

2024 FALL REPORT



Kerr Street Mission

Oakville's Mission of Hope

Kerr Street Mission is a *Community of Support*

For more than 25 years, Kerr Street Mission (KSM) has been providing essential programs, community-centered services as well as innovative partnerships that enable us to provide care and support for vulnerable and at-risk children, families and individuals. Our Mission statement is simple, to provide care and a community of support for those in Oakville that are struggling and in need, improving their current and future well-being. As you review the Mid Year Report, this will be the constant thread that links all we do, the heart of Kerr Street Mission is to provide a community of support to those in need. When our clients come through our doors we hear a very common refrain, they feel alone. They have no one to turn to in their time of need. To them, their situation seems desperate and hopeless. In the words of one of our clients:

“At the start, I was so alone I couldn’t even think straight. When the team at KSM came alongside, I didn’t feel alone anymore, and it made going through everything so much easier. Once I had the help from others, I felt like I was somebody again.”

We thank you for being an invaluable part of our community of support for our clients. Whether you are a donor, volunteer, or team member you play an essential role in providing the support that so many within our community need. For those who are reading about Kerr Street Mission for the first time, we invite you to join our community to make a very real and lasting change!



Financial Update

Thanks to your incredible support, Kerr Street Mission is on track with our budget year-to-date, and we’re excited to share that we surpassed our Send a Kid to Camp goal—raising \$260,000 against our \$250,000 target! This success wouldn't be possible without your generosity. However, the need in our community continues to grow. Participation in our Choose Fresh Program has risen by 46%, and your ongoing support is more critical than ever. Together, we are changing lives.

Thank you for joining with us a community of support for those in need!



Passion and Compassion

Several times over the last few months people have asked me: **“Why are you so passionate about Kerr Street Mission?”** There are so many reasons:

The refugee who is struggling to find work and worried sick about where she will live and what she will do if she doesn’t find something soon. The long line of people that come everyday because without our help they won’t have the enough food to feed their families. The 62-year-old woman who found herself homeless for the first time in her life and needed our help to get into a shelter. The seniors that have been lonely and isolated and now have a community of support because they have attended our Young at Heart program. All the kids that come to participate in our children and youth programs, who get to experience so many of the fun activities that most of us thought of as essential for our own kids physical, social and emotional development. There are so many more reasons. I could go on an on.

We can make a difference! We are making a difference! What a privilege it is to be able to come alongside and help people in their time of need! Yes, I am passionate! Passionate about the impact we are making everyday and about finding ways to make a greater difference for the vulnerable and hurting in our community.

I am so thankful for the generosity our community – for your faithful support. It really is critical for us to continue to **provide the care and community of support** so many of our neighbours need.

Here are two scripture passages that provide direction for my life and leadership:

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but to the interests of the others.

Philippians 2:3-4

The Lord has shown you what is good. He has told you what he requires of you. To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8

Looking to the Future

Another question I am often asked is **“What do you see in the future for KSM?”**

Early this year we completed a comprehensive Strategic Planning Process to ensure we had a clear longer-term vision, and to establish a road map for the next few years. We spent considerable time reviewing the survey and focus group feedback gathered from all of our stakeholder groups. We also carefully considered statistics from our programming and community research. It was a very helpful and important process as we looked to the future.

Here are 2 Learnings that came from the research:

- Our space and systems can no longer efficiently accommodate the continually expanding and complex needs of our community.
- To continue to be responsive to the growing and evolving needs in our community we will need to undertake the related infrastructure growth our programs require.

Here are 3 important Actions identified as Next Steps:

- We will review the design of our programs to ensure we are maximizing the positive outcomes for those we serve.
- We need to explore options for space and systems to support the growing number of clients and client needs
- We will work to engage our community even more, as we move into the next phase of service and support, to ensure greater impact and sustainability.

Blessings,

Gary O'Neill
Executive Director

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FAMILY SERVICES

Our clients don't fit a cookie cutter but the thing that they all have in common, as do all of us, is that they are navigating their current life circumstances. Some are new to Canada and trying to establish themselves by finding a place to live, a place to work and to raise their children. Others have been living on fixed income and are often isolated with minimal access to any extras and often not enough to meet necessities. Having a positive impact means that we have come alongside individuals and families to meet them where they are at and support them in their existing situations, and this connection provides meaningful support and relief as they navigate their challenging circumstances. Connection with someone else so that they are not alone in life can make a world of difference. Impact can be engaging in conversation, making a referral to a community partner, helping them fill in paperwork or establishing concrete plans to change their situation. Impact may be short term, limited to one or two interactions (such as giving someone an emergency food kit, a new backpack, sleeping bag) or it can be through longer term relationships.

One thing that they often have in common is that they are looking for community, a place to belong, to be seen and known.



1/3 of our
Incoming Clients
are living off Government
Support such as
ODSP
\$1,368/month
or Ontario Works
\$733/month



*Community
of Hope*

There are two individuals who have recently been hospitalized for an extended period. The most recent hospital stay has been a very different experience for them from previous hospital stays when they were completely abandoned and alone. This time they have had a Kerr Street Mission (KSM) community of staff, volunteers and other clients walking alongside them, who visited them throughout their stays, spent time with them, brought them things they have needed and helped them to prepare for their discharge. Our community extended past the KSM walls. They are no longer alone and isolated.

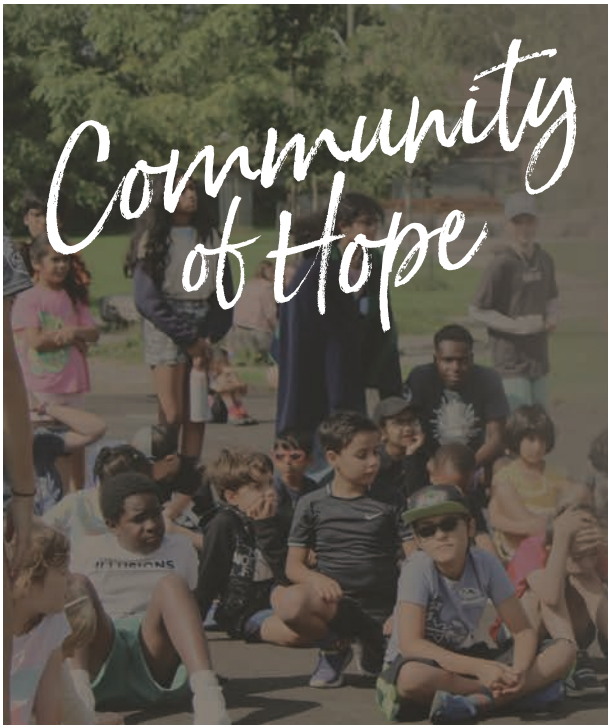
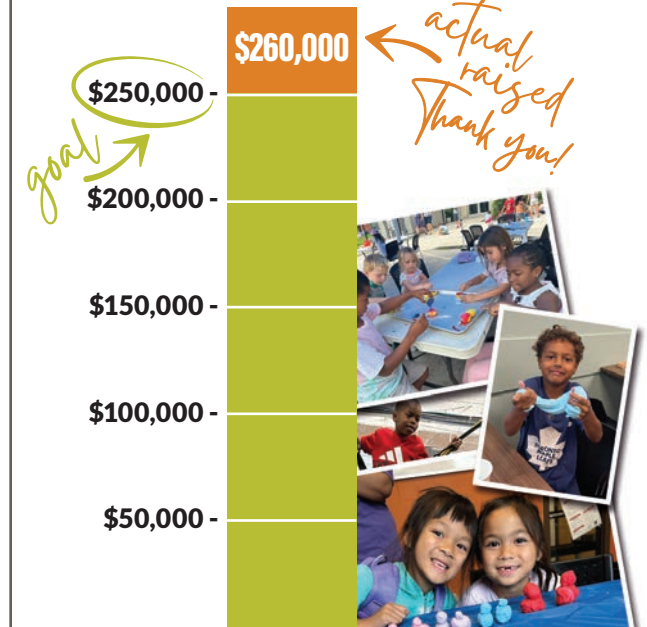


CHILD & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Our vision for the Child and Youth department is to facilitate development: to see our kids move up our ladder of program opportunities... kids, to youth, to Leaders in Training (LIT), to summer staff, and maybe even join the KSM staff one day. For the last few years, we have put a lot of attention and energy into our Jr High ages (grades 6-8.) As a result, we have seen tremendous growth in that age group and capacity has started to become an issue as we are consistently seeing 45-50 youth at our Friday Night Youth Group.

This September many of the youth we have spend years building relationships with have now gone into High School. Based on this transition we thought this was the perfect time to introduce High School drop-in times. We know how formative the High School stage is for their development, and these students need the opportunity to bond and support their peers. Having these extra drop-in times is helping to address some our capacity issues, spreading the youth to different days. In just the last couple weeks we have started to see grade nines coming together in a new and amazing ways... and we also see the older youth, (grades 11 and 12's) ones who used to come in previous years now returning because it's an age group closer to their own. It is so rewarding to see all our youth share, support and create a community of their own!

Summer Camp Donation Goal



There was a young man that we hired this summer that was one of our youths who has been in our programs since he was in grade 5.

He had recently been through significant health challenges and was concerned about working with us through the summer. He did make it through the summer and during our camp debrief he detailed that the KSM team were encouraging, supportive and essential for his recovery. He recognized that he had always looked up to his previous summer counsellors and always hoped he would be like them one day. He realized that his life had come full circle, he was now one of those people for the kids at camp who would one day remember him, and maybe one day they would want to be a counsellor. If that wasn't enough to bring the tears, he then personally shared that he believes that Kerr Street Mission changed his life, allowed him to try new things, find new passions and gave him a place to belong.

There wasn't a dry eye in the room.



FOOD SERVICES

In 2024, we continue to see a significant upward trend in the needs around food security. We are consistently serving over 1000 individuals per week in our KSM Food Market. Our Choose Fresh program has seen a staggering increase in the number of individuals that rely on this critical food program. Our goal within Food Services is to provide a consistent and dependable supply of both staple food items and fresh products (meat, chicken, fish, milk, eggs, cheese etc.) Impact to us is the ability to make a positive change on the challenges of food security with our clients so they can focus on other aspects of their lives and foster a sense of community, respect, and dignity.



The KSM Market consistently serves **OVER**

1000

people each week

75% of what is offered in our market is fresh food!



Choose Fresh participation **INCREASED** by

46% OR 300 INDIVIDUALS

from January to September 2024

The program cost has **INCREASED** by

45% vs. previous the year



Community of Hope

In conversations with one of our weekly KSM market clients he mentioned that as hard as he works, and he worked multiple jobs there simply wasn't enough money left at the end of each week to buy groceries. He made an insightful remark when he said, "I'll take anything that you're willing to give." My first thought was that he was talking about food but upon reflection, I realized he was talking about something quite different. As important as food is, he needed a listening ear, a caring response, he needed to be known and valued, and he absolutely need a community of support to walk with him in his time of need.



WHAT'S *new* AT KSM

FAMILY SERVICES

- Young at Heart Program for Seniors
- Budgeting 101 Course
- New Mental Health and Wellness Coordinator



CHILD & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

- High School Youth Group
- Enhanced Leader in Training Program



FOOD SERVICES

- Home Food Delivery Service
- Strategic Partnership with Feed Halton (Regional Food Distribution Centre)
- Online Food Ordering System





Christmas Wonders AND BEYOND

As the holiday season approaches, we're reminded that many in our Oakville community are struggling. If you're thinking about how to make an impact, consider supporting our upcoming "Christmas Wonders and Beyond" program. It's more than a donation—it's a gift of hope and joy for families who find the season challenging. Your generosity directly supports our neighbours in need, ensuring everyone can experience a bit of Christmas magic.

Thank you for your continued support!

***Scan code to
donate today!***



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