



Annual Report

2024-2025



Welcome Inn
Community Centre



KRISTINA SANTONE
Executive Director

A Note from the Board Chair

It is hard to believe that it's almost Welcome Inn's 60th anniversary. What started out as a vision to support those in need in Hamilton's north end has grown into a multi-program hub that supports those from young to old, from those who just moved in to those that have lived here all their lives.

Welcome Inn could not operate without our incredible staff who are dedicated to serving the community. They are the heartbeat, compassion, and energy that keeps our non-profit running.

I'd also like to thank our board members who give of their time and energy. It is a privilege to work with such a deeply caring and action-oriented team of staff and board.

--Tom Geiger

With Gratitude

At Welcome Inn, generosity is at the heart of everything we do. This past year has been a powerful reminder that community care is not just an idea, it's an action, lived out daily by our volunteers, neighbours, and supporters.

We've witnessed remarkable generosity in so many forms: a senior who attends our Diners Club program helping a newcomer navigate the food bank for the first time; retirees stepping in to mentor and support children in our after-school program when needed; local businesses stepping up during the holidays so we can continue to spread joy, offer vital services, and provide care during what is often a stressful and sometimes isolating season. Each of these moments, though seemingly small, helps lay the foundation for a strong, connected, and deeply compassionate community.

Our volunteers have given thousands of hours with open hearts. Their commitment has allowed us to stretch every dollar further, reach more people, and meet needs that often go unseen. Our donors and supporters have stood with us, trusting us to be stewards of their generosity and hope.

Welcome Inn is more than a place, it's a community of people who believe that everyone belongs and everyone has something to give. Thank you for being part of this work. Together, we are building a more caring and connected neighbourhood, one generous act at a time, as we strive toward our shared vision of Living Well Together.

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.

Staff Corner: THE REST OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM



JAMIE VANDERBERG
Fund Development



CHRISTIANE CAIN
Financial Administrator

Together with the Community . . .



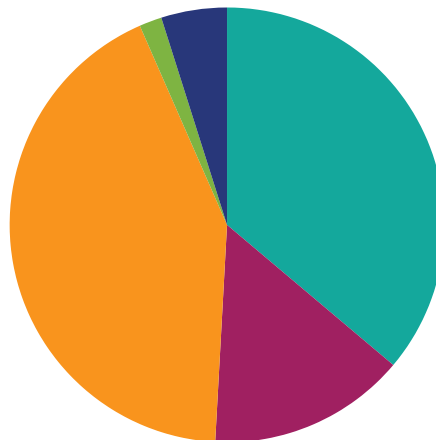
465 volunteers 

24,536  hours

Our volunteers make all the difference!!

Here's how their hours are split between our programs:

- Children's Programs
- Seniors' Programs
- Food Bank
- Community Programs
- Administration



Board Members in 2024/2025

Tom Geiger, Chair
Leah Schwenger, Vice-Chair
David Dutchak, Treasurer
Joanne Roth, Secretary
Peggy Savage, Member
Harvey Bremer, Member
Gladys Flores, Member
Dale McDonald, Member
Lyndsy Baillie, Member
Doug Sider, Member



Welcome Inn would like to acknowledge and celebrate all 465 volunteers that have given so much of their time to support our community. Our community-focussed work has been going strong all year, and we could not have done it without them! Together, they have amplified the efforts of our staff team.



Seniors Programs

2948 meals served

3495 visits made, up from 3079

756 Life Navigation sessions



For more than 10 years, Doug has been a member of the Seniors Diners Club. Doug lives alone in a small apartment, and he makes the trek out to Welcome Inn every Tuesday. He loves spending time with the friends he has made at the Diners Club. Many of them get together outside of Welcome Inn on a regular basis. He is a much loved part of the community!

Who is Doug? Well, there's no better way to describe him than to say that he loves adventures. He is the guy who climbs up a waterfall using his walker and needs to be rescued by emergency services. He is the guy who rides the bus in the early days of COVID, simply because it was free and wanted to go exploring. Nothing holds him

back--he's up for anything!

Over the years, Doug's health challenges have increased, and he became a member of our Visitation Program. He was matched with Al, another senior who also attends the Diners Club, but volunteers with the Visitation Program.

Al's support for Doug is very hands-on. The support takes the form of hospital visits, advocacy for the right home supports, problem solving tenant issues, and furniture shopping. The friendship means a lot to both men.

This past spring, Al shared that he finds volunteering very rewarding. He enjoys his interactions and likes learning new skills through our volunteer training sessions.

Relationships like these lie at the heart of our seniors' programs, and Doug and Al's story is one of many!



Staff Corner: THE SENIORS' PROGRAMS TEAM



RUTH KAULBACK
Seniors' Program &
Volunteer Coordinator



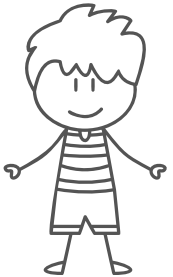
KARI DENGERRINK
Community Visitation
Manager

Children's Programs



70
LAF
participants

378
summer
camp
registrants



Over the past year, the Learning and Fun program (LAF) has had an amazing time fostering growth and instilling excitement! The children have reflected on what makes them unique and made self-portraits to hang on the wall. For Black History Month, they learned about Matthew Henson, the first person to step foot on the North Pole. They also competed in a tower building challenge--an activity focused on improving financial literacy. The children had \$5 to buy items to build the tallest tower they could.

At LAF and at summer camp, our mentors have been forming strong bonds with the children, and they've been supporting them through some difficult moments, like fear of deportation, bullying, parent illness, and broken relationships. The goal of both programs is to provide academic and social support, while providing meaningful relationships with supportive adults.

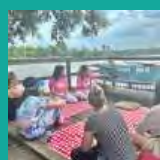
"What I'll remember most from this summer are my experiences working with special needs, newcomer, and ESL kids. I hope to take what I learned with the Welcome Inn and leverage it into a career in paediatric medicine. If I'm lucky, I'll get to do exactly what I did at the Welcome Inn for as long as I live: take care of, educate, and organize around the welfare of children, their families, and their communities."

--**Rasheed Ahmad**
Camp Counsellor

Staff Corner: THE CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS TEAM



MICHELLE URBANEK
Children's Program
Coordinator



CANADA SUMMER JOB
Student Employees

Food Bank

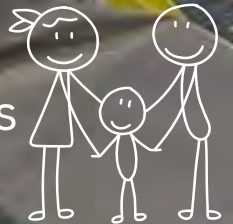
38,625 visits

10,443
volunteer hours

481,812
pounds of food
distributed

9,163

unique
individuals
served



Staff Corner: THE FOOD BANK TEAM



KRISTA RAO
Food Bank Coordinator

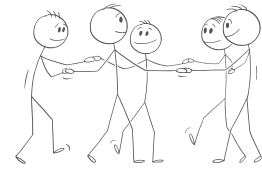


BARB BROW
Food Bank Manager

Supports for Recent Immigrants



219 peer support
group
participants, up
from 98



540
direct
supports

parenting
sessions

36



“My family and I first visited Welcome Inn four months ago. We had just arrived from Cuba. We immediately felt the warmth and care from the settlement support team. Yaima took the time to help us learn all parts of our immigration process, taught us how to use the bank, how to rent an apartment and helped us register our children in school. It meant so much that we could have a real conversation in Spanish

and ask questions that Yaima said she had when she first arrived.

Shortly after our first visit, my husband and I started to volunteer in the food bank. This was a time that we could forget some of our worries, work with others, share our care and compassion and treat people with dignity. It gave us the opportunity to contribute and give back to the community. Volunteering helped us to know about

Canadian society and how to be included. We felt useful and very welcome--a feeling we thought we would never find leaving our home.

I joined the women's Spanish peer-to-peer support group.



This group has helped me so much in my transition to Canada. Knowing that I have a group of women supporting me has helped me to not feel lonely or depressed. This group has helped me focus on the future and solve the problems of the present.”

--Family Noda Rodriguez

Staff Corner: THE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS TEAM



KRISTA RAO
Community Programs
Coordinator



YAIMA FROSSEARD
Community Programs
Staff



AHMAD ALBADDAAH
Community Programs
Staff

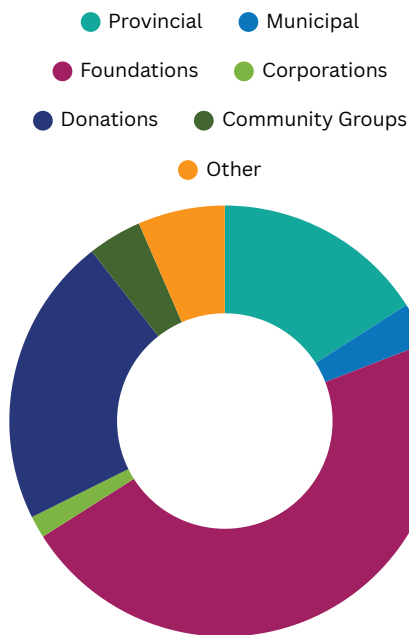
Our Partners and Supporters



Additional Foundations:

- Allen and Milli Gould Family Foundation
- Bernard and Johnson Fund
- Edith H. Turner Foundation
- Foundation for Human Development
- Karen & Peter Turkstra Family Foundation
- Bob & Peggy Savage Foundation
- Mayberry Family Fund
- McCallum, McBride Fund
- Ontario Endowment for Children & Youth in Recreation
- Turkstra Lumber Foundation

A Picture of Generosity



\$609,704

total revenue from grants, foundations, and donations

\$1,989,884

value of food donated to the food bank

\$598,678

total donated by our volunteers, if we would have paid them for all their work!

Partner Profile: The Allen and Milli Gould Family Foundation

“The Gould Family opened our store Milli in Hamilton in 1964 and since its inception, twenty years later, The Allen and Milli Gould Family Foundation has been committed to empowering women, promoting the education and mental well being of children and youth, and supporting economic opportunities in under-served areas of our community.

Welcome Inn is a beacon of light and hope for many people in the north end of Hamilton and we are proud to continue our partnership with Kristina and her team by providing funding for their after school program.”

Ways to Give

- Donate to Welcome Inn at www.canadahelps.com;
- Consider becoming a monthly donor, helping ensure consistent support throughout the year;
- Volunteer with us, because our organization is volunteer-driven and community-focussed!

Charitable # 107690992RR0001