

Wellspring London & Region / Stratford ANNUAL REPORT 2023



renewal & growth

Welcome

from the Executive Director

I want to wish everyone a very warm welcome to Wellspring London & Region / Stratford's third annual report! As we close in on the end of 2023, I am taking the opportunity to reflect on a year that has brought us incredible memories, joys, challenges, new friendships, and lessons that we can take forward as we move into 2024.

We can feel proud knowing the impact that Wellspring London & Region / Stratford support provides to our larger Southwestern Ontario community, is being felt far and wide. Our donors, volunteers and staff continue to be instrumental in helping us navigate “post pandemic” times. We are working hard to understand what a new “normal” looks like in the world of not- for-profit.

2023 marks the first full year since 2020 that we have had both centres fully open to our members and volunteers. Our approach to how we are offering programs, (whether that be virtually and/or in-person) has been very strategic and has carefully gaged the needs of our Wellspring members. We realize that there is an interesting “dance” that we do at Wellspring – we are inclined to take a step forward to bring everything back as it once was, but then we pause and step back, realizing that not everything is the same as it was pre-Covid. In fact, much has changed. This dance is complicated, but we are committed to working together with leadership from our Board of Directors and our community to figure out how we can best support each other.



Please take the opportunity to read through our 2023 Annual Report and celebrate with us as we continue to renew and grow our dedicated partnerships, increase our programs, and honour our amazing volunteers in our cancer community. Wellspring London & Region / Stratford continues to redefine itself in 2023, and our report is reflective of this. We continue to live our core organizational values being, **COMMUNITY**, **COMPASSION**, **EMPOWERMENT** and **RESPECT**, in everything we do.

We look forward to welcoming new faces into our Wellspring family as we move into 2024. With this, comes new opportunities. And for this, we are grateful.

A heartfelt thank you again for YOUR support in 2023.
Warm regards,

Tracey Jones, Executive Director
Wellspring London & Region / Stratford



Dear Friends & Supporters,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am honoured to welcome you to the annual report for Wellspring London and Region / Stratford

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with gratitude and a sense of accomplishment. Once again, the support of our dedicated community, the tireless efforts of our staff, and the leadership of our director have all played a role in ensuring another good year for Wellspring.

The challenges of the past years since covid tested our resilience, yet we did well. I can affirm the commitment and determination exhibited by each member of the Wellspring team. Their dedication to our mission has not only sustained our organization but has also fostered a nurturing environment for all those affected by cancer in our community.

I extend our heartfelt appreciation to our invaluable supporters. Your steadfast belief in our cause and your continued generosity have been the cornerstone of our achievements. Your contributions, whether financial or through volunteering, have empowered us to continue providing comprehensive support and essential resources to those in need.

As we read this report, I invite you to join us in acknowledging accomplishments that show our collective efforts. With your ongoing support and dedication, we are confident in our ability to further our mission and continue to provide hope and compassion for all those touched by the challenges and pain of cancer.

Thank you for being an integral part of our journey and for your unwavering commitment to our shared mission.

With sincere gratitude,

**Roman Molodynia
Chairman, Board of Directors,
Wellspring London & Region / Stratford**



Margo Bettger-Hahn, Vice Chair, Steve Harris, Past Chair, Anne Sawarna,
Jennifer Foster, Mat Barber, Julie Heitbohmer-Tomchak, Ashley Mitchell



Our Mission

To create the best programs to meet the psychological, emotional and educational needs of individuals and families affected by cancer and deliver those programs to people in Southwestern Ontario.

This year we highlighted five new donor-based opportunities to help us continue to deliver our mission. Gifts in support of the following will help ensure that we're able to provide our critical no-cost programs to those who need them, today and tomorrow.

Sponsor a Room

Sponsoring a room in one of our Wellspring Centres, is a wonderful way to show our members and the general public that you care. Wellspring Centres are warm supportive gathering places, for cancer patients and their loved ones to connect with others and simply relax.

Give to Greatest Need

Wellspring believes in being responsive to the changing needs of our members. A gift towards our greatest need in programming helps us provide cancer patients and their loved ones with timely, relevant support to help them cope with the challenges they're experiencing today.

Support a Program

Wellspring offers a variety of programs intended to address specific areas of concern for those experiencing a cancer diagnosis. All programs are free of charge. A gift in support of a program helps ensure that specific needs are being met.

Leave a Legacy

Help us ensure that our critical programs and services are here today and tomorrow. There are many ways to leave a lasting gift, including bequests, transfer of stocks and gifts of life insurance.

Constant Companion Club

Our monthly donors provide support we can count on each and every month to meet the ongoing needs of our members.



Light Up Wellspring!

It's amazing how quickly this year has gone by! The holiday season will be here before we know it. It can be an emotional time for many families, but particularly so for cancer patients, survivors and their loved ones. It is also a time to think back on the year that has passed, and reflect on those we would like to honour, or who are in need of support.

Each year, Wellspring offers the opportunity to recognize these special people in our lives by making a donation in their name and dedicating a candle in their honour. This year, we are excited to launch our brand new **Light Up Wellspring website!** If you'd like to dedicate a candle and support Wellspring at the same time, simply scan the QR code below on your phone or visit the website directly at: wellspringlondon.ca or wellspringstratford.ca

Once a donation has been made, a virtual light will appear on our **interactive Holiday Tree**. You'll be able to hover over each light to read the names of those who are being honoured. Because it's important for our members and visitors to see how much love and support can be found at Wellspring, we will also be posting your candle in our Centre, on our **Wall of Light**.

Our hope is that by the end of the December, both our virtual Holiday Tree and our Wall of Light will be filled with love and support for those special people coping with cancer today or those we have lost. Of course you can always make your donation in person, at either of our centres or by mail, if you prefer. Don't forget to include the name of your special person.

Our mailing address is:

Wellspring London, 382 Waterloo Street, London, ON N6B 2N8.

Wellspring Stratford, 55 Lorne Ave. Unit 6, Stratford, ON N5A 6S4.

Tax receipts are available for donations of \$20 and over. Note that in order to issue tax receipts for 2023, the CRA requires that the donation be received before Dec. 31/23. Post dated cheques are an option.

We are grateful to so many of you for making your yearly contribution to Wellspring through our Light Up campaign. These funds are critical in ensuring our no-cost programs and services remain available to anyone affected by cancer in our communities.



Scan here to be taken to the Light Up donation web page

**Thank you for your support!
Wishing you a warm and loving
holiday season!**



Donate



Dedicate



Support



Spotlight on Programs

What a difference this past year has made in terms of us being able to reinstate most of our original programs and launch some exciting new options. We continued to provide a hybrid of in-person and virtual programs, as so many of our participants appreciated being able to attend sessions from home if they're feeling unwell or to drop into the centre when they want to personally connect with each other. Here's what was New in 2023!

- Art Journaling is a program where participants create a personal 'art journal' while sharing their experiences in a safe, non-judgmental environment.
- Art Expression workshops are held 4 times per year in conjunction with the changing seasons.
- Souper Tuesdays are lunch and learn informational sessions led by a registered Physiotherapist, and held six times per year.
- Just Show Up – Interactive Connections is now in it's second 8-week session. It's a weekly program for children ages 6 to 14 years old who have a parent, guardian or grandparent impacted by a cancer diagnosis.
- Circle of Sharing – Breast Reconstruction Support Group is a unique service that helps women who have undergone breast reconstruction, reclaim a sense of wholeness.
- Garden Club workshops were held twice in 2023, both times enabling members to create seasonal centrepieces while enjoying a fun and supportive afternoon.
- Our Nourish Program was reinstated in 2023 with seven different workshops covering a variety of topics pertaining to food/nutrition and cancer. Sessions are led by a qualified dietician.

Productive Partnerships

Wellspring London and Region was very active with our research partners in 2023. In collaboration with Kings College (Western University) we presented our research titled 'Narratives of the cancer journey: Fostering resilience, at two separate National conferences.'

Wellspring staff, members, volunteers and stakeholders also participated in phase two of the 'Experiences of hope, self-compassion and authentic collaboration: Foundations for a consumer-informed compassion-based HS delivery framework in a Canadian Context', working closely together with our partners from Humber College. We are the only cancer organization represented in this study of eight organizations across Canada.



Stats as of end of August 2023

Wellspring London & Region / Stratford Statistics for 2023

157 unique in-person and virtual programs
Average of 20 new members per month
6,700 local program opportunities

432 avg # of people registered each year
62% patients. 29% Caregivers. 9% Other
53% of our members have Breast Cancer

Stratford Highlights

It's been a busy year at our **Wellspring Stratford Centre** with lots of program and fundraising activity. We've settled into our new home and are loving our warm and welcoming space. Here are some highlights from 2023!

- We continued to have success in numbers attending all online programs (including meditation, evening yoga, afternoon yoga, and chair yoga) with members from Stratford and London participating online. Meditation and chair yoga are now hybrid programs where members have the choice to attend online or can come in to the center to join the class with others.
- Due to popular demand, we expanded our Reiki program to include a second afternoon each week.
- In conjunction with Wellspring London, our Souper Tuesdays have been a fabulous success. Special thanks to our program sponsors who provide our members with bowls of delicious soup and baked goods to enjoy while they tune in to listen to the information provided on different topics relating to cancer.
- A new Poetry Workshop was held three times in 2023 and has proved to be a very powerful program, giving participants an opportunity to creatively express their emotions through words.
- Our Annual BBQ Fundraiser at the Mountain Estate was another great success. Many thanks to David and Lenora Mountain for once again hosting this fun (and delicious) event!



- Our 16th annual Golf Tournament was held at River Valley Golf Course on September 14th, and was another super successful year, thanks to our golfers, hole and silent auction sponsors.
- In late October we held a Community Engagement event at Jobsite Brewery with approximately 75 people in attendance. Guests were able to learn more about Wellspring Stratford and the various opportunities available to help support our Centre and the programs we offer.

Sunflower Meditation Workshop

Fundraising & Events

It was wonderful to have reinstated our in person **Wellspring Events** in 2023. We look forward to growing these events and raising valuable funds and awareness in 2024!



2023 saw another fabulous **Battle of the Bands** event! Over 400 people gathered at the London Music Hall on March 3rd, to enjoy some spectacular music and an awesome silent auction. The incredible EllisDominators brought home the Paul Stanley Cup once again, but the competition was fierce. Thank you to the RBC/DC band, RJ Conspiracy, and The PDC's for your fabulous performances. Thank you as well to our many event and auction sponsors! Overall the event raised an amazing \$107,000 for Wellspring! The 2024 event is scheduled for Friday, March 1st. Tickets will go on sale in January 2024.

This year Wellspring held our 19th Annual **Walk for Wellspring** in two locations – we were very fortunate that we had amazing weather on both days! Our first Walk was held on Sunday, September 10th in London at Springbank Gardens. A few weeks later, on September 23rd we held our second annual Walk in Stratford at Falstaff Family Centre. Thank you again to all those who participated, fundraised, and supported our Walk for Wellspring, and a special thanks to the London Central Lions Club and Black Angus Bakery and Catering for providing the complimentary BBQs!

Congratulations to our wonderful Top Fundraisers, Sandra Close (Start with Today), Lynn Danby (The Tumornators), and Tracy Loewen (Start with Today), and a heartfelt thanks to those who shared their story! Together we raised an amazing \$37,000 this year...Way to go Wellspring community! We look forward to seeing everyone again for our 20th Annual Walk for Wellspring in September 2024! Thank you to everyone for walking and fundraising in support!

Our first annual Wellspring **Pickleball Fun Day** was held on November 4th, at the Centre Branch YMCA. 14 teams of two participated in a full slate of fun and exciting pickleball matches designed for all skill levels. Congratulations to our Top Fundraisers, Tina Hickey, Gail Schaftner, and Wendy McCann. Thank you again to all who participated, fundraised, and supported this inaugural event. We look forward to seeing everyone again for our 2nd annual Pickleball Fun Day scheduled for May 2024.

Friends of Wellspring!

Friends of Wellspring (FOW) is a group of like-minded members who have been raising funds for Wellspring for over 10 years. FOW also spreads awareness about Wellspring and the NO-COST programs and services that are offered to anyone affected by cancer. Throughout the year, this amazing group organizes and runs a variety of community fundraisers and raffles. We are fortunate to have members and friends who have knitted, crocheted, sewn, made woodcrafts, jewellery, and stained glass, painted, collected, sold, lifted, carried and more! There is so much talent within our community, and we are truly grateful for all the amazing crafts and unique one-of-a-kind items that are donated to the Friends of Wellspring.

As of November 1st, 2023 FOW has raised over \$11,000 through sales in our 'store' at Wellspring, at garage sales, book sales, craft sales, euchre parties, and raffles. Our goal is to end the year by raising at least \$13,000 to help support Wellspring's slate of no-cost cancer programs.

We thank you for your support in 2023. We welcome anyone who is interested in giving back to Wellspring to join us. We hope to see some new faces in our group next year! If you would like to find out more, please call **Wellspring at: 519-438-7379**.

3rd Party Events

We are so grateful to the many groups who have stepped up to support both of our Wellspring Centres over the course of the year through a variety of creative, fun and well-run 3rd Party events!

Heartfelt thanks to the many organizers and committee members who work so hard at putting together these amazing community events on our behalf. There are too many to list, but please know how much we appreciate your support!

Congratulations to Sandy DeMelo and her amazing crew on their 25th Anniversary!

Sandy is the founder and main organizer of 'Curl for Wellspring', an incredible event that began raising money for charity 25 years ago. Over the years, they have raised a cumulative amount of well over \$41,000 to help support Wellspring. We are truly blessed to have been the chosen recipients of these wonderful gifts, for many years!



Your gifts help us grow

Wellspring is truly grateful for each and every donation received from our amazing supporters. TOGETHER we make a difference!

Every year your gifts enable us to provide our programs and services at NO-COST to those affected by a cancer diagnosis AND ensure that this vital support will be there for those who need it tomorrow and beyond.

The chart below represents the approximate percentage breakdown of how Wellspring raises funds in our communities.



Total Revenue
\$738,408

Amounts taken from 2022 Audited Financial Statements and does not include revenue generated from investments and other assets.

support & hope

Wellspring London & Region/Stratford has so much to thank our communities for in making 2023 a tremendous success. New partnerships, increased volunteer engagement, increased donor engagement – the list continues for Wellspring as to reasons we should look back on 2023 and feel inspired.

Some of highlights in 2023 are as follows:

- Membership has **INCREASED** again from 2022, with several people enrolling in both our in-person and virtual programs. This would indicate that we are reaching more people in our community, and they are finding their way through our Wellspring doors.
- Our fundraising team has been very successful in growing **NEW** partnerships with third-party events and engaging new volunteers for Wellspring events to raise funds. Our Friends of Wellspring (FOW) have had another fantastic year of creative fundraising, directly supporting no-cost programs.
- New and existing **PARTNERSHIPS** with the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario, the YMCA of Three Rivers (Stratford), Childcan, St. Joseph's Breast Care Program, and the London Regional Cancer Program, allow us to serve more people in our communities across the region and strengthen outreach throughout Southwestern Ontario.
- We have successfully **ENGAGED** Western University, Kings College (Western), and Humber College to continue working in collaboration on research projects and academic placements that directly impact our Wellspring community.
- New donor stewardship and engagement events have increased our financial capacity to **SUPPORT** the invaluable programs Wellspring London & Region / Stratford offers.

Thank you again for **YOUR** support of Wellspring London & Region / Stratford throughout 2023. We are truly grateful to have the support of our community throughout these times of unpredictability. We look forward to another year of success in 2024 as we ensure that those affected by cancer never have to feel alone. Wellspring is that open door to offer hope and a sense of well-being.

“There are not enough words to describe how blessed I am to have Wellspring in my life, and I honestly don't think I would be where I am today if it wasn't for Wellspring and the online programs that I'm still able to join... Thanks everyone xoxo” (Wellspring Member)