

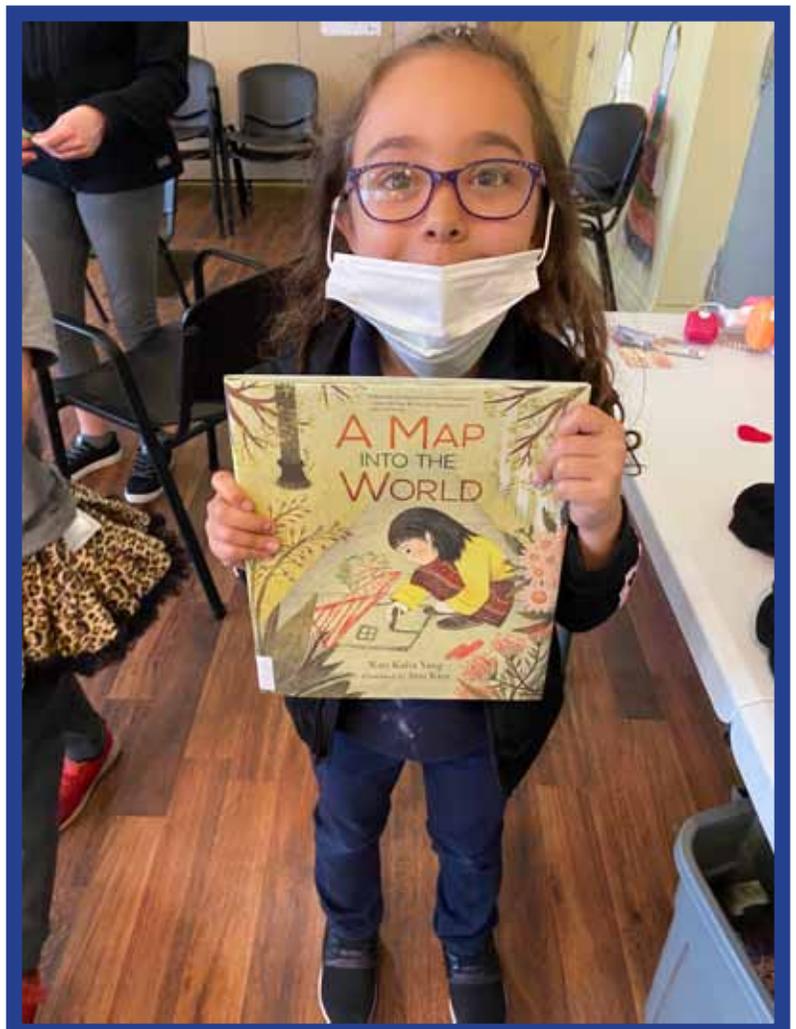
# Living WELL Together



Welcome Inn  
Community Centre

## Annual Report

April 2021 - March 2022



# Living WELL Together



## Welcome Inn's Vision

Welcome Inn is a dynamic community centre that dares to imagine that there is a different and more vibrant path forward for ALL members of our community. Together with the community, Welcome Inn works to alleviate poverty, loneliness and marginalization—challenges that our community members face on a daily basis—by offering supportive relationships, promoting wellness and providing capacity-building opportunities. Our five program areas include: Children's Programs, Seniors' Programs, Community Programs, Food Access Initiatives and Social Enterprise Initiatives. All five program areas are designed to improve the eight dimensions of wellness.



### The Wellness Areas

For us, it's not about creating another program; it's about empowering members of the community so that **ALL** might be **well**.

Welcome Inn promotes wellness in eight key areas >>>>



**Social:**  
Supported, connected, engaged



**Physical:**  
Healthy, safe, well-fed



**Occupational:**  
Purpose-driven, fulfilled, self-directed



**Financial:**  
Stable, interdependent, housed



**Intellectual:**  
Creative, articulate, skilled



**Emotional:**  
Self-aware, reflective, grounded

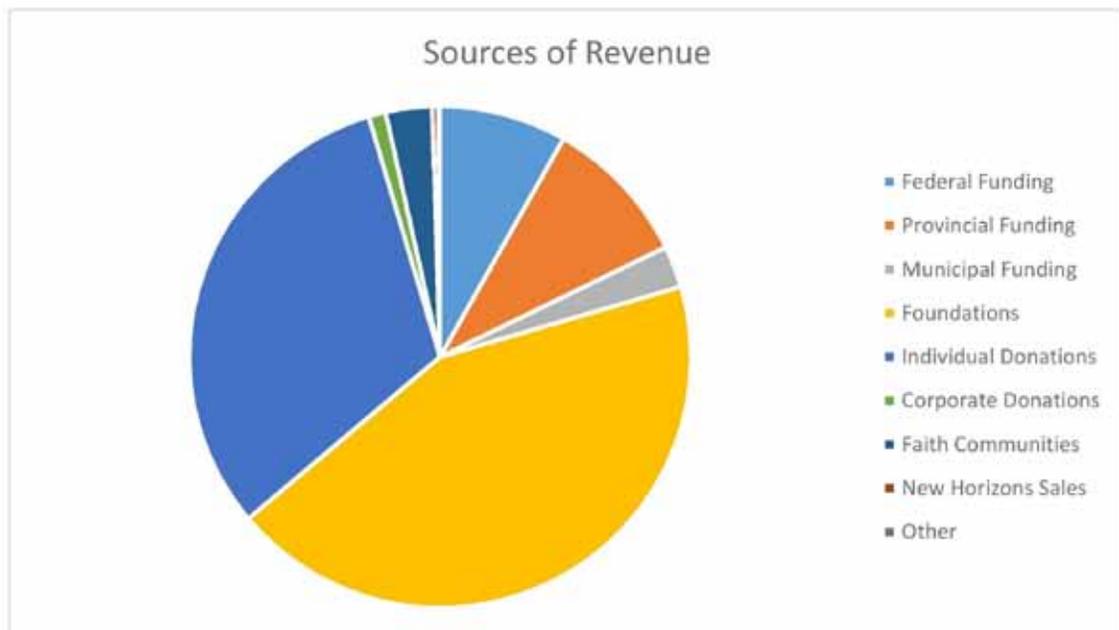
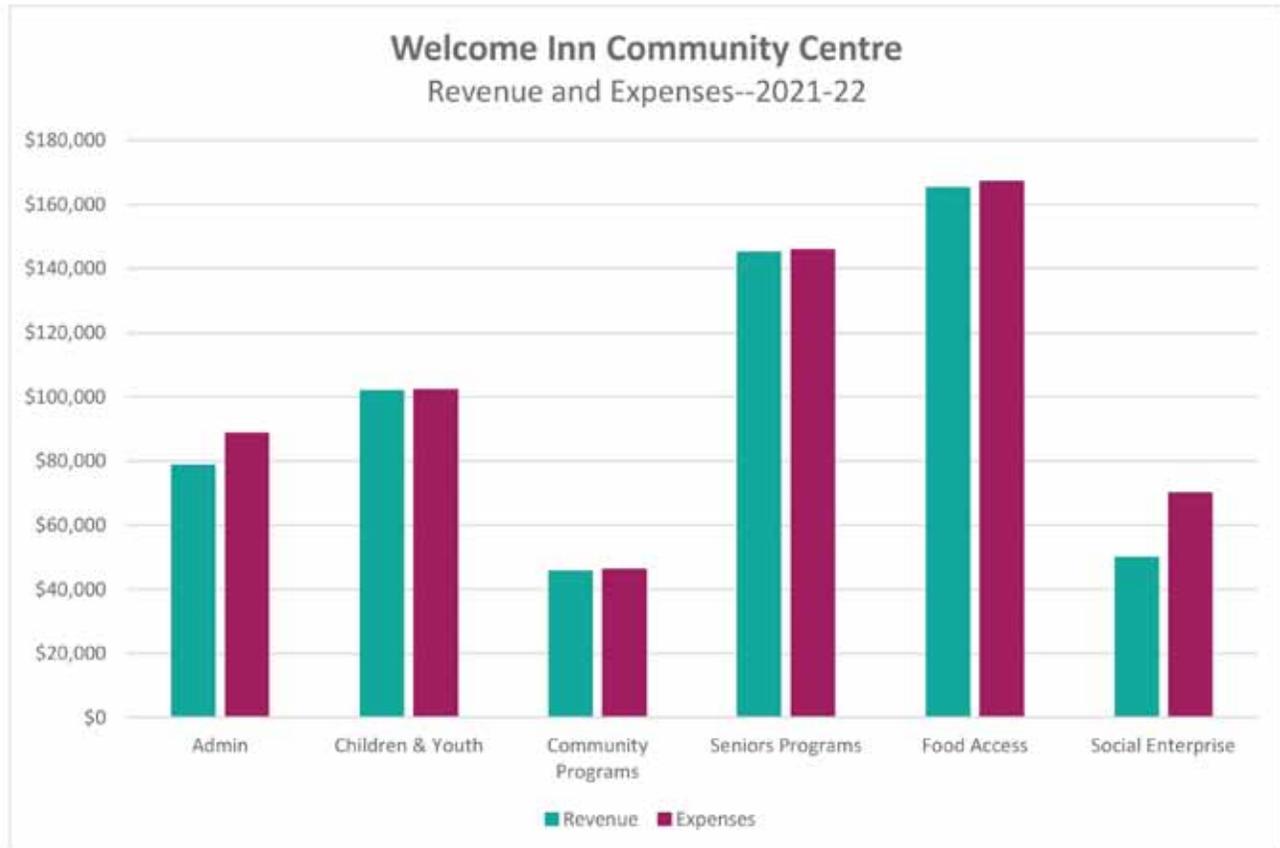


**Environmental:**  
Attentive, active, safe



**Spiritual:**  
Peaceful, mindful, compassionate

## Financial Report



## Children's Programs

Striving to create safe and inclusive spaces for children and youth to further their academics, practice their leadership skills and become more resilient . . .

### Learning and Fun Afterschool Program (LAF)

Children who struggled prior to the pandemic were disproportionately affected by the online environment, and they are now faced with the enormous task of catching up. Welcome Inn has completely refreshed LAF in response. Our mentors help identify gaps in learning and organize opportunities for social development. Far more creative energy has been put into craft-time! The newly designed curriculum, more importantly, now includes age-appropriate mental health activities.

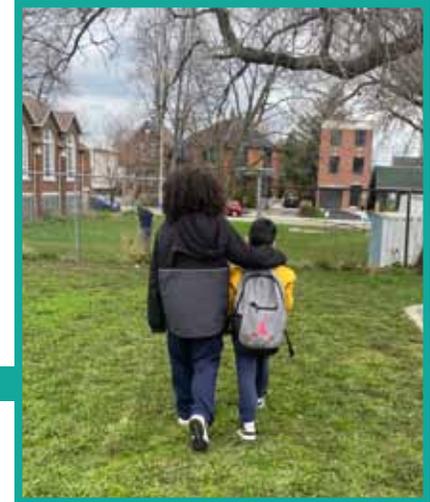


### Youth Resiliency Team

We are excited to launch our brand new Youth Resiliency Team in September. During the pandemic, Welcome Inn designed a new youth-empowerment program that will see youth learn more about mental health issues and create activities and initiatives that will be offered in local high schools, youth groups and our own LAF program. The Youth Resiliency Team is modeled on the Youth Mental Health and Addictions Champions Initiative Toolkit.

### Summer Day Camp

During the summer of 2021, we offered our summer day camp as a hybrid program. Smaller groups of children had the opportunity to be onsite for games and activities, and the rest of the camp day was filled with online games and virtual fun! In the summer of 2022, camp was back to normal.



23  
Enrolled  
in LAF

930  
Meals  
Provided

1584  
Volunteer  
Hours

49 Summer  
Camp Kids



## Seniors' Programs

Gathering together to reduce social isolation, offer peer support and encouragement, and improve overall wellness in the later years of life . . .

### Diner's Club

At the height of the pandemic, Welcome Inn transitioned away from our weekly Diner's Club and delivered food hampers and essential items to isolated seniors. Newsletters were sent out, and the visitation program grew by leaps and bounds. The seniors did miss the community, though, and they longed to be back with their Welcome Inn family. In September of 2021, when COVID protocols allowed, the seniors were welcomed back into the building!

*"I have been so lonely during the pandemic. Being with my friends on Tuesday's makes all the difference. I am starting to be happy again." --Welcome Inn Senior, 2021*

*"Tuesdays are the highlight of my week. Just knowing that I have plans to be with people I love, and we can enjoy a nice meal together, makes my whole week better." --Welcome Inn Senior, 2021*

### Community Visitation Program

Our volunteer-based visitation program was one of our most vital programs during the pandemic, and we grew it from just over 50 seniors to over 175 seniors. Volunteers and staff called seniors regularly, visited when they could, and tried to reduce the isolation experienced because of the pandemic. We are expanding the program to include a Life Navigation component that will help some seniors navigate the far more complex situations that they face, including housing advocacy, mental health supports and relationship development.



99 Diner's  
Club  
Participants

6195 Food  
Hampers  
Delivered

5579 One-on-  
One Support  
Visits

4995  
Volunteer  
Hours

## Food Bank

**Working toward justice for all, recognizing that access to nutritious food is a basic human right (and a great social connector) . . .**

The COVID pandemic and the high cost of living has heightened awareness about food insecurity, both locally and nationally. Food insecurity is a matter of systemic injustice, and the high cost of living has amplified the problem for all those already living with poverty. Visits to our food bank have risen steeply from 11,000 annually before the pandemic to 19,216 visits in the past year.

At Welcome Inn, the food bank is connected to the other programs that we offer at our community centre—programs like support groups for recent immigrants to Canada, telephone and porch visits for socially isolated seniors, and afterschool programs (that are now back onsite) for children struggling with their academic work. The nutritious and culturally sensitive foods that are distributed at the food bank are part of a much larger series of community development initiatives, and the food bank is central to the referral services we offer to our community members.

As part of our pandemic response, we reached out to some of the most vulnerable communities in Hamilton (LGBTQ+, sex workers and homeless individuals) and temporarily added a barrier-free day of operations on Tuesdays. More significantly, we added a grab-and-go hamper service, together with an appointment system, to our more traditional food bank model. Our goal is to remove as many barriers as possible!



**19,216 Visits  
to the Food  
Bank**

**57,648 Days  
of Food  
Provided**

**3,589 Unique  
Individuals  
Served**

**2582  
Volunteer  
Hours**

## Community Programs

Aiming to provide quality community programs, accessible to everyone, improving financial stability, access to technology and more . . .

### Tax Clinics

Welcome Inn has ramped up its efforts and is now completely 160 tax returns with community members each year. We have added translation services, and 82 of these returns involved recent immigrants.

### Referral Services and More

Connected to our food bank is a robust referral service that ensures community members are aware of services throughout the city and have access to free menstrual products, transit passes and more.

160 Tax  
Returns Filed

Hundreds  
of Direct  
Referrals



## Supports for Recent Immigrants

Two languages at our community centre—Arabic and Spanish—are almost as common as English. Translation services are now available at our food bank and tax clinics.

### Peer-to-Peer Support Groups

Welcome Inn has hired two new part-time staff to lead these support groups based on their own lived experience. Recent immigrants have been enjoying picnics in the park, exploring local swimming pools and visiting other great places around the city. Social connection and peer support is a major part of the settlement process.

### ESL Conversation Circles

This year, we have launched brand new ESL conversation circles for those looking to deepen their comprehension of the English language. People gather together, all with different languages of origin, to converse more comfortably with one another and read more effectively.

### Settlement Supports

Connecting with our staff, community members are offered assistance with paper work, support throughout the citizenship process and referrals to organizations like the Immigrant Working Centre. These support services are uniquely catered to the individuals and the families involved.



2 P2P  
Support  
Groups

70 Direct  
Supports  
Offered

# Living WELL Together



## MEET THE TEAM 🖐️ Staff, Partners & Volunteers

With a passion for community development, our staff and Board of Directors propel us forward

### Our Core Staff Team

James VanderBerg,  
*Executive Director*



Ruth Kaulback  
*Seniors Program & Volunteer Coordinator*



Kari Dengerink  
*Seniors Visitation Manager*



Krista Rao  
*Community Programs Coordinator*



Barb Brow  
*Food Bank Manager*



Michelle Urbanek  
*Children's Program Coordinator*



### Board of Directors

Tom Geiger, *Chair of the Board*

Leah Schwenger, *Vice Chair*

David Dutchak, *Treasurer*

Joanne Roth

Peggy Savage

Carolynn Reid

Harvey Bremer

9993  
Volunteer  
Hours

208  
Volunteers

7 Core Staff

28 Partners

Our community development efforts would be nothing without the leadership of our dedicated staff team, the financial support of our various partners and the significant commitment of our volunteers.

