



**St. Leonard's**  
community services  
LONDON & REGION

2023-2024

# ANNUAL REPORT

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*A report to our community*

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair

**Alan O'Brien**

Vice-Chair

**Gordon Thane**

Board Members

**Beth Allison**

**Jody Graham**

**Anthea Fordyce**

Secretary

**Nicola Memo**

Treasurer

**Scott Switzer**

**Bev Kobe**

**Joanna Moss**

Executive Director

**Michael Oates**

# A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



We are happy to present this annual report in our 55th year of providing services to our community. Since the beginnings of the organization in 1969, there has been steady growth, and this year saw that continue.

In our youth programs, we saw the addition of two new service offerings. First, staff in the Attendance Centre Program have been trained to begin delivering WiseGuyz, an evidence-informed program designed for young men to promote healthy relationships and prevent adolescent dating violence. Next, we submitted a proposal through the Building Safer Communities Fund to expand our Restorative Approaches program and increase our presence within schools and reach more students.



Along with growth in programs is an ongoing focus on growing the relationships we have with various other organizations and agencies. In the summer, we started working differently with Family Service Thames Valley (FSTV): with some grant funding from the Community Services Recovery Fund, we did a pilot project with FSTV and Project Home with an aim of supporting staff resilience and wellness.

What we learned from that pilot project has the potential to help us develop new ways to continue to respond to the needs of staff as they work with our community.

We also joined the London Police Services and LUSO Community Services in a police-led project called “B.U.I.L.D.S.”, Building Unity In London’s Diverse Society. This project aims to build connections and opportunities for youth through educational awareness, youth engagement, and mitigation of violence within schools.

While all of these things have been going on, we’ve been continuing with our efforts to raise awareness of the important work that we do in London Middlesex. As the lead agency for the Human Services Justice Coordinating Committee, we hosted and led a one-day conference in October with speakers from the Ministry of the Attorney General, one of our local crown attorneys, CMHA Windsor Essex, John Howard Ontario, and from our own organization too. We were also part of press conferences at London Police, City of London council meetings, and one of our managers, Mick Kunze, was a panelist on “The Agenda with Steve Paikin” on TVO.





Of course, we also recognize that we need to continue to support our participants including creating opportunities for them to share their voices and stories.

During Restorative Justice Week in November, one of our participants was our keynote speaker, sharing his experience with incarceration and introduction to restorative justice. While continuing to work on repairing relationships with his own family and friends, he also actively continues to provide opportunities for others to share their own stories through poetry: he has published two, and is working on a third, book of collected poems written by others who are serving, or have served, time in the prison system.

And, this year also saw St. Leonard's grow in a bit of a different way: the acquisition of a (new to us) building on King Street that will become a new home for many of our staff! At the time of writing, we are finalizing plans for our Supported Independent Living, Project Home, and Mental Health Justice Supportive Housing programs to get moved in and bring a vibrant energy to the new space.

Of course, none of this is possible without the people that are at the heart of St. Leonard's. Our teams continue to welcome new members into the organization and give lots of effort in creating an inclusive space where all of our people can feel a sense of belonging. From staff-led committees focusing on diversity and equity, staff wellness, and creating opportunities for social inclusion, we continue to see more and more how our staff want to be included: whether it is participating in the London Pride Parade, getting competitive on the baseball diamond, or taking part in Halloween decorating contests and holiday clothing and food drives, our staff are there!





And, no less important to the growth and success of the organization are the members of our Board of Directors. Alan O'Brien (Board Chair), Gordon Thane (Vice Chair), Nicola Memo (Secretary), Scott Switzer (Treasurer), Beth Allison, Anthea Fordyce, Bev Kobe, Jody Graham, and Joanna Moss all give of their time, their expertise, and their passion and commitment in seeing St. Leonard's flourish. This year, we will bid farewell to Jody Graham: Jody has served 6 years on our Board, several of those years as our Treasurer, and her contributions to the organization have been instrumental in our success.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the Leadership of St. Leonard's, we extend our sincere thanks to our dedicated employees, our numerous collaborators, and our valued participants for their unwavering support and contributions. The overarching goal of our strategic plan is "transforming community through collective impact" and we will do it because of all of you!

**Michael Oates**

Executive Director







# RESTORATIVE JUSTICE DAY 2023

*Laena Leandro Starr*

Restorative Justice Day has become a significant date for SLCS. It is a day when we celebrate the impact of restorative practices on the lives of those we serve, while also strengthening the bond among our staff. It is an opportunity to honour our values and openly discuss the barriers we strive to overcome in our services.

During Restorative Justice Day at SLCS, we had the privilege of hearing from a program participant who shared his personal experience with restorative justice and the profound impact it has had, and continues to have, on his life. This participant also shared his remarkable accomplishment of self-publishing two books, which are compilations of penitentiary poetry written by incarcerated individuals. His goal with these books is to provide people in these institutions an outlet to express themselves through the art of poetry. In his words, "Imagine every goal you are working towards comes to a grinding halt. Imagine all your wildest dreams turning into your worst nightmares. Imagine all your hopes fading away, to be put on a shelf for at least 15 years. This book represents a motion to make these goals, dreams, and hopes come back to life and seem more tangible. It gives hope to the hopeless, and goals to those with no direction."

Here's one of the poems from the second edition of *Screwed Up: Penitentiary Poetry*:

## *Newborn Son*

*Unconditional love to my newborn son*

*In my darkest hours, I feel like I have won*

*You and your mom made the pain go away*

*Don't follow in my footsteps, just listen to what I say*

*Always be a leader and do whatever it takes*

*I've done everything wrong, so learn from my mistakes*

*Don't ever stop fighting for everything you need*

*But know when to stop before need turns to greed*

*I'm never gonna be the world's greatest dad*

*Please don't resent me, it's the only life I had*

*I pray every day that I'll be able to watch you grow*

*And it breaks my heart 'cause I just don't know*

*You and your mom were god's gifts to me*

*But I couldn't let you live in my insanity*

*I racked my brain on how to raise you right*

*With the heart-breaking solution of outta mind, outta sight*

*But keep risin', little man, don't ever look down*

*Keep your eyes on the prize and you'll wear the crown*

At the end of his presentation, he signed a few copies of his books for our staff, and we thanked him and his family for their eagerness to showcase the impact of restorative practices on those who do not take the power of second chances for granted.



We also had the participation of our Manager of Forensic and Supportive Housing Programs, Mick Kunze, who spoke about the importance of play, the potential it has in transforming relationships, and brainstorming creative ideas for engaging in play with peers, participants, and the community. This was a great opportunity for us to integrate strategies into our daily routines to decompress and alleviate the challenges that come with our work.

Restorative Justice Day perfectly exemplifies how the values celebrated on this day serve as the foundation of our mission and shape our organizational culture. In alignment with our mission statement, we are committed to supporting, advocating for, and empowering individuals who are, or are at risk of being, justice-involved. Restorative justice, with its emphasis on inclusion, collaboration, compassion, and accountability, aligns seamlessly with our identity.





# LONDON'S WHOLE OF COMMUNITY SYSTEM RESPONSE TO HEALTH & HOMELESSNESS – AN OPPORTUNITY FOR COLLABORATION & GROWTH

*Mick Kunze*

Over the past eighteen months, a markable shift has occurred in London's health and homelessness sector. As the result of another utterly tragic and preventable death of a beloved community member, organizations from across the health and social service sector, alongside local educational institutions, developers, businesses, and, notably, individuals with lived and living experience came together to, in simple terms, change the way we respond to the needs of the most vulnerable individuals within our community. At the centre of this new work ethos, which was termed London's Whole of Community System Response to Health & Homelessness (or H&H, for short), was to break down silos, increase collaboration between different sectors, and respond meaningfully to the ongoing crisis that affects the health and well-being of so many of our community members. In other terms,

“  
*we believe that housing is  
healthcare and a  
fundamental human right.*

St. Leonard's Community Services, London & Region (SLCS), has been actively involved in H&H from the very beginning. We had representatives from across the agency at the initial summits—representatives who clearly and with determination communicated our desire to support this movement.

Amongst those present were frontline staff, program managers, and members of our senior leadership team. But our commitment to this movement did not end there: the summit resulted in the creation of a number of accountability, implementation, backbone, and reference tables. And immediately, staff from our organization committed to be part of these tables. In fact, some members of our organization even stood up and committed to co-chairing some of those tables, leading conversations across the community, with a variety of partners; guiding strategic implementation of H&H, and developing evaluation and research frameworks that support the work of H&H, amongst many other things.



“  
**We are not healthy  
until we take care of  
each other.**

**JENNA ROSE SANDS,**  
Executive Director, Safe Space



These past eighteen months have been a tremendous journey for our community, and for SLCS, as an integral part of this journey. Staff involved in the tables have built collaboration with numerous community partners, aligning closely with our strategic and operational plans, as well as with our Mission, Vision, and Values. Moreover, those participating at the tables have also brought back to the organization new ideas, new questions, new ways of doing and thinking about things.

While innovation may not be one of our values, through H&H we have been innovating a new system that, at its heart, aligns closely with what we do every day, and which we strive toward: building a community where everyone feels safe, valued, and supported.

While much has been achieved already, more is to be done. I am incredibly excited to see what the next year(s) will have in store for H&H, and our organization's role in it. I know that we will certainly remain present at the various tables. As an organization, I believe we have much to contribute within H&H. We are creative, have never shied away from a challenge, and come with a unique set of knowledge and expertise. What this may translate to in the future remains to be seen. Either way, though, I know it will be exciting. Stay tuned!



# ACCREDITATION

*Kerri Cushing-Mitchener*

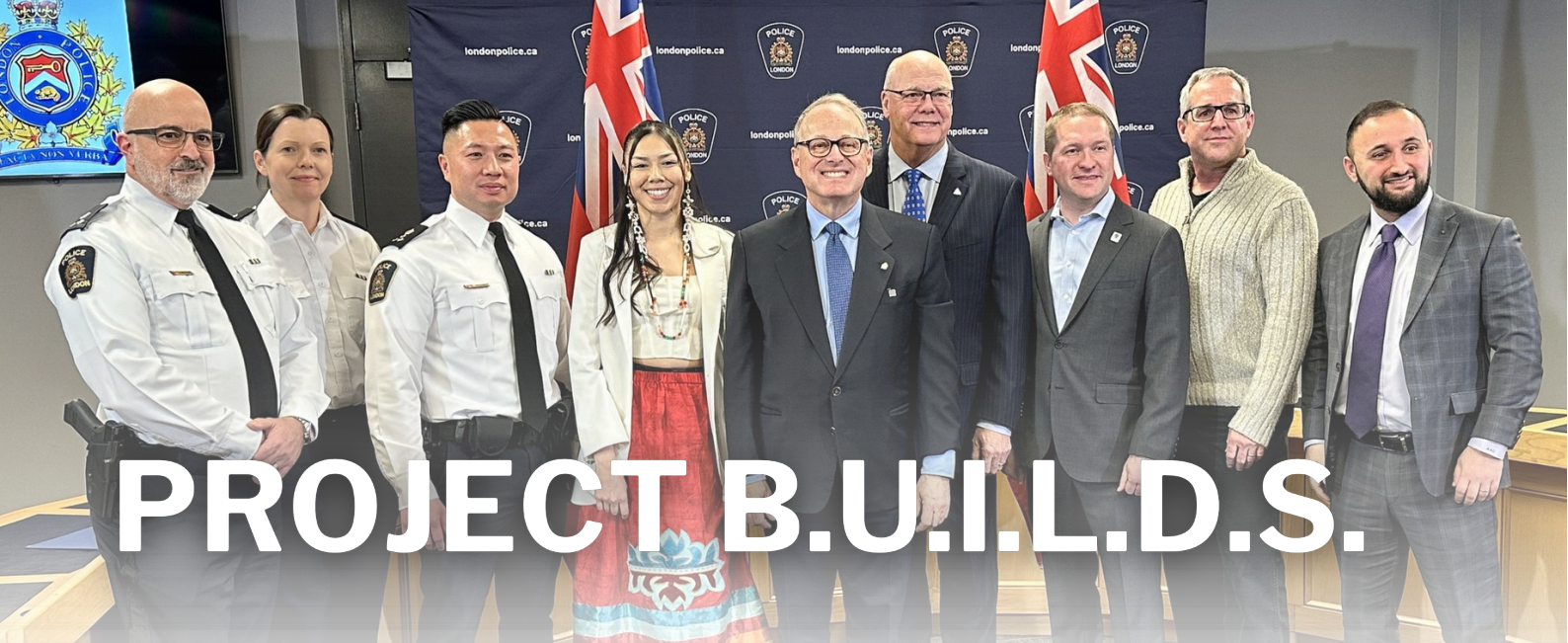


St. Leonard's successfully achieved accreditation status for the very first time in 2020. During our 2020-21 Annual Report, we highlighted the culmination of work that was demonstrated through good governance, fiscal responsibility, and the provision of quality, responsive services to meet 100% of the standards. As we are currently in the preparation phase for our second review in the fall, what stands out as we look back on the last four years are the incredible efforts of our teams. The people in our community whom our employees provide service to are some of the most complex individuals; many struggling with mental health, addictions, food and employment insecurity, justice involvement and being unhoused.

And all of this happening during a global pandemic that people and communities are still recovering from. Every SLCS employee, no matter what role they play within the organization, has put their heart and soul into their work, in a collective and compassionate effort to impact our community so that everyone feels safe, valued, and supported. We are excited to show our reviewers from the Canadian Centre for Accreditation that their stamp of excellence in service is taken seriously, as demonstrated through our actions to support our program participants, our community and each other! We look forward to sharing with you, our partners in this work, the results of another successful accreditation!







In January of 2024 SLCS announced our collaboration with London Police Services on Project B.U.I.L.D.S!

The vision of the London Police Service project B.U.I.L.D.S. (Bringing Unity in London's Diverse Society) is to build lasting connections and positive opportunities for youth and diverse members of the City of London with the goal of mutual understanding, respect and trust. This funding will assist the London Police Service in the creation of innovative models focusing on the areas of crime prevention, strategies for youth engagement and mitigating violence within the schools.

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted many, but more significantly youths. Within the London school systems and the community, many of the youth have lost direction, their purpose and ability to interact positively with their community and peers. Compounding this even further is the removal of police officers from schools. This has impacted the police-youth relationship and precipitated violence and criminal activity amongst the youths and within the schools. In order to build connections and unity within the schools, a collaborative initiative within the community is needed.

Utilizing the Community Services Unit members, Project B.U.I.L.D.S will enable the London Police Service to host workshops, training conferences, programs and community events that are in line with the London Police Service 's mission of ensuring the safety and well being of London's communities and the Ministry's priority of School Safety. This undertaking by the London Police Service is one of a kind that involves partnerships across all professions and community members where a dialogue style approach with the youth and diverse members will occur.

As a result, the London Police Service, will invite community partners within the diverse groups and experts in the field to educate, mentor and support this proactive approach. Uniting with SLCS and other community partners.





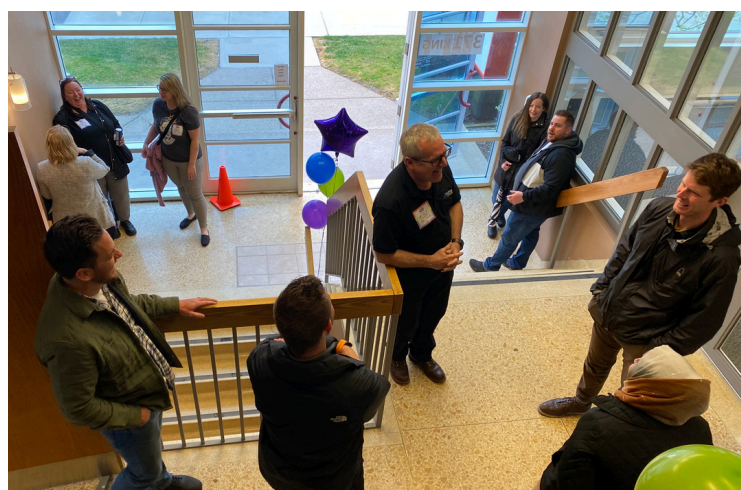
# OUR NEW BUILDING

One of the exciting developments over the past year was the acquisition of our new (to us) building!

You may know that, for the past several years, St. Leonard's has been renting offices, totaling about 10,000 square feet of space: 499 Hill Street (which is where our Supported Independent Living team operates from) and 340 Saskatoon Street (where the Project Home team operates from) both of approximately 5,000 square feet each. About 18 months ago, we made the decision to begin looking for an appropriate space that we might purchase (and own, rather than rent) that would provide enough room for both teams, including having enough parking and being located centrally...not an easy task.

Our search was successful and at the end of the fiscal year, we officially became owners of 371 King Street! It is located on the south side of King Street between Waterloo and Colborne.

The building has approximately 15,600 square feet of space across 3 levels. It has 86 parking spaces and is centrally located (it's about a 250 metre walk from 405 Dundas). The first floor is a combination of several offices, a large open conference-type room, and several large storage rooms. The second floor is primarily office spaces with a small meeting room and small kitchen area. The third floor is more office spaces, a larger kitchen and lunch room, and a larger board room-type meeting space.





There are washrooms on all 3 floors, lots of windows and natural light.

Our plan is that SIL and Project Home will move into the space in the months to come, likely during the summer of 2024. In addition, the Mental Health Justice Supportive Housing program will move out of the mezzanine area at 405 and take some of the office spaces there (which then also frees some space at 405 Dundas for where our staffing complement continues to grow). The large conference space on the 1st floor will become a training space: rather than renting rooms at BMO, we will be able to conduct staff training etc. in our own building. There is enough storage space that we will be able to stop renting storage units. The availability of ample parking is a huge plus: as it is currently, we rent additional parking spots near Project Home's office at 340 Saskatoon, simply because of the lack of on-site parking.

As we are writing this for our annual report, the SIL, Project Home, and MHJSH teams are having discussions about the space and planning to move. As the year progresses, we will be exploring our options for better accessibility to the site.

By the fall of 2024, the site will undoubtedly be alive and busy with our teams making it their own!







# THE CODY AWARD 2023

In June 2023, we had the immense privilege of celebrating with Dr. Carey Sturgeon as she was honoured with the St. Leonard's Society of Canada Cody Award. This prestigious award recognizes individuals who have made exceptional contributions to community corrections, working alongside or in support of St. Leonard's.

Dr. Sturgeon's nomination came from staff across numerous programs, a testament to her far-reaching impact. In presenting the award, St. Leonard's Canada highlighted:

“*In reading your nomination, it was clear that you do far more than just show up to do your job – you show up courageously and with great compassion to help the people who live and work at SLCS realize their full potential. Your dedication, support, and actions towards the people at SLCS have clearly made an impact on their organization, and also on all of us who comprise the St. Leonard's network across Canada. As such, the St. Leonard's Society of Canada Board of Directors had no hesitation in approving your nomination.*”

For years, Dr. Sturgeon has been a reference for guidance and support for our participants and our organization. Her undeniable commitment and heartfelt contributions have profoundly enriched us all. We are deeply grateful for her dedication and could not think of someone more deserving of this recognition!





# Our Impact

6,640 TOTAL PEOPLE SERVED

**2,279**

Total Adults  
Served

Adult Community Programs

**2,088**

Adult Residential Programs

**191**

**4,361**

Total Youth  
Served

Youth Community Programs

**468**

Youth School-Based Programs

**3,863**



# SLCS BY THE NUMBERS

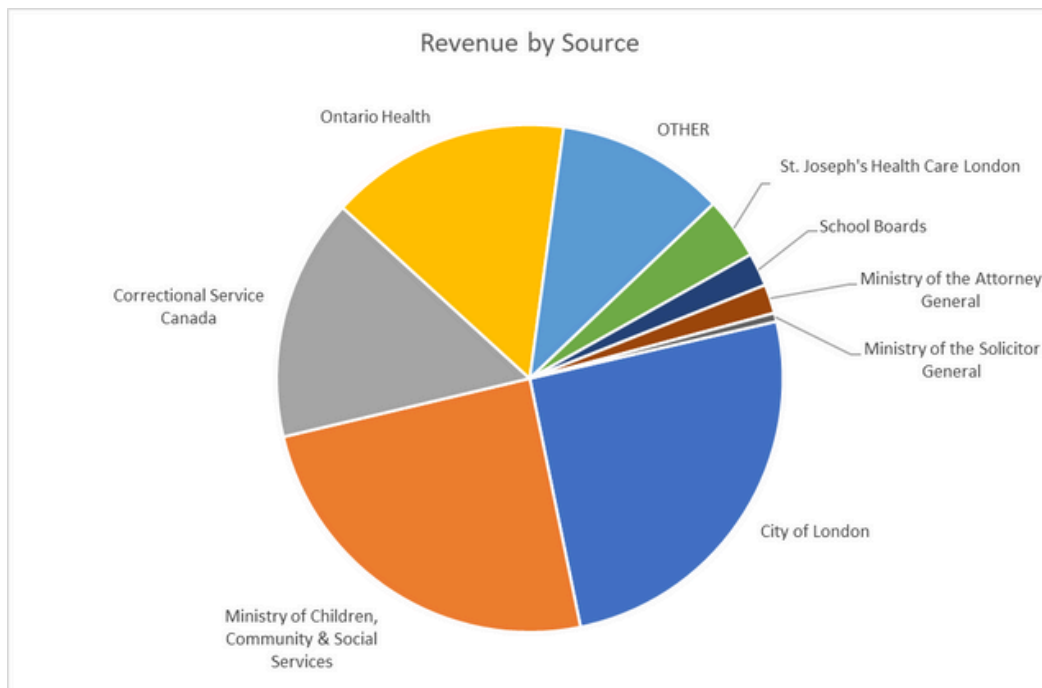


78	Restorative conferences during the year held by the Youth Justice Committees
337	Visits provided by the London Reporting Centre
381	Individuals served in our adult diversion programs
1,057	Participants supported by Project Home
1,268	Hours of service to youth in our school programs
1,477	Number of visits by the Housing First Registered Practical Nurse
2,568	Hours of service in the Attendance Centre Program
2,900	Students participated in our Peer Power, our school-based early intervention/prevention program
4,846	Hours of service to youth in our youth community programs
8,749	Support days in the Supported Independent Living Program
15,912	Bed days in our residential programs



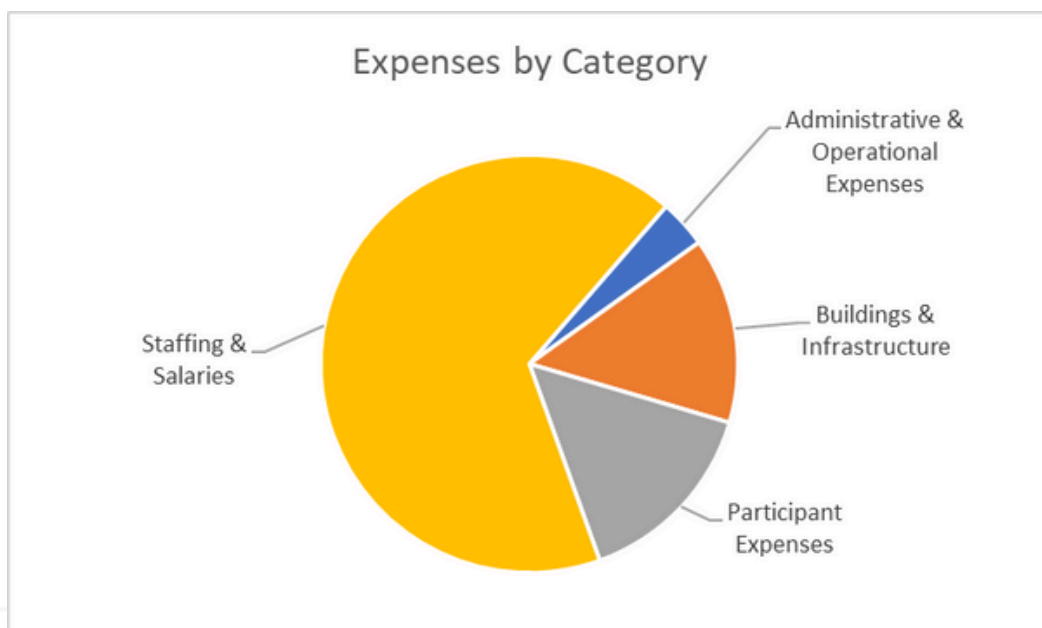
# SOURCES OF FUNDING

2 0 2 3 / 2 4



# SLCS EXPENSES BY CATEGORY

2 0 2 3 / 2 4







# About Us

## St. Leonard's Community Services London & Region

While St. Leonard's Society of London is our legal name, today, St. Leonard's is known as St. Leonard's Community Services, London & Region (SLCS). SLCS offers community-based support programs and residential centres that:

- Assist persons in conflict, or at risk of conflict, with the justice system, all within a restorative practices framework
- Develop, implement and advocate for improved policies, procedures and service delivery within the justice system to assist in the prevention of crime
- Promote acceptance of responsibility and accountability by persons in conflict with the law to assist with changing behaviour that contributes to crime
- Promote understanding and education to our communities about their responsibility in both the incidence of crime and in the manner in which society responds to it

While SLCS continues to evaluate and respond to the needs of the communities it serves, the spirit of SLCS remains consistent with the original core values its founding members shared.



# Mission

To support and advocate with individuals who are, or who are at risk of being, justice-involved.

# Vision

A community where everyone feels safe, valued, and supported.

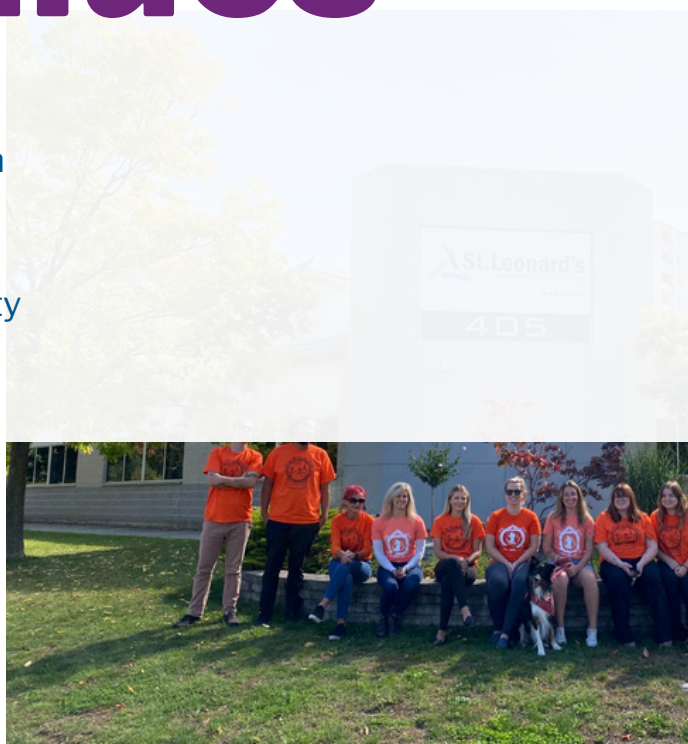
# Values

Inclusion

Collaboration

Compassion

Accountability







**St. Leonard's**  
community services  
LONDON & REGION

*A community where  
everyone feels safe,  
valued, and supported.*

**Our administrative offices and many of our community-based programs are located at:**

**405 Dundas Street**

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**N6B 1V9**

**Telephone: 519-850-3777**

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**Website: [www.slcs.ca](http://www.slcs.ca)**

