



# 2023/2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Neighbour to Neighbour's impact  
in the community.

NEIGHBOUR

— 2 —

NEIGHBOUR

[n2ncentre.com](https://n2ncentre.com)



## President & Executive Director's Message

Taking a moment to reflect on the unprecedented challenges and incredible achievements of our organization and community.

This year was defined by immense change as Neighbour to Neighbour (N2N) transformed to be more responsive to the evolving needs of the community. Like so many not-for-profits, Neighbour to Neighbour experienced intense pressures as we worked to meet escalating demand. With everything, from the cost of goods and services to the fuel we use in our truck skyrocketing alongside inflation. These realities required us to be dynamic in our response while relying more than ever on the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and donors.

Our Emergency Food department saw record demand. With an 18% increase in monthly visits year over year, we filled nearly 19,000 household appointments last year. To meet this increase, we looked to expand partnerships, staff and volunteer capacity, as well as the collection of food - collecting over 1.12 million lbs this year.

Families in our community are feeling the intense economic and social pressures. In the Family Services department, members of our community accessed our supports at unprecedented levels. Our staff and community counsellors worked with over 6,100 households to provide support in navigating services and accessing basic needs. This represents a staggering 49% increase in year over year access for these services.

Our Education programs continue to be an area of celebration for N2N with a strong presence in schools and community-based settings across Hamilton Mountain. We celebrate these programs, which both expanded and ran at full capacity this year. Thanks to our volunteers, we have been able to meet our commitment of providing twice weekly tutoring supports in math and literacy for 360 students. **A big congratulations to all of the students who've seen improvement in reading scores, math skills, and most importantly, confidence!**

N2N's Hamilton Community Food Centres (HCFC) continued its commitment to providing a place where members of the community can come together to connect while growing, sharing, cooking, accessing and advocating for good nutritious food. This dedication is reflected in the numerous programs being accessed by community members and the successful partnerships established including the City of Hamilton.

Community groups, businesses, fundraisers and donors to the rescue! Our two signature fundraising events, the N2N Charity Golf Classic and Coldest Night of the Year, received incredible support from sponsors, donors, and event participants.

We also launched the inaugural Gather and Nourish event in support of our HCFC. Thank you to all of our donors, event sponsors, and business partners.

The impact N2N has in our community is quite simply not possible without our dedicated volunteers. We continue to be humbled by each of the over 400 volunteers who chose to dedicate their time, energy and passion for the people in their community. You support our special events, programs and services at both locations, sit on our Board of Directors and committees, and are the driving force behind our bookstore - N2N Books. Your commitment is valued and means so much.

We take pride in our ability to meet the sharp increase in demand in many areas of our organization and recognize this is in large part possible due to the skill and strength of our staff, and we thank them for their dedication as we continue to navigate uncertainty together.

Neighbour to Neighbour also experienced significant change with the retirement of long serving Executive Director, Denise Arkell. Denise left a legacy of community unity which is reflected in robust community support, thousands of relationships nurtured, and the tens of thousands of lives positively impacted by her leadership and vision. Building from the incredible legacy left by Denise Arkell, N2N welcomed Barrington C. Hector as its new Executive Director in the summer of 2023.

As we look toward our future, we know that so many in our Hamilton Mountain community rely on N2N as a hub. A place to connect with friends and neighbours. A place to access services and programs, take part in courses, learn new skills and celebrate events. A place to stay engaged in the community by volunteering or to give back by becoming a donor. Simply put, no matter who you are, there is a place at Neighbour to Neighbour for you.

**The challenges we faced over the past year were met with the energy, creativity, grit, determination and heart that N2N is known for in the community. This is an exciting time for N2N as we enter into a new strategic planning period so that we can adapt to meet the evolving needs of the community.**

**We know that the next year will bring new challenges – and that with our incredible team of staff and volunteers, and the continued support of our donors, we are poised to meet these challenges as we serve our community!**

**BARRINGTON C. HECTOR**  
Executive Director

**& DAN HOLSTEIN**  
President of the Board

# Volunteer Engagement

As community demand increased, N2N responded, in part by recruiting new volunteers. With more households visiting our Food Bank than ever before, we brought on additional servers and box-packers to fill the need. We also launched new programs, like the summer cooking program for youth, and expanded existing ones, like our Literacy and Math Programs, to serve even more students this year. Our fundraising events continued to grow, with new volunteers getting involved in raising vital funds to support N2N's programs and services. We are so grateful for the hundreds of dedicated volunteers who make what we do possible.

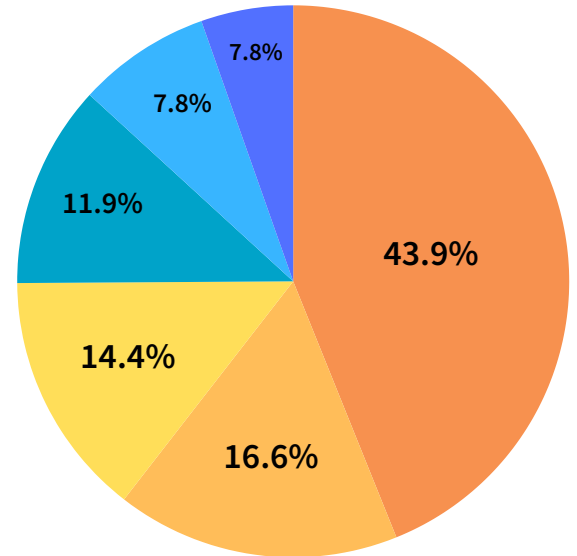
**134** new volunteers in 2023

**143** volunteers at fundraisers & food drives

**414** volunteers involved in programs & services

**25602** total volunteer hours

## Volunteer Hours by Department



- 43.9%** Emergency Food Programs
- 16.6%** Education Programs
- 14.4%** Hamilton Community Food Centre
- 11.9%** N2N Books
- 7.8%** Family Services
- 5.4%** Development & Administrative Support

## Senior of the Year Award

This past October, Neighbour to Neighbour was proud to nominate long time volunteer, Kathleen Deehan for Hamilton's 2023 Senior of the Year award!

Since 2011, Kathleen has contributed nearly 1500 hours of her time to N2N, volunteering in multiple departments including Family Services, Emergency Food, Education, and Development! Early on, Kathleen would regularly volunteer during weekends at community organized food drives and fundraising events, also going on to assist with multiple shifts in our Holiday Toy Store, and then with on-line tutoring for elementary students during the pandemic. Currently both a weekly reading tutor and volunteer with our used bookstore, N2N Books, Kathleen has become a regular fixture of Neighbour to Neighbour.

It is because of dedicated volunteers like Kathleen, that we are able to continue our work helping communities thrive.



# Hamilton Community Food Centre

This year, high rates of inflation added to the stress felt at individual, family and organizational levels. We saw demand for all types of programs and services skyrocket across the country.

Hamilton Community Food Centre (CFC) is part of a national movement committed to well-being, belonging and social justice. We create welcoming spaces where people gather to grow, cook, share, and advocate for good food.



## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Community Meals, Cafe, and Markets served **6,978** nourishing dine-in and take-out meals.
- Community Kitchens for adults and youth held **44** sessions throughout the year, sharing **751** meals with participants.
- Volunteers contributed **3,688** hours to Community Food Centre programs in 2023!

## PROGRAM LIST

All Community Food Centres offer a special mix of programming. Key ingredients include cooking and food-growing skills, healthy food access, and ample community engagement opportunities. Here's what was served up in 2023.

- Community Meals
- Affordable Produce Market
- Intercultural Community Kitchen
- Cooking Up Justice Youth Kitchen
- Kids Club
- Kids in the Kitchen
- Hamilton Community Garden Network
- Garden Club
- Morning Cafe
- Community Action Training
- Advocacy Office - Community Support & Referrals
- Social Justice Workshops
- Justice Circles
- Land-based Learning
- Mindful Movement
- Planting the Seeds of Belonging - Anti-Oppression Education
- Seniors Connect - Phone Outreach
- Welcome Baby Prenatal Education & Support
- Morning Yoga with the YWCA
- Tai Chi
- YWeConnect Morning Fitness
- Self-care Workshops



*"I'm eating healthier and feeling healthier."*

Hamilton CFC remains committed to supporting our community. This means providing a place where people can connect and access good food – food that nourishes the body and spirit. And it means advocating for equitable policy change that addresses food insecurity and poverty in the long term.

*\*\*This Impact Summary provides a snapshot of our 2023 program data, as well as key results from the 2023 Annual Program Survey (APS). 49 people from Hamilton CFC were interviewed.*

*“It’s broadened my perspective on the issues that affect people that I wouldn’t have been exposed to otherwise.”*

## OUR IMPACT IN 2023

### INCREASED SENSE OF BELONGING & SUPPORT



**94%**

*“Every time I come here I meet and talk to different people. [...] I feel like we are all coming together here.”*

of community members surveyed feel they belong to a community at the CFC.

### IMPROVED HEALTH & WELL-BEING



**82%**

*“It feels like my problems go away when I get to talk to people and play chess.”*

of community members surveyed said their physical health, mental health, or both improved when coming to Hamilton CFC.

### IMPROVED ACCESS TO NOURISHING, CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE FOOD



**94%**

*“I have less financial worry knowing I can eat well [here]. They offer a lot of organic foods. Sometimes in the morning, we can eat granola and yogurt. That’s easy, healthy.”*

of community members surveyed said the CFC is an important source of healthy food.

### SUPPORTED HEALTHY FOOD SKILLS & BEHAVIOURS



**92%**

*“The CFC has made me aware of more types of beans and veggies to incorporate into dishes.”*

made changes to their eating habits.



### INCREASED COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



**47%**

*“The CFC offers a friendly and safe environment to share ideas and opinions with others freely. I feel more at home and am able to speak up about issues that affect me and my community.”*

of community members surveyed are more confident speaking up about social issues.

# Education Services



N2N's Education Department continues working to plant seeds of success in our community, expanding both of our programs this year to serve more students. Our caring volunteers work to support students with building literacy and numeracy skills, while also developing positive attitudes towards learning.

It is our intention for students to foster a love of learning that not only prepares them for success in academics, but pushes them to strive for greatness outside of the classroom. We have witnessed immense personal growth in our students as they become more self-confident learners.

“There were many moments when their eyes would light up because some detail or aspect in the story reminded them of something good about themselves or their experiences – or when they learned something they had never heard of before.” – N2N Volunteer Tutor



students receive tutoring support twice per week



Reading Tutor Volunteers



Math Tutors



of students improved their reading scores



of students improved their math skills

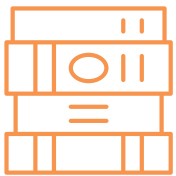


of students have become more confident

“A student who had little confidence in his reading gradually started sounding out words as his confidence built up. I was amazed at how well he was doing. He wasn't afraid to try guessing new words and really started to make progress.” – N2N Volunteer Tutor



## Literacy



Since 2003, the Deban Brunette Literacy Program has provided students with a supportive place to foster a love of literacy through meaningful reading practice and opportunities to engage with books and caring volunteers. We are partnered with both the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board and the Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board to operate our literacy program in 15 local elementary schools. This year, our program offered **240 students in Grades 1 – 4 individual tutoring twice per week**. We also introduced a pilot program this year, that provided **40 students in Grades 5 and 6 group tutoring twice per week**.

## Math Success



**This year, our Math Success Program expanded to include not only Grade 7 and 8 students, but Grades 5 and 6 as well, with over 80 students enrolled and participating.** This program provides a supportive space for under-resourced students to receive curriculum support and opportunities to build core math skills. Students are provided opportunities for math practice aimed at supporting their successful transition into high school. We offer after-school programming twice a week at four locations across Hamilton Mountain thanks to the generous donation of space by the Hamilton Public Library and the City of Hamilton. At each location, students receive instruction from qualified math educators and volunteers from our community.

### Struggling with math in Grade 6

Carly\* a Grade 6 student, initially found simple addition and subtraction problems challenging when they enrolled in the math program. With the support of dedicated volunteers and the help of our math educators, Carly went from struggling with addition questions to quickly and accurately answering more complex multiplication and division problems. Not only did their math skills improve, but their parents were amazed at the overall difference in Carly's confidence and commitment to learning.

\*Names have been changed for student privacy.

# Emergency Food

Food insecurity is at crisis levels in our communities. Rising food prices, limited housing and reduced or precarious employment are key factors in the need for food.

We work to offer a supportive, welcoming, and safe environment to receive food, providing 5–7 days' worth of groceries helping to alleviate an immediate need, while also assisting with critical access to additional community supports.



## Significant Challenges

Over capacity of client visits with an **18% increase in monthly visits** this year and a 40% increase in monthly visits since 2022. The growth in visits is the highest in the history of our food bank.

**48% increase in new households to the food bank system** — individuals who are new to the country and new families seeking support from a food bank for the first time.

An **increased request for home deliveries** with a growing waiting list for those who have medical barriers which prevent them from personal on-site visits to our food bank.



N2N's Emergency Food department collected and distributed over 1.1 million pounds of food this year, which includes produce, meat and dairy items and key non-perishables. The key nutritional items have a direct benefit to our client's health and wellbeing.

Our community champions — schools, grocery stores, businesses, food hubs, the faith community, and individuals — help keep our food bank stocked with a variety of choices for our clients.

*“Thank you for the beautiful box of assorted food — you have opened up my world to cooking in a variety of ways...” – N2N Food Bank Client*



## Food Bank



Collected & delivered over 1.12 million lbs. of food with dollar value of \$3.6M (+8%)



4,090 households per year with 11,962 clients



50% of food distributed is fresh produce, meats, & dairy



18,873 community visits to the food bank (+18%)



Over 13% of clients are older adults (50+)



Over 38% of food bank clients are children under 18 years of age

## Home Delivery



1,390 home deliveries completed (avg. 115 per month) (+4%)



61% of clients experience long term limited mobility



24% of clients experience mental health challenges



12% of clients experience neurological challenges

**We are so grateful for the 125 volunteers** who contribute their time, energy and continuous commitment to N2N's Emergency Food Department, making a major impact in the lives of almost 1,600 families that visit the food bank each month!

Their kindness and empathy, dedication to receive and load, commitment to stock and sort and willingness to take extra shifts and train new volunteers is second to none. Thank you to our extraordinary volunteers, who we rely on to truly make a difference in our community!

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” – Margaret Mead*

# Family Services

N2N’s Family Services department continued providing critical support and service navigation throughout the past year, working to improve the emotional, social, and financial health of local families. Our Community Counselling program assisted individuals with around 3300 points of contact this year, providing instrumental emotional support and assistance navigating services offered both at N2N and through external agencies and programs. We continued working to build and maintain key community partnerships, enabling us to provide well-rounded support to those needing our services.

In 2023/24, we welcomed and reengaged, several key partners to the wrap-around support provided through our department. This year, we partnered with the Early ON Centre, providing drop-in play at our Athens Street location one day per week. In early 2024, we also began offering assistance with navigating programs and services for children 0-6 and their caregivers by hosting a Daycare Fee Subsidy Worker in partnership with the City of Hamilton.

We continued working closely with the Xperience Annex team, VPI Employment and Wesley, to provide access to employment and education assistance and opportunities. In addition, we worked to host a bi-weekly drop-in legal clinic in partnership with the Hamilton Community Legal Clinic, providing support with common needs, such as child support, eviction prevention, and OW/ODSP appeals.

This department also continues to work in partnership with the Women’s Centre of Hamilton and Interval House providing Housing supports to women and families escaping intimate partner violence, as well as with Lens Crafters providing free eyeglasses, with Public Health dental service providing free dental care, and with Compass Community Health providing community development and service navigation support to Trans & Non Binary persons.



## Settlement Services

Our Settlement Service program continued to be in very high demand throughout the past year, providing essential support for the basic needs for newcomers and persons with persistent barriers to settlement. We saw a large increase in the number of single person households, and a notable increase in the number of families utilizing our services, with the majority of new clients being aged 25-64 years old.

	TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS SERVED	REPEAT HOUSEHOLDS SERVED	NEW SINGLE-PERSON HOUSEHOLDS SERVED	NEW FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS SERVED	NEW CLIENT AGE RANGE
<b>Total 2023/2024</b>	<b>6,138</b> <i>+49% over previous year</i>	<b>5,418</b> <i>+48%</i>	<b>260</b> <i>+134</i>	<b>460</b> <i>+30%</i>	<b>25-64</b> <i>years old</i>

# Financial Advocacy

N2N’s Money Matters Financial Advocacy program is focused on income security; whether that is making sure household expenses decrease, household income and financial benefits increase, or both.

Over the past year, our financial counsellor assisted 43 new households, with a total of 113 family members.

# Utilities Support

The Utilities Support Program remained an essential feature in our income security work. This past year, our team connected 640 households with the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP)- providing a 24- or 60-month rebate to income eligible households, reducing the monthly electricity bill by \$35-\$113.

We also worked this year, to support 320 households through the Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP), which provides disconnection prevention grants up to \$780 for income eligible households. This continues to be vital assistance for both income and housing security.



2023	JANUARY - DECEMBER
<b>Ontario Energy Support Program Monthly Rebate</b>	
Households	640
Household Members	2112
Rebates (dispersed over 24 mo)	\$871,800
Rebate/household	\$1362
Newcomer Households	86
Newcomer Rebates (over 24 mo)	\$124,632
<b>LEAP Disconnection Prevention Grant</b>	
Households	320
Grants dispersed	\$152,813.60
<b>Financial Impact</b>	
Total credits distributed	\$1,024,613.60

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

# 2023/2024

## N2N Leadership Team



**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
Barrington C. Hector



**DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY  
FOOD SERVICES**  
Charlotte Redekop-Young



**DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY FOOD  
CENTRE & FAMILY SERVICES**  
Krista D'Aoust



**DIRECTOR OF MARKETING  
& DEVELOPMENT**  
Laura Berljawsky



## Board of Directors

<b>PRESIDENT</b>	Dan Holstein	<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Chris White
<b>PAST PRESIDENT</b>	Steve Kartonchik	<b>DIRECTOR</b>	George Kalacherry
<b>SECRETARY</b>	Nick Davies	<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Joan Nelson
<b>TREASURER</b>	Joti Vallabh	<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Joti Vallabh
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Alicia Au	<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Lorraine Hoult
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Andrew Brown	<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Natalie Shearer
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Ann Higgins		

### CONTACT

905-574-1334 | 28 Athens Street, Hamilton, ON L9C 3K9

### FOLLOW

n2ncentrehamilton @n2ncentre



Scan to visit our  
website and become  
a supporter today.  
[www.n2ncentre.com](http://www.n2ncentre.com)