



2024-2025

ANNUAL REPORT

A YEAR OF PROGRESS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	2
OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS	4
OUR CORE TEAM	5
OUR STAFF – ADULT SERVICES	6
OUR STAFF – YOUTH SERVICES	7
OUR VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS	8
WHO WE ARE	9
A NEW HOME	12
OUR PROGRAMS	13
ACCESS TO HOME	13
DIRECT ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAM	13
ENDING THE CYCLE	15
FAIR CHANCES	16
HOME AGAIN	17
HYPE	18
HYPE +	18
MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTIONS PEER SUPPORT	19
MINDSET	20
PARTNER ASSAULT RESPONSE PROGRAM	21
REINTEGRATION SUPPORT SERVICES FOR ADULTS	22
RESET	23
SERVICE NAVIGATOR PROGRAM	24
YOUTH OUTREACH PROGRAM	25
YOUTH REINTEGRATION PROGRAM	26
FINANCIAL REPORT	27
OUR FUNDERS	28

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As we close out the 2024-2025 fiscal year, we are filled with gratitude and pride for what we have accomplished together. It is our pleasure to highlight the remarkable progress that the team at the John Howard Society of York Region has made over the last 12 months. This past year has been one of growth, meaningful impact, and exciting adventures – and we have truly transformed how we show up for our community.

Our word of the year was “**Progress**”, and this was the driving factor in everything we did this year. We worked to deepen our relationships with community partners and stakeholders through joint programming and working together to make change. We streamlined operational processes so we could spend more time

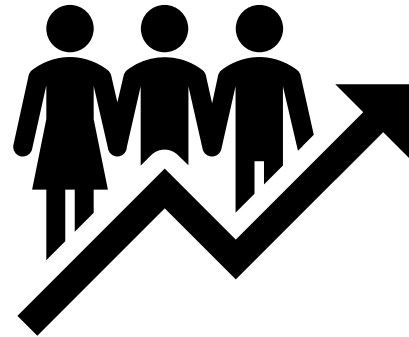
supporting each other. We strengthened our commitment to our community by continuing to advocate for those most vulnerable.

This year marked a major turning point for our organization with the purchase of our own building at **70 Main Street South, Newmarket**. Our new office space represents an exciting step forward in our ability to serve the community. With larger meeting rooms, dedicated areas for programming, two kitchens to prepare community meals, and a centralized location, the

space will allow us to expand our capacity and offer more services, host larger and more diverse programs, and better support the individuals and families who rely on us. It creates a welcoming environment for collaboration, drop-in support, and outreach, while also giving our team the room and resources needed to grow. This new location strengthens our foundation and opens new opportunities to deepen our impact across the region.

Our board, staff, and volunteers have remained deeply committed to the values and mission of JHSYR and have shown extraordinary dedication throughout the year. We owe them gratitude for continuing to be an essential part of this journey.

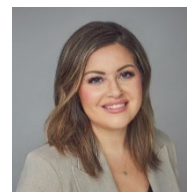
This coming year marks the 15th anniversary of the John Howard Society of York Region. Since our official incorporation in 2010, we have come a long way, and we are proud of the growth and progress we have achieved. As we celebrate this milestone, we remain deeply committed to our community and look forward to building on our impact for the next 15 years and beyond.



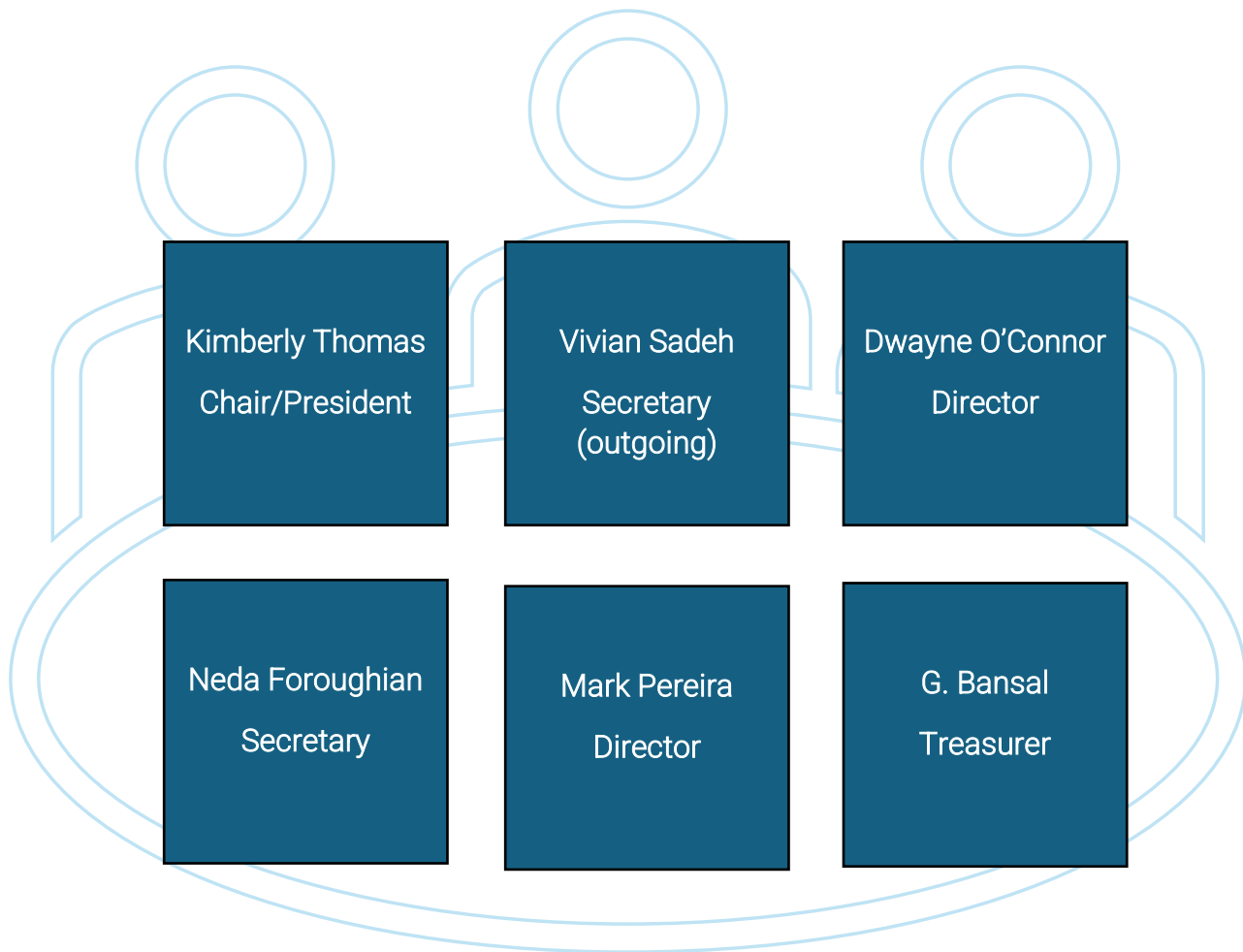
Kimberly Thomas
Board Chair



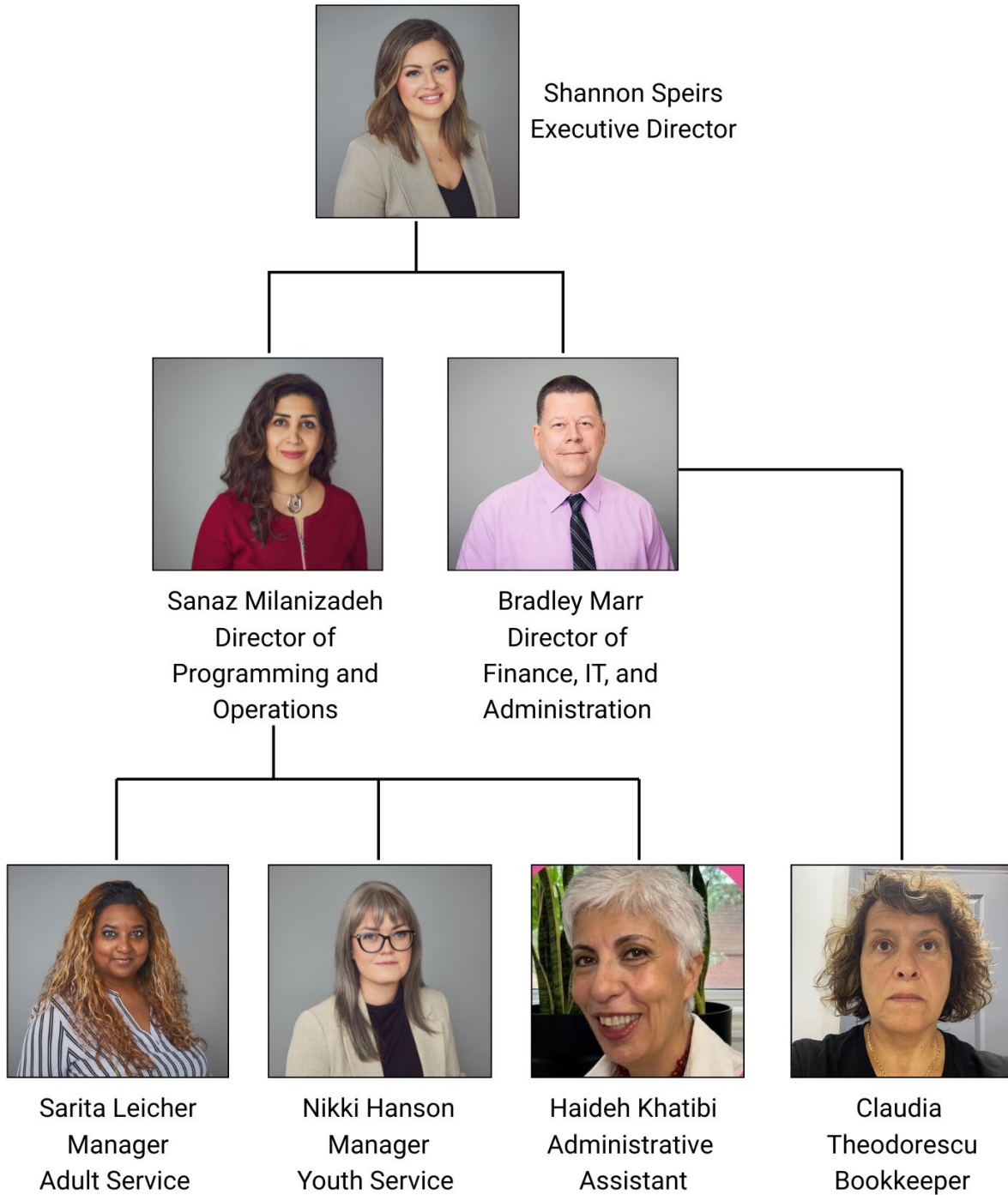
Shannon Speirs
Executive Director



OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



OUR CORE TEAM



OUR STAFF – ADULT SERVICES

Alexander Blake

Anishar Nakimera

Chandlar Chambers-
Jones

Christine Sherlock

David Blow

Erika Pascoal

Erin Brandson

Giselle

Palomo

Habibullah

Shinwary

Huggo

Teixeira

Izzie Jones

Jamie Hayashi

Jessica Seron

Josh Kirstein

Karlee Howe



Karyn Tam

Laura Foster

Malavikka Sinnarasa

Maryam Eslahi

Megan Dalrymple

Michael Neblett

Michael Wahbi

Monique Brent



Narmin Halabchi

Osato Lawani

Rain Chan

Readeat Kerie

Shannon Van Der Valk

Shawna di Nardo

Tariq Aziz

Tim Pennock

Ushani Umachandran

Zoey Ellis



OUR STAFF – YOUTH SERVICES

Amanda O'Hara

Arielle Boshi

Carrie Castaldi

Cheryl Martin

David Patrick

Haley Aldred

Irene Tse

Kenzie Wass

MaKayla Pelekis

Priya Singh

Sara Lockerbie



OUR VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS

Brooke Shuval

Coco Wang

Emily Campbell

Emma Dennies

Francis Gaffney

Halima Abdillahi

Kiana Namdarpour

Lydia Kobusingyenamukasa

Marino Mazzotta

Meher Plahay

Najiba Mukoya

Sanjana Parmar

Solmaz Dehghan

Tamara Nickie

Victoria Nicastro



WHO WE ARE

Working together with other John Howard Society local offices in Ontario and our community partners, we deliver more than 80 evidence-based programs focused on prevention, intervention, and re-integration.

Our services cover a wide range of programs aimed at youth and adults who are facing challenges and difficulties. Our youth-oriented programs aim to assist them in developing life skills to help them realize their full potential. We also help families navigate issues of criminal justice and provide support for those leaving incarceration so they can become a valued member of their communities and contribute to their community in a meaningful way.

Our experienced staff remain current with community needs and societal trends and can quickly respond to client needs and effect sustainable and meaningful change in our clients' lives.

It is a living system of accountability, correction and growth that must work for the communities and individuals it touches. We believe that when our responses to crime are truly effective, they cost society less and provide us with more. When they are just, they create safer communities. And when they are humane, they reflect the potential everyone has for a better future.



Our priorities are focused on

- ◆ Creating a framework to guide program design, development, and delivery in each service area.
- ◆ Respectfully support and champion the human rights of our clients, and deliver on our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.
- ◆ Treat each person with dignity and respect in a non-judgmental manner.
- ◆ Support our clients to change and grow, to make informed decisions, and to have the agency act on their own behalf.

Whether with policy or programming, advocacy, or service delivery, we strive for supporting and promoting human justice in Ontario.

VISION

- ◆ Providing our community with the opportunity to thrive through continued improvement, second chances, and fostering connections.
- ◆ Promoting systemic change through the creation of safe spaces that are responsive, innovative, and inclusive.



MISSION

1. Commitment to Reducing Harm

We strive to reduce harm by building a community of awareness around stigma and nonjudgmental approaches to care.

2. Fostering Community Connections

We believe that the strength of our community lies in strong connections with one another; we seek to elevate agencies committed to inclusion and empowerment and expand program development through enhanced relationships.

3. Person-Centered Care

We are committed to acknowledging the value of every individual and implementing opportunities that contribute to their success.

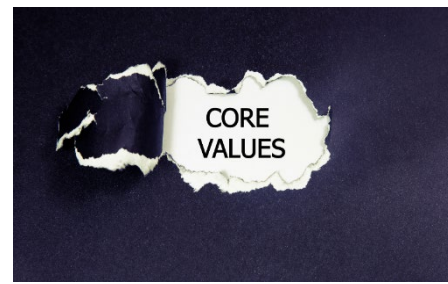
4. Commitment to Change

We empower our community through the elevation of skills and knowledge. We are dedicated to investing in their stories and being responsive to their needs.

VALUE STATEMENT

1. Commitment to Integrity

We commit to serving our community in a way that is fair and unbiased, promoting dignity and respect with the highest quality of service through evidence-based approaches.



2. Belief in the People We Serve

We recognize and celebrate the intrinsic worth in everyone and are dedicated to a culture of mutual respect and belonging.

3. Accountability and Compassion

We lead with compassion and care for one another, striving to foster accountability through recognizing strengths and promoting positive change.

4. Continuous Learning

We grow through our successes and learn from our evaluations; we are dedicated to listening to our community and responding through informed approaches.

A NEW HOME

This year, we proudly purchased 70 Main Street South in Newmarket, which is a significant milestone in the growth of the John Howard Society of York Region.

The journey to get there was not easy! Working tirelessly behind the scenes for months prior to our closing date, our Board and our leadership staff navigated challenges, negotiated critical details, and remained steadfast in their commitment to securing a space that would truly support our mission and serve our community for years to come.

Since moving in, our team has been working hard to make the building feel like home. We have painted, decorated, and designed each of the three floors to reflect the warmth, inclusivity, and purpose that define JHSYR's mission, and created a welcoming and supportive environment for those we serve.



This investment in our future strengthens our commitment to making a lasting impact, and we are excited about the positive change this new space will help bring to our agency and the broader community.

OUR PROGRAMS

ACCESS TO HOME



Funded through Regional Municipality of York, Access to Home is tailored specifically for adults and provides additional components such as landlord/tenant mediation; harm reduction supports to ensure housing is not compromised due to substance use; financial literacy; and other relevant supports. It is designed to provide comprehensive case management to individuals who are precariously housed and support them as they strive for housing stability.

This joint Adult/Youth Reaching Home program focuses more on individuals who are already housed but are at risk of becoming homeless.

During the 2024-2025 period, we supported **103** unique clients through this program, helping them stabilize their financial situation. **76** of these clients retained or obtained housing security during their case management with the team.

DIRECT ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAM



With the funding support of the Ministry of Attorney General, the Direct Accountability Program is made up of two alternatives to formal charges and/or prosecution for adults over the age of 18 who have been held over for specific minor criminal offences.

- ◆ **PRE-CHARGE DIVERSION** clients are referred directly by the York Regional Police (YRP) in response to a call out. Clients are offered the opportunity to participate voluntarily in the program as an alternative to formal charges for specific minor criminal offences. Those opting into the program are provided with community hours, or community-based sanctions intended to hold themselves accountable and make amends for their actions. They are also provided with community resources and counselling support as a means of intervention and a positive response to reducing crime.

- ◆ **POST-CHARGE DIVERSION** is an alternative to formal prosecution for individuals who have been charged with specific minor criminal offences. This court-referred program is available as a post-charge alternative for accused individuals to be held accountable through community-based sanctions and/or financial restitution to victims.

Some of the sanctions for the Direct Accountability Program are community volunteer hours, monetary restitution to victims, prevention and education workshops, letter of accountability and in-kind donation to an approved list of charities/not-for-profit organizations. The program provides resources and alternative ways of handling stressful situations in an effort to reduce crime. It also utilizes Counselling Support Intervention (CSI) aiming to provide clients with space to unpack causes for their action and examine their accountability.

Direct Accountability clients	923
Pre-Charge Diversion clients referred by York Regional Police	393
Post-charge diversion clients referred by Newmarket and Bradford Court	530

I have found the program very well designed and [felt] supported on all level[s]. From the moment it was offered as an alternative through the supervision stages and reminders from YRP, including the John Howard Society of York Region's coordinator guidance and support, I felt involved and engaged in helping the community and most importantly the vulnerable members. It gave me a sense of responsibility as a stakeholder in the process. I appreciate having been given a chance to make amends with the community that I feel a part of.

ENDING THE CYCLE



Ending the Cycle (ETC) is a 10-week, cost-free, early intervention program for young adults between the ages of 15 and 24 who have witnessed emotional and/or physical abuse, neglect, aggression, or high-risk behaviour within their familial unit. The program which is funded through Women and Gender Equality Program of Government of Canada, aims to change behaviour, identify barriers, create and learn about boundaries, and examine belief systems about domestic violence in young persons. Through delivering weekly sessions, we examine a series of topics such as understanding gender-based violence, healthy relationships and consent, stereotypes and building awareness, beliefs, behaviours and boundaries, communication, identifying emotions, mental health, building resiliency, personal safety and planning for the future.

During the reporting period **192** individuals were engaged in the program and we

- offered six, 10-week group sessions across York Region schools and assisted a total of **72** youth in understanding gender-based violence
- supported **27** individuals outside of the school board with 1:1 counselling support
- established partnership with Sutton youth shelter, Victim Services York Region, DASA (Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Clinic), Staybridge Shelter, Bridgenorth, Sandgate Shelter and York Region Centre for Community Safety (YRCCS)
- participated in initiative with Abuse Hurts through Empower website



FAIR CHANCES



The Family and Adult Intervention and Reunification (FAIR) Chances initiative is funded by the Regional Municipality of York and provides an evidence-based, trauma-informed program that brings justice-involved and/or individuals at risk of involvement with criminal justice and their families together to promote healing and reunification while reducing stigma.

After a loved one's justice involvement, through group and individual counselling, mentoring, peer support and system navigation, families receive comprehensive wraparound support to increase positive outcomes and prevent future family involvement with the criminal justice system.

To further increase our community's capacity to promote community safety and wellbeing, FAIR Chances provides newcomers with information/ education and support pertaining to Canadian law promoting awareness on how to remain out of the justice system. Using a lens of prevention, topics such as employment, housing rights, bylaw information, social awareness and parenting are explored and discussed. Newcomers are also provided with information related to system navigation to find relevant support if ever needed.

No. of group counselling sessions	21
No. of intakes and assessments	67
No. of community referrals	66

[As a client] FAIR chances program helped me and provided me and my family with legal resources information, employment resources and food banks.

[As a community partner] It was so nice meeting the FAIR Chances staff. I appreciate their spending time speaking to the residents and helping with interpretation [...]. I am impressed they were able to give some resources right away and help the residents feel more informed about their rights as future tenants.

HOME AGAIN



With funding support from the United Way of Greater Toronto, this program provides wrap-around case management support to young people who are 15 to 29 years old. The program provides support on self-directed goal planning, housing, access to basic needs, and referrals to community resources as needed. In 2024-2025, Home Again supported the participants in

- ◆ acquiring stable housing and employment support
- ◆ community connections
- ◆ social and emotional learning
- ◆ financial literacy
- ◆ family reunification
- ◆ access to basic needs including food and rental assistance
- ◆ life skills

No. of new case management & wraparound support	15
No. of short-term rental supplements	5
No. of youth prevented from becoming homeless	15
No. of participants who engaged in family reunification	3

John Howard [Society of York Region's] Home Again Program has been very remarkable, extremely helpful and on time with the supports. They were able to assist me. Especially at a time when I felt very hopeless and alone being at Blue Door Shelter, JHSYR staff provided me with positive encouragement and great information that helped me to not be discouraged with my housing search.

HYPE



The evidence-based Healthy Youth Preventative Education (HYPE) Program aims to prevent violence through the promotion of positive, healthy relationships. With small group sessions that focus on healthy relationships covering a wide range of risk behaviours, and addictions among adolescents, youth are enabled to engage in healthier relationships and build social and emotional strength. The program is offered through York Region schools in partnership with York District School Board.

No. of youth
participants

400+

No. of groups

19

No. of community
referrals

55

(YRDSB): They were awesome! Incredibly friendly, outgoing, approachable and my students loved them.

(YRDSB): Excellent program which should be a mandatory course for the grade 8's in York Region.

HYPE +



The Healthy Youth Preventative Education Plus (HYPE+) helps build resiliency and promote well-being for 2SLGBTQ+ youth ages 13-18. HYPE+ offers small group sessions that support positive mental health. In a safe space, youth engage in activities and discussions about what contributes to stress, well-being, and healthy relationships at school, home, and their community.

Over the last fiscal year, we were able to offer the program to **three** schools in York Region, serving **16** youth in total. We also offered 1:1 counselling for **one** of the participants.

MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTIONS PEER SUPPORT



Funded by the Ministry of Solicitor General, Mental Health and Addictions Peer Support (MHAPS/MAPS) utilizes expertise of Peer Support Workers who are individuals with lived experience. These professional peers work with clients on an individual basis

exploring recovery goals and connecting them with community supports and services. Peer Support Workers use innovative and sector-relevant strategies to support clients in developing and maintaining daily harm reduction plans. They are also able to support clients who are attending probation, court, and counselling appointments.

No. of referrals	31
No. of participants	31
Current active participants	31
% of clients receiving addiction related support	42

MAPS provides connections to mental health services, addiction services, housing support, cultural resources as well as the Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Programs. Through this program we have been able to support our most vulnerable clients with food gift cards and access to other basic needs such as clothing, toiletries and harm reduction supplies.

Thank you Lord. [Client] is thriving and doing amazing!! She is safe and sound, healing beautifully every day. Thank you for being an angel in her life.

MINDSET



This anger management program for those 18 years of age and older utilizes Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) techniques to help increase clients' capacity to better understand and manage their anger and emotional responses in a more constructive and positive manner. This fee-for-service program aims to develop self-regulation and self-management skills in clients so they can reduce the intensity, frequency and duration of their emotions such as anger and subsequently, help support the end of any patterns of aggression.

During the reporting period we were able to assist **35** adults with their emotional regulation issues.

After I completed the Mindset Program, I felt compelled to express my deepest gratitude for the tremendous impact this program has had on my continued journey [...]. The skills we developed, and the insights gained through this program have provided me with a new perspective on how to approach challenges, manage emotions, and build healthier responses. These lessons from the Mindset program have not only helped me better rationalize this dysfunction but have also given me tools that I know will serve me for a lifetime.



PARTNER ASSAULT RESPONSE PROGRAM



Funded by the Ministry of Attorney General, the Partner Assault Response (PAR) Program is a 12-session domestic violence court initiative that delivers a specialized community-based group intervention program. It gives clients the opportunity to examine their beliefs and attitudes towards intimate partner violence and helps them learn non-abusive ways of resolving conflict.

Calls made to partners/victims	1068
New PAR referrals	642
Partners/victims referrals to community partners	211
Partners/victims supported through partner contact	350
Intake assessments completed	607
Clients starting the program	613
Clients completing the program	487
Training sessions provided to YRP	4
Training sessions provided to Crown in Newmarket court	3

Before starting this session, I couldn't believe it would affect me this much but it is very effective. It had a positive effect on my family and my life. It made me change my mind so much through the sessions. I am very happy with the quality of the classes, and the facilitators were very caring and friendly.

REINTEGRATION SUPPORT SERVICES FOR ADULTS



With support and funding from the United Way of Greater Toronto and Newmarket Charitable Gaming Association, Reintegration Program supports adults involved with, or those at risk of involvement with the criminal justice system at no cost. The program works with clients on an individual basis to reintegrate them back into their home communities in York Region. Support is provided through case management counselling, immediate temporary housing options such as emergency hotel/shelter, continued support to secure stable housing, and help with immediate basic needs and housing start-up support.

In 2024-2025, we were able to support **76** clients. We also extended our assistance to **180** individuals from the previous reporting period who continued to need support and assistance through this program. **82** clients also received help through the court mandated counselling.

Thank you so much for your advice and guidance over the last few weeks. I found our sessions to be of real value, engaging, and interesting.

I didn't know quite what to expect at the outset, but your style put me instantly at ease and I found myself opening up way more than I even know I could.



RESET



Supporting those who have already completed one of the programs offered by the John Howard Society of York Region, RESET is a peer-led, after-care program for adult male or male identifying individuals who would benefit from ongoing support.

The program is led by those with lived experience who are able and willing to provide support for their peers. With the goal of continuous peer-facilitation through group members who qualify, the program is offered at no cost to participants.

Funded by Ontario Trillium Foundation, RESET covers a range of topics such as stress and coping mechanisms, dealing with grief and loss, effective communication, gender roles, navigating relationships, unpacking anger styles, parenting support, addiction support and self-care techniques.

In 2024-2025, **62** clients were helped by the program including **9** volunteer peers. Additionally, staff attended a number of community initiatives led by community partners such as Library information sessions, Community Action tables, Children and Youth Situation Table, Krasman Center housing events and presented and introduced the RESET program to different agencies. Through our Counselling Support Intervention (CSI) we were able to assist clients from court and continue supporting them through our program.

Together, both of you – along with the entire organization, have created a supportive and empowering environment that has allowed the participants to grow, develop and shed some of the unfortunate stigma associated with mental health. Definitely not an easy outcome to obtain; but one most worthy of pursuing.

SERVICE NAVIGATOR PROGRAM



The Service Navigator Program serves priority groups of youth between ages of 6 and 26, who are at risk of involvement with gangs, victimization related to crime or involvement in crime.

Funded through Regional Municipality of York, the program helps clients navigate individual barriers to accessing services, provides emotional support to clients and families, explains and clarifies terminology, provides referral to additional services, coordinates with providers, and responds to unique client needs.

The program is offered in partnership with Routes Connecting Communities which has **12** Ambassadors who provide additional client support and increase community engagement.

Individuals
engaged

1143

Individuals
assisted

45

Community
referrals

280

Super kind and understanding as well as able to help me find food when needed.

I felt cared for and understood. I was comfortable sharing what my daughters and I are going through. I felt supported and could contact at any time for help. No matter what I needed, my caseworker would do everything in their power to help us. I would not know what I would've done without JHSYR. I am so grateful to have had their support and, in my experience, they are the most supportive agency to date

YOUTH OUTREACH PROGRAM



We were able to help our youth build strength, resilience and coping skills through our Youth Outreach Program. Using individualized one-on-one support, the program provides free weekly sessions for youth to discuss issues affecting their lives.

Our counsellors work collaboratively with the youth to enhance their understanding of their issues, overcome their challenges and meet their goals.

The negative mental health impacts of the pandemic exacerbated existing mental health concerns in youth. This program allowed youth to learn new coping skills and encouraged mental health resiliency through emotional regulation. Upon completion, the program also connected youth with other community resources to encourage self-sufficiency and help issues such as housing, employment and substance use.

In 2024–2025, we accepted referrals for youth between the ages of 11 and 29 who were experiencing mental health or substance use concerns, relationship conflict, bullying, stress, or involvement with the criminal justice system.

During the reporting period, we held **100** sessions and provided one-on-one counselling and case management support to **18** youth helping them access resources, develop coping skills, and work toward positive outcomes.

It was a very good experience because of two main reasons. First, my counselor was extremely comfortable to talk to and was able to calmly discuss personal matters within an environment which allowed me to open up beyond the conversations I was having with my family and friends. Secondly, my sessions helped me get along with the people I have surrounded myself with. My acceptance of the person I am became a much easier transition than solely trying to find answers on my own.

YOUTH REINTEGRATION PROGRAM



Similar to the program offered to adults, the Youth Reintegration Program is another no cost, wrap-around case management program which is funded by the Department of Justice (Youth Justice Fund). The program supports those between the ages of 12 and 17 who are involved in the justice system, are currently incarcerated and/or are being released and aims to enhance and extend support to those affected by connecting them with other support programs to increase their chances of reintegrating into the community. Through this program we provide one-on-one specialized counselling, advocacy and collaboration, individual goal planning and referrals to a variety of community resources. We can help the youth with acquiring stable housing and employment, social and emotional learning as well as access to basic needs including food and rental assistance.

No. of clients	39
No. of successfully completed cases	35
No. of racialized (BIPOC) youth in York Region or being released to York Region from incarceration	28

I learned that I have to be responsible, and I have to take accountability in my actions, and I need to surround myself with good influences.

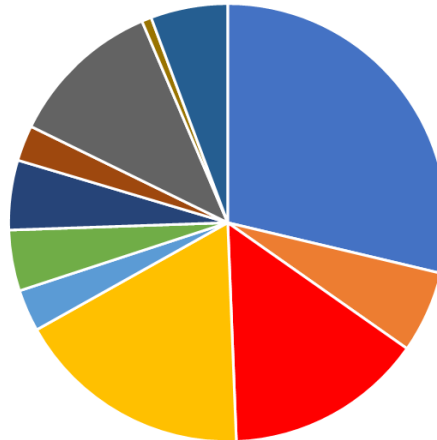
I've learned how to control my emotions, especially my anger issues. It's been really helpful.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Revenue for the year end March 31, 2025

Revenue has increased by 24.1% compared to the previous fiscal year as a result of new funding and increased funding from existing funders.

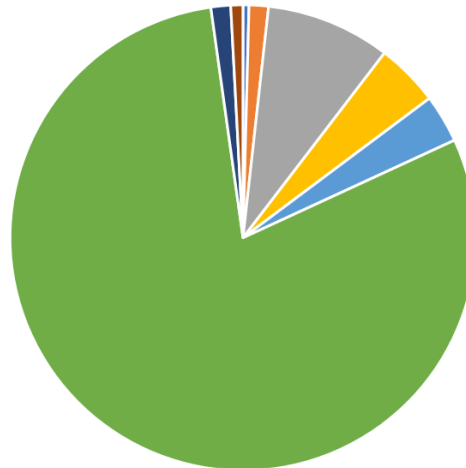
The agency achieved a surplus of \$148,457 for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.



- Ministry of the Attorney General
\$870,767 | 28.7%
- Ontario Trillium Foundation
\$182,916 | 6.0%
- United Way Greater Toronto
\$443,584 | 14.6%
- The Regional Municipality of York
\$530,775 | 17.5%
- Ontario Lottery Gaming Corporation
\$93,992 | 3.1%
- The Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
\$136,252 | 4.5%
- Ontario Solicitor General
\$156,004 | 5.1%
- Donations
\$79,856 | 2.6%
- Department of Women and Gender Equality Canada
\$344,419 | 11.4%

Expenses for the year ended March 31, 2025

Overall expenses have increased by 27.0%. This is primarily due to the expenses related to the new funding received and increased funding from existing funders.



- Amortization of tangible capital assets
\$11,919 | 0.4%
- Office and general
\$38,745 | 1.3%
- Program expenses
\$249,255 | 8.6%
- Purchased services
\$126,274 | 4.4%
- Rent and occupancy
\$96,338 | 3.3%
- Salaries and benefits
\$2,297,864 | 79.7%
- Staff development, training and travel
\$39,537 | 1.4%
- Telephone and internet
\$24,301 | 0.8%

OUR FUNDERS



Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada



Department of Justice
Canada

Ministère de la Justice
Canada



Ministry of the
Attorney General



United Way
Greater Toronto



Ministry of the
Solicitor General



