



Pathways Health Centre for Children

Report to Our Community 2023-2024

A year of IMPACT



Alison Morrison
CEO

Message from the CEO and Board Chair



Dana Petko
Board Chair

Reflecting on 2023-2024, we celebrate the **IMPACT** Pathways has had in Sarnia-Lambton, supporting children and youth with physical, developmental and communication needs. In 2023-2024, Pathways embraced *innovation* for **IMPACT**, *partnering* for **IMPACT** and *quality* for **IMPACT**. We stand proud of the accomplishments of this past year: accomplishments realized by our dedicated and skilled staff; leadership and Board of Directors; and accomplishments realized by clients, their families and support systems.

Moving through pandemic recovery has had Pathways teams *innovating* for **IMPACT**, working in new ways to support the growing number of children and youth referred for services. 2023-2024 service shifts included kindergarten-aged children receiving services and supports in their school setting as opposed to in the Centre or at community hubs. More children participated in group therapies. Tiered intervention was also introduced, with supports to more children in classrooms and more supports for educators. Listening to families and working with schoolboard partners was essential to pave the way forward!

Partnering for **IMPACT**, a core value for Pathways, was actioned in 2023-2024 as we worked together to do more for our community. We partnered with families and community agencies to offer wrap around services and provide care for the most vulnerable in Sarnia-Lambton.

2023-2024 also had Pathways focus on *quality* for **IMPACT**, with the Centre participating in an onsite survey with Accreditation Canada, examining our ability against internationally recognized standards to deliver safe, quality care. We were pleased to be awarded the highest-level standing: EXEMPLARY, achieving 100% compliance on all 486 indicators! Further, this year marked the re-opening of the Pathways Therapeutic Pool, following the second phase of the renovation plan to address accessibility. We have been hearing from swimmers of all ages of the quality improvements the renovation and the pool have had on their health and wellbeing!

The shared commitment to our Mission, Vision and Values by our Board, Staff and Volunteers grounds our energies to support and **IMPACT** children and youth. We are pleased to share this “2023-2024 Report to Our Community”. Within, you will read stories of **IMPACT**, focused on helping over 5,000 children and youth in Lambton County to reach for their potential!



Pathways Health Centre for Children...

...delivering services to children, youth and young adults with physical, developmental and communication needs.

...supporting children, youth and young adults to achieve their potential through effective partnerships.

...where excellent care is available, by exceptional staff, right here in Sarnia-Lambton!

Programs and Services

- Audiology
- Augmentative Communication
- Autism Diagnostic Hub
- Autism Supports
- Behaviour Consultation
- C.A.C.H.É. Childcare
- Coordinated Service Planning
- Family and Transition Support
- Family Engagement Services
- Feeding Services
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Resource Hub
- Infant Hearing Program
- Lifelong Learning Program
- Medical Clinics
- Occupational Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- School Based Rehabilitation Services
- Seating and Mobility
- Service Coordination
- SmartStart Hub Services
- Social Work
- Special Needs Resource Support
- Speech-Language Pathology
- Student and Volunteer Services
- Teen Transition
- Therapeutic Aquatics
- Therapeutic Recreation



Pathways is a member of Empowered Kids Ontario (EKO) – the organization that represents Ontario’s publicly-funded child development and rehabilitation sector. With the united voice of its member agencies, EKO promotes evidence-based investments, policies, and programs enabling smart, innovative approaches and service delivery so kids with special needs and their families live their best lives.



**Pathways
Board of Directors
and
Senior Leadership**



Territorial Acknowledgement

Pathways Health Centre for Children acknowledges our obligation to Truth and Reconciliation. We acknowledge that the land on which Pathways stands and serves is part of the ancestral land of the Chippewa, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples, referred to collectively as the Anishinaabeg. It is through the connection of the Anishinaabeg with the spirit of the land, water and air that we recognize their unique cultures, traditions, and values. Together as treaty people, we have a shared responsibility to act with respect for the environment that sustains all life, protecting the future for those generations to come.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Pathways' Equity, Diversity and Inclusion committee seeks to lead by example; provide EDI training to all staff; and create a culture of safety for staff, clients, and anyone that comes into our building or affiliate spaces. This sometimes means we need to step out of our comfort zone and ask questions to learn more about the world and people around us and their experiences. With this as our guide, the EDI committee continues to centre our work on three pillars of focus to ensure we are moving forward as an organization working to support all staff, families, and clients:

- Learning through Truth and Reconciliation, and continuing to strengthen partnerships with local First Nation and Urban Indigenous communities;
- Working with the 2SLGBTQAI+ community to create positive space for our staff, clients, and community members; and
- Working to identify and address systemic racism through education and open dialogue, and review of policies and practices.



A Family and Client Story ~

Gail and Zachary

Our journey with Pathways began in 2014. Zachary was assessed by Pathways for speech-language services in June of 2014; he was close to two years old. He had moderate delay in his use of language, and in addition to his individual lessons for speech, we attended many workshops together at Pathways: fun programs to help with speech, small group play settings, and even pool sessions.

Since starting with Pathways in 2014, Zachary has been diagnosed with Moderate Intellectual Disability, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Motor Co-Ordination Disorder, and Stereotypical Behaviour. His services have expanded into audiology, physiotherapy, and occupational therapy.



In 2017, he was also referred to Therapeutic Recreation. It is here that he discovered his favourite program of all time: Expressive Arts. He has participated in three productions so far and has already voiced his commitment to participating in the 2025 production.

Zachary, now in grade 6, continues his journey with Pathways in the Teen Transition group. He also receives yearly blocks of occupational therapy and enjoys how fun his therapists make sessions and that they really get to know him.

For myself, the Family Engagement Coordinator has been an amazing support. She holds parent support groups where I have been able to connect with other caregivers and learn from them. At times when we met, she stayed to chat with me about my struggles of being a grandma raising a young boy with special needs. Through Zachary's group programs, I have also gotten to know the caregivers of many other clients and friendships are developing.

I am thankful to all the Pathways staff for walking with me on this journey to help Zachary develop, strengthen and learn. I really don't know what I would have done without Pathways.



Sarnia is very blessed to have such an amazing facility where our children can receive so many forms of help.
~ Gail, Zachary's grandmother

A Family and Client Story ~

Linda and Brynlee



When starting service at Pathways, I did not expect the strangers sitting with my two-year old to play such a large role in assisting Brynlee to grow into the young lady she is today. Brynlee was nonverbal until the age of three. I knew she was delayed in speech but had no idea the extent of support that was about to be offered once we partnered with Pathways.

Brynlee's story with Pathways began at St. Bartholomew's daycare while receiving resource support in the toddler room. One of her first therapy sessions was speech therapy in the Pathways pool, which continued to be a significant place for Brynlee's journey. I was privileged to watch her therapy sessions through a two-way mirror, witnessing both the wins and challenges worked through by Brynlee and her team of therapists. Some of the strategies that helped her most, and that we continue to use today, include music, dance, and laughter.

Brynlee's experiences with Pathways have also included swimming lessons and Therapeutic Recreation (TR). She learned how to swim in the Pathways pool thanks to dedicated 1:1 lessons, and the TR team helped her develop the necessary skills for working and playing with other children. Brynlee's favourite activities in TR included jumping on the trampoline and walking on the beams. She was also supported in learning to ride a bike through the iCan Bike program. Brynlee is now a proud bike owner and is excited to go on bike rides with her younger sister.

Brynlee continues to grow through school-based rehabilitation services, learning how to understand her body cues and the appropriate ways to respond. These lessons have helped to make home-life easier.

Everyone from Pathways that has come across Brynlee has made a lasting impact. We entered Pathways' doors as clients and we are leaving as family.

~ Linda, Brynlee's mom

A Staff Story ~ Cindy

Almost 30 years ago, Pathways—then known affectionately as “Rotary Children’s Place”—brought me to Sarnia for the first time as a Therapeutic Recreation (TR) intern. I didn’t know what laid ahead of me, and certainly not how many roles I would fulfill. During my time with Pathways, I have been a TR, a Lifeguard, a Home Support Worker, a member of the Applied Behaviour Analysis team, a Coordinated Service Planner, and now I hold the role of a Service Coordinator.

Starting at Pathways, I didn’t know that I would feel such a sense of pride in the accomplishments of clients. I have watched clients learn how to ride a bike as a teenager and enjoy this skill a decade later, become Pathways staff themselves, and even become Paralympic medalists.

In my role as a Service Coordinator, I act as a family’s initial point of contact at Pathways. When transitioning to this role, I didn’t know that I would hold many of the answers that parents and clients had been searching for. I help to guide clients and their families to the right services for them, both inside and outside of Pathways.

I couldn’t have anticipated the sense of family I would feel when joining the organization, either, or the joy that would come when connecting with now adult clients who return to Pathways with their own children.

I am glad that I didn’t know what I was walking into at Pathways. The organization builds a community of possibilities for our clients, and it has offered possibilities for me to witness and experience firsthand moments of growth, support and achievement. With Pathways, I look forward to the possibilities of the future.



For many of our families, it is hard for them to see where they will be in 10 months. I have had the privilege of seeing their growth and celebrate how far they have come over decades.

~ Cindy, Pathways Service Coordinator

Program Innovation for IMPACT

Services for Kindergarten-aged Children

Over the past three years, Pathways has been working on a collaborative project with school boards and community partners to transition physiotherapy (PT), occupational therapy (OT), and speech-language (SLP) services into the school environment, where children learn and grow all day (as opposed to in-centre or in hub locations)!

This transition was informed by feedback from families, staff focus groups, school boards and partners. We heard that services taking place in the school environment would:

- be less disruptive to their child's day and less disruptive to the classroom
- allow more children to access services and learn alongside their peers
- provide universal supports, with OT, PT and SLPs able to offer supports and build capacity within the classroom

This transition aligns our delivery approach with other Children's Treatment Centres in the province and with new Ministry guidelines. We continue to refine processes and are excited to focus on continued collaboration with school boards and Home and Community Care Support Services to evaluate and adjust as we expand our efforts to support in-school services for JK/SK clients!

Tiered Intervention Services

Alongside the kindergarten transition over the past year, the School Based Rehabilitation Service (SBRS) Occupational Therapy (OT) team has worked closely with school boards to provide a tiered model of OT supports within classrooms. The Tiered model of service allows the teaching team more access to the OT team to provide universal, class-wide functional strategies and may include (but is not limited to): workshops provided to the entire class, small workstations within the classroom, classroom equipment recommendations (like flexible seating options), and environmental/sensory recommendations for the classroom.

The type of OT universal support offered varies and depends on the needs of each classroom, with the overall goal being to optimize all students' functional engagement within the classroom to access the curriculum. More intensive OT supports continue to be available to children with higher levels of need.

Feedback has been largely favourable, with Teachers sharing:

It's nice to bounce ideas off of [the Pathways team] to help some of my kids progress; I had no idea where to start.
~ A grade 1/2 teacher

Thanks for all your support in our class... I have already noticed a massive difference.
~ A grade 2 teacher



Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Resource Hub

In 2023/24, through Health Nexus, we were able to offer 412 opportunities for children and youth (and their families) from Pathways' Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Resource Hub. Thanks to grants from Health Nexus, the FASD Hub has been able to offer enhanced service experiences since 2018/19. This past year, activities included: "Family Soothing Swim", "Kids in the Kitchen", "Friendship Social Skills Group" and the "Caregiver Support Group".

The "Kids in the Kitchen" program was a highlight of the year! The program was supported by the Occupational Therapy Feeding Team and local dietitians who provided opportunities for 115 participants to explore nutrition, as well as kitchen and cooking skills. The program was offered hybrid "in-person" and virtually, and had participants prepare and share meals together and create cookbooks. The Health Nexus grant provided the funding to offer the program at no cost to families, and this past year included respite workers for participants needing additional support.



iCan Bike 2023

Learning to independently ride a two-wheel bike is a milestone many enjoy in childhood. For some, bike riding can be difficult! The "iCan Bike" program offers a tested approach, with specialized equipment and leadership to create a comfortable and fun space for individuals over 8 to feel supported and experience success in bike riding.

In July 2023, Pathways partnered with the "iCan Bike" program from iCan Shine to offer this unique program to 21 young riders at The Point Edward Arena. Organizers worked with 55 volunteers from Pathways to ensure that riders' specific needs were met, including physical adjustments on learner bikes, along with the all-important encouragement, balancing support and safety monitoring necessary for motivation and success.

Across the one-week program, the arena was full of smiling and confident riders. The program ended with riders taking their own bikes into the Arena parking lot for cycling practice in the "real world"!

Meet Cole. During his week with iCan Bike, volunteers Megan and Allison worked with him each day for his 90-minute session. By the end of the week, Cole could independently ride a two-wheel bike! We understand he continues to enjoy cycling now several months after the program ended!



Rockers N Rollers

The NEW Pathways Physiotherapy Gross Motor Group, “Rockers N Rollers”, provides clients with experiences to achieve movement goals including: balance, coordination, strength, and mobility. Specialized equipment was purchased this year for the program, which has participants attend sessions once a week for 8-10 weeks. For each session, therapists work to tailor activities to best meet the needs of clients within the group. We celebrate significant progress from the first to the final week, with gains not only in gross motor goals, but also in self-confidence and social skills.



Meet Owen who often arrived at our program feeling discouraged because he did not know how to catch or pass a basketball at a community sports program. At each “Rockers N Rollers” session, Owen and his parent received personalized practice techniques to work on at home. With every passing session, Owen’s confidence and abilities noticeably improved, and as a result, he was able to enjoy both programs and successfully participate in his community sports program!

Partnering for IMPACT

The Lifelong Learning Program

The Lifelong Learning Program (LLP) hosted a Pathways “Giving Tree” during the holiday season this year. The LLP services young adults aged 18-35 with special needs. The program aims to support participants in developing independence and healthy peer relationships, and to provide them with a fun and productive way to get involved within our community.

Staff members and visitors were invited to donate new hats, mittens and scarves for those in need, decorating a tree standing proudly in our lobby. Families entering the Centre were encouraged to receive from the tree, if there was need. Unclaimed items were later donated to The Inn of The Good Shepherd!

Myles [Executive Director of The Inn of The Good Shepherd] was really cool and it felt good to help other people.

~ Shelby, a LLP participant



Special Needs Resource Service

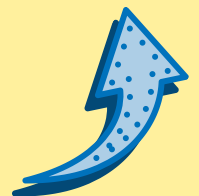
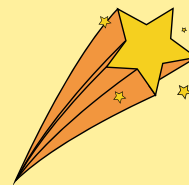
The Special Needs Resource Service (SNRS) partners with St. Clair Child & Youth Services (SCCYS) to offer the “Mental Health in Childcare” (MHCC) program in licensed childcares across Lambton County. This valuable program provides additional services to children, 6-years of age and under, who are attending licensed childcare, and are experiencing adjustment or emotional and behavioural difficulties in the home and childcare environments.

As part of the program, SCCYS works with the Pathways Resource Team, observes children in the childcare program, and works with families and educators to offer strategies and support for the home and childcare environments.

Additionally, the SCCYS and Pathways Resource team provide workshops to educators and families, offering information on a variety of topics, including trauma and anxiety. These workshops support a shared knowledge base for the circle of care for clients.

We are forever grateful for this opportunity to partner with SCCYS. We appreciate all the hard work they have provided and their dedication to families.

Your team of Resource Consultants and Resource Assistants truly make it easy. The kindness and knowledge they bring to the table whenever I connect with them just proves how privileged I am to be working with them.
~ SCCYS partner



C.A.C.H.É. Childcare

C.A.C.H.É. Childcare partnered with Trillium Villa to organize weekly visits between Trillium residents and children at our childcare during the warmer months. The “grandmas and grandpas” of Trillium and C.A.C.H.É. children come together for interactive activities, story time, parachute games, bubbles, and more. Every visit sees smiles all around!



A Focus on Quality for IMPACT

Pathways Pool Reopening

The reopening of Pathways' therapeutic pool made a "splash" in 2023! After undergoing a second phase of refurbishment funded by a contribution of \$800,000 from the Government of Canada through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario), Pathways was thrilled to reopen the pool for swimmers of all ages

The second phase began in January of 2023 with a focus on upgrades to changing rooms and lobby areas. This followed the first phase of refurbishment completed in December of 2020 following a successful \$1.6-million capital campaign. Accessibility was at the centre of the second phase, aligning with the Centre's strategic goal to be even more inclusive and accessible to our patrons and community. Some of these upgrades included wider doorways; automated fixtures; improved flow; additional showers; and new flooring, lighting, and surfaces.



We invited members of the public to tour our newly improved facilities on October 27, 2023. Our community was, and continues to be, excited to return to Sarnia's only therapeutic pool.

The Pathways pool is a wonderful resource for the community, providing therapeutic services to users of all ages and abilities. Thanks to our multi-phase refurbishments and the abundance of support from our community and governing bodies, Pathways looks excitedly on the opportunity to continue servicing our community for years to come.



Voyce™

In the late summer of 2023, Pathways launched VOYCE™: a real-time service offering medical interpretation in more than 240 languages, including Ojibwe and American Sign Language. Using VOYCE™ helps our team communicate more effectively with clients and families in the language they feel most comfortable using. This is one step that Pathways has taken to become even more accessible to families from “hello” to “goodbye”!

With the interpreter, it felt like the conversation became more natural and there was a better understanding of the information being shared with the support of Voyce.

~ A Pathways clinician



Accreditation

This year, Pathways celebrated the designation of “Accredited with Exemplary Standing” from Accreditation Canada, meeting 100% of criteria following an on-site visit where surveyors spoke with clients, families, staff, board members and community partners to measure compliance with healthcare quality and safety standards. Pathways voluntarily engages in the accreditation process, a signal of commitment to continuous improvement in quality and safety by measuring our practices against internationally recognized standards. Surveyors shared that Pathways is an “impressive organization” and “trusted community partner” where “family-centred care is deeply embedded in its culture.” We are delighted and extremely proud of our whole team to have earned the highest status available.



AlayaCare

In 2023, we began a project to launch a new Electronic Client Record called “AlayaCare” alongside several partner Empowered Kids Ontario organizations. Using AlayaCare has enabled our team to more efficiently document the client’s journey. We look forward to taking advantage of new features, including a Client Portal and an electronic referral system. While we are still early in our journey with AlayaCare, we are very excited to have this new tool to aid us in continuing to best serve our clients!



Fundraising

As a non-profit organization, Pathways has long relied on the support of our community to supplement funds issued by the government to offer our services and programs to those in need. Thanks to our community, volunteers, and staff, we had a remarkably successful fundraising year—and we had a lot of fun doing it!

Give the Kids a Lift

For 25 years, Ironworks Health & Wellness has hosted the “Give the Kids a Lift” bench press competition and fundraiser in support of Pathways. The event welcomes participants of all ages and abilities to show off their strength. After the COVID-19 Pandemic prevented the event from running for three years, Ironworks and community members were eager to bring the competition back – for lifters and for Pathways! We were so pleased to benefit from Bench Press competitions offered in our fiscal year, raising **\$15,500** in April 2023, and an extraordinary **\$25,000** in March 2024.



Rugby Tournament

Pathways was honoured to be picked as the Sarnia Rugby Club's charity of choice for their 65th season in 2023. Pathways hosted a BBQ at the Norm Perry Park venue, with our volunteers serving food to rugby players, and their excited fans, from across southwestern Ontario and Michigan. Between the BBQ and the auctioned rugby jerseys that featured our logo, **\$13,200** was raised to support programs and services through Pathways.



Fundraising

Sarnia Street Machines

Pathways continues to benefit from a longstanding friendship with the Sarnia Street Machines. During the summer of 2023, the Sarnia Street Machines hosted 2 car shows in support of Pathways: “Cruise in the Park” and “Hot Nights, Cool Cars”. Pathways’ volunteers accepted donations at the entrances to the car shows and hosted BBQs at both events. More than **\$30,000** was collected between the two car shows, contributing to over **\$300,000** raised for Pathways by the Sarnia Street Machines over the years! That’s one COOL club!



The Rotary Club of Sarnia

The Rotary Club of Sarnia—the vision casters of Pathways over 50 years ago—remain a strong support for the organization. We are grateful to continue to lease the space that Pathways stands and serves for just \$1 per year, and benefit from large donations each year, including **\$60,000** in 2023 as part of their 10 year, **\$600,000** total pledge for the therapeutic pool in 2018.



Our Year in Numbers

4,940*

individuals seen

Includes:

- infants seen through the Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Program

Does not include:

- pool users
- individuals served through classroom care

Pathways supports:

- **1 in 5** children under the age of 5
- **1 in 4** children between the ages of 6-11
- **1 in 14** children between the ages of 12-18



69,372*

client service hours



68,953*

visits

1,332

new clients



4,720

Centre referrals and admissions



Our Year in Numbers

The average wait time
for assessment is

156 days

2,475

total volunteer hours
from **310** volunteers



183

staff members

43%



of initial assessments
completed within 3
months

31

student placements



1,725*

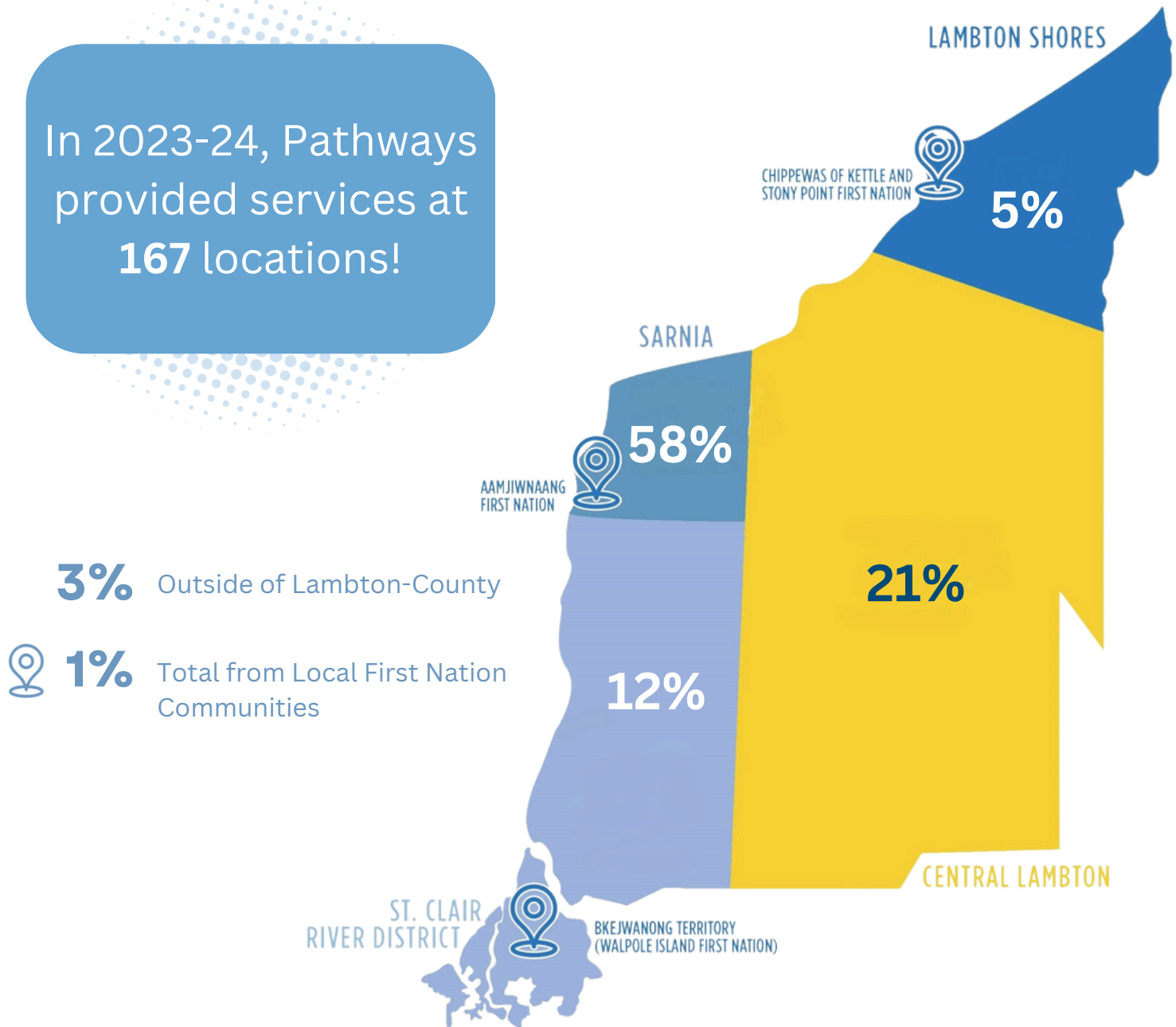
referrals for a new
service remaining at
end of year

(includes children already
receiving other Pathways
services)



New Referrals by Location

In 2023-24, Pathways provided services at **167 locations!**



Our most in-demand services are: Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, and Speech-Language Pathology. From April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024 Pathways provided:

Occupational Therapy to **2,055** children

Physiotherapy to **457** children

Speech-Language Pathology to **1,903** children

Statement of Operations 2023/2024

OPERATING FUND

REVENUE

Ministry Supported Programs & Services	\$ 7,497,747
Municipal Supported Programs & Services	\$ 3,172,398
Community Fee Supported Services	\$ 1,230,390

Total Revenue

\$ 11,900,535

EXPENDITURES

Salaries, Benefits, & Employee Expenses	\$ 10,344,174
Equipment & Supplies	\$ 1,215,413
Facilities Expenditures	\$ 272,394
Contracted Purchased Services	\$ 297,648

Total Expenses

\$ 12,129,629

Fund Activity Balance for Fiscal Period

\$ (229,094)

PROPERTY & EQUIPMENT FUND

REVENUE

Deferred Contribution	\$ 180,646
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EXPENDITURES

Amortization	\$ 554,836
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Fund Activity Balance for Fiscal Period

\$ (374,190)

DONATIONS/EVENTS FUND

REVENUE

Gifts, Bequests, and Fundraising	\$ 599,446
Interest and Other Income	\$ 89,540

Total Revenue

\$ 688,986

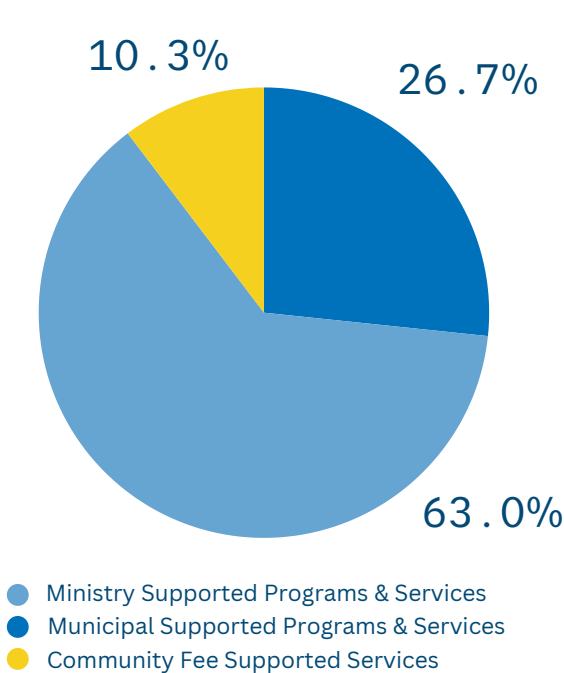
EXPENDITURES

Fundraising Costs	\$ 337,638
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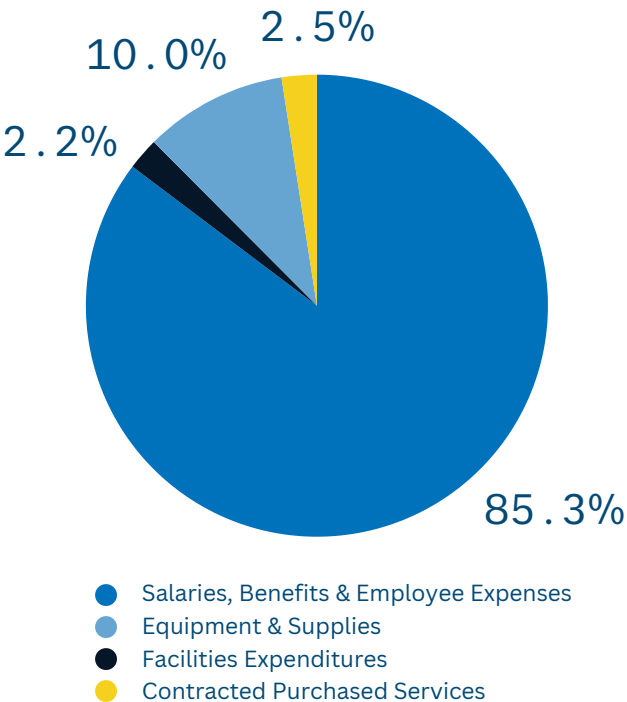
Fund Activity Balance for Fiscal Period

\$ 351,348

Source of Operating Funds



How We Spent Operating Funds





Thank you to
the many
hands and
hearts that
support
Pathways!



www.pathwayscentre.org



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1240 Murphy Rd.
Sarnia, ON N7S 2Y6



ACCREDITED WITH
EXEMPLARY STANDING



ACCREDITATION
AGRÉMENT
CANADA