



# Annual Report 2023/2024

## Excellence and Accessibility: Values that Shape our Work

*Executive Director Report: Susan Schwartzentruber, MSW, RSW*

As we reflect on the past year, we want to highlight two guiding values—**Excellence** and **Accessibility**—that shape how we serve our community. With your support as valued donors, these values come to life.

### **Commitment to Excellence**

We are fortunate to have a team of dedicated professionals who bring expertise to their work and a shared commitment to our vision, mission, and values. Our staff members are passionate about providing care and support to individuals and families facing mental health challenges.

Our counsellors engage in professional development to ensure they remain at the forefront of best practices in mental health counselling. We intentionally invest in training within our budget to promote ongoing learning, skill-building, and excellence.

### **Ensuring Accessibility**

Accessibility goes beyond physical access. We are committed to removing financial barriers, offering services at various fee levels through our sliding scale. This ensures no one is denied care based on their ability to pay.

But accessibility also means equity. Every person who seeks help is treated with care, dignity, and respect, regardless of their financial situation. When clients come to us, there is one wait list, no priority based on income level. Therapists work with a diverse range of clients—some who can pay the full fee, others who pay as little as \$20 per session—and each client receives the same compassionate, professional care. This is our commitment to ensure everyone has equal access to the support they need.

### **Impactful Support for Those in Need**

In November, we provided counselling for 70 clients at the \$20 fee level. The demand for affordable mental health services continues to rise, and we are seeing more individuals who require this level of support during these challenging times. While the need remains high, it also presents the challenge of sustaining affordable services. As the cost of providing care increases, we remain steadfast in our commitment to our mission.

This is where you, our generous donors, play a crucial role. Your contributions make it possible for us to continue providing services at these accessible rates. Whether you've supported us for years or donated for the first time, your investment in our work is a vital part of how we care for our community. We are honoured to have you alongside us on this journey.

## 2023/2024 in Numbers

# 882

Number of unique individuals provided counselling sessions by Shalom this year. Last year we provided counselling sessions to 944 individuals.

# 18.4

Average number of total sessions a client attends. Short term therapy is often defined as 8 sessions or less. Last year the average was 16.3 sessions.

# 69%

The percentage of fee based counselling sessions that were subsidized at Shalom in 2023-24. Last year 70% were subsidized.

# 812

Number of intakes for people reaching out interested in counselling at Shalom. Last year 733 people reached out.

We acknowledge that Shalom Counselling Services at 9 Avondale Ave. S., is located on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples who continue to have an unresolved interest in the lands within six miles of the Grand River. This area is known as the Haldimand Tract, land promised to the Six Nations. We support efforts toward justice and reconciliation.

# Counselling Services

At Shalom we provide a safe, welcoming and non-judgemental environment for conversation and problem-solving. Our experienced, accredited counsellors support individuals, couples, families, and groups from age 16 and up as they work through emotional and relationship concerns. The main reason for seeking counselling at Shalom continues to be primarily due to Mental Health Concerns such as Depression and Anxiety. Other reasons include Relationship Challenges, Family & Parenting Concerns and Stress Management.

## Youth and Young Adult Mental Health Supports

In our most recent Seedlings newsletter, we gave a glimpse of life within Shalom's walls. Susan described the hustle and bustle of what goes on inside our office each week. What you may not know is that 16% of our clients fall into the youth category, ages 16 to 25. Those between the ages of 20 to 25 represent the largest segment across all age ranges served by Shalom.

For many of these young adults and youth, this might be the first time they are reaching out for mental health support. We hope that counselling at Shalom can be an experience that is both healing and positive. You may wonder, why is this age group so highly represented amongst our clients. Some reasons may be that mental health issues often emerge during this developmental stage or perhaps young people are more open to reaching out for help. Another reason may be many are away from home for the first time, attending university or college where academic and social stressors are high. Shalom also has the unique benefit of being a community counselling agency that is geographically close the Waterloo universities and colleges making us an accessible and affordable resource for students who need mental health support.



## Who We Are

### Vision

"A community of peace and wellness where all can thrive"

### Mission

"Shalom provides inclusive and accessible counselling services, supporting people to grow towards peace and wholeness."

### Values

**Peace** - We nurture peace with self, others, and God known by many names.

**Excellence** - We pursue excellence by implementing best practices and building partnerships that promote individual and community wellness.

**Accessibility** - We promote accessibility by removing barriers to ensure people can access our services.

**Diversity & Inclusion** - We foster diversity and inclusion, and endeavour to be ethical, anti-oppressive, welcoming, and inclusive in all aspects of our work.

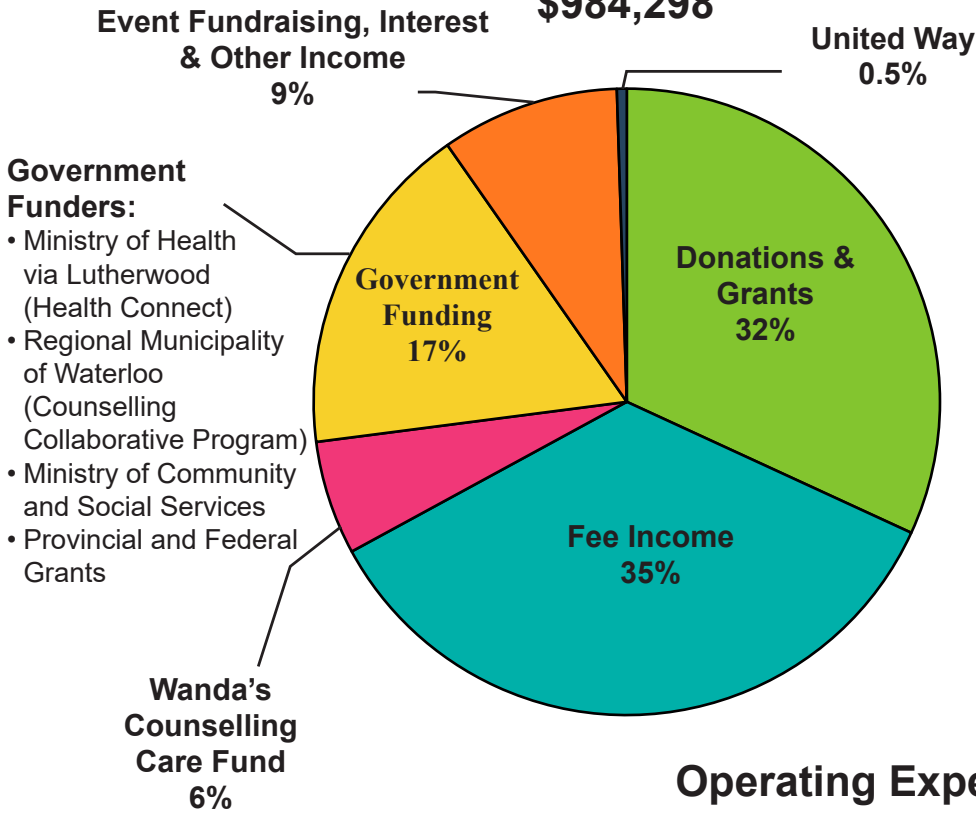


# Financial Update

(2023/2024 Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2024)

## Operating Income

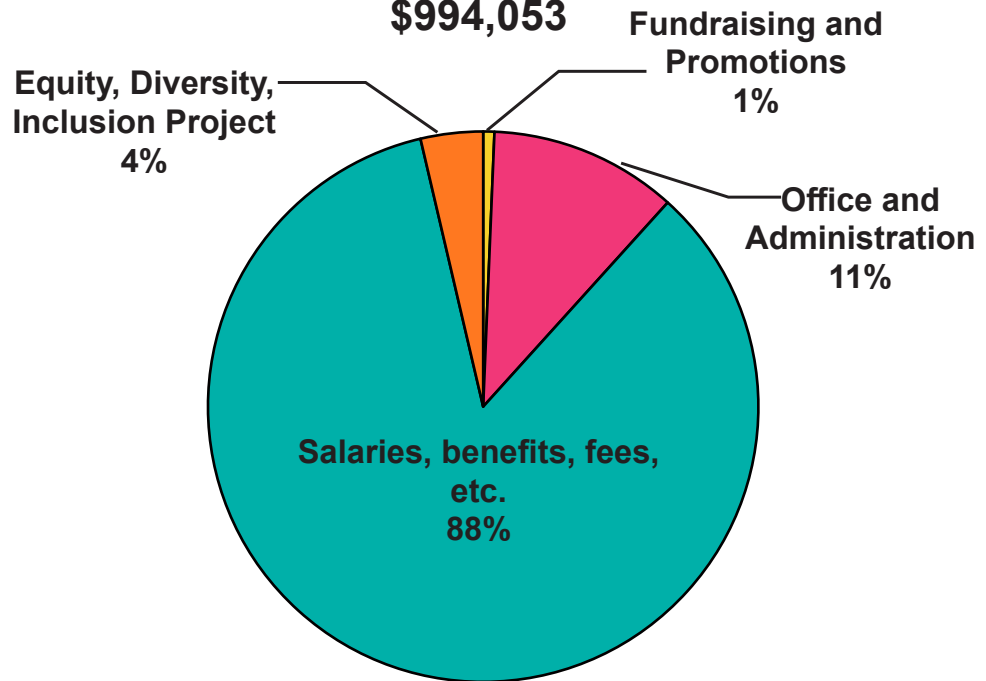
**\$984,298**



Shalom received a large bequest this year which is included in our Donations & Grants income. We are grateful for the gift that will be used over several years to come.

## Operating Expenses

**\$994,053**



**2023/2024 Operating Deficit: (\$9,755)**

\* Complete audited financial statements are available upon request.

## Our Staff

Name and Credentials	Start Date	Name and Credentials	Start Date
Jeanne Kelly, MA (AAMFT, Registered Psychotherapist)	1988	Greg Chandler Burns, BEng <i>Business &amp; Operations Director</i>	2022
Susan Schwartzentruber, MSW, RSW	2010	Andrea Areguy, MSW, RSW	2023
Paula Quarrie, MSW, RSW	2012	Tracey Saulesleja <i>Office Coordinator</i>	2023
Melody Martin-Schelling, MA (Registered Psychotherapist)	2014	Jane Wardell, MSW, RSW	2023
Joëlle Martin-Root, MSW, RSW	2016	Riley Goltz, MA <i>(Registered Psychotherapist, Qualifying)</i>	2024
Mark Gedcke, MA <i>(Registered Psychotherapist)</i>	2018	Chantal Niyochuti, <i>Student Intern</i>	2024
Maria Geleynse, MSW, RSW	2021	<b>Coverage Receptionists:</b>	
Melanie Ferrier, MA <i>(Registered Psychotherapist)</i>	2022	Carol Lichti, Dru Morrison, Ingrid Regier	

### Board of Directors (2023/2024)

- Allan Sauder (*Chair*)
- Helen Eby (*Vice-Chair*)
- Brent Zorgdrager  
(*Treasurer*)
- Margaret Andres  
(*Secretary*)
- Amanda Geiger
- Paul Fast
- Leanne Lobe
- Katie Steckly
- Carla Santomero
- Karen Martin
- Sara Cressman

## Upcoming Events



**Shalom Spring Brunch**  
*May 3, 2025*



**10,000 STEPS**  
FOR MENTAL HEALTH

**10,000 Steps for  
Mental Health**  
*September 20, 2025*

## Thank you to our partners



Thank you to our supporters, congregations and foundations who make the work of Shalom possible.



9 Avondale Ave. S.,  
Waterloo, ON N2L 2B5  
(519) 886-9690  
[www.shalomcounselling.org](http://www.shalomcounselling.org)