

Inside Shalom's House

by Susan Schwartzentruber

There are moments when I wish you, as donors and supporters, could see what I see. You may wonder, “What is happening inside the Shalom house?” Let me paint a picture for you: each week, 133 individuals walk through our doors, log in for online sessions, or pick up the phone for a counselling appointment. Ten offices are busy from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., each buzzing with the energy of clients seeking healing. And within that buzz, 40 of those sessions are subsidized by Wanda’s Counselling Care Fund, a source of gratitude for those we serve.

I intentionally use the word “buzz,” because recently our staff reflected on the concept of biomimicry, drawing inspiration from the natural world. How can we learn from nature as we seek to guide ourselves and others toward healing? Janine Benyus, a pioneer of biomimicry, teaches us that nature has much to offer in understanding trauma recovery. In nature, each element plays a role in the larger system—seeds are planted, some plants nurture the growth of others, and certain species provide shelter, creating circles of regeneration and healing.

In a similar way, within Shalom’s house, conversations of healing are taking place simultaneously. We reflect on the synergy and energy that flow through our walls each day, as clients and counsellors work together in these interconnected circles of care.

And it is because of your generous support that we are able to foster these healing connections. Your financial contributions make it possible for us to start the journey with each client, guiding them toward peace and wholeness.

This year has been a challenging one, with donations lower than expected. Yet, we remain steadfast in our commitment to our mission: “Shalom provides inclusive and accessible counselling services, supporting people to grow towards peace and wholeness.” Thank you for continuing to support us in this important work. Your generosity truly makes a difference.



A New Group Opportunity

by Melanie Ferrier



This winter, Shalom will offer a new group called “Kintsugi for Suicide Bereavement” for individuals grieving the loss of a loved one to suicide. The 3-week expressive arts group uses the Japanese art of kintsugi, where broken pottery is repaired in a way that highlights—rather than hide—its brokenness. This symbolizes the process of coping with grief. Participants will reflect on the impact of their loved one’s death and how they are adjusting to life without them, using the kintsugi process as both a creative and reflective tool to explore their grief.

Another Record Breaking 10,000 Steps

by Greg Chandler Burns

This year's **10,000 Steps for Mental Health** was a day to remember, bringing together 107 participants and exceeding all expectations. Despite forecasts of thundershowers, the day turned out to be warm and sunny, creating the perfect atmosphere for the event. The morning began with a lively performance by the local folk band Twas' Now, building excitement for the walk. Joelle Martin-Root, Shalom's Clinical Director, opened the program, followed by warm greetings from Catherine Fife (MPP, Waterloo), Julie Wright (Ward 7 Councillor), and Waterloo Mayor Dorothy McCabe. Special guests Mike Morrice (MP, Kitchener Centre) and Senator Marty Deacon also joined us, participating in a group send-off.



The community's generosity was truly inspiring. With a fundraising goal of \$38,000, we were thrilled to surpass it, raising an incredible \$57,061 to support Shalom's work. Events like 10,000 Steps are essential in helping us provide accessible counselling services, and this overwhelming support ensures we can continue to walk alongside those seeking peace and healing.

Looking ahead to the 10th anniversary of 10,000 Steps for Mental Health in 2025, we're excited to introduce a refreshed event logo designed by artist Cassidy

Hicks. Her design reflects the vibrant and overlapping stories of Shalom's clients, therapists, and donors. Cassidy shared, "The mosaic of stories, care, and healing at Shalom inspired me. This logo celebrates the joy that comes from growth and the bright energy fundraisers bring to make healing possible."

Thank you for being part of this journey. Your generosity and support make events like this possible and successful.



Get to Know Shalom: Staff and Board

Ben Shantz - Board Member - Ben joined the Shalom Board in October 2024. He calls Waterloo home with his Partner, Rebecca and their two dogs, Ivy and Ellie. Ben is a Senior Business Advisor for the Province of Ontario, in the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, and is also a licensed Realtor® with TrilliumWest Real Estate Brokerage in Kitchener.



Chantal Niyochuti - MSW Intern - Chantal joined Shalom in September 2024. Prior to returning for her MSW, Chantal enjoyed her role in community engagement and wellness with a local grassroots organization. She is interested in the integration of community and mental health wellness as part of the wholistic approach.

Upcoming Events

Shalom Spring Brunch

Saturday,
May 3, 2025

10,000 Steps for Mental Health

Saturday,
September 20, 2025

Support the Journey of Hope and Healing

Cheque

Cheques can be made payable to:

*Shalom Counselling
Services Inc.*

Credit Card

Credit card donations can be made online or by phone:
shalomcounselling.org/donate
(519) 886-9690

Monthly Gifts

Consider a regular gift to Shalom either by Credit Card or Bank Transfer. Call us to find out more.

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