

# God's Word is a Light to Our Path

**Impact Report 2022-2023**

Investing in People • Inspiring Hope • Transforming Life



# From the CEO

Have you ever stumbled in the dark because you couldn't see where you were going? Just as a lamp brightens a path, we rely on God's Word to guide us as we support people in poverty, youth struggling with addictions, young adults preparing for employment, and youth in custody.

Through abundant communication and courageous transparency, our staff team renewed our sense of shared vision and mission this year.

We're on a journey to demonstrate the love of Christ with those we serve. As we refocused after the pandemic, the Ray of Hope team rallied to re-imagine the best ways to provide support. Our people-first programs care for the whole person as we recognize their strengths and are mindful of their trauma.

Striving for excellence includes pursuing accreditation for our Youth Support Services and Youth Justice Services through the Canadian Centre for Accreditation. Becoming accredited assures social service partners, employees and donors that they can trust us.

We advanced on the path toward diversity, equity and inclusion. With our staff, volunteers and community, we're working to ensure everyone feels welcomed and supported.

This past year, we also took huge strides in caring for those who do the caring by expanding our employee health and wellness initiatives.

In 2022-2023 we collaborated with funders, community partners, volunteers, and donors to inspire hope,

invest in people, and change lives.

In this report, read about the resilience of those we support, the generosity of our donors and volunteers, and the dedication of our staff.

I pray that you will see how we relied on God's word as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.

Serving Him with Grace,  
*Tonya Verburg*



CEO Tonya Verburg (Right) with Ray of Hope staff at the Coldest Night of the Year Fundraiser for the Community Centre.

***"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."***

***– Psalm 119:105***



# God's Word is a Light to People Experiencing Poverty

## Challenges People in Poverty Faced

*In 2022-2023 people experiencing homelessness faced continued change in the shelter system and jumps in rent and renovations. This led to a high number of people camping out.*



*Thankfully, by the end of the year, new local shelter options were available and more people had a safe place to sleep.*

Dan Wideman, Community Centre Program Director

## Good Food, Friends, Safety, and Kindness

Our guests like the Community Centre because it is safe, clean and staff treat them well. They also like breakfasts and lunches prepared by our Employment Services participants and home-made meals served by church and community groups.

“One man says if it weren't for staff and guests he would have no social contact because his family lives in another country.”

“This year, we began providing lockers. Having a safe place to store valuables gives unhoused guests peace of mind.”

## Progress on the Journey

Two guests stabilized their lives as they helped in the Community Centre kitchen regularly. Both secured affordable housing and one was accepted into a college culinary arts program.



**Thanks to you, people in poverty receive friendship and basic necessities like food!**



## Community Support

In 2022-2023 we served:

- 44,840 dinners
- 12,236 breakfasts
- 24,240 lunches
- 1,001 food hampers to 5,177 people (including 1,944 children)

**Thank you to our Hospitality Teams. In 2022-2023 you served more than 44,840 dinners.**

# God's Word is a Light for Youth in Custody

## In 2022/2023

- Our Secure custody facility supported 62 young men during custody/detention.
- During the pandemic, staff supported youth to stay connected with their families through virtual visits, phone calls and writing letters.
- Students in the Secure Section 23 classroom earned 48 high school credits.
- Youth participated in Ontario Safety Group (OSG) certification training courses and completed 84 certifications.
- We celebrated the diversity of young men at Secure with a cultural meal and by observing Easter, Passover, Ramadan and other religious holidays.

## Trades Training Change Lives

The Trade & Employment Readiness Program (TERP) has been thriving since it started at Secure in 2021. "I love teaching youth real-life skills that they want to learn. Teaching them about trades prepares them for work and owning a home," says TERP teacher Joel-Jansen Stafford. He adds, "It gives youth experience in the trades and transferable job skills such as reliability, teamwork and collaboration."

Eight young men registered for the 10-week program this year, and 3 completed it. TERP students earned 6 high school credits and 10 certificates. Thanks to a new partnership with Conestoga College, those who enroll in the program can earn a college trade credit. Youth are preregistered as Conestoga students so they can complete a trades diploma or other education when they return to the community.

Joel says, "TERP is a stepping stone for community job opportunities." One young man told him the program is helping him to make positive changes and prepare to be successful when he is released.



Trades teacher Joel Jansen-Stafford working alongside a young man at Ray of Hope's Secure custody facility.

***[The Trade & Employment Readiness Program] gives youth experience in the trades and transferable job skills such as reliability, teamwork and collaboration.***

—Joel Jansen-Stafford, TERP teacher

# God's Word is a Light to Young Adults Preparing for Employment



Youth learning in-class in phase 1 of the new Employment Services Program.

## Challenges Youth Faced

“The diverse group of youth we serve face many challenges. Some are trying to escape the shadows of their past, others want to better themselves or are new to Canada. Many have never had an opportunity to reflect on their skills and strengths, who they are, and what they want to do. Coming out of the pandemic, many youth feel anxious in social settings. Others have fears about entering the job market or have given up. We want to be the bridge that connects youth with their potential and their futures.”

Josh Healey, Employment Services,  
Program Coordinator

## Employment Services Update

In 2022/2023, Youth Employment Services closed the Morning Glory Café at Heffner after 17 years. We also closed the café location at the Family Centre and shut down our catering operation.

In the 21 years that our Youth Employment Program included a café and catering, hundreds of youth received job training and support to work through personal challenges. Most graduated from the program and found jobs or returned to school.



## Renewed Focus

No longer operating businesses will allow us to focus on our strength of supporting people with challenges to prepare for employment.

Through our new Employment Services Program, youth aged 15-29 participate in a 3-phase, 26-week program.

## Thanks to you, young adults are prepared for employment and a brighter future!

### PHASE 1: Youth Learn Employment Skills (6 weeks)

ACCOUNTABILITY

SELF-AWARENESS

COMMUNICATION

LIFE SKILLS

### PHASE 2: Youth Prepare Meals at the Ray of Hope Community Centre (10 weeks)

### PHASE 3: Youth do a Placement with Employers (10 weeks)



# Thank You For **Sharing Your Light!**

## In 2022/2023

- 1,492 volunteers served 16,224 hours at the Community Centre
- 78 New Individuals and 21 New Groups began serving

Ray of Hope provides opportunities for people to invest their time and abilities in life-transforming ways.

## Volunteers and donors are at the heart of Ray of Hope

Whether you volunteer on a meal team or committee, donate clothes or food, or give financially, you are at the heart of everything Ray of Hope does.

1505 volunteers served 19,264 hours!

68 meal teams donated 9,631 hours and ingredients for the homecooked suppers they served at the Community Centre.



## Coldest Night of the Year

736 walkers in 77 teams, supported by 35 volunteers, raised \$225,000 with gifts from 2771 donors!

These gifts will fund life-change at the Community Centre all year long.



***"It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness."***

– Eleanor Roosevelt



## What volunteers are saying:

***"I get great satisfaction from volunteering here."***

***"Staff are great and the work is meaningful."***

***"Two thumbs up! I'm grateful to be here."***

# Volunteer Spotlights



A true leader, Therese M. is always willing to engage with our guests as she serves meals. She brings humour and warmth to everyone she interacts with.



Thank you those who spoke at Community Centre chapel times.



Thanks to Matt D., Leidy Y., and Alecia W. for doing dishes.

Thanks to Grant O. for preparing taxes for Community Centre guests.



***Volunteers are the lifeblood of Ray of Hope.***

Our awesome hair stylist volunteer cuts our guests hair every week. Thanks to her, they leave the Community Centre walking tall and feeling confident.



Bryan D brings strong faith and a calm spirit to his hospitality team at the Community Centre. Since 2016 Bryan has served more than 859 hours.



# God's Word is a Light to Youth Recovering From Addictions

## Challenges Teens Faced

*Many young people are struggling to find their way and move forward in their lives. Isolation experienced during the pandemic made it worse. We're thankful that God changed lives this year and provided staff—social workers and therapists are in short supply. My word for the year is 'overflow'. These last few months, God's overflow has kept me going. I see his abundance in the way YSS staff go above and beyond to support youth.*

Don Plant, Youth Support Services,  
Program Director

## Teen Curious About The Bible



*When I visited with youth at Ray of Hope's Live-in Treatment program, Robert\* asked me many questions about what was going to happen at the end of history. He was extremely interested, so I asked if he would like to study the book of Revelation together. "Yes, I would love to," he responded. God taught us both as we studied the Bible and prayed together for a few months.*

John Murray, Ray of Hope Chaplain

***Thanks to you, youth are recovering from addictions and planning a healthy life!***

## Celebrating 10 Years of Healing and Hope!

2,700+  
families  
helped

4,300  
people  
requested  
help

92% of  
people who  
asked for  
help were  
assessed

74% were  
admitted  
into one  
of our  
treatment  
programs

85% of  
participants  
reported  
achieving  
at least  
one of their  
treatment  
goals



### From Trapped to Triumphant: A Journey to Recovery

“My life was a mess. I was trapped in a loop and thought I could never change,” says Brittany\*. She hung out with friends who used drugs. Sometimes she stayed out all



Brittany avoided using drugs with coping strategies like playing cards with friends.

night, returning home for a few hours of sleep before going to school. Brittany wanted to change but didn't know how. “I was stuck with the same friends and the same habits.” She didn't trust her parents and had few other supportive adults in her life.

Then a bad experience prompted her parents to suggest

she stop attending school. Her mom contacted Ray of Hope, and Brittany began counselling with a Youth Support Services counsellor. Needing a safe place to finish school, Brittany started attending Ray of Hope's Day Treatment Program.

“I learn coping skills through one-on-one and group meetings with counsellors.” Instead of using drugs, Brittany is learning positive coping strategies like playing board games and cards. “It gives me something to do with friends. Playing cards helps me focus and have fun when I feel stressed or anxious.” These days, Brittany spends more time with her family and is much closer to her siblings and parents. “They are happy I am in recovery.”

*I feel really proud of myself.*

– A young woman recovering from addiction

Brittany appreciates that Ray of Hope's Youth Services are low cost and that staff don't treat participants like children or try to punish them. “They're here to support us.” She recommends the program to youth struggling with addictions if they're ready to change and not doing it for their parents. “The program is what you make of it.” Brittany is putting in the hard work to get free from her addictions. “I feel really proud of myself and where I am.”

\*Not her real name.

## YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICES

*For addicted youth 15-21 and their caregivers*

Community treatment

Day treatment

Live-in treatment

Brain training

Caregiver support services

**GET HELP** Do you know a teen struggling with addictions?

Contact Ray of Hope at (519) 578-8018

Or visit [rayofhope.net/need-help/youth-support-services/](https://rayofhope.net/need-help/youth-support-services/)

# Doing Their Part for the Community

## Profile: Zero Environmental



Ray of Hope donors Joel Van Es (left) and Randy Balzer, co-owners of Zero Environmental.

“There are lots of charities out there with great needs. We can’t do everything,” says Joel Van Es, co-owner of Zero Environmental. He and his business partner Randy Balzer chose to support Ray of Hope because it aligns with their values and it’s local. “This is where we work and live, and our clients are here [in Waterloo Region].” He adds, “As a business, we want to do our part for the community by supporting Ray of Hope.” They see giving as a natural outflow of how they operate their company. “We are honest, and we treat our employees fairly.”

Joel and Randy took “steep pay cuts” to start their company. But from the beginning, they wanted to give back. So once a year, they gave Ray of Hope what

they had left over. As Zero Environmental grew over the past ten years, they realized the importance of predictable cash flow. He and Randy decided to give monthly so Ray of Hope has money it can count on. “Ray of Hope needs money all year, not just in December.” At Christmas, the Zero Environmental team sends cards to their clients with a note that a donation has been made to Ray of Hope on their behalf. “Our clients don’t need gimmicks or gifts. They appreciate that we donate on their behalf.”

They often donate to the community centre because that’s the part of the ministry they’re most familiar with. Joel has served many Community Centre meals with church teams. “There is something special about meeting the most basic needs. Food is a starting point for a lot of care. You can’t help someone if they’re hungry,” says Joel. He also appreciates that Ray of Hope goes beyond feeding people to build relationships. “Having someone to talk to and having meaning and purpose is so important.”

“I encourage other businesses to do your part for the community by giving to Ray of Hope.”

***“There is something special about meeting the most basic needs. Food is a starting point for a lot of care.”***

–Joel Van Es, Co-owner, Zero Environmental

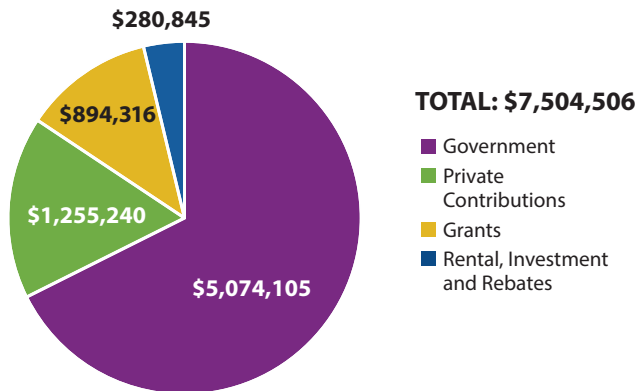


# Financials

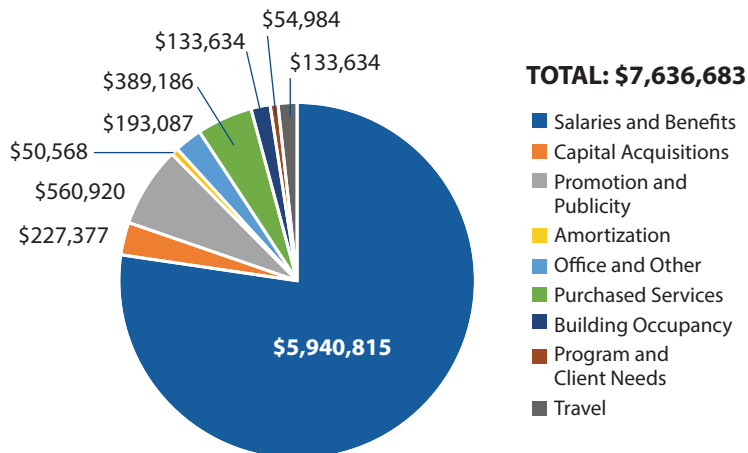
Revenue	2023	2022
Government	\$5,074,105	\$5,120,144
Private Contributions	\$1,255,240	\$1,645,973
Grants	\$894,316	\$1,094,294
Rental, investment and rebates	\$280,845	\$285,900
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,504,506</b>	<b>\$8,146,311</b>

Expenses	2023	2022
Salaries and benefits	\$5,940,815	\$5,515,287
Amortization	\$227,377	\$217,856
Building occupancy	\$560,920	\$480,247
Capital acquisitions	\$50,568	\$249,415
Office and other	\$193,087	\$214,895
Program and client needs	\$389,186	\$436,556
Promotion and publicity	\$133,634	\$78,529
Purchased services	\$54,984	\$55,885
Travel	\$132,071	\$113,831
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,636,683</b>	<b>\$7,323,478</b>

## REVENUE 2022-23



## EXPENSES 2022-23





# Thank You to Our Dedicated Leaders

## 2022/2023 Board of Directors

### Scott Starra

(President), Owner/  
Operator, Massage  
Addict

### Warren Griffin

(Secretary) Partner,  
Giesbrecht, Griffin,  
Funk and Irvine LLP

### Christy MacDonald

(Treasurer) Senior  
Manager with Deloitte

### David McKee

(Past President) Retired  
Lawyer, formerly  
Vice-President and  
Associate General  
Counsel, Sun Life  
Financial

### David Barker

Educator, Heritage  
College & Seminary

### Del Brubacher

Owner/President,  
Mardel Electrical &  
Mechanical Ltd

### Hilda DeBoer

Retired Manger at CRA

### Paul Wagler

Proprietor/General  
Manager St. Clements  
Heart and Home

### Jen Lambert

Mental Health  
Clinician, Canadian  
Mental Health  
Association

## RAISE FUNDS

- For people in poverty,  
Coldest Night of the Year  
February 24, 2024
- For addicted youth,  
Ray of Hope Golf Classic,  
June 2024



## GIVE YOUR TIME

- At the Community Centre  
with people in poverty

## GIVE A DONATION

Online at [www.rayofhope.net](http://www.rayofhope.net)

**Share your light.** Donate to Ray of Hope to  
invest in people, inspire hope and change lives!

230-659 King St. E, Kitchener, ON N2G 2M4  
[info@rayofhope.net](mailto:info@rayofhope.net) 519-578-8018 [rayofhope.net](http://rayofhope.net)

**Ray of Hope** 