

# 2024-2025

## Annual Report

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john  
howard  
society

London & District



London & District



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# HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY

Recognizing the intrinsic worth and dignity of every human being, the John Howard Society is committed to upholding the principles set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Human Rights Act. This commitment is expressed in the following undertaking:

The Society shall provide services within its mandate to every person without discrimination regardless of race, ethnicity, language, religion, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, age, abilities, economic status, political affiliation, national ancestry or criminal record.

The Society shall maintain such personnel policies and practices as are consistent with the tenets of the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Human Rights Act.

The Society, through its employees, shall deal with representatives of the community in a responsive manner with courtesy, respect and without prejudice or discrimination.

## Our Core Values

- We believe that every individual has intrinsic worth and has the right to be treated with dignity and respect
- We believe in the potential of all human beings and in their capacity for growth and change
- We believe that all individuals have the right to live in a safe and peaceful society and that justice is best served through measures that resolve conflict and promote the reparation of harm
- We believe that individuals are responsible for their own actions and must be held accountable for those actions
- We believe that the root causes of crime are found within communities and that the solutions to crime are also found in communities
- We believe in serving community needs by cooperating and collaborating to achieve a healthy and safe society



# MISSION STATEMENT

**Effective, just and humane responses to crime and its causes**

## Mandate

In furtherance of its Mission, the Society:

- Provides for the effective integration into the community of those in conflict with the law and provides, or encourages others to provide, services to those in contact with, or affected by, the criminal justice system
- Promotes changes in the law and the administration of justice which will lead to the more humane and effective treatment of individuals
- Promotes citizen awareness of the problems of crime and its causes, acceptance of responsibility to respond to these problems and involvement in the delivery and management of justice related programs
- Promotes the fair and humane treatment of all incarcerated persons and seeks to ensure that all forms of detention and imprisonment comply with relevant legal and human rights standards

## Description

The John Howard Society of London and District is an organization of citizens who accept responsibility for understanding and dealing with the problems of crime and the criminal justice system.

## Inclusivity/ Diversity

The John Howard Society of London and District recognizes the barriers which prevent some members of the community from participating fully in society and affirms its commitment to policies, practices and the provision of services without prejudice or discrimination, as stated in the Human Rights Policy of the John Howard Society of Ontario.

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



It is with deep gratitude and pride that we present this annual report, reflecting on a year of profound impact and transformative growth for the John Howard Society of London and District. The landscape of criminal justice continues to evolve, and the needs of those caught within its system have never been more complex or more urgent. Our work is not just about providing services; it is about restoring dignity, fostering hope, and building pathways to a brighter future.

Last year, we faced new challenges and seized new opportunities, always with the goal of providing *effective, just and humane responses to crime and its causes*. We strive for providing the best possible support to our clients. The statistics within this report paint a clear picture of our expanding reach, but they only tell part of the story. The real measure of our success lies in the personal transformations we witness every day from the individuals who secure stable housing, to the people who reunite with their family, and the ones who find meaningful employment and a renewed sense of purpose.



Our work is deeply rooted in the belief that everyone deserves a second chance, and that a person's past should not define their future. By providing a holistic suite of services, from counselling and case management to housing support and employment readiness, we are not just helping individuals avoid recidivism; we are empowering them to build stable, fulfilling lives and contribute positively to their communities.

Over the past year, we have seen an increase in the number of individuals seeking our help, and we are proud to say that we have been able to respond to this demand with compassion, expertise, and dedication. Through advocacy, education, and direct support, we were able to serve 3,592 individuals and families impacted by the criminal justice system last year. Our team has grown, and our offices are full. Our organization has continued to evolve and expand its services to meet the growing needs of our clients.



A key highlight of the past year has been the establishment of new programs and services. Recognizing the growing need to support our clients with financial literacy, we launched the Learning Information for Financial Transformation (LIFT) Program. The LIFT Program provides financial literacy support and financial counselling to individuals in the form of budgeting, debt management, financial coaching, applying for social assistance and disability benefits, completing annual income taxes, and more. Thanks to the Ontario Trillium Foundation who provided financial support to help us establish this initiative.

We also launched the Community Service Order (CSO) Program in Grey and Bruce Counties. The Society assists clients, who have community service orders placed by the court, find proper placements where they can complete their volunteer hours in the community. The Society has developed new partnerships with local businesses and organizations who are willing to offer placement opportunities to our clients. Thanks to the Ministry of the Solicitor General for providing funding for the CSO program.

We are particularly proud of our new Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) funded by Public Safety Canada through the Crime Prevention Action Fund. The YEP addresses risk factors for youth violence and targets youth aged 16–30, with a focus on Indigenous, Black and newcomer youth. This new program has helped the Society to expand its youth programming and enhance the work we do with at risk youth. The YEP has also helped us develop many new partnerships with different sectors and take the leadership in organizing workshops and training events for youth in our community.

These new initiatives were born out of a deep understanding of the evolving needs of our community and a commitment to innovation. They are a direct result of the hard work and creative thinking of our dedicated staff, who consistently go above and beyond to serve our clients. Our staff are the heart of our organization. They meet clients where they are, with empathy and expertise, often working long hours to navigate complex bureaucracies and providing a calming presence in moments of crisis. We would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to our incredible team. Their commitment to justice and human dignity is the driving force behind our success.

The accomplishments we celebrate in this report would not be possible without the incredible support of our funders, donors, and partners. Their belief in our mission provides the vital resources that allow us to turn our vision into reality. To our generous funders and donors, thank you for your investment in second chances. Your financial contributions enable us to operate our core programs, innovate new services, and respond to the most urgent needs of our clients. To our community partners, your collaboration is invaluable. We know that the complex

challenges our clients face require a network of support, and your partnership allows us to provide a more comprehensive and effective range of services. Your trust in our work fuels our efforts and inspires us to reach higher. On behalf of the entire organization, and the clients we serve, we want to extend our deepest gratitude.

The Society has many volunteers who have dedicated their time and skills to our cause. To our volunteers, you are the heart and soul of this organization. Whether you are covering the front desk, assisting with different programs, or supporting at a community event, your commitment is truly inspiring. Your willingness to give so generously of your time enriches our programs and reminds our clients that there are people in the world who care about their success.

Finally, we want to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of our Board of Directors. Your strategic guidance, wisdom, and unwavering commitment to our mission are the pillars upon which this organization stands. Your leadership ensures our fiscal responsibility, guides our long-term vision, and holds us accountable to the highest standards of excellence. Your dedication to our cause is a constant source of motivation for us and for the entire staff.

The journey of our clients is one of courage and resilience, and it is a privilege to walk alongside them. They are not defined by their past mistakes but by their determination to build a better future. Their stories are a powerful reminder of why our work is so critical.

As we look to the year ahead, we are guided by a clear and ambitious vision; to expand our reach, deepen our impact, and continue to serve as a beacon of hope for those navigating the criminal justice system. While we have achieved so much, we know there is still more work to be done.

The pages of this annual report tell a story of dedication, collaboration, and hope. They are a testament to our collective achievements, and we invite you to delve into the pages that follow to learn more about the lives we have touched and the impact we have made.

Thank you for being a part of our journey. Thank you for believing in second chances. Thank you for helping us build a more just and compassionate world, one person, one family, one community at a time.

With deep gratitude.

  
Stuart Ewing  
President of the Board of Directors

  
Taghrid Hussain  
Executive Director



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## Officers

Mr. Stuart Ewing, President  
Mr. Jeff Gray, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
Ms. Sandy Ferreira, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
Mr. Abdulrahman Saad, Treasurer

## Directors

Professor Peter Barton  
Mr. David Peeling  
Mrs. Christina Ninham  
Mr. Chris Dobson  
Mr. Michael Cywink  
Mr. Michael Shannon  
Chief Thai Truong  
Mr. Paul Ladouceur  
Mrs. Heather McCallum  
Mr. Andre Lisowyk  
Mr. David Ferri  
Ms. Mary Kay Arundel (until October 16, 2024)  
Deputy Chief Patricia McIntyre (until October 16, 2024)  
Ms. Sharan Abraham (until January 10, 2025)

## Honourary Directors

Mrs. Margaret MacGee  
Mrs. Judy Webb



# OUR STAFF 2024–2025

Taghrid Hussain, Executive Director  
Julianna (Juli) McGrenere, Assistant Executive Director  
Kelly Reiter, Manager of Accounting and Administration  
Anita Parker, Indigenous Services Program Supervisor  
Carolyn Henry, Indigenous Services Worker  
Rachel Read-Baxter, Indigenous Services Worker  
Isaac Youmans, Indigenous Services Worker  
Tracey Gough, Clinical Supervisor  
Courtney Coqu, Counsellor/ Institutional Worker  
Alicia Lozon, Social Worker  
Athena Alex, Social Worker  
Jessica Uitvlugt, Social Worker  
Samantha Fernandes, Social Worker  
Sydney Whalen, Social Worker  
Victoria van Eyk, Social Worker  
Sofia Reyes, Summer Student/Case Manager  
Hannah Gilmore, Counsellor/Direct Accountability Program Coordinator  
Teresa Friesen, BSW Placement Student  
John Linder, Support Worker

Lara Hicks, Volunteer Program Coordinator  
Lindsay Tipping, Fundraising Consultant  
Mark Tutu, Counsellor/Housing and Financial Support Worker  
Rajaa Al-Abed, Youth Program Supervisor  
Adnan Osman, Youth Worker  
Ajibola (Samuel) Adebajo, Youth Worker  
Amanda Wright, Youth Worker  
Natasha Henry, Youth Worker  
Erin Beasley, Youth Worker  
Chenoa Chapman, Youth Worker  
Huma Cheema, Youth Worker  
Ana Rojas-Navarro, Director of Programming and Marketing  
Tia Elkhayri, Team Lead/Bail Supervisor  
Jovana Lojpur, Bail Supervisor  
Mathew Dewit, Bail Supervisor/PAR Program Coordinator  
McKinley Pickett, Bail Supervisor  
Rouba Hamou, Bail Supervisor  
Trevor Oudekerk, Bail Supervisor  
Amanda Ruypers, Indigenous Bail Supervisor  
Meagan Oldroyd, Bail Supervisor  
Stephanie Alegria, Bail Supervisor

# OUR VOLUNTEERS

The aim of our Volunteer Program is to build leadership and organizational capacity and to develop the next generation of volunteers. Members of the community are recruited, trained and supervised in the provision of agency services. Volunteers expand the capacity to deliver effective services to the community.

Alena Beniamin  
Chirag Bhanushali  
Connor Blackwell  
Gabriella Corrado  
Mallory Crispin  
Lori Cunningham  
Mackenzie Daniels  
Kayla Driscoll  
Crystal Easton  
Sam Freemark  
Katya Heckendorn  
Taylor McHarg  
Bozhena Melnychuk

Katelyn Moore  
Habiba Munniwala  
Mathew Nagel  
Tosin Okusana  
Maksym (Max) Petryk  
Sofia Reyes  
Maddie Scrimgeour  
Temitope Soewu  
Sharone Tensy  
Abigail Twaites  
Abigail Vancea  
Carley Van Hoof

25 Volunteers  
944 Hours Contributed



## CAROL REID

# VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD 2024

The Carol Reid Award was established in 2001 in honour of Carol Reid who was a long-term staff member of the John Howard Society of London and District. Carol was a woman of courage and determination. Carol, a social worker who lived with a visual impairment, carried a large caseload of clients, conducted interviews at Elgin Middlesex Detention Centre, developed community education programs for elementary school children, supervised students, and performed the role of volunteer coordinator. Her standards were high, and she demanded the best from her volunteers and students. Following her untimely death, this annual award was established to recognize the volunteer who has made an exceptional contribution to the agency that year.

It is our great pleasure to name Sofia Reyes as the 2024 Volunteer of the Year for the John Howard Society of London and District. Sofia began her volunteering journey with us in July of 2023. She initially provided help with the front desk at the 570 Building and then transitioned to the front desk at the main office. She has successfully completed her undergrad program and is now a full-time employee with us, working in the BTC Program!

With unwavering dedication and a heart full of compassion, Sofia has gone above and beyond in her service to others, embodying the very spirit of volunteerism and the John Howard Society. Her tireless commitment, generosity of time, and genuine care have made a lasting impact on many lives.

She meets each task with an open mind and an open heart and when things change she adapts to the “side quests” with joy and excitement. Whether stepping in when help is most needed, or uplifting those around her with kindness and empathy, Sofia is an inspiration. This award honours not just her generous contributions, but the profound difference one person can make when driven by purpose and love for others.

Congratulations Sofia!

My time with the John Howard Society started two years ago when two of my classmates encouraged me to apply as a volunteer. At the time, I had never heard of the John Howard Society. After doing some brief research online and seeing the mission statement *effective, just, and humane responses to crime and its causes*, I knew that this was somewhere I wanted to be. As a criminology and psychology student, I had a passion for learning more about the criminal justice system and how it both hinders and helps people, while also maintaining an appreciation for the psychology behind the individual.

I started volunteering at the front desk of the bail office in the summer of 2023. There, I was able to see and understand first-hand what it meant to have humane responses to crime. The way the bail workers interacted with the clients by showing them dignity, grace, and support really moved me.

In the fall of 2023, I transitioned to volunteering at the front desk of the main office. That was where I really fell in love with this work. From a student perspective, I enjoyed seeing the counsellors combine the concepts I learned from criminology and psychology when interacting with their clients. But on a personal level, I loved seeing the counsellors embody the Society's mission statement and provide hands-on, meaningful support to their clients.

I have learned so much while volunteering with the Society. Getting trained under Lara, I have learned about the vast community resources available for our clients. Lara truly serves our clients. Over the years, she's collected a plethora of resources ranging from healthcare, to childcare, to citizenship, to housing, to addiction help, to financial help. When clients came in, Lara was always able to point them in the right direction. When I was sat at the front desk, that's what I strived to do: help the clients in any way I could. As much as I have learned about the various community resources that are available for our clients, I've also come to learn the gaps that are still present within society that leave our clients unsupported and stuck in a vicious cycle.

Volunteering at the Society has been such a privilege. To be on the front line and be the first person that a client will interact with, whether on the phone or at the door, is a privilege. I'm very grateful for the trust that both the Society and the clients extended to me.

Since I have started volunteering, I became the summer student for the Society in 2024. In the fall of that year, I came back to volunteer during my last year of university. Now that I have graduated, I am working at the Society as a counsellor/case manager for the Breaking the Cycle Program. I am very grateful for all the experience and knowledge I have gathered during my time as a volunteer, and I am very cognizant of the privilege I have now as a worker where I can apply that knowledge.

Sofia Reyes



## My Volunteer Experience





# PROGRAMS



# PROGRAMS

## Counselling Program

The John Howard Society of London and District (the Society) offers both short and long-term counselling services. Counselling is provided to individuals who are involved in, or are at risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system. Counselling is also provided to their respective families. Counselling services are offered in-person or remotely.

The length and frequency of the counselling sessions varies based on clients' needs and progress. Social workers engage the client in a therapeutic relationship to assess risk and needs and to develop an intervention plan. Clients are assisted with problem-solving, developing new coping and social skills, improving familial relationships, addressing mental health and substance use and examining attitudes and beliefs which create barriers to their success in the community.

### Tom's Story

Someone's first time being involved in the Criminal Justice System can be confusing, overwhelming, and isolating. Tom knew very little about the justice system when he connected with the Society for counselling following a period of poor mental health that resulted in charges. No one else in Tom's life had criminal justice system involvement and the stigma held him back from seeking support. He felt as though no one would understand the challenges he was facing and they would judge him for not being able to overcome these challenges on his own.

The Society's counsellor worked with Tom on developing emotional regulation and fostering positive self-talk throughout his time accessing services. He was met with a safe and accepting environment every time he walked through the Society's doors. As the sessions progressed, Tom's mental health improved which helped him to begin to accept himself and open up about his experiences to his loved ones. Tom's experience with seeking mental health support while having justice system involvement created a deeper understanding and empathy for the individuals around him who may be facing the same stigma he once had. He continues to use this understanding and empathy to advocate for men's mental health, breaking down the barriers for those individuals who are involved in the criminal justice system, and the importance of social connectedness.

### Client Testimonial

*Counselling services have been a lifeline for me during a time when I felt I had very little support. They've helped me during a scary time, in understanding and navigating the legal system and supporting my recovery journey. I always leave my appointments feeling lighter, more confident, and aware of the progress I am making. I am grateful for the guidance my counsellor and JHS have shared, and I would recommend that anyone facing similar challenges reach out for support.* Program Participant



**United Way**  
Elgin Middlesex

# PROGRAMS

## Institutional Visiting

The John Howard Society provides weekly visits to the Elgin Middlesex Detention Centre (EMDC) to provide information, counselling, and advocacy to assist individuals with reintegration planning. Incarcerated individuals discuss their struggles due to their involvement in criminal activities, how to avoid future involvement, resources for addiction treatment, both inside the criminal justice system and community based services, connections with family members, expectations in various institutions, planning for release on parole or mandatory release, and more. Incarcerated individuals may place a request with the guards on duty to see a worker from the John Howard Society. Collect calls are accepted from all provincial and federal institutions.



## Anger Management Program

The Anger Management Program is a cognitive-behavioural based program for individuals aged 16 and over which is delivered in 8 sessions on a one-on-one basis or in a group setting. The goal of this program is to help individuals learn to recognize anger, promote self-regulation, identify triggers, learn to communicate more effectively and make better decisions in the future.

## Navigating Relationships Program

The Navigating Relationships Program is a 6-session program focused on establishing and maintaining healthy relationships. Sessions are offered on a one-on-one basis. The Navigating Relationships Program is a psycho-educational program focusing on skill building through the promotion of positive and healthy relationships.

## Community Service Order (CSO) Program



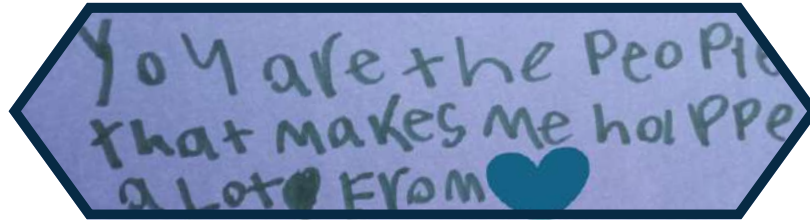
As a probation order or as a conditional sentence, judges may order individuals to perform a specified number of hours of volunteer work in the community at charitable organizations. The Society oversees the completion of these community work orders by setting up work placements, providing support to participating community agencies, and by verifying that the work order has been completed satisfactorily. The Society provides this program in both Grey and Bruce Counties.



# PROGRAMS

## Children's Group

The Children's Group is an after school program for children living in the Boullee, Huron, and Kipps Lane communities. The John Howard Society offers a group for girls and boys between the ages of 5 and 12 years. The group offers a safe place to go after school to engage in fun educational activities, eat snacks, build positive relationships and develop skills.



## Teen's Group

The Teen's Group supports youth (males and females) aged 12-18 in developing leadership skills, critical awareness and opportunities to positively impact their own lives. The youth are involved in the design and implementation of the program activities, thereby "sharing power" with adults.

The program assists youth to develop skills through exploration of teamwork, cultural diversity, critical thinking, peer relationships, family relationships, bullying, racism and other issues. The youth are introduced to positive role models through interaction with staff members and volunteers.



### Client Testimonial

*I always look forward to Teens Group. Every week we get to play games, work on our cooking and baking skills, and do educational activities with the facilitators. I have learned a lot and always enjoy having a place to see my friends outside of school.* Program Participant

## Women's Group

The John Howard Society offers a weekly support group for women who have a loved one involved in the criminal justice system. The group offers women an opportunity to receive support through emotional crises, evaluate their relationships and receive relevant information about the criminal justice system. The women share common experiences and emotions in a confidential and non-judgemental setting and develop new coping skills. Through involvement with the group, women build friendships with other women and feel less socially isolated.

# PROGRAMS

## Turn2Us Program

The Turn2Us Program is an evidence-based program that addresses risk factors for street level violence among youth and enhances pro-social skills through case management, skill-building, referrals to community resources, and connection to community activities and supports. The program aims to build resiliency, strength, and skills in youth through education and awareness. The main component of the program is participation in eight sessions that are tailored to the needs of youth and focused on prevention of violence. The program offers personalized support in education, employment, housing, health, and community engagement.



### Client Testimonials

*When I first came to the JHS I was beginning my court process. The interpersonal relationship component of the program helped me realize that I wasn't in a safe healthy relationship. We went over the power and control wheel, equality wheel, talked about all different styles of abuse etc. I have used many skills from the program such as essential skills during a potential argument like; walking away, listening to music, colouring and even learning how to deal with conflict maturely. The program really made me realize that abuse works both ways and I learned how to be less verbally aggressive. Thank you to the Facilitator Amanda, I wouldn't be where I am today without all the support she has given me, thank you. Program Participant*

*The program has been a turning point for me since arriving in Canada. When I first came, I struggled to make friends and often felt isolated. Through the program, I was introduced to the Black community, where I finally felt a sense of belonging and connection. The support I received not only helped me socially but also guided my career path. I enrolled in a construction program, completed it, and I am now actively seeking employment in the field. This program has given me the confidence and skills I needed to move forward. Program Participant*



# PROGRAMS



## Youth Empowerment Program

The Youth Empowerment Program is an evidence-based intervention program that addresses risk factors for youth violence. The program targets youth aged 16-30, with a focus on Indigenous, Black and newcomer youth. The program also focuses on prevention by working with youth to address risk factors, develop resiliency and enhance social skills. The main component of the program is participation in an eight session skill-building curriculum designed to enhance essential skills. The program also offers personalized support in education, employment, housing, health, community engagement, and referrals to additional programs and services.

### Client Testimonial



Public Safety  
Canada

Sécurité publique  
Canada

*A Journey from Fear to Empowerment: My Story with the John Howard Society.*

*There was a time in my life when I truly believed that all doors had closed in front of me. As a single mother navigating life alone, the challenges felt overwhelming. I feared for my future, unsure if I could find the support and guidance I needed. Being a woman on my own, I thought my circumstances would only grow more difficult. Everything changed the day I was introduced to the John Howard Society and their Youth Empowerment Program. From our very first interaction, I felt seen, heard, and valued. They provided more than just services — they offered hope. Through their incredible support, I was able to access resources I never knew existed. They walked me through employment opportunities, offered me valuable guidance, and helped me regain my confidence. Their team was patient, compassionate, and deeply committed to helping me rebuild my life. Thanks to their unwavering support, many of the obstacles I once thought were permanent began to fade. I found meaningful work, began planning for a brighter future, and most importantly, rediscovered my strength. The John Howard Society didn't just help me stand on my feet — they helped me believe in myself again. To any young person feeling lost or hopeless, I encourage you to reach out. The Youth Empowerment Program is more than a service — it's a community that truly cares, and they can help you the same way they helped me. Program Participant*





# PROGRAMS

## Stratford Jail Institutional Visiting and Reintegration Program

The John Howard Society provides regular visits at the Stratford Jail to provide information, counselling, advocacy and support to assist individuals with reintegration planning. Individuals are connected to community resources to access additional support. Follow-up is offered to facilitate the individual's successful reintegration into the community.



### Client Testimonial

*I spent many years in custody, locked away from the outside world. I served both time in the federal and provincial jail systems. During this time, I did not receive much assistance from non-jail staff. I felt alone and lost, with no guidance on how to turn my life around. I was very connected to the criminal lifestyle inside the prison system and often ended up getting more charges inside custody because I did not know how to cope with my rage and anger.*

*Things began to change in my life when I met an institutional worker who provided me with alternative pro-social lifestyle options. It took me time to build trust with the worker and slowly I began sharing my story. The worker saw potential in me and encouraged me to look at the reasons why I was incarcerated and the decisions I was making. I started questioning my own belief systems and I started to realize that I needed to make a change in my life. The institutional worker also connected me with resources and helped me build connections within the community before my release. The worker believed in my potential and helped me see that there was more to life than just being behind bars. Thanks to the worker's support and guidance, I was able to start to successfully reintegrate into the community. Things are not perfect but I have used the skills and knowledge I gained to make positive choices and stay away from my past mistakes. I hope my story can inspire others in similar situations to never give up and to seek help and support. We all have the power to change our lives for the better. This is a wonderful program that should be offered in all jails to help so many others who are desperate for help. Program Participant*

## Emergency Transportation

In 2020, both United Way Perth-Huron and the John Howard Society saw firsthand the significant challenges of individuals released from the Stratford Jail with no means to return to their hometown. The lack of funds for transportation for individuals released from custody, who live out of the region, has created a substantial gap in service in the community of Stratford. To eliminate this gap, the United Way Perth-Huron has generously provided the Society with funding to support emergency transportation for inmates released from custody who are in need of transportation to return to their hometown.

# PROGRAMS

## Record Suspension

The John Howard Society assists individuals in completing applications for a suspension of their criminal record. The Society also offers information about travel waivers (a document that allows Canadians with a criminal record to travel to other countries). This service assists individuals in regaining confidence, finding employment and boosting their self-esteem.

### Client Testimonial

*I want to express an enormous gratitude towards you. Today, I was able to attend my first placement at a Hospital and experienced a feeling of knowing where I belong. Thank you for being part of my accomplishments, I wouldn't have been able to achieve it without your synergy.* Program Participant

## Learning Information for Financial Transformation (LIFT) Program

The Learning Information for Financial Transformation (LIFT) Program provides financial literacy support, financial counselling and problem solving to individuals involved in the criminal justice system and those who are at risk of involvement. The LIFT Program aims to improve the overall financial literacy and well-being of our clients. The program provides one-on-one support to help clients work towards reaching their identified goals. The program also offers support with budgeting, debt management, applying for social assistance, and completing income taxes.



# PROGRAMS

## Breaking the Cycle of Post-Incarceration Homelessness (BTC) Program

BTC is a hotel-based intervention program that provides rapid stabilization for those experiencing post-incarceration homelessness and facilitates supports into safe and suitable accommodations. This program aims to help vulnerable individuals aged 18 years and over who are newly released from custody to avoid living unsheltered in London. The program provides intensive case management, reintegration support, mental health and addiction counselling, assistance with accessing basic needs and system navigation.

The Society received funding from the United Way Elgin Middlesex (UWEM) to pilot the project in 2020. UWEM continues to be the main funder for the BTC Program. The Society also receives funding from the Ministry of the Solicitor General (SOLGEN) to offer the BTC Program to individuals on probation to help them reintegrate back to the community.

We are so grateful to the London Community Foundation, Lawson Foundation and the Westminster College Foundation for collectively providing us with funding in the amount of \$80,000 to support our BTC Program (funded by SOLGEN). This additional funding helped increase the program's capacity to offer hotel beds to more clients in need.



Ministry of the  
Solicitor General



### Client Testimonial

*Reentering society after incarceration continues to be an enormous challenge. Experiencing life in prison left me feeling angry, hurt, saddened, and deeply shaken and obviously terrified. But even in the middle of all that pain, I found unexpected growth. I have agoraphobia and am extremely introverted, and oddly enough, it was inside the rigid structure of prison that I felt more free than I had in 25 years.*

*Prison, with all its scary hardships, offered a sense of structure, routine, and predictability that I had never experienced in the outside world. For someone living with chronic anxiety and fear of public spaces, that kind of environment — though limiting in many ways — gave me a strange kind of freedom. I didn't have to worry about overstimulation, unexpected social demands, or navigating a chaotic world. In a way, prison was the first place where I felt I could function within the parameters given to me. And as much as I wanted to be free, I can't ignore the fact that it gave me space to learn more about myself — especially how I interact with others.*

# PROGRAMS

*I learned a lot about trying to be social in prison. With few distractions and nowhere to hide, I was slowly exposed to interacting with people in a way I never had been before. It helped chip away at some of the walls I had built around myself, walls that agoraphobia and life circumstances had fortified over the last 25 years. But nothing could have prepared me for the real world after release. The transition was absolutely terrifying. I was out, but now I had to figure out how to live again — this time with no structure, no road map, and an overwhelming amount of uncertainty. That's when The John Howard Society - Breaking the Cycle (BTC) Program came in — and it changed everything.*

*BTC didn't just help me reintegrate into society — they helped me reclaim my humanity. On the first day of release, BTC placed me in a hotel. That simple act gave me dignity. I had privacy, a door I could close, a bathroom of my own — things that so many take for granted, but for me, they were powerful reminders that I was still a person, worthy of comfort and care. Having that space gave me time to process, decompress, and prepare for the next steps without being thrown into chaos.*

*One of the biggest hurdles I faced right away was the lack of identification. Without ID, I couldn't access healthcare, financial assistance, housing — anything. It was a massive barrier that, due to my anxiety and agoraphobia, felt completely impossible to tackle on my own. The BTC team stepped in and helped me every step of the way. They made the phone calls, helped gather the paperwork, and even came with me to appointments. With their help, I was able to obtain my health card, photo ID, and everything else I needed to begin again. That might sound like a small thing, but it was everything.*

*Courtney and Victoria were the heart of BTC for me. These two incredible women didn't just support me — they saw me. Courtney, especially, showed empathy and understanding that helped me feel safe. She listened without judgment and gently encouraged me to take steps that felt scary but necessary. She never pushed beyond my limits, but she did challenge me in kind, thoughtful ways that helped me slowly stretch beyond my comfort zone and still continues to help get me out and about every now and then.*

*When the time came to move into my own apartment, Courtney didn't just offer support — she showed up. She helped organize and do the move, and offered emotional support, and reminded me that I deserved to have my own space. That apartment was more than just shelter — it symbolized a new chapter, one that I never thought I'd get to write. To this day, Courtney remains a part of my life, and her encouragement continues to be a guiding force.*

*I'm currently on ODSP, which provides important financial stability while I focus on continuing my healing and building a future. BTC helped me navigate the paperwork for that too. They made sure nothing slipped through the cracks, that I had everything I needed to live safely and with dignity.*

*Today, I live in my own apartment. I have space to breathe, privacy to think, and — maybe for the first time in 8 years — the ability to look toward the future. I'm not "fixed," but I'm healing. I'm learning to accept that my experiences shaped me, but they don't define me. I'm learning how to ask for help, how to set boundaries, how to slowly reenter the world on my own terms. I'm not cured of agoraphobia, and I still struggle with extreme introversion, but I no longer feel as alone in those struggles.*

*The Breaking the Cycle Program didn't just help me reenter society — they helped me rebuild from the ground up. They restored my hope, protected my dignity, and surrounded me with people who truly cared. They gave me tools, but more importantly, they gave me belief — in myself and in the idea that life after prison is not just possible, but meaningful.*

*I am living proof that with the right support, people can rise from the lowest points and create something beautiful. I've chosen to take what I learned in prison — about structure, discipline, and connection — and use it to shape a better life. And Because of the BTC Program, that life is finally beginning....like they often say, "From The Ashes I shall Rise".*  
Program Participant

# PROGRAMS

## Partner Assault Response (PAR) Program Huron and Perth Counties

**The PAR Program is a Domestic Violence Court initiative. It is a 12-session group intervention that provides participants with an opportunity to examine their beliefs and attitudes towards domestic violence and learn non-abusive ways of resolving conflict within a relationship. The program also assists victims/partners by reducing their isolation and providing information that will help them to make informed decisions about their safety and their relationship.**



Ministry of the  
Attorney General

### Larry's Story

Larry was referred to the Partner Assault Response (PAR) Program with resentment and frustration. The court-mandated sessions were a punishment in his eyes, a forced admission of guilt for arguments he believed were always a two-way street. He spent the first few weeks slouched in his chair, a silent, defiant observer. He counted the minutes until he could leave. He was not one of them, the men who openly confessed to violence. His own outbursts, he rationalized, were simply misunderstandings.

The turning point came with the discussion on accountability. The program facilitator talked and helped the participants to visualize separating "my actions" from "their reactions." The facilitator explained that no matter what someone else does, we are always responsible for how we respond. This idea began to chip away at Larry's defenses. He started remembering the victims' tears, not just from the big fights, but from the countless small moments where his words had been laced with control and disdain. He began to see that his anger was not a reaction, but a choice.

During a group session, another participant shared his story of hitting rock bottom. Larry saw his own shame and fear reflected in the story. It was a humbling moment, a realization that he was not alone in his struggles and that change was possible. This vulnerability from another man gave Larry the courage to start participating, to stop defending himself, and to begin truly listening.

The PAR Program became more than just a court requirement; it became a catalyst for personal growth. The program provided him with a new set of tools, and he began to actively use them. He started attending optional follow-up sessions and even sought out individual therapy, determined to understand and address the insecurities that fueled his behaviour. Larry understood that while the court had sent him to the PAR Program, it was his decision to use the experience as a turning point – a chance to move from a future defined by his mistakes to one marked by growth and positive change.





## Bail Verification and Supervision Program

The program provides community supervision to eligible individuals who do not have the financial or social supports to meet bail requirements. Prospective clients are interviewed while in custody to determine eligibility. If release is approved by the Court, clients report weekly, or more frequently, to have their conditions monitored. The program also provides enhanced supervision to support clients with mental health and substance use issues. The program offers specialized bail services for Indigenous people using a culturally appropriate approach to supervision. Our program also participants in the London Gladue Case Management Court to support our Indigenous clients.



Ministry of the  
Attorney General

The Bail Program is currently offered in the following jurisdictions: London, Woodstock, St. Thomas, Stratford, Goderich, Owen Sound, and Walkerton. Supervision is also available at the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation.

### Stephen's Story

Before the COVID-19 Pandemic, Stephen was a dedicated and practicing nurse. The immense pressures and emotional strain brought on by the pandemic took a toll on Stephen which lead him to turn to alcohol as a way to cope. This shift in his life led him to being exposed to the criminal justice system.

Upon entering the Bail Verification and Supervision Program, Stephen met with his bail supervisor consistently. He opened up about his struggles and his want to undo the hurt he had caused. Through consistent check ins, he was connected to stable housing, which became an important part of his recovery. He began spending more time outdoors and shared his perspective he gained from being in nature.

With the help of his bail supervisor, a letter of support was prepared to assist him in his goal of regaining his nursing license and reuniting with his son. The agency also helped with the process of retaining suitable counsel that played a crucial role in his legal process.

Stephen was able to secure employment setting up for local festivals, giving him a temporary sense of purpose. He is now looking forward to a future with the hope of returning to the profession he loves and rebuilding a relationship with his family.

# PROGRAMS

## Indigenous Services Program

The John Howard Society is under contract with the Ministry of the Solicitor General and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to provide culturally relevant probation and parole supervision for Indigenous adults and probation services to youth. The Society employs Indigenous workers who supervise sentence orders for Indigenous youth and adults residing in London, Oxford County, Elgin County and the three neighbouring communities: Oneida Nation of the Thames, Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, and Munsee-Delaware First Nation. The Indigenous Services workers incorporate traditional Indigenous approaches in their work with clients.



Ministry of the  
Solicitor General



Ministry of  
Children, Community &  
Social Services

### Nathaniel's Story

When Nathaniel was originally sentenced to probation, he struggled with emotional regulation which resulted in a lot of problems for him and others around him. He incurred more charges as a result and was sentenced to more probation. With patience and advocacy, the probation officer worked on accessing basic needs for Nathaniel. The probation officer also made a referral for culturally-meaningful counselling, to which Nathaniel is now amenable. He is faring much better and has set himself some favourable and realistic life goals. Previously, he was unable to see a future for himself.

### Michael's Story

Michael was sentenced to probation for one year. He was initially ambivalent to engaging in probation services; however, by the end, he successfully completed counselling, became more involved in the community, attained identification, and completed credits toward his OSSD. Michael was appreciative of the services provided and is optimistic about his future.

## Gladue Court

In collaboration with the Court and other community agencies and organizations, the John Howard Society supported the development of a Gladue Court in London which focuses on the unique needs of Indigenous offenders. One of the Society's Indigenous Services Program workers attends the Court on a regular basis.

# PROGRAMS

## Direct Accountability Program (DAP)

The Direct Accountability Program is an alternative to prosecution for eligible individuals over the age of 18 who have been charged with minor criminal offences. The program involves accused persons being held accountable through community-based sanctions. The five programs held at the John Howard Society are the Stop Shop Theft Program, Alcohol and Drug Awareness Program, Anger and Substance Awareness Program, Anger Management Program and Counselling, Support, and Intervention Program. Individuals referred to those programs have been assessed to benefit from an opportunity to address the problematic thinking, feelings and behaviours that led to their involvement with the criminal justice system.



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## Community Case Management and Supervision (CCMS) Program

The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) implemented a national Community Case Management and Supervision (CCMS) Program, in partnership with the John Howard Society of Canada, to provide an alternative to detention for those who would otherwise be detained in custody awaiting the resolution of their immigration issues. The John Howard Society offices across the country are participating in this national program. The John Howard Society of London and District is one of the affiliates in Ontario that established the CCMS Program. The program offers intensive community supervision and case management services to eligible individuals so they can be supervised in the community and access counselling and services as required.



Canada Border  
Services Agency

## Community Education Program

The John Howard Society works closely with many community groups and coalitions to educate and involve more people in understanding the social justice issues affecting John Howard Society clients, providing information and workshops about the criminal justice system and its impact on society. The John Howard Society provides speakers to churches, service clubs, government and community organizations.

# THANK YOU

## Our Funders



**United Way**  
Elgin Middlesex



**United Way**  
Perth-Huron



Canada Border  
Services Agency



Public Safety  
Canada

Sécurité publique  
Canada

**Ontario** 

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CANADA



**LONDON**  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION

**LAWSON**  
FOUNDATION



STRATFORD PERTH  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION



# By The Numbers

28,599  
SESSIONS/  
INTERVIEWS

3,546  
CASE  
CONFERENCES/  
CLINICAL  
REPORTS

20,947  
COLLATERAL  
CONTACTS

3,592  
CLIENTS  
SERVED

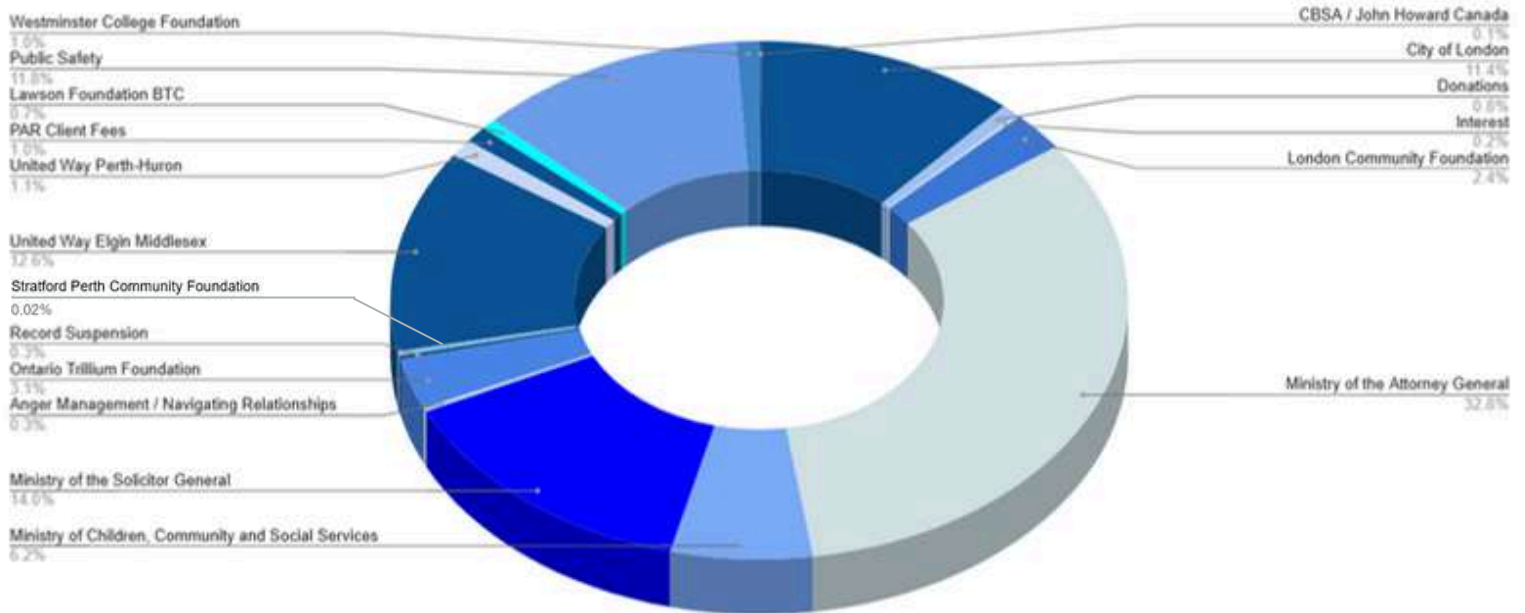
71  
COMMUNITY  
EVENTS

325  
GROUP  
SESSIONS

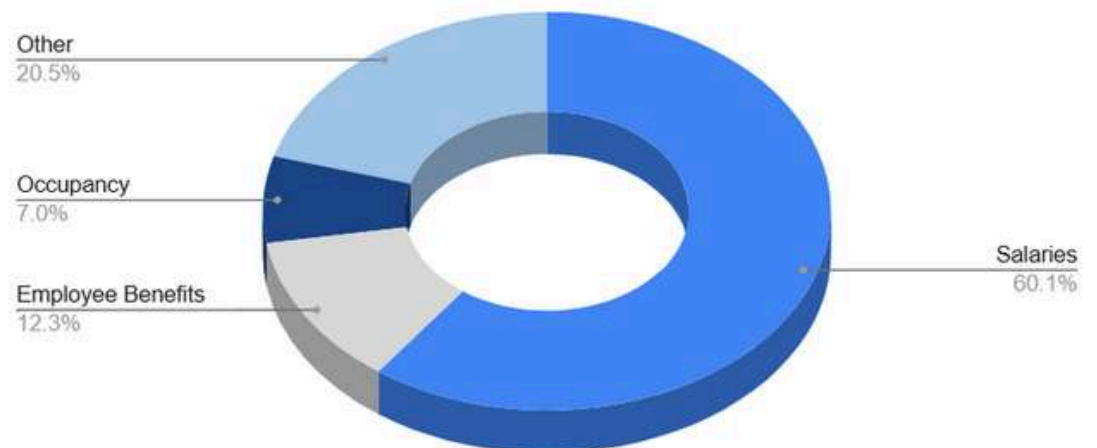
944  
VOLUNTEER  
HOURS

# FINANCIAL REPORT

REVENUE \$2,971,976



EXPENSES \$2,934,411





# MILESTONE SERVICE AWARD

Our success as an organization is due largely to the hard work of our amazing staff members who meet the intense challenges of the day-to-day work. We truly appreciate your hard work and commitment to the work of the John Howard Society of London and District. As such, the Society has established the Milestone Service Award in order to recognize our staff members for their dedication and years of service to the agency. The agency recognizes staff for each five years of continuous service. At each milestone, our employees receive a certificate of service and an award gift.

This year we have one exceptional staff member to recognize!

**Courtney Coqu for 15 years of service.**

Thank you for the loyalty and dedication you have brought to the organization over the years. Thank you for your hard work, devotion and commitment and for going above and beyond every day to assist one of the most vulnerable client populations in our community.

Congratulations Courtney!



# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



## **AGM 2024 – Guest Speaker**

**Pamela J. Hill, Director Strategy, CMHA Thames Valley Addiction and Mental Health Services**

Pam Hill was the speaker for the Annual General Meeting last year. Pam shared her expertise on the latest trends in mental health and addiction within our community. She also shed light on the profound impact these issues have on frontline staff.



## **AGM 2025 – Guest Speaker**

**Dr. Alexander Summers MD, MPH, CCFP, FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health  
Middlesex-London Health Unit**

Dr. Alex Summers is the Medical Officer of Health for the Middlesex-London Health Unit, a position held since March 2022, and previously the Associate Medical Officer of Health starting July 2018. Dr. Summers holds a Bachelor of Science from Queens University, a Doctor of Medicine from Queens University and a Master of Public Health from Harvard University. He completed his residency in public health and preventive medicine at the University of Toronto.



# UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN 2024

The John Howard Society of London and District has been a community partner of the United Way Elgin Middlesex for over 70 years and the United Way Perth-Huron for 15 years. The Society is able to achieve its mission each year due to the ongoing financial support of the United Way.

This year's campaign included participation from staff, as well as volunteers, students and board members, all of whom contributed to the campaign's success.

The United Way Campaign holds a heartfelt space for those who participate because it unites us all for a cause that profoundly impacts our community. The campaign team created its famous "United Way Calendars" where every weekday for a month, a draw was held for a prize. In addition, we held several draws and raffles, featuring lovingly crafted homemade items donated by generous staff members.

The Society would not be able to continue to provide services to our community members without the continued support from the United Way.

Total raised funds for the 2024 campaign were **\$8,823.04.**

Thank you to our campaign team, staff, volunteers, students and board members who continue to embody the spirit of collaboration for a well-deserved cause!



**United Way**  
Perth-Huron



**United Way**  
Elgin Middlesex

# OUR TEAM





# OUR TEAM





# AGM 2024



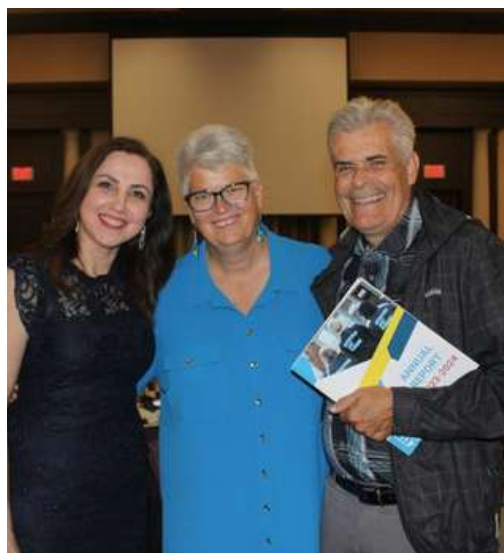


# AGM 2024





# AGM 2024





# CHIEF'S GALA



We attended the London Police Service Chief's Gala - Appreciation Dinner & Awards Night on January 29, 2025.

The event was in support of two charities with proceeds going towards YOU and CMHA. More than 1,000 people attended the event to recognize exceptional LPS members making positive impacts in our community.

Congratulations to Chief Thai Truong and his team on the success of this event.





# STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY

November 11, 2024





# STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY

November 11, 2024





# JHS ONTARIO STAFF CONFERENCE





# JHS ONTARIO STAFF CONFERENCE





# SUMMER RECEPTION





# SUMMER RECEPTION





# CHRISTMAS PARTY





# CHRISTMAS PARTY





# UNITY IN ACTION CONFERENCE 2025



The John Howard Society took a leadership role on the planning committee for the “Unity in Action Conference,” in collaboration with London Police Services, St. Leonard’s Community Services, and LUSO Community Services.

Held under Project B.U.I.L.D.S, the conference brought together students, educators, and community partners to address violence through leadership, allyship, and restorative practices.

The conference hosted 200 participants, including 100 youth from 14 schools. Grade 11 and 12 students were selected for their leadership potential and trained to implement projects at their schools.

**The Society’s Youth Empowerment Team delivered two workshops at the conference:**

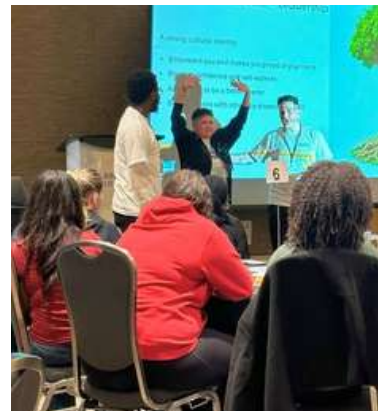
**Adult Workshop: “Understanding Violence from a Cultural Lens”** Focused on how cultural perspectives shape our understanding of violence, especially structural harm affecting BIPOC youth. It emphasized cross-cultural understanding and culturally competent services as tools for healing and social change.

**Youth Workshop: “The Power of a Strong Identity – A Key Leadership Trait”** Encouraged self-awareness and confidence as leadership traits. Youth explored identity as a source of strength and learned advocacy and leadership skills through interactive activities.





# UNITY IN ACTION CONFERENCE 2025





# BOARD RETREAT

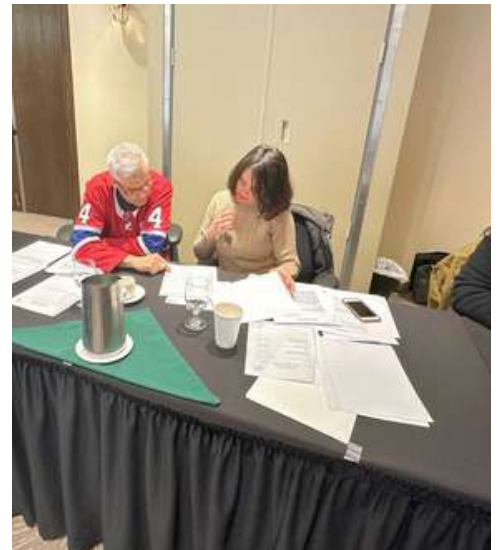


**Our Board members had a productive retreat on March 1, 2025. They participated in essential governance training and spent valuable time reviewing the agency's programs and strategic direction. Thank you to our dedicated Board for their unwavering commitment to strong leadership!**





# BOARD RETREAT



# john howard society

London & District



## Head Office

601 Queens Ave. London, ON N6B 1Y9  
Tel: 519.438.4168 Fax: 519.438.7670



## Satellite Office

570 Queens Ave. London, ON N6B 1Y8  
Tel: 519.518.5420 Fax: 519.518.5180



United Way  
Perth-Huron



United Way  
Elgin Middlesex

Designed by:  
Lindsay Tipping