



2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

FEATURING A 2025 CALENDAR



BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023-2024

Robert Allie	Bruce Lilley
Bernice Booth	Paul Miller
Denene Berard	Foluke Ololade
Mike Dale	Rob Richardson
Susan English	Reginald Soper
Keira Knowles	Laurie Warkentin



STAFF

Jamal Anwar	Sherry Macpherson
Sarah Conlon	Jenna McIntyre
Linda Crago	Lynn McIntyre
Julie Conkwright	Sandy Middleton
Sam Dekker	Russell Moore
Laura Dumas	Pam Nicholson
Emily Fieguth	Sarah Olsen
Chris Gill	Shane Quies
Rebecca Jacobs	Molly Rujuwa
Donna Johnston-Mitruk	Wayne Schmidt
Yoana Kalinova	Mishelle Stephenson
Nesrine Kandil	Baxter Thom
Melissa Lee	Tony Venditti
Gayle Long	



MEET OUR BOARD CHAIR REV. DR. PAUL MILLER



This past year has been a time of transition and challenge for our organization. We completed the sale of 17 Gale Cres. and the lease on 211 Church St. This move gives SMUN plenty of room to grow our programs and services.

But the road has had some bumps in it. Renovations at 211 took longer and cost more than expected. Our staff and volunteers deserve a massive thank you continuing to serve those who rely on us through all the chaos.

Loss of our transitional and supportive housing funding has led to a rethinking of who we are and what we do.

At the same time, we have been able to enter into a wonderful new partnership with REACH Niagara Mobile Medical Clinic who will be occupying space at 211 Church St.

The Board has been actively involved in steering the organization through this time of change. We are working on a revised strategic plan to reflect changed circumstances. We continue to explore ways to ensure that SMUN remains financially viable.

In the midst of all the challenges, Start Me Up remains a respected and vital presence in St. Catharines and the Queenston neighbourhood and a life-line to individuals facing challenges

of poverty, homelessness, unemployment, disabilities, addictions and mental health issues. Start Me Up Niagara relies on an outstanding group of volunteers who give their time and commitment in support of our work.

Our reputation in the community is reflected in the success of our major fundraiser, Coldest Night of the Year, which raised over \$170,000 to support our work. Without CNOY we could not do what we do. Thanks to all those who organized and participated in this great event.

I want to express my appreciation to our Executive Director, Laura Dumas, who has guided the organization through the last year with dedication, professionalism and compassion. Laura and her whole management and staff team have earned our heart-felt gratitude.

I want to express appreciation to our Board of Directors who are responsible for protecting and directing our whole organization. Again this year we will be experiencing significant turnover on our Board as Laurie Warkentin, Bruce Lilley, Susan English, Foluke Ololade and Denene Berard depart. Since the last AGM, Bernice Booth and Robert Allie have joined the Board and we will be presenting to the AGM the names of five new directors which will give us a full complement of twelve.

It is an honour to serve as the Chair of your Board of Directors and I look forward to an exciting year ahead in the life of this wonderful organization.

Respectfully submitted,
(Rev.) Dr. Paul Miller

MEET OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LAURA DUMAS



at 211 Church Street, where we will be sharing space with REACH Niagara, an agency that provides mobile health and medical support to those who are unable to access medical services in the community.

One of the great aspects of our programs is the interconnectedness. The Resource Centre serves as the initial point of contact for many community members, offering meeting space, medical attention, as well as phone and computer access. Our staff is also available to provide referrals to other community services that can benefit individuals in their current life circumstances.

As individuals become acquainted with the Centre and the opportunities it offers, they gain access to our other programs, such as the Mobile Closet, Employment support, recreational activities, and volunteer opportunities.

Start Me Up Niagara truly is a place where people can progress at their own pace as we celebrate successes. We are thrilled to see what the future holds for us as we embark on this new chapter. Benjamin Franklin wrote, "Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement and success have no meaning."

We are ready for the challenge and the commitment that is yet to come.

Laura Dumas

Start Me Up Niagara continues to expand its partnerships and collaborations as we seek new ways to create better opportunities for individuals in our community who are dealing with the effects of poverty. We are preparing to move into our new space located

RESOURCE CENTRE

The Resource Centre, now at 203 Church street has a fully accessible entrance complimented with a medical room, consultation room and a program room to engage service users seeking health care, mental health care and/or recreational activities with dedicated staff, volunteers and students.

The Resource Centre offers a diverse range of services including systems navigation, phone calls, advocacy and connections to external community partners. We offer a safe, friendly space to everyone who enters our doors. The Resource Centre offers daily services provided by community partners and/or an in-house activity.

Our most recent partnership with REACH has significantly enhanced service users' ability in receiving much needed health care offered by a team of skilled and dedicated practitioners on a weekly basis.

39
INDIVIDUALS RECEIVED
MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

1,589
INDIVIDUALS SERVED

1,027
HYGIENE KITS ISSUED

343
HOUSING PREVENTION
REFERRALS

762
STH PROGRAM REFERRALS

1,556*
PARTICIPANTS IN SKILL
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
*NOT UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS



JANUARY

ALZHEIMER AWARENESS MONTH

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.
			1	2	3	4
			New Year's Day			
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
					International Day of Education	
26	27	28	29	30	31	
	Family Literacy Day					





COLDEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR

Every year, we hold the "Coldest Night of the Year" event in St. Catharines to raise funds for those who lack a safe and warm refuge. The success of the event is all thanks to our wonderful community, their fundraising efforts, participation in the walk and event sponsors. This event helps Start Me Up Niagara sustain our fundamental programs and services for individuals in our community who struggle with homelessness, compromised mental wellness, and substance use.

We can't wait to see you at the upcoming event on February 22nd, 2025!

FEBRUARY

BLACK HISTORY & HEART AND STROKE MONTH

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Groundhog Day		World Cancer Day				
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
					Valentine's Day	Canada's Agriculture Day
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	Family Day Random Act of Kindness Day			World Day of Social Justice		Human Trafficking Awareness Day
23	24	25	26	27	28	
			Pink Shirt Day			



INCOME MATTERS PROGRAM

The Income Matters program is funded by the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program and the Canada Revenue Agency. This program allows us to assist and file tax returns for low income individuals. The program alleviates the financial burden for members of our community and is especially advantageous for those who depend on the monthly or quarterly benefits they receive from the Canadian government. In collaboration with the Resource Centre team, we help individuals file for Canada Pension, sign up for the Electricity Support Program and find various strategies to maximize income. We have the ability to file returns at any time of the year. We also have the ability to file multiple years' taxes.

We encourage all clients to file their taxes yearly to ensure the continuation of such benefits and income maximization.

472
RETURNS COMPLETED

\$ 1,053,086
TOTAL INCOME RECOVERED



MARCH NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.
						1 Zero Discrimination Day
2	3	4	5	6	7	8 International Women's Day
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19	20 International Day of Happiness	21 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	22
23	24	25 Earth Hour	26	27	28	29
30 Trans Day of Visibility	31					



Start Me Up Niagara provides a wide range of volunteer opportunities. Programs such as Bike Me Up, Mobile Closet, Delta Bingo, The Café, From Our Garden, and the Kitchen require volunteers to operate. Our volunteer program is an excellent way to engage with the community and participate in meaningful work. We are fortunate to have a group of dedicated, supportive, and caring volunteers. None of the work we do at SMUN would be possible without the dedication of our volunteers. We are also looking for new volunteers to expand our team and brainstorm innovative ways and ideas for people to contribute meaningfully to our community.

307
VOLUNTEERS
19,290
VOLUNTEER HOURS

VOLUNTEERS

APRIL

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 World Health Day	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25 Good Friday	26
Easter 27	28	29	30			
National Volunteer Week begins	National Day of Mourning					

BIKE ME UP

BMU celebrated its 6th anniversary and continues its commitment to community engagement through several initiatives. We partnered with Heart Niagara to host four training sessions and numerous community pop-up events. Additionally, we participated in the Manchester three-on-three basketball tournament with our partnering organization, Broken Spoke in Port Colborne, where we distributed 50 bikes to the neighbourhood children.

Staff and dedicated volunteers conducted a six-week training course for students at the Alternative Pathways school on Monday and Wednesday mornings.

Volunteers are paramount to the success of the program and work extra shifts over the summer to meet the increased demand, which helps prevent daily sellouts. This program not only provides individuals in our community with access to alternative modes of transportation, but it also helps to keep bicycles out of local landfills. The Bike Me Up staff and volunteers are always ready and available to accept donated bikes to add to the inventory in order to meet the increasing demand from our community.

\$ 9,315
IN REVENUE

186
BIKES SOLD



MAY SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.
				1	2	3 National Volunteer Week ends
4 Mental Health Week begins	5 Red Dress Day for Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)	6	7 National Child & Youth Mental Health Day	8	9	10 Mental Health Week ends
11 Mother's Day	12	13	14	15	16	17
18 EMS Week begins	19 Victoria Day	20	21	22	23	24 EMS Week ends
25 National AccessAbility Week begins	26	27	28	29	30	31 National AccessAbility Week ends





FROM OUR GARDEN

During the last fiscal year, the SMUN Garden produced 9,000 lbs of organically grown food that was distributed to food banks and social service agencies serving those struggling with food insecurity at no cost. Additionally, we distributed another 1,000 lbs of food courtesy of Vineland Research and Innovation Centre. This 2-acre piece of land is operated by a small yet very dedicated and skilled SMUN team complimented by a small group of volunteers and service users, offering meaningful activities and community engagement.

In 2025, we plan to grow more produce and expand our distribution area to include more of West and South Niagara, including Port Colborne, Welland and Lincoln. We will also continue to support our many community partners in St. Catharines.

9,000 LBS
PRODUCE HARVESTED

9
COMMUNITY PARTNERS
RECEIVED PRODUCE



JUNE PRIDE & INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
				World Day Against Child Labour		
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Father's Day						National Indigenous Peoples Day
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
					Canadian Multiculturalism Day PTSD Awareness Day	
29	30					

MOBILE CLOSET

The Mobile Closet continues to expand its network of resources and ensure full availability to community locations. Our free shopping events and Mini Closets are held in various locations across the Niagara Region, offering weather-appropriate clothing, shoes, and hygiene products to those who need it most.

We come together to form connections, aid where we can and to create a sense of trust, belonging and safety. We continue to connect with resourceful and informative community partners that can provide the resources needed by our community and to overcome obstacles and enrich the lives of our service users in a healthy positive way. At Mobile Closet we engage and depend on a large volunteer base to support the cause and deliver quality service.

33
SHOPPING EVENTS

3,196
INDIVIDUALS SERVED

1,480
HYGIENE KITS ISSUED



JULY

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.
		1	2	3	4	5
		Canada Day				
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		
		World Day Against Trafficking in Persons				

OUR FIVE PILLARS



Community Partnerships
Referrals to other community agencies including housing programs, mental health supports, substance use programs, and continued goals of community reintegration that help to alleviate social isolation.



Employment
Our Work Action Centre offers support through employment and self-employment opportunities and workshops to augment positive results of your job search.

Food
Daily access to food and snacks. Raising nutritional awareness and food options to low income individuals and families. The food program increases food security for those at risk.

Resource Centre
The First Point of Contact, where individuals access various supports and services, programs, and community partner connections.



Community Development
Our team raise funds, awareness, opportunities to engage, and build our network through community engagement events.



AUGUST

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.
					1	2
3	4 Civic Holiday	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18 Never Give Up Day	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31 International Overdose Awareness Day						

WORK ACTION CENTRE

At the Work Action Centre, our new location has enabled us to host an open space computer lab for job seekers to drop in and use the computer supports available.

We deliver in-house workshops to assist job seekers to understand their skills to match their career goals. We launched a Better Jobs program through FedCap where job seekers are able to explore a new career.

The Work Action Centre partners with employers (large and small) to match job seekers with available employment opportunities. We subscribe to a client centered life stabilization action plan. Often lack of appropriate housing and compromised mental wellness are barriers that prevent employment opportunities to materialize. A holistic and tailored approach has proven to be essential and effective in achieving meaningful employment opportunities.

61
JOBS SECURED

377
INQUIRIES

26
WORKSHOPS HELD

127
INDIVIDUALS SERVED

15
SELF-EMPLOYMENT VENTURES

55
EMPLOYERS

SEPTEMBER

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.
	1 Labour Day	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10 World Suicide Prevention Day	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 SMUN's 25 th Anniversary	26	27
28	29 National Day for Truth and Reconciliation	30				





KITCHEN

The Food & Kitchen team has made many positive strides within the community by supplying food throughout the Queenston Neighborhood and beyond to help tackle food insecurity.

We offer a door meal service on Sundays with the addition of donated fruit, vegetables and bread. We offer a delivered, free meal to two low income senior buildings and one permanent supportive housing for men, women and families with low to moderate income, once a month to each location. Our Emergency Food Bags made from donated non-perishable goods, aim to support housed and unhoused recipients with breakfast, lunch/dinner and snacks for at least two days. The Kitchen Program has partnered with a local school to provide 45 hot lunches to students that have been identified as food insecure. We also provide our donated extras, such a sandwiches, fruit and veggies to families of the school to take home for the weekend to ensure they have access to health food options.

Our program has developed and maintained close partnerships with many agencies, churches and community organizations in St. Catharines. This allows giving and receiving so that nothing goes to waste and can be used to help the greater community.

11,667
WEEKEND MEALS SERVED
6,993
SNACKS SERVED



OCTOBER WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Mental Illness Awareness Week begins					World Homeless Day World Mental Health Day	Mental Illness Awareness Week ends
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	Thanksgiving			World Food Day	International Day for the Eradication of Poverty	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	
					Halloween	



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Aboriginal Health Centre

ACTT - Assertive Community Treatment Team

Alessandro Salon

Brock University

Broken Spoke

C.A.S.O.N.

C.M.H.A.

C.O.R.E. Unit NRP

Casa El Norte

Club Roma

Community Care & Housing Help Centre

Community EMS

Crazy Indians Brotherhood

CTS - Consumption & Treatment services

Gateway Residential Services

Heart Niagara

Matthew House

Mohawk College

Mountainview CRC

NALE - Niagara Advocates with Lived/Living Experience

NASO - Niagara Assertive Street Outreach

Niagara College

Niagara Region Public Health

Niagara Region SAEO

Niagara Regional Native Centre
- Niagara's Multicultural Folk Arts Centre

Nightlight Youth Services

Ontario Disability Support Program

Ozanam Centre

Port Cares

Positive Living

Project Share

Queenston Round Table

Quest Community Health Centre

REACH Mobile Health Clinic

Salvation Army

Sheridan College

Silver Spire United Church

Southridge Shelter

St. Alfred's Church

St. George's Church

St. John Ambulance

St. Vincent de Paul

The Hope Centre

The RAFT

The Soup Kitchen

The Toolbox Project

Third Space Café

Value Village

Veteran's Affairs Canada

Willis College

YWCA

NOVEMBER

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Veterans' Week begins						Veterans' Week ends
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
National Addictions Awareness Week begins		Remembrance Day				National Addictions Awareness Week ends
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						



THANK YOU
FOR A
WONDERFUL
YEAR

DECEMBER

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	World AIDS Day	Giving Tuesday			International Volunteer Day	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
			Human Rights Day			
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Hanukkah begins			Anti-Bullying Day			
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	Last Day of Hanukkah			Christmas Day	Boxing Day	
28	29	30	31			
		New Year's Eve				



THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

Alectra Utilities
Accenture
Benevity
Big Hearts Canada
Bluesea
Branscombe Family Foundation
Brian K Kerley Medicine
Professional Corporation
Bridges Community Health
Centre
BTO Performance
Burtnik Printing
CAA Niagara
Cabico & Company
Calhoun's
Canada Helps
Canada Summer Jobs
CHIMP - Charitable Impact
Foundation (Canada)
Chorus Niagara
City of St. Catharines
Club Roma
Cogeco
Con Gusto Artisan Bakery
Costco Wholesale
Cotton Inc.
CVITP Canada
Delta4Digital
Desks Plus
Eco-Defenders
Edible Options
Elkin Injury Law
Engage & Change
Essential Cremation and Burial
Services Inc.
Fedcap
First Church of Christ Scientist
FirstOntario Credit Union
FoodBasics
Fowler Family Foundation
Garden City Productions
General Motors
Giant Tiger Niagara Falls
GoFundMe
Good Food Access Fund

Government of Canada
Government of Ontario
Grantham Lion's Club
Grant Thornton LLP
H2Only Inc.
Habitat for Humanity -
Hamilton
IRP - Investment Readiness
Program
Jeanne Sauvé Public School
Joe Feta's
Kids Being Kids
Kits For A Cause
Kiwanis Club of St. Catharines
Lapennaco Liquidation Centre
Lincoln Community Midwives
Lococo's
Mahtay Café
Many Seeds
Maple Crest Early School
Mary Martha Society
Masonic Lodges of Niagara "A"
District
Meridian Credit Union
Merritton Lions Club
Minuteman Press Niagara
Miriam Miller Psychotherapy
Miyen Coffee
Move 105.7
Mr. Mike's Steakhouse Casual
NGA2
Niagara Academy of Tennis
Niagara Community Church
Niagara Community Foundation
Niagara Falls Nissan
Niagara Ice Dogs
Niagara Investment Castings
Niagara Parks
Niagara Region
Niagara Region Police
Association
Niagara Regional Broadband
Network
Niagara River Lions
NoFrills Niagara

O'Hara Trucking & Excavating
Inc.
OLG - Delta Bingo
Ontario Power Generation
Ontario Trillium Foundation
Patterson Family Foundation
PayPal Giving Fund
Port Dalhousie Lions Club
Profile Products - Quick Plug
Purple Perk
Rankin Construction Inc.
RBC
Ridley College
Rotary Lewiston-Niagara On
The Lake
Rotary South St. Catharines
Second Harvest
Sei Con Jiu Jitsu
Shoppers Drug Mart
St. Catharines Game & Fish
Association
St. Davids & District Lions Club
St. Denis Catholic School
St. John's Anglican Church -
Port Dalhousie
Starbucks Canada
Starbucks Neighbourhood
Grants
Steenhuis Elite Lawns and
Gardens
Sullivan Mahoney LLP
The Grove Niagara
The Purse Project
The ShoeBox Project
Unifor
United Way
Vancouver Foundation
Vineland Research and
Innovation Centre
Walker Industries
Westminster United Church
WMKL
Woods Electrical Contractors
Zehrs

