



st. matt's
where hope thrives



2025 IMPACT REPORT

Showing Our True Colours: Leading With Authenticity

At St. Matt's, we often talk about creating spaces where people feel safe, supported, and valued. This year, we found ourselves returning to a deeper question: what does it truly mean to belong?

Our answer is both simple and profound: belonging begins when people are free to show up as themselves. Fully. Honestly. Without fear of judgment or exclusion.

This year's theme, **True Colours**, reflects that commitment. It speaks to who we are as an organization — grounded in faith, guided by compassion, and unwavering in our belief that every person has inherent worth. It also reflects the community we are proud to be part of - diverse, resilient, and beautifully complex.

Across our programs, we see every day what happens when people are met with dignity. A senior avoids eviction and stays rooted in their community. A child is nurtured in a space where their identity is celebrated. A person experiencing homelessness finds not just a meal, but connection, recognition, and care. A refugee is able to live into their identity as a member of the LGBTQI+ community.

This work is not abstract. It is deeply human. And it is made possible by a community of Board and Committee members, staff, volunteers, partners, funders and supporters who continue to show up — bringing their own true colours with them.

To all of you, thank you. You are part of something that is changing lives in real and lasting ways. **And together, we are building a community where everyone has the opportunity not just to be supported—but to thrive.**

Belonging is not a program. It's a practice.



*Executive Director Renée Wetselaar (left) and
Chair of the Board Melanee McAulay (right)*

Melanee McAulay
Chair of the Board

Renée Wetselaar
Executive Director

The Colours of Our Work

These are not just numbers — they symbolize people choosing safety and connection every day.

Every day, our work takes shape in different ways, but is always rooted in the same purpose: **helping people live fully, safely, and with dignity.**



Stability:
A foundation
people can rely on.

- 95 seniors benefited from a core eviction prevention service
- More than 1,000 seniors referred to community supports
- 15 new units of deeply affordable housing for seniors

“Stability isn’t just about housing — it’s about peace of mind.”



Nourishment:
Meeting essential
needs with care.

- 29,450 lunches in full-day child care centres
- 187,980 lunches and snacks served in child care and before & after school programs
- 4,072 grocery boxes delivered to seniors
- Cathedral Café served 63,960 meals in a year, with 205 meals and 518 cups of coffee daily
- 544 seniors had a visit from Mobile Markets, an accessible pop-up grocery store

“A meal can be the first step back to feeling human again.”



Growth: Creating
space for children &
families to thrive.

- 241 children enrolled
- 1,260 educator hours per week
- Multiple centres supporting families across Hamilton

“Every child deserves to feel seen, valued, and encouraged.”



Connection:
Building community
& reducing isolation.

- 52,158 visits to Cathedral Café
- 714 hampers, 412 families, 302 seniors, 367 sponsors through Holiday Hope
- Countless moments of belonging created

“Connection is often the beginning of everything.”

Where Colours Meet Action

Across every program at St. Matt's, one principle guides us: **people deserve to be supported as whole individuals — not reduced to their circumstances.**



Child Care

We create environments where children feel safe, joyful, and known. Our educators work in partnership with families to nurture confidence, curiosity, and a strong sense of identity from the very beginning.

"Families trust us with what matters most — and we honour that every day."



Seniors Support

Our Seniors Support and HOPES (Housing Outreach Preventing Evictions for Seniors) program helps older adults remain housed, connected, and supported. Through eviction prevention, income security, and food access, we focus on stability and dignity.

"A small intervention can mean the difference between staying housed — or losing everything."

Cathedral Café & Outreach

More than a drop-in space, the Café is a place of connection. It provides meals, services, and something just as important: a place where people are welcomed without condition.

"Sometimes the most powerful thing we offer is a place to be."



Holiday Hope

Holiday Hope is our holiday program in December that brings warmth, stability, and joy to seniors and families who are thoughtfully matched with community sponsors. Holiday Hope ensures households receive meaningful gifts, holiday meals, and essential household items—delivered with dignity and care.

"This program makes the season more than a moment of generosity. It becomes a reminder that no one is forgotten."

Stories of Transformation, Belonging and Hope

A Future Reclaimed

When John's* wife passed away, he faced more than grief. In the midst of mourning, he discovered that months of rent had gone unpaid, leaving him with significant arrears and uncertain housing.

Overwhelmed by loss, financial stress, and health challenges, John wasn't sure where to turn.

Through St. Matt's Senior Support Navigator Program, he connected with a case manager who helped him secure financial assistance, access housing supports, and create a plan for a more stable future.

"There were days when I just couldn't think straight," he says. "Knowing someone was there to help made all the difference."

Along the way, St. Matt's provided food support, practical guidance, and ongoing encouragement, helping ease immediate pressures while longer-term solutions took shape.

Today, John is preparing to move into an affordable apartment and begin a new chapter. The uncertainty that once threatened his housing has been replaced with stability, confidence, and hope.

At St. Matt's, this is what support looks like.

**John is a pseudonym.*



A Place to Belong

For years, Sylvia* moved through the city feeling invisible. After leaving an unsafe living situation, she found herself experiencing homelessness and the quiet exhaustion of feeling unseen.

Her first visit to Cathedral Café was difficult. She expected a meal and a place to sit. What she didn't expect was to be greeted by name the second time she returned.

"That changed something for me," she says. "It made me feel like I mattered."

Through the Café, Sylvia connected with supports that helped her access identification, healthcare, and eventually stable housing. Yet when she reflects on her journey, she speaks less about the services and more about the people.

"It wasn't just help," she says. "It was how they treated me. Like I was still me."

Today, Sylvia is rebuilding her life with renewed confidence and continues to visit the Café, offering the same welcome and kindness that once meant so much to her.

At St. Matt's, this is what belonging looks like.

**Sylvia is a pseudonym.*



Building with Purpose

What does it mean to build a home where people don't have to shrink themselves to belong?

412 Barton is not just a building. It is a statement about what community can be.

Designed to provide deeply affordable homes for Indigenous and Black seniors at risk of homelessness, this project reflects a commitment to both equity and reconciliation. It acknowledges the past while actively shaping a more just future.

Inside, it offers more than housing. 412 Barton is centred around shared spaces, community connection, and culturally meaningful programming. Outside, it stands as a visible expression of what is possible when partnerships align around purpose.

As we have welcomed residents, we are reminded that home is about more than four walls. **It is about safety, dignity, and the freedom to live fully as oneself.**

⁴¹²
Barton
A PLACE TO THRIVE



"It is so clean and beautiful here. I can sleep when I want. I have peace."

"What's unfolding at 412 Barton has been deeply moving to witness."

For people who have gone so long without the safety and stability of a home, this building represents so much more than four walls — it represents peace, dignity, belonging, and the chance to begin again. There is a quiet joy that comes from having a space of your own, and you can see the difference it makes in residents every single day.

Programs and connections are emerging naturally because people finally feel safe enough to participate, contribute, and belong. 412 Barton is becoming far more than housing — it is becoming a vibrant gathering place filled with hope, humanity, and possibility."

— Mo Tafta, Tenant Support Worker, 412 Barton

The Colours Behind the Work

"This work is only possible because people choose to show up — in their own true colours."

Walking Together, Building Hope

The community came together in powerful fashion for the 3rd Annual Walk for St. Matt's, a vibrant walk through Hamilton's historic North End in support of neighbours experiencing housing instability, food insecurity, and poverty.

The event raised more than \$7,200; more than a fundraiser, the Walk for St. Matt's was a celebration of connection, compassion, and community action. Every step taken helped strengthen the welcoming programs and supports that allow people across our city not only to survive, but to thrive. St. Matt's is deeply grateful to every walker, donor, sponsor, and volunteer who helped turn community spirit into meaningful impact.



Building Homes Through the Sound of Motown

The Holk Family believes deeply in the power of community — and in music's unique ability to bring people together across generations. In May 2025, that spirit came alive through Motown Mania, a dazzling evening of tribute performances in support of St. Matt's and the 412 Barton project.

Presented by The Holk Family, Motown Mania was a joyful celebration of compassion, connection, and community impact. Proceeds from the evening supported 412 Barton, which provides safe, dignified housing and wraparound supports for seniors in Hamilton who need it most. St. Matt's is profoundly grateful to The Holk Family for turning the soundtrack of a generation into meaningful change for our city.

In 2025:

- \$292,918+ in donor contributions
- Thousands of acts of generosity
- Hundreds of community members engaged

Community is our co-creator. This work does not happen alone. It is powered by a community of donors, partners, volunteers, and supporters who choose — again and again — to show up.

From grassroots fundraising to transformational gifts, every contribution plays a role in sustaining and growing our impact.

"This is what collective care looks like."

Show Your True Colours

St. Matt's marked its 50th anniversary with an unforgettable evening that celebrated not only five decades of service, but the extraordinary spirit of community. The immersive celebration brought together supporters, partners, artists, volunteers, and community leaders for a night filled with **music, storytelling, culture, and connection.**



The event radiated warmth, joy, and heartfelt pride in Hamilton's community spirit. Co-hosted by local musician and author Tom Wilson and community activist Lohifa Pogoso Acker of Excel in Style, guests experienced powerful performances from Indigenous and Afro-Canadian artists, uplifting music from Tom Wilson and the Glendale Secondary School Choir and moving moments that honoured the people and partnerships at the heart of St. Matt's mission. One of the evening's most memorable moments came as audience members raised wristband flashlights in a collective "shine your light for community" finale - a beautiful reflection of hope, compassion, and shared purpose.

Scan to view our anniversary film:



Throughout the evening, the celebration highlighted the ongoing impact of St. Matt's work. More than an anniversary event, the evening became a vibrant expression of belonging, resilience, and the belief that when a community comes together, hope truly thrives.



We are grateful to our sponsors.

Anglican Diocese of Niagara, Ross and McBride, McCallum Sather Architects, Hamilton and District Labour Council, Landwise, Aligned, Afro Canadian Caribbean Association, Assembly, City of Hamilton, CUPE 5167, Empower Strategy Group, Hamilton Oshawa Port Authority, Hamilton Regional Indian Centre, Jackman Ltd., LJ Barton, Three Seasons Landscaping.

The need in our community is growing — but so is the opportunity to respond.

Whether you choose to give, volunteer, partner, or advocate — you are part of this story.

*We welcome you to come as you are.
Stay as you are. Thrive as you are.*



A Special Thanks to Donors

St. Matt’s is grateful for all of its funders, granters and partners. Individual donations represent a special kind of partnership. Through monthly donors, one-time donations and dollars raised during events, these funds are precious as they are one at a time and face to face. Given the challenges of the year, this generosity is felt even more keenly. Thank you for helping hope thrive.

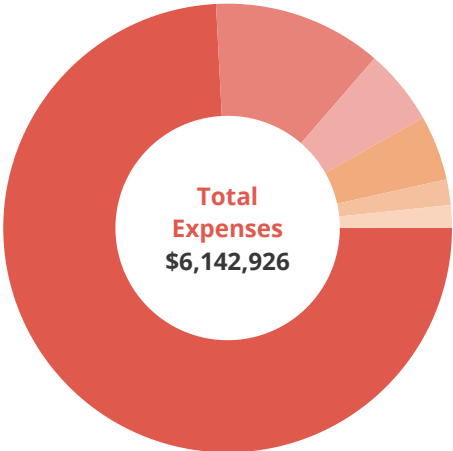
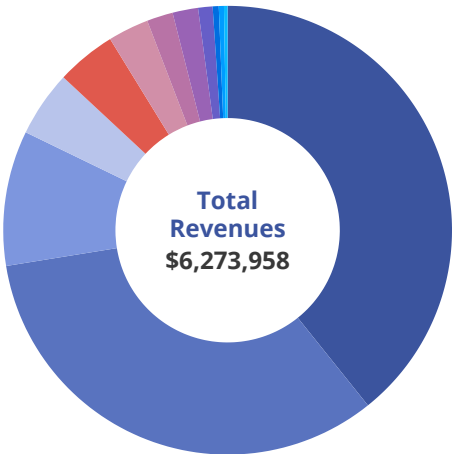
Total Value	# of Donations	Average Donation
\$292,918	958	\$305.76

Financial Report

With total revenues at \$6,819,242 for 2025 – an increase of 8.9% over 2024 — we are feeling very strong in our financial results for 2025. In particular, our granting and fundraising efforts were rewarded with a robust success rate that speaks to our community impact.

Rob Gibson, Treasurer

	2025 (12 months)	2024 (12 months)
REVENUES		
• City of Hamilton - <i>Child Care program</i>	2,676,500	2,204,272
• City of Hamilton - <i>Other programs</i>	2,264,141	2,321,646
• Fees for Service — Child Care Program	663,912	672,506
• Government of Ontario	323,587	295,824
• Donations	292,918	240,589
• Other Contributions	200,546	107,018
• Hamilton Community Foundation	128,517	179,817
• United Way	125,343	24,657
• Amortization of deferred capital contributions	71,072	95,753
• Ontario Trillium Fund	93,858	93,858
• Interest	29,676	38,018
• Government of Canada	17,739	-
Total Revenues	\$6,819,242	\$6,273,958
EXPENSES		
• Salaries and benefits	4,860,878	4,565,763
• Program expenses	798,412	756,449
• Building occupancy and rent	358,161	286,833
• Office and administration	307,627	346,310
• Professional fees	120,978	77,708
• Amortization of capital assets	107,314	109,863
Total Expenses	\$6,553,370	\$6,142,926
Excess of revenues over expenses from operations	\$265,872	\$131,032



2025 Board of Directors

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Vice Chair & Chair, Child Care
Innovation & Capital Projects and
Facility Improvements Committees

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Committee

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Val Kerr (Honourary
Board Member)

Mary Burnett

(ex-officio 25–26)

Executive Director:

Renée Wetselaar

Director of Finance:

Mark Ronan

Thank you
to all staff,
volunteers,
and committee
members who
make St. Matt's
a place to
thrive.



Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that we are on the traditional territories of the Mississauga, Haudenosaunee, and Anishinaabe nations, within the lands protected by the Dish with One Spoon wampum agreement.

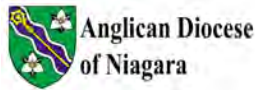
For generations, Indigenous peoples have cared for this land with deep respect and responsibility. We honour that legacy and commit to walking forward in the same spirit by responding to the 94 calls to action of the truth and reconciliation commission

African Ancestral Acknowledgment

We also acknowledge the generations of people of African descent who were forcibly displaced through Colonization and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. We stand in solidarity with all those who continue to be impacted by the history of slavery and injustice in Canada and face the harsh reality of Black racism today

Grounded in this awareness, we commit to learning, to accountability, and to action — advancing reconciliation, equity, and belonging in all we do.

Partners & Funders



Proud to have 84 team members represented by collective agreements with CUPE 5167 and UFCW 175.

Special Support

DGBK Lift Fund

Anonymous

The Goodman Family Foundation

J.P Bickell Foundation

Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch

Ward 3 Councillor Nrinder Nann



True Colours of Community

Our Build Hope program increases your impact.

Monthly contributions are the key to helping us move beyond crisis management, band-aid solutions, and short-term fixes. Monthly donorship supports our organizational sustainability, giving St. Matt's the means to provide dependable, ongoing support to those we serve.

To learn more or to donate, please visit:

www.stmatthewshouse.ca/donate

By Mail: 414 Barton St E, Hamilton, ON L8L 2Y3

By Phone: 905-523-5546 Ext.230

By Email: admin@stmatthewshouse.ca

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Most photography in the St. Matt's 2025 Impact Report graciously taken by Tim McKenna.