

# PORCHLIGHT IMPACT REPORT 2025–26

## Building Stability

People, places, and partnerships making room for recovery,  
connection and possibility in Cambridge and North Dumfries.

APRIL 1, 2025 – MARCH 31, 2026



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This report primarily covers the period of April 1 2025 - March 31 2026. All figures and information cover that time unless otherwise stated.



# The land and our responsibility

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Porchlight acknowledges that our organization operates on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Neutral, and Mississauga First Nations, 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 to the Haudenosaunee. This agreement has never been fully honoured and remains part of ongoing disputes.

The history that has led to us residing on this land is inseparable from colonialism and the pain it has caused. As a counselling and addiction services organization, we recognize that understanding past and present harms is essential to healing for individuals and communities.

Reconciliation requires humility, accountability and meaningful action. Porchlight commits to learning, building relationships with Indigenous communities, supporting Indigenous-led initiatives and incorporating Indigenous perspectives into our practices.

# A MESSAGE FROM PORCHLIGHT

A year of growth, difficult choices, and community care

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## 2025-26

As leaders of Porchlight, one of the comments we hear most often throughout this community is that “Porchlight staff are so kind.” It is a lovely thing to hear, but it also speaks to something deeper. When someone comes to us for counselling, a place to stay warm, support in recovery, or a chance to connect with others, they build a relationship with a person at Porchlight. And that relationship can often make it easier to take the next step in whatever care journey they are on.

Throughout 2025-26, our staff brought that care to people through our counselling, addiction, housing, homelessness, and community programming. At our seasonal peak, Porchlight has nearly 50 staff members. Their work is strengthened by the partners, networks, and collaboratives around us, including Engage Rural, the Counselling Collaborative of Waterloo Region, and the Cambridge North Dumfries Ontario Health Team. Together, we can respond to needs that no single program or organization can meet alone.

This year saw us operate a winter warming centre for the second consecutive year, build dedicated counselling capacity for neurodivergent and 2SLGBTQ+ youth, and establish our full Ending Veteran’s Homelessness team. We also continued to see the importance of connection in our addiction recovery homes. Residents are working toward their own goals while also contributing to the community through Harvesting Hope, events, and meals for seniors. These are different services, but each can help someone find greater stability and a stronger sense of belonging.



# A MESSAGE FROM PORCHLIGHT

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Amidst everything that was accomplished this year, there were also difficult choices. Funding for counselling often falls short of what it costs to provide the service. Without sustainable funding, we decided not to return to local schools with Taming the Dragon. We know the value of that program and putting it on the shelf was painful. The decision reminded us that caring deeply about a service is not, by itself, enough to keep it available. We must be able to support the people and practices that make good care possible.

That responsibility also shapes how we look ahead. This year, we worked with community members and partners to reimagine recovery-supportive housing and explore how homes, programming, and community support could grow together to create more opportunities for people to build stability, connection, and a future. We'd like to thank CMHC and the National Housing Solutions Lab for their support in this work.

Since the close of this reporting year, we have also completed accreditation with the Canadian Centre for Accreditation and begun offering Grief Walks for frontline workers in the housing and homelessness sector. Both developments reflect our commitment to listening, learning, and strengthening our work.

To our staff, clients, residents, volunteers, funding and community partners, donors, and supporters: thank you. The kindness people encounter at Porchlight is made possible by your work, trust, and generosity. We are grateful to be building what comes next with you.



Cameron Dearlove  
Executive Director



Douglas Bartholomew-Saunders  
Chair, Board of Directors

# ABOUT PORCHLIGHT

Many programs, a single purpose

Since 1940, Porchlight has been providing accessible mental health services in Cambridge, North Dumfries, and beyond. Informed by our vision, mission, and values, today, we offer services related to Counselling, Addiction Recovery, Housing, Homelessness, and Community Programming.

## 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



# LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Leadership that reflects our community

## 2025-26 Board of Directors

Porchlight is a registered charity overseen by a volunteer board of directors. In 2025-26 those directors were:

**President/Chair**

**Douglas Bartholomew-Saunders**

**Members**

**Janet Jones**

**Vice Presidents**

**Sherri Tyron-Hughes**

**Anne Tinker**

**Jessica Hill**

**Secretary**

**Ray Ward**

**Peter Morey**

## A BOARD THAT REFLECTS OUR COMMUNITY

Porchlight's Board is made up of people with diverse experiences, lived expertise, and strong connections to Cambridge, North Dumfries and the broader Waterloo Region. We value different perspectives and believe that a strong Board is one that reflects the community it serves.

## JOIN OUR BOARD

We are always open to have conversations about future membership on our board. Reach out to [info@porchlightcnd.org](mailto:info@porchlightcnd.org) any time to begin a discussion.

# COUNSELLING SERVICES

A range of ways to seek support

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1,945

individuals supported

1,670

unique client counselling cases

For the 2025-26 fiscal year, Porchlight's Counselling Program continued to provide a safe, non-judgmental space for individuals facing a wide range of personal, emotional, and mental health challenges. Clients consistently shared that they valued having a trusted environment to discuss difficulties, explore solutions, and access support during challenging periods in their lives.

As community demand for counselling services continues to grow, balancing client needs with limited resources remains the program's primary challenge. Throughout the year, the team focused on maximizing the impact of available resources to ensure that support remained accessible to as many community members as possible.

The year also marked the retirement of long-serving employee and supervisor Sabina Santilli. Her many years of dedicated service exemplify the commitment, expertise, and institutional knowledge that strengthen Porchlight's work. We are grateful for her lasting contributions and the positive impact she has made on clients, colleagues, and the organization.



# NEW WAYS TO REACH FURTHER

Targeted support alongside general counselling

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## 2SLGBTQIA+ & NEURODIVERGENT YOUTH

This year, Porchlight introduced a therapist role focused on providing specialized support for 2SLGBTQIA+ and neurodivergent youth. This included one on one counselling sessions and expressive art labs.

## INTEGRATED SUPPORT AT YWCA SHELTER

Porchlight maintains an on-going presence at YWCA's Women's Shelter in Cambridge to provide mental health support to those experiencing homelessness. This includes counselling for on-going challenges and past trauma.

## COUNSELLING THROUGHOUT PORCHLIGHT PROJECTS

The Counselling team continues to provide support to participants in Porchlight's addiction recovery, Ending Veterans' Homelessness, Young at Heart, and other programs. Ensuring accessible mental health services are available to all our clients.



# TAMING THE DRAGON

A valued school program facing a funding shortfall

Anxiety is the number one mental health concern addressing youth in Canada today. For a number of years, Porchlight has run an in-school program for youth in grades 1-8 providing them with tools and techniques to help address this and other mental health challenges.

## A DIFFICULT DECISION

As the funding landscape for mental health programs changes, programs which were once sustainable sometimes become impossible to maintain.

Taming the Dragon has not had sustainable funding since 2024 and, during the last year, we have had to make the difficult decision to place the program on pause until long-term sustainable funding can be identified.

We would like to thank donors throughout the community who stepped forward to keep this program operating for as long it has. Hundreds more children were able to benefit from lessons that will serve them for life, thanks to you.





# YOUNG AT HEART

Food, Company, and a Friday Routine

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1,751

meals provided

90+

unique individuals served

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## MORE THAN LUNCH

In Ayr, Young at Heart brings people together for a weekly luncheon, activities, and conversation. A Friday meal becomes a reason to leave the house, meet neighbours and look forward to next week. Caregivers and grandchildren are welcome, and outings are organized when funding allows.

## WHAT IT TAKES TO KEEP IT GOING

Volunteers help make the Friday gathering possible. Occasional shortages have been a challenge, showing how much the program depends on sustained community participation.



# ADDICTION SERVICES

Groups, practical support, and a path to treatment

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Porchlight offers services throughout a person's addiction recovery journey. Whether someone is wondering what the process would look like, or accessing on-going support after years of success, we have programs that help with what comes next.

## 245

People accessed Porchlight's Addiction Services in 2025-26

### Treatment planning

Treatment planning helps people identify their next steps toward care and prepare for treatment. It is part of the support Porchlight provides beyond our supportive recovery homes.

### Recovery groups in Cambridge

Porchlight's primary relapse-prevention groups provide regular support in Cambridge. Alongside therapy and other community programming, they give people a place to return to throughout their recovery journey.

### Access in Ayr

Tuesday evening relapse-prevention sessions bring programming closer to rural participants, reducing travel barriers. One participant told the team: "I'm so glad I don't have to drive so far to get help."

# ADDICTION RECOVERY HOMES

Recovery Needs More Than a Bed

Porchlight's two Cambridge homes give those with a recent history with active addiction a safe place to live and continue the early months of their recovery.

19

beds across two homes

10 for women · 9 for men

58

unique people served

## MORE THAN ACCOMMODATION

Residents take part in recovery support while pursuing education, trades training, academic upgrading or the YWCA's Small Steps to Success program. They also navigate the personal work of rebuilding family relationships and trust. Childcare can remain a barrier to participation and employment.



# BUILDING FOR RECOVERY

A housing model taking shape

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Throughout 2025-26, Porchlight embarked on a major consultation & due diligence process, examining the possibility of constructing purpose-built addiction recovery homes on a site offered by Wanner Mennonite Church in Cambridge.

The Building for Recovery Lab received funding from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) under the NHS Solutions Labs, however, the views expressed are the personal views of the author and CMHC accepts no responsibility for them.



Guest House - Existing Recovery Home at Wanner Site

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# A WARM PLACE ON COLD NIGHTS

Overnight Warming Centre at Wesley United Church

From November through March, Porchlight operated an Overnight Winter Warming Centre at Wesley United Church. During this especially harsh winter, the centre gave people experiencing homelessness a low-barrier place to come inside.

6,382

visits from November  
through March

Full Capacity

Every Night

## WHEN THE COLD WAS MOST SEVERE

Staff often opened early so guests had a warm place to go and something hot to eat. The Centre operated over capacity every night, with several nights reaching 196% of its official capacity.

## WHEN THE SEASON ENDED

Porchlight and community partners provided tents, sleeping bags and other essentials to people facing the transition back outdoors.



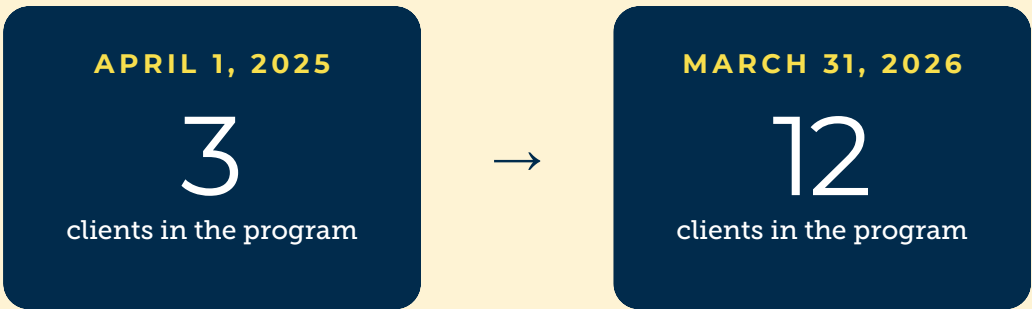


# ENDING VETERANS' HOMELESSNESS

Ending Veteran Homelessness Initiative

The Ending Veterans' Homelessness Initiative aims to ensure those who risked their safety to serve our country always have a safe place to live at home.

Finding housing is often a process, not a single appointment. The team helps veterans through the search and the practical steps around moving into a home while providing access to wrap-around services needed to rebuild stability.



# GRIEF WALKS

After the reporting year · April–July 2026

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## A LOW-BARRIER PLACE FOR REMEMBRANCE

Frontline workers supporting people experiencing homelessness often carry unprocessed grief and loss. In partnership with the Social Development Centre and the Plan to End Chronic Homelessness, Porchlight developed walks that made room to reflect, connect, and access counselling support when needed.

**60+**

people helped shape  
the program

**6**

grief walks

**~25**

attended a sacred fire

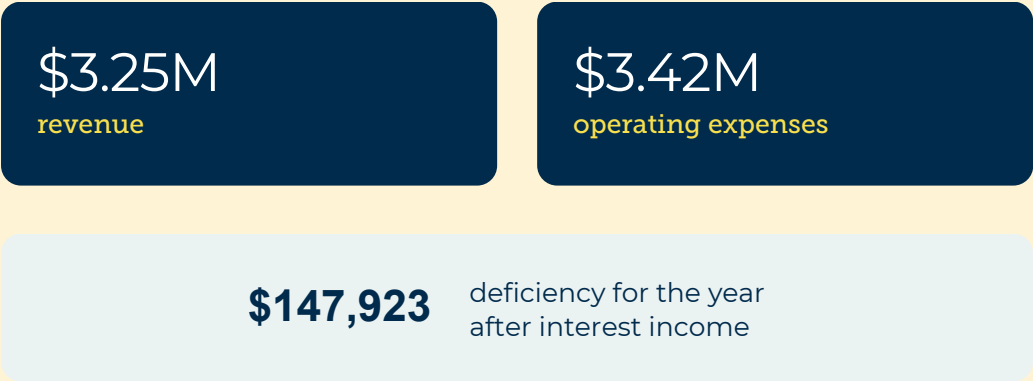
## WHAT WE LEARNED

More than 60 frontline workers and community members helped shape the initiative. Between April and July 2026, Porchlight hosted six walks and supported a sacred fire after a community member died. Early feedback suggests these small, relationship-based spaces matter.



# FINANCIAL PICTURE

Year ended March 31, 2026



## WHERE REVENUE CAME FROM



Revenue was \$3,253,521 against \$3,422,618 in operating expenses. Interest income of \$21,174 reduced the deficiency from \$169,097 before other income to \$147,923.

Figures are from the 2025-26 audited financial statements based on a qualified opinion from the auditor; see the complete statements for accounting details.

# HOW FUNDING WAS USED

Read with the full audited statements

\$3.42M

total operating expenses

71.3%

salaries and benefits

People make Porchlight’s services possible. Salaries and benefits accounted for just over seven in ten dollars of operating expenses.

## SALARIES AND BENEFITS

\$2,438,829

## OTHER OPERATING EXPENSES

|                                    |  |        |
|------------------------------------|--|--------|
| Rent, utilities and property taxes |  | \$340k |
| Program expenses                   |  | \$282k |
| Professional fees                  |  | \$118k |
| All remaining expense lines        |  | \$243k |

“Program expenses” is one accounting line, not the full cost of delivering programs. Staff and space costs are reported separately.

# PARTNERS IN THE WORK

Local relationships extend what each organization can do

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People do not experience counselling, housing, food and connection as separate systems. Partnerships help Porchlight respond to the whole person.

## ENGAGE RURAL

Working with rural partners helps Porchlight stay connected to needs and resources beyond the urban core.

## COUNSELLING COLLABORATIVE OF WATERLOO REGION

Counselling providers connect and coordinate around access to care across Waterloo Region.

## CAMBRIDGE NORTH DUMFRIES ONTARIO HEALTH TEAM

Health and community partners work together across Cambridge and North Dumfries.

These are examples of collaboratives and networks, not a complete list of 2025–26 partners.

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# WITH THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Funders, donors, and volunteers

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Every service described in this report depends on people and organizations willing to invest in accessible care.

## FUNDERS

Grants and service agreements support the staff, spaces, and practical resources behind programs.

## DONORS

Gifts help Porchlight respond where restricted funding cannot meet every need.

## VOLUNTEERS

Time, skills, and encouragement add warmth to homes, programs, and community events.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Shared spaces, referrals, and coordinated effort help people find support.

Our thanks extend to everyone whose support sustained this work during 2025-26.

# COMMUNITY SUPPORT IN ACTION

Giving, showing up, and staying connected

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Porchlight's work grows through the choices people make close to home: joining an event, making a gift, volunteering or telling a neighbour where support is available.

## A COMMUNITY THAT WALKS WITH US

Cambridge Moves for Mental Health brings neighbours together around accessible care. Participants turn a shared event into practical support for people seeking help.

### GIVE

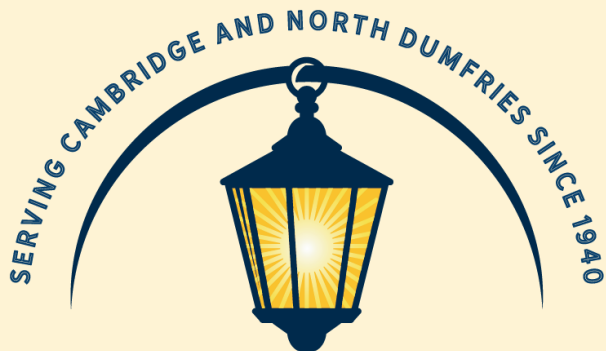
Support counselling, recovery, and community programs through a donation.

### GET INVOLVED

Volunteer, share an opportunity, or take part in a local gathering.

Find current ways to participate at [porchlightcnd.org](https://porchlightcnd.org).





# PORCHLIGHT

. COUNSELLING + ADDICTION SERVICES .



# Stability grows in community.

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Thank you for making room for care, recovery, and connection in  
Cambridge and North Dumfries.

[porchlightcnd.org](https://porchlightcnd.org)

