



ConnectWell
COMMUNITY HEALTH

Annual Report

2025-2026





A Message from Our Board Chair

I am pleased to report that ConnectWell Community Health has completed another successful year of service to our clients, families, and communities.

As is often the case in a dynamic and evolving healthcare environment, this past year brought both opportunities and challenges. Together, we celebrated many achievements while continuing to find creative and innovative ways to respond to emerging needs and strengthen the services we provide.

Looking ahead to 2026–2027, I am pleased to share that I will let my name stand for election to continue in my role as Board Chair, while Shari Glen has agreed to stand for election for the position of Vice Chair. Bruce Brough has agreed to stand for election for the position of Secretary/Treasurer, and Jean Dunning will continue as past chair. The Board will also seek the election of a new Director to begin a three-year term at our annual meeting.

The Board continues to support the organizational restructuring and transformation initiatives being thoughtfully led by our CEO, Sarah Sark. We recognize the significant work involved in guiding organizational change and remain committed to supporting these efforts as ConnectWell continues to evolve and strengthen its services.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all ConnectWell staff. Every day, they demonstrate remarkable dedication, professionalism, and resilience as they navigate ongoing system changes while continuing to provide exceptional care and support to clients and families.



Mary Lou Pratt

Board Chair, ConnectWell Community Health

CEO Message 2025-26

This past year has been one of meaningful progress, collaboration, and continued commitment to the health and well-being of the communities we serve. At ConnectWell Community Health, we have strengthened services, expanded partnerships, and responded thoughtfully to evolving community needs. These achievements are made possible through the dedication of our Board, staff, volunteers, and partners.

A key highlight of the year was our success in securing new and sustained provincial funding to expand Interdisciplinary Primary Care Teams in Renfrew county and Lanark, Leeds and Grenville counties. We worked collaboratively with partners to secure funding to recruit new providers, support staff and expand our lung health program. Collectively we have already attached over 5800 people to primary care.

ConnectWell staff successfully secured multiple grants this year, enhancing our capacity to deliver impactful services across the community. These investments supported key initiatives, including the Volunteer Income Tax Program, expanded workforce capacity within our Autism services, and provincial base funding for our Senior Active Living Centre. Additionally, grant funding enabled the hiring of summer students, supporting both service delivery and meaningful youth employment opportunities.

Advocacy remained a critical focus throughout the year. In response to regional service pressures, we worked collaboratively with partners to maintain access to chiropody services in Lanark. We continue to advocate for equitable access to essential services and for sustainable funding that supports both front-line care and the infrastructure needed to deliver it effectively.

We also visited Queen's Park and met with our MPPs to promote ConnectWell's model of community-based care. In addition, we supported the For Us, For You (#ForUsForYou) campaign— a collaborative advocacy initiative led by the Alliance for Healthier Communities and community health partners across Ontario—focused on addressing critical staffing shortages and the growing wage gap within the community health sector.

This year also marked the transition of the Lanark Early Integration Program to the County of Lanark. While we were saddened to see this longstanding program conclude at ConnectWell, we are proud of its impact and worked closely with partners to ensure a seamless transition for families.

Our accomplishments reflect the collective effort of an entire organization. Beyond our front-line providers, we recognize and deeply appreciate the contributions of our administrative, custodial, and shared services teams. Their work ensures that our services remain accessible, efficient, and responsive, forming the foundation of everything we do.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to supporting our staff, strengthening partnerships, advancing innovation, and advocating for the resources needed to meet growing community needs.



Sarah Sark
ConnectWell CEO

Mission, Vision & Values



Our Mission

To work collaboratively to enable people and communities to achieve and maintain their best possible health and social wellbeing.



Our Vision

A community that is healthy, equitable, and supportive of all people.



Respectful & Relevant

We deliver respectful, relevant, and effective services that respond to the needs of the people and communities we serve.



Equity & Inclusivity

We are committed to equity, accessibility, and inclusivity, ensuring all people can access the care and support they need.



Collaboration

We build strong partnerships, share knowledge, and work together to support people within their communities.



Staff & Stewardship

We value our staff and volunteers, support people in community, and manage resources responsibly for long-term impact.



Strategic Priorities

2023–2028



Increase Equitable Access

Expanding access to health and social services for all community members, with a focus on equity, inclusivity, and removing barriers to care for underserved populations.



Strengthen Community Partnerships

Building and deepening collaborative relationships with community organizations, service providers, and stakeholders to deliver integrated, person-centred support.



Respond to Service Delivery Pressures

Adapting our programs and operations to meet growing community needs, address capacity challenges, and ensure timely, high-quality service delivery across all programs.



Invest in Staff Wellbeing

Valuing and supporting our 240+ employees and 100+ volunteers through professional development, recognition, and a healthy, inclusive workplace culture.



Together, these priorities guide ConnectWell toward a healthier, more equitable community for all.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT

2025-2026



\$21.3M

annual budget



265

dedicated staff members



261,668

KM's Traveled to serve our clients

Service Delivery



17,500+

clients served across the organization

Volunteer champions



128

Volunteers Engaged

Health & Wellness

23

Lung Health Program locations

2520

Clients served by Mental Health

33758

CHC client encounters

Community Volunteer Income Tax Program

2885 Tax returns filed



increase from previous year



Connections Program Highlights

Parent Education Program

Offered 62 group sessions, including:
32 Wednesday parenting groups
7 Making the Connection sessions
2 Fathers Groups
21 Monday Parenting Groups

Good Food for a Healthy Baby: 123 group sessions & 124 individual support

Children's Programming

Delivered 16 group sessions, including:
7 Making the Connection groups for children
9 School Readiness programs

Family Support Program: Supported 18 families & 100+ direct service contacts.

Parent/Child Groups: 101 group sessions across

Birth Companion Program: Supported 11 women during pregnancy and childbirth

Positive Feedback:

“Hi, ... Your play group is of strong value is required in all communities. You all provide a safe and comfortable learning environment to help not just children but guardians as well with a completely unbiased approach. Your team's friendly nature and gentle approach allows everyone to feel safe and welcome. The one on one with professionals such as yourselves in a smaller group setting allows you the ability to help all disabilities and diagnosis from youth to adult and 'read the room' easier and step in to help people in need quickly. This is something we lack in many communities. Having multiple professionals and resources on site is paramount to building children and guardians up so they move on to be more confident in group settings and interactions with others...”

signed by the participant.



Community Health Centres



ConnectWell's Community Health Centres (CHCs) provide client centred, interdisciplinary team based care to best support the needs of our clients. Our model of health and well being is anchored in health equity, access and wholistic care with and understanding of the impact of the social determinants of health in our communities and to our clients in Lanark and Renfrew counties.

Social Prescribing

Our **Social Prescribing Pilot** project with the Alliance for Healthier Communities took place between June 2025-April 2026. The social prescribing team, led by Sarah Byrne, met regularly with the Alliance for coaching and mentoring from other Community Health Centers. Sarah Byrne presented at the Alliance Quality Improvement webinar to share information about the process in May 2026. This pilot further expanded our internal referrals for social prescribing and helping connect clients to social events within ConnectWell and the community.

Feedback on our Health Promotion

"Love your program. Looking forward to returning." "I'm just sending a quick note to thank you and your entire staff and volunteers for the wonderful community work in Whitewater Region. I'm a very appreciative client and fan."

"I'm not alone in aging."

"I like gathering with friends and neighbours with a common goal in a safe environment."

"[this program] lifts our spirits, teaches us healthy eating, and develops new friendships"

"This group is a fantastic group. Lots of laughters and chatting."

"Love your program. Looking forward to returning."



**Primary Care
Outreach
Individuals Served**

162

**Chiropody Individuals
served**

227

**Health Promotion
Individuals served**

265

**Community Food
Boxes shared**

1651

Dietician clients

69

**Clients seen by
Diabetic clinic**

313

Lung Health Program

The ConnectWell Lung Health & Rehabilitation Program, delivered across 23 locations in Renfrew, Lanark, and Leeds Grenville Counties, has expanded into Renfrew through a new partnership with the Ancient Rivers Family Health Team. This growth reflects both identified community needs and the strong commitment of rural health providers to collaborate and integrate services. New funding, secured through a purchase of service agreement, will help address gaps in lung health services in parts of Renfrew County.

Participants in our Pulmonary Rehabilitation (PR) program in Cobden, as well as our established programs in Barry's Bay, Carleton Place, and Kemptville, are reporting meaningful improvements in their daily lives.



1134

COPD clients

921

Asthma clients

“This program has been extremely valuable to my health. I not only received the education needed to manage my chronic condition but also gained a support system that helps me cope with everyday life. I’ve made new friends through the rehab classes who have become part of that support network.”

BEHAVIOUR DEVELOPMENT

Client Feedback :

- “Caring, kindness, competence, resourcefulness of behaviour consultant.... She is a treasure.”
- “So grateful for the support your agency provides to vulnerable individuals and their families. Thank you!”
- “The team is compassionate and caring and very easy to work with. We just need more of them!”
- “Willingness to listen to parental concerns”



149 clients served



444 clients served

RESPIRE SERVICES

The Respite Team has 82 Staff, which includes 69 Direct Care Respite Staff and 13 Support Staff: caseworked, team leads, worker recruitment, maintenance, scheduler and supervisors.

Group Programs include Day Programs, respite homes, recreational programs, summer programs and transitional supports

THERAPEUTIC RIDING

121 registered participants who count on riding as a part of their identity, exercise and community.

48 current volunteers

7,000 annual volunteer hours

Over the past 41 years, we have developed a hard-earned reputation & have raised over 3 million dollars through a myriad of fundraising ventures





Autism Services

Base Funded by Ontario Autism Program:

- Foundational Family Services
- Monthly Teen Hangout
- Little Explorers (2-4yr ages playgroup)
- Client Care Coordination & support
- Virtual Consultation Clinic 2x month (MD Team)
- On demand workshops and follow up consults
- Special Events (Family Fun Day, Trunk or Treat, Sensory Santa, Bowling etc.)

Services provided (fees based):

- Individual services include;
Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA), Occupational Therapy (OT),
Speech Language Pathology (SLP)
- Individual Consultation Services (ABA, OT)
- Group ABA, OT and SLP Services
- Activities of daily living -Cooking (ABA)
- Life Skills (OT)
- Secret agent society (OT, MH and ABA)
- PEERS (ABA)
- AIM (ABA)
- Psychological Assessments (for informing treatment planning)
- Therapeutic Riding & Stable Thinking Program

859
children served

93
adults served



Early Years Program Highlights

<u>Program Name</u>	<u>Number of Clients Served</u>	<u>Details of Programs</u>
Entry to School- Carleton Place	18	2025 Cohort- February-August 2025
Feedback from Parents "The staff were incredible and he loved second going there. He gained so much confidence" "This program was so beneficial to my child! Her development soared and her educators were so kind patient with her. Even though the hours were short, I would recommend any parent to switch up their schedule to fit this program into their autistic child's schedule"		
Entry to School- Brockville	20	2025 Cohort- February-August 2025
ETS parents say: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That they are seeing their children generalize the skills learned within the classroom into their home environments. For many families, this program represents their child's first experience being away from their immediate family, which can be both emotional and incredibly meaningful. • Parents have expressed that watching their child build confidence, independence, and communication skills in a safe and supportive environment has been genuinely powerful. • The growth and development seen within the program not only supports the children but also empowers families. Parents report feeling more confident in advocating for their child's needs, having important conversations, and recognizing the progress their child can achieve, both within the program and beyond when they start school. 		

Coordinated Service Planning	53	Client support in the community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully implemented the Transition2Kinder (T2K) initiative with local school boards to ensure all community partners were included in school transition process for students entering school for first time • Began new process for integrating CSP with new CSN (Complex Special Needs) funding process. Heavily involved with Ministry reps to pilot and deliver feedback • Successfully navigated many challenging and resource-intense family situations as the needs of clients continue to grow 		

Early Years Program Highlights continued

Infant and Child Development Program	71	Individual, in-home and Group Services
<p>Feedback from Parents</p> <p>“I didn’t realize the extent of the knowledge and skills I would be introduced to in this program. The supportive environment for both myself as a parent and my two littles has exceeded my expectations. I have learned so much, I’ve watched my kids grow and I believe a lot of our successes start with being apart of such an incredible program. I enjoy the staff the most, their knowledge, patience, passion and authenticity in caring for parents and children alike will always stay with me. A truly amazing service I am very grateful was suggested to me.”</p> <p>“Very simply, it gave us confidence as parents, support as caregivers and appreciation for all staff involved. (Clinician) was so supportive, understanding and knowledgeable. We came to so many other resources through her as well that proved to excellent contacts. There’s no price for getting a professional’s help during incredibly difficult times. That being said, I would say that’s true even more for (Clinician), her calmness, her general vibe, her knowledge, her humour and genuine caring were priceless and we couldn’t be more grateful to her and the team.”</p>		

Speech & Language Program (Language Express)	180	Individual and Group Services
<p>Feedback from Parents</p> <p>(Clinician) was a joy to have in our lives during (child)’s first years of receiving SLP services. She has helped him find ways to communicate through ASL, gestures and speech. We wish we could have continued with (Clinician) throughout (child)’s journey. We are forever grateful for her time, patients and endless resources. Thank you!”</p>		

Play Project	17	Individual, in-home services
<p>Feedback from Parents</p> <p>“I liked the convenience of the services coming to our home, making this less stressful for me and my child and (clinician) was so easy to work with.”</p> <p>“This program really helped my child develop language, play and social skills. (Clinician) was really knowledgeable and a joy to work with.”</p>		



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT PROJECT

ConnectWell Mental Health Support Project (MHSP) is a part-time peer support program based in Smiths Falls, ON. Led by certified peer supporters Andrea Schaefer and Shannon Butt, it draws on lived experience to provide hope, empathy, and practical strategies. Using a trauma-informed, recovery-oriented approach, they create a safe, inclusive space grounded in trust, collaboration, choice, and respect —helping adults feel supported and not alone in their mental health journey.

THERAPEUTIC SINGING



This year we trialed a therapeutic singing group hosted by MHSP and with a member of our mental health team who is a certified music therapist and registered psychotherapist. With 20 participants this program was a success and plans are to offer again in the Fall 2026.

“Queer Coffee has been a source of much needed community and emotional support for me and my friends. Each week I can attend I know that there will be a friendly atmosphere and a place to speak what is on my mind and hold space for those who need it. I feel seen here in ways I do not often find in my day to day, and in ways I cannot find in individual therapy. It is like a sneaky support group - you come for the coffee and stay because it changes you for the better” - participant.



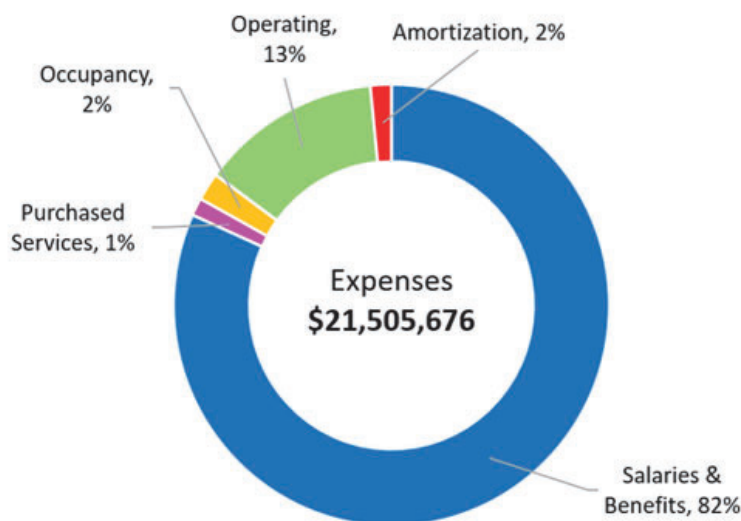
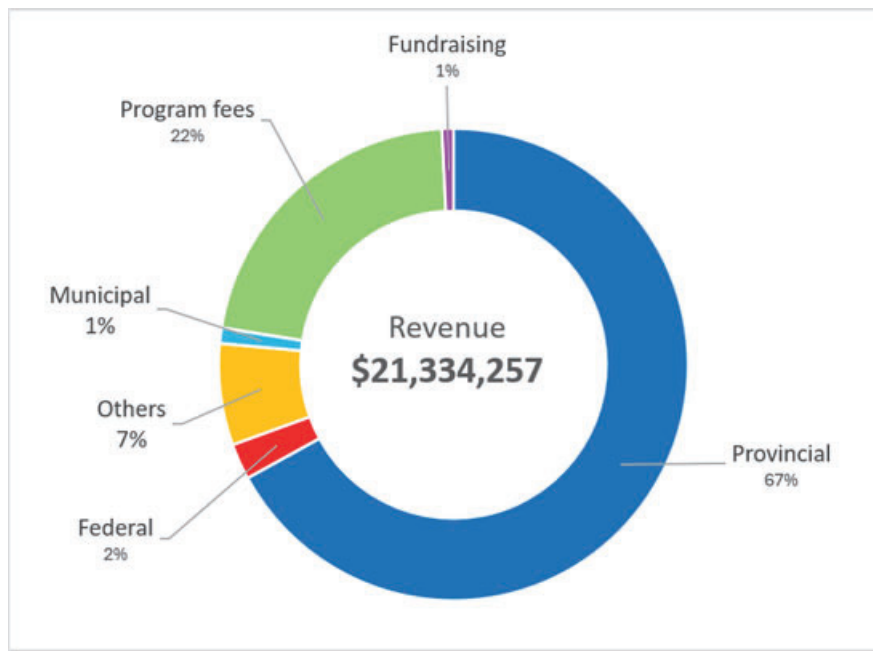
Queer Coffee, launched in September 2025 to provide an inclusive and welcoming space that fosters connection.



Financial Overview



A sincere thank you to our Finance Team for your hard work, dedication, and professionalism throughout this year's audit process. Thank you for your expertise, responsiveness, and willingness to go above and beyond. Your efforts not only support compliance and transparency but also help strengthen ConnectWell's ability to serve our communities with confidence. Congratulations on another successful audit, and thank you for all that you do.



Staff Retirements

Pam Ferguson
Community Health
Worker
33 years

Wilma Lee
Receptionist/Property
Lead
28 years

Angus Daniel
Physician
20 years

Ronald Strickland
Residential Care
Worker (Smiths Falls)
15 years

Lori Rowsell
Finance Assistant
9 years

Shelley Strickland
Secondary House
Parent
7 years

Judy Vermeulen
Registered Nurse
6 years

Thank you for your contributions to ConnectWell
Community Health and Congratulations on your
retirement. Enjoy!



Years of Service

Celebrating the dedication of our incredible team.

Celebrating 25 Years

Leslie Greene – Director of Developmental Services
Carolyn Brunet – Registered Behaviour Analyst
Melanie Ferguson – Program Manager of Client Care
Maureen Hampton – Birth Companion Facilitator
Christine Crampton – Worker Recruitment and Placement

Celebrating 20 Years

Stephanie MacGregor – Programming & Transitional Age Youth Coordinator
Sara Cooke – Program Manager of Respite Homes and Clinical Support
Kelly Millar – Speech Language Pathologist

Celebrating 15 Years

Eliisa Bruder – Connections Family Support Worker

Celebrating 10 Years

Andy Byers – Custodian
Jennifer Brooks – Physician (Lanark)





Contact Us

We'd love to hear from you. Reach out to learn more about our programs, services, or how you can get involved with ConnectWell Community Health. Together, we build healthier communities.

Please contact your local ConnectWell office

In Renfrew County:

Beachburg: 613-646-0420

Eganville: 613-628-2523

In Lanark, Leeds & Grenville counties:

Lanark: 613-259-2182/Toll Free 1-866-762-0496

Carleton Place: 613-257-7121/Toll Free 1-800-667-2617

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