

# IMPACT REPORT

2023  
2024



# PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

Effective leadership of an organization like Porchlight must, in my opinion, come from a place of service. This is the approach that I try to take as President and Chair of Porchlight's Board of Directors. However, from time to time, that service also comes with a few privileges. Like this one:

It is my privilege to thank you for taking an interest in Porchlight Counselling and Addiction Services through our 2023-24 Impact Report.

This report will, we hope, provide you with a clear overview and strong starting point which will help you to understand the work that Porchlight does within our community. If that satisfies your purpose in reading it, I'll repeat very sincerely: Thank you for taking an interest.

However, if you are hoping to truly understand the work that we do - a growing work which is reflected in the people and community we serve - then I hope that you will see this report as an invitation to engage further.

Porchlight's vision is for a community where emotional & mental health and well-being are prioritized and destigmatized. That is not something we can achieve on our own.

Please, throughout this year, join us and communicate with us. Attend our events, sign up for our mailing list, let us know where we are doing well and where we can improve.

It is one of Porchlight's values to be, and to remain, a community-based organization. We value your participation in our work and in our community.

Thank you, once more, for your interest in our work.



## Diana Drackley

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Drackley".

PRESIDENT/BOARD CHAIR

# TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

At Porchlight, we acknowledge that our organization operates on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Neutral, and Mississauga First Nations, who are the original caretakers of this land.

We are situated on lands connected to the Haldimand Treaty of 1784, which promised six miles of land on both sides of the Grand River would belong to the Haudenosaunee. This agreement has never been fully honoured and remains part of ongoing, living disputes to this day.

The complex history that has led to us residing on this land is inseparable from colonialism and the pain it has caused. As a counselling and addictions organization, we recognize that acknowledging and understanding past and present harms and injustices is essential to any healing journey, both for individuals and for societies.

Reconciliation requires more than acknowledgment; it demands humility, accountability, and meaningful action. At Porchlight, we are committed, both individually and collectively, to educating ourselves, building grounded relationships with Indigenous communities, and taking concrete steps toward positive change. This includes supporting Indigenous-led initiatives, advocating for Indigenous rights, and incorporating Indigenous perspectives into our organizational practices.

Together, we can work towards healing, reconciliation, and a future of mutual respect and understanding.

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# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Porchlight is an organization dedicated to providing mental health services to residents of Cambridge and North Dumfries - two underserved communities in Waterloo Region. Doing this work on a daily basis, seeing the increasing need for our services outpace our capacity to provide them, it can be easy to give in to pessimism and to believe solutions to the problems of today are unachievable.

However, I believe, as Helen Keller has been quoted as saying, that "optimism is the faith that leads to achievement". As an organization with 84 years of experience serving this community, we have lived this truth many times. We also know that stepping back to recognize achievement, even (perhaps, especially) when work is still on-going, provides one of the greatest sources of optimism. That is why it is so important for us to look back at the past year and reflect on and celebrate our accomplishments as a community organization.

Very simply, we have a smart, dedicated, and creative team doing incredible work in our community, making a real impact in the lives of our neighbours.

Throughout 2023-24, we invested a great deal of effort into finding a new, expanded home for our Counselling Centre. While the actual move happened just after the end of the fiscal year, these efforts resulted in us moving to our current space on Bishop Street in Cambridge, growing our footprint and our capacity to serve.

This year also saw the Region of Waterloo award sustainable funding for our two Transitional Supportive Recovery Houses, which allowed us to move our women's recovery home, Ancora House, into a new building with the capacity to increase the beds there from six to ten.

These facility changes are huge achievements impacting the heart of what we do as an organization, removing major bottlenecks which were limiting our ability to grow in line with our community's needs.



"Nothing we do as an agency happens in isolation."

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE (CONT'D)

This year has also seen growth in a number of our existing programs and the beginnings of some new ones.

With the generous support of the Lyle S Hallman Foundation we were able to hire a dedicated Social-Emotional Learning Facilitator who has expanded our Taming the Dragon Program – combatting anxiety among children – significantly. Meanwhile, through funding from the Government of Ontario, participants in our Young and Heart seniors' program in North Dumfries have been able to enjoy more events and experiences that reduce social isolation.

We also brought mental health services to supportive housing sites through the Supportive Housing Health Initiative (SHHI), which is funded by the Region of Waterloo, and provided a free drop-in counselling clinic at the Multi-Agency Community Space (MACS) specifically to serve the needs of those experiencing homelessness.

During this year, our addiction recovery homes reached their highest ever number of concurrent residents at 19. Our waiting list continues to grow, and we are exploring ways to increase this further, however, 19 beds is a remarkable achievement which comes thanks to years of effort from our entire team and untold numbers of supporters.

As the twin crises of homelessness and drug poisoning continue to grow and impact our community we expect this to be an area where our services will continue to expand in future years.

Porchlight also did a significant amount of advocacy work in 2023-24, as advocacy is one of our core values. This included continuing to act as a leading voice for mental health and addiction supports in our community, amplifying diverse voices from across the region, and fighting the stigma around mental health care and addiction.

Advocacy focused events we organized included "Cambridge Moves for Mental Health" and our "Conversations for Community Care" series where we partnered with organizations such as Rhythm and Blues Cambridge, the Cambridge Public Library

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE (CONT'D)

(formerly IdeaExchange), Muslim Women of Cambridge, OK2BME, Kind Minds Family Wellness, and the Waterloo Region Family Network to facilitate important conversations about the diversity of mental health needs in our community. This series was funded by Waterloo Region's Upstream Fund.

Our advocacy also involved working within region-wide planning frameworks where we particularly advocated for expanded and more equitable distribution of services for Cambridge and North Dumfries. This included participation in the Plan to End Chronic Homelessness, the Waterloo Region Integrated Drug Strategy, the Cambridge & North Dumfries Ontario Health Team, and the Gender-Based Violence Leadership Table.

In fact, nothing we do as an agency happens in isolation. Our counselling services rely on cooperation with our partners in the Counselling Collaborative of Waterloo Region. This partnership was strengthened this year through initiatives which saw our counselling team receive enhanced training on supporting clients on the autism spectrum, and through a service agreement with Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health that allowed us to provide more children's counselling in Cambridge and North Dumfries.

We also provided programs and services jointly with the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council, Cambridge Food Bank, and Muslim Social Services. Of course, this is just a taste of the many important partnerships we value in our community.

Porchlight has so much to celebrate from 2023-24, and has a strong foundation in place to do even more in the future. We hope that you will continue to engage, support, and partner with Porchlight as we continue expanding our supports to better serve our community.

**Cameron Dearlove**



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# ABOUT PORCHLIGHT

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Diana Drackley,  
President

Ray Ward,  
Secretary

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Director

Janet Jones,  
Director

Douglas Bartholomew-Saunders,  
Vice President

Jessica Bellamy,  
Director

Tara Chapman,  
Director

Jessica Hill,  
Director

### **VISION**

We envision a community where emotional/mental health and well-being are prioritized and destigmatized.

### **MISSION**

Porchlight provides a safe space where counselling and addictions services support the emotional well-being of people in Cambridge and North Dumfries.

### **VALUES**

Exceptional  
Inclusive  
Community Based  
Advocacy  
Empathy

# COUNSELLING UPDATE

Porchlight's counselling team has continued to deliver incredible care throughout this last year, as we went through a year of consolidations and preparation for growth. Our commitment to being a safe space which supports the mental well-being of people in Cambridge and North Dumfries continues to be unwavering, as we provide counselling services that are exceptional, inclusive, and community-based.

One major element of the growth we were preparing for has since culminated with the move to our new, modern office space. This new space is fully accessible and has twice as many counselling offices as our previous home, creating a significant increase in the number of in-person appointments we are able to facilitate.

As part of our preparation for this expansion, we brought in three new therapists during the year – growing our team and increasing the diversity of experience within it significantly. The resulting team is more balanced in terms of experience, able to provide veteran and fresh perspectives, gender experience, allowing us to link clients with therapists they can relate to, and therapeutic approaches.

This has allowed us to say yes to more referrals more quickly. We have also seen this expansion of expertise recognized as we have experienced an increase in the number of referrals from partners who feel they do not have the internal capacity to best serve specific clients, but who are confident that Porchlight does.

The increase to our counselling team also allowed us to stabilize our children's counselling and couple's counselling programs – creating more consistency and a smoother continuum of care for clients using those services.

Similarly, the Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region (SASC) reached out to us as part of their efforts to reduce wait times, and we were able to assist them by expanding our own services for women who have experienced violence and offer faster assistance to a





# COUNSELLING UPDATE (CONT'D)

significant number of women in Cambridge and North Dumfries who had been waiting for services through SASC.

Our team has also been active outside of our offices, providing services in the community.

Our Taming the Dragon Program, which provides in-school sessions for students that are designed to give them tools and strategies to combat and address anxiety, grew significantly after we were able to hire a dedicated Social-Emotional Learning Facilitator. This program now serves students throughout all elementary grades and visited more classrooms during 2023-24 than in any prior year.

Meanwhile, on top of our long standing commitment to provide excellent counselling services in North Dumfries, our Young at Heart Program, which provides relief from (and addresses the outcomes of) social isolation among seniors who live rurally, was able to include trips outside the community for the first time since before COVID.

This year, in response to the growing needs of those experiencing homelessness, we partnered with the Multi-Agency Community Space (MACS) to provide free drop-in counselling sessions at their 150 Main Street site in Cambridge. We also brought our mental health services on-site to local supportive housing through the Supportive Housing Health Initiative and partnered with the Two Rivers Health Team to send therapists to work from their facility.

Long-standing partnership based programs also continued, such as the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council's "Why?" support group as well as the youth focused Vibe and Thrive and the Kin Group with the Cambridge Food Bank. Through a space sharing agreement, Muslim Social Services is now able to provide culturally appropriate counselling using Porchlight's office.

All of this, combined, has meant better access to counselling services throughout our community. And it has set us up to provide even better access to these services in the years ahead.

# COUNSELLING BY THE NUMBERS

## COUNSELLING

Total # of Clients: 1699  
Children & Youth (Under 18): 246  
Seniors & Elders (Over 65): 71  
Individuals living with addiction: 359  
Individuals with diagnosed mental illness: 1011  
People experiencing violence: 610



## TAMING THE DRAGON

Total # of students: 1077  
Number of schools visited: 20  
Grades served: 1-8  
Sessions Delivered 160

## YOUNG AT HEART

Unique Individuals Served: 110  
Total Meals Served: 1800+  
Participants taken on out of area trips: 100

# CAMBRIDGE MOVES FOR MENTAL HEALTH

SAVE THE DATE: Cambridge Moves for Mental Health is returning on May 3rd, 2025!

In April, many members of our community joined us at the second annual Cambridge Moves for Mental Health event. During this event, we encouraged participants to walk, roll, run, or move in any other way which brings them joy for up to 5KM to raise awareness and donations for inclusive & accessible mental health services in our community.



We would like to thank everyone who participated. Thanks to you, we raised over \$16,500, and over 120 people joined us on our walk to raise awareness and fight the stigma around mental health.

## Media Coverage:

CTV News Kitchener, [Cambridge Moves for Mental Health draws dozens in spite of weather, Apr 27, 2024](#)

Waterloo Region Record, [Porchlight to get Cambridge moving to support mental health, Apr 16, 2024](#)

Cambridge Today, [Cambridge Moves for Mental Health hopes to raise \\$25K, Apr 16, 2024](#)



# ADDICTION PROGRAMS UPDATE

Throughout the 2023-24 year, Porchlight continued to operate and expand its Addiction Services as needs continued to grow within our community.

This year, we celebrated a significant milestone when, in March of 2024, we had the highest-ever number of residents concurrently in our homes – 19. This was possible thanks to the recent relocation of our women’s home, Ancora House, to a new and larger building. The expanded space allowed us to increase the number of residents at Ancora House from six to ten, and offers improved facilities - including areas for study, private counselling sessions, and family visits. Leaving our old neighborhood was difficult, as we had built a supportive community there, however, we are hopeful we can foster the same compassion and respect in our new neighbourhood.



Our men’s home continues to thrive with on-site counselling and group support, aided by parishioners from Wanner Mennonite Church and 12-step community volunteers. Inclusion in Wanner’s community events helps our men build a sense of belonging and self-respect. This year, our garden produced an abundance of tomatoes, peppers, and other vegetables. Residents actively participated in gardening, allowing us to freeze and share the produce.

In total this year, Porchlight’s addiction recovery homes housed 32 unique individuals. Despite the increased capacity, this is a reduction from 34 individuals in the 2022-23 year – primarily due to increases in average stay length caused by the difficulty in finding safe housing to transition into. 14 individuals transitioned out of our homes this year, 13 of whom had no permanent housing after completing addiction treatment programs, and all but one of whom were housed when they left our recovery homes.

We are incredibly grateful to those who supported us financially and with donations

# ADDICTION PROGRAMS UPDATE (CONT'D)

throughout this year – especially as we furnished the new women’s home. We want to particularly thank Wanner Mennonite Church for their donation of beds for the home, and Preston Mennonite Church who have been providing home-made quilts which our residents cherish. We also want to mention our appreciation of Christie Myers and Erin Moraghan who have been supporting our residents for several years through the LiteThrive program but are now closing their facility. Your contributions are appreciated and will be missed.

Our addiction programming also consists of recovery support groups, individual addiction treatment planning, and counselling. One of our avenues to aid in building self-esteem and learning life skills is through our Social Enterprise “Harvesting Hope” where our lead volunteer, Randy Novak, continues to work with our residents at Wesley United Church to make meat pies, butter tarts and jams to sell at the Cambridge Market. In addition to learning to bake from scratch, safe food handling, and gaining certifications assists with future employment opportunities. Our residents also help to serve and prepare lunches for the Retired Teachers Luncheons and the monthly Community Senior Luncheons hosted by Wesley.

Many of our residents also further their education through YWCA Cambridge’s Small Steps for Success program or by attending college or University classes. Still others others will enter apprentice programming.

In light of recent policy changes within Ontario, we feel it is necessary to highlight that, while our recovery homes operate under an abstinence-based model which does not provide safe consumption or harm reduction services, we support harm reduction services in our community. We view those who provide these services as integral partners in the continuum of care.

Addiction is a chronic illness and we know that individual journeys do not end when residents leave our homes. That is why we have alumni options for; accessing our addiction groups, connecting with our counselling services, primary care, follow-up with peer workers and the possibility of returning to our homes if a relapse occurs. We provide an opportunity for change and are grateful to all of you who provide supports, from our neighbours, volunteers, community partners, and alumni.

# THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS & PARTNERS



Community Fund  
The Savvas & Lenia Chamberlain Fund



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CAMBRIDGE  
NORTH DUMFRIES

OHT

Rotary  
Cambridge Preston-Hespeler



Ontario



The TOWNSHIP of  
NORTH DUMFRIES



Employment and  
Social Development Canada



The Essentials  
Fund



United Way  
Waterloo Region  
Communities



House of  
Friendship



WATERLOO REGION  
Community  
Foundation



Upstream  
Fund

Cambridge Centre Honda • ibowl.ca Family Fun Center • Halo Hair Studio • Catering By Suzanne • Play with Clay Cambridge • Freshco Delta Centre - Cambridge • Sobeys Cambridge • Food Basics - Cambridge • Island Flavours Carribean

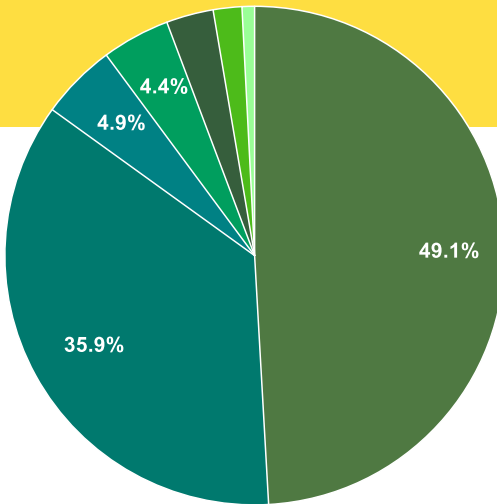
Support  
Porchlight  
Today:



Porchlight also relies on large & small donations from individuals in our community.

# 2023-24 FINANCIALS

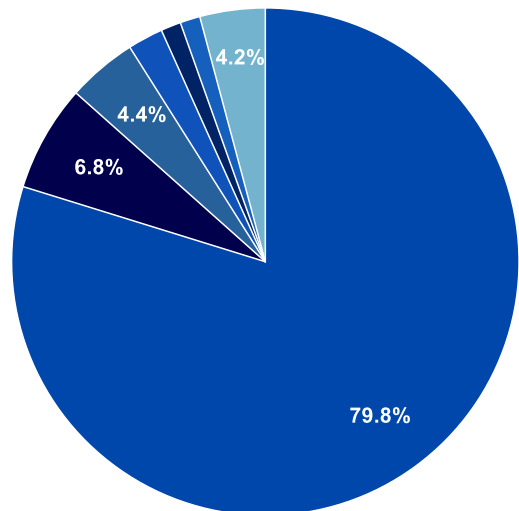
Total Income: \$2,468,896



- Grants  
\$1,212,350
- Government & related services  
\$885,111
- Housing rental & related  
\$121,455
- Donations & fundraising  
\$108,815
- Client fees  
\$75,434
- Interest  
\$45,731
- Loan forgiveness  
\$20,000

Total Expenses: \$2,099,306

- Salaries & benefits  
\$1,674,898
- Program Supplies  
\$142,728
- Rent, utilities & property taxes  
\$93,304
- Subcontract  
\$47,295
- Professional fees  
\$26,890
- Memberships & subscriptions  
\$26,811
- Other (9 items)  
\$87,380





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