



ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

1

Letter from our CEO and Board Chair

3-4

Strengthening our culture of learning, humility and growth

7-8

Building capacity in priority neighbourhoods

11-13

Engaging in collective action to advance health and wellbeing for all

16

Financial statements

2

Our mission, vision, values and strategic aims

5

Delivering early help and prevention to children and families

9-10

Modelling person-centred and collective care

14-15

Truth, reconciliation, and justice

17

Looking ahead

Message from our CEO and Board Chair



Melissa Kwiatkowski

CEO

Chris Merchant

Board Chair

This past year, we have witnessed both triumphs and challenges in our work to ensure equitable access to health services. With increasing demand, our commitment to providing accessible, holistic care remains unwavering.

Through these challenges, we have experienced tremendous growth across all of our program areas, which speaks to the depth of need in our community. Some of the most critical aspects of health, like housing, income, food, and social networks, are increasingly out of reach for many in our community. Despite this, we have worked tirelessly with local partners to advocate for compassionate, evidence-based interventions that address the root causes of poor health. We have continued to deliver neighborhood and community-based programs that build connection and social cohesion. We have also stepped into new spaces with new partners to meet some growing gaps—like housing.

Our staff and volunteers have shown remarkable resilience and dedication, continuing to care for the whole person—body, mind, and spirit. It is this passion that allows us to navigate challenges while expanding services like community midwifery, accessible HIV care and gender-affirming care, primary health care, and social support programs for families.

We want to express our deepest gratitude to our team, board members, volunteers, and partner organizations who continue to stand with us. Each day we demonstrate what it means to serve with empathy and dedication. That is what will sustain us as we continue to advocate for health equity and justice.

As we move forward, it is vital to care not only for our clients, but for ourselves as well. We encourage our staff and community to prioritize their wellbeing, and to lean on one another for support. Together, we are stronger. We may not control the larger forces at play, but we can control how we respond—with compassion, solidarity, and a firm belief in our vision: a community without barriers to health and wellbeing.

Our mission, vision, values, and strategic aims

Guelph CHC provides clinical and community health services to those who have trouble accessing health care in Guelph and Wellington.

We provide these services and care by reaching out to the populations and neighbourhoods we prioritize.

By removing health inequities, healthier and brighter futures are made possible for local residents.

Our staff, partners and greater community support and give our clients the right and ability to take charge of their own health.

This report showcases some of the work we have done this year toward our aims.



Mission

We reduce health inequities by providing interprofessional primary health services and community programs, focused on the populations we prioritize, in collaboration with community partners.

Vision

A community without barriers to health and wellbeing.

Values

Innovation
Accountability
Person-Centred
Health Promotion

Excellence
Sustainability
Accessibility

Health Equity is at the core of what we do, and each of our six strategic aims supports how it can be met. This is why the pinwheel is a perfect symbol; the centre button (Health Equity) brings all the wings (the 6 strategic aims) of the pin together, all working as one.

Strengthening our culture of learning, humility, and growth

Human Resources

Between April 2023 and March 2024, we hired 65 new staff members and onboarded two new programs: HIV and Gender Affirming Care in April 2023 and Community Access Midwifery Program (CAMP) in January 2024. We also expanded our teams and created new leadership roles- Human Resources Manager and Allied Health Supervisor. We were able to hire internally for these new positions, increasing opportunities for growth and development for our staff members.

We have also taken concrete steps to support equitable recruiting and retention, recognizing that a diverse and inclusive workplace is paramount to staff satisfaction and retention. Our targeted interventions focused on enhancing staff wellbeing. These efforts have resulted in improved staff engagement scores and a notable reduction in turnover rates. Hiring processes have been revised to minimize bias.



Facilities

We completed our downtown location's new roof over the winter months of 2024.

At the Shelldale Clinic, we refreshed the space including new flooring and painting, purchase of new furniture, and other site upgrades.

We completed a Health Hub renovation at our Downtown site. This will allow us to provide the best possible care to clients in need of medical and counseling spaces.

We purchased a forklift and pump lift for new stack shelving at The SEED Community Food Warehouse. This will save on space and efficiently move items that would not otherwise be used right away.

Primary Care and Allied Health

With a growing demand for access to primary care in the community, over the past year, our primary care team has focused on increasing the number of clients we support. The clinical team and allied health have onboarded more than 10% more clients overall to service.

Additionally, the agency has seen a significant increase in the need for mental health counseling, dietetic care, and service coordination. We have increased access to all three service areas by adding additional support; an increased number of counseling sessions and walk-in services, therapy groups, and cooking workshops.

49,112

Encounters

23%

Increase from last year

5,325

Clients served

33%

Increase from last year



Accreditation

Accredited by
**Canadian Centre
for Accreditation**



Agréé par
**Centre canadien
de l'agrément**

Accreditation supports centres like ours to excel and meet challenges by applying a set of standards that reflect best practices.

In early spring 2024, we ended our 18-month accreditation journey. Together our team collected hundreds of pieces of evidence, audited our processes, supported client journeys, participated in interviews, and tended to the many questions of our accreditors.

In May, we learned that we achieved 51/51 of the mandatory standards and 28/28 of the leading practice standards- an exemplary result and a new four-year accreditation!

Delivering early help and prevention to children and families



EarlyON



EarlyON had a very busy year, with some exciting expansion into the community. The team remains focused on finding ways to improve the mental health of both families and children, and we've made efforts to be more sensory-conscious in our spaces. A key area we've been working on is what representation means within EarlyON. Our facilitators are deeply engaged in both individual and team learning to continue developing in this important area.

5,013

Children served

192%

Increase

16,535

Visits by children

87%

Increase

New Program: CAMP



Community Access Midwifery Program (CAMP) is our new team of midwives providing 24-hour, accessible, on-call pregnancy and reproductive care in the community for the priority populations we serve. The team will visit for any needs related to pregnancy, birth, and postpartum care up to 8 weeks after birth. Clients do not have to commit to regular visits. Rather, the team works with them to determine the care they need, and can provide one visit or a series of visits.



Pregnancy 2 Parenting

P2P consistently facilitates connections between families and the resources available within Guelph CHC and the wider community. The program prioritizes critical areas for families, including food security, healthy relationships, nutrition, positive parenting, and breastfeeding.

Participants are **dedicated** to the weekly classes, both in person and online. One participant moved back to India for a year with her new baby, and despite the time difference, she still logged on weekly to our Zoom classes as an active participant.

377

participants

41

sessions

We Breastfeed and Chestfeed

We Breastfeed and Chestfeed launched a new logo and look to better connect with the new parent community online, as well as continuing to host weekly drop-in Cafes.



Our volunteers feel **empowered** to help new parents. One volunteer is a parent with 14-month-old twins. We intentionally matched her with another parent in the community with 6-month-old twins. The peer relationship was instrumental in helping the newer parent process the daily difficulties of raising twins, including feeding challenges. It is great to see their connection and exchange of experience.

346

parent/child pairs

50

sessions

Building capacity in priority neighbourhoods



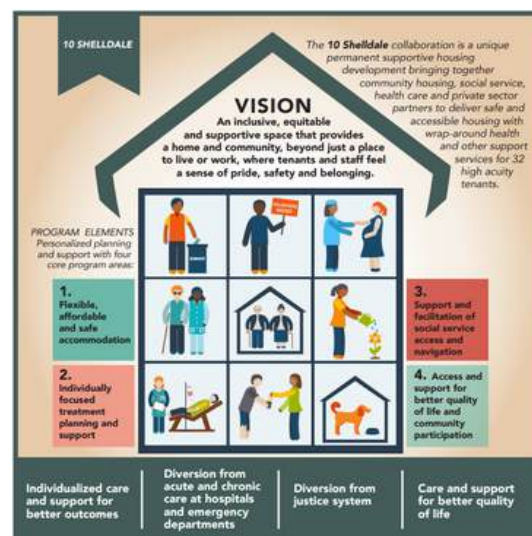
We grew our impact in our priority neighbourhoods as we returned to a full roster of regular in-person programs. Our Peer Leader programs expanded- both in number of programs and participants. EarlyON programs also expanded into different community locations, with amazing results.

We have continued to strengthen our impact in Onward Willow in particular, with new partnerships at Shelldale including The SEED's new market location at Shelldale's f.u.n. Fridays, Shelldale Farm Park activities, and the advancement of the 10 Shelldale project. So many newcomers and their families in particular are learning about our services through these welcoming spaces.

10 Shelldale: The power of partnership

We continued successful collaborative planning with our partners at Stonehenge Therapeutic Community and Kindle Communities and garnered financial and community support for the 32-unit supportive housing project at 10 Shelldale.

In March, we received the last piece of the puzzle- \$9 million over three years of operational funding from the Ministry of Health, to provide supportive housing and wraparound mental health and addictions care to 32 new clients. We will also increase service levels for 76 high needs supportive housing residents.



10 Shelldale program model

THE SEED

Groceries and Markets

In 2023, we transitioned Groceries from The SEED from being a primarily home delivery social enterprise to one that focused nearly entirely on a click-and-collect model. As we did so we ensured that customers who are the most food insecure would be able to order free food. The total value of food accessed through the program actually increased compared to 2022-23, when free delivery was an option. This is an incredible result that shows the value of the program to our customers.

\$547,000

of food accessed through
Groceries from The SEED

3

Pickup locations for Groceries from
The SEED (one new location at
Shelldale)

4,300

purchases at two SEED Market locations

Ximena started coming to The SEED Market at Shelldale soon after immigrating from Peru. Now she comes almost every week with her husband Leo and 7-month-old baby, Leonardo. Leonardo loves the apples, pears and zucchini that they buy and Ximena explained, “as a family we’re eating more vegetables, more fruit, we’re making more meals with the food we buy”. For Ximena and Leo, the market is important because they can buy more good food for less compared to the grocery stores. They also explained that the staff are so friendly and give them the opportunity to practice their English, which is important to them.

-Evaluation of SEED Markets, published June 2024

Parent Outreach Workers

Parent Outreach Workers work with families to assist them in accessing services that will help their unique needs. This year brought some challenges that highlighted these important workers’ roles in addressing acute and emergent needs.

A mother and her two young children were facing imminent deportation in summer 2023. The client did not bring her situation to the attention of the Parent Outreach Worker until a week before she was set to be removed from the country.

The Parent Outreach Worker brought the case forward to her manager, who then contacted Family and Children’s Services, Immigrant Services, and the MP. Family and Children’s Services was able to provide emergency consultation and directed the mother to connect with FCJ Refugee Services and stop the deportation order.

This case took an enormous amount of advocacy, service coordination, and effort to keep the mother in the country so her and her children would not be separated. The Parent Outreach Worker role has enormous potential to make a difference in our clients’ lives.

470

Families served by Parent Outreach
Workers

3,192

Encounters

Modelling person-centred and collective care

We congratulate Russ on his 20 year milestone as a Guelph CHC volunteer! It has been an absolute pleasure and honour to work with Russ for all these years. As a peer leader volunteer, he has supported English Conversation Circles, walking groups, virtual social time, and drop-in social programs downtown. He also uses his passion for writing and researching to create an article called “Dwell in Wellness” for our monthly calendar, to increase community awareness of local programs and services that enhance wellbeing. His commitment and generosity are inspiring and make a big impact. Thank you, Russ, for all you have done and for the continued sharing of your time and talents!



Students

This year we provided student placement opportunities for students across all levels, including highschool level co-ops and experiential learning classes, undergraduate, masters, college degrees, and medical rotations. Community placements are a vital way to provide empathetic learning opportunities for students, and they really help strengthen our organization’s impact! This year, student placements supported...

- The SEED
- EarlyON
- Shelldale and downtown clinic locations
- HIV and gender affirming care
- Wellington Drug Strategy

Volunteers

So much of our work can only happen because of our incredibly dedicated volunteer team! This year, volunteers supported...

- our board (and its various committees)
- our Client Advisory Committee
- our two clinic locations
- our EarlyON family programs
- family support programs like We Breastfeed and Chestfeed and Pregnancy 2 Parenting
- eight programs of The SEED
- 13 peer-led community programs offered every month across the city of Guelph

25

Students

4,567

Hours contributed

215

Volunteers

7,545

Hours contributed



Client Advisory Committee

The Client Advisory Committee supported the transformation of our feedback channels, co-designed many of our policies and procedures, supported our accreditation process, and created deepened partnerships with the board of directors. They bring innovative ideas and thoughtful perspective to our organization and help shape our programs, services, and ways we do our work.

8 Clients on the committee

200 Hours contributed

Healthy Living Peer Leaders

We encourage clients to join our Peer Leader volunteer program, where they (and community members) take on leadership roles. Our peer leaders led zumba, yoga, cooking workshops, beginner English conversation groups, sewing and crafting, mindfulness, dance, and more!

2x Increase in number of Peer Leaders since last year

17x Increase in program participation rate since last year

"I feel at home here. I make friends here. I need to do this everyday. I look forward to this group. I'm grateful that I learn English. I'm happy to be here."

-Kiyomi Ikari (Participant of Healthy Living Peer Leader Programs: Beginner English Group, Helping Hands, Learn Skills and Socialize)

Social Prescriptions (SRx)

Social prescribing has become an important part of our organization. This year we received 'Social Prescribing for Better Mental Health' funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada, through the Alliance for Healthier Communities, and hired a Community Programmer which allowed us to better support our community.

180 Social prescriptions made in 2023-24

24 Primary care and allied health providers made social prescriptions

We surveyed our providers and found that they feel confident referring clients to SRx, and that they have the resources and supports needed to make prescriptions.

All providers agreed that they knew who to contact if they had questions about SRx.

Most providers felt the referral process was straightforward and that collaborating with other team members in SRx was helpful for supporting clients.



Engaging in collective action to advance health and wellbeing for all

Welcoming Streets

Welcoming Streets supports downtown businesses and community members who are concerned about situations, but do not require police response. We also offer business owners and their teams de-escalation and safety training. This year our team expanded to be available 7 days per week, increasing our impact in the downtown community.

149 avg. calls per month

The most common calls are for:

- de-escalation of a mental health crisis
- resource navigation/outreach support for a person in need
- inappropriate use of space/loitering



“Overall, our incidents have not gone up since last summer which is positive or perhaps is a sign of our staff being better equipped to deal with situations as they arise. We appreciate and value the assistance of Welcoming Streets and feel that our need to call police is down significantly because they are able to de-escalate situations for us.”

-Guelph Public Library (permission to use, received from Michelle Campbell, Manager of Public Service, August 26, 2024)



Health Hub

Our Health Hub provides non-stigmatizing acute, episodic, preventative and primary wrap-around healthcare and substance use supports for adults who:

- use drugs;
- are experiencing homelessness or are precariously housed;
- have complex, high acuity physical, mental, and substance use health needs; and
- are disproportionately impacted by substance use.

10,000 annual visits

700 unique individuals

There has been a marked increase in people presenting to the CTS and Hub with wounds that require treatment. From 2022 to 2023, there was a 229% increase in how much we spent on wound care supplies. The actual cost of wound care supplies only increased 4%.

Based on the same 6-month timeframe in 2022 and 2023.

Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS)

Consumption and Treatment Services is an anonymous walk-in service offered 7 days a week to community members who use substances. Services provided include:

- medically supervised space to consume substances
- harm reduction supplies, naloxone, health education
- safe syringe disposal
- space for supervised quiet activities
- foot and wound care, HEP/HIV/STI screening and other medical assessments
- access to drug testing technology
- connecting to income support, housing, social services
- support and referrals to addiction treatment, mental health supports, primary care, and other resources
- access to walk-in virtual addiction medicine

7,641 visits for consumption and wrap-around care

177 unique referrals for primary health services

171 unique referrals for mental health services

528 referrals to on-demand addiction services

85 unique referrals for social services





Upcycle Kitchen

This year, the SEED team transitioned our Upcycle Kitchen program to a volunteer-led model. This collective of dedicated volunteers has successfully maintained a high level of quality and care in goods cooked. Their leadership has reduced our costs, and we passed these savings along to our customers, increasing our impact.

Good Food Distribution: Surplus Food

The SEED has maintained our social enterprises that distribute affordable food to individuals, partner organizations, and schools. In addition, we continued to increase our capacity to receive, store, and distribute surplus food to our community, free of charge.

This year we purchased a 26ft dock height refrigerated truck that allows us to drive to the surplus food warehouse ourselves (in place of paying a contractor) on a biweekly basis. This funding was sourced in collaboration with our community partners through the Community Services Recovery Fund.



50%

Price reduction since last year

1,215

Meals and muffins distributed (double the previous year)

\$1.2 m

Surplus food distributed free of charge

40+

partner organizations accessing surplus food each week



Truth, reconciliation and justice

A message from our Senior EDI Advisor, Don Mahleka

As the Senior Advisor of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), I am honoured to report on ways Guelph CHC has aligned with Ontario Health's Equity, Inclusion, Diversity, Anti-Racism (EIDAR) framework this year. We have taken significant strides in embedding principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion into many aspects of our operations. We have focused on creating an environment that acknowledges historical injustices and actively works toward healing and inclusive growth.

In accordance with Ontario Health's mandate, we have prioritized Indigenous health advancement separately from our health equity initiatives, acknowledging the unique history and experiences of Indigenous communities.

We are making progress in collaborating and serving equity-deserving groups to address health inequities among priority populations. Our leadership team has undergone Anti-Oppression training, and our senior leadership has completed the Ontario Health required Executive-level EDI training requirements, equipping them with the knowledge and tools to create a more inclusive organization.

This year's training pathways also included cultural sensitivity in healthcare, understanding systemic racism, and Indigenous experiences and practices. These learning opportunities for the Board, Leadership and Staff deepened our collective awareness and understanding, fostering a culture of empathy and proactive inclusiveness.

We have launched a preliminary Employee Resource Group (ERG) and drafted a policy that provides essential information and guidelines on forming and maintaining ERGs. These groups will empower equity-deserving and general staff, fostering a culture of inclusivity. The policy also lays the groundwork for supporting measurable employment equity enhancements, enabling us to continue recruiting and retaining a diverse and equitable workforce. We have also updated our Psychological Health and Safety policy with specific provisions for equity-deserving groups.

These advancements would not have been possible without the dedication of our staff and ongoing trust-building with the communities we serve and partner alongside. We are committed to continuously learning, unlearning, and improving our journey toward truth, reconciliation, and justice. We look forward to continuing this work together.

85%

Of staff completed EDI training

100%

Of executive-level staff completed EDI training



Advocacy framework and priority areas

This year, we established an advocacy framework that allows our organization and all staff to have a greater role in advocacy towards changes to public policy. We aim to coordinate the efforts of our clients, staff, leadership team, and Board of Directors into shared goals and outcomes. We want to be strategic with our efforts and establish clarity around what issues we **facilitate, monitor, and support**.

We used our framework to narrow our focus to the following issues for 2023-24:

- Addictions and mental health access
- Affordable housing
- Community resilience
- Food sovereignty and justice
- Gender affirming care
- Harm reduction
- Fair wages

We were proud to add our organization's name to the Guelph-Wellington Charter for Food Justice, joining the voices of many community members and organizations who believe everyone in Guelph-Wellington deserves equal access to food, water and opportunity. Co-created by members of our community, the Charter articulates a new vision—and a new set of values—to guide a transformational food justice movement in our region.

Staff Benefits Improvements

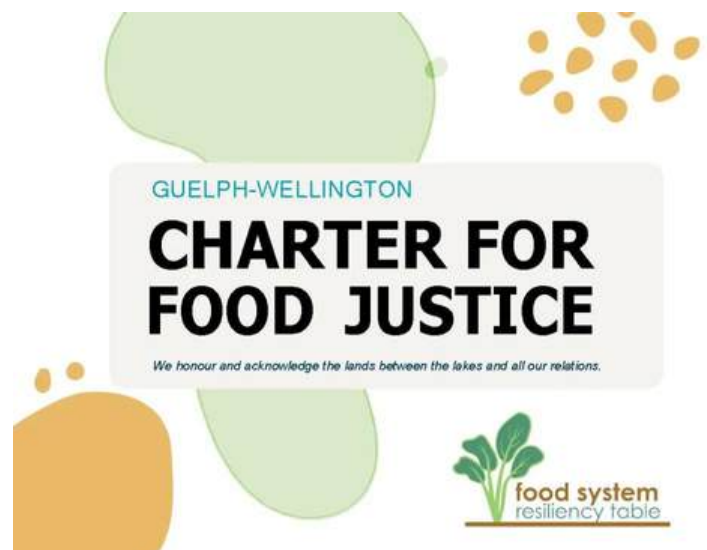
Our team conducted a health benefits and Employee Assistance Program (EAP) review that improved support for staff.

We were able to increase health coverage from \$400 to \$1,500 annually for mental health practitioners, and physical health practitioners to \$1,500 with reduced copayments.

Staff determined they needed an integrated, user-friendly Employment Assistance Program (EAP) platform with wellness tracking, recognition, team challenges, personal goal setting, and continuity of care. The new EAP provider meets these needs and exceeds benchmarks.

133%

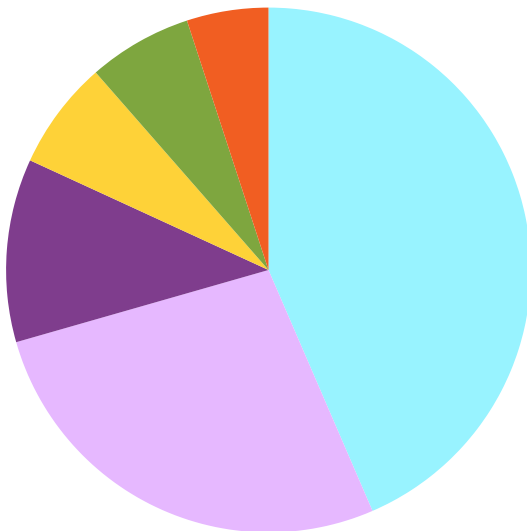
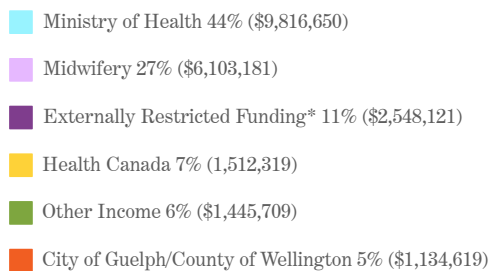
Increase in EAP usage since changing providers



Financial Statements

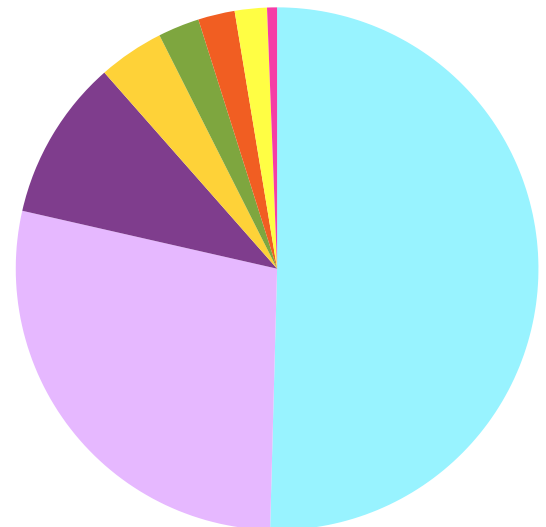
Guelph CHC is grateful for the generous support of dozens of funders and over 150 private donors this year. If you are interested in making a charitable donation, [visit our website](#) today. If you are interested in leaving a lasting memory we also hold a charitable endowment fund at the Guelph Community Foundation. Gifts invested into the Guelph CHC Endowment Fund support the sustainability of our programming and services.

Revenue



* Externally restricted funding includes Nurturing Neighbourhoods, The SEED, Toward Common Ground, EarlyON, Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy, Clinical telemedicine, Welcoming Streets and Specialized Outreach Support

Expenses



Looking ahead

As we move into 2024-25, we continue to adapt to changing needs in our clients and communities. Looking ahead, we will keep finding ways to support our staff through program enhancements and opportunities to focus on things that are important to them, including advocacy on issues they care about.

We have hired a Communications Coordinator, who will start in April. This role will help us enhance internal and external communications moving forward. Once again, this was an internal hire which created another opportunity for staff growth and development.

Our HIV and Gender-Affirming care program has almost completed a rebrand as Hive Health Services, which will roll out early in the 2024-25 fiscal year. We have begun a comprehensive needs assessment in partnership with the Guelph-Wellington Ontario Health Team (OHT), and OHTs in KW and Cambridge, to better understand the needs and gaps in the current system. We will be using this information and data to guide the next phase of program development and growth.



We will be welcoming a new pharmacy at our downtown location, a great improvement in accessibility for our clients. They will not have to leave the building to fill prescriptions.

The first residents will move into 10 Shelldale's supportive housing units in summer 2024.

We plan to launch a new program, in partnership with Family and Children's Services, called Village Finding. Village Finding will connect families who need extra support with a "village" of volunteers who can provide practical assistance and emotional support.

Fresh Food Prescriptions will be running a third pilot project with more families involved. We look forward to contributing further to the research on what prescribed food can do for health and food security.

Human Resources will continue to work on our onboarding and orientation processes to ensure that meet our new staff needs.

We will also be engaging our Client Advisory Committee, board, staff and clients in refreshing our strategic plan, mission, vision and values. We look forward to sharing these updates with our community.



Phone 519-821-6638

Website www.guelphchc.ca

Address 176 Wyndham St. N.
Guelph, ON N1H 8N9



@guelphchc

