



House of Lazarus
Building Community...Sharing Hope

Annual Report

2025-2026



**BUILDING COMMUNITY.
SHARING HOPE.**

Message from the HOL Board Chair

Gayle Hewton

“As Board Chair, it is my privilege to reflect on a year of remarkable growth, resilience, and community impact for House of Lazarus”.

This past year marked a major milestone in our organization’s history with the completion of our new food bank facility. This project represents far more than a building, it is a commitment to dignity, accessibility, and meeting the growing needs of our community for years to come. Seeing this vision become a reality has been both inspiring and humbling.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to extend sincere gratitude to our Executive Director, Cathy Ashby, whose leadership, determination, and unwavering dedication guided this project from vision to completion. Her passion for serving the community continues to strengthen every aspect of House of Lazarus.

I would also like to recognize past Board Chair Rilla Seward-McShane and Board and past Board Secretary Darlene Simms for graciously extending their board terms to help see this important build through to completion. Their commitment and leadership played a meaningful role in bringing this project to life.

To our staff, volunteers, donors, partners, and community supporters, thank you. Every contribution, whether through time, resources, or advocacy, helps ensure that House of Lazarus can continue providing essential food security and supports to individuals and families throughout our community.

“Together, we are building more than programs and services; we are building community and sharing hope.”



Board of Directors
Gayle Hewton
Chair

Mark VanDelst
Co-Chair

Janet Carkner
Treasurer

Erin Zollinger
Secretary

Sasha Clarke
Chloe Preston
Michelle Robichaud
Kate Hubble

Message from Executive Director Cathy Ashby

2025: Building a Solid Foundation

The focus of 2025 has been to build a solid foundation for the future of House of Lazarus. The year began with the completion of our new food bank building, a significant milestone for the organization. The new facility not only houses the food bank and warehouse but also includes a furniture store, three offices, a boardroom, and a fully equipped kitchen. This expanded space will allow us to better serve our community and support future growth. The project was led by general contractor Watko. John and Tyler Koenjer were excellent partners throughout the construction process. Their patience, professionalism, and willingness to guide me through my limited building experience made the project both manageable and successful. Today, we have a strong, modern facility that meets our current needs and positions us well for the future. We are also deeply grateful for the incredible support we received from the community. The generosity of donors, volunteers, and community partners played a vital role in helping us complete this important project.

As the year progressed, the management team undertook Food Banks Canada's new Standards of Excellence accreditation process. This comprehensive initiative required House of Lazarus to review and demonstrate compliance across six key areas: governance and administration, people management, financial and legal practices, client service and care, public engagement and fundraising, and food operations and safety. The accreditation process was a significant undertaking. Existing policies and procedures were carefully reviewed, while others were created or redeveloped to ensure alignment with the new standards. Once completed, board members conducted a thorough assessment of all requirements before the documentation was submitted to Food Banks Canada. This process has strengthened House of Lazarus by establishing a solid foundation of policies, procedures, and accountability measures that will guide the organization well into the future.

This year, we celebrate Kim Merkley's 25 years of dedicated service at House of Lazarus. Kim has been an integral part of the foundation of House of Lazarus, helping to shape the organization into what it is today. Her commitment to serving others is evident every day. Kim has consistently demonstrated generosity with her time, energy, and expertise, always putting the needs of our community first. As the demands within our community have continued to grow, Kim has been a true leader in the development and expansion of our food programs, ensuring that more individuals and families receive the support they need.

We are deeply grateful for Kim's unwavering dedication, compassion, and 25 years of outstanding service to House of Lazarus. Her contributions have made a lasting impact on our organization and the countless lives she has touched.

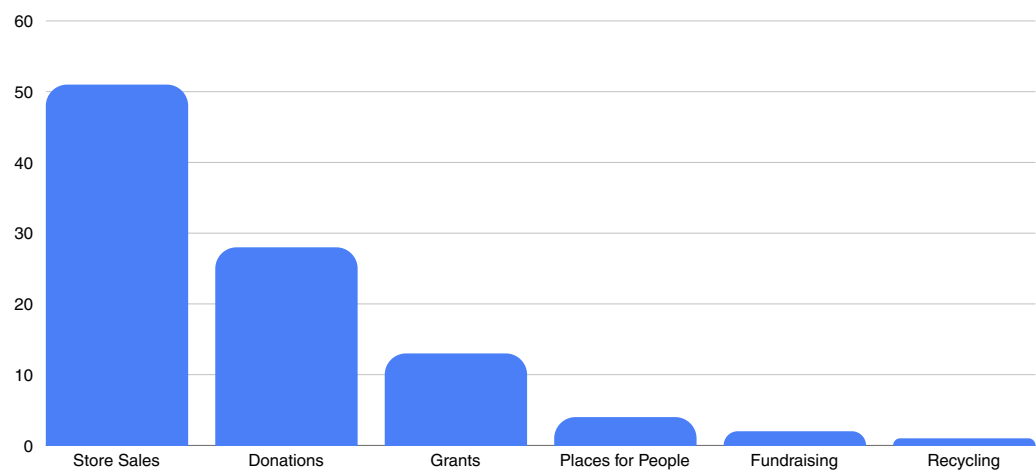
Thank you, Kim, for your years of service and commitment to our mission. Congratulations on this remarkable milestone.



Cathy Ashby
House of Lazarus
Executive Director

HOL's Sources of Income

The strength of our mission is made possible through the generosity and support of many partners. The chart below highlights the diverse sources of income that sustain our programs and services, demonstrating the collective investment of donors, supporters, funders, and community members in the work of House of Lazarus.



GRANTS RECEIVED	AMOUNT
South Nation Conservation	\$800
Mission & Service Support United Church Canada	\$27,000
Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council	\$4,200
United Way SDG Last Resort Funding	\$8,467
EOORC Vision & Transformation Grant	\$3,300
Food Banks Canada Capacity Grant	\$46,756
United Way SDG Community Investment Fund	\$52,576
United Way East Ontario School Infrastructure Grant	\$10,000
Municipality of North Grenville Grant	\$15,000
100 Women Who Care North Grenville	\$250
Township of North Dundas	\$5,000
100 Women Who Care South Dundas	\$5,000
Canada Summer Jobs	\$10,826
John Stewart Estate Foundation	\$2,008
Community Volunteer Income Tax Program Grant	\$2,365
100 Men Who Care North Grenville	\$8,000
Five B Family Foundation	\$15,000
Food Banks Canada After the Bell Program	\$840
Total Grant Funding Received	\$216,548

Fundraising:

Community Generosity in Action

A Year of Community Support

Our fundraising efforts throughout the year played a vital role in sustaining and expanding our programs and services. Through community events, donor campaigns, and the ongoing generosity of individuals, businesses, and partners, we were able to secure the resources needed to support those who rely on our work. Each initiative reflected a shared commitment to strengthening our community and ensuring that essential supports remain accessible to those who need them most.

Ladies Night Out
\$10,500



Summer Auction
\$11,500



Purses With a Purpose
\$20,500



Trash'n Show
\$7,500



One of our most unique fundraising events of the year was the Trash'n Show, organized by longtime community supporter Gail McCooeye. Guests enjoyed an afternoon of tea, desserts, and imaginative fashion creations made from recycled and repurposed materials. From newspaper dresses to accessories crafted from everyday items, the event showcased the creativity and generosity of our community.

The event raised \$7,500, helping support the Community Hub and Warming Centre and ensuring individuals facing housing instability and hardship continue to have access to essential services and supports.

Community-Driven Fundraising Efforts

Community-led fundraisers such as Jingle Jangle, Ah Capella, the Poker Ride, the Murder Mystery fundraiser, A Bunch of People, John Alaire, and many others play a vital role in supporting our work. We are sincerely grateful for their generosity and commitment to making a difference in our community.

Together, we are building a stronger, more connected, and more supportive community for all.



\$13,965.89

We were humbled to be chosen to receive the proceeds from the Morrisburg and Long Sault Tim Hortons Locations Smile Cookie Campaign.

New Food Bank Grand Opening

Building Hope: A New Home for Food Security

This year marked a remarkable milestone for House of Lazarus with the completion of our new food bank, a project born from both necessity and hope.

Following the devastating fire that destroyed our previous food bank, our organization faced an enormous challenge. What could have been a setback became an opportunity for our community to come together in an extraordinary way. Through the support of donors, funders, volunteers, community partners, staff, we transformed a difficult chapter into a story of resilience and renewal.

The new food bank has been thoughtfully designed to meet the growing needs of our community. With increased storage capacity, improved accessibility and a welcoming environment for clients and volunteers, the building positions House of Lazarus to better serve individuals and families experiencing food insecurity for years to come.

Throughout the rebuilding process, we witnessed the strength and generosity of our community. From financial contributions and in-kind donations to words of encouragement and countless hours of volunteer support, every act of kindness helped move this vision forward.

While the loss of the former building was deeply felt, the completion of this new facility represents far more than replacing what was lost. It reflects our shared commitment to ensuring that no one in our community faces hunger alone. It stands as a testament to what can be accomplished when people come together with compassion, determination, and a belief in caring for one another.

As we open the doors to this new space, we do so with profound gratitude and renewed purpose. The building itself is a symbol of hope, but its true value will be found in the lives touched within its walls through every meal provided, every family supported, and every connection made.

Together, we have not simply rebuilt a food bank; we have strengthened our capacity to serve our community for generations to come.

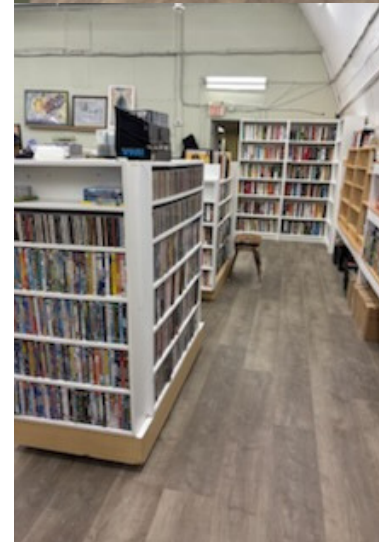
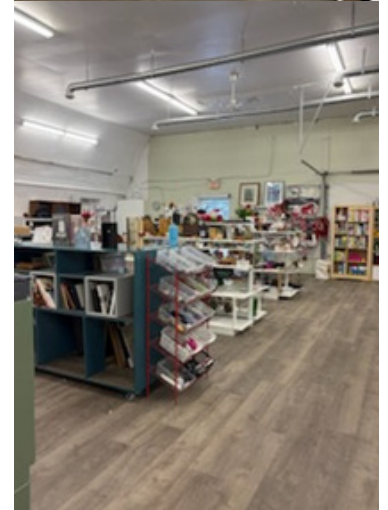
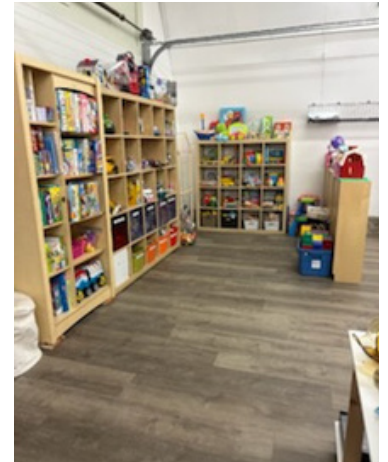


Our Social Enterprise

Enterprise in Action

Our social enterprise at HOL continued to grow and evolve this year, strengthening its role in supporting our mission. We were pleased to launch a new furniture thrift store, expanding our ability to provide quality, affordable household furnishings to the community. In addition, our Household Goods store underwent a successful revamp, improving layout, accessibility, and the overall shopping experience. Together, these initiatives not only generate essential revenue to support our programs but also enhance dignity and access for individuals and families in need.

IMPACT:	CHALLENGES:
Creates opportunities for employment and volunteers: -10 full time employees -12 part time employees -33 volunteers	Always a need for more volunteers
Outreach through household goods store: \$32422 -School supplies to 42 families -HGS gift cards to 65 families -Medical supplies to 18 families -Starting Over program for 32 families	Limited warehouse capacity to generous community donors
Main funding source	Reliant on economic circumstances
Outreach through clothing store: \$46755 -Back to Work program: 4 people -Clothing gift cards for food bank visitors: 106 families	Clothes recycling has stopped for the time being therefore more clothes to store
Recycling: -\$972 revenue from electronic and smash room recycling -\$18900 revenue in clothing recycling	Clothes recycling has stopped for the time being so no revenue being raised



Community Hub & Warming Centre

22 High Street, Morrisburg

The Community Hub and Warming Centre continues to be a vital source of support, connection, and hope for residents across Dundas. Through partnerships with local agencies, access to essential resources, and a welcoming space for community members, the Hub helped hundreds of individuals and families navigate challenges while building stronger community connections.



The Past Year by the Numbers

21

AGENCIES

Our Community Hub provides a welcoming and accessible space for community agencies to connect with residents. This year, six agencies regularly accessed the Hub to deliver programs, services, and support, strengthening collaboration and increasing access to resources within our community.

339

PEOPLE ACCESSED SERVICES

The Community Hub continues to be a valuable access point for residents seeking support, resources, and connection. Throughout the year, individuals accessed a variety of services offered through the Hub, helping to reduce barriers and ensure community members can find the assistance they need close to home.

41

PEOPLE ACCESSING THE WARMING CENTRE

The Warming Centre offers a pathway to stability. Through supportive relationships, access to resources, and personalized assistance, several individuals who accessed the Centre were able to secure housing, taking an important step toward greater safety, security, and independence.

6

COMMUNITY GROUPS

Our Community Hub continues to serve as a welcoming gathering place where connection, learning, and support thrive. Throughout the year, community groups regularly accessed the space. By providing an accessible and inclusive environment, the Hub strengthens community partnerships, fosters collaboration, and creates opportunities for people to come together, share resources, and build meaningful connections.

2308

VISITS TO THE HUB

Throughout the year, the Community Hub recorded a significant number of visits, reflecting its role as a central and trusted space for connection, support, and access to services within the community.

50

CARDS GIVEN OUT

Gift cards and gas cards were distributed throughout the year to help individuals and families meet immediate needs, providing practical support for essentials such as food, transportation, and day-to-day expenses.

913

VISITS TO THE WARMING CENTRE

The Warming Centre provided a safe, welcoming space for individuals. More than just shelter from the weather, the Centre offered warmth, connection, and access to support, ensuring community members had a place to rest, recharge, and feel cared for during challenging conditions.

"This is my happy place. I need that right now."
— Community Hub Visitor

Kemptonville Hub

400 Prescott Street, Kemptonville

Operating one day per week, the Kemptonville Community Hub provides a welcoming space where individuals can connect with supports, resources and advocacy. The Hub plays an important role in helping community members navigate challenges and access the services they need.

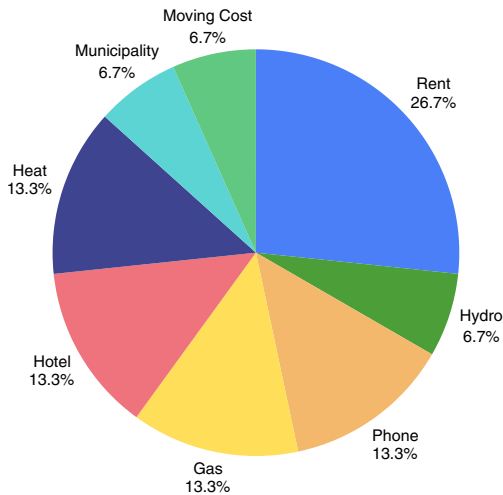
15 Emergency Financial Supports Provided

Helping community members maintain housing, access utilities, secure temporary shelter, and overcome unexpected financial barriers.

Advocacy

Community members received assistance with:

- ✓ Income tax filing
- ✓ Family doctor registration
- ✓ Housing applications
- ✓ Homelessness Prevention Program referrals
- ✓ Social housing referrals
- ✓ Accessing community resources
- ✓ Connections to local services



158 Community Hub Visits 40 Income Tax Returns Completed

CVITP

Community Volunteer Income Tax Program

Our Volunteer Income Tax Program helped individuals and families access valuable tax benefits, credits, and refunds that contribute to their financial well-being. By removing barriers to tax filing and providing free, reliable assistance, the program ensured community members could receive the supports they were entitled to. Beyond completing tax returns, the program helped increase financial stability and connected people to resources that make a meaningful difference in their daily lives.

580

INCOME TAX RETURN COMPLETED

Through our Volunteer Income Tax Program, tax returns were completed for community members, helping individuals and families access important benefits, credits, and refunds while reducing barriers to filing.

4

INCOME TAX CLINICS

Our free Income Tax Clinics provided accessible, reliable tax filing support for individuals and families, helping community members maximize their benefits and access the financial resources available to them.

\$1.4
Million

IN INCOME TAX REFUNDS, TAX CREDITS AND TAX BENEFITS TO THE PEOPLE WHO PARTICIPATED.

Through our free Income Tax Clinics, more than \$1.4 million in tax refunds, credits, and benefits were accessed by community members, helping individuals and families strengthen their financial stability and access resources they are entitled to receive.

Housing Programs

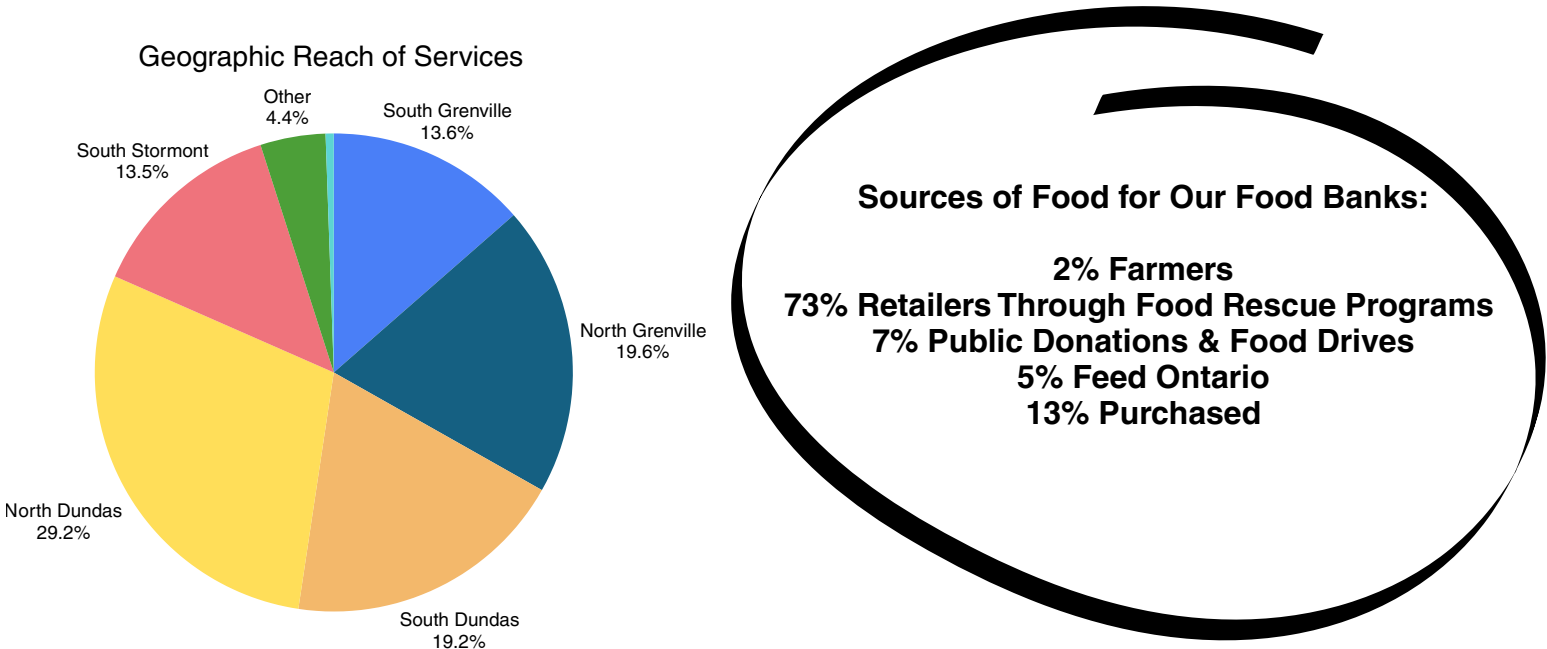
PROGRAM	IMPACT	CHALLENGES
Handyman Heroes: The Handyman Heroes project matches licensed tradespeople with families in need of home renovations or auto repairs that are urgent in nature. The volunteer professionals provide the labour, while HOL provides the parts and materials needed.	A roof was replaced for grandparents who care for their grandchildren as they were at risk of losing their house insurance and subsequently their mortgage.	Need funding for materials. Need for more tradespeople to complete the repairs.
Places for People: An affordable rental model whereby tenants pay 30% of their income towards rent. The program offers mentorship to the tenants and holds in trust 5% of rent paid for the tenants to use incase of emergencies or towards their goals.	3 single parents and their children are currently living in our 3 three-bedroom units.	Maintenance of units. Costs for additional rental stock.
Last Resort Dollars: Funding filtered through the United Way SDG to assist with housing insecurity. The funding keeps people housed by paying arrears for rent, hydro and heat or to house poeple by paying first and last month's rent.	5 families assisted	Inconsistent funds.
Neighbours Helping Neighbours: This program encompasses a variety of activities that will help maintain stability in the lives of those in need. NHN aims to help with basic needs, including transportation, food security, and housing stability.	97 people/families assisted 17 families kept housed	Fundraising necessary to fund this program.

Food Bank:

More families. More visits. Greater need.

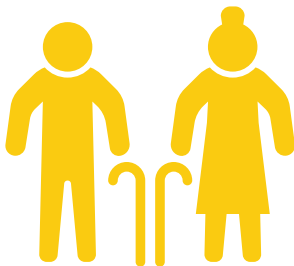
Growing Demand for Food Assistance

The number of individuals accessing food support increased from 825 to 907, reflecting a 10% increase in community need. Food bank visitors are needing to access the food bank more often, resulting in 4749 visits, which is an increase of 31%.



Food Bank Programs

Senior Support Program



28

Seniors received from the program

Supporting seniors to age with dignity remains an important part of our mission. Through meal support, food hampers, and nutritious snacks, the Senior Support Program helps reduce food insecurity while ensuring older adults remain connected to community resources and supports.

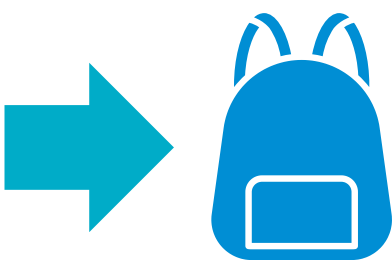
Operation Backpack



295

Children received Operation Backpack

Operation Backpack program provides bags of food each Friday in the school year to students in our community who might otherwise go without meals over the weekend. Each bag contains food for 2 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 4 snacks, with fresh produce and nutritious food included.



12545

Bags Were Delivered

FOOD PROGRAMS

Drop-in Breakfasts
 Food banks (Mountain and Ingleside)
 Drop-in Lunch
 Dinner on the House
 Green Food Box
 Seniors Support Program
 Crockpot Cuisine
 Operation Backpack
 Community Hub and Warming Centre Frozen Meals
 Community Kitchen (Youth and Adult)
 Lunch and Learn

IMPACT:	CHALLENGES:
Increased access to nutritious food for individuals and families experiencing food insecurity. -907 people fed through HOL food banks (11% increase) -5274 community meals served -253 participants in cooking classes -81 Crock Pot kits	Growing demand for food assistance due to rising costs of living.
-4749 visits made to HOL food banks last year (31% increase over last year) -56 children received Birthday Club kits	Increased financial pressure on households, allowing limited income to be used for housing, utilities, and other essentials.
-240 food deliveries made to those who could access the food bank -3500 meals served at Community Hub in Morrisburg	Supporting individuals during times of crisis, transition, or unexpected hardship.



Volunteers



151 Volunteers
Contributed
13,531 Hours
x Living Wage
(\$22.60)

\$305,800.60
+ Handyman Heroes
\$13,359
\$319,159.60



Making Waves

Reflecting on a year shaped by compassion, resilience, and the incredible impact of our volunteers. This year's volunteer appreciation theme, "Making Waves," could not be more fitting because every act of kindness you offered created ripples that reached far beyond what we can see.

In our food bank, those waves looked like full shelves, warm meals, and the reassurance that no one in our community is facing hardship alone. In our thrift store, they showed up in every donation sorted, every customer greeted, and every dollar raised to support vital programs. Together, these efforts formed a powerful current of care that carried hope to so many. What makes waves so powerful is not just their movement, but their momentum. One small action builds on another: one hour volunteered, one conversation, one helping hand, until the impact becomes something transformative. That is the story of this year. Because of our volunteers what started as individual acts of service became a force for good that touched countless lives.

This generosity, dedication, and heart are the reason our mission continues to grow. You are not just supporting our work, you are shaping it, strengthening it, and carrying it forward.

As we look ahead, we do so with deep gratitude and renewed inspiration. Thank you for making waves with us, waves of kindness, dignity, and hope that will continue to reach far beyond this year.



Volunteers

The Pat Dobosz Volunteer Award



In 2024 we honoured the memory of the late Board of Directors, Pat, with the Pat Dobosz Volunteer Award. This award is presented to a volunteer for the knowledge, energy, experience, dedication and passion that they bring to House of Lazarus through volunteering. These are the traits that Pat brought to her volunteering. The second recipient of the Pat Dobosz Award was **Nancy Christie**.

Nancy's dedication has left a lasting impact on House of Lazarus. She introduced the Healing Pathway program to our organization and worked tirelessly to coordinate, schedule, and promote it, helping the practice flourish within our community. She was also instrumental in developing and growing the Linking Hands Program, fostering connection, care, and support for others. Through her weekly administrative volunteer work, Nancy has generously given her time, talents, and commitment, helping ensure our programs continue to thrive. Her leadership, compassion, and service embody the values of House of Lazarus.

Nancy is a champion and an advocate for those who have a hard time being heard. I am forever changed by knowing her and having the blessing of her tempered, consistent guiding love. Nancy embodies the House of Lazarus mission. Nancy is building community by lifting people one by one to be the best version of themselves, by advocating for those who need a champion, by adding reason, kindness and conviction to conversations surrounding change.

“She is sharing hope through her gentle healing hands and her warm reassurance. Her ability to listen to the words that are not said and how she reflects back to you the best parts of yourself.”

**We thank you for your
continued support in
our efforts to build
community and share
hope!**

Contact

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