

The Edge

Mission Services of Hamilton

Fall 2023

Since 1956

Fall, the Season of Change

As I look out my window here at Mission Services, I see the trees changing colours, the children back in school, all signs of Fall. I also see many changes and challenges, both for us as an organization and our service users. Our sectors – food services, housing, safe shelter spaces, and other services – are evolving rapidly. Where once someone would come to us for a food hamper or a bed, now they may request or require further support, perhaps with their finances or housing or addiction treatment.

The move of our men's programming to a purpose-built space really opened our eyes to the changes in the sector. Considerations like washroom safety, physician and pharmacy services, and spaces for specialized needs were top of mind.

In all of our work, we are always evaluating our programming - we see a need and adapt to fill it.

In this issue of The Edge, we celebrate the expansion of The 196 to support youth in grade nine as they transition to high school. As the

future generation, we want to give them all the opportunities they need to succeed.

We also need to advocate: the women's sector is seeing too many deaths, too many women and children fleeing abuse. As a society, we need to ensure that there is shelter for these families, and services to help them reintegrate back into a life without violence.

With all this change, we are grateful for you! Through everything, your support means we are able to ensure these programs can adapt for the most vulnerable people in the city.

We exist because of the need, but we're HERE because of you. Thank you!

Carol Cowan-Morneau



Carol Cowan-Morneau
Executive Director

Mission Services of Hamilton is located on the traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, and Mississaugas.



Act Justly. Show Mercy. Offer Hope.

Youth - Our Hope for the Future



Introducing "The 196+"

One year ago, our youth program added The 196+ which aims to help The 196 youth transition into high school. We provide a fun and safe space for the grade 9s and help them acclimatize to their new school environment. They can work on their communication skills, resumé and cover letter writing, and are given opportunities to engage in the community through volunteer work that goes toward the hours they need for graduation.

14 youth joined the 196+ program this past school year and we look forward to The 196+ starting again this Fall!



The 196 and 196+ are both youth-led and support youth in a fun, fit, and healthy way.

The goal of both programs is to encourage students to pursue post-secondary education. Youth Leaders accomplish this goal by offering activities Monday to Friday including homework help, physical activities, cooking lessons, healthy meals, tours at Mohawk and McMaster, and more.

"We want to provide the participants with a space to gain experiences that they wouldn't otherwise have," explains Adalia, The 196 Program Coordinator.

Mini Chefs is a cooking program that teaches youth in The 196 cooking, food safety, and other food skills.

"This is an opportunity for kids to learn food literacy. Often kids would be hesitant to try something unfamiliar, like tofu but when we show them how to sauté it in a great sauce and add it to udon soup, they are usually willing to try and discover they like it!

Alongside introducing them to new foods, we also show them how to create great dishes with ingredients they might readily have access to, or find ways to make dishes healthier like adding shredded veggies to your brownies to give them more nutrients," says Adalia.

Youth also learn proper kitchen etiquette, proper hygiene standards in the kitchen, how to use knives and other kitchen tools safely, and different ways to cook, bake, and prepare foods.



Did you know that learning how to grow your own food can have an impact on food insecurity?

Sprouts, a program for youth in The 196, teaches youth how to grow their own food while emphasizing environmental sustainability.

Thanks to a partnership with Mohawk College's Sustainability Program, youth in our community learn about environmentalism, how pollination works, plant life cycles, and more! They also give youth hands-on experience with growing vegetables from seeds. When the seedlings are well-established, The 196 sells them at Mohawk College's Community Garden at a Seedling Sale.

"It is a great day where we gain sales and marketing experience, and the money we make goes back into our program for Summer camp! It is definitely a highlight of our program," explains Adalia.

Plants leftover from the Sale get planted in a community garden where youth are encouraged to help care for them and harvest them during the Summer.



"At Mission Services, we know summer camps are a great way to maintain and strengthen relationships with the youth while giving them structure and an outlet for their creativity and energy!" says Adalia.

During **summer camps**, the youth have a lot of say in what activities they get to do. This summer, the program visited Bayfront and explored the HMCS Haida, went roller skating, visited the Art Museum, did cooking challenges, conducted a Scavenger hunt, and more!

Each day the program also provided a daily challenge for the youth; exhibiting certain positive traits, such as empathy, gratitude, encouragement, or patience, gained them points that could be redeemed for prizes at the end of camp!



The youth who join us are the next leaders of our neighbourhood and our city. We are proud of them and look forward to seeing their future impact!

The youth programs are funded from donations from supporters like you, as well as by grants from Hamilton Community Foundation: ABACUS Program, the City of Hamilton City Enrichment Fund, Mischa Weisz Foundation, TC Energy, The Alice and Murray Maitland Foundation, The Children's Fund, and the Gordon and Ruth Gooder Charitable Foundation!

***Follow us for program, staff, and client stories!
Instagram: missionhamilton
Facebook: Mission Services of Hamilton***



Women in Ontario Deserve Better

According to the Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses (OAITH) femicide reports, the number of women killed by domestic or intimate partner violence continues to rise.

In Hamilton, women and children are trying to escape abusive homes but there are major challenges for the Violence Against Women (VAW)-serving agencies. The entire VAW shelter system in Hamilton is under tremendous, unsustainable pressure; every women's shelter is over-capacity, and we are turning away women fleeing violence at staggering rates.

At Inasmuch House alone, we turned away 5,715 women looking for space between 2019-2022. And that number doesn't include the children who are also experiencing the violence. *This is truly unacceptable.*

In 2022, an inquest into the 2015 triple-femicide in eastern Ontario made recommendations to the Ontario government, many of which have since been rejected. As well, it seems the government has no plans to implement the remaining ones.

The VAW-sector is concerned because with rates of femicides increasing over the past few years, it is time for all of us to take this seriously.

We not only are turning away women and children in the thousands due to capacity pressures, but

women and children can't find safe affordable housing to move into so they remain in shelter system for longer. Without shelter, safe and affordable housing, and specialized services, women and children's lives are at risk.

This summer, the City of Hamilton declared Intimate Partner Violence and Gender Based Violence an Epidemic. We hope that this motion along with motions from other cities in Ontario, will bring this to the attention of the provincial government.

Inasmuch House sees first-hand the effects of intimate partner violence and gender-based violence on the women and children we serve. They deserve better. They deserve safety and housing and support and to live their lives freely. And they deserve a government that will take these recommendations seriously.

Erin Griver

*Director of Inasmuch House & Women's Services,
Mission Services of Hamilton*



*Read the full op ed,
and more articles on
this topic*

Move to 400 King St East Complete! A New Era Begins

The men's building at Barton and James closed at the end of July as we moved into our new building at 400 King St East. This building will allow us to increase the number of men in the short-term stay program, helping more find permanent housing!

Scan the QR code below for more photos and videos, and to support the work in this new space.



Hunger in Hamilton

Mission Services of Hamilton participated in a Snapshot of Hunger Report produced by Hamilton Food Share. This snapshot compared March of 2022 to March of 2023.

Some highlights from this snapshot:

- Across Hamilton, Food Bank use by households is up 39% (to almost 12,000 households) from one year ago
- 39% increase in the number of children served
- 24% increase in the number of seniors served

Food Bank Usage and Housing Insecurity

A Research Report with input from clients of Mission Services found that when calculating the shelter-to-income ratio of food bank service users, almost all (96%) were housing-insecure. Nearly 38% are spending more than 60% of their income on housing putting them at an extreme risk of homelessness. Spending 30% of income on housing is considered affordable.



Thank you to Bill Paul who chose Mission Services as his charity of choice during his term as District Deputy Grand Master, Hamilton Masonic District 'C'. Through two golf tournaments and support from Hamilton Masonic Lodges, over \$40,000 was raised over the past two years.

Truth and Reconciliation

Over the past few years Canada has reckoned with the discovery of graves at Residential Schools and the historical abuses experienced by Indigenous people across the country. At Mission Services, we have been challenging ourselves to better understand our impact in the First Nations communities and how we can work better with, and for, these communities. We work with a number of men and women who identify as Indigenous in our programs. Understanding intergenerational trauma helps our staff better help those clients.

Our land acknowledgment (part of which is included on the cover of this newsletter) acknowledges our history as an organization founded on the principles of Christian faith and the role churches have in the Residential School System and their impact on Indigenous groups. As an organization founded with good intentions, we are always striving to grow and learn.

Mission Services is also creating an Action Plan to guide us in our Truth and Reconciliation Efforts. One of our goals is to increase our knowledge and understanding of Canadian Indigenous history, and Indigenous cultures, practices, and more. To this end, we created a book club and so far have read and discussed *21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act*, with help from residents in Ohsweken.

As our programming “meets the client where they are at”, we want to ensure we can offer, or refer to, Indigenous practices and supports.

On September 30th, we will mourn the lives lost throughout the years due to indifference and prejudice, and remind ourselves that the calls to action are not just for one day, but for every day.

YOUR Gifts at WORK

May - July

 **28,869**
Meals Served

 **6,666**
Households
Accessing Grocery
Assistance

 **6,039**
Visits at
Willow's Place

 **279**
Men and Women
Sheltered

 **334**
Addiction Services
Interactions



Thank you

**to those who took part in our Summer Sponsor A Family!
Over 40 families and folks received items to give them hope for the
Summer!**

Want to join?

Take part in our Christmas Sponsor A Family starting in October!

Contact communityrelations@mission-services.com for more info!

To support Mission Services, call 1-877-542-2732 ext. 2222, donate online at mission-services.com/donate, donate with online banking (RBC, BMO and Central 1 customers), or on site with debit/credit card machine.

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