't hold on its own. It holds through people.

This year, 247 individual volunteers and 83 meal teams showed up week after week with steady, faithful commitment. They poured coffee, stocked shelves, served meals, carried boxes, and sat with guests. They came back the next week and the week after that. Their consistency was an anchor in itself.

Something meaningful happened in our volunteer community this year. While the total number of individual volunteers was slightly lower than the year before, the total volunteer hours increased. Our volunteers are staying longer, serving deeper, and choosing to remain connected to this mission through summer, through the holidays, through the hard seasons. We required less recruitment this year because our people simply didn't leave.

That kind of loyalty is not something you can manufacture. It grows from something real.

Every hour served, every act of care, every smiling face at the door became part of something greater than any one of us.

Volunteer Highlights 2025/2026

247
individual volunteers

18
new group volunteers

120
new individual volunteers

12,739
total volunteer hours

83
meal teams with 1,338 group volunteers contributing 13,149 hours

17
student placements serving 3,016 hours

49
meal teams from local churches



Volunteer Spotlight

Learning to Give Back

For a group of students from the KCI ACE program, walking through the doors of the Community Centre for the first time was not easy. Some were nervous. Some were unsure if they belonged.

By the end of the year, they were encouraging one another and looking for ways to help.

The ACE (Alternative Continuum of Education) program supports students with intellectual disabilities through real-world learning opportunities. Volunteering at Ray of Hope became one of the most meaningful parts of their year.

With the support of teacher Phillip Parsons and Educational Assistant Carmen Cordova, students who arrived uncertain grew into confident contributors who took pride in showing up and serving others. For many, it was their first opportunity to connect with people experiencing homelessness and poverty.

It opened their eyes and their hearts. Several plan to continue volunteering after graduation, including one student who hopes to return to Ray of Hope.

When asked what they appreciated most, their answer was simple: the kindness. The patience. The welcoming smiles. They felt respected, valued, and part of the community.

“It is impossible to put into words the impact, small and large, that you have had on many of the students. So much appreciation to you all.”

— Philip Parsons, Teacher, KCI ACE Program

Students that started the year quite nervous are now beaming with confidence and looking for opportunities to help their peers.



Fundraising & Community Support

Anchored by Generosity



There is something that happens when a community decides to hold together. Donors give more. New supporters step forward. People who have never walked through our doors raise money on our behalf because they believe in what happens here.

That is what we witnessed this year.

In a challenging economic climate, our community held firm. The average donation increased. Monthly giving grew. New donors joined us for the first time. And total giving remained strong, a testament to the depth of commitment from people across Waterloo Region and beyond.

Coldest Night of the Year

On February 28, 2026, 708 walkers across 72 teams braved the winter cold for the Coldest Night of the Year, raising \$256,000 to support the Ray of Hope Community Centre. It was a night of shared purpose, shared discomfort, and shared hope. Every dollar raised helps keep our doors open and allows us to continue serving over 10,000 meals a month to people who need them.

708 walkers. 72 teams. \$256,000 raised. One community, anchored together.

Fundraising Highlights 2025/2026

2,691

donors

426

new donors

385

monthly donors

\$175.07

average donation

8,957

total donations received

15

major donors giving \$10,000 or more

26

mid-level donors giving between \$5,000 and \$9,999

\$23,460

in monthly giving per month



Employment Services

Anchored in Purpose

Program Highlights 2025/2026

32

individuals enrolled in Employment Services

32

individuals completed the Enhanced Employability / Employment Skills training

31

individuals secured employment and began new jobs

20+

different employers across a wide range of industries

Hope Through Meaningful Work

We believe employment is about more than a paycheck. It is about dignity, belonging, and believing your future can look different from your past.

This year, more people came to Ray of Hope searching for stability in the middle of economic uncertainty. Many participants faced significant barriers to employment, including unstable housing, mental health challenges, addiction, and long periods of unemployment.

The Employment Services team walked alongside participants as they rebuilt confidence, developed new skills, and connected with meaningful opportunities. Even as employers became more cautious about hiring, staff continued building relationships with local businesses willing to invest in people's potential.

Ray of Hope partners with local employers to connect job seekers with meaningful placements, providing ongoing support for both participants and businesses throughout the process.

When the economy slows, hope has to work harder. So does our team.

Adriann's Story: Hired On the Spot

After graduating high school, Adriann found himself stuck. There was no clear path forward, no obvious next step, just a series of seasonal contracts that offered work for a while and then left him back where he started.

He had potential. He had drive. What he needed was someone to see it, and a team willing to help him show it to the world.

The Employment Services team at Ray of Hope recognized what Adriann was capable of early on. They walked alongside him through coaching sessions and interview preparation, helping him learn how to navigate the job market and present himself with confidence. Then they made a connection that changed everything.

A family-owned contracting company was looking for an ambitious labourer. Adriann walked into that interview ready. His drive and potential came through clearly. He was hired on the spot.

Today, Adriann works year-round for that same company. He has earned strong reviews and the respect

of his employer. He takes pride in his work every day, and one day, he hopes to run his own job site.

His drive and potential came through clearly. The employer saw what Ray of Hope already knew.

His story is a reminder that when the right opportunity meets the right support, extraordinary things happen. Hope stops being something you wait for and starts being something you build.



Anchored in Relationship



Hope for Youth and Their Families

Youth Support Services provides trauma-informed care for young people aged 13 to 21 navigating mental health concerns, substance use, screen dependency, and other complex challenges. Through Day Treatment, Community Treatment, Caregiver Support, and Neurofeedback, youth and families receive support that meets them where they are.

This year, Community Treatment more than doubled its reach, connecting more youth and families across Waterloo Region with timely and accessible care.

When flooding forced teams to share space and adapt programming, staff continued providing consistent support with minimal disruption. Through every challenge, young people and families continued receiving the care they needed.

What the Data Tells Us

The impact of this work is reflected in the experiences of the youth we serve:

- **75%** reported feeling more hopeful about the future
- **88%** felt more supported
- **75%** reported improved family relationships
- **100%** noticed a positive change in their lives
- **100%** felt respected and supported by staff

100% of youth surveyed noticed at least one positive change in their life.

Program Highlights 2025–2026

13 youth in Day Treatment	474 group counselling sessions
198 youth in Community Treatment	2 students graduating high school from the program
20 credits awarded through the Day Program by end of June	305 neurofeedback sessions

Investing in the Next Generation of Helpers

Some of the most meaningful work at Ray of Hope happens quietly. A student on placement listening to a young person. A supervisor investing in someone just beginning their career. A team creating space for new voices to grow.

This year, Youth Support Services hosted both a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and Master of Social Work (MSW) student placement. They quickly became valued members of the team, supporting youth while developing skills that will shape their future careers.

**We are not just serving the community of today.
We are helping train the helpers of tomorrow.**

Trends We Are Watching

Food insecurity among the youth we serve is on the rise. Having food available during sessions has become an important part of how we care for young people who arrive hungry and distracted. The Community Centre's support in providing free lunches for Day Program youth this year made a real difference.

Looking Ahead

In the coming year, Youth Support Services will introduce Greenspace, a Measurement-Based Care platform integrated with EMHware, to better track outcomes through standardized, best-practice assessments. This will strengthen our ability to understand and demonstrate the depth of impact our programs are having on the young people and families we serve.

“Working collaboratively with the staff and young people at the Day Youth Program has taught me valuable lessons about youth-led change and strength-based approaches.”
 — Sebastien Plante, Bachelor of Social Work Student Placement



Anchored in a Second Chance

Hope for Youth in Secure Custody

Our Secure Custody facility supports young men involved with the Youth Criminal Justice Act, helping them build skills, confidence, and stability as they prepare for life beyond custody.

Through counselling, education, mentorship, and trades programming, youth are encouraged to take responsibility, work through challenges, and begin building a different future.

This year, staff continued expanding opportunities for mentorship and skills development, connecting youth with trades training, technology programs, and community partnerships. The Anchors School Program remained at capacity throughout the year, with a growing waitlist reflecting the need for alternative educational support.

Every young person who walks through our doors is still capable of a different future. We hold that belief even when they can't hold it themselves.

Trends We Are Watching

Youth entering the program are facing increasingly complex challenges, including violent crime involvement, human trafficking, and addiction. Despite these realities, our team remains committed to helping every young person build a different future.

Program Highlights 2025/2026

- 3** Anchors School graduates
- 5** youth graduated high school
- 60** certificates completed, including trades programs
- 10** youth gained employment after custody
- 46** youth participated in reintegration
- 8** students in Anchors School, at capacity with a waiting list

John's Story: I Never Thought I Would Amount to Anything

John arrived at the Youth Reintegration Program on probation. His probation officer had referred him, and on paper, his situation was serious. He was dealing with a drug addiction that had led him down a path he never intended to walk, to criminal charges, to a life that felt like it was already written for him.

Then his best friend died.

That loss cracked something open. John made a decision, a real one, not the kind you make because someone tells you to, but the kind that comes from somewhere deep and quiet and certain. He decided he needed to change his life. And then he held onto that decision even when holding on was hard.

With the support of his reintegration team at Ray of Hope, John earned his diploma. He completed every condition of his probation order. Today, he is working at a garage, learning the trade, and setting his sights on becoming a mechanic.



He made the decision. The team helped him hold it.

John's story is the reason this program exists. It is a reminder that the anchor of hope holds, even when the person holding it has stopped believing it will.

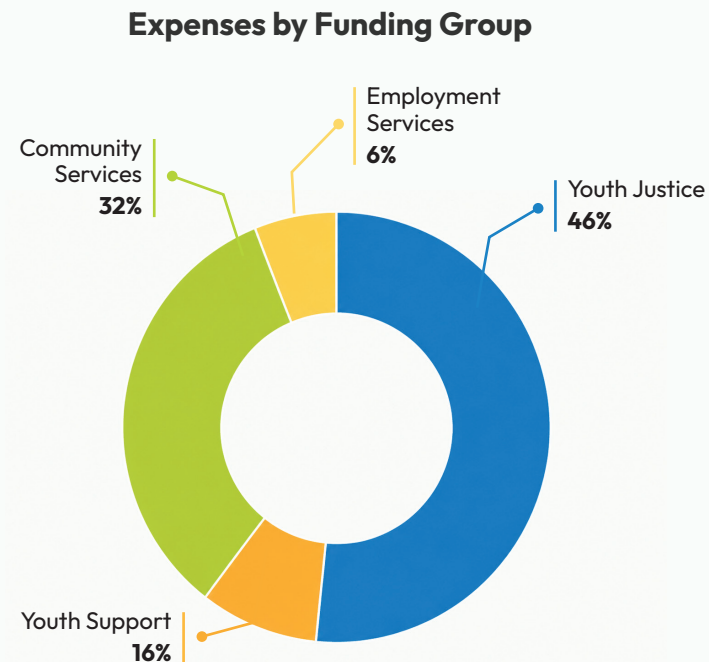
YRP and Anchors matter because they give youth who have potentially hit rock bottom another chance.

"I never thought I would amount to anything, and I thought I would be dead within a year. Thank you to Rawan, Tom, and Kent for helping me navigate through the hardest time of my life."

— John



Ray of Hope Inc. Financial Statements



Consolidated Statement of Operations & Net Assets Ending March 31, 2026

	2026	2025
Revenue		
Government contributions	\$5,770,134	\$5,878,954
Private Contributions (donations)	\$1,392,629	\$1,399,727
HRDC & other grants	\$1,119,518	\$947,847
Gain/Loss on Investments & Assets	(\$1,495)	\$2,861
Rental, Investments & Rebates	\$777,291	\$562,739
Total	\$9,058,077	\$8,792,128
Expenses		
Salaries & Benefits*	\$6,513,943	\$6,073,519
Amortization	\$225,982	\$225,982
Building Occupancy	\$710,980	\$737,757
Capital Acquisitions	\$293,351	\$421,447
Office & Other	\$248,409	\$238,752
Program & Client Needs	\$431,502	\$405,908
Promotion & Publicity	\$63,808	\$115,394
Purchased Services	\$203,166	\$600,042
Travel	\$145,610	\$80,480
Total	\$8,836,751	\$8,899,281
Excess of revenue over expenses for the year	\$221,326	(\$107,153)
Net asset balances, beginning of year	\$7,733,100	\$7,840,253
Net asset balances, end of year	\$7,954,426	\$7,733,100

*represents an average of 96 staff

A Message From Our Board President Held By What Cannot be Moved

God has been faithful through another year of challenge and change. As needs continued to grow across our community, we saw His provision through the generosity of donors, churches, volunteers, staff, and community partners who continued showing up when it mattered most.

This year brought difficult moments, including significant flooding and repairs to parts of our facilities. Yet even in disruption, Ray of Hope remained a place of refuge, support, and hope for people facing some of life's hardest circumstances.

Across every program, staff continued walking alongside people with compassion, dignity, and unwavering commitment. They met challenges with resilience and remained focused on the people we serve.

Leadership Team

Tonya Verburg, CEO

Jeff Coveyduck, CFO

Dale Prosser, Director of Services

Kimberly Rogan, Director of Human Resources

Kyla Arsenault, Director of Fundraising and Public Relations

Dan Wideman, Program Director, Community Centre

Don Plant, Program Director, Youth Support Services

Justin Batabyal, Facility Manager, Secure

Samantha Arbon, Manager of Quality and Compliance

Board of Directors

Tom Arndt, President

David Barker, Vice President

Scott Starra, Treasurer

Warren Griffin, Secretary

Ashley Hibbard

Carlene Hawley

Harold Albrecht

Paul Wagler

Rachel Weiler

Shelley Campagnola

Shelly Stone

Jim Stirt



Together, We Remain Anchored in Hope

For 59 years, Ray of Hope has been a place where lives are changed, not by grand gestures, but by consistent, compassionate presence. Every meal. Every conversation. Every second chance. Every hour volunteered. None of it is wasted. All of it is anchored in something firm and secure.

Thank you for being part of this. Thank you for giving, serving, and believing with us.

A community where hope, connection, and positive change are within reach.

Our Vision

To Demonstrate the Love of Christ by:

- Investing in People
- Inspiring Hope
- Transforming Lives

Our Mission

Being Christ-Centred

Rooting all we do in love, compassion, humility, and the grace of Christ.

Being Relational

Building relationships on trust, empathy, and mutual respect.

Acting With Integrity

Doing what's right, even when it's difficult, with honesty, transparency, and consistency.

Treating People With Dignity

Honouring the God-given worth of every person.

Our Values

Ways to Give

By Phone
519-578-8018 x217

By E-Transfer
info@rayofhope.net

By Mail
Send a cheque to
230-659 King Street East,
Kitchener, ON, N2G 2M4

Join an Event
Coldest Night of the Year, Ray of Hope Golf Classic, or host your own fundraising event.

Leave a Lasting Legacy
Leave a gift to Ray of Hope in your will.

Donate Stocks or Securities
Call 519-578-8018 or email donations@rayofhope.net

Online
rayofhope.net/donate