

Annual Report  
2022-23

PASSION • DETERMINATION • RESILIENCY

EVOLVE • ADAPT • TRANSFORM • ENVISION

*Pushing Forward  
through Adversity  
for Young Victims*

PARTNER • TRANSITION • PIVOT • NAVIGATE

COMPASSION • PERSISTENCE • TENACITY



## Our Vision

Building resiliency and creating strong futures with children, youth, and their families in our communities.

## Our Mission

Child Witness Centre provides caring and compassionate support, education, and advocacy for children, youth, and their families in our communities as they journey through the criminal justice process.

## Our Values

At Child Witness Centre, we are a team of compassionate and diverse members who utilize trauma-informed practices to provide tailored support to children, youth, and their families.

We are guided by the following values in all the work that we do: inclusivity, integrity, collaboration, respect, and resiliency.

## 2022-23 Board of Directors

Child Witness Centre is led by an amazing group of individuals whose volunteer service is invaluable. Thank you for your support, passion, and dedication.

### Officers

Bernadette Behm (Chair)  
Sharon Seifried (Vice-Chair)  
Ryan Selves (Treasurer)  
Paula Fecteau (Secretary)

### Directors

Kendra Abraham  
Mallory Allan  
Tomas Blazejowski  
Lisa DeBaets

Alexis De Leon  
Matthew Demarte  
Lisa Goertz  
Reid Pridham

**Giving Child Victims**

**Their Power Back**



**Laura Cook**  
Caseworker

Child  
Witness  
Centre

What is it really like for the children we support? Laura Cook sheds light in this **YouTube video**.



## 2022-23 Fiscal Year

1,261 Children and Youth  
+ 867 Parents and Caregivers  
**= 2,128 Total Supported**

*"Thank you so much for all you have done. It has helped me a lot and I will not forget it."*

— **Past Client**

# A Relentless Pursuit of Hope and Healing

## Message from Board Chair and Executive Director

**A**s we reflect on our achievements of the 2022-23 fiscal year, we are truly humbled and grateful to present this annual report to you, our supporters.

The intense demand for our services continues, underscoring the crucial need for victim services geared for children and youth in our community. Throughout 2022-23, we had the privilege of providing support to **1,261** children and youth who have endured the devastating effects of abuse or crime. As a result of needing to **pivot**, we found ourselves faced with an unprecedented challenge: establishing a waitlist for our services for the first time. The overwhelming demand, surpassing our current capacity, has motivated us to **adapt** and **evolve** in order to meet the ever-expanding needs of our community.

Thanks to our continued collaboration with law enforcement, child protection, medical, and mental health professionals, the children and their caregivers that we served in the past year have experienced improved outcomes. These important collaborations ensure comprehensive support throughout the investigation and court processes. Despite recognizing the critical importance of advocacy at this pivotal stage in a child's life, the combined support from federal, provincial, and local municipal governments only covered approximately **30%** of the young people we served. To meet the urgent needs of our community, we raised funds throughout the year and successfully served over **850** additional children, thanks to the generosity of supporters like you. While this accomplishment is extraordinary, the demand still far exceeds our current capacity.

In order to grow to meet this increased local need, our aim has been to **adapt** with raising awareness of the unprecedented demand. Our two seasonal giving campaigns saw gifts from hundreds of donors, helping us raise **more than \$65,000** to continue serving these children. Although this achievement is impressive, there is still much more that we need to do to **eliminate** our waitlist and meet the immediate

needs of every child who needs our help throughout the entire criminal justice process. By **conquering** our waitlist, we can ensure that children and youth do not experience any delays or gaps in receiving the advocacy and support they require.

The urgent call for waitlist services and the need for additional funding to assist every deserving child propels us towards an unwavering **commitment** to funding growth and the pursuit of sustainable resources. We firmly believe that every child in need deserves our **steadfast** support, and this inspires us to seek new avenues for financial stability.



**Bernadette Behm**  
Board Chair



**Robin Heald**  
Executive Director

We have been incredibly fortunate to have a committed team of staff, volunteers, and agency partners. They have enabled us to serve each young client with **empathy**, helping to significantly reduce the trauma of being a child victim or witness. We are grateful for the **compassion** and **dedication** of our exceptional team. This includes all the hard work and leadership of our former executive director, Kim Rodrigues.

Over the past year, we have been actively working towards a mindset **shift** to change the perception of child witness and victim support from treatment-focused to a truly preventative service. Our efforts have a lasting impact, helping **prevent** the retraumatization of child victims and witnesses, and offering them better chances at improved outcomes.

In **striving** to provide exceptional services and trauma-informed care, we are **dedicated** to ongoing self-improvement. Our staff and volunteers, in partnership with other child and family serving organizations, underwent Adverse Childhood Experiences training to be better equipped to mitigate the impact of childhood trauma. We also **engaged** in many opportunities to grow from an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion perspective – to best meet the needs in our community.

**We share this report with warmth in our hearts, knowing that with your continued support, we can create a brighter future for more vulnerable children and youth. Thank you for joining us on this meaningful journey of hope and healing.**

# Changing One Life Forever at a Time

The impact of our work is immediate and lasts a lifetime. From the time we begin to work with young victims, they experience positive transformation in their mental health, emotional wellbeing, and resiliency to face tomorrow with hope.

*"At 12 years old, I was referred to Child Witness Centre after disclosing sexual abuse to my school's guidance counsellor. My caseworker helped me overcome my fear of testifying and walked with me through the entire court journey. Today, I am a university graduate, pursuing a successful career. I am grateful for being supported through a very difficult time in my life so that I could move forward."*

— Past Client

*"(My support worker) really kind of held my hand and walked me through the most difficult time in my life."*

— Past Client

*"It was a great service and very helpful. The worker explained the process well."*

— Past Client

*"Thank you for all the support you provided to me and my child. You made it so we had the support we needed and we are so very grateful."*

— Parent of Past Client

*"I was greatly impacted by the support I received through Child Witness Centre and I can't imagine how many other kids like me were too. I know it means the world to me, so I would love to believe it is the same for everyone else too."*

— Past Client



Munazza Abbasi shares about her passion to help child victims throughout criminal investigations in this **YouTube video**.



*"Our caseworker made us feel comforted and hopeful knowing that she was there to help ease our daughter's fears and concerns about the court process."*

— Parent of Past Client

# Child and Youth Advocacy Centre (CYAC) of Waterloo Region

We are proud to be the lead agency in this child and youth friendly collaborative, providing wraparound support under one roof during criminal investigations.

This collaboration ensures a holistic experience, and builds a larger focus on child abuse in our community. Demand for services continues to rise, as **1,012** children and youth were involved in criminal investigations at the CYAC this past fiscal year. **512** of them received support from our Child Witness Centre advocates.

## More Highlights Include:

- We expanded our partnership to include Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region, providing short-term/crisis counselling supports.
- A "Caregiver Handbook" was developed, which is filled with valuable information and resources to help meet caregiver needs.
- Expanded knowledge by providing in-person CYAC-wide training opportunities for all partners about trauma-informed approaches, mindfulness, equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Our Program Supervisor, Rebecca Heibein-Kursikowski, attended the National CAC/CYAC Network Conference. She said, "We were able to share ideas, discuss challenges, and move forward with a national framework for CAC/CYAC's in Canada."

*"The CYAC recently supported a family who had experienced several traumatic experiences. Being co-located with other agencies, we were able to have a member from another organization provide immediate support for one of the parents while the child was interviewed."*

— **Krista McCann, Child Witness Centre**

*"Over the past six years, the Child and Youth Advocacy Centre has grown and evolved to help thousands of children and youth in our region... The children are provided advocate support from their first contact with the CYAC and have access to this support as long as they need it."*

— **Sgt. Gwen Sim, Waterloo Regional Police Service**



## Child & Youth Advocacy Centre

WATERLOO REGION

A joint communications committee has broadened awareness about the CYAC and launched this new logo which embodies a caring and supportive place for young people and their families.

## Our Partners in the CYAC



**And more!**

# Trauma Informed Victim Services

There is far more need for our services in our communities than most people realize. Did you know that an estimated **1 in 3 girls** and **1 in 5 boys** will experience an unwanted sexual act **before the age of 18**? Were you aware that our local police lay an average of **11** charges per week for crimes directly harming a child? These young individuals are our clients – the survivors you are supporting so they won't walk alone. Together, we are fostering hope, wellbeing, and resiliency for brighter futures.

## Critical Help for Kids

We supported **1,261** young people this fiscal year, providing a continuity of service from the time of an investigation, through to a court resolution. We freely offered them a safe landing place, listening ear, and education. We also provided testimonial support and attended court with them.



Sadly, we were forced to start a waitlist for the first time in our history of **over 40 years**. Funding cutbacks led to reduced staffing, while the need for our services continued to be high. This perfect storm resulted in **201** young people being added to the list – and even one child is too many!

As our frontline staff's workload increased, their **determination** to service our clients with excellence was unwavering. They were actively involved in finding solutions to help more young people on their difficult journeys.

## Territory We Serve



## Partnering for Impact

Without us, no one else does the work that we do. But the effectiveness of our work depends on having strong collaborations. One great partner is Coalition of Muslim Women of KW. Two of our part-time team members were seconded from them to fill one of our full-time advocate positions. This diversity has enhanced our ability to connect with clients.

*"It was important for my daughter to have someone who listened and reassured her, but also asked difficult questions."*

— Parent of Past Client

## 1,261 Kids Supported

512  
(41%)



749  
(59%)

- During criminal investigations
- During criminal court process

## Remote Testimony Room

We are grateful for the funding we received from Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Government of Ontario, in the spring of 2022. It enabled the creation of our remote testimony room and improved soundproofing for privacy. This means a young victim can meet with our team and testify in a friendly environment. Being comfortable makes it easier for them to share their story and avoids the possibility of retraumatization from seeing their perpetrator in a courtroom.



*“(Testifying remotely) made me calmer and was easier to answer the questions.”*

— Past Client

## Our Furry Team Member

Monet continues to be a huge asset in supporting the mental health of our clients, our staff, and many professionals working in the justice process.

Child  
Witness  
Centre



**MONET**  
and her support role



Learn about the incredible difference Monet makes in this **YouTube video**.



*“A 10-year-old victim of physical assault, and her mother, were quite anxious about their trial. As I got to know the child, they both slowly became more comfortable. I then shared about our furry colleague, Monet. You should have seen this girl’s face light up! She was excited knowing Monet will be present in our upcoming meetings and even go to court with her!”*

— Laura Cook, Caseworker

## All That Kids Can Be

We co-led a service partnership called “All That Kids Can Be,” funded through United Way Guelph Wellington Dufferin. It includes a partnership of more than 12 agencies working together to provide seamless support to children and youth, and their families. The focus of this network is on reducing the impacts of adverse childhood experiences and to provide client referrals between our different agencies.

# Events

*Your Kindness Fosters Healing and Wellbeing!*

## 2023 Pancake Lunch: 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition

It is **wonderful** when our community comes together in support of local young victims and their families. And that is exactly what happened on February 21, while raising **over \$48,000** for our work!

**Thank you** to our over 430 attendees, Angie Hill of Bounce 99.5 for being our emcee, and Mandy Bujold for delivering an inspiring message on resiliency from her experience as a two-time Olympic boxer. **Special thanks** to our top sponsors, Septimatech and Knell's, and guest speaker sponsor, RBC Royal Bank.



## Charitable Events Hosted by Supporters

A huge amount of heart went into each of these initiatives, and we are beyond grateful.



**ChefD and Chief Larkin Pancake Breakfast**  
\$1,341 in April 2022



**Waterloo District Masonic Golf Tournament 2022**  
\$4,800 in May 2022



**Springfield Golf Club's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Charity Tournament**  
\$10,523.80 in July 2022



**Widows Sons Grand River Chapter's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Charity Ride**  
\$3,823.75 in August 2022



**Perfect Pitch 2022 (run by Social Venture Partners WR)**  
\$4,599.27 in November 2022



**16<sup>th</sup> Annual Elvis Birthday Show (run by Shon Carroll)**  
\$2,495 in January 2023



# Campaigns

*Your Generosity Makes a World of Difference!*



## Spring Appeal

**Over \$16,000** was raised in the spring of 2022 to transform the lives of children and youth, and their families! **A big shout-out** to Septimatech and Swan Dust Control for their incredibly generous corporate support. We are also **grateful** for our board providing a matching incentive.



## Holiday Campaign

You heard our urgent call for support as we faced soaring demand and stretched resources. And in response, you dug deep and showed how much you care. We are grateful for your generosity in helping us raise **over \$51,000** between the end of October and year-end.

## “Hope for 7 Child Victims” Campaign

A peer-to-peer fundraiser ran by Tomas Blazejowski, Board Member, far surpassed his goal and raised **almost \$13,000** from **61** thoughtful donors. That equates to fully supporting nearly **13** child victims!



# Volunteers

*We Simply Could Not Do It Without You!*

**Thank you** to all our awesome volunteers for generously offering your time and talents to support our mission. Your willingness to give of your resources and expertise is greatly appreciated. With reduced staffing, we relied more heavily on volunteers through student placements, co-op programs, and the Canada Summer Jobs program.



**Canada Summer Jobs**  
Summer 2022



**Board Members at Pancake Lunch**  
February 2023



**Carl Thiel, All-Star Supporter**  
Over 20 Years

# Gifts Received

*Thank You for Helping Local Young Victims!*



## Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada

We are **so thankful** for our close relationship with Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada. They are an outstanding employer and partner. We are particularly grateful for the **\$75,000** we received in early 2023. This incredible gift enabled our team to walk with many more child and youth victims, and their caregivers, through the criminal justice system.

## More Amazing Contributions



**May Court Club of KW**  
\$1,000 in April 2022



**100 Women Who Care – Wilmot**  
\$8,000 in June 2022



**T.E.A.M. Financial Solutions**  
\$464 in September 2022



**100 Women Who Care – CW**  
\$9,000 in October 2022



**Bell Let's Talk**  
\$20,000 in October 2022



**Weber Supply**  
\$400 in November 2022



**WRAR (Realtors Care)**  
\$4,000 in January 2023



**KBG Sorority**  
\$510 in January 2023



**Staebler Insurance**  
\$5,000 in March 2023

# 2022-23 Financial Summary

## Treasurer's Report

Child Witness Centre finished our 2022-23 fiscal year in a stable financial position. The environment within our community over the last three years has further pressed the demand for our services throughout the region. Our team continues to fight to control this demand.



**Ryan Selves**  
Board Treasurer

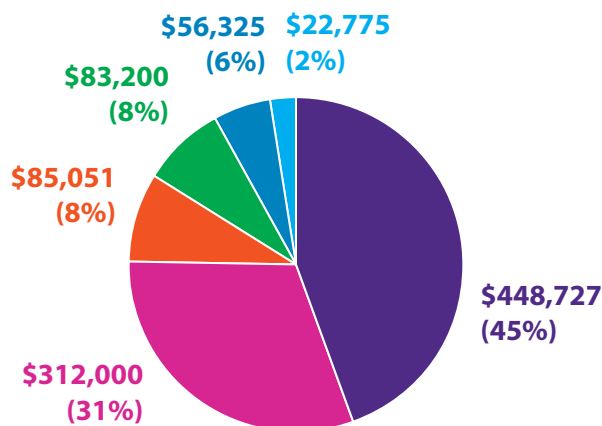
We want to extend a **heartfelt thank you** to the community that we passionately serve for the amazing support that we've seen through the last year. Our donors, supporters, and funders are **crucial** to the sustainability of our organization. We are dependent on the **overwhelming** and **generous** support we receive from the community to enable us to do the work that we do.

As always, we also need to extend our **thanks** to the federal, provincial, and municipal government and the United Way for supporting the organization through the hardships we have faced, along with other not-for-profit and charitable organizations, that are so important to our community and others across the country.

We are focused on ensuring the financial support we receive is being used effectively to support the many children and families in dire need of our services.

*This annual report shares some highlights and summary information from the audited financial statements for the year ending March 31, 2023. Complete financial statements are available upon request.*

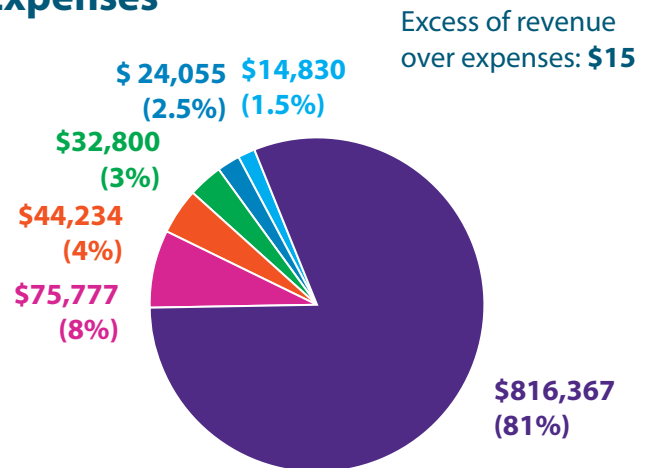
### Revenue



**Total Revenue: \$1,008,078**

- Community Donations
- Government Funding (Program)
- Fundraising Events
- United Way
- Government Funding (Projects)
- Other

### Expenses



**Total Expenses: \$1,008,063**

- Staffing
- Facility Expenses
- Administrative Expenses
- Amortization
- Resource Development & Marketing
- Direct Program Expenses



Department of Justice Canada

Ministère de la Justice Canada



Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario

Certain funding is provided by the Ontario Ministry of Attorney General. Views expressed in the publication do not necessarily reflect those of the Province.

An agency of the Government of Ontario  
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

STRENGTH  
OPTIMISM • STEADFAST

# *Thank You for Your Incredible Partnership!*



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COMMITMENT • BELIEF  
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