

Annual Report

2022-2023

Message from Leadership

Dear Community,

As we look back on the 2022-2023 year at Willowbridge, our leadership team is struck by the growth we have seen. Growth in program numbers and staff, growth in our community presence, and growth in the way we think about our role in the community.

We are profoundly grateful for the transformation and growth we've experienced. Last year, we asked our community and our staff what they needed and worked together to co-create solutions. In 2022-2023, we implemented those solutions. We built new services – like Brief Service Facilitation and Single-Session Counselling – and we expanded others. We opened new offices in Paris, Hamilton, and Norfolk and reduced our wait-times even though demand for service was increasing. New funding allowed us to design new programs and pilot a successful 4-day workweek so we could address a human resources crisis.

So much growth. We are privileged to serve this amazing community, proud of the agency we are becoming, and proud of the dedication to community that our participants, staff, and volunteers have shown. We have been busier than ever as we learn and create in partnership with those we serve. Willowbridge would not have been able to accomplish so much without an exceptional team. We would not have been able to do it without our community.

If you're reading this, thank you for the part you played in making our growth possible – whether you attended service, provided service, or just spread the word. Together, we are making our community a better place to live.

Warmly,

Leslie & Jamie



Leslie Jamieson



J. Savage



Our Board of Directors

- Jamie Savage, Chair
- Anna Maria Petitti, Vice Chair
- Kathy Reston, Treasurer
- Carley Gallant-Jenkins, Secretary
- Wendy Easveld
- Malcolm MacFarlane
- Gregory Grumett
- Courtney MacDonald
- Christine Clark
- Carol Fraser (To Be Appointed)

Our Strategic Priorities

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Mission & Purpose



Our Mission & Purpose

To bring positive change to life through counselling, education, and support.



Our Vision

A community where everyone leads their best life.

2022-2023 Service Review

Sometimes, growth comes with growing pains. This year, services at Willowbridge were full of excitement and innovation – but also challenges and change. Despite this, Willowbridge was proud to serve over 1,697 community members between 2022-2023.

799 Counselling Services

- 313 Gender Based Violence
- 277 Fee-for-Service
- 93 Subsidized
- 78 OSP Program
- 38 Indigenous

92 Routes Respite Community

- 43 Adults
- 32 Passports
- 17 Children

1697
Community Members Served

410

EnCompass Service Coordination

- 326 Adults
- 44 Children
- 40 Transitional Aged Youth

456

Pivot Behaviour Supports

- 371 Adults
- 85 Children

Routes Respite Community

After a few challenging years, our Routes Respite Community is getting back to in-person supports. The focus this year was on increasing our program capacity in response to community need. An increase in staffing, fee-for-service support, and group programming helped Routes connect 92 people to the community this year. These connections include proud partnerships with RuffinsPet Centre, Hope's Closet, and Circle Square Ranch, where our participants volunteer.



92

COMMUNITY MEMBERS SERVED

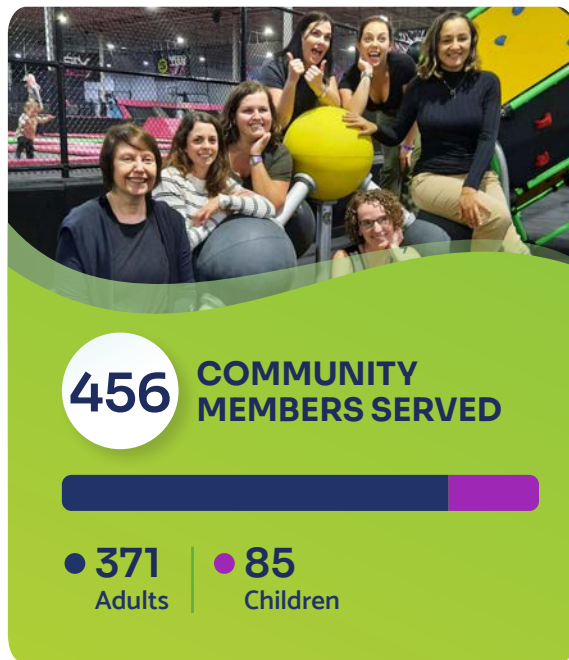
● **43**
Adults

● **32**
Passports

● **17**
Children

Pivot Behaviour Supports

Pivot Behaviour Supports focused on community partnerships and program expansion this year. We successfully completed the second year of partnership with Project Search, a transition-to-work program for folks experiencing barriers to entering the workforce. The Pivot Team was thrilled to receive a grant to support the Re-connect Art Group, offered in partnership with Shalem and Re-create Outreach Art Studio, that promotes wellbeing, relationship, and belonging in youth experiencing autism. The available supports at St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton was expanded and lastly, our Pivot team proudly reports that we now offer clinical supervision to other agencies as well.



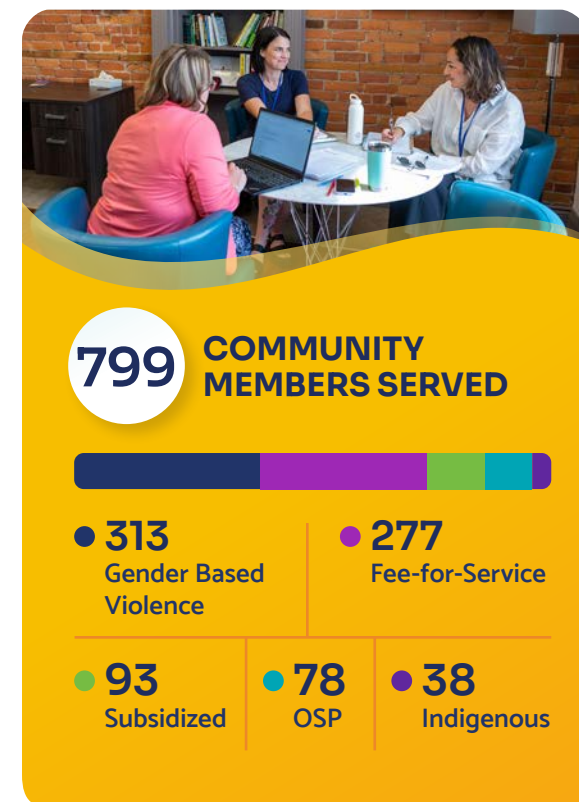
EnCompass Service Coordination

EnCompass Service Coordination had a year of innovation and responsiveness. New drop-in services in Hamilton were offered to help relieve pressure in critical situations. A new initiative began with the support of the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services to provide housing, education, planning, and support to those living with developmental disability who are moving toward independent living. Our Service Coordinators also provided leadership during Mental Health Week and volunteered with community partners to run the ABCD Symposium – Belonging Brant.



Counselling Services

In 2022-2023, we received over 820 new referrals for counselling services. With demand growing, the Counselling team introduced new ways for our community to access counselling at Willowbridge! This includes single session counselling, rapid access counselling program for individuals on Ontario Works with the City of Brantford, and counselling through the Ontario Structured Psychotherapy (OSP) program – free for individuals with mild-moderate depression and anxiety. We have also grown our team significantly with three new counsellors who are helping us focus on reducing our waitlists.



PRIORITY #1

Moving Toward a Welcoming Environment

Willowbridge is committed to creating an environment that meets the needs of our diverse community – both in our office spaces and across our services. We want our community and staff to know they matter to us. That's why a "welcoming environment" is one of the strategic priorities of our agency.

This year, Willowbridge continued to move the needle toward creating a more welcoming environment.

New outdoor spaces

With generous funding from our ministry in 2022, Willowbridge was able to create a much-needed new patio space for our program participants! We were proud to unveil a new gazebo, gardens, and sitting area for those we support and have been able to greatly improve our programs as a result. This space is particularly meaningful for those in our respite community so they can enjoy the outdoors during their days at Willowbridge. So far, we've had barbecues, pizza parties, games days, and so much more in the new space!

Willowbridge was also able to update the crumbling retaining walls in our back parking area and re-pave the lot. These updates will make Willowbridge a safer, more welcoming place to visit for everyone in the community.



New Offices

Willowbridge is thrilled to announce the addition of new program spaces throughout our service areas this year! This includes a new space in Norfolk where we will deliver the Ontario Structured Psychotherapy Program in 2023, a new space in Paris at the Cowan Community Health Hub for service delivery, and finally, a new permanent office in Hamilton at the Gasworks Community Hub. These spaces make Willowbridge more accessible and allow us to welcome more community members close to home.



The Riverside Hub

Together with our community partners, Willowbridge has continued to provide leadership in the planning and construction of an inclusive, accessible, and welcoming community hub this year. The Riverside Hub partnership has grown and is now home to twelve mental health, social service, wellness, and social recreation organizations in a single space.

We passionately believe that the Riverside Hub will make Brantford a better place to live. It has been designed purposefully to support our diverse community and to foster relationships, belonging, and well-being. Being housed under one roof means services can be integrated across organizations making them easier to access, and we can find smarter and more innovative ways to deliver the best value for every dollar spent.

Our hub partnership had explored the feasibility of a property at 79 Icomm Drive but it was determined to not be suitable as that property rests on the floodplain. Provincial policy does not allow using floodplains for institutions which serve vulnerable persons. The hub is now exploring and evaluating the feasibility of building this hub on Willowbridge's property at 54 Brant Ave. The site, with a stunning view of the Grand River, is highly accessible and well-located within walking distance of the downtown and bus terminal.

Willowbridge is excited to continue to lead this important project over the coming year as the shared vision moves closer to completion! We are deeply grateful to our partners, including our architects from +VG and TwoRow Architect as well as the engineers from MTE Consultants, for their ongoing dedication to the Riverside Hub.

PRIORITY #2

Accessibility and Diversity at Willowbridge

At Willowbridge, we understand that our community is strongest when everyone is respected, empowered, and celebrated. We aim to address the roots of inequity and the barriers inequity creates so that we can provide safe and relevant service options that everyone can access. That's why "accessibility and diversity" is another one of our agency's strategic priorities. We know that being accessible to diverse communities is an ongoing journey, but we are proud to report our progress toward this objective in 2022-2023.

Service Reimagined

In 2021, People Minded Business (PMB) came onboard to facilitate a year-long co-design project that brought staff, participants, families, and community members together to rethink the way Willowbridge does business. We believe that to design services for our diverse community requires us to work together with that community. Although our Service Reimagined work will continue, our team officially wrapped up the first phase of the project in 2022 and we have begun implementing the suggestions from our community.

This included breaking down barriers between our services and sharing expertise across programs. Last year, we created a new committee that provides peer consultation for complex situations, combining mental health and developmental services expertise.

We also responded to the community's need for timely service. In 2022, Willowbridge launched Brief Service – a program that offers those waiting for long-term support with immediate solutions. This includes single-session counselling, short-term behaviour supports, access to group programming, and drop-in service coordination supports and planning.

Chamber of Commerce Award

Willowbridge is humbled and grateful to report that we were the recipient of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award at the Chamber of Commerce Brantford-Brant Business Excellence Awards 2023! A huge congratulations to the other inspiring nominees, Six Nations Polytechnic and Food4Kids Brant-Haldimand. We are proud to work alongside you in this community. Willowbridge will strive to better itself and make Brantford a more caring place to live.





Community Events

Willowbridge is excited to have celebrated with our diverse community more than ever this year. We know that we still have work to do to reach marginalized communities, but we had a blast getting to know our partners, community members, and service participants this year! Our agency is committed to making sure that everyone in the community knows they have a safe place to seek support with us.

Training

Willowbridge works hard to ensure that the community's experience of our service is safe, welcoming, and inclusive. That's why this year we undertook a great deal of training and are committed to continuing our learning journey. This included Safer Spaces training for our staff and Board of Directors, Residential School Tours, Gender-Affirming Support for Psychotherapists, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Anxiety Disorder Training for counsellors delivering OSP, Anti-Oppressive practice training for the whole agency, Mental Health First-Aid, and training on the unhoused community we support.



[T]hank you for your support and your kindness with working with me over a year... Your help has been amazing and wonderfull [sic]. [Y]ou were always there when I was having a hard time and it means so much.

Pivot Behaviour Supports participant, July 2022

Innovation and Excellence in Service

The demand for counselling, developmental, and community services is growing and changing over time. To keep up with the diverse needs of individuals and families in our communities, organizations must continually adapt, grow, and innovate to remain relevant. “Innovation and Excellence in Service” is therefore one of Willowbridge’s strategic priorities. We are pleased to report our progress toward this objective this year.

New Programs and Services

As our organization continues to grow, our opportunities do, too. Through new funding sources and a commitment to change, Willowbridge introduced the following new programs this year:

BRANCH OUT

A new service offered by our EnCompass Service Coordination team that connects young adults with developmental disabilities to the various supports, activities, and events available in the community. We support individuals to connect with and attend the opportunities that appeal to them.



ONTARIO AUTISM URGENT RESPONSE SERVICES

A new, short-term support for children and youth living with an autism diagnosis. Our teams offered wrap-around support through applied behavioural analysis, respite, and social work to respond quickly to a specific need to prevent escalation or risk of harm.

ONTARIO STRUCTURED PSYCHOTHERAPY PROGRAM (OSP)

In 2022, Willowbridge was proud to become an OSP service delivery site. The OSP program offers free psychotherapy to individuals living with mild-moderate anxiety and depression and is funded by the provincial government.

COUNSELLING WORKS!

In partnership with the City of Brantford, Willowbridge is now the primary provider of counselling services to individuals who receive Ontario Works in the region of Brantford and Brant County. The Counselling Works! program offers free, short-term counselling to individuals who are referred through the City’s Family Income & Stability Department.





BRIEF SERVICE

After launching Brief Service in 2021 to support individuals waiting for service at Willowbridge, we expanded and refined the service in 2022. Brief Service now offers access to single-session counselling and short-term supports for participants in all our programs.

I feel so much more confident in myself...and I know I will be able to manage my anxiety while also creating healthier thoughts. This would not have been possible without Willowbridge and the support of my counsellor.

Willowbridge OSP participant, July 2022

SERVICE COORDINATION DROP-IN

A new drop-in service available at our Hamilton location for 2 hours a week that provides consultation for individuals with critical, urgent needs for housing, health, mental health, and service coordination support.

SOCIAL RECREATION GROUPS

While we began our social recreation groups as a response to Covid-19 in 2021, in 2022-2023 they really came into their own. We have shifted from virtual groups to largely in-person, and now offer cooking classes, walking groups, games groups, book clubs, exercise groups, art classes and many more!

RE-CREATE ART GROUP

An art group offered in partnership with Shalem Mental Health Network that invites our participants experiencing autism into a healing, inclusive community with support from the Pivot team.



Technology & New Platforms

Willowbridge has also gotten innovative with technology. This year, we implemented two new online referral platforms. The first, Caredove, is a self-referral platform which now allows community members to book appointments directly from our website. The second, Ocean, is an e-referral platform used by Family Doctors and other collaterals so they can refer individuals directly to Willowbridge.

Recently, we also became active on MulberryFinder.com, which is a provincial platform available to community members seeking services for gender-based violence.

caredove

 Ocean


mulberry

PRIORITY #4

Financial Sustainability & Growth

Individuals and families have been turning to Willowbridge Community Services in their moment of need for over 115 years. To continue supporting the community for years to come, we must have the capacity to address diverse challenges as they arise. This means having the financial resources to sustain our services and allow for growth. We are pleased to report our progress toward this objective in 2022.

New Funding

This year's success in grants and development at Willowbridge will have far-reaching impacts on our agency and community for years to come. Bringing in nearly \$1,000,000 in new funding for 2022-2025, our leadership team wrote 22 grant/funding applications and was successful with 15. New funding includes:

- + \$220,000 each year for Ontario Structured Psychotherapy Program
Province of Ontario
- + \$150,000 for a human resources strategy (four-day workweek, compensation)
Ontario Trillium Foundation
- + \$150,000 for building updates, patio area, and retaining wall
MCCSS
- + \$100,000 for repaving of parking lot and new air-conditioning units
MCCSS

- + \$100,000 for 2 years for subsidized counselling
Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF)
- + \$100,000 each year for Ontario Works Counselling
City of Brantford
- + \$45,000 for 3 years for EnCompass Service Coordination
MCCSS
- + \$26,000 for Brief Service Delivery
Harry Foster Foundation
- + \$22,000 for Recreate Art program
Unity for Autism
- + \$50,000 for GBV Counselling
Canadian Women's Foundation
- + \$9,286 for new Branch Out Program
Brantford Community Foundation
- + \$5,000 for group programming
Brantford Community Foundation
- + Various other grants

Fundraising Strategy

In 2022-2023, Willowbridge also engaged KCI Development Consultants to help design and initiate a fundraising strategy for Willowbridge. Their work included capacity building, donor mapping, and a plan for beginning fundraising work at the agency. Willowbridge's Board of Directors has plans to implement this strategy beginning in 2024.



Financial Report

April 1, 2022-March 31, 2023

REVENUES (\$)

Brant United Way	-
Ministry of Community and Social Services	3,028,316.00
Bethesda	80,000.00
Donations/Other Revenues	104,206.00
Fees for Service	456,832.00
Other Government Grants	231,323.00
Passport Revenues	72,863.00
Capital funding	12,000.00
Total	3,985,540.00

EXPENDITURES (\$)

Salaries and Benefits	2,982,281.00
Non-Salaried Expenses	466,901.00
Centrally Allocated Administration	298,126.00
Total	3,747,308.00

Excess (Deficiency) of Revenue over Expenditures 238,232.00



The Willowbridge Audited Financial Statements for the year ending March 31, 2023, prepared by Millards, Chartered Accountants, are available at 54 Brant Ave, Brantford, Ontario N3G 3G8.



Community Spotlight

Every year there are community members who stand out for their exceptional work with Willowbridge and the community. This year, we want to take the opportunity to recognize those who went above and beyond in their support of Willowbridge.

Emily Kew and Lisa Pateman are valued community builders who have generously given their time and expertise over the course of the past two years as we explored our participants' experience of service. Their authentic feedback and insights have allowed us to co-design new, meaningful, and useful supports and services. Willowbridge began implementing the 27 recommendations that came out of these consultations in 2022-2023. We can't wait to see how Emily and Lisa's contributions help our community in the years to come.



Lisa Pateman

Lisa Pateman is an artist and mother of two. Nature lover, mental health advocate, and doer of hard things. Learning through chaos and paying it forward.



Emily Kew

Emily is an accomplished photographer from Paris, Ontario, and uses her art to capture nature and the joys of community life.

PRIORITY #5

Becoming an Employer of Choice

A successful workplace requires engaged and vibrant staff. Willowbridge Community Services believes that our agency is only as strong as the people we employ. As a result, we have prioritized employee engagement to grow our team, retain experienced professionals, and provide excellence in service. Our strategic priority of becoming “Employer of Choice” made significant progress this year.

Four-Day Workweek at Willowbridge

After struggling with a human resources crisis in 2021, the decision was made to explore a four-day workweek to reduce our turnover rate (32%), retain and recruit experienced staff, and improve quality of life for our team. In 2022, we officially made the shift to a four-day workweek after testing the model in a successful six-month pilot. The results of the pilot were staggering. Productivity and staff satisfaction were up, resignations were eliminated, and job applicants began pouring in. We are excited to see more positive impacts from this change and to share our experience with other organizations in the region.

Recruitment and retention of staff has never been better. New recruits have told us that they applied to job postings because it's obvious we're a workplace that cares about its employees. Existing staff are no longer looking elsewhere, either.

Jenn Hanna, Director of HR & Business Operations



Compensation Review

Willowbridge also took significant strides toward offering competitive salaries in 2022. After exiting our provincial moderation period, our agency hired consultants to bring us through a full compensation review for every position. Our review was based on market comparisons, required education for positions, and the level of difficulty for each role. We were pleased to offer modest increases across the organization to all our staff, and to improve our benefits package to better support the team.

Staff Wellness & Engagement

Willowbridge prioritized team building, staff wellness, and staff engagement in 2022. We were thrilled to be able to offer an escape room experience, holiday lunches, Wellness Bingo, a trip to the Flying Squirrel Trampoline Park, walking clubs, various workshops, extended training, and a book club. We look forward to continuing this work next year!

Our Team

As of March 31, 2023

Counselling Services

Vicki Hartman – Manager
Lori Hensen
Shelley Jonathan
Paul Polito
Valentin Angardi
Maria Johansen
Melissa Kuzler
Joanne Towers
Joanne MacNeil
Elizabeth Passmore (MSW student)

Developmental Services

PIVOT BEHAVIOUR SUPPORTS

Margaret Elson – Manager
Kristin Campbell-Scardellato – BCBA
Mary Mullen
Jo-Anne Kens
Sarah Smith
Carmen McCauley
Safaa Sofyane
Meagan Nightingale
(maternity leave)
Emily Sevier-Stoneman
Aliana Weavers

ENCOMPASS SERVICE COORDINATION

Edie Mous – Manager

ENHANCED SERVICE COORDINATION

Heather Mordue
Jim Kennedy
Amanda Downs
Jessica McRae
Lyndsey Dickson – Transitional
Aged Youth Planner

ONGOING SERVICE COORDINATION

Jackie Thompson
Laurie Redpath-Rolfe
Holly Floyd
Michelle Bell
Keji Temitayo-Oseni (SSW student)

ROUTES RESPITE COMMUNITY INCLUSION

Jenny Poplar – Manager
Marilyn Ward
Shanah Hayes
Allan Murray
Elizabeth MacMillan
Brittany Holland
Harlene Muniz
Reegan Cameron
Kimberley Sproul
Raquel Meneses
Amanda Dietz (SSW student)
Kinza Syed (student)

Admin

Sarah Hammond
Sandra Kennedy
Melissa Kuzler
Kendra Marjerrison

Leadership Team

Leslie Josling – Executive Director
Laura Bergeron – Director of Services
Jennifer Hanna – Director of HR
& Business Operations
Devon Atherton – Communications
& Project Manager
Jenny Poplar – Manager of
Community Inclusion Programs
Margaret Elson – Manager of Pivot
Behaviour Supports
Vicki Hartman – Manager of
Counselling Services
Edie Mous – Manager of Encompass
Service Coordination



Donors

The work we do wouldn't be possible without our community donors. A huge thank you to all those who helped us bring change to life in 2022-2023.

Sanderson Centre Foundation
RockIT Fuel Design
& Technology
Two Row Architect
Strodes BBQ and Deli
+VG Architects
MTE Consultants
Royal Botanical Gardens
Bard & Bear Games Café
Sobeys – Colbourne St.
Individual donors

COUNSELLING SERVICES

- Family and Children
- Couples
- Groups
- Individuals
- Developmental Disabilities
- 2SLGBTQIA+
- Indigenous
- Multicultural
- Men's Specific
- Women's Specific
- Single-Session
- Ontario Structured Psychotherapy
- Counselling Works!

DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

Pivot Behaviour Supports

- Behaviour Consultations
- Pivot Clinic
- Behaviour Support Plan Review

EnCompass Service Coordination

- Enhanced Service Coordination (Adults)
- Ongoing Service Coordination (Adults, Youth, & Children)
- Transitional Aged Youth Planning
- Branch Out

Brief Service

Respite

- Routes Respite Community
- The Grove
- Passports
- Summer Camps (Kids & Youth)
- Groups

GROUPS

- Virtual Groups
- Women Initiating New Growth and Self Esteem (WINGS)
- Soaring Above the Turbulence
- Flying Together in Healthy Relationships
- Zones of Regulation
- Nurturing Self Compassion
- Skills for Healthy Living
- Crock-pot Cooking Classes
- Re-create Art Group
- Social Recreation Groups



willowbridge.ca