

2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The work of Somerset West Community Health Centre takes place on the unceded and unsurrendered territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation.

A land that has been cared for by the Algonquin peoples since the beginning of Turtle Island and is now home to a diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Metis communities.

This acknowledgement is a reminder of our duty to take great care to honour and respect the land in which we live today.

As a Community Health Centre, we recognize the traumatic impacts that the health care system has on the health and well-being of all Indigenous communities, which has had lasting intergenerational consequences.

We acknowledge our responsibility as health services providers to actively identify and dismantle the barriers within our organizations to create a safer and welcoming environment for Indigenous communities.

We are grateful to the Algonquins for their stewardship of the land.

We also recognize and respect the expertise and cultural diversity that First Nations, Inuit and Métis people bring to our community.

We will continuously seek ways to engage, listen, and learn from Indigenous leaders, elders, and youth.

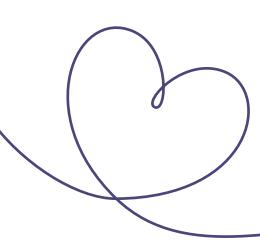


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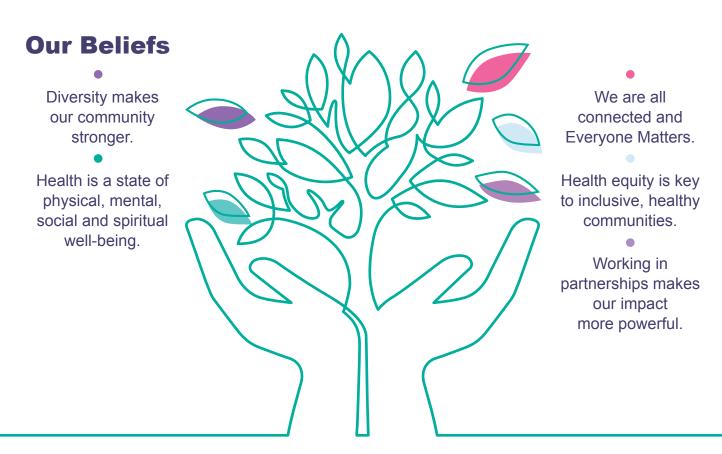
ABOUT US

SWCHC is a non-profit community-governed organization established in 1978 and located in the center of Chinatown.

We support people and communities to enjoy the best possible health and well-being by providing health and social services.

We work with community members to make our neighborhood and our city an even better place to live. Somerset West is deeply connected to the communities we serve. We pay particular attention to people who are:

- Isolated seniors
- Experiencing mental health challenges or substance use
- From racialized or newcomer communities
- · Living with low-income
- Experiencing homelessness or precariously housed



Our Strategic Priorities

Culturally-centered mental health supports

Healthy, inclusive workplace

Organizational infrastructure and sustainability

Partnerships and advocacy

REFLECTIONS FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

We have seen firsthand the strength of a community that continues to show up for one another—with care, courage, and a shared commitment to justice. This past year has been one of profound change—across our city, our province, and our sector. We continue to witness the compounding effects of the housing crisis, gaps in mental health and substance use supports, and growing inequities in access to care. Yet amidst these pressures, Somerset West Community Health Centre has remained steadfast.

We are deeply grateful to our staff, volunteers, clients, partners, and funders who make this work possible. Your trust and collaboration fuel our mission, and we are proud of what we have achieved together. This includes the launch of the Homelessness & Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub—that integrates housing, harm reduction, and health services under one roof. We also released formative evaluation data from the ANCHOR crisis response program, which demonstrates the power and promise of community-led initiatives. And through new investments in the Provincial Black Health Plan, we're advancing culturally responsive mental health supports for Black communities in Ottawa.

The province-wide closure of Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) sites has placed many communities at greater risk. While we continue to advocate for a comprehensive continuum of care that includes harm reduction, we are also working closely with partners to ensure that the new HART Hub model responds meaningfully to the needs of those most impacted.

Beyond service delivery, our Centre has played a leadership role in critical conversations around housing and homelessness, immigration, and mental health—locally, provincially, and

nationally. We were honoured to speak at Ottawa Public Health, contribute to national conferences, and host engagement sessions that amplify community voices. We continue to learn from Indigenous partners, community leaders, and clients who guide our commitment to reconciliation and culturally responsive care.

The Board of Directors is proud to support Somerset West CHC in these efforts. We remain focused on investments that strengthen our services and center equity in all aspects of governance. From deepening partnerships across the health and housing sectors to advancing integrated care and community-driven solutions.

The challenges ahead—deepening poverty, systemic racism, shifts in public health policy—are urgent and real. But so is our belief in what's possible when communities lead and systems follow. We will continue to invest in staff leadership, deepen relationships across sectors, and push for a health and social system that reflects the dignity and needs of all people.

We thank you—our neighbours, partners, and supporters—for walking alongside us as we build this future. **Together, we can meet this moment with purpose, integrity, and care.**



Sammy Onyeama-Asonye Board Chair





PROMOTING INDIGENOUS CULTURAL SAFETY

Somerset West CHC remains deeply committed to Indigenous-led healing. This year, our leadership team took part in the Indigenous Cultural Safety course through the Indigenous Primary Health Care Council. This work aligns with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #23 and supports our ongoing responsibility to foster culturally safe spaces across all programs.

Throughout the year, we aim to deepen our relationships with Indigenous partners and continued to show up in community in meaningful ways. Our Children & Youth team aligned its internal policies with Pikwakanagan's Child and Family Well-Being Law: Nigig Nibi Ki-Win, honoring Indigenous jurisdiction and child welfare leadership. We also launched a monthly Indigenous newsletter and continued to build community through culturally grounded outreach events - including our weekly Dundonald Park Circle gatherings, participation at World AIDS Day and Indigenous AIDS Awareness Week ceremonies, and holiday outreach initiatives in partnership with Shawna's Outreach and others.

Honouring Indigenous Traditions and Teachings:

In 2024–2025, we continued to walk in respect and reciprocity with Indigenous communities by embedding cultural teachings into our programs and community events. Our Indigenous Practice Facilitator and Knowledge Keeper led a beautiful opening ceremony at our Black History Month celebration, grounding the event in Indigenous ways of knowing and creating a space of unity and shared healing.

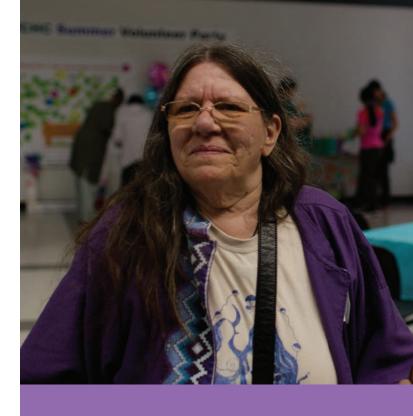
We also hosted a Smudge Teaching Ceremony and introduced a smudge-making kit for staff, clients, and community members. The ceremony was a powerful moment of learning and connection, allowing participants to explore the meaning, purpose, and practice of smudging in a culturally safe space. The smudge kits were prepared with care, offering traditional medicines and teachings to support ongoing personal and collective wellness.

These initiatives reflect our ongoing commitment to decolonizing care, uplifting Indigenous voices, and creating spaces that honour spirit, land, and story.

Our Board of Directors participated in a dedicated session on Indigenous Cultural Safety in healthcare, exploring the structural inequities faced by Indigenous communities and identifying actionable strategies for embedding cultural safety into governance, leadership, and decision-making.

We also held a Letting Go Ceremony to honour the contributions of everyone involved in our Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) program. It was a moment to acknowledge the care, advocacy, and dedication that shaped the program, and to move forward in community with strength and gratitude.

Through these collective efforts, ceremony, learning, outreach, and reflection, we remain grounded in the knowledge that reconciliation is a journey, not a destination. We are honoured to walk this path alongside community, and grateful for the teachings that guide us.



STAFF COMMENT

"Cultural performances and drumming circles are some of the ways we centre Indigenous cultural safety."



"In this ongoing public health crisis, we cannot deny the impact of the profound closure of the CTS.

Every interaction represented a chance to build trust, to prevent infections, to prevent someone from ending up in the emergency department and to save a life. We are talking about preventable deaths — and preventable costs.

These are human lives — and system failures we cannot afford."

SUZANNE OBIORAH, OTTAWA PUBLIC HEALTH

DELEGATION SPEECH

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FAREWELL TO OUR CONSUMPTION & TREATMENT SERVICES

At Somerset West Community
Health Centre, we see the impacts
of this crisis every day—on lives,
on families, and on neighborhoods.

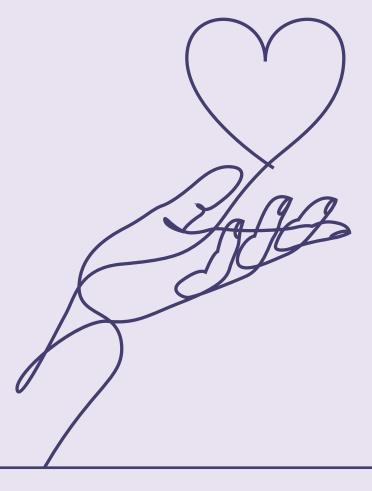
Over the years, our CTS has built and nurtured the trusting relationships necessary for our neighbors to access care in a welcoming, non-judgmental environment. This program has been a vital space for harm reduction, safety, and community building. We recognize the life saving impacts we've had on individuals who have accessed our services, as well as the staff, peer workers, and community members who have made it possible.

Collectively, we must remain steadfast in ensuring that solutions to address substance use challenges and homelessness do not lead to a resurgence of stigma, the criminalization of illness, or the complete withdrawal of life-saving support. Let us remember true progress lies in compassion, evidence-based care, and our collective commitment towards dignified approaches.

While our CTS is coming to a close, our dedication to harm reduction, equity, and system change remains unyielding. We will continue working alongside you to address the root causes of substance use and drive systemic change in our pursuit of fairness and justice.

To everyone who has walked through our doors, worked alongside us, or supported this program in any way—thank you. Your trust and dedication have been at the heart of everything we do to serve our community.

NEW PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES







Data from the first 11 weeks shows that ANCHOR is having a meaningful impact, contributing to system change. It demonstrates the value of compassionate, community-led solutions to complex challenges.



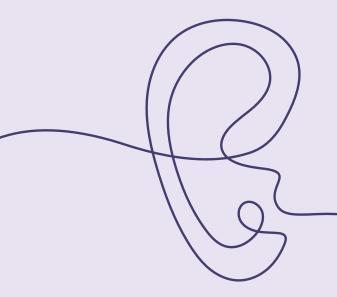
1,310 total calls received successfully by ANCHOR

626 dispatches to ANCHOR Crisis Response Teams



8

92% of crisis interactions were handled by ANCHOR Crisis Response Teams with no police involvement



ALTERNATE NEIGHBOURHOOD CRISIS RESPONSE (ANCHOR)

In partnership with the City of Ottawa, Centretown Community Health Centre, and Community Navigation of Eastern Ontario, Somerset West CHC held a press conference to share the early findings of ANCHOR's formative evaluation. The data offers powerful evidence in support of what we have long known — Ottawa urgently needs a compassionate, community-led alternative to traditional emergency crisis response.

Between August 15 and October 31, 2024, ANCHOR received 1,310 calls through the 211 service, with 626 mobile crisis team dispatches. Remarkably, 92% of these interactions were resolved without police involvement, underscoring ANCHOR's success in de-escalating crises and connecting individuals to the supports they need.

These early results highlight ANCHOR's potential to transform mental health and substance use crisis response in Ottawa. The evaluation also provides valuable insights to enhance service delivery, improve data collection, and strengthen operational excellence as the program continues to evolve.

CLIENT COMMENT

"I've called ANCHOR once when a woman was screaming and crying by herself on a very cold day. I was glad I could get her some professional help without involving the police or ambulance — after all, she wasn't committing a crime and didn't seem to require an ambulance. She still needed help though. This fills an important service gap."

BLACK HEALTH PLAN

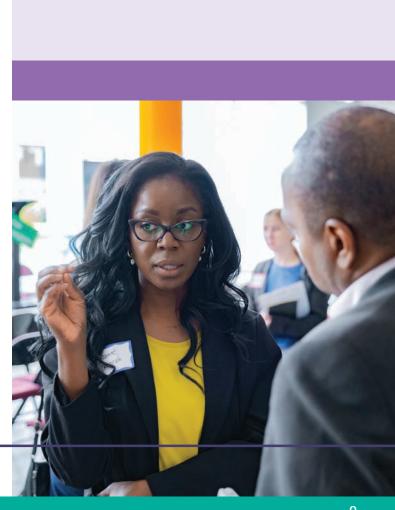
This year marked a major milestone in Somerset West Community Health Centre's work to advance health equity, having received one of the largest local investments from Ontario Health to implement the provincial Black Health Plan (BHP) in Ottawa.

Developed by Black community leaders, grassroots organizations, research and health experts, the BHP aims to address long-standing systemic health inequities by ensuring Black communities are prioritized in health crises; addressing gaps and rebuilding a more inclusive healthcare system; and transforming how health and social services are delivered to eliminate disparities for Ontario's Black populations.

Rooted in Afrocentric principles, the BHP is driving service enhancements across the Centre, including expanded health and wellness clinics, culturally responsive prevention models, and mobile outreach initiatives in collaboration with Black-led partners. Programs are being tailored to support Black children, youth, families, and seniors – delivering care that is safe, relevant, and affirming. This includes increased access to prenatal and pediatric services, cancer and chronic disease screenings, mental health supports, and peer-led programs grounded in community wisdom. Efforts are also underway to improve accessibility through extended clinic hours, while deepening partnerships with Black-led organizations to co-create programs that reflect community needs.

We are building our team's skills to respond to racial trauma with care. By offering student placements, anti-Black racism training, and mentorship, we support Black health professionals and help staff provide more consistent, client-focused care. We are also improving how our programs work together by streamlining referrals, creating shared pathways, and using race-based data to guide our progress.

Somerset West CHC continues to contribute to the province-wide conversation on Black health, including recent presentations at Ottawa City Council and the Canadian Association of Community Health Centres. As implementation continues, our shared goal is clear: to eliminate systemic barriers and improve health outcomes for Black clients through a coordinated, data-driven, and community-led approach.



HOMELESSNESS & RECOVERY TREATMENT (HART) HUB

Our Homelessness & Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub represents a significant milestone in our journey to provide compassionate, coordinated care — offering people experiencing homelessness a trusted place to access health, housing, and recovery supports.

Our HART Hub is a low-barrier, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive 24/7 healthcare model. We offer a whole person approach that includes primary care, mental health and substance use treatment, supportive housing, and health systems navigation services. By providing accessible, compassionate support, the HART Hub ensures that individuals with complex health and housing challenges have a trusted place to turn for stability and recovery.

Since officially launching on April 1st, the HART Hub has quickly become a vital lifeline. We've grown from seeing just over a dozen clients per day to nearly 100 daily visits by July.

The Hub now offers a well-used shower service, daily lunches and snacks, and a safe, welcoming space for meaningful engagement.

Front-line staff, many with lived experience, connect with clients with care and understanding, showing them every day that they are seen, valued, and matter. Staff have been trained in the LIFE Process Program, which approaches addiction as a way of coping, rather than a disease. This helps clients to define their own personal recovery goals, and work towards meeting them at their own pace.

Our mental health partners — Rideauwood Addictions and Family Services and Upstream Ottawa — are now co-located on-site and actively offering their services. We have also established pathways for referrals to withdrawal management and to AccessMHA, giving clients even more options for treatment and recovery.

The SWCHC HART Hub represents a promise: to walk alongside people on their journey toward health, connection, and recovery.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS









This last year through the services of our extensive primary health care team we offered:



39,863 Patient visits in our primary care clinic.

227 Group Sessions with **6,398** attendances



1,606 interactions through our Seniors Outreach Team.



PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

This year, our Primary Health Care team continued to meet clients where they are, offering services that reflect the diverse and evolving needs of our community.

Outreach efforts included mobile vaccine clinics, rooming house outreach, and tailored wellness initiatives for Chinese and Vietnamese seniors. From flu and COVID-19 vaccine delivery at housing complexes to "Smiles for Seniors" holiday gift drop-offs, our team reached isolated and vulnerable populations with both care and compassion.

We launched Happy Channel, Happy Life, a virtual program supporting homebound Chinese seniors, and hosted Chinese and Vietnamese foot care seminars. In partnership with Abbotsford House, we extended a tablet lending program to help seniors stay connected and engaged.

In collaboration with community partners, we hosted diabetes eye screening clinics, continued our participation in the Kids Come First immunization campaign, and helped deliver Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) protection for infants through Beyfortus clinics. The Rosemount site also joined Ottawa Public Health's sharps kit pilot program to promote safer communities.

This year, we welcomed two new family physicians, Dr. Michelle McBride and Dr. Jessica MacLean, whose diverse experiences will strengthen our capacity to deliver high-quality care.

OTTAWA NEWCOMER HEALTH CENTRE

In the past year, the Ottawa Newcomer Health Centre (ONHC) has deepened its role as a key provider of culturally responsive, low-barrier care for immigrants and refugees.

Through health fairs, shelter-based screenings, and targeted health education events, ONHC brought essential services directly to underserved populations. These efforts resulted in over 1300 newcomers receiving initial health assessments, screenings, vaccinations, chronic disease support, and culturally tailored health literacy programming—meeting clients where they are and reducing barriers to care.

Our Multicultural Health Navigator (MHN) team continued to lead boldly on a national scale, organizing gatherings and forums that brought together service providers across sectors to advance newcomer health. These gatherings not only fostered collaboration but also helped influence system-level changes in how navigation services are designed and delivered across the country.

With funding from Ontario Health, ONHC made significant progress in addressing anti-racism within pediatric and family health care. This investment supported the development of an equity-focused training curriculum — positioning ONHC as a provincial leader in inclusive care for racialized children and families.

The curriculum equips pediatric and family-practice providers with a focus on anti-racism, cultural humility, and bias-aware decision-making. ONHC is helping to close care gaps and improve outcomes for families across the region.

Our Ottawa Language Access (OLA) program, now in its 9th year of operations, continues to grow and expand—both in reach and impact. With over 100 organizations registered, OLA supports communities as far as Cornwall and other regional areas. As a social enterprise, OLA endeavors to bridge critical communication gaps in health and social services, helping clients overcome language barriers and access the care they need. Today, the program coordinates language support in over 200 languages, underscoring its role as a vital and trusted resource for equitable service delivery.



456 Women screened in our women's health clinic

In the past year:



We offered **6,379** In-person visits and

1,712 virtual visits.

105 Client Organizations served in the Community.

Our interpretation services played a crucial role in bridging language barriers, with

4,247 Assignments for in-person

interpretation services and **1,178** assignments for Remote interpretation (video and phone).

MENTAL HEALTH & COUNSELLING

Over the past year, our Mental Health and Counselling team continued to provide a dynamic mix of individual and group supports—offered in-person and virtually—with a deep commitment to culturally affirming, linguistically accessible, and community-rooted care.

Our programs focused on fostering wellness, connection, and resilience, particularly within Vietnamese, Chinese, Cambodian, and Black communities.

Our programs are designed not only to respond to mental health needs but to honour the cultural strengths, lived experiences, and leadership within the communities we serve. By reducing social isolation and enhancing culturally affirming pathways to support, we continue to promote healing and wellbeing through wraparound individual and collective approaches that affirm identity, dignity, and belonging.

We were honoured to see our Black-Focused Social Prescribing (BFSP) team—led by the Alliance for Healthier Communities and in partnership with Rexdale CHC, Black Creek CHC,

and Taibu CHC—receive the Social Prescribing Innovation Award at the 2024 International Social Prescribing Conference. This recognition reflects our leadership in culturally grounded, community-led mental health strategies.

Our Black Mental Health Team deepened its commitment to culturally rooted care through a number of community based initiatives. Highlights included: Writual, a music workshop series; Mind Your Wellbeing, developed with the Royal Ottawa Hospital for faith-based groups and community organizations; Love Continuum, a 3-week creative program for youth exploring self-love, self-discovery, and boundaries in partnership with the Amani Effect; and Generations United, an intergenerational workshop co-hosted with Jaku Konbit that helped bridge generational gaps and share mental health tools with the community.



597 calls to the Black Health Phone Line

1271 Clinical Counselling Sessions

236 clients seen through the Social Services Walk-in

A total of **406** unique Vietnamese and Chinese Seniors participated in weekly wellness groups, resulting in **4.154** total contacts

183 community groups and events

3809 contacts through community groups, outreach, and workshops

Peer leadership and community connection remained at the heart of our work. A highlight includes: African Lunch Day—co-hosted with the Parkdale Food Centre and created with volunteer chefs—which brought people together to celebrate African food and culture while breaking isolation through storytelling and shared meals.

Our Chinese, Cambodian, and Vietnamese mental health teams provided culturally anchored and affirming care through group programs and one-to-one support, including counselling, intensive case management, wellness coaching, and resource navigation. Weekly wellness groups for seniors fostered connection and healing in affirming spaces. Highlights included Mindfulness and Yoga groups, our partnership with the Vietnamese Canadian Community of Ottawa (VCCO) to offer 4 hybrid health seminars tailored to Ottawa's Vietnamese Community, Lunar New Year celebrations and annual Vietnamese Seniors' Summer Picnic. These events exemplify how wellness is tied not only to services but to joy, culture and connection.

Our Social Services Walk-In Clinics, available five days a week across two sites, offered low-barrier access to service navigation, advocacy, emotional support, and referrals.

Meanwhile, our intake phone lines—including the Black Health Phone Line—remained consistently active and well-used, ensuring timely access to care.

Clinically, our Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) Skills group continued to be a core offering for individuals navigating emotional distress, trauma, and relationship challenges. With full enrollment and strong retention, this group continues to support participants with tools for emotional regulation, resilience, and self-advocacy.

We also prioritized internal wellness and collective learning, with Asian Heritage Month events and staff-led celebrations that honored cultural knowledge, food, and shared reflection. These moments affirmed our belief that healing is not only clinical—but also cultural, communal, and creative.

We are proud to continue building accessible, affirming pathways to mental wellness—ones that recognize and uplift the strengths, voices, and leadership of the people we serve. At the heart of our work is the belief that culturally affirming care, delivered by providers who reflect the lived experiences of our communities, is essential to fostering healing.



CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

This year, our Children and Youth programs continued to provide inclusive, welcoming spaces where children, youth, and families can connect, learn, and grow.

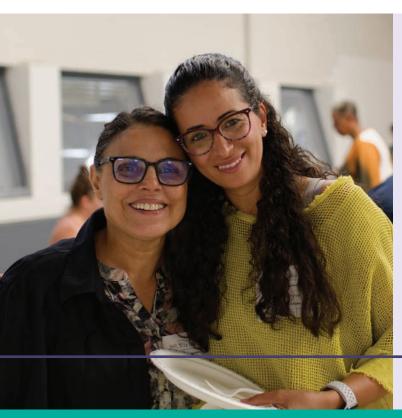
With funding from Canada Summer Jobs and community partners like Bluesfest's Green Team, we expanded our skill-building programs and youth leadership initiatives, ensuring access remains barrier-free and empowering for all participants.

We launched the I LOVE TO ... DANCE program at Laroche Park, giving children a chance to build confidence, learn choreography, and celebrate their creativity. Our After School and Headstart programs thrived with seasonal events. Staff also supported the popular Halloween gathering at Plouffe Park that brought together over 300 attendees.

Workshops like Babysitting Training and Youth Leadership Camp provided critical life skills for youth aged 11–17, while community outreach brought essential early years services into neighbourhoods through shared spaces such as Keith Brown Community Building, local schools and park-based programming. We also continued to support children's mental wellness with evidence based programs such as Friends for Life, helping students build resilience and healthy coping strategies.

Our team actively engaged in citywide strategic planning and advocacy efforts, including supporting Mandarin-speaking families in shaping Ottawa's EarlyON and child care strategy. We also deepened our commitment to Indigenous child well-being by aligning our policies with Pikwakanagan's new Child and Family Well-Being Law, Nigig Nibi Ki-Win.

Through every partnership, program, and gathering, our goal remains clear: to offer safe, enriching, and culturally responsive spaces where children and youth can thrive.





Our early years program supported **1,103 children** ages newborn to 6 yrs old children through **7,236 visits**.



Our three after school programs provided barrier free programming to 55 children in grades 1-10.



This year, **28 youth** took part in our Youth Leadership Camp, developing projects, building connections, and completing service hours necessary for high school graduation.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Community Engagement Team plays a vital role in fostering connections, providing essential resources and strengthening social bonds across our service area.

From shared meals to local advocacy, our Community Engagement create inclusive spaces where residents come together to lead, learn, and support one another. Whether it's welcoming newcomers, strengthening tenant leadership, celebrating cultural traditions, or supporting seniors to age in place — our programs are rooted in partnership, driven by community, and ensure community voices are reflected in local decision-making.

This year, community spaces like Tea & Toast in Mechanicsville, the Rochester Heights Community House, and Sunshine Hub in LeBreton Flats continued to serve as vital gathering places. These welcoming environments reduce isolation, support wellness, and create space for learning, celebration, and care. Through strong partnerships, and resident leadership, the Sunshine Hub and surrounding communities continued to build resilience, reduce

Engaged in **50 partnerships**.

In 2024, **766 unique clients** accessed service **12,995 times** at the Rochester Heights Community House.

Nearly **579 tax returns** were completed, through both onsite and virtual services, by the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP).

The Yet Keen Seniors' Day Centre's weekly lunch program has provided more than **50 affordable healthy meals** to isolated seniors this year.

isolation, and respond to community needs. Whether through gardening initiatives, weekly bingo, or culturally rooted holiday events, each activity helps build relationships and collective resilience.

Yet Keen Senior's Day Centre continued to offer rich opportunities for connection, learning, and celebration among seniors. From wellness workshops and cultural outings to seasonal gatherings and joy-filled activities like laughter yoga and community hikes, the program fostered a deep sense of belonging. The team also piloted new initiatives — including a Traditional Chinese Medicine lecture series and the launch of a multilingual blog.

Across our sites, we partnered with community members, local businesses, and agencies to promote access to food, resources, and social services. We also collaborated with the City of Ottawa and community leaders to ensure programming is responsive to local needs—from skill-building workshops to multilingual health outreach. Volunteers played a vital role in bringing programs to life, including the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program, which helped hundreds of residents access essential benefits and avoid housing insecurity. These initiatives underscore the importance of collaborative efforts in addressing various social challenges.

As our community grows and evolves, we will continue to listen, adapt, and build relationships that help people thrive—together.

HARM REDUCTION

In a year of change, our Harm Reduction team remained deeply rooted in care, compassion, and connection.

Our long-standing Harm Reduction program, The Needle Exchange and Safer Inhalation (NESI) team provided essential supplies, overdose and Sexually Transmitted and Blood Born Infections (STBBI) prevention education, and neighbourhood clean-ups, while creating space for grief, healing, and community connection. Between April 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025, our NESI Daytime and Gear Room services recorded a total of 36,670 interactions, highlighting the high demand for harm reduction support, basic needs, and access to supplies. During the same period, the NESI Van provided 4,545 interactions, extending vital outreach and harm reduction services directly into the community.

Our Community Response Team (CRT) expanded into new areas, engaging directly with people in crisis and linking them to vital supports. The CRT helps people who are homeless and people who use substances. Outreach workers connect with them, give referrals to health care, housing, or other services, and help with basic needs like food, clothing, and harm reduction supplies. Throughout the year, the CRT recorded over 1,300 outreach interactions, distributed more than 600 naloxone kits, and helped reverse over 50 overdoses through community-based response. Staff also made 65 referrals to Opioid Agonist Therapy (OAT) and provided over 230 "Where to Go" resources to improve access to harm reduction and health supports. These outcomes reflect CRT life-saving impact, connecting clients to care, strengthening prevention, and improving community safety.

We expanded HIV outreach and anonymous testing services across the city, increasing access for priority populations and building trust through culturally safe, community-based care. This included trauma-informed outreach

to people who use drugs, Naloxone training, and HIV testing in trusted community settings. The Anonymous HIV Testing team reached deeper into the community with on-site and outreach testing at shelters, community events, and partner locations, making sexual health care more accessible than ever. Through the ACB/HIV Prevention Strategy, we partnered with African, Caribbean, and Black communities to promote HIV and STBBI prevention, increase health literacy, and address systemic barriers to care. From April 2024 to March 2025, our prevention efforts within African, Caribbean, and Black (ACB) communities reached over 775 individuals through a range of tailored education and outreach initiatives. This included 62 activities, each designed to build trust, increase awareness, and strengthen connections to care. In total, more than 280 service referrals were made, with the majority supporting access to HIV/STI testing, mental health services, and culturally relevant

CLIENT COMMENT

"I really enjoy coming here. Coming here makes things safer."

"I am grateful there are good outreach workers that know what I am going through."

care providers. Digital outreach also played a strong role, with over 820 individuals engaged through health promotion on platforms like chatrooms and app-based tools. These numbers reflect a growing, trusted presence in ACB communities, driven by a responsive and community-rooted team committed to health equity.

Together, these teams form a coordinated, compassionate response to some of our community's most urgent health challenges, grounded in dignity, trust, and the unwavering belief that harm reduction saves lives.

Every interaction is a reminder: harm reduction is essential health care.

2024 SURVEY RESULTS

"It gave me more hope,"

"I am grateful there are good outreach workers who know what I'm going through."

80% agreed or strongly agreed that they feel safer in their community because of the program, **85%** felt more hopeful after participating, and **86%** reported an improved ability to manage challenges in their lives. Notably, **88%** of participants identified as living with a disability, underscoring the importance of inclusive, low barrier supports that meet people where they are.



LUNG HEALTH

The Ottawa Community Lung Health Program continues to provide exceptional care and education for individuals living with chronic respiratory conditions such as COPD and asthma.

While maintaining its presence across 15 Community Health Centre locations in the Ottawa and surrounding Prescott-Russell region, the program has expanded its focus on self-management and overall wellness. This includes integrating education on nutrition, physical activity, and mental health. Highlights from the year included a client-led walkathon for World Asthma Day and group sessions focused on diet and mental well-being—critical supports for clients managing chronic lung disease.

Through the Complex Respiratory Care (CRC) Program, our team provided vital in-home services to clients with advanced respiratory needs across the Champlain Region. Staff participated in advanced training on palliative care and hosted a well-attended Respiratory Care Symposium, bringing together over 90 healthcare professionals from across Ontario to share best practices in home ventilation and complex care.

CLIENT COMMENT

"I feel very fortunate to have been a part of this program that has taught me so much about how to deal with my lung disease. I have committed myself to following all the guidance. I've been given the opportunity to attain my best quality of life."

To ensure the continued delivery of high-quality and transitional care, the Complex Respiratory Care Program has maintained strong partnerships with key organizations, including the Ottawa Hospital Rehabilitation Centre, the Ventilator Equipment Pool, the Ottawa Hospital, Bruyère Health Research Institute, Montfort Hospital, and Queensway Carleton Hospital, among others across the Champlain region. At the provincial level, the program continues to collaborate with the Provincial Long-Term Ventilation Strategy, a group which aims to improved patient flow from ICUs and facilitates care for individuals with complex respiratory needs closer to home and in the community.

The Lung Health team was pleased to attend the Annual Physician Refresher Course, where we shared updates on our services with providers across Ottawa. This included improvements to our Pulmonary Rehabilitation referral process, now accessible via QR codes and the Ocean eReferral platform. Attendees had the opportunity to engage with demo inhalers, review Action Plans, and discuss the latest lung health updates—enhancing collaboration and awareness across the health system.

Our partnership with local colleges also continued, with more than 50 Algonquin College students shadowing the team to gain hands-on experience with the CHC model of integrated care. In October, we celebrated Respiratory Therapy Week, recognizing the invaluable contributions of our respiratory therapists who deliver compassionate, client-centered care every day.

The Lung Health Program focused efforts on developing inter-centre collaboration, organizing education sessions with SWCHC dietitian and mental health services. These sessions brought together 28 participants across two sessions focused on the role of nutrition and managing mental health and anxiety as it relates to managing lung disease.

Program awareness was further elevated through a presentation to the Ontario Health Team–East COPD Working Group, helping advocate for continued investment in community-based lung health services.

CLIENT COMMENT

"The program has helped me physically and equally important, it has helped me psychologically. When one has a lung disease for which there is no cure and, until only recently, no medication, the psychological trauma is ongoing and intense.

Over the past ten years, for me, hope has been in short supply. The Ottawa Community Lung Health Program has given me renewed hope that I can live a reasonably productive and happy life."

Lung Health Program



15 Sites Served

3,739 Total Encounters

1,083 New Clients

287 Active Smoking Cessation Clients

Complex Respiratory Care



647 Clients

110 New Clients Served

We serve our clients in a variety of settings including:

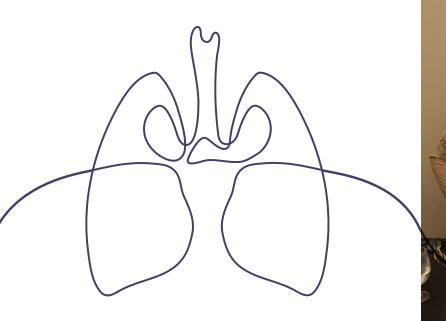


808 Home Visits

57 Visits to regional hospitals

2,882 Phone & Online

89 Group Training Sessions





VOLUNTEERS

This year, 281 volunteers generously contributed 10,355 hours across Somerset West CHC programs – an extraordinary show of commitment that continues to enrich our services and strengthen our community.

Volunteers played vital roles throughout the Centre, making a powerful impact—reducing poverty and housing loss, increasing access to free services and benefits, supporting skill-building and learning, strengthening social connections, expanding resources, and providing essential planning, admin, and advocacy support.

Volunteers supported many activities, such as helping at breakfast clubs, social events, Bingo, ESL groups, cooking class and the Good Food Market. At Yet Keen Seniors' Day Centre, they brought joy through recreation, community connection, life skills learning and companionship. Children and Youth programs benefited from volunteer support in leadership, childcare, and after-school activities. Volunteers also supported the Christmas Exchange Program applications, helping families in need receive gift certificates and food hampers during a difficult time.

In Harm Reduction, peer volunteers contributed to life-saving initiatives, while tax clinic volunteers helped hundreds of clients access essential government benefits, reducing poverty and housing loss. Volunteers also supported administrative tasks in Primary Care, community events through the Ottawa Black Mental Health Coalition, and culturally specific programming for Chinese and Vietnamese communities.

Board and committee members provided thoughtful guidance through their leadership on governance, finance, and quality improvement. And behind the scenes, our volunteer photographer and videographer helped capture the heart of our work – ensuring our stories are seen and shared.

Together, our volunteers remain essential to our mission – building connection, enhancing care, and creating a more inclusive and supportive community.

Our volunteers have made an immense impact across diverse programs, including:

Needle Exchange
Safer Inhalation
Peer Program and
the Anonymous
HIV Testing
initiative:
89 peers
contributed
276 hours.

Community
Engagement:
39 volunteers
contributed 3,974
hours, including
Breakfast Club,
Homework Club,
Good Food Market,
Bingo, field trips,
and events.

Community
Volunteer Income
Tax Program:
Prepared
579 income tax
returns,
contributing
623 hours.

Christmas
Exchange
Program:
3 volunteers
supported 428
clients, providing
403 with gift
certificates valued
at \$15,479; and
25 with food
hampers.

Yet Keen Seniors
Day Centre:
36 volunteers
contributed
2,585 hours.

These examples reflect just part of the story. Together, our volunteers create meaningful impact across our programs, in the lives of community members, and in every corner of our work.

OTTAWA BLACK MENTAL HEALTH COALITION

This past year, the Ottawa Black Mental Health Coalition (OBMHC) continued to expand its impact through advocacy, engagement, and capacity-building.

With the launch of a Community of Practice Clinical Workshop Series, OBMHC is strengthening the ability of Black and allied professionals to deliver culturally responsive mental health supports. Over 290 participants engaged in the first in-person Black Mental Health Week, under the theme "For Community, By Community", which featured a full week of events, including professional conferences and a community expo.

OBMHC also completed a Strategic Planning Session with over 60 stakeholders, setting new directions to guide growth and deepen collaboration. Coalition representatives played a leading role in the 21-day Coroner's Inquest into the death of Abdirahman Abdi, contributing to 57 recommendations for systemic change, all of which were adopted. Throughout the year, volunteers and staff represented the Coalition at dozens of community events and developed key partnerships to increase visibility, recruit volunteers, and promote access to Black-led services.

The Coalition significantly expanded access to mental health support, offering hundreds of free counseling appointments seven days a week in both English and French. OBMHC supported community groups like The Brotherhood Coalition and Mahari Centre, in hosting thier own mental health events. By provinding information resources, mental health counsellors and peer support workers at community-led events, OBMHC is empowering community members to engage in open dialogue and reduce stigma.

Coalition representatives also participated in ten regional and provincial tables, advancing advocacy efforts focused on anti-racism and systemic change. OBMHC members actively engaged in over 25+ meetings and working groups thoguhout the year to advance collective work and collaborate on initiatives determined by the members and emerging needs.



37 unique OBMHC member organizations engaged in activities



91 unique member/ partner representatives engaged in activities

16 community engagement activities

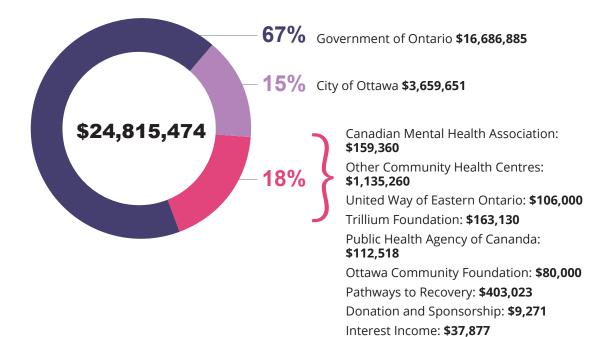
190 subscribers via newsletter

51 OBMHC meetings

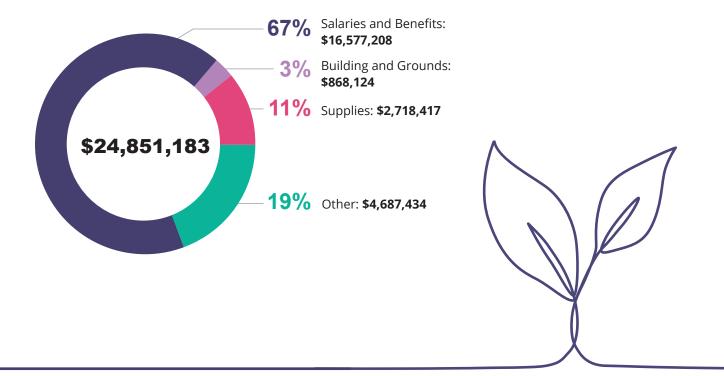


FINANCIALS

Revenue



Expenses



Other Program Funding: \$959,824

Other: \$1,302,675

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sammy Onyeama-Asonye, Board Chair

Jennifer Arntfield, Vice Chair

Derek Vilis, Treasurer

Colleen Hendrick, Secretary

Alexa Paz

Drew Meerveld

Elham Gharji

Ife Olarewaju

Joey Yip

Marie-Louise Chartrand

Mohammed Kibria

Stacy Douglas

Sydnée Burgess

"This community is special. A rich tapestry of individual stories woven together by a shared belief in our collective humanity. A place of welcome where our close proximity gives us the privilege of wearing the joys and struggles of all neighbours. Bringing people together and supporting them through a life journey does not happen by accident. It takes a professional social support network willing to meet community members wherever they might be. Somerset West Community Health Centre is that place. It is a privilege to join in the good work SWCHC undertakes through Board and Committee membership."

- DREW MEERVELD, BOARD MEMBER







swchc.on.ca



To our generous funders













