

NO ONE SHOULD
BE FORGOTTEN

OUR ANNUAL REPORT

SUMMARY
2022-2023





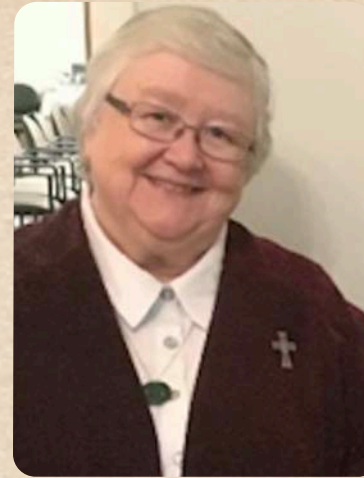
Paul Davis,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A KIND WORD...

The Gathering Place is growing and changing. While we began in 1994 by offering a simple lunch to people who were hungry, today we have become a multi-faceted organization focused on helping the most vulnerable who often struggle with very complex challenges.

And the need continues to grow. Over 2,000 registered Guests and an estimated 1,000 unregistered Guests come to The Gathering Place regularly. They are among the most in need in our society who often through no fault of their own, have no place to turn to for help. Today, The Gathering Place provides meals, clothing, showers, social supports, dental care, a place to stay for the night, and other programs and services. We couldn't do this important work without our dedicated and compassionate staff, which we have had to increase substantially to meet the growing need. During the past year, we have begun the redevelopment of the former Mercy Convent. When completed in 2024, it will include a new 40-bed permanent overnight shelter, transitional housing, and supportive housing. But all of this is so dependent on our valued partners, volunteers, and donors.

We are an organization that believes in the power of kindness, and it is the kindness of others that is helping to improve the lives of those who need so much. Thank you for your kindness.



Sister Elizabeth M. Davis, rsm
CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In the dining room of The Gathering Place, there is a ceramic sculpture of hands created by Gerald Squires and entitled "A hand rules compassion as a hand rules heaven." This work of art reflects gratitude for the community that is at the heart of The Gathering Place, a place now growing to include Mercy House and O'Callaghan's Haven – all in response to the expressed needs of Guests. Near the artwork is a plaque with words that are fitting for my greetings in this Annual Report, given in my privileged role as Chair of the Board.

The Gathering Place is a community in which Guests, staff members and the leadership team, volunteers, founding congregations, religious groups, builders, corporate donors, individual donors, media partners, governments (municipal, provincial, and federal), and the board of directors all have a place. It is a community rooted in principles of equality, inclusion, compassion, kindness, and dignity for each person. It is a community which makes a difference, works with energy and purpose, and gathers together to make good things happen. This is what happened when The Gathering Place community was true to itself during this past year 2022-2023. For that, we can only say thank you and again thank you.

MORE ARE IN NEED



Hunger, poverty, homelessness, and mental unwellness are just some of the challenges that many Guests of The Gathering Place face every day. Today, Guests' needs are greater and more complex than ever. The number of people who use our services has doubled since 2018 and continues to grow exponentially.

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

At one time, Guests of The Gathering Place were largely older, mature individuals. Today, the overall number of Guests continues to increase and their needs have become much more complicated. We also see a concerning trend of younger Guests. The economic and social realities of today have created food insecurities, educational limitations, housing instability, and social isolation across a wide variety of groups. Everyone deserves kindness and dignity and The Gathering Place strives to help all those who need it most.



THE HOMELESS CRISIS

Available, affordable housing continues to be a challenge in St. John's and right across Canada. From April, 2022 to March, 2023, it was estimated that those experiencing homelessness increased by 63%¹ in our community. During the Covid crisis, The Gathering Place opened a temporary overnight shelter that is now fully utilized. We are presently



working on a 40-bed permanent overnight shelter (O'Callaghan's Haven), as well as transitional and supportive housing through the soon to be completed (2024) Mercy House Project.

¹ End Homelessness in Dashboard Data, April, 2022 & March, 2023, wecanendit.com

MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Many Guests of The Gathering Place have lived very difficult lives. A lot of Guests have lived in poverty and have suffered mental, physical, and



sexual abuse. In order to provide help for these complex needs, easily accessible, supportive services are critical.

THE NUMBERS KEEP INCREASING

At The Gathering Place, we continue to help more and more people. Today, we have 2,000 registered Guests and we estimate another 1,000 who are unregistered. This continues to put great pressure on our organization especially regarding staffing, food, and supplies. But it is our mission that no one be forgotten.



“ We rise
by *lifting*
others ”
— Robert Ingersoll

WHAT WE PROVIDE

Many Guests of The Gathering Place have more needs than ever, so we have greatly expanded our services. We strive to provide critical necessities of life in a safe, warm, respectful environment.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE



As a low-barrier community health centre located in downtown St. John's, we are able to provide many critical services all under one roof.

3 MEALS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK

We offer a hot breakfast, lunch, and supper every day. Our meals are designed to provide essential nutrition to those who are often deficient in necessary vitamins and minerals.



BE KIND BOUTIQUE

With the help of so many community donors and partners, the Be Kind Boutique provides clothing, footwear, toiletries, and small houseware items. Guests spend a large amount of time outdoors with little protection from the elements so providing seasonal outerwear is very important.



DENTAL SERVICE

Guests can avail of dental services here at The Gathering Place in our fully equipped dental clinic. Volunteer Dentists, Hygienists, and Assistants all give their time to help provide free dental care to Guests. Many of whom have never received dental care in their lifetime.



HOT SHOWERS

Many Guests of The Gathering Place don't have access to a hot shower. Guest Support Workers help arrange convenient times for a safe, private environment for Guests to shower.



LAUNDRY SERVICES

We all deserve to have clean clothes. The Gathering Place has a dedicated laundry facility with multiple units allowing Guests to wash and dry their clothes daily.



GUEST EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS

Guests are given the opportunity to build life-skills, self-worth, purpose, and social skills. Programming can include cooking classes, book exchanges, music and art, and so much more. Some Guests eventually volunteer themselves; helping to build their self-esteem, while learning how to give back.



SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Our Bikes for Good Program and Hopeful Garden offer opportunities for Guests to learn new skills. As our demographic continues to change, we hope to offer more social enterprise opportunities in the future.



LOW-BARRIER 30-BED TEMPORARY SHELTER

During the pandemic, in partnership with the Provincial Government, we opened a temporary overnight shelter. Three years later, we are operating at 100% occupancy, by sheltering 30 Guests every night, who would otherwise have nowhere else to go.



NEW SHELTER AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

In response to the increasing demand for housing, we are excited to be building a new permanent shelter and supportive housing facility. We expect this new housing facility, Mercy House (which will include O'Callaghan's Haven) to be completed in 2024. When completed, this new facility will provide overnight shelter and accommodations for 90 Guests.



OUR NUMBERS SAY A LOT

Sometimes it is hard to grasp the enormity of the situation we face daily at The Gathering Place. Our numbers are a clear indication that the need is increasing dramatically as well as the challenges we have to keep pace.

3,000 GUESTS

It is very difficult to know exactly how many people need and use our services. Our records indicate that we serve about 2,000 registered Guests, and about another 1,000 Guests who choose not to register.

OVERNIGHT SHELTER STAYS OVER 10,000

Our temporary 30-bed shelter was occupied 95% of the time during 2022, resulting in over 10,000 overnight stays. Over 360 individuals stayed one or more nights at the shelter. Sadly, we had to turn people away 397 times.

ANNUAL FOOD AND KITCHEN COSTS NOW OVER \$550,000

Food costs have tripled over the last couple of years, due to the increase in Guest numbers as well as the overall increase in food costs. This has put tremendous pressure on our budgeting, so donations are more important than ever.

MORE THAN 400 MONTHLY CASE MANAGER VISITS

Demand for Case Manager support for Guests is rising and while we manage to work with so many, we are continuing to search for additional qualified professionals to meet the actual needs around us.

OVER 175,000 MEALS SERVED IN 2022

We served over 115,000 hot meals and gave out over 60,000 sandwiches last year. We serve 3 meals a day; 365 days a year. Plus sandwiches outside of mealtimes.

OVER 1,000 DENTAL CARE VISITS

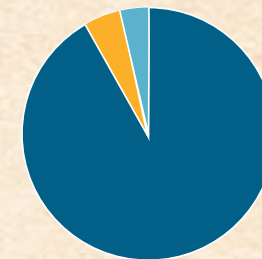
This year we surpassed 1,000 dental care visits since our onsite clinic opened in 2018! Volunteer Dentists, Hygienists, and Assistants continue to be the backbone of this successful program.

OVER 200 GUESTS USE THE BOUTIQUE EVERY WEEK!

We provide donated clothing such as coats, boots, and gloves as well as new items like underwear, socks, and toiletries.

OVER 10,000 LOADS OF LAUNDRY DONE THIS YEAR!

Having clean clothes is critical to one's overall health and wellbeing. Our modern laundry room operates 7 days a week.



Expenses

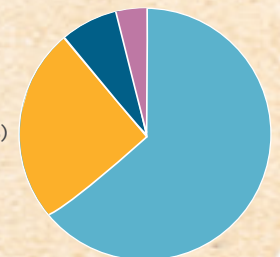
- Charitable Programs \$4,997,995 (93.53%)
- Management and Administration \$200,000 (3.74%)
- Fundraising \$145,933 (2.73%)

Total expenses: \$5,343,928
Source: Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)

Revenue

- Government Funding \$3,578,106 (64.83%)
- Donations \$1,341,514 (24.31%)
- Other \$379,950 (6.88%)
- Other Charities \$219,789 (3.98%)

Total revenue: \$5,519,359
Source: Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)



EMPLOYEES: FULL-TIME - 55 PART-TIME/RELIEF - 43

I cannot do all the good that the world needs, but the *world needs* all the good that I can do. ”

— Jana Stanfield

GRATITUDE FROM GUESTS

I am so grateful to those who donate money and things like yarn – knitting is therapy for me. I would be lost without The Gathering Place.

– Yvonne

I'm homeless, but The Gathering Place is where I access food, laundry, showers, and support. Without this place, life would be very difficult for me. God bless everyone who helps.

– Shawn

The music room is the most important room for me because I don't have an instrument at home. It helps me reduce stress. By donating, you are helping so many people.

– Mike

As a senior, I don't have many friends left. The Gathering Place helps me be around other people. So, I come here every day. I'm so grateful for all the donors.

– Ellie

Life would be a lot darker and lonely without The Gathering Place. I can get a good, cooked meal, feel like people care about me, and can share my feelings.

– Shane

Life would be really hard for a lot of us if The Gathering Place didn't exist. I'm so thankful for donors who don't forget about us, and for staff and volunteers who respect everyone and are really kind to me.

– Marilyn



COMMUNITY PARTNERS



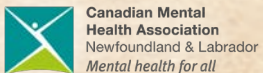
Sisters of Mercy



Presentation Sisters



ST. JOHN'S



END HOMELESSNESS
ST. JOHN'S #WECANENDIT



Stella's Circle
Hope Lives Here

Canada