

KINDNESS WANTED FOR

HOMELESS & HUNGRY

OUR ANNUAL REPORT

SUMMARY
2024-2025





AS WE REFLECT...



As I reflect back on this past year, I am mindful of both the progress we have made and the growing challenges we continue to face. Knowing this will be my final message as Executive Director of The Gathering Place before I retire, I do so with deep gratitude. The Guests, dedicated volunteers, hard working staff, donors, and community partners who shape The Gathering Place and all that it represents have become incredibly important to me and will always hold a lasting place in my life.

One of my proudest moments was the official opening of Mercy House and O'Callaghan's Haven in November, 2024. What began as a long-held vision became a reality — a place of safety, dignity, and stability for over 90 individuals who would otherwise have nowhere to turn. Witnessing Guests walk through those doors for the first time is something I will never forget and now seeing the transformation that some are experiencing is truly inspiring.

This year also marked the completion of renovations to our exterior grounds. We have completed a redevelopment of the very busy courtyard and main entrance, providing protection from the elements for Guests waiting to access meals and services. Work is continuing on the expanded garden, that will include accessible walkways, raised garden planters, outdoor meeting space and new welcoming entrances that will invite the community in to enjoy the space. We look forward to the scheduled opening in spring 2026.

At the same time, the need for services continues to grow. More people are seeking support, and many are facing increasingly complex challenges. The Gathering Place operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, working to meet people where they are with food, shelter, health care, social supports and much more. This work is only possible because of the generosity of donors, the dedication of volunteers and the commitment of partners who stand alongside us.

The Gathering Place cannot exist without the ongoing kindness and support of this community. Thank you for being part of this important work.

Paul Davis EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



“Can I be someone who helps change what they see?” — the song, *Can I Dream* (written by Gary Wadden and Kim Power), was sung by a children's choir at the opening of Mercy House on November 5, 2024. Mercy House gathers within its walls a permanent, low-barrier emergency shelter (O'Callaghan's Haven), transitional beds

and supportive housing, responding to diverse needs of Guests and others seeking better housing.

Complementing our existing programs, Mercy House is a symbol of people dreaming about a more inclusive and just society, acting together to bring that dream to reality, and advocating for those whom society has failed. It shows that governments, private citizens, religious congregations, and community groups can make a difference when we choose to work together.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I express gratitude to staff, volunteers, and senior leaders at The Gathering Place who work every day to make the dream a reality. We are especially grateful to Paul Davis who will retire at the end of December 2025. Paul has led with wisdom, compassion, creativity and respect to make our vision of “Kindness Wanted, Kindness Shared” come alive. He will be deeply missed. I extend sympathy to the Presentation Sisters (co-founders of The Gathering Place) who mourned the death of their leader, Sister Betty Rae Lee.

As we hear the echoes of *Can I Dream*, let us never stop believing that we can make a difference. Let us dare to dream that we can have a world where hunger and homeless are only words, to see a future where all of us are respected, and to be the ones who together help make that future real.

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

GRATITUDE FROM GUESTS

The Grief and Loss group has really helped me with my problems. It's also nice to enjoy a cup of coffee.

– TAYLOR

The services help keep me out of my bad depression. It means the world to me.

– KELLY

The Gathering Place basically kept me alive. The fact that it's open daily is sunshine on my shoulders and it helps me cope. Without it, I would be living in solitude, no food, no hope.

– ROB

I'm alive because of The Gathering Place. My belly is full, I have people around me, and I'm even gaining some social skills.

– BOB

Life can be difficult. I need food and support, but I'll never forget being asked to be involved in Indigenous Day.

– JORDAN

I Love the Murphy Centre Programing at The Gathering Place. I have learned to read and write better and even published my very own book of poems. I wouldn't have gotten as far as I have without The Gathering Place.

– MARGARET

I find purpose here – a place to go, and something to get up for.

– DON



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

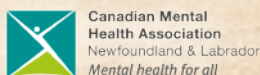


COMMENT OF SUPPORT



For well over a decade, the Patten Family Foundation and the A. Harvey Group has been proud to support The Gathering Place and the meaningful work they do in our community. Sponsoring a Thanksgiving meal each year has become a special tradition for our work family and reminds us what community truly means. We're continually inspired by the kindness at The Gathering Place and are incredibly grateful to have an opportunity to play a small role in the compassion & warmth they give so freely.

– Nichole, Patten Family Foundation





THE NEED

The need has never been greater and more complex than it is today. The number of people who use our services has doubled since 2018.



UNDERSERVED POPULATION

We refer to those who use our services as Guests. Many Guests face life circumstances that make it difficult to access the help they need. Their economic reality, food insecurity, educational limitations, housing instability, and social isolation can create inequities. We know that when these

challenges are addressed, health outcomes improve. Everyone deserves kindness and dignity, no matter their situation, and that is what we strive to extend to the Guests we serve in our community.

THE HOMELESS CRISIS

Affordable housing continues to be a challenge. From February 2024 to February 2025, it was estimated that while those experiencing homelessness has slowed, it still increased by 5%. Moreover, those who experienced chronic homelessness increased by more than 15%. While we are slowly making a difference,

these numbers continue to rise, and we understand a key part of someone's success begins with ensuring someone has a safe and secure roof over their head.

CHALLENGES

Guests navigate so many unique life stories and situations – no journey is the same. Many Guests of The Gathering Place have been impacted by mental health and addictions issues, poverty and trauma. But when life is already complicated, the need for accessible, supportive services becomes more critical.

3550 GUESTS

We provide services to a vast community within St. John's, NL. Sometimes Guests are willing to register with us to help serve them better, while some Guests are unable to make that level of commitment. To our best understanding, we currently serve about 2800 registered Guests, and about another 750 unregistered Guests.

INFLATION AND ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

While many are experiencing a post-COVID economic rebound, the Guests we serve are often left to pick up the pieces of their complex situations. Many of their stories include loss of employment and housing, mental health, and various addictions. It's no surprise that demand continues to rise as the impact and economic wake of the pandemic becomes our reality.



“Kindness begins with the idea that we all struggle.”

— Charles Glassman

OUR NUMBERS SAY A LOT

Numbers don't always show the complexity of the situation, but they serve as indicators to the growing need, and how we are striving to meet that need.

**3,550
GUESTS**

It is very difficult to know exactly how many people need and use our services. Our records indicate that we serve about 2800 registered Guests, and about another 750 Guests who wish to remain anonymous.

**OVER 360
PEOPLE OUT
OF THE COLD**

95% OCCUPANCY

Since opening our Shelter, we have now sheltered over 360 individuals, but we also had to turn people away 397 times. 40 turn-a-ways each month.

**OVER 10,000
LOADS OF LAUNDRY
DONE THIS YEAR!**

Access to clean clothes is essential for maintaining overall health. Free laundry services are available to Guests seven days a week.

**OVER
268,000
MEALS SERVED
THIS YEAR**

We served over 154,000 hot meals and gave out over 114,000 sandwiches last year. We serve 3 meals a day; 365 days a year plus sandwiches outside of mealtimes. – 10.3% increase YOY.

**88
NEW DENTAL CARE
PATIENTS THIS YEAR**

56 Guests were able to get dental cleanings, and 74 Guests received dental services like fillings, extractions, checkups or dentures. A total of 804 Guests have been helped since opening the clinic. Volunteer Dentists, Hygienists, and Assistants continue to be the backbone of this program.

**OVER 210 GUESTS
USE THE BOUTIQUE
EVERY MONTH!**

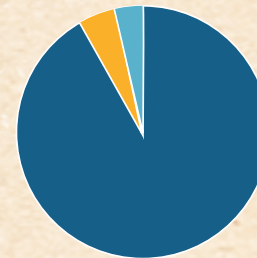
Toiletries along with new underwear continue to be the biggest need on an on-going basis.

**MORE THAN 420
MONTHLY CASE
MANAGER VISITS**

Demand for Case Manager support is rising and while we manage to work with so many, we are looking for more resources to meet the actual needs around us.

**ANNUAL FOOD & KITCHEN
COSTS NOW OVER
\$722,000**

Food costs have tripled, and demand has increased over the last few years. (demand increased 10%; total costs increased 20% YOY)

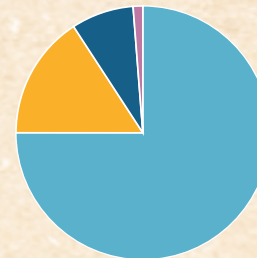


Expenses

- Charitable Programs
\$6,137,437 (92.22%)
- Management & Administration
\$300,000 (4.51%)
- Fundraising
\$217,628 (3.27%)

Total expenses: **\$6,655,065**

Source: Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)



Revenue

- Government Funding
\$4,927,557 (75.01%)
- Donations
\$1,037,943 (15.80%)
- Other
\$523,081 (7.96%)
- Other Charities
\$80,885 (1.23%)

Total revenue: **\$6,569,466**

Source: Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)

EMPLOYEES

Full-time - 100 Part-time/Relief - 48

WHAT WE PROVIDE

We strive to create a kind and respectful community where Guests can belong and receive holistic community help.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

Not only can Guests receive the basic needs of life like food, clothing and shelter, but they can also get a warm shower, do their laundry, participate in an art class, see a Case Manager, or even receive dental care. We are bringing services to the people where they are.



MEALS SERVED 7 DAYS A WEEK

We offer breakfast, lunch, and supper meals every day. Guests are encouraged to register but are not required to do so to receive a meal. Food is a necessity of life, and we do whatever we can to make sure everyone has something to eat.



BE KIND BOUTIQUE

With the help of so many community donors and partners, the Be Kind Boutique provides free clothing, toiletries, and small houseware items to Guests. Whether someone needs a winter coat as the temperatures



begin to drop, supplies for their bedsitting room, or new underwear and socks, the Boutique is there to help.

DENTAL SERVICES

Guests can avail of dental services on site. Volunteer Dentists, Hygienists, and Assistants all give of their time to help provide free dental care to Guests. Many have never experienced dental care in the past; their new smile is contagious!



HOT SHOWERS

Many Guests don't have the opportunity to enjoy a hot shower. Guest Support Workers facilitate the booking process and provide a safe environment for Guests to take a shower.



LAUNDRY SERVICES

Because of the kind heart of a special donor, Guests can now book a time to do their laundry on site. We all deserve to have clean clothes. Guests can wash and dry their clothes and participate in other services while they wait.



GUEST EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS

Guests are given the opportunity to build life-skills, self-worth, purpose, and social skills. Programing can include cooking classes, book and DVD exchanges, music and art, and so much more. Some Guests eventually volunteer themselves and learn how to give back.



LOW-BARRIER 40-BED SHELTER

During the pandemic, in partnership with the provincial government, we opened a temporary overnight emergency shelter to help meet an urgent community need. For several years, we operated 30 beds at 100% occupancy, providing consistent support throughout a challenging time. In response to the increasing demand for housing, we were excited to open a purpose-built, permanent 40-bed shelter facility in November 2024. In honour of Pat O'Callaghan's incredible contribution, this new shelter is called "O'Callaghan's Haven."



TRANSITIONAL & SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Housing stability is critical to addressing the housing crisis. Transitional housing provides 12-18 months of stable housing paired with programing to equip Guests with the life skills needed to eventually successfully thrive in their own space. Supportive housing provides permanent housing options for Guests needing long-term wrap around supports. In November 2024, this new 52-bed housing space opened alongside our new shelter, and is called "Mercy House."

