

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

OVERFLOWING WITH HOPE

Ray of Hope 

OVERFLOWING WITH HOPE

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him,
so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

ROMANS 15:13



Letter from our CEO

As I reflect on the past year, I am overwhelmed with gratitude and hope. As I think about the theme for this report and the scripture from Romans 15:13, I am reminded of the hope that we find in the love of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Our faith serves as an anchor, grounding us in the promise of a brighter tomorrow.

In God's strength, we stood firm in our commitment to our mission and adapted swiftly to the evolving landscape. Our ability to navigate through turbulent waters with grace and determination is a testament to the strength of our organization and the talents of every person, whether as a donor, a volunteer, a person in need of support, a community partner or our staff.

To our valued supporters and volunteers, your commitment to our mission has been inspiring. Your contributions have enabled us to continue our vital work, touching the lives of countless individuals and families.

To our staff team, I want to express my deepest gratitude to each member, whose passion, dedication, and unwavering commitment continue to inspire me every day.

As I review the pages of this annual report, I am reminded of the countless stories of perseverance that define our journey. I invite you to read these stories of resilience, transformation and hope from the people we support. Each story serves as a testament to the transformative power of hope. Together, we have the power to shape a brighter tomorrow, where hope flourishes and lives can be transformed.

Let us continue to embrace the limitless possibilities that lie ahead, and may our lives be a testimony to the transformative power of God's love, and may we overflow with hope, inspiring others to do the same.

Tonya Verburg, CEO



Demonstrating the love of Christ
by investing in people, inspiring hope,
and transforming lives.



Chaplaincy at Ray of Hope provides spiritual support and guidance to those facing life's challenges. Chaplains play a key role in the healing process by addressing the spiritual needs of our community and the people we support.

Letter from our Youth Justice Chaplain

At Ray of Hope Secure I see every day how hope can make a big difference. Even when the young people here face tough times, hope helps them see a way forward. As their chaplain, I see how hope can change their lives for the better.

Part of my job is to remind them to have hope, even when things seem bad. It's this hopeful feeling that helps our young residents believe in themselves and think about better days ahead, even when things are tough. When life gets hard, it's important to have something strong to hold onto. For me, that something is my faith in God. The Bible tells us that if we trust in God, our strength will be renewed (Isaiah 40:31). In God, we find more than just feeling good for a moment. We find comfort and strength that lasts through any situation. We find true joy.

This reminded me of a quote given by Andy Stanley "Jesus is the hope of the world, and the local church is the vehicle of expressing that hope to the World" I see what we do here at Ray of Hope as also being that "vehicle of hope" that God uses to bless others. I would encourage us to continue to spread this hope and to let the world see that there is hope in Christ.

Hector Pineda
Chaplain, Secure Custody

Letter from our Community Chaplain

It was the late Billy Graham who said, "The greatest need in our world today is the need for hope." Ray of Hope focuses on offering hope to those we serve. We do so by helping to meet the physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual needs of those we serve.

In Chaplaincy, we focus on offering the greatest hope, which is found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. People can find a deep and lasting hope through an authentic and living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chaplaincy provides hope in a variety of ways, through weekly chapel services, bible studies, devotional and prayer times, as well as giving out Bibles, and other devotional materials. We have countless conversations, with a focus on listening, answering questions, encouraging and ministering. As a Chaplaincy Team (chaplains and chapel volunteers), we aim to build trust with those we serve, in order that we can minister the hope of Christ, through the Gospel.

As our theme verse declares in Romans 15:13, we serve a God of hope. Thus, as His servants, we want to minister His hope. It is our prayer that all those we serve may experience the life transforming and eternal hope of Jesus Christ in their lives.

John Murray, Chaplain, Community

HOPE AT THE COMMUNITY CENTRE & MARKETPLACE

The Ray of Hope Community Centre: A Year-Round Commitment to Hope

365 days a Year: We'll be here. The Community Centre is open every day of the year, offering meals, services, support, and spiritual care. "People on the street don't get a day off, so we'll be here for them," affirms Program Director Dan Wideman. This steadfast presence provides a sense of stability and consistency. The Community Centre is a beacon of hope every day of the year, providing a reliable sanctuary for those in need.

Inclusive Approach: Serving All with Dignity

Ray of Hope adopts an inclusive approach at the Community Centre, serving everyone with dignity and respect. It is a place where diversity is celebrated, and every individual's unique path is honored. "We see everyone as an individual, deserving of respect," Program Director, Dan Wideman highlights. This philosophy of inclusiveness is woven into the fabric of the Centre, creating an environment where each guest is valued and accepted.



Letters from our Community Centre Guests

For the last year, one of our young adult guests has been struggling with addiction and homelessness. He has a family who loves him and a support system behind him, but he wasn't ready to change his life until a few weeks ago when he agreed to go into residential treatment.

One week into his treatment, one of our staff received the following note. The grammar and punctuation are his – we want you to hear it in his voice:

"I miss you guys and the ray of hope. The people that work there and the place in general have been such a huge part of my life during this whole period. It's crazy to try and imagine that there is only that one in Kitchener. Like it makes me sad to think of people in other cities and areas that don't have the opportunity to have something like ray of hope. It's painful to imagine where I'd be and what I'd be doing right now if it wasn't for ray of hope. Like just think of everything



you've done for me and helped me with. Without ray of hope I wouldn't have met you and without you I wouldn't have gotten into this place and I'd still be sleeping outside or worse. Today I've been here for 1 week exactly and its been 2 weeks without using anything which is a pretty big deal for me"

A couple who frequent the Community Centre on weekends passed our staff this note:

"We have lived in Kitchener nearly 20 years. We often come to Ray of Hope Community Centre to have meals on the weekends. We feel all the workers and volunteers are very kind and friendly. We have meals without pay. Such a thing is unknown in China.

We are over 90. Next week we'll go back to China to spend our remaining time there. We'll never forget the days where we stay here. We'll remember you in our hearts. At last, let us say again, Thank you very much Ray of Hope Community!"



KEY OUTCOMES



95,625
meals served



3,341

Marketplace Hampers
distributed to 7,419 individuals,
2,441 of which were children



3,338
showers taken



1,742 loads of
laundry completed

HOPE FOR OUR VOLUNTEERS, STAFF AND SUPPORTERS

VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS

1,489 volunteers served
over 24,673 hours

109 new volunteers and
20 new groups joined the team

22 educational placements
were completed

70 meal teams cooked and
served nutritious meals for our
Community Centre guests

DONOR HIGHLIGHTS

3,180 generous donors gave to Ray of Hope

\$130 was the average donation

592 donors gave to Ray of Hope for the first time

319 Hope Builders - our faithful, monthly donors

A donor appreciation event was held on Saturday, April 22 to thank our donors and show the tremendous impact you made in the lives of so many people.

HR HIGHLIGHTS

- **Engagement & Wellness:** The Wellness Committee continued to roll out initiatives to enhance staff well-being.
- **Service Excellence:** Improved communication, recruitment, and streamlining HR tasks
- **Professional Development:** Boosted training with in-house courses, including First Aid, Health and Safety, and Crisis Intervention
- **New Employee Onboarding:** Partnered with Conestoga College to co-create an updated employee Organizational Orientation Day

HOPE FOR EMPLOYMENT

Ray of Hope Employment Services empowers people with barriers to employment to achieve their career goals. Our programs bridge the gap between learning and practical experience, providing participants with the tools they need to thrive in the workforce.

Two Programs, One Mission:

Youth Employment and Skills Strategy: This program equips youth aged 15-29 with essential skills and paid work experience, preparing them for successful careers.

Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities: This program breaks down barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities of working age, helping them find fulfilling careers.

Investing in Skills, Building Confidence:

Participants gain a strong foundation through workshops and hands-on training in areas like health and safety, food handling, and first aid. We provide resume writing assistance, interview practice, and career exploration to help them identify their strengths and find fulfilling work.

Beyond the Classroom: Launching Careers:

Ray of Hope Employment Services goes beyond traditional classroom learning. Participants gain practical experience through paid external placements, accumulating 350 to 700 hours of on-the-job training. These placements serve as a launchpad for meaningful careers, where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Hope spills over, saturating workplaces, neighborhoods, and hearts. Ray of Hope's Employment Services participants are a testament to the transformative power of hope.

KEY OUTCOMES



43 individuals were enrolled in Employment Services



145 employment partner connections



32 new jobs for participants



HOPE FOR REINTEGRATION AFTER CUSTODY

Young men leaving Ray of Hope's Secure Custody are met with significant hurdles as they reintegrate into society. A significant challenge is the continuation of their education. The Youth Reintegration program provides an alternative educational pathway for these youth, aiming to assist them in earning school credits to facilitate their pursuit of employment or further education.

The program operates within the Youth Reintegration Classroom at Ray of Hope, offering a fresh start for students who struggle to adapt to conventional school environments.

Recognized as a Section 23 school by the Waterloo Region District School Board, the Youth Reintegration Classroom is part of a collaborative effort with community agencies. Ray of Hope offers three additional Section 23 schools, one at Secure Custody and one each in both Day Treatment and Live-In Treatment facilities.

In the Youth Reintegration Classroom, a team comprising of teachers, probation officers, and Ray of Hope staff unite to deliver comprehensive support to students. This includes not only educational guidance but also assistance in securing housing, employment, and access to mental health and rehabilitation services. The staff's dedication extends beyond the students' probation period, ensuring that they receive continued support and do not slip through societal cracks.

This program stands as a beacon of hope, guiding young people towards a brighter future by equipping them with the necessary tools and support to overcome the challenges of reentering society after custody.



KEY OUTCOMES

**8 youth completed
4 high school credits
each for a total of
32 credits completed**



**3 youth
graduated
high school**

**15 youth successfully gained
employment after custody**



**18 youth entered
counselling**

**36 youth were
participants
in the youth
reintegration
program**

HOPE FOR YOUTH EXPERIENCING ADDICTIONS

Your support helps young people like Lexi regain health and hope. Two years ago, 14-year-old Lexi felt lost and alone, trapped in an addiction that was destroying her mental health. But today — thanks to a Ray of Hope program supported, in part, by caring donors like you — she's learning healthier ways to cope.

The pandemic was one of the darkest times in Lexi's short life. Unable to see her friends or participate in her usual activities, she started feeling more and more isolated, anxious and depressed. A friend suggested that smoking marijuana might help her feel better. Lexi discovered that pot helped her forget about her worries and feel more at ease. As time went on, she began smoking more frequently, using the drug to numb her emotions.

Before she knew it, Lexi was prioritizing smoking over her schoolwork and hobbies. She began avoiding family and friends and spent more time alone, focused on getting high. But the more she smoked, the less relaxed she felt. It seemed like her anxiety was getting worse, not better.

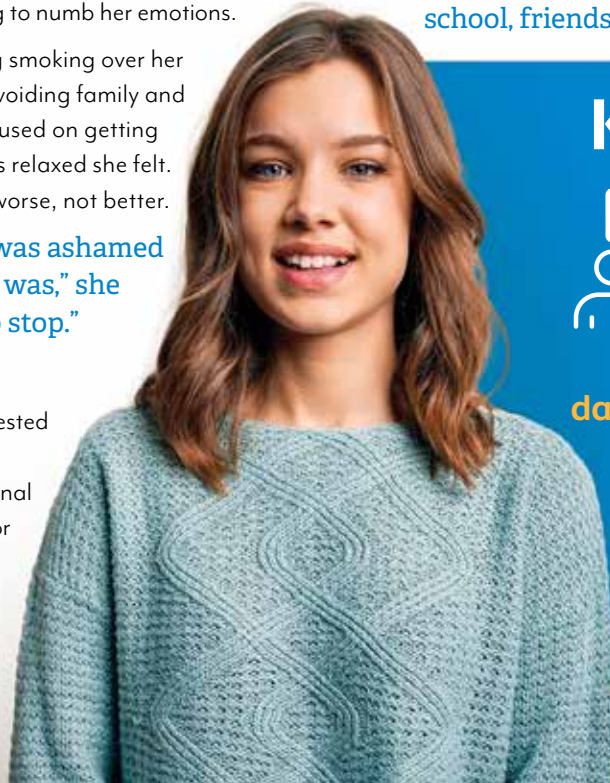
"I knew I had a problem, but I was ashamed for anyone to know how bad it was," she says. "And I didn't know how to stop."

Finding support and strategies

Fortunately, one of Lexi's teachers suggested she and her family connect with Youth Support Services, which offers professional therapy through a range of programs for young people who want to overcome substance use and other compulsive behaviour concerns.

Lexi joined the Day Treatment program. Five days a week, she's part of a small group of teens who are each following their own tailor-made treatment plan. As part of her plan, Lexi participates in individual counselling and group therapy sessions. Academic programming ensures she doesn't fall behind in school, while recreational activities like rock climbing allow her body to generate "feel-good" hormones to replace the artificial high that marijuana once provided.

"I'm learning better ways to cope with my anxiety, but that's not all," Lexi says. "I feel like the program is helping me make healthier decisions in all areas of my life — school, friends, home — everything."



KEY OUTCOMES



17

students in
day treatment

158 youth in
community treatment

12 participants in
live-in treatment



161
neurofeedback
sessions

Ray of Hope Inc. Financial Statements

Consolidated Statement of Operations & Net Assets ending March 31, 2024

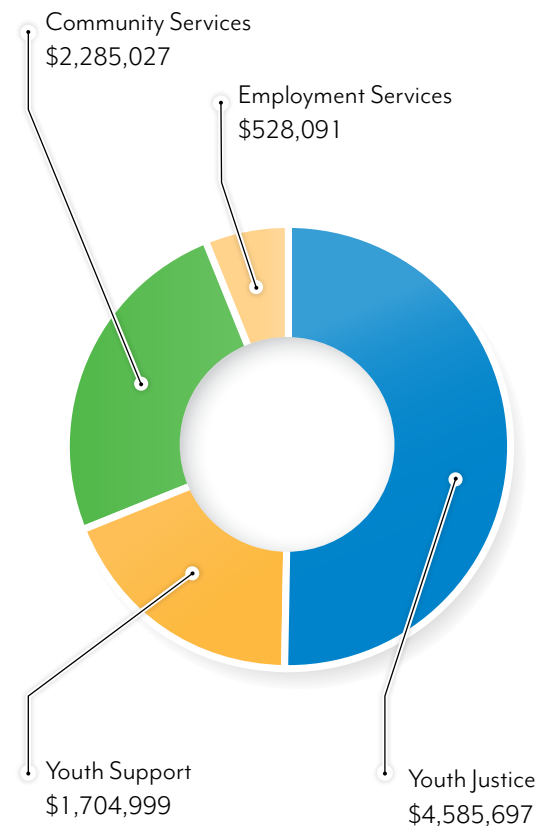
REVENUE

	2024	2023
Government contributions	\$6,282,249	\$5,052,118
Private Contributions (donations)	\$1,281,192	\$1,255,240
HRDC & other grants	\$899,974	\$916,303
Gain/Loss on Investments & Assets	\$-4,158	\$-5,159
Rental, Investments & Rebates	\$336,199	\$331,963
	\$8,795,456	\$7,550,465

EXPENSES

Salaries & Benefits	\$6,126,911	\$5,940,815
Amortization	\$217,920	\$227,377
Building Occupancy	\$815,500	\$560,920
Capital Acquisitions	\$497,351	\$50,568
Office & Other	\$221,327	\$193,087
Program & Client Needs	\$408,087	\$389,186
Promotion & Publicity	\$93,461	\$133,634
Purchased Services	\$58,832	\$54,984
Travel	\$102,365	\$132,071
	\$8,541,754	\$7,682,642
Excess of revenue over expenses from operations	\$253,702	\$(132,177)
Gain on Sale of Property	\$-	\$860,662
Discontinued Operations	\$-	\$-
	\$253,702	\$728,485
Net asset balances, beginning of year	\$7,586,551	\$6,858,066
Net asset balances, end of year	\$7,840,253	\$7,586,551

EXPENSES BY FUNDING GROUP



Letter from the Board President

Ray of Hope is an organization that is very appropriately named. We are in the business of inspiring hope. Whether it is a person that is experiencing homelessness or a youth that is struggling with an addiction or has run afoul of the law. We believe all people are created in the image of God and this is what drives us to fulfill our mission to demonstrate the love of Christ to the people we serve. By demonstrating that people are valued and by investing in them, we spread hope.

This past year has been another year of delivering hope to the people we serve. It has had both key accomplishments and challenges.

- **We gained accreditation from the Canadian Centre for Accreditation – a key testament to our commitment to excellence in the delivery of our services**
- **We saw increased demand for meals and in our food marketplace that required us to focus our efforts and hours in the Community Centre**
- **We secured new funding from the Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities, administered by Employment and Social Development Canada, to support individuals with mental health challenges in finding employment**

While dealing with these opportunities and challenges, we have not wavered from our mission and values. We are grateful to our volunteers, donors, community partners and government funders. We couldn't have delivered this hope without your help. Thank you.

Scott Starra, Board Chair

Board of Directors

Scott Starra - Owner/Operator, Massage Addict, Serving as President

David Barker - Educator, Heritage College & Seminary, Serving as Vice President

Christy MacDonald - Senior Manager with Deloitte, Serving as Treasurer

Warren Griffin - Partner, Giesbrecht, Griffin, Funk and Irvine LLP, Serving as Secretary

Del Brubacher - Owner/President, Mardel Electrical & Mechanical Ltd

Harold Albrecht - Retired MP

Hilda DeBoer - Retired Manager at CRA

Jen Lambert - Mental Health Clinician at CMHA/Private Practice

Jim Stitzinger - Senior Leader, Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan

Paul Wagler - Proprietor/General Manager St. Clements Heart and Home

Shelly Stone - Canadian Director, MissionGO

Rachel Weiler - Police Officer, WRPS

Leadership Team

Tonya Verburg - CEO

Debbie Woodhall - 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

Jaime Wright - Volunteer Services Manager

Joshua Healy - Employment Services Coordinator



WAYS TO GIVE:

Online at
rayofhope.net/donate

Over the phone at
519-578-8018 x217

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

Through an event:
Join Coldest Night of the Year,
the Ray of Hope Golf Classic,
or do your own fundraising
event for Ray of Hope

Donate stocks or securities:
Call 519-578-8018 or email
donations@rayofhope.net

Leave a lasting legacy: Leave a
gift to Ray of Hope in your will