



ConnectWell

COMMUNITY HEALTH

Annual Report

2020-2021

30 Bennett Street
Carleton Place, Ontario
K7C 4J9
613-257-7619

207 Robertson Drive
Lanark, Ontario
K0G 1K0
613-259-2182

207 Robertson Road
Beachburg, Ontario
K0J 1C0
613-582-3685

About ConnectWell Community Health

ConnectWell Community Health is a non-profit and charitable organization serving the predominantly rural population of Lanark and Renfrew Counties and the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville. Under our new name, ConnectWell Community Health continues the voluntary integration of several pre-existing organizations including Lanark Community Programs (est 1979), North Lanark County Community Health Centre (est 1993), Connections (est 1993), Mental Health Peer Support Project (est 1999), and the Whitewater Bromley Community Health Centre Satellite (est 2004). Accomplishing service and 'back-office' integration across the sectors of primary health care, developmental services, mental health peer support, and pre/post-natal community health has been a 20-year journey (starting in 2001 under the banner of 'Lanark Health and Community Services'). The strength of our integration has served us especially well during COVID, in helping us innovate, communicate, collaborate and adapt to meet the diverse needs of people in our communities.

Our team of 200+ staff includes a diverse array of professionals (detailed below) who work together to support people and communities in achieving and maintaining their best possible health and social well-being. An equal number of registered volunteers allow us to enhance and expand our programs and services by providing front-line service, special events, fundraising support and community governance. To further increase our impact, we engage with hundreds of community members, civil society groups and partner agencies across our region.

We have been continuously accredited by the Canadian Centre for Accreditation (and its precursor – Building Healthier Organizations) since 1999.

Our Interdisciplinary Team of Staff



Letter from Deborah Duffy, Board Chair and John Jordan, Chief Executive Officer

The pandemic has had a profound impact on all of our lives. For some people, it has been a nuisance and an inconvenience. For others, it has placed hardships and burdens which, unless experienced, are almost impossible to comprehend. Our staff, Board members, volunteers and community partners have worked tirelessly this past year to focus on the latter – people who have been disproportionately and harshly affected by the impacts of the pandemic. This includes people who live alone, people with physical or developmental disabilities, people with chronic health conditions, seniors, low-income individuals and families, people who lost their jobs, indigenous people, people who are precariously housed, and rural dwellers with limited access to reliable internet or transportation.

We have been able to maintain and grow our core services in this rapidly changing landscape, while ramping up new services in order to meet the emerging and urgent needs of people in our communities. Our rock-solid foundation, formed by 20+ years of integration experience, enabled us to pivot many of our services to virtual platforms within a matter of days, to re-deploy staff to work with community partners to create everything from grocery delivery services and emergency COVID housing to COVID vaccination centres, to continue providing in-person services at our Community Health Centres as needed throughout the pandemic, and to continue the operation of our respite homes.

In addition to all of our pandemic-related priorities, our work over the past year included re-designing our Autism services to align with the new Ontario Autism Program, addressing local and regional gaps in service for primary health care, contributing to the creation and development of two Ontario Health Teams, and moving forward with a re-naming and branding of our organization as 'ConnectWell Community Health'.

This coming year, we know that we have a great deal of work to do. Our relationships with our partner organizations will be key to ensuring that the people who experienced the greatest negative impacts during the pandemic have access to the resources and supports they need to recover and rebuild their lives.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank our staff, volunteers, community partners and funders for your commitment, innovation, resilience, values-based decision-making, caring and sharing. We are very appreciative (and proud) of all that you have accomplished.

Thank you

Deborah Duffy

John Jordan

We Believe . . .

... in the right of all people to have conditions and resources for good health, including peace, shelter, education, food, income, access to health care, a stable ecosystem, sustainable resources, social justice, equity and social inclusion.

Our Vision . . .

... a community that is healthy and just and supportive of all.

Our Mission . . .

... together we support people and communities in achieving and maintaining their best possible health and well-being.

Board of Directors

Deborah Duffy, Chair

Stephen Bird, Vice Chair

Kim O'Connor, Secretary-Treasurer

Tom Baumgartner, Past Chair

Andrea Brett, Director

Gwen Bennett, Director

Barbara Drake, Director

Matthew Dever, Director

Bonny Johnson, Director

Richard Schooley, Director

Carol Devine, Director

Sharon Mousseau, Director

Cynthia Carver, Director

Retiring from the Board

Andrea Brett, 4 years

Barbara Drake, 3 years (plus previous service)

Bonny Johnson, 3 years

Gwen Bennett, 3 years

Connecting Virtually

Twenty years of progressively integrating our information technology systems and in supporting staff to work across sites meant that within a matter of days of the first COVID lockdown, our staff were able to meet with clients on secure virtual platforms while working remotely from home. For clients who lacked access to technology (phones, tablets, computers) or for people who had poor internet and cellular connectivity (common across our region), our staff worked hard to find ways to connect.

Zoom Sessions

13,283

Staff across our organization hosted 13,283 Zoom sessions for individual appointments, group sessions, coalition/network meetings, staff and Board/Committee meetings. Pre-COVID, our Speech and Language program was the sole user of Zoom. Sixty-six Zoom professional accounts are now shared across the organization.

The Future of Virtual Practice

↑ 55%

Our Speech Language Pathologists surveyed families with children receiving virtual speech language services. The feedback was very positive. Post-COVID, 55% of families would like to have a combination of virtual and in-person service.

“As a rural family, the convenience of online sessions before the school day made this an easier commitment than when we had received services in person with another child. The clinician was very adaptable and understanding of our poor internet connectivity and our busy family dynamic and was very flexible to work with our daughter and keep her attention through a variety of activities.”

Face-to-Face Visits with Primary Care Providers

↓ 60%



Throughout the past year, our primary care providers have continued in-person appointments for people when a virtual appointment was not suitable or adequate. Even with a 60% decrease of in-person visits from the previous year, there were still 13,082 mask-to-mask visits with our primary care providers.

Virtual Visits with Primary Care Providers

↑ 112%



Our Primary Care Providers have conducted 28,136 virtual visits on the secure electronic medical record program known as 'PS Suites Virtual Visit'. This is a 112% increase from the previous year.

Community-Based Fitness Classes Go Virtual



Community Connections

The pandemic has affected all of us – but some people have been disproportionately affected. This includes people who live alone, people of colour, indigenous peoples, people with physical or developmental disabilities, people with chronic health conditions, seniors, low income individuals and families, people who lost their jobs, people who are precariously housed, and rural dwellers with limited access to reliable internet or transportation. Staff across our organization worked with many community partners and funders to respond, as best we could, to the urgent needs arising in our community.

Food Access

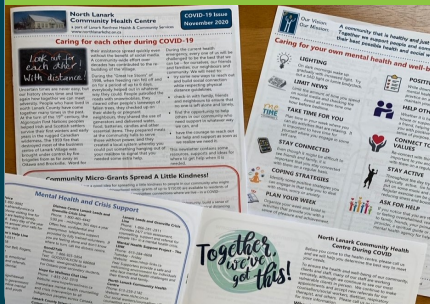
4000+



Through grocery cards, fresh fruit and vegetable baskets, food hampers, prepared meals and grocery delivery, we increased access to food 4000+ times

Caring During COVID Newsletters

6600



System Navigation

 87%

Two new System Navigator roles have been created to help people find, apply for and access services and supports to meet their everyday needs including:

- ♦ income support programs such as Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), Ontario Works (OW) or pandemic benefits like Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB) and more;
- ♦ food hampers and fresh produce through local food banks and food programs, grocery cards, grocery delivery support etc);
- ♦ local social, legal, housing, health and dental care, and many other supports and services; and
- ♦ connecting people to local volunteers and service clubs for help with snow removal, minor home care and maintenance, yard work . . . and much more...

87% of the people who responded to a recent survey about our Systems Navigation found an improvement in the main issue they were hoping to have addressed.

“You would not believe how much I appreciate that. I needed that so much.”

Completed Income Tax Returns

 1580

This past year, our team of volunteers prepared 1580 income tax returns for low and modest-income individuals and families. Almost all returns were completed over the telephone—a complete pivot from in-person tax clinics used in previous years. This community based service is in partnership with the Canada Revenue Agency's Community Volunteer Income Tax Program.

“I'm hoping that you can please pass along my sincere gratitude for the beautiful Christmas food basket I received, to all involved in this wonderful initiative. I was so grateful and thankful as I unpacked the items received that tears began to flow and didn't stop for some time. You have no idea how immensely helpful and appreciated (this is). Thank you from the bottom of my heart. 

Mental Health

Our mental health staff team includes social workers, counsellors, psychotherapists, peer support workers and system navigators, but all our staff are attuned to the mental health and well-being needs of the people we serve. Many of our programs are designed to be trauma informed and culturally sensitive, to build a sense of belonging with others in the community and to decrease loneliness and isolation.

Care Baskets

3000+



Across the organization, gift baskets of personal care and mental health and wellness products were assembled and distributed to low income individuals, at-risk families, isolated seniors and people facing significant mental health challenges. Baskets were tailored to the needs of each individual, but included some combination of grocery cards, toiletries, personal care products, hand sanitizer, hand-knit mitts, scarves and blankets, activity books (ie crossword puzzles and word searches), jigsaw puzzles and paperback books and even fans for summer-time cooling. Financial and in-kind contributions from individuals, area businesses, foundations and funders made these baskets possible.

Marlene and Myra

1 + 1 = 😊



One happy woman (Marlene) and one contented horse (Myra) get up close and personal in this new program between our Mental Health Peer Support Project and our Therapeutic Riding Program

Trauma-Informed Training

34

34 staff received training in becoming 'trauma-informed'. This means that our work emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for everyone, and creates opportunities for survivors of trauma to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.

Iris the Dragon

200



Working with the author, we printed and distributed 200 Iris the Dragon books to help support low-income parents in reducing the mental health impact of COVID-19 on children. The book includes conversation starters and resources to help adults support children through feelings related to dealing with unexpected changes in life.

Indigenous Cultural Safety Awareness

100+

As part of our commitment to deepen our awareness of the impacts of colonization on First Nations Peoples, to date over 100 staff have participated in intensive Indigenous Cultural Safety Awareness and Cultural Humility trainings.

New Ventures

While COVID challenged us in our day-to-day work to meet the needs of the people we serve, there were many other far-reaching changes and challenges we faced this year. The dismantling of the Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs), the creation of Ontario Health Teams (OHTs), the announcement of “Needs Based Ontario Autism Funding”, the extraordinarily high number of people in Renfrew County without access to a primary care provider, and the re-naming and re-branding of our organization are a few of the priority ventures of this past year.

Membership in Ontario Health Teams

2

The Ministry of Health is creating Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) across Ontario to improve the patient and caregiver experience, the health of populations and the work life of providers and to reduce the per capita cost of health care. With the large rural geography we serve, we are active members in two OHTs – the Lanark Leeds Grenville OHT and the Renfrew County Network 24 OHT.

Unique Individuals Served



17%

In spite of the pandemic, our primary care providers were able to serve more unique individuals this year. Much of this growth is due to increased funding for providers in our Renfrew County sites. Over 800 clients were brought on-board, resulting in increased service in Bonnechere Valley and Cobden, greater access to smoking cessation, chronic disease prevention and pharmacy medication review.

Serving Children and Families on the Autism Spectrum



The “New Ontario Needs Based Autism Program” gives choice in the service options available to a family, based on their needs. Many families are anxiously waiting for the full roll-out and implementation of this program. In order to help meet the needs of families

with children on the autism spectrum, we have made significant changes to our Autism Services. We have brought on eleven new team members—including Speech Language Pathologists and an Occupational Therapist—to work in collaboration with our existing team of ABA Therapists, Behaviour Consultants and Board Certified Behaviour Analyst. Our new hires have enabled us to create a new feeding team to support our families and to reach out to 48 people who were on a waiting list for Occupational Therapy and 63 people waiting to access a Speech Language Pathologist.

To help meet the needs of children and families, this past year we added 7 new group services, including a Movement-Based ARCS (Activities of daily living, Regulation, Communication and Social Skills) group and a monthly Family Foundational consult clinic where family members can talk to members of our professional team.

Celebrating Our New Name!

The name ConnectWell Community Health was chosen because the words *Connect* + *Well* joined together and standing alongside *Community Health* demonstrates collaboration for overall health and well-being for the people and communities we serve. It highlights the connections we make to one another, to our clients, to our partners, and to our communities, and it demonstrates that we will help connect people and communities to their own wellness. Our new name also pays tribute to our evolving integration where all our staff and volunteers are connected to each other in one organization.

Announcing . . .



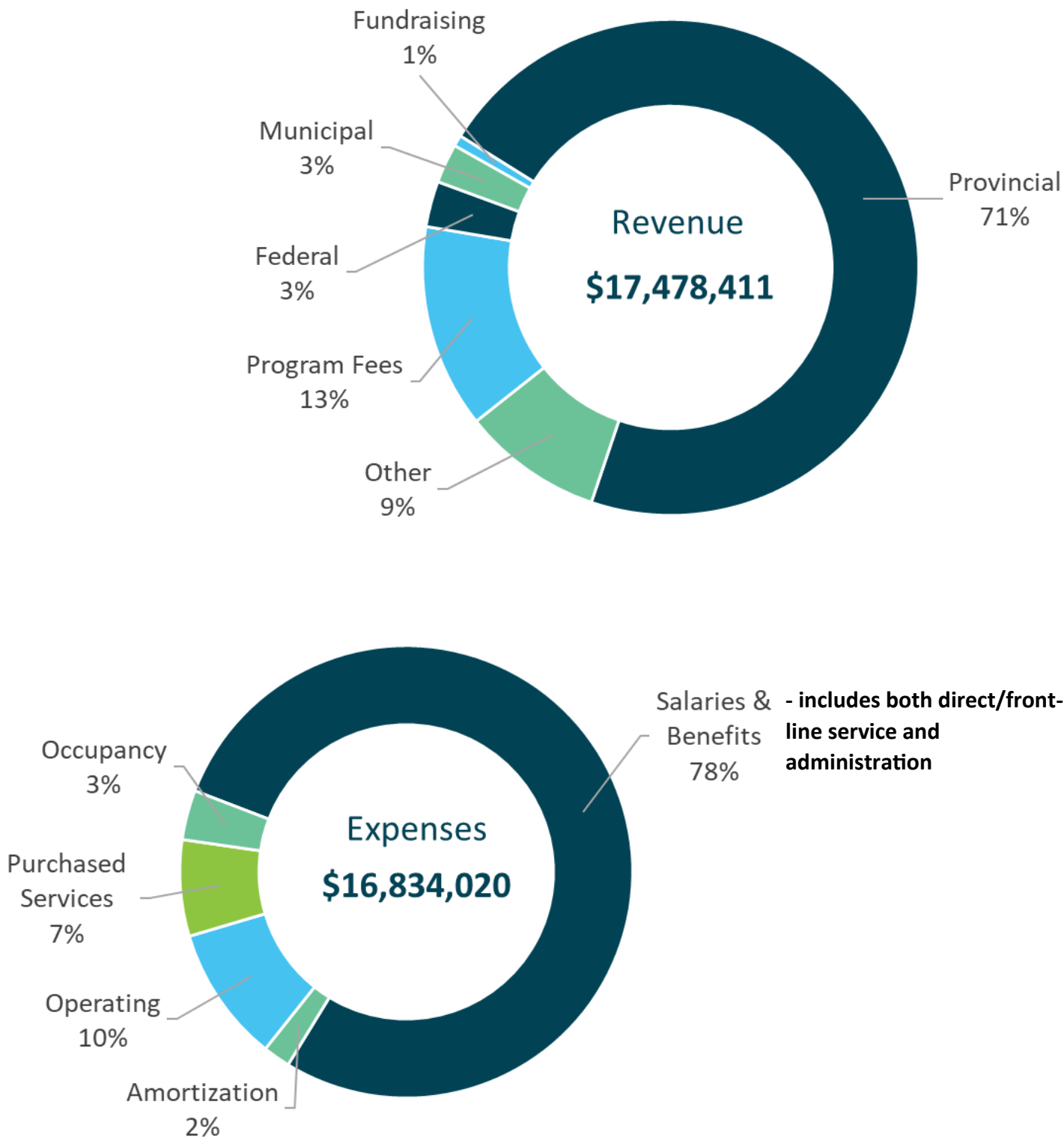
ConnectWell
COMMUNITY HEALTH

We are excited to launch our new brand on March 22nd!

Visit our website

www.connectwell.ca

Financial Summary



Please email info@connectwell.ca for a copy of the Audited Financial Statements

Staff Service Recognition

25
years

300 MONTHS
1,304 WEEKS
9,132 DAYS
219,168 HOURS
13,150,080 MINUTES

Teri Mullins, LEIP Program Coordinator

*Carolyn Brunet, Autism Clinical Supervisor
Christine Crampton, Family Relief Coordinator*

John Jordan, Chief Executive Officer

Leslie Greene, Speech Program Coordinator

Maureen Hampton, Birth Companion Coordinator

Melanie Ferguson, Family Relief Intake Coordinator

20
years

240 MONTHS
1,043 WEEKS
7,305 DAYS
175,320 HOURS
10,519,200 MINUTES

15
years

180 MONTHS
782 WEEKS
5,479 DAYS
131,496 HOURS
7,889,760 MINUTES

Angus Daniel, Physician

Kelly Millar, Speech Language Pathologist

Lindsay McLeese, Admin. Team Lead

Sara Cooke, Behaviour Consultant

Elissa Bruder, Connections Home Visitor

Julie Paterson, LEIP Resource Teacher

Ronald Strickland, Family Relief House Parent

Victoria Garrah, Autism Therapist

10
years

120 MONTHS
521 WEEKS
3,652 DAYS
87,568 HOURS
5,258,800 MINUTES

Retirements

Congratulations!



Penny Pitcher

*Coordinator of Infant and
Child Development Program*

31 Years of Service



Angella Johston

*Instructor-Therapist
Autism Program*

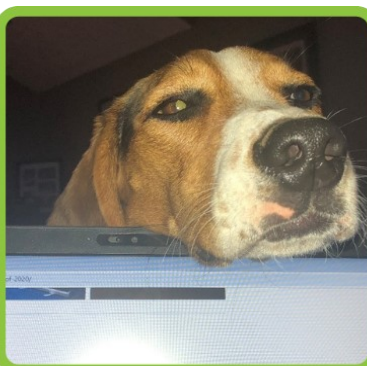
22 Years of Service



Shari Southin

*Social Recreation
Coordinator*

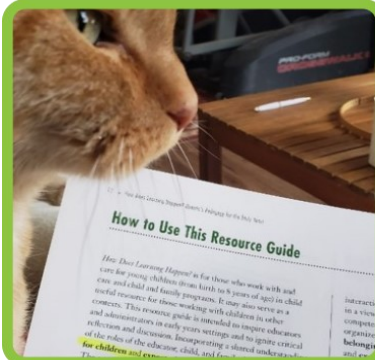
*Family Relief Program
19 Years of Service*



Staff Wellness—Humour Helps

Leading a staff team of 200+ people during a pandemic, most who immediately started working remotely from home, posed many challenges. While staff adapted quickly to our 'new way of doing business' we definitely felt the lack of daily interaction with our teams and co-workers. To help keep people connected in a rapidly changing world, we quickly started daily all-staff, lunch-time virtual meetings to keep people current with the latest COVID news, to identify and prioritize issues needing attention and to answer questions.

Over the past year, supervisors and staff have adapted in many ways to 'connect well' with each other. Some arranged small group team chats and zoom break-out rooms; some created a daily 'blog' that provided useful information and comic relief; some hosted Zoom Halloween, retirement, maternity-leave and holiday parties; some held fun contests for staff to send pics sporting their new ConnectWell T-shirts, or their home office set-up, their home based support staff (i.e. pets and family); some created slideshows and posters and others had secret gift exchanges to celebrate each member of the team. We are getting through this together and we are definitely better together!



Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

The work of ConnectWell Community Health takes place on the traditional unceded territories of the Indigenous nations who have lived on these lands since time immemorial. In particular, we acknowledge the Anishnaabeg, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Oneida peoples.

We are grateful to live and work on this land, and to work in allyship with Indigenous communities. Let us learn from the Indigenous caretakers of this land about the sacred relationships and responsibilities that we have to each other and to these beautiful lands that give us what we need to live a healthy life.

Geographic Area Served

