



2025 | 2026  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

Nurturing Resilience, Inspiring Hope



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We would like to respectfully acknowledge that Vanier Children's Mental Wellness is located on the traditional land of the Anishinaabek (Uh-nish-in-ah-bek), Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-no-show-nee), Lūnaapéewak (Len-ah-pay-wuk) and Attawandaron (Add-a-won-da-run) Nations. There are many treaties specific to this area, including the Two Row Wampum Belt Treaty of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy/Silver Covenant Chain; the Beaver Hunting Grounds of the Haudenosaunee NANFAN Treaty of 1701; the McKee Treaty of 1790, the London Township Treaty of 1796, the Huron Tract Treaty of 1827, with the Anishinaabeg, and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum of the Anishnaabek and Haudenosaunee.

London-Middlesex is home to many urban and rural Indigenous (First Nation, Metis, and Inuit) people and neighbours three sovereign Nations: Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Munsee-Delaware Nation, and Oneida Nation of the Thames. Each has its own individual and unique languages, cultures, and customs.

## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO & BOARD CHAIR

To Our Community,

At Vanier Children's Mental Wellness, we are deeply committed to providing the highest quality care for children, youth, and their families. Over the past year, we achieved significant accomplishments, experienced growth, and demonstrated resilience. The impacts highlighted in this report reflect the dedication and passion of our exceptional staff, leaders, and Board of Directors, who work tirelessly to achieve our mission. When children and families encounter a mental health crisis, they turn to Vanier, knowing that we will always be here for them.

2025-2026 was a year of meaningful impact. We made significant strides in advancing our strategic plan and demonstrated the positive effects of our programs and services throughout the region we serve, inspiring continued support. This year, Vanier led a coordinated access project, which streamlined the referral process for community live-in treatment beds. Now, all referrals come directly through Tandem. As a result, children can access mental health treatment beds more quickly, leading to reduced wait times. Additionally, the administrative burden on those making referrals to the program has decreased. Vanier has continued to expand its services to support adolescents. A great example is the Assertive Community Treatment Team (ACT), which has developed and expanded to provide intensive mental health support for children aged 8 - 17, both in their homes and within the community. Vanier invested in our staff and leaders by providing evidence-based education and learning opportunities to help them maintain their skills.

We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our funders and donors who believe in our mission, vision, and values and support us in providing mental health treatment to children, youth, and families. As a lead agency, we take pride in the collaborative partnerships we have built, and we look forward to continuing our important work together. As we look ahead, we are filled with hope, inspiration, and gratitude.

Thank you for being part of the Vanier community and for your continued support.



*Kelly Simpson*

Kelly Simpson, CEO

*Meredith Whitney*

Meredith Whitney, Chair, Board of Directors

# OUR KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Launching the ACT Team

In 2025, Vanier secured \$1.2 million to establish an Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) team, expanding access to intensive mental health services for children and youth from 8 to 18 years old with serious mental illness. The team began serving clients in November 2025, marking a significant step in enhancing support for young people with complex needs. This innovative model gained recognition at the Children’s Mental Health Ontario (CMHO) Conference in March 2026, showcasing Vanier’s leadership in specialized, community-based care.

## New Playgrounds for Kids

Two vibrant, interactive playgrounds were installed at the main site, thoughtfully designed to promote both creativity and safety. The sensory playground features a range of equipment and activities that engage children’s senses, supporting exploration, development, and social interaction. Together, these spaces create an enriching environment that combines play, learning, and meaningful opportunities for growth.

## Improving Client Access Through New Centralized Intake

Vanier led the Coordinated Access Project in partnership with community organizations to streamline access to live-in treatment services. The initiative successfully established a centralized referral pathway, creating a single point of access for treatment bed referrals. This enhanced coordination among service providers, reduced system fragmentation, and improved the timeliness of client access to care.

## Modernization of Information Technology Systems

Implemented the IT modernization initiative to improve cybersecurity, improve protection of staff accounts and devices, and create a more reliable and modern technology environment.



# OUR KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Capital Improvements

A number of capital improvements were made, including replacing our HVAC system, constructing a new kitchen for the day treatment and day respite programs, and numerous additional facility upgrades.

## Investment in Professional Development and Staff Training

We continued to invest in professional development and specialized training for our staff, strengthening organizational capacity and advancing the delivery of high-quality care. Through access to evidence-based learning opportunities, staff enhanced their clinical knowledge, practical skills, and understanding of emerging best practices in children’s mental health.

## Sensory Art Mural

Vanier hired local artist, Candy McManiman, to create a sensory mural featuring animals from around the world. Her work is exceptional and is featured on the cover of this report. A learning plan will be developed for staff to use with children, encouraging them to explore the mural, identify the various animals, and learn about the regions of the world where these species are found. This interactive experience will support children’s curiosity, observation skills, and understanding of global wildlife and habitats.



# EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING

## Ongoing Commitment to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging

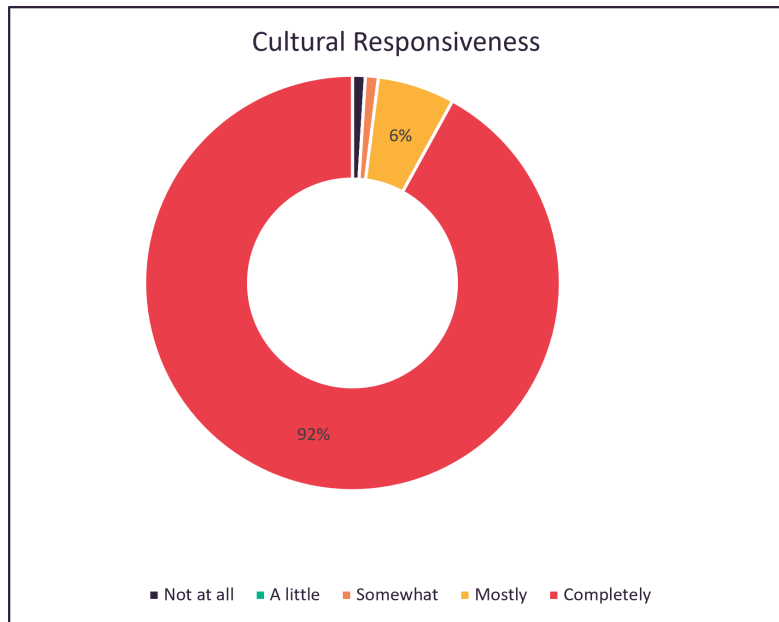
Vanier is proud of the progress made in 2025–2026 in advancing our long-term commitment to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (EDIB).

## Creating Learning and Belonging Through Indigenous Education for Children and Staff

In the fall of 2025, the Southwestern Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre (SOAHAC) organized a meaningful learning event for our Adolescent Day Treatment Classroom. During this experience, children and staff learned about the significance of the fall harvest within Indigenous cultures, including themes of gratitude, reflection, sharing, and preparing for the winter season. SOAHAC facilitators also introduced participants to smudging practices and other cultural Indigenous traditions, helping deepen understanding of the values, teachings, and community connections that these practices represent. The event provided an engaging opportunity for both students and staff to learn in a hands-on and respectful way, and it was warmly received by all who participated. By exposing our students to diverse cultural practices and perspectives, we continue to foster a more inclusive, welcoming, and culturally-responsive environment for our clients and families.

## Respecting Culture, Beliefs, and Feelings in Care Delivery

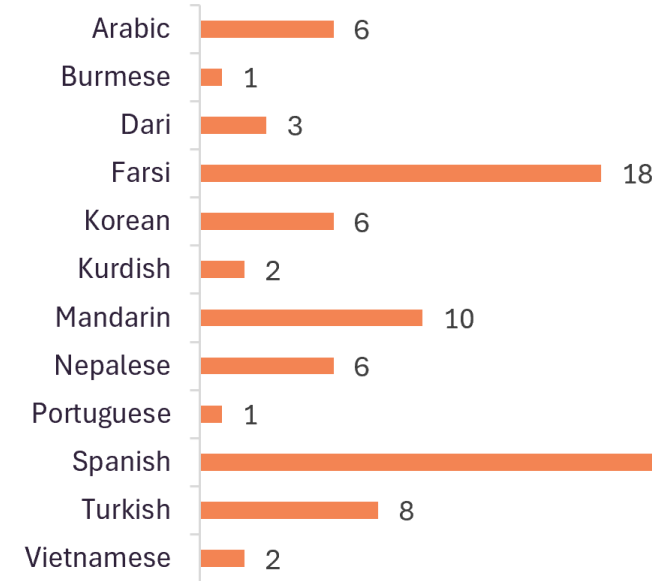
All Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) clients reported that their culture, beliefs, and feelings were respected, with 100% indicating they felt either “very much” or “mostly” respected.



**92%**  
of respondents reported that Vanier respected their cultural background and provided culturally responsive services.

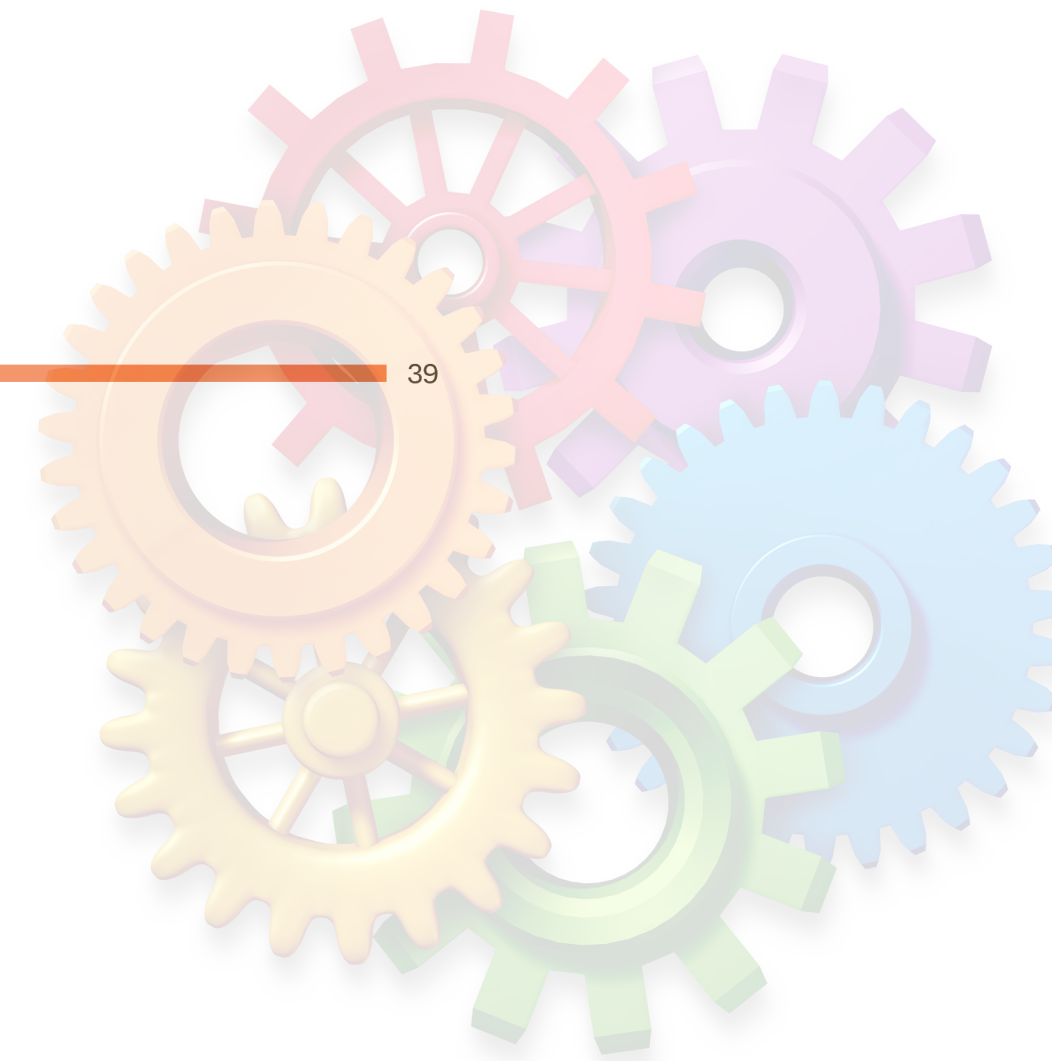
## Requests for Translation Services

### Translation Services by Language 2025



In 2025-2026, Vanier changed translation providers to improve the timeliness of access and expand the number of languages available to children and families.

**Spanish** continued to be the most frequently requested language for translation services.



# QUALITY & PERFORMANCE

## Our Impact

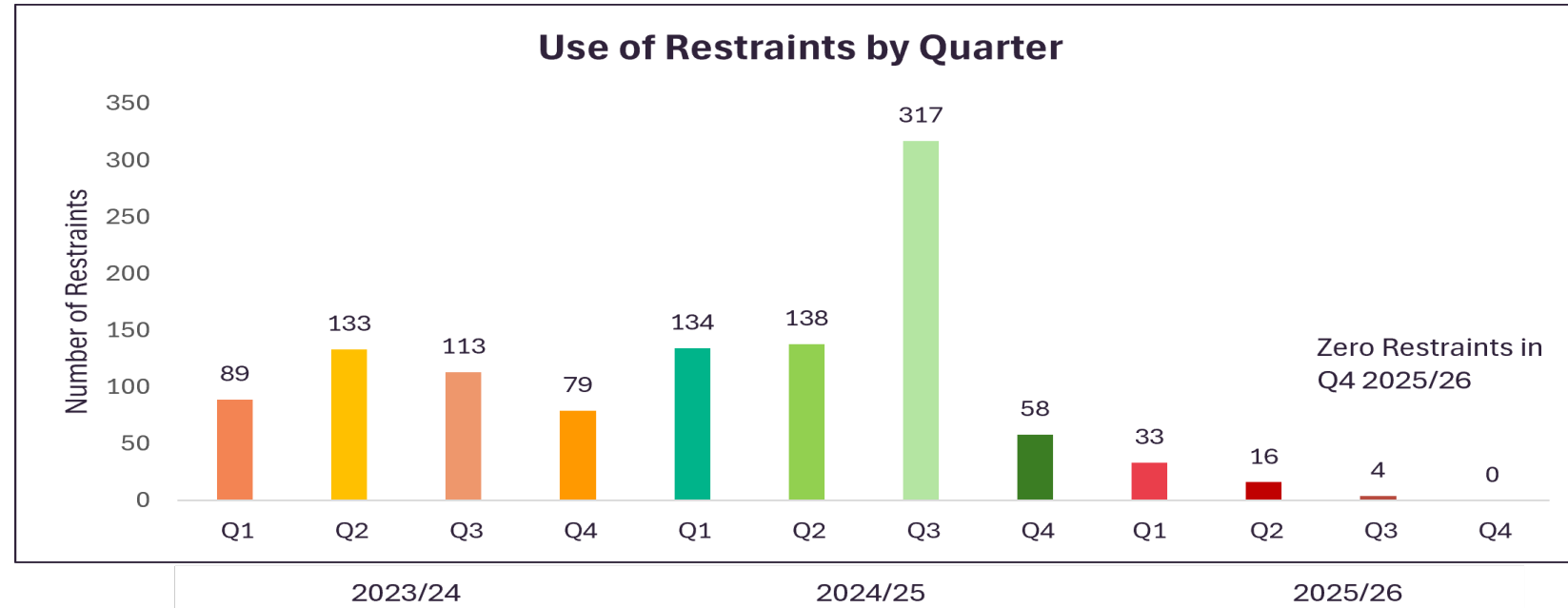
The Data and Quality Team is proud to partner with Vanier clinicians and system leaders to share program and service data and highlight quality improvement initiatives that have a measurable impact on improving care and services to clients.

## Restraint Reduction Project

A physical restraint is a holding technique that staff may use to limit a child's movement with the least necessary force. In 2025, Vanier set a goal to reduce the use of physical restraints by 55% as restraints do not align with the Ontario Quality Standards for Live-In Treatment 2025 (MCCSS guideline) or our clinical model, and they increase the risk of staff injury. Vanier eliminated restraints in all programs except live-in treatment, including day treatment, community programs, crisis services, and intake. We provided frontline staff with education and support. Leaders received change management training and certification. Live-in treatment staff also received coaching and mentoring from experienced child and youth counsellors, along with ongoing care planning for clients with externalizing behaviours.

## Results

From 2024/25 to 2025/26, restraint use decreased by 74%, exceeding our target by 20%. Restraint use declined in each quarter of 2025/26, reaching zero in Q4.



## Staff Testimonials on the Restraint Reduction Project

### Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, and Empathy (PACE)

The PACE approach, developed by Clinical Psychologist Dan Hughes, offers a practical, trauma-informed way of responding to the everyday challenges faced by children and young people with trauma or attachment difficulties.

Live-in treatment staff recently participated in PACE training. Staff found the training highly effective for working with children and reminded them why this work matters.

Recently, a child refused to wash their dishes and became agitated. I leaned into playfulness and became a "dish washing robot" where this child had to use my hands as their own to wash the dishes. We had fun, the child was able to regulate, and the task was completed!

### Dyadic Development Psychotherapy (DDP)

The DDP framework emphasizes relational safety, repair, co-regulation, reflection, cultural safety, and PACE. It's helped to step away from power struggles and focus on compassion and connection with clients. Modelling this approach with colleagues and across the organization improved continuity of care, collaboration, and confidence. Overall, DDP has had a positive impact on my practice.

## Common Presenting Issues




### Emotional & Mental Health

-  Anxiety
-  Depression
-  Self-Harm Statements/Behaviours
-  Eating Disorders

### Behavioural Challenges

-  School Behaviour Issues
-  Anger Management
-  Non-Compliant/Opositional Defiant
-  Attention Problems/Hyperactivity

### Relationships & Social Wellbeing

-  Family Issues
-  Relationship/Attachment Issues
-  Peer Issues

# QUALITY & PERFORMANCE

## Impact at a Glance 2025-2026

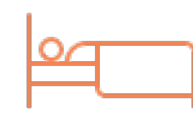
Each number tells a story of care, connection, and support reaching those who needed it most.



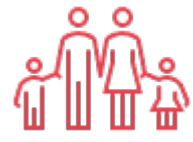
**2,017**  
clients served



**523**  
Telemental Health  
client consultations



**14**  
children in live-in



**376**  
children & families accessed  
focused therapy services



**133**  
families received  
intensive in-home support



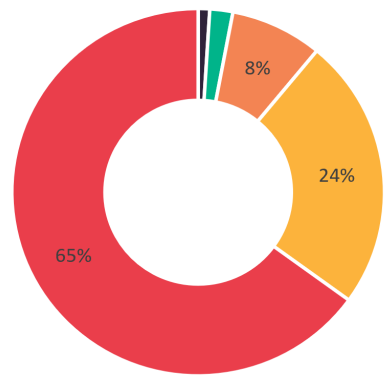
**4,177**  
calls to Tandem supported  
intake and assessment

**98%**

of respondents indicated a positive experience with our staff, describing them as professional, competent, respectful, and compassionate.



Treatment Outcomes



■ No Impact ■ Minor Impact ■ Moderate Impact  
■ Significant Impact ■ Major Impact

**89%**

of respondents reported positive treatment outcomes, including enhanced coping skills, greater emotional awareness, and improved parenting abilities.



### HOPE Program (Helping Other Parents Excel Program)

Vanier is grateful to the May Court Club of London for their continued support of the HOPE Program. The HOPE Coordinator continues to support parents who are struggling with their children's mental health.

The HOPE Coordinator provides one-on-one support and runs groups for families.

A new connect and chat group was developed in 2025-2026.

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS - VOICES OF IMPACT

### Bea's Story

My journey through mental health services began in 2024, when I first started to engage in self-harm at the age of twelve. By age thirteen, I was surrounded by friends who also self-harmed, and we supported each other, but not in a good way. I would stay up all night talking to them, and engaging in bad habits. I started skipping school almost every day, so that I could stay home and lay in bed. My self-harm became worse over time, and it led to an attempt to end my life, which thankfully failed.

I struggled to get the help that I needed, and things got worse over the year. My attempts became more frequent, leading to my first of many hospital admissions in January 2025. The hospital stays were long and frequent but remained a steady support system and safe place for me when I needed it. In April, I lost trust with my mom when I hurt myself while home alone, and that would be the last time I stayed home alone for almost a year.



In November of 2025, things started to change. I started at a new school, which was working well. I had my first credit done by second semester, and started working with Vanier's ACT Team. The ACT Team was helping me to gain life skills and trust back. We started off by taking the bus, which I quickly mastered. We also began the process of staying home alone, starting at five minutes, and gradually increasing as the weeks went by. My urges to engage in bad habits were weakening.

As of this day, April 21, 2026, I am 15 years old, 7 months free of self-harm and I stayed home alone today for 45 minutes, taking the bus by myself from school. I have applied for a volunteer position for the summer, and just began going to the gym. Things are looking up thanks to the ACT Team and I can't wait to continue making progress towards my independence.

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS - VOICES OF IMPACT

### How I Found My Way Back

As a first-time mom navigating postpartum challenges, connecting with the Vanier Pair Clinic was a turning point in my journey, especially working with Rachael, who truly created a compassionate, judgment-free space where I felt supported and understood.

Each session was meaningful and thoughtfully structured with helpful resources. For me, including books and personalized "homework" allowed me to reflect and continue growing between visits. After our session, I received a summary outlining what we discussed along with clear areas to focus on. This helped me stay grounded, intentional, and focused on becoming the best mom and partner I could be.

Through this experience, I not only learned practical parenting approaches, but I also gained a deeper understanding of myself. I built confidence, developed healthier coping strategies in family dynamics, and felt reassured that I was capable even on the hard days. My bond with my baby has grown stronger. I feel so much gratitude. What once felt overwhelming and isolating is transforming into a journey of growth. The Vanier Pair Clinic didn't just give me parenting tools, it helped me find myself. My experience is a reminder that postpartum struggles are real, but with the right support, you can show up as the best parent you can be. Rachael is truly a skilled and passionate professional who I would highly recommend any new caregiver connect with. Vanier is something I feel deeply passionate about sharing, it's more than a program, it's a powerful tool that supports both parent and child relationships but truly is the best form of self-care.



*"I just want to share how incredibly proud I am of the work Rachael did with this parent. Equally, I feel so proud that we have the opportunity to walk alongside families earlier in their journeys, it truly makes a difference."*

*Thank you, Rachael, for all that you do and for the care, skill, and dedication you bring to your work every day."~ Maria, Clinical Manager*

## LEAD AGENCY

As the lead agency for children’s mental health in London-Middlesex, Vanier is responsible for more than just our own programs and services. We take the lead in system planning and collaborate with our partners to ensure that children, youth, and families have timely access to the right services, at the right time, and in the right place.

### Regional Impact - Coordinated Access Project – Phase 1

Vanier worked together with community organizations and hospital partners to provide leadership in expanding centralized access to intensive treatment services. The goal of the project is to create a “one-door” entry point for children, youth, and families seeking intensive mental health services across London-Middlesex, Oxford-Elgin, and Huron-Perth. This approach is designed to reduce confusion about where to obtain services and to shorten the intake and wait times.

This expansion is part of a provincial movement towards coordinated and centralized access in primary and mental health care. It also extends Tandem’s existing multi-agency collaborative model.

Since 2022, Tandem has helped over 4,800 children and their families connect to 24/7 crisis support and mental wellness program intake. With the introduction of enhanced services, families can now access child and youth mental health services through one central system—just one call, click, or visit. This allows them to share their story once and follow a simplified, coordinated pathway to receive the appropriate level of care. Initially, this will focus on live-in treatment, and will expand to include all community-based care in 2026.

*“With one consistent referral process, the coordinated access model aims to help families under pressure or in crisis connect more easily to the mental health services they need. It ensures children and youth are matched more quickly and effectively to the services that best meet their needs, and that providers can better manage service levels across the region.”*

*Kelly Simpson, CEO of Vanier Children’s Mental Wellness*



**1,800**  
Intakes Processed



**1,401**  
Initial Needs  
Assessments Completed



**76%**  
Positive Feedback  
at Discharge

## LEADING WITH IMPACT

### Provincial Impact - Intensive Treatment Pathway Initiative (OITP) <https://oitp.ca/>

The OITP initiative is a provincially guided model aimed at transforming Ontario's intensive treatment system to enhance access for children and youth with significant mental health needs.

Our CEO, Kelly Simpson, is a member of the OITP System Planning Committee. In 2025–2026, she co-led the development of the Provincial Landscape Report. This report paints a point-in-time picture of the provision of live-in treatment in Ontario. This foundational report will be utilized to continue to advance OITP.

Kelly was also a member of the OITP Symposium Planning Committee. OITP hosted their first provincial conference in November 2025. Over 350 Senior Leaders attended the 2-day session to learn about new frameworks, models, and tools for system transformation.

Misty Gray, Clinical Director; Leanne Pringle-Cole, Clinical Manager; and Jordan MacKay, Supervisor, also serve on OITP committees, contributing to provincial initiatives and representing Vanier in this important work.

### Provincial Training Initiative (PTI) - Supporting Evidence-Based Treatment

The PTI Initiative began in Ontario in 2022 to support front-line children’s mental health professionals in their skills in evidence-based treatment modalities, including the Circle of Security Parenting and Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. Vanier is a member of the Southwest Training Network and coordinates and promotes the adoption of evidence-based learning for our community partners.

## COLLABORATIVE IMPACT



Collective  
Action



Shared  
Goals



Result  
Orientation



Resource  
Optimization



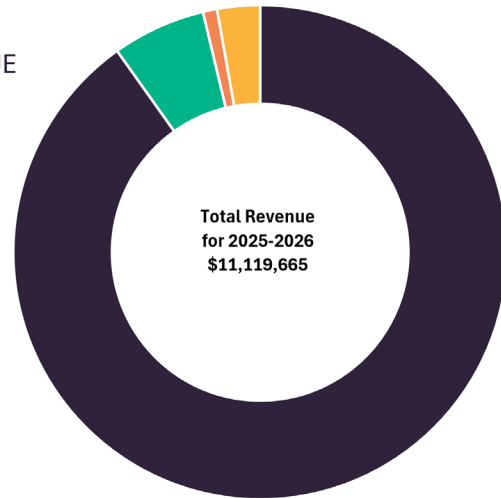
Continuous  
Improvement

# REVENUE & EXPENSES

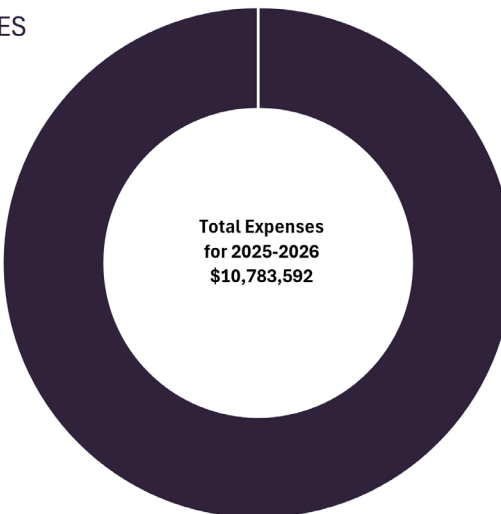
Year Ended March 31, 2026

## REVENUE

- Ministry of Health
- Ontario Health
- Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services
- Donations & Other Revenues



## EXPENSES



The May Court Club  
of London



ed financial statements are available on our website

# THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

We are so grateful for your support. Your generosity helps us keep moving forward, whether it's launching new projects, providing vital resources, or supporting the children, youth, and families we serve.

Thanks for believing in what we do. Your support means the world and truly makes a difference. Together, we are creating positive change. Thank you for being a big part of it.

## From One Individual's Vision to a Year of Impact

On Saturday, April 26, 2025, on her 50th birthday, Chrisoula ran 50 km to raise \$50,000 for Vanier's DASH Program.

The inspiration behind the 50k for 50k fundraiser, Chrisoula Van Oirschot, helped transform the DASH Program through a renewed space, new experiences, and meaningful growth for children and families.

## DASH – Development • Acceptance • Social Skills • Healing

One year after organizing the 50k for 50k fundraiser, Chrisoula's generosity continues to shape the DASH Program in meaningful ways. Her support helped refresh the respite space for the first time in over a decade, fund enriching activities and outings, and create more opportunities for children to build confidence, social skills, connection, and joy. Families have seen the difference firsthand, sharing how their children are growing socially, emotionally, and independently in a space that feels more welcoming and like home.



**One Person Can Make a Difference. Thank you!**

Chrisoula was the 2025 recipient of the May Court Award  
Champion of Children's Mental Health.

*Thanks  
for your support*

## UNDERSTANDING MY COMMUNICATION STYLE

### Lee's Story, The Power of Being Understood

Hey, I wanted to share something about how I communicate so there are fewer misunderstandings.

I am neurodivergent, which means my tone, facial expressions, and my body language don't always match what people might expect. Because of this, I can sometimes come across as having an "attitude" or seeming upset – even when I'm completely okay.

*My face might look neutral or serious.  
My tone might sound flat or blunt.  
I might give short answers.  
I might not react strongly to things.*

#### What it actually means:

*I'm not upset or mad.  
I'm not trying to be rude or disrespectful.  
I'm just communicating in a way that feels natural to me.*

**Important to Know:** If I am upset, I will try to say it directly. If I haven't said anything is wrong, there usually isn't a problem.

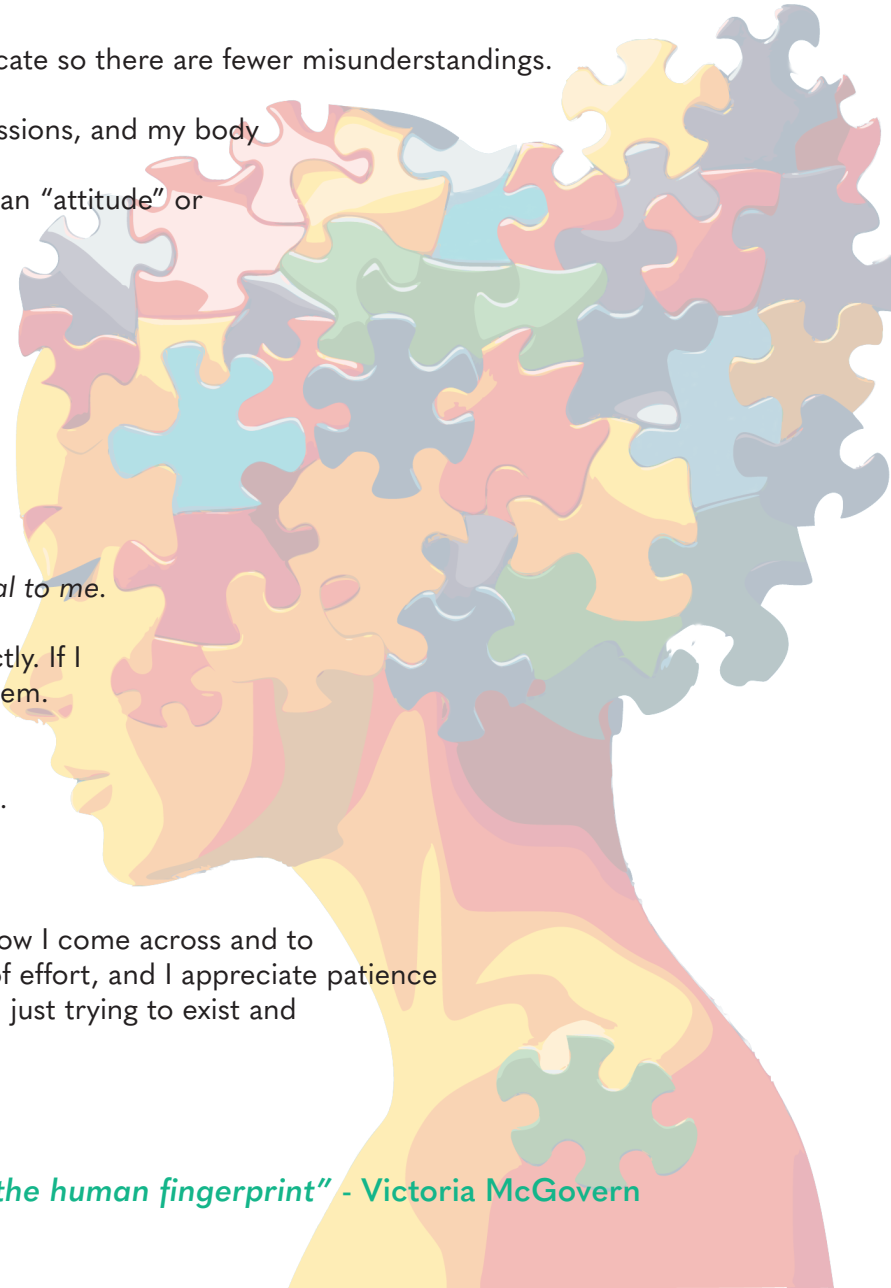
#### What helps:

*Asking me calmly if I'm okay instead of assuming.  
Not taking my tone personally.  
Giving me a chance to explain if something's off.*

**What I'm working on:** I am trying to be more aware of how I come across and to communicate more clearly when I can. This takes a lot of effort, and I appreciate patience while I work on it. I'm not trying to have an attitude – I'm just trying to exist and communicate in my own way.

Thank you for understanding, Lee

**Neurodiversity:** "The human brain is as diverse as the human fingerprint" - Victoria McGovern



## A JOURNEY OF COURAGE AND HEALING

### Meredith's Story

When Meredith came to HAVEN, (Healing, Accessible Care, Vision, Empowerment, Nourishment) she was navigating one of the most difficult periods of her life, with challenges related to eating habits, mental health, substance use, and family dynamics. Like many young people beginning a healing journey, she was understandably hesitant to trust the process and the team around her. Through patience, compassion, and steady encouragement, the HAVEN team built a meaningful connection with Meredith and helped her feel safe enough to take those first important steps forward. She worked hard to prepare for treatment by building daily routines, engaging in behavioural activation, and beginning to challenge unhelpful behaviours.

During the Action Phase, Meredith's resilience and determination shone through. Day by day, she practiced new coping strategies, challenged eating-disorder thoughts, and worked to interrupt harmful behaviours. Her progress was reflected not only in the steps she was taking, but also in a growing shift in how she viewed food, nourishment, and reducing daily substance use. Along the way, Meredith brought warmth and authenticity to the program, helping to foster a caring and hopeful environment for those around her.

Meredith's mother also played an important role in her journey. Through the program, she gained skills and insight that strengthened her ability to support Meredith's recovery. Together, they participated in family therapy, working through past conflicts and taking meaningful steps toward healing and rebuilding their relationship.

As Meredith continues in Aftercare with HAVEN, she is meeting new challenges with courage, persistence, and openness. She is working hard to apply the skills she has learned in everyday life, and her commitment to consistent eating habits and healthy coping strategies reflects how far she has come. Meredith has also shared a growing confidence in her ability to pursue both short and long-term goals, including returning to school, and she continues to look ahead with hope. The entire HAVEN team is incredibly proud of Meredith's strength, dedication, and the progress she continues to make on her healing journey.



*"With patience, compassion, and steady encouragement, Meredith began taking her first important steps toward healing."*

## MUSIC THERAPY

### *When Music Becomes a Path to Healing*

*“This gift is helping children and youth find comfort, confidence, and connection through the power of music.”*

Thanks to the generous support of the HALO Fund, a division of Minto Foundation Inc., Vanier is expanding access to music therapy for children and youth. A \$15,000 grant is helping fund a Certified Music Therapist, strengthening a program that gives young people a safe and creative way to express themselves, build confidence, and connect with others during some of the most challenging moments in their lives.

Music therapy is already part of the HAVEN program, and this investment now makes it possible to extend those services to additional Vanier programs. For many children and youth, music offers a way to communicate when words feel out of reach. Through guided sessions with a trained therapist, young people can explore emotion, develop healthy coping strategies, and experience moments of joy, calm, and belonging. Evidence shows that music therapy can support emotional expression, self-regulation, social connection, and engagement for children and adolescents, especially in behavioral health and trauma-informed settings. It creates opportunities for self-reflection and helps young people identify feelings, strengthen resilience, and practice new ways of coping, all of which are important building blocks for mental wellness and healing.

One child had this to say - *“Amazing! Oh my goodness this is so great, this is like a dream come true!”*

This gift from the HALO Fund is more than funding for a program, it is an investment in hope, healing, and possibility. By helping children and youth discover music as a healthy outlet for self-expression, Minto Foundation Inc. is making a lasting difference in their mental wellness today and in the confidence they will carry into the future.



## INFANT & EARLY MENTAL HEALTH

### *Why it Matters*

Mental health is a crucial aspect of development from the very start of life. It influences how children experience emotions, form relationships, and cope with challenges. For infants, children, and youth, mental health is fundamentally connected to safe and responsive relationships, as well as supportive environments that encourage growth, learning, and resilience.

Early experiences, especially relationships with caregivers, play a critical role in brain development, emotional regulation, and a child's sense of self. When mental health is nurtured early, children are better able to understand their emotions, form healthy connections, and adapt to life's challenges. Good mental health does not mean the absence of struggle; rather, it reflects a sense of safety, support, and the ability to cope when difficulties arise.

As Dr. Sue Johnson reminds us, *“We are emotional beings from the cradle to the grave.”* The foundations of attachment begin even before birth, and our need for connection and responsive caregiving emerges in infancy and continues throughout the lifespan.

At Vanier, we are dedicated to promoting the mental health of infants, children, and youth with evidence-informed, culturally responsive care. Our services, such as Parent and Infant Relationship Clinics and Family Therapy, focus on strengthening early relationships and emotional well-being. Key practices include responsive caregiving, predictable routines, and co-regulation strategies, all supported by neuroscience, which underscores the impact of early relationships on brain development.

In the first years of life, mental health concerns often appear as patterns over time rather than isolated behaviours. Signs such as challenges with emotional regulation, persistent sleep or feeding difficulties, developmental delays, or sensory sensitivities may indicate a need for additional support. Equally important is caregiver mental health, as caregiver well-being directly influences a child's sense of safety and ability to regulate emotions.

Vanier is also engaged in broader system collaboration, including participation in the Infant and Early Mental Health (IEMH) Initiative, to strengthen coordinated and equitable early mental health services.

We believe there is no wrong time to seek support. Caring for mental health early lays the foundation for lifelong well-being, and reaching out is a powerful step toward healthy development.



## OUR PEOPLE

### Why I Do This Work

Every day, our staff bring compassion, resilience, and hope to the children, youth, and families we serve. In this 100-word challenge, staff reflected on the question: **“Why do I do this work?”** Their answers remind us of the heart behind our mission.

**Paisley**  
DIETITIAN

“Every small step matters”

I work as a dietitian because food is never just food, it's identity, control, fear, comfort, and connection. With being focused in eating disorders, I've seen how deeply these illnesses can isolate someone, and how powerful it is when nourishment becomes safe again. My role is not just to restore eating, but to rebuild trust, between a person and their body, their hunger, and themselves. Every small step matters, a bite, a belief shift, a moment of self-compassion. I do this work to help people reclaim their lives, find freedom beyond rules, and rediscover that they deserve to be nourished, both physically and emotionally.

**Amy**  
SUPERVISOR

“Some of the toughest days and most complex moments have taught me the most”

My why today is the same as it was over 20 years ago: to leave meaningful imprints in the lives of children and youth who need to know they matter, are deeply cared for, and are capable of great things. Over time, what that looks like has grown and evolved. As Maya Angelou said, **“When you know better, you do better.”** With experience comes reflection, humility, and growth. Some of the toughest days and most complex moments have taught me the most. I feel incredibly grateful for the trust, the connection, and the joy of walking alongside each child and youth, even for a short time.

**Alie**  
CYC

“Connection comes through playfulness, laughter, and simply being present”

My “why” is rooted in my personal experience and understanding of children not always having the words and capacity to express their need for connection, love, and support. I recognize that many of the behaviours we see and work with every day as CYCs come from unmet needs and unprocessed experiences of trauma. Feeling seen and having even one trusted adult relationship can change so much for a child, and my “why” is being that adult for the children we work with. I have learned within my role that this connection does not always come through words, but through playfulness, laughter, and simply being present.

**Shanon**  
CYC

“Hold space for hope, resilience, and possibility”

I do this work because my life showed me how deeply it matters to have someone who listens, cares, and stays. Guided by my own experiences, giving me purpose to be the person you needed when you were younger and inspired by my mother and the generations before me, and the strength and compassion I saw in my mother and those before her. Working in community and social services allows me to show up with compassion, open arms, and to support others. I carry the heart to help heal, co-create new narratives, and hold space for hope, resilience, and possibility. This work is my call to help others feel valued, understood, and never alone. Every day, I show up to walk alongside others as they find their strength again, especially in moments when hope can feel fragile, so no one feels unseen, unheard, or alone.

Different roles. One purpose.  
We show up for kids, youth, and families - together.

## OUR PEOPLE

### *Celebrating Years of Service*

Congratulations on this milestone, and thank you for your years of dedication and commitment. Your hard work, compassion, and contributions have made a lasting difference and we are grateful to celebrate with you.

## YEARS OF SERVICE

- 40** Marion Whitfield • Diana MacKay
- 30** Karen Boyd
- 20** Mary Saltern • Melissa Masciotra • Brian McDonagh
- 15** Karly Rix • Amy Mouselimis • Alex Turgeon • Karen Allen • Donald Keay • Kristy van Diepen-Costa
- 10** Sabrina Chiarella • Mark Belsheim
- 5** Rachael Duck • Nicole Youngson • Patricia Bellettini • Shannon Hunter



## From Crisis to Hope

### *Amy's Story*

When Amy came to us, she was carrying a weight no young person should have to carry. She was living with trauma, struggling at school and at home, and trying to navigate overwhelming family stress. During treatment, she also endured a serious illness and the loss of a parent. Even when in so much pain, Amy showed remarkable courage and a determination to keep moving forward.

Amy's journey was not straightforward. At times, she became overwhelmed and responded in ways that put both herself and others at risk. But with steady support, trusted relationships, and a trauma-informed approach, staff began to recognize the needs beneath those reactions and respond with greater understanding and consistency. Even through difficult setbacks, Amy continued to show up, build trust, and practice healthier ways of coping, one hard-won step at a time.

By the time Amy was ready to return home, her growth was clear. Transitions were still hard, but she had developed stronger coping skills, greater self-awareness, and the ability to accept support from trusted adults. What once felt impossible was starting to feel within reach.

Since discharge, Amy and her guardian have shared encouraging updates. She is back at school full-time, there have been no police calls in months, and conflict at home has greatly decreased. She is using strategies to manage anger and distress, stepping away from difficult peer situations, and rebuilding trust at home. Amy's progress is a powerful example of what can happen when young people receive the right support, at the right time, in the right place. When hope grows, stability returns, and healing can begin.



*"Amy's story is a powerful reminder that healing is possible."*



*"It has been an honour to serve as a volunteer member of Vanier's Board of Directors over the past two years. During this time, I have been continually inspired by the organization's unwavering commitment to supporting children, families, and the broader community. Vanier's work reflects not only a deep understanding of the needs of those it serves, but also a genuine dedication to improving lives through compassionate, high-quality care and support.*

*What stands out most to me is the passion and purpose that is evident throughout the organization. Every interaction with staff and every presentation I have attended reinforces the incredible commitment of the Vanier team. Their dedication to caring for children and families, and to making a meaningful difference in the community, is both inspiring and deeply impactful. It is a privilege to contribute, in a small way, to an organization whose mission and values are so clearly lived every day."*

**Krista Muncaster**  
Vice-Chair, Board of Directors

## OUR 2025 - 2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Vanier Children's Mental Wellness is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors who follow best practices for board governance. They provide broad strategic oversight to ensure that all of our resources are used in pursuit of the organization's mission, vision, values, and strategic plan. We appreciate the time and commitment given to the organization by our board members.



**Meredith Whitney**  
Chair



**Stefan Loker**  
Secretary



**Dayna McNair**  
Director



**Krista Muncaster**  
Vice-Chair



**Wendy Teft**  
Director



**Jean-Marc Boisvenue**  
Director



**Hilary Di Crescenzo**  
Treasurer



**Chris Churney**  
Director



**Samrat Raj**  
Director



### MISSION

We deliver culturally responsive, accessible mental health services to children, youth and families while providing system leadership and advocating to improve care in our community.



### VISION

A community that cares, supports and transforms the lives of children and families.



### VALUES

Compassion	Trust
Belonging	Innovation
Advocacy	Excellence

**ABOUT THE ARTIST**

**Candy McManiman**

Candy has been improving her art and photography skills for years, as an artist, interior designer, gallery owner and art teacher.

She is attracted to birds and her paintings often utilize this theme.

As a Signature member of the International group called Artists for Conservation, her paintings have been accepted in their International Juried Show in Vancouver, Arizona Sonora Desert Museum and Qingdao, China.

Candy is also a member of the Federation of Canadian Artists and has been accepted into over a dozen shows.

Her interest in photography is honed on her world travels to see the variety of birds and mammals that inhabit our planet.

Read more: <https://www.artistsforconservation.org/artists/1046>



We listen. We advocate.  
We champion children to find their victories every day.  
We support the family, the central part of a successful outcome.  
We help put the pieces together.  
Caring. Supporting. Transforming Lives.



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