

2025



ANNUAL REPORT

Gerstein Crisis Centre



Letter From Our Leadership



Dear Friends,

This year has been all about listening, connection and growth—and we continue to place the people who use our services at the core of all we do. We're deeply grateful to our incredible staff and dedicated Board for their passion, commitment and patience. We have navigated a great deal of change in a short time. Together, we've opened more doors-meeting people where they are and have created increased opportunities for people to find the support they need.

We've expanded adding new touchpoints to our existing access points, now offering connection through our Crisis Line, 211, 911 Diversion, Toronto Public Library, 988 National Suicide Prevention Line and our many partnerships that make help easier to find.

Our wellness and community programs have grown too-increasing access to tools like Wellness Recovery Action Plans, Finding Recovery through Exercise Skills and Hope, and Suicide and Crisis Intervention Training, including Safe Talk. These initiatives help people understand their strengths, connect to community, further their resilience and build hope every day.

One of the biggest changes this year is the expansion of Toronto Community Crisis Service (TCCS) across the city covering South Central Toronto and South Etobicoke. This along with our existing services means more neighborhoods now have timely, compassionate crisis response when it matters most.

And we didn't stop there—we've been out in the community, taking part in cultural events across the city, reaching out to all communities and making sure everyone knows they're not alone.

We are excited to launch a new Strategic Plan for 2026-2031. This plan was a collective effort informed by over 150 voices that included staff, service users, community partners and of course our incredible board and leadership team. We are excited to celebrate our work at Gerstein Crisis Centre and are committed to furthering our model to improve community crisis response in our city, province and across the country.

Thank you for helping us build respectful, dignified and health focused responses to mental health crisis. Together, we're building a future where help is always within reach.

With gratitude,

Stephanie Gloyd & Susan Davis

Board Chair Executive Director



Strategic Planning



Executive Summary

For over 35 years, the Gerstein Crisis Centre has been a leader in community-based, nonmedical crisis support—meeting people where they are and offering low-barrier, strength-based care. We’ve seen remarkable growth in recent years, along with new opportunities that come with greater complexity.

The demand for mental health and crisis services continues to increase as poverty, homelessness, and limited access to resources impact more people. Internally, our team has expanded from 60 crisis workers to over 180.

In 2024 alone, eight mobile crisis teams facilitated more than 12,000 community visits.

This significant growth and change have driven the need for the Gerstein Strategic Plan 2026-2031. This plan strengthens the foundation that makes Gerstein trusted and effective: a values-rooted model grounded in dignity, equity, choice, and lived/living experience. It is built on broad, careful listening to more than 175 contributors—service users, staff, leaders, partners, and community members—through surveys, interviews, focus groups, and workshops.

Our Direction has two aims:

- 1 Achieve System-Wide Impact**
- 2 Strengthen Our Core**

To realize this, we will concentrate on four priorities:

- 1 Foster a resilient, connected, supported team**
- 2 Lead with equity and centre lived experience**
- 3 Stabilize and evolve our infrastructure and practice**
- 4 Advance our model and shape the future of crisis care**

This Strategic Plan was developed through a rigorous, people-centred process, led by our internal leadership - including the Management Team and Governance Committee - with invaluable guidance and expertise from our Board Chair, Stephanie Gloyn. We would also like to acknowledge our collaboration with STR Consulting, whose expertise in data collection and analysis engaged over 150 stakeholders. We extend our sincere thanks for the leadership and unwavering commitment to our mission, they all offered.

The voices of the 150 stakeholders we engaged are at the core of this plan. They grounded our reflections and, as with all our work at Gerstein Centre, listening remained central to our approach. We are deeply grateful for the time, commitment, expertise and engagement of our stakeholders - including our staff teams, community partners, and, most importantly, our service users. Their collective insights ensure that this plan aligns with Gerstein Centre’s mission, vision, and values and responds to current needs and opportunities.



Wellness Recovery Action Plan: Enabling Wellness in the Community through the Toronto Public Library – Social & Crisis Support Services.

The Gerstein Crisis Centre and Toronto Public Library partnered to execute the library's WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) program, which has completed another successful year. The Toronto Public Library serves as a community hub for wellness through the WRAP program, offering a safe space that provides customers with a welcoming and inclusive environment in which they can connect, share, and support one another. By hosting the WRAP program, the GCC and the TPL helped reduce stigma around mental illness and fostered a culture of understanding. Developed in collaboration with WRAP's 8 Level II co-facilitators, the train-the-trainers model of WRAP equipped individuals to take control of their recovery journey using a peer-led approach.

Some of the benefits that customers achieve by attending an 8-week program are:

- Improvement of their mental health: Participants reported reduced stress and anxiety, improved mood, and increased self-awareness.
- Community connections: WRAP fosters a sense of belonging, helping customers build relationships and connections with others. A peer support group was organically formed at the Northern District Library after participants completed the eight-week sessions. They continue to meet weekly to support one another.
- Building life skills: Participants learn practical strategies to manage challenges and maintain their well-being.

Expansion and Growth: We're thrilled to share the expansion of our WRAP program from 4 to 8 libraries, now serving TPL customers from east to west of the city. This growth has enabled us to:

- Reach more individuals: Our expanded program has increased accessibility and inclusivity, allowing more individuals to benefit from WRAP.
- Establish new relationships with local organizations, enhancing our support network and resources.
- Increase participation: Our WRAP program has seen a significant increase in participation, with double the number of customers benefiting from our WRAP program.
- Positive feedback: Participants have shared testimonials and feedback, highlighting the positive impact of WRAP on their lives. One participant shared that "the WRAP program helped them develop adjusting strategies and connecting with others, leading to improved mental health and a renewed sense of purpose." Fort York Library participant.



The WRAP – Wellness Recovery Action Plan is an evidence-based practice that has been proven effective in supporting individuals with mental health conditions. Some of the evidence supporting WRAP includes:
Recovery-oriented: WRAP is based on the recovery model, which emphasizes individual strength, self-determination, and holistic well-being.

Increased self-advocacy: WRAP helps individuals develop self-advocacy skills, enabling them to take an active role in their recovery.
Supportive community: WRAP provides a supportive community environment, reducing feelings of isolation and increasing social connections.

Reduced hospitalization: Studies have shown that WRAP participants experience reduced hospitalization rates and lengths of stay.

Improved symptoms: WRAP participants have reported improved symptom management and reduced symptom severity.

Increased hope: WRAP has been shown to increase hope and optimism among participants.

WRAP Participants celebrating the completion of the Program



TPL Expansion

The Toronto Public Library Social and Crisis Support Services expanded to 12 libraries in July 2025. (The soft launch took place in June 2025 with the official/hard launch beginning in July 2025.)

The crisis workers are currently in seven libraries (Toronto Reference, Parkdale, Bloor/Gladstone, High Park, Parliament, Sanderson and Lillian H. Smith); however, beginning 2026, there will be changes. Our sites will be Toronto Reference, Parkdale, Bloor/Gladstone, Parliament, Lillian H. Smith and Maria A. Shchuka.

Our team began as six and will be increasing to seven towards the end of 2025.

We have regular food donations that enables us to provide consistent food at a number of our locations.

We have had the ability to host two community lunches (August in Lillian H. Smith & November in Parliament) by way of a financial donation made to the program. Each community lunch had a great turn out 60+ and 40+ people respectively.

Community members have shared incredible feedback about the support that they have been provided. Some examples are that when the crisis workers are not in a specific location, they miss the food, laughter and sense of community that is present there; another has returned to give specific thanks to a staff person who assisted them with getting the right information and support to get their spouse to Canada. It is evident that there are folks who rely heavily on our services; including some who even travel to a couple of sites to be able to receive support.

From July 2025 to end of October 2025, we have had 3,250 interactions in total; 916 of which were Crisis Intervention interactions (not outreach); 560 unique individuals (not including outreach).

- This includes an incredible amount of outreach through food offerings, Coffee & Conversation events within library locations, community lunches, wellbeing checks, etc.

Supports that we provide on a regular/consistent basis:

- wellbeing checks
- risk/suicide assessments
- advocacy
- resources/information (housing, shelter, financial supports, primary care supports)
- food
- mental health supports - both in the moment and referrals for future need.





Gerstein staff with Mayor Olivia Chow while doing outreach March, 2025

GCC in the Community



Gerstein staff supporting Surrey Place for FASD Awareness Month September, 2025





Gerstein staff providing service information at Caribana July 2025



Gerstein staff with MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam



Gerstein Leadership Team with Mayor Olivia Chow at the TCCS TTC Pilot Project Launch

GCC in the Community

F.R.E.S.H. Boundless Trip



Finding Recovery Through Exercise Skills and Hope (F.R.E.S.H.) is a Gerstein Crisis Centre initiative that uses a peer-led model to help people get active, strengthen their community and social connections, develop new skills and knowledge, and have fun.

All F.R.E.S.H. workers have lived experience of mental health and addictions and have navigated through many of the issues participants are facing. They have a passion for physical activity, education, and social/community involvement.

Thanks to our community partners the ROM, the AGO, Central and West End YMCA, Toronto Public Library, and the Dufferin Grove Park. Gerstein Crisis Centre's F.R.E.S.H. project offers over 50 recreational and social activities per week.

This year, 15 F.R.E.S.H. clients were brought on a Boundless Trip. The trip was initially intended to be white water rafting, but was transitioned to canoeing, fishing, swimming, hiking archery, pickleball and other games due to water levels being too low.



Gerstein by Numbers



37,856 Crisis Calls



13,767 Mobile Visits



752 House Stays

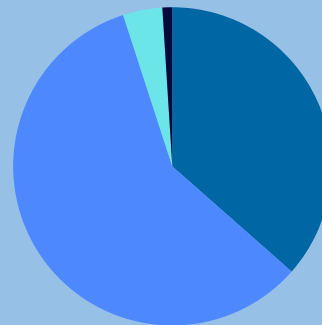


Over 1,500 Trained in Crisis
& Suicide Prevention



Over 100 Wellness &
Recovery Sessions

Revenue



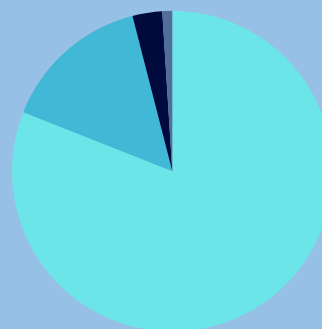
58.5% Ontario Health

36.5% Municipal

4% Federal

1% Other Income

Expenses



81% Salaries & Benefits

15% Program
Operations

3% Contracted
Services (including
services by
community
partners)

1% Professional fees,
Amortization



Board of Directors



Stephanie Gloyn (Chair)
Angela Nyamweya
Desmond Rowley
Frank Gerstein
Indira Stewart
Jill Shakespeare
Katie Almond
Lisa Manuel
Lisa Schlosser
Lubna Khalid
Lucia Costa
Madeline Timlin
Shawonna Hunter
Sonali Sagare



We gratefully acknowledge and thank the Bertrand Gerstein Family Donation, Laurene Kredentser Fund and Phillip Smith Foundation for supporting our work.



Thank you!

Special thank you to Q30 designs inc. for their ongoing support and partnership

...and to the hundreds of supporters in our community.
We appreciate your support and words of encouragement!