



# 2022/2023 ANNUAL REPORT

An overview of Neighbour to Neighbour's  
impact on the community in 2022–2023

NEIGHBOUR

— 2 —

NEIGHBOUR

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## President & Executive Director's Message

**What a year it's been, both in community and here at Neighbour to Neighbour Centre.**

2022 was fuelled by incredible inflation and economic uncertainty, resulting in severe food insecurity across the country. We all know that the cost of groceries in Canada increased by 10% this year, a 41-year high. The normalization of these high prices is alarming, and we've seen its effects in all areas of our organization.

Our Emergency Food department really felt it this year, with the number of households visiting our food bank increasing from 1,100 to 1,400 monthly. We rose to meet this challenge with increased service availability, ensuring more appointments were available to meet this growing need every month.

Our Family Services department continued to provide service navigation to people facing systemic barriers to basic services. We were able to distribute utility support grants to over 630 households, lowering electricity bills and increasing housing affordability for some of our most vulnerable neighbours.

While we modified to meet the increased need from skyrocketing inflation, we still had plenty of reasons to celebrate: Our education department relaunched after being dormant due to Covid since March 2020. Starting the year with a rebrand to the Deban Brunette Literacy Program, we have been able to honour our dear friend and colleague and the legacy she built in this community. We have been busy planting the seeds of success through our work with our wonderful students.

After two years of major adaptations and reduced capacity to connect, we have also been delighted to start welcoming more community members back to face-to-face programs at our Hamilton Community

Food Centre (HCFC). We've had reports from participants of improved health, an increased sense of belonging, and improved access to nourishing, culturally appropriate foods. We are so pleased with the positive impacts both our Education and HCFC departments are making in community.

Our Development team also had an amazing year with outstanding support from donors all across the community. Sponsors and walkers really showed up for our Coldest Night of the Year Walk, making it our most successful walk to date. Our N2N Charity Golf Classic had a banner year as well, thanks to our incredibly hard-working volunteer committee. Thank you to everyone who sent cheques, donated online, phoned or walked in, supported an event, or supported our used bookstore this year. We understand the value of your dollars and we appreciate you.

Of course, none of what we do would be possible without our stellar volunteer team. Each week volunteers make their way to N2N, our HCFC, one of our Education Program sites, or a special event location to donate their time. Without our volunteers, we would be nothing and we thank each one sincerely.

Our staff team is also vital to our organization. We are incredibly proud of their commitment to serve community, the extraordinary expertise they show in their work, and we thank them for all they do at N2N.

We are looking forward to the next year of serving the Hamilton Mountain community, and know that with our outstanding staff, volunteers, and donors supporting us, we are well poised to tackle the challenges ahead of us.

**DENISE ARKELL & DAN HOLSTEIN**  
**Executive Director      President of the Board**

# Volunteer Services

We are profoundly grateful to the many volunteers who give their time, week in and week out, to enhance Neighbour to Neighbour's services and programs. As the provincial mask mandate lifted, N2N volunteers continued the practice of wearing facemasks and upholding the pledge to keep everyone safe. But loosening provincial restrictions also meant the exciting return of many in-person programs and activities.

22,220 number of total volunteer hours

95%

Of Attendees at 16 Volunteer Sessions Continued

8%

Cross-Departmental Volunteers



116 new volunteers



399 total volunteers

*Each person represents five (5) volunteers.*

## Co-op Students

Meet Zachary, Marco, and Aaron (not pictured) from Bishop Ryan High School. They are the first high school co-op students to volunteer in the Emergency Food Services department since before the pandemic! These students are also the first volunteers, along with their teacher Maria (shown), whose role is to exclusively pack the pantry boxes for the food bank. To date, Zachary, Marco, and Aaron have contributed 118 hours in this role, and have worked up to packing 54 boxes, ensuring that when they finish their respective 2-hour shifts, there are sufficient boxes ready for pick-up by the scheduled families visiting the food bank in the next half-day. This student co-op opportunity offers valuable experience in a work setting, a chance to meet other volunteers, and is making a difference by helping those in need in the Hamilton Mountain community.



# Hamilton Community Food Centre

In 2022, food insecurity remained a top concern in communities all across the country. This critical issue was fuelled by rocketing inflation, economic uncertainty, and insufficient income support programs.

Community Food Centres, like Hamilton Community Food Centre (CFC), were essential places where people could share not only a nourishing meal, but a sense of belonging and solidarity.

## Food Access Programs

These programs increase access to nourishing food and improved health.

### COMMUNITY DINNER

Nutritious community meal offered once per week

### FRIDAY LUNCH

Nutritious community meal offered once per week

### SATURDAY MARKET & CAFE

Fresh, affordable produce offered once per week

## Food Skills Programs

These programs nurture food skills and strengthen health and well-being.

### INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITY KITCHEN

Participants cook and enjoy a meal together and share food stories from their cultures

### COOKING UP JUSTICE

Youth ages 13–18 practice food skills, cook, and share a meal together while discussing the food system and food justice

### GARDEN DAYS

Participants learn and share gardening skills and have fun planting, tending, and harvesting food

### KIDS' CLUB

Children ages 6–12 cook, grow good, and play in nature

## Education & Engagement Programs

These programs nurture food skills and strengthen health and well-being.

### COMMUNITY ACTION TRAINING

Training program designed to build capacity, advocacy skills, and community connection

### PLANTING THE SEEDS OF BELONGING

Anti-oppression workshop designed to create inclusive communities

### ADVOCACY OFFICE

Weekly drop-in assistance, education, and support with systems navigation

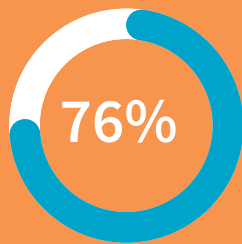
### SENIOR CONNECT PROGRAM

Telephone program connecting seniors age 55+ to wellness activities, healthy recipes, guest speakers, and discussions

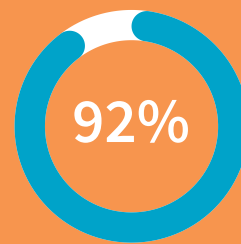


## Our Impact in 2022

Especially in difficult times like these, Hamilton CFC remains committed to supporting our local community. This means helping people stay connected and access nourishing, culturally relevant food. And it means advocating for equitable policy change that solves food insecurity and poverty in the long term.



of community members surveyed said that their mental health has improved due to coming to the CFC

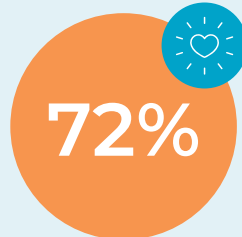


of community members said the CFC was an important source of healthy food

**10,611** number of meals served and sent home



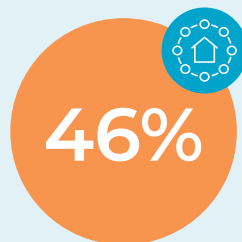
skilled food sessions taught at CFC



surveyed said they made new friends at the CFC



volunteer hours contributed



surveyed are more involved in creating change



*“Like family, we can meet people from our community here.”*

# Education Services

Our education department has relaunched after being dormant due to COVID-19 since March 2020. It has been an honour for all our staff and volunteers to continue the work that Deban Brunette began, and to rename our literacy program, the Deban Brunette Literacy Program, in honour of the work she accomplished for the children of Hamilton. Our education department is busy planting the seeds of success in our community through our work with our wonderful students. Our focus is on building literacy and numeracy skills through the support of caring volunteers while developing positive attitudes towards learning.



students receive tutoring support twice per week



Reading Tutor Volunteers



Math Tutors



of students improved their reading scores



of students improved their math skills



of students have become more confident

## Struggling to read in Grade 2

In our literacy program, Grade 2 student, Samia\*, was struggling to read. Even books that would have been age appropriate for a child in Kindergarten were too difficult for her. Samia's literacy volunteer came into our office to receive extra training and support to be able to help her more effectively. After trying some new techniques, Samia went from uninterested and frustrated to engaged and excited. Now, Samia is on track to be at the age-appropriate reading level by the end of the school year. More important than her reading score is the change in her attitude towards learning. Samia now wants to read and has improved her self-image.



## Literacy



Our literacy program provides meaningful reading practice and creates opportunities for children to engage with books and a caring volunteer. **240 students in Grades 1-4 receive individual tutoring twice per week.** We are partnered with both the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board and Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board and operate our program out of 15 schools. We want to help students see themselves as successful readers and develop an appreciation of the importance of literacy. 100% of our volunteers believe that their students have become more confident since beginning our program.

## Math Success



Our math program provides a supportive space with structured instruction and opportunities to build core math skills. This year, our math success program was able to offer after-school programming and tutoring twice a week at four locations across Hamilton Mountain thanks to the generous donation of space by Hamilton Public Library and the City of Hamilton. Each session, students have the opportunity to build their mental math skills while receiving small group support with their homework or topics covered in classes. At each location, students receive instruction from qualified math educators and volunteers from our community. **Our math program has had over 60 students in Grades 7 and 8 enrol and participate.**

### Struggling with math in Grade 7

Though our after-school program is focused on math, tutoring can help a student improve in many subject areas. Sam\*, a Grade 7 student, enrolled in our math program after struggling across subjects in school. Initially, they weren't interested in participating in our program, but with the encouragement of our math educators, they began to open up and try more complex math. Sam began participating in group activities, often volunteering to answer questions. Not only did their math skills improve, but their teacher and parent indicated that their behaviour at home and school was improving and Sam's grades increased in all areas.

\*Names have been changed for student privacy.



# Emergency Food

Record high food prices, increased rents, stagnant wages, and overall economic uncertainty have led many in the Hamilton Mountain community to reach out to Neighbour to Neighbour for food assistance.

We know that food is fundamental — a lack of food affects one's physical and mental health. We have seen the direct impact and immediate toll it has taken on our city. The economic challenges have resulted in many families who have never used a food bank coming to us for help. N2N's food bank has seen an overall 18% increase in food bank usage with 48% growth in new families.

The reality is that the need for food is much more than numbers on a page — it is about real stories of families and individuals who face multiple challenges and enormous difficulties. It is about people who struggle, who work hard, who take care of their families and themselves and continue to need our support. It is a Ukrainian family fleeing from a war zone, someone who has lost their job, someone who works two jobs, a senior, or your neighbour on disability with a fixed income.



***“You made space for me and listened to me and gave me food – I’m struggling with my school studies, taking care of my children, and working, and it is very challenging to get here....”***



The support we provide in the community is made possible by the generosity of our food partners – food hubs, grocery stores, corporations, businesses, schools, faith-based groups, and individuals. This community assisted our food bank in reaching 1.3 million pounds of food.

The volunteers are the heartbeat of our organization. Our Emergency Food volunteers actively engage in the Mountain community with grace and compassion and contributed 10,332 hours as greeters, food bank servers, warehouse receivers, runners, sorters, packers, and drivers.





*“Thank you for the care you took to prepare my home delivery. It was the best food delivery ever. I will share with my neighbours as well. I’m so pleased and honoured that you took such care. You took care of me!”*

## Food Bank



Collected & delivered over  
1.3 million lbs. of food (\$3M+)



3,204 households per  
year with 9,823 clients



44% of food distributed is fresh  
produce, meats, & dairy



15,930 community visits  
to the food bank (+18%)



Over 14% of clients are  
older adults (50+)



Over 40% of food bank clients are  
children under 18 years of age

## Home Delivery



1,337 home deliveries  
completed (+13%)



45% of clients  
experience long term  
limited mobility



23% of clients  
experience mental  
health challenges



12% of clients  
experience neurological  
challenges

**1,273** households served at our Christmas Food Market

*“I’m so happy I will have something to eat when I wake up tomorrow....”*

# Family Services

**The Family Services Department provides service navigation to people facing systemic barriers to services that meet their basic needs.** We also offer participants settlement support, financial advocacy and education, financial relief for household electricity bills, and new in 2022, emotional counselling.

All people that come to the food bank are experiencing food insecurity, but lack of food is always a symptom of other issues. Our Community Counselling program serves to build relationships with participants and invites difficult conversations. Counsellors and the manager provided 3,555 personal points of direct service helping folks overcome difficult feelings, discover essential services outside Neighbour to Neighbour, and to effectively navigate programs inside Neighbour to Neighbour.

For many households, the primary cause of food insecurity is income insecurity. Our Utilities Supports serve to lower household expenses by lowering electricity bills, and our financial advocate in the Money Matters program serves to examine places to earn more, save more, or spend less. The reality for many of the households we serve is that they earn a fixed income, so they are not likely to receive more income, however they may be missing supplements or tax entitlements that bring more money into their home, and they may also not realize that there are programs to lessen the costs of basic needs, which the advocate will help them uncover. The Money Matters financial advocate can also identify when the needs are bigger than finding resources, and that the household needs debt counselling or a financial trustee. The advocate explains why these services are necessary, and helps participants through the often emotional, and sometimes scary process of reaching out to and navigating them.



## Utilities Support

CUSTOMERS	# HOUSEHOLDS	# INDIVIDUALS	SAVINGS OVER 24 MONTHS
Total 2022/2023	635	1774	\$707,492
Newcomers	56	257	\$79,944
Seniors	129	151	\$154,392

In 2022 Utilities Support assisted 635 households secure \$707,592 in credits for their electricity bills. This helps to improve the housing security of 1774 people. \$154,392 is going into the households of 151 seniors, and \$79,944 will support 56 newcomer households. The Money Matters financial advocate welcomed 30 new households, assisted 7 existing households, supporting the financial needs of 91 people.

# Middle East Outreach

	EXISTING HOUSEHOLDS	NEW HOUSEHOLDS, INDIVIDUAL	NEW HOUSEHOLDS, FAMILY	NEW CHILD 0-14	NEW YOUTH 15-25	NEW SENIOR 65+
<b>Total 2022/2023</b>	<b>3,656</b> <i>+71% over previous year</i>	<b>111</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>61</b>

The Middle East Outreach Settlement Worker also provides service navigation, like the counsellors, but significantly more enhanced. They serve people who have barriers to services caused by programs being unfamiliar with the unique needs of migrating and settling persons. The settlement worker provides service navigation, cultural and language translation and interpretation, as well as emotional support. They commonly serve folks over many years through many stages of the development of their family, and the stages of their settlement in Hamilton. This past year continued to bring large numbers of folks seeking this service. Existing participants returned for 3656 visits, from 2589 return visits in 2021, which is a 70% increase. 464 new households accessed the service in 2022, an increase of more than 100% from the 228 new households that accessed the service in 2021.



## Counselling

New in 2022/23, this department offered brief counselling that we referred to as Emotional First Aid. Although our Community Counselling and settlement support provides emotional support for the purpose of de-escalating persons in crisis, it is not intended to be for the sake of emotional counselling alone. Through a University of Toronto student placement, developing skills were brought to this position and we were able to provide weekly sessions to folks on site and over the phone.

We are working with U of T to find suitable student matches for future placements to continue this learning and service opportunity for our participants!



Learn more about resources and programs available at Neighbour to Neighbour by visiting [www.n2ncentre.com](http://www.n2ncentre.com)



# 2022/2023

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Denise Arkell



### MANAGER OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Mark Raymond



### DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & DEVELOPMENT

Robyn Knickle



### DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY FOOD & FAMILY SERVICES

Krista D'Aoust



### DIRECTOR OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Carolyn Rankin-Boutin



### MANAGER OF FAMILY SERVICES

Laura Ryan



### DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY FOOD SERVICES

Charlotte Redekop-Young



### COORDINATOR OF VOLUNTEERS

Marija Kupina



### MANAGER OF FOOD ACCESS & SKILLS

Amy Angelo



### INTERIM MANAGER OF FOOD ACCESS, SKILLS, & YOUTH PROGRAMS

Caitlin Craven



### INTERIM MANAGER OF GARDEN SKILLS & CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

LeeAnne MacGregor

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