

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

SANCTUARY MINISTRIES OF TORONTO



our year in review

[SANCTUARY]

THE ISSUES IN 2023



Unhoused Population

11,000+

Individuals are **unhoused**.

The number is **growing**



Shelter Occupancy

10,700

Sheltered by the **City of Toronto**

=

9,000
In shelters

1,700
In bridging programs



Shelter Bed Availability

1,095

Avg. # of daily calls to
Central Intake

8.9

Avg. # of callers offered
beds daily

291

Avg. # of callers turned away
daily due to no space

October 2023



Foodbank Reliance

1 in 10

Torontonians rely on
foodbank.

2.53M

visits in 2023

Up **50%**
in 2022



Housing Affordability

85%

Rent increase in **10 years**

Ontario Works only **COVERS**

20% of average rent

ODSP only **COVERS**

20% of average rent



Affordable Housing Waitlist

85,000+

Active applications

14 years

average wait time for a

one-bedroom apt.
with rent-geared-to-income (RGI)
housing

THIS IS WHO WE ARE

At Sanctuary we are becoming a healthy, welcoming community in which people who are poor and excluded are particularly valued. We believe this is an expression of the good news embodied in Jesus Christ.

Together, we strive to offer the love, dignity, stability, and resources that all of us need to flourish.

Sanctuary's approach is relationship-based. We invite people to develop genuine, supportive friendships and become engaged in our community. Many of the relationships that people build at Sanctuary are empowering and life-giving, and they are frequently the deciding factor that enables many of us to see hopeful changes in our lives.

We commit ourselves to seeking to live out the Good Way, which encompasses both love and humility, as we bravely journey towards the justice which Jesus proclaimed with his words, life, death and resurrection.

Sanctuary acknowledges the history, spirituality, culture, and ancestral stewardship of the land on which we meet from the Haudenosaunee, and more recently from the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, who are Anishnaabe people. We are grateful that our community includes both First Nations and settler peoples.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE



Monday
Street Outreach

Tuesday
Community Meal - Lunch
Health Clinic

Wednesday
Street Outreach
Arts Studio, Drop-In

Thursday
Community Meal - Dinner
Health Clinic

Friday
Community Care
Bible Study

Sunday
Sunday Worship

MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

The past year saw our community fully return to many of our pre-pandemic rhythms and routines with great celebration from everyone. This included our first Night At Grace's since 2019, a sacred time where we come together to eat, sing, and dance. This year we celebrated outside on our front parking pad, welcoming our immediate neighbours to come join the dance. We also saw a return of Bible studies, community BBQs, and other community trips to farms, Niagara Falls and Blue Jays Games.

These small and big moments of celebration were important acts of joy-filled defiance and necessary sustenance for many in our community, as the worsening affordability crisis and opioid crisis continue to put pressure. The rapidly rising cost of housing has pushed more people onto the streets, and high food inflation saw record numbers of people turn to food banks and drop-in meals for food in 2023.

In 2023, the Board was delighted to welcome two long-term staff members to serve as Pastoral Directors, and join the Leadership Team alongside Simon. Tanja Futter stepped into the role of Pastoral Director for Staff Care after a decade as a registered nurse in our clinic team. Rachel Tulloch stepped into the role of Pastoral Director for Ministry Vision after serving as our Theologian-in-Residence for 15 years. The two bring incredible wisdom and passion for our community to their new leadership roles.

The Board and staff also had extensive conversations and training around racial justice and equity, putting in place a new anti-racism and anti-oppression (ARAO) policy, as well as developing an implementation plan to ensure changes are made for our staff and our community to remove barriers to access and inclusion. This is important work that we are committed to continuing to do in the years ahead.

As we look to the future, we are excited to be undertaking a season of discernment as we conduct a thorough review of how we operate as an organization, a church, and a community. Through this process we seek to understand how we can best support our community in the midst of our changing context, especially for those who are unhoused and facing mental health challenges and addictions. Please pray for us as we together discern how God is calling us to be a community of welcome and healing in these new and increasingly challenging circumstances.

We remain very thankful for the generosity and commitment of our supporting community who have sustained Sanctuary all these years. We know many of you face mounting financial pressures, and that it is an act of sacrifice to continue to support our community.

With deep gratitude,



Simon Beck
Executive Director



Sylvia Keesmat
Chair, Board of Directors

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023

Night at Grace's



Strides for Sanctuary



Together, we raised \$72,000!

OUR CORE VALUES

JUSTICE



We acknowledge that our society is built upon and supports injustice and oppression. These particularly affect the people who make up the Sanctuary community. We are often complicit in unjust systems, but we are committed to working towards what we understand to be God's vision for our world.



BECOMING

We seek to maintain an open, humble posture that invites us to learn together and from one another and to support each other as we live - and struggle - in the tension between who we are and who we strive to be. Through the grace of God, we long for and work towards reconciliation and healing in all of our relationships.

RELATIONAL



We seek to walk alongside one another and share our lives, both giving and receiving care, and valuing each person's gifts. As we walk together in this way, we are given opportunities to honour and bear witness, both privately and publicly, to one another's stories.



WELCOME

We want each person who finds themselves at Sanctuary to be met with warmth, safety, and the sense of home that is rooted in being deeply known and accepted. Therefore, we aim to embrace and love all people in our community for who they are, not for who we think they ought to be.



CREATIVITY

We believe that we are each made in the image of a creative God. As such, we see creative expression as a fundamental human need and a quintessentially human act. Moreover, we recognize the importance of artistic expression as a means of giving a voice to members of our community whose voices are often silenced.



WELLNESS

We believe that all people should be able to pursue wellness of body, soul, and mind. No matter what someone's journey, we desire to offer each person dignity in pursuing their understanding of a quality of life for themselves. As we do this, we long for individual and communal redemption and renewal.



CELEBRATION!

We believe that collective celebration is an important part of our lives together. We seek opportunities for creative, joyful and authentic expressions of our individual and communal uniqueness. In both profound and light-hearted ways, we celebrate the value and gifts of our community and our hope for future redemption.



LIVING OUR



Outreach

We dream of a world overflowing with **JUSTICE**, where all is as it should be, everyone has enough, and everyone belongs. As often as we go out to walk the streets, we are met with the reality that our efforts are inadequate. Simply put, no matter what we do, people will still be alone and deprived of housing. Yet, interactions happen on outreach that speak of a better world, if only for a moment.

Every day we meet people who have known great oppression and yet have found a way to endure. It's a great honour to listen to their joys, hopes, dreams, and pains. We stop to share a story, eye to eye, and know for the briefest of instants that we are in this together. Perhaps in God's alternative economy, those moments will add up.



Sunday Worship

The Sunday Worship service is a sacred time where we explore our own **BECOMING**. We meet together and worship the God who has promised to be in our midst. Sometimes that doesn't look like anything you might expect. We strive for an inclusive and affirming space where everyone is encouraged to join together in Worship.

Intentionally sitting in a circle with the Communion table in the middle is a regular reminder that Jesus is at the centre. It also reminds us that none have special access to the table, that each of us is uniquely welcome, and all are beloved just as they are. To us, this time together is not just a religious ceremony, but a place where everyone can have a voice, where questions and doubts are welcomed. Together we create a space where openness and honesty is honoured, even when it is uncomfortable.



VALUES IN 2023



Community Meals

WELCOMING matters to us both in terms of whom we welcome (everyone! but especially those most in need of a place to belong) and also in terms of what we are welcoming them into (a community of mutual care where people's value is seen and celebrated). Two of the ways we cultivate a welcoming community are through *community meals* and *community care*. Sitting around a table to enjoy a delicious, thoughtfully prepared meal is the place where individuals become part of a community and where strangers move towards relationship and belonging. This year, our post-pandemic meal gatherings have been full of new encounters, lively conversation, and people appreciating Ronald (new Kitchen Manager) and the team's amazing food.

Community care is a significant part of what we each do. We love getting to know and spending time with the people who come through our doors, who hang around outside, or who we encounter during outreach walks. However, community care is not something primarily offered by staff. We help create a space where members of the community can care for each other, extend hospitality to guests, and offer their unique gifts for the benefit of all.



Lucas House

RELATIONALITY is expressed in our subcommunity called "Lucas House." Lucas house is home to four people in Toronto's east end. As with any community, life in the house isn't always smooth sailing. There are relationships issues to attend to, chores to be negotiated, and idiosyncrasies to be lived with. Sanctuary helps manage the place, but we don't think of ourselves as merely landlords for a housing unit. No. We're trying to nurture a growing sense of sharing, mutuality, inclusion, and belonging.



LIVING OUR VALUES

Health Clinic



As a Sanctuary clinic team, we are focused on **WELLNESS** of the whole person - physical, mental, and spiritual. We try to create a space in our clinic that breaks down some of the barriers people face in the traditional medical system. Often people encounter judgment, a lack of understanding, and various roadblocks that dismiss the impact that trauma has had on their lives both past and present.

In the clinic, we frequently see the tremendous negative toll that social marginalization, lack of connection, and loneliness have on overall wellbeing. We strive to build positive relationships that go beyond just meeting physical health needs. This regularly involves taking people out for coffee, helping to clean/organize their apartments, attending appointments with them to be an additional advocate, visiting them in the hospital, and celebrating significant events such as birthdays or sobriety or anything else that comes up. In these ways, in addition to providing clinical care, we seek to nurture the wellbeing of everyone in our community.



Community Arts



During our community art studio, we cultivate a space where people are free to explore their **CREATIVITY** in whatever way they are comfortable. Some days this may involve making cards for friends, practicing sketching techniques, or pouring and swirling together all the brightest colours we can find. Other times we discover that within us there is a story longing to be told. Our artists transform paint and canvas into a means of expressing those things that words could never capture. Creative self-expression of this sort is a chance to see and be seen. Our art-making helps us both convey, and process, the pain, joy, suffering, and hope in our histories and inner worlds.

DOING LIFE TOGETHER

CELEBRATION!



While our community faces more than its fair share of sorrow, we also find ways to celebrate with one another. Celebrating together is not about denial of the hardship and injustice so many face, but it reminds that there is still so much beauty, connection, and joy to be found even despite it. One of our longtime community songs is called "Choosing Joy." In our special events and outings, we choose joy, dancing, adventure, friendship and silliness. Whether it is someone's first time seeing Niagara Falls, a full dance floor, or people experiencing the fresh air and beauty of a farm, **CELEBRATION** is a huge part of our life together.



FINANCIAL & GIVING UPDATE

We are deeply grateful for the longstanding generosity of our supporting community -- friends, family, businesses, churches and foundations. We know many of you have faced mounting financial pressure in 2023 and that it is an act of deliberate sacrifice to continue to support our community. With your gifts, big and small, you have sustained Sanctuary and allowed us to come out of the pandemic in a strong financial position that has enabled us to celebrate in big and small ways the return to shared communal life. This also offers us the opportunity to dream more freely for what comes next for our community!

97%
OF OUR BUDGET
SPENT ON
COMMUNITY
PROGRAMS &
SUPPORT

227
NEW DONORS

\$1.7M
TOTAL DONATIONS

195+
REGULAR
MONTHLY
CONTRIBUTORS

90%
OF OUR INCOME
CAME FROM
PRIVATE
DONORS

WE ARE INDEPENDENTLY AUDITED BY PETER W. HOGG, CPA

OUR TEAM

STAFF

Health Clinic

Aindrea Kiss
Rikki-Lee Martin
Sheryl Mah

Drop-In Support

Ronald Cockburn
David Atwell

Administrative Support

Rica Piccio
Kelliann Robinson
Debra

Sunday Worship

Greg Paul
Sam Sundar-Singh

Outreach

Jay Barton
Simon Beairsto
Gil Clelland
Greg Cook
Angel LeBar
Mark Lewis
Donald Sturrock
Aylish

Art Studio

Alejandra Adarve
Natasha Sudenis

Leadership

Simon Beck
Tanja Futter
Rachel Tulloch



BOARD

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Britt Hudson, Director
Frank Hull, Director
Marnie Smith, Director

Sylvia Keesmaat, Chair
Lynne Westerhof, Secretary
Viva Zhou, Treasurer





We are becoming a healthy, welcoming community where people who are poor and excluded are particularly valued. This is an expression of the good news embodied in Jesus Christ.

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Thank you for your support!