

ANNUAL REPORT

CMHA Niagara

2023/24



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Niagara
Mental health for all

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ACCESS LINE matches you with the support you need from over 100 services across Niagara. Call today for direct connections to services such as crisis intervention, housing, groups, withdrawal management, addictions support, employment, and caregiver support.



Message from the board president and executive director

As another year closes, the pages of CMHA Niagara's annual report provide an opportunity to reflect, review and regroup.

With a mission to strengthen mental wellness in Niagara, we believe timely access and intervention can reduce frequency and severity of our community's mental health concerns. We're grateful for our dedicated staff who lend incredible talents and experience to their work every day. We recognize our clients' resilience in undertaking their journeys of hope, healing and recovery. And we acknowledge our funders, supporters, volunteers and donors for their trust in our work.

This past year has been one of progress, change and achievements. In the face of turbulent socio-economic times, amplified by a consistently-rising demand for mental health and addictions services, we're proud to have served 8,772 clients (with another 8,035 additional telephone interactions).

As a growing and dynamic organization, we've adapted to technological advancements, changing complexities of mental health and substance use, new discoveries in client care, political reforms and policy initiatives. Through this, we've role modelled continuous quality improvement.

Leveraging such initiatives as cultural safety training; trauma-informed care; inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility; motivational interviewing; harm reduction; and crisis intervention training, we continue to lead the way in community service provision. As we venture into a new year, we'll continue to seek new opportunities, strengthen partnerships, advocate for enhanced government funding and devise innovative solutions to the challenges and opportunities.

In any given year, one-in-five people in Niagara personally experience a mental health concern or illness. The other four love, work with or care for someone impacted. CMHA Niagara exists to strengthen mental wellness and build a Niagara where mental health is readily recognized, supported and optimized. As a trusted partner in mental health and addictions systems, we're privileged to provide these valuable services to our community, and we'll always strive for progressive improvements in all we do.



Andrew Bassingthwaighte

Andrew Bassingthwaighte
Board president



Tara McKendrick

Tara McKendrick
Executive director

Strategic goals 2019-24

➤ Organizational wellness to support quality services

Improving internal culture, leadership and operations to enhance service offerings and experiences for clients.

➤ Strengthening foundations to build capacity

Strengthening organizational values, approaches and capacity to improve and broaden service delivery.

➤ Expanding pathways to service through collaboration

Increasing collaboration and broadening our outreach to continue building on community presence and impact.

➤ An adaptive and sustainable utilization of resources

Developing sustainability and capacity to match diverse funding sources with programming needs.

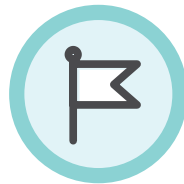
➤ Excellence in mental health and addictions across the region

Strengthening the network of service providers to improve service co-ordination, setting a standard of excellence in care and demonstrating collaborative leadership across the region.

Vision, mission and values



A Niagara where mental health is recognized, supported and optimized



Our purpose is to strengthen mental wellness in the Niagara community



Service, respect, integrity, teamwork, competency



Year-in-review

Collaboration in Niagara region

CMHA Niagara executive director Tara McKendrick co-presented findings on behalf of the Niagara Ontario Health Team's Mental Health & Addictions Working Group to the Niagara Region's Public Health and Social Services Committee in May 2023. The presentation provided an opportunity to create awareness about the challenges faced in the mental health and addictions sector. It also provided an overview of the work being done, the provincial strategy, and Roadmap to Wellness as it relates to the sector, providing a better understanding of the challenges, existing services and agencies, over-reliance on crisis services, capacity issues and funding required for sustainable service delivery.



Pre-budget consultation

With the support of CMHA Ontario Team, CMHA Niagara executive director Tara McKendrick appeared before the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs regarding pre-budget consultations in January 2024. The presentation highlighted the region's declaration of a state of emergency on mental health, homelessness and addictions, and the challenges the mental health sector faces. CMHA advocated on behalf of the community's mental health sector for additional government funding to help stabilize programming and strengthen evidence-based mental health and addictions services, and also requested resources for supportive housing.



Civilian Crisis Response Team pilot

A temporary grant through the solicitor general allowed CMHA Niagara, in partnership with the Niagara Regional Police Service, to pilot a new Civilian Crisis Response Team (CCRT) for Welland and surrounding area. Two front-line staff acted as secondary response to provide follow up based on referrals from police in the community. The pilot was seven days a week from November 2023 until March 31, 2024.



Donor recognition wall

CMHA Niagara installed a new donor recognition wall in the reception area at the St. Catharines office. Although not yet officially unveiled, the installation was completed at the end of 2023 and allows the agency the opportunity to showcase and thank donors of \$5,000 and over.





Office expansion

CMHA Niagara secured additional square footage at its St. Catharines headquarters, prompting office expansions to accommodate growth and more opportunities for safe and healthy face-to-face services for clients.

Truth and reconciliation town hall

Our organization hosted a virtual truth and reconciliation town hall in September featuring guest presenter Tanya Glabb, manager of Métis languages, initiatives and curriculum for the Métis Nation of Ontario. She shared many valuable teachings, including historical background about the Métis, her personal story about resilience and giving back to the community, and an informative video giving more insight into Métis culture.



Trauma-informed care panel

Executive director Tara McKendrick, joined by co-directors of the University of Buffalo's renowned Institute on Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care, participated in a trauma-informed panel. The free forum, held in November 2023, taught best practices on effectively interacting with people suffering the effects of trauma. In our effort to ensure the sustainability of this modality, another cohort of CMHA Niagara staff have been trained in motivational interviewing.



Mental health drug court

CMHA Niagara is a partner with the new Ontario Court of Justice's mental health drug court, a therapeutic court dealing with mental health and problematic substance use. This court provides court-monitored treatment, trauma-informed support and an alternative to incarceration for some of the most vulnerable and difficult to engage participants in the criminal justice system. This multi-sector team approach aims to reduce recidivism, reduce crime severity, address detrimental social health, increase public safety and reduce higher-risk interactions with law enforcement.



Safe Beds

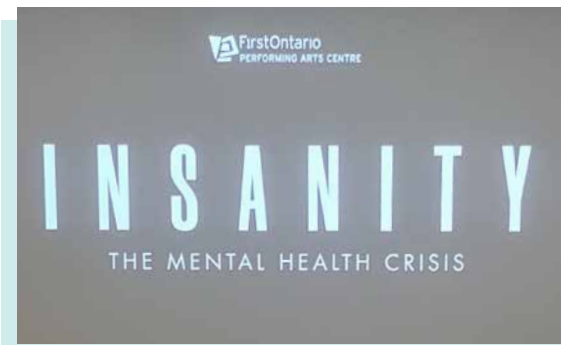
The agency has continued successful partnerships with Community Addiction Services of Niagara, Bethesda and Quest on Safe Beds, helping to build staff capacity and providing Safe Beds clients with access to addictions, primary care and behavioural supports while in this short-term crisis support program.



Year-in-review

INSANITY: The Mental Health Crisis film screening

The First Performing Arts Centre's film house presented a free community movie screening of *INSANITY: The Mental Health Crisis*. This personal point-of-view documentary about the director's experience living with her brother, who lived with schizophrenia and went missing 25 years ago, also explored the lives of other families dealing with mental illness. The film was followed by a moderated panel discussion including CMHA Niagara executive director Tara McKendrick.



Memorial Forest Vigil

The annual Memorial Forest Vigil, held in October 2023, was a poignant event remembering those who passed away after a courageous battle with mental illness. Hosted by Niagara Region Mental Health, the event is organized in partnership with committee members from CMHA Niagara, Distress Centre Niagara, Positive Living Niagara, Niagara College and community members. The hour-long tribute was well attended by the community and included a variety of music, speakers with lived experience and reading of commemorative plaque names.



Talk Today partnership with Brock

CMHA Niagara and Brock University established a new partnership to pilot and evaluate CMHA's comprehensive amateur sports mental health program, Talk Today. During the fall semester, men's soccer and women's rugby athletes received mental health and suicide prevention education and were paired with mental health coaches to receive support throughout the season. In November, Brock Athletics, the Student Wellness and Accessibility Centre and CMHA Niagara provided students with mental health and addiction information and resources and invited them to take positive mental health message photos.



Grape and Wine Festival

Staff, family, clients and volunteers were on hand at the end of September 2023 to participate in CMHA Niagara's float at the Grape and Wine Festival's annual Grande Parade. The theme for the float was "harvesting mental wellness," depicted by storm clouds giving way to a rainbow of hope and recovery. It was a fun-filled day walking through the crowd-filled streets of St. Catharines.



Year-in-review



Wellness for All fundraiser

CMHA Niagara's annual fundraising event, Wellness for All, raised over \$20,000 in February 2024 as the community came together to celebrate mental wellness in support of our agency. The evening included songs, spoken word, live art demonstration, a mental wellness panel, delicious food and fundraising activities including a live art auction, silent auction and raffle.



IceDogs promote mental health awareness

Staff and family of CMHA Niagara enjoyed a night on the town to see the Niagara IceDogs take on the Ottawa 67's at the annual Talk Today mental health awareness game. The group was easy to spot wearing their bright green toques! A CMHA Niagara information booth promoted the agency



Artwork presented by Willow Arts Community

The Willow Arts Community presented CMHA Niagara with a unique artwork, created at the Wellness for All fundraiser. Audience members wrote a "glimmer" – a moment in life that sparks joy or peace – and crumpled it up to be used to create the wings of the moth. The insect was chosen both for its attraction to light (and how we often spark small embers of hope for others) and how, unlike the beautiful butterfly, it's often derogatorily viewed, despite being vital to the ecosystem. The artwork, created and donated by Dani RJ Hummel (lead artist) and Shauna MacLeod (founder/director of Willow Arts), will hang in the main entrance at CMHA Niagara's Safe Beds program.



Community engagement

To broaden CMHA Niagara's outreach and build on community impact and presence, the agency participated in numerous information displays through the year. These included: Suicide Prevention Day, Niagara Region's Hepatitis Day, Niagara Falls Mental Wellness Fair, Niagara College Community Resource Information Fair, Niagara Health Wellness Fair, Mainstream's Path to Success, Positive Living's wellness event, Recovery Day, Quest Community Health Care's barbecue, Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre's Health Fair and more.



Staff appreciation event

Staff enjoyed many laughs during our annual staff appreciation event held in the fall. After a delicious dinner and dessert, table partners teamed up for snacks, door prizes and a fun and competitive trivia tournament. Staff awards and recognition for service and attributes concluded the evening.

Programs and services



Same-day counselling

Mental health counsellors provide same-day service to individuals by exploring their immediate concerns, offering assistance with problem-solving and crisis management.



Safe Beds

Short-term crisis support is available 24-7 as an alternative to hospitalization. This voluntary, non-medical residential program offers a therapeutic environment for individuals to stay while they work through their crisis.



Group counselling

Group counselling focuses on life skills, illness management and recovery, behaviour therapy, anxiety, depression, substance use and suicide prevention.



Ontario Structured Psychotherapy

Free, short-term therapy to help those with mild-to-moderate depression/anxiety-related conditions. By referral only from health care providers and self-referrals. Forms at www.OSPWest.ca.



Real Work

This specialized employment program helps individuals who experience mental health concerns as barriers to employment maintain meaningful employment.



Supportive housing

Offered across the region, this program provides an apartment and counselling services to individuals who require weekly, intensive support.



Crisis Outreach and Support Team (COAST)

A mobile crisis outreach and intervention service that offers immediate telephone counselling and on-site crisis outreach intervention. It operates seven days a week, 24 hours a day, for individuals 16 and up experiencing a mental health crisis.



Case management

Counsellors visit individuals in the community to offer support working through the challenges of living with mental illness.



Court diversion and support

Individuals living with mental illness charged with minor offences are assisted by community support workers at court, detention centres and upon release with transitioning back into the community.



Transitional Housing Support Program

This congregate living program offers three-to-six months of residential support to those with a mental illness and/or addiction. Individuals learn life skills, set goals and become connected to services to assist them in their transition to independent living.



Education and training

Education, training and presentations on a variety of mental health and wellness topics are available to agencies, businesses and groups by request.



Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Team (MCRRT)

In partnership with Niagara Regional Police Service, a mental health counsellor and a police officer provide a first response to 911 calls related to mental health in St. Catharines, Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake. This program provides service to all ages.



Volunteering

Volunteers are occasionally needed to assist at CMHA events, third-party fundraisers and bingo. If interested in volunteering, contact kmarazzo@cmhaniagara.ca.

Service statistics

2023-24

PROGRAM	CATEGORY	INDIVIDUALS SERVED
Case management	Long-term	428
Information and referral	Brief	3,645
Concurrent	Long-term	28
Dialectical behaviour therapy	Long-term	28
Court support	Long-term	287
Urgent Support	Brief	850
Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Team (MCRRT)	Brief	549
MCRRT2 –Niagara Falls	Brief	487
COAST Civilian	Brief	29
Support within housing	Long-term	132
Safe Beds	Brief	306
Real Work	Long-term	329
National employment program	Long-term	30
Transitional housing	Long-term	8
Walk-in counselling	Brief	217
Crisis Outreach & Support Team (COAST)	Brief	1,108
Youth navigator	Brief	51
Justice Safe Beds	Brief	91
Safe Beds Substance Use	Brief	135
Ontario Structured Psychotherapy	Long-term	34
TOTAL		8,772



8,772

Individuals served



7,468

Brief services



1,304

Long-term services



8,035

Additional telephone interactions

Help us help someone you know

Fundraising is a necessary priority for CMHA Niagara in order to meet the increasing mental health and addictions needs of Niagara residents.

Individuals, groups, families, service clubs, and organizations who coordinate and host their own fundraising events to support and promote awareness of CMHA Niagara are invaluable. We are consistently inspired by our community partners' creativity to host unique events that help us to strengthen mental wellness in Niagara.

Individual contributions, corporate donations, and legacy gifts help to make mental health and addictions matter. These philanthropic donations impact the lives of thousands in our community ensuring available and accessible mental health and addictions programs when and where they are needed.

Visit our website's direct access donation portal at www.niagara.cmha.ca for online donations.

\$25

provides someone entering our Safe Beds program with a "Welcome Kit" - new t-shirt, sweatpants & essential toiletries.

\$100

provides a one-on-one session with a mental health counsellor or supplies for 10 people to participate in Life Skills training.

\$300

provides three meals a day for one month to a residential crisis client.

\$500

provides a 1-day/1-night stay in a therapeutic environment for someone working through their mental health crisis.



360° OF GIVING

Small circles.
Big hearts.
Lasting impact.



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Niagara
Mental health for all

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
Niagara
La santé mentale pour tous

Donations and third-party events — thank you!



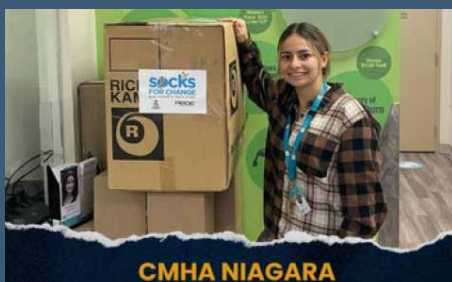
Tread Forward donated \$19,618.13 to CMHA Niagara from selling mental wellness apparel at pop-up kiosks across the region. To date, they've generously donated \$41,000 to benefit our organization.



Tenja Hagenberg donated \$6,270 in proceeds from her annual **Performance on Point Student Showcase**. In total, since 2018 she has raised over \$25,000 for CMHA Niagara!



General Motors St. Catharines doubled their Plant City Grant donation to CMHA Niagara with a whopping \$10,000 in 2023. This donation helps to offset the costs of same-day counselling services.



CMHA Niagara is grateful to **Socks for Change**, a Niagara registered charity that provides Canadian-made, high-quality, warm wool socks and winter accessories to organizations in need. Their donation of 126 pairs of socks, 50 toques and 30 tubes kept CMHA clients warm this season!



Matt Martindale organized the **KS Golf Memorial Tournament** to raise awareness and funds for CMHA Niagara, raising \$5,500 for the agency in July and another \$1,460 received from hockey tournament fundraising.



Thank you to **Henry Schein Canada** for their \$5,000 donation to CMHA Niagara's Crisis Outreach and Support Team (COAST) program. Team Schein members from Niagara-on-the-Lake and across Canada participated in a suicide prevention walk, reflecting with colleagues about mental health and how their team has been affected by suicide.



CMHA Niagara received 216 personal hygiene kits for our Safe Beds, compliments of **Meridian Credit Union and Meridian mortgage specialists** who organized the team-building event through “Kits for a Cause.”



Jeff and Tracy Gamble hosted the second annual **Kyle Gamble Memorial Golf Tournament** in July, raising \$4,548 for CMHA Niagara. Many thanks for your efforts and for helping strengthen mental health in our community.



The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario donated \$3,500 to CMHA Niagara at their 85th annual conference “Cultivating Municipal Excellence” held in June 2023.



Tanya Cullen, organizer of **Ride for Mental Health**, donated \$2,030 to CMHA Niagara. To date, she has raised over \$9,300 from her bicycle circuit from Ridgeway to Port Colborne in memory of her niece, Carra-Lee.



The Metal Community of Niagara organized “**Fade to Black**,” a concert in memory of Samael Raven on Jan. 19, raising \$2,515 for CMHA’s mental health and addictions services.



Support Pack’s Run/Walk for Mental Health raised \$1,570 for CMHA! Many thanks to all, especially organizers Kaitlyn and Katrina.



Tracy and Vinny Fattore, of **Thistle Book Shop & Café**, hosted Canadian Independent Book Store Day in May 2023, raising \$1,554 in proceeds from donations and raffles to benefit CMHA Niagara.



Thank you to Brynn and Carmen for organizing their “**Run for Grapes**” half marathon fundraising event, raising \$1,905 for CMHA Niagara.



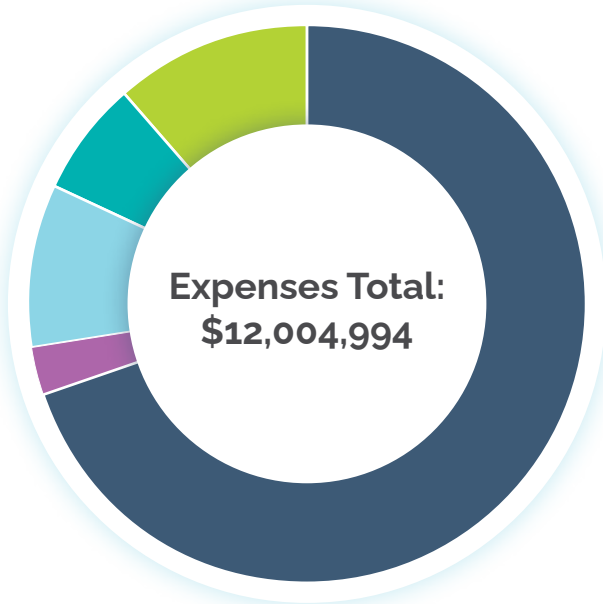
The **Fort Erie Corporate Challenge** hosted a public hot air balloon event to raise funds for CMHA Niagara. Thanks to Ray Rosettani and Holly Mackinnon for promoting mental awareness and raising \$1,008.

Supporters

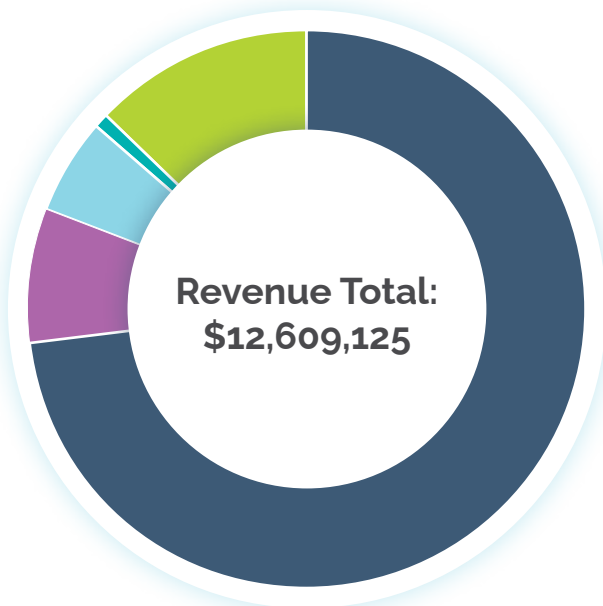
We're grateful to these contributors whose generous donations help CMHA Niagara strengthen mental wellness in the community. This list highlights donations and sponsorships of \$100 or more, with consent to publish (April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024):

- Amanda Costelloe
- AMCTO
- Anuradha Lilmohan
- Benefaction
- Bosch Rexroth
- Brock University
- Brookside Psychologists
- Canada Helps
- Canadian Online Giving Foundation
- Carmen Esau
- Charities Aid Foundation of Canada
- Chris Ventura
- David Featherstone
- Deborah Black
- Delaney Greig
- Diana Okal
- Enbridge Gas
- First Ontario Credit Union
- FrontStream
- Garden City Customs Services Inc.
- General Motors
- Grant Thornton Foundation
- Greater Fort Erie Youth Soccer Club
- Harald Brecht
- Haver & Boecker Niagara
- Heather Kallio
- Henry Schein Canada
- Jamie Gibson
- Janice Sloan
- Janine Hann
- Joyce Morocco
- JPAS International
- Judith George
- Kaitlyn Williams
- Kathy Harten
- Keri Ferencz
- Kraun Electric Inc.
- Kyle Gamble Memorial Golf Tournament
- Lesia Huzar
- Linda Saari
- Lynn & Jim Lief
- Mary Cullen
- Mary Jane Scholtens
- Matt Martindale
- Michael Doucet
- Michelle Kelley
- Michelle Stranges
- Mike McCallion
- Monica Brecht-Yendt
- Mr. & Mrs. R O'Dell
- Neil Alexander Marshall
- Niagara Falls Volunteer Firefighters Association-Station 6
- Pawsitive Productions Inc.
- PayPal Giving Fund Canada
- PenFinancial Credit Union
- Performance on Point
- R Esau Consulting Esau, Ronald Esau
- Randy & Yola Wardrope
- Ray Rosettani
- RBC Foundation
- Reunion Masonic Lodge
- Ronald and Ruth Esau
- Scott Construction
- Sheldon Lisoy
- St. Michael Catholic High School
- Tammy and Robert Gagnon
- Tanya Cullen
- The Benevity Community Impact Fund
- Thistle Bookshop & Cafe
- Tiffany Clark
- Tread Forward Fundraising
- Unifor Local 973
- Union Lodge No. 16 I.O.O.F.
- United Way Centraide Ottawa
- Wendy Goertz
- William Charles Mark
- William Pentland
- Wormald Masse Keen Lopinski LLP

Financial overview



Wages & Benefits	\$8,394,095	69.9%
Capital Assets & Amortization	\$342,115	2.8%
Supplies & General	\$1,118,095	9.3%
Funding Directed to Community Partners	\$787,351	6.6%
Occupancy	\$1,363,338	11.4%



Ontario Health	\$9,245,596	73.3%
Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (Housing)	\$969,308	7.7%
Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development	\$678,262	5.4%
United Way of Niagara	\$137,838	1.1%
Rent, Grants, Fundraising, Interest and Other	\$1,578,121	12.5%

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Mental health for all

Contact us



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