

CONNECTING *with* COMPASSION

ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25



From the Executive Director



“Connecting With Compassion” is the theme of this year’s report and AGM. At Wellkin, mental health matters every single day, and that shows in every life that we touch.

Wellkin continues to prioritize recognizing that the children and youth of Oxford & Elgin Counties need significant and accessible mental health supports. Throughout the past year, our staff ensured that clients were seen, wherever they needed to be seen (virtually, in-person, in-community, in-school, in-home, and more).

This report showcases some (but certainly not all) of Wellkin’s key accomplishments, and inspiring stories and insights from the year. The level of expertise and compassion of our staff continues to have a very positive impact on the children, youth, and families in our Counties. This is always a challenge, especially when working in a sector with very limited funding, and ever-changing priorities from the government.

While serving as a Lead Agency for Child & Youth Mental Health in Oxford & Elgin Counties, we continue to focus on system management, continuous quality improvement, program redesign, new programs, and more. We continue to seek additional funding opportunities at the Ministries and through grant applications.

Wellkin is on the leadership committee for a new provincial initiative, the Ontario Intensive Treatment Pathway (OITP). Supported heavily by the Ministry of Health, this program is being developed to increase access to intensive services, including live-in treatment, to ensure that every child or youth in Ontario has access to the treatment they require.

Wellkin is also involved with the development and implementation of One Stop Talk/Parlons Maintenant (OST/PM). This innovative program provides instant access to clinical therapists for children and youth throughout Ontario. Therapists can be reached by phone, text, and online chat. In addition to instant therapy, the children and youth can be connected with local resources in their community for ongoing support.

Wellkin is one of the lead agencies as a project sponsor for the Provincial Training Initiative (PTI). Through PTI, we are ensuring that there is accessible standardized training for child & youth mental health workers everywhere in Ontario.

Being entrusted with public funding is an enormous responsibility, and one that we take very seriously. I am incredibly grateful to our Board of Directors, Youth Engagement Advisory Committee, and other volunteers for their guidance, leadership, advocacy, and support. Holding us accountable, and providing governance and support to the leadership team is invaluable.

I especially want to thank all staff at Wellkin for their dedication and passion during the past year. Your unwavering commitment is what makes Wellkin leaders in our sector. On behalf of the entire leadership team, THANK YOU! I also want to thank our many community partner agencies; without your collaboration we would not be able to thrive and grow. Last but not least, I want to thank the people we serve... the children, youth and families – you are the reason we are here. Thank you for entrusting us with your care... mental health matters!

— *Kelly Baker, Executive Director*

From the Board President



It has been a privilege and honour to serve as your Board President since September. I would first like to acknowledge and thank our past Board President, Shawn Shapton, for his many years of service at Wellkin

and the Woodstock community, and for being my mentor when I first joined the Board.

Much like the rest of the world — Wellkin has experienced many challenges in our 2024–2025 year. And yet, Wellkin continues to lead the way for the counties of Oxford and Elgin in the delivery of Child and Youth Mental Health services.

This is of course due to the hard work, commitment and professionalism of all the Wellkin staff and management. The Brightside Youth Hub is a shining example of what can be accomplished when government and community work together.

I would like to take this time to acknowledge and thank those Board members who have left the Board in the past year and have assisted greatly in our commitment and assistance to Wellkin. Thank you Janis Hunt, Bilal Khalife, Wayne Ostermaier, and Suzanne Theriault.

One of my best personal experiences this year is to have been able to work more closely with and experienced the depth of knowledge, experience and talents on our Board of Directors. It has afforded me the opportunity to appreciate the countless hours our Board members commit to making Wellkin the invaluable service that it is! It has also made my duties much lighter.

I know that staff, management, administration and the Board are committed to the continued success of Wellkin and the families we serve. Never underestimate the difference you can make in someone’s life!

— *Mike Gobeil, Board President*

From the Youth Engagement Advisory Chair



This year has been a year of growth for Wellkin’s Youth Engagement Advisory (YEA), growing from a small but passionate team of 4 members to a larger but equally passionate team of 8 members.

This year saw several completed projects for the YEA. Members of the advisory participated in outreach opportunities at the St. Joseph’s Catholic High School Wellness Fair, the East Elgin Secondary School Volunteer Fair, and Clovermead in support of youth suicide awareness & prevention.

For Mental Health Week 2024, members of the YEA put together a bookmark campaign with the goal of spreading kindness. Bookmarks promoting kindness, compassion, and connection were distributed to local businesses and community organizations, with the message to pass it on.

Members of the YEA also participated in several pride events, including the St. Thomas Queer Prom, Oxford County Pride Family Day, and Elgin County Pride in

the Park where they hosted chill spaces and organized activities such as a plant adoption station and a 2SLGBTQIA+ history exhibit.

YEA attended Breaking the Ice, an event that was created and organized by Jaden Ball, a local Elgin County youth. The event promoted inclusion & cultural diversity in the community. Our team also joined community partners in supporting Grow Girls, an annual event open to all grade 9 girls in Oxford County, where they learn about resources and make networking connections. And, once again, the YEA attended the Jeep Club Fundraiser, held in Wellkin’s honour. We are so grateful for our generous and valuable community members and our incredible community partners.

Plans for the coming year include an event for Mental Health Week 2025, participation in more community pride events, and many more exciting plans that are still being dreamed up, so stay tuned!

— Wren, YEA Chair

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EMPOWERING CHILDREN & YOUTH
through empathy and kindness

Highlights

Brightside Youth Hub

This year has been a remarkable one for Brightside, marked by growth, connection, and meaningful youth engagement.

A Welcoming Drop-In

Our weekly Wednesday Drop-In continues to thrive as a welcoming space where youth can relax, build friendships, and access tailored support from Hub staff and service providers. Attendance has steadily increased, with an average of thirteen youth joining us for weekly drop-ins.

Over the past year, Brightside has supported 504 drop-in service interactions—with 108 workshop attendees, and 252 wellness activity participants.

Growing Partnerships for Greater Impact

In addition to the great work done by our core service providers, we've expanded our network by forming new partnerships with local youth-serving organizations. These creative collaborations are vital to ensuring our programs remain accessible, engaging, and relevant to youth—both within our temporary space and throughout the broader Oxford County community.

Creative Activities & Community Fun

Youth have had a blast this year taking part in a wide range of fun and enriching activities. They explored STEM projects and creative expression with support from staff at the Woodstock Public Library, Big Brothers Big Sisters Oxford, and Oxford County Library.

Additional highlights that added to the excitement included the Monster Trucks All-Out event, and Youth Cooking Group with Danielle at the Oxford County Community Health Centre.

Recreation & Skill Building

Our Hub Hoops program at the YMCA Woodstock has been very successful, with over 1000 attendees throughout the year, averaging 50 youth weekly.

Youth continue to have access to skill building opportunities, like Big Talks training presented by DART and supported by the Woodstock Police Services Victim Support grant.

Youth Leadership in Action

Brightside's Youth Hub Advisory Committee has grown to 27 active youth volunteers, with even more young people showing interest in joining.

Youth Leads from the committee take on key roles such as facilitating drop-in activities, attending community events, leading the Hub Hoops Program, and contributing to long-term planning for the hub's growth and impact.

Their passion for improving youth wellness is reflected in the hundreds of hours they've dedicated this year to meetings, events, planning sessions, and programming. Their voices shape everything we do.

"Being part of the Brightside Youth Hub Advisory Committee has had a positive impact on my life by giving me opportunities to connect with the community, grow as a leader, and gain confidence."

— Casey, Youth Lead

"I've made some fun memories during my time at the Youth Hub. I was able to reconnect with an old friend, try new recipes, and express myself through costume making.

I'm very excited to be part of planning future events and to keep facilitating the new Trinket Trading activity that I lead at the drop-in. I hope to keep making great memories at the Hub."

— Tatyana, Youth Lead

Expanding Access

We remain committed to addressing the unique accessibility challenges facing rural youth by hosting pop-up events throughout Oxford's rural townships and removing barriers to support transportation needs.

As we look ahead, we will continue to be creative, collaborative, and intentional in developing inclusive, accessible programming for all youth across Oxford County. We are so excited to see what will bloom in the next year for Brightside!

BrightsideYouthHub.ca

   @BrightsideYouth

Brightside is a safe, inclusive space where young people can access a wide range of supports, build skills, connect with peers, and find the resources they need to thrive.



One Stop Talk

One Stop Talk offers free virtual counselling services and seamless entry into child and youth mental health services across Ontario.

The program serves as a single access point to mental health services for children and youth aged 0–17, connecting them with registered and experienced therapists across the province. Wellkin’s therapists, and an integrated network of province-wide infant, child, and youth mental health agencies, support this program.

As of April 2025, the program has served 3,935 clients, with 45,341 unique connections. It has provided over 30 parent/caregiver sessions and nearly 400 navigation service sessions to date. OST has recently launched a marketing campaign that includes signage on buses and bus stops, radio ads, and TV commercials, and new website visits increased by over 200% in April 2025.

Mental Health Week Events

YEA’s Mental Health Week Open House

On May 5th, the Youth Engagement Advisory hosted an Open House & Wellness Event at Wellkin’s Elgin Office.

Youth created unique mental wellness stations featuring activities aligned with this year’s Mental Health Week theme, “Unmasking Mental Health”. Highlights included blackout poetry and stations for making bracelets, masks, and buttons. The stress ball mindfulness craft was an especially big hit with our community. Outdoor games, plus door prizes and pizza donated by generous local businesses, contributed to the event’s success.

It was a great experience for our youth, including many new members, to build leadership skills and confidence doing something they’re passionate about. The event also gave the community an opportunity to connect with Wellkin’s programs and become more familiar with the Elgin location. Welcoming over 25 families through the doors, it was the perfect way to kick off Mental Health Week 2025!

Brightside’s Mental Health Week

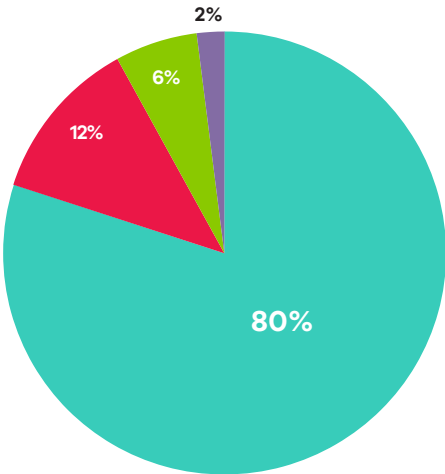
Brightside Youth Hub also hosted a dynamic Mental Health Week featuring a variety of engaging activities aimed at fostering connection and wellness among youth. Highlights included Chalk n’ Chat at Wellkin, where youth drew positive messages on the walkway and enjoyed visits from Woodstock Therapy Dogs. At a heartwarming Whiskers & Wellness event, in collaboration with Woodstock Kitten Nursery & Rescue, youth cuddled with kittens while they made crafts & socialized.

Over 60 youth took part in the Hub Hoops 3-Point Contest (with four lucky winners!), and the week concluded with a fun-filled Retro Gaming Night at Wellkin (graciously organized with Operandi Technology Solutions).

The week offered meaningful opportunities for youth to connect, relax and have fun in supportive, safe spaces.

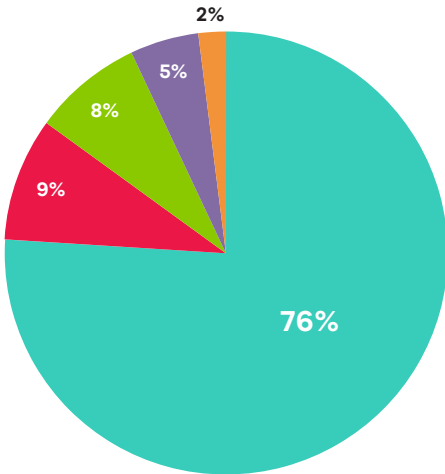


Financial Summary



Revenue

- MOH
- MCCSS
- Hub
- Recoveries
- Donations = <0.1%
- Other = <0.1%



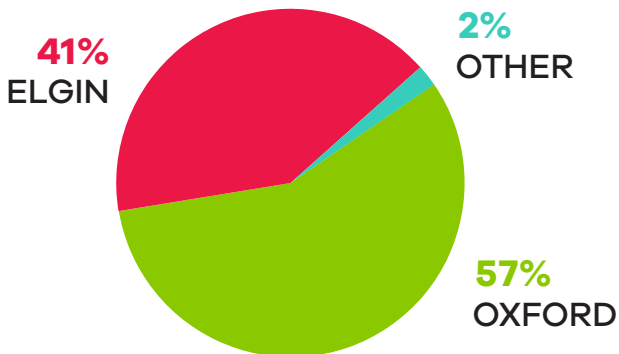
Expenses

- Employee Related
- Client Related
- Occupancy
- Office & Admin
- Purchased Services

	2024–2025	2023–2024	% Change
REVENUE			
Ministry Funding	4,490,789	4,598,960	-2.35%
Other Revenue	404,342	272,881	150.30%
Total Revenue	4,895,131	4,871,841	2.83%
EXPENSES			
Salaries & Benefits	3,640,461	3,745,438	-2.80%
Travel & Training	37,212	58,195	-36.06%
Client Related	446,324	130,114	243.03%
Occupancy	361,297	346,534	-10.02%
Office & Admin	245,320	286,865	18.91%
Purchased Services	104,691	242,011	-32.99%
Total Expenses	4,835,305	4,809,157	2.93%
Net Results	59,826	62,684	-0.10%

The Numbers

Clients served, by county



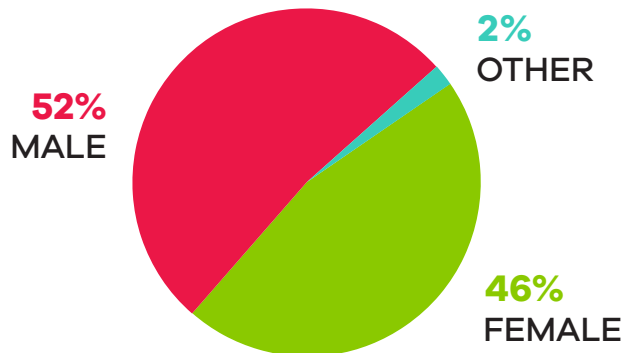
1,505+

clients served in-person
and through virtual service

3,065+

referrals to Wellkin
programs & services

Clients served,
by gender identity



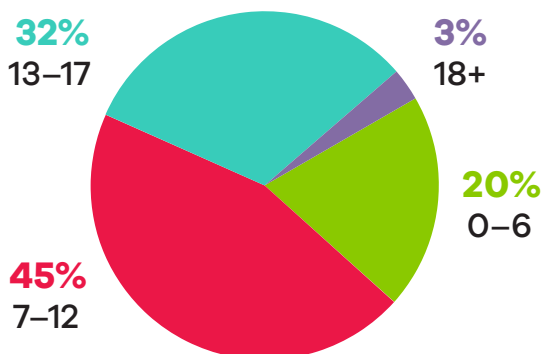
2,400+

social media followers,
across all platforms

400+

Board of Director
volunteer hours

Clients served, by age



250+

hours contributed by
the youth on the Youth
Engagement Advisory
Committee



A special thank you to

Canada 

Ontario 

**youth
wellness
hubs**
ONTARIO

**carrefours
bien-être
pour les jeunes**
DE L'ONTARIO

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Elgin

Clovermead Apiaries

Cross Country Jeepers

East Ontario United Way

IPEX Management

Kathie Brett

Oxford District Women's Institute

Pamela Derksen

Unilock

Woodstock Wildcats



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