

THE DOOR YOUTH CENTRE'S

ANNUAL REPORT

2025



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



It has been an exciting year at the Door; a year of incredible growth, both in attendance and in the breadth of our programming. With an **average of 25 youth a night**, and many evenings **reaching up to 40**, the Door has become, once again, the place to be for the youth of Centretown.

The strength of our **core programming**, the diversity of our activities, the lure of **scrumptious meals** and the **expertise of our staff and volunteers** all combine to make our centre a very appealing hub for teenagers to **thrive and grow**.

Our core programming remains focused on meeting the needs of our youth in three very important areas: **Education, Recreation and Social/Cultural Enrichment**. The staff and volunteers aim to make these experiences - **vital, exciting, youth-oriented and fun**. The diversity offered is amazing with the information shared and by the expertise provided to lead these activities.

In the **Education** module, **Homework help** is a nightly focus throughout the year. Regular sessions of **IT and VR** with Joe, **3D Printing** with Bingchen, **Vision Boards** with Semira, **Career Planning** with Susan and many other seminars augment the learning component of our centre.

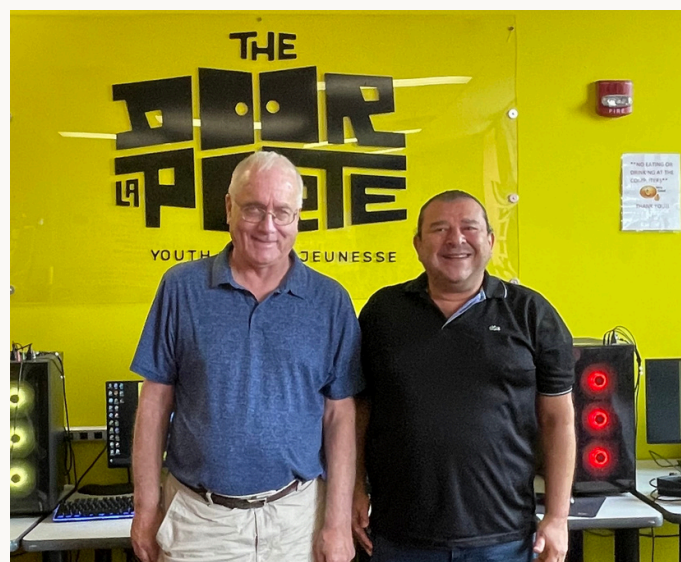
Of course, **recreation** is a huge motivator for youth attendance at the Door. Regular use of the **computers and gaming consoles** are extremely popular. A great variety of board games are played every night, often loudly and with much discussion. **Billiards and ping pong** provide hours of excitement. Outdoor sports like **basketball, dodgeball and volleyball** are enthusiastic pastimes. Recreation provides wonderful opportunities for the youth to **mix and meet new friends**.

There are numerous areas of **social and cultural enrichment** provided by the staff and volunteers at the Door. **Weekly music sessions** are led by Armaan and/or Chad and Elijah heads a popular **Friday Karaoke night**. Art activities are limitless and designed by exceptional volunteers: **Drawing** with Jordan, **Crochet** with Alejandra, **Photography** with Vincent, **Sculpting** with Caroline, **Knitting** with Shayla, **Card making** with Gabriella and **Bracelets** with Isabel. Our youth's talent comes to the forefront during all of these activities.

Throughout the year, the **enthusiasm of our wonderful staff** has never wavered as they lead our youth to fulfillment and success. The recognition of both **cultural and gender diversity** is ever present in all of our interactions and special events at the Door. Our celebrations **include all faiths and cultures**. Our workshops stress the unique issues and challenges faced by our participants such as **Mental Health, Gender, Internet Safety, Bullying and Career Planning**.

Thanks to the generosity of the **Ottawa Community Foundation**, youth are further inspired by the many field trips provided to them, including visits to the Flying Squirrel, the Humane Society, Saunders Farm and Plant Bath.

I would like to thank the "Village" that makes all of this possible as we strive to prepare our youth to take their meaningful future roles in our community: **our remarkable staff (Malik, Susan, Nathy, Vincent, Julien & Rabah, our incredible volunteers, our hard-working Board and our many community supporters**. Kudos for coming together in the pursuit of our noble goals.



Rick Desclouds (left) and Malik Ayass (right)



WHO WE ARE

VISION AND MISSION

Our vision is one of a **safe and welcoming place** where young people acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours that help them realize their full potential and participate actively in their communities. Our mission is to provide **integrated social and developmental activities** within an accessible and supportive environment. We are open to all youth and our programs are **free of charge**. The Door is the only youth centre in the Centretown West area, fulfilling a need that would otherwise go unmet in the community.

HISTORY

The Centre was modelled after The Door New York, a youth centre located in the heart of New York City. Art Stinson, the former head of the School of Social Work at Carleton University, saw a need for a place for young people to make new friends and access services in Ottawa. This vision led to the opening of the Centre in May 1994. In recognition of his vision, The Centre annually awards the Art Stinson Achievement Award to an outstanding young person who demonstrates good leadership and has made a difference at the Centre.

Staff

- Malik Ayass** - Executive Director
- Susan Agobia** - Program Coordinator
- Vanessa De Luca** - Youth Supervisor
- Nathy Tati** - Youth Supervisor
- Vincent Valentino** - Youth Worker
- Julien Mejia** - Youth Worker
- Eva Petersen** - Youth Worker
- Rabah Al Helfi** - Kitchen Supervisor

2025 Board of Directors

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Rick Desclouds - Chair | Justin Claros - Director |
| Sarah Carneiro - Vice-Chair | Luc Lalande - Director |
| Joe Carrigan - Director | Serguei Tabatchenko - Director |
| Julie Fallon - Treasurer | Taysham Shaw - Director |
| James Merhej - Secretary | Bhagyashree Ravinthiran - Director |
| Ashley McMullan - Director | Judy Thompson - Director |

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

YOUNG MEN'S MOTIVATIONAL

Young Men's Motivational started as a pilot in 2025 after a really natural need came up at the centre. With **Girls Night** already running as a dedicated space, a group of **young men** began asking for something of their own. They came together and shared that request with **Vincent, one of our Youth Workers**, who brought it forward to leadership. From there, the idea quickly turned into action, and with the support of **Telus Foundation**, the program was launched through the leadership of **Vincent** and volunteer **Elijah Dorval**.

The program is all about helping young men build **confidence, emotional awareness, and practical life skills** as they prepare for independent adulthood. It creates a **safe space** where young men can talk openly, learn from one another, and get support around **real life challenges**.

Each session focuses on things like **emotional well-being, healthy relationships, communication, budgeting, cooking, job readiness, and digital skills**. More than anything, it's a space where young men can **grow, connect, and feel supported** as they build the tools they need for the future.



Youth planting many different types of plants with Debbie (left)



Youth barbequing with volunteer Samir (second from the right) and Youth Worker Vincent (right)

THYME TRAVELS GARDENING PROGRAM

With the support and encouragement of our **previous Board Chair, Debbie Barton**, The Door launched a pilot gardening initiative in 2025 called the **Thyme Travels Gardening Program**. What began as a small idea quickly grew into a **hands-on learning opportunity** for young people to connect with **food, nature, and sustainability** in a meaningful way.

The program includes **weekly gardening sessions** where young people learn how to **plant, care for, and maintain herbs and other plants**. As part of the pilot, we introduced **composting at the centre** with the purchase of a new compost box, helping youth understand the **full cycle of food growth and waste reduction in a practical, engaging way**.

We were also fortunate to receive support and guidance from **Just Food and Sweet Willow Community Garden**, who helped strengthen the program and connect us to broader community **gardening knowledge and resources**. These partnerships have helped root the program in **community collaboration and shared learning**.

One of the most rewarding parts of the program is seeing young people use what they grow. The herbs cultivated in the garden are harvested and **used directly in our dinner program and Young Chef cooking sessions**, giving youth a real sense of **ownership and pride** in what they have helped create.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

THE RETURN OF 3D PRINTING

After a short break from **3D printing** due to a lack of knowledgeable volunteers, we were fortunate to welcome **Bingchen**, a passionate volunteer with experience and a strong interest in technology. His arrival brought new energy and direction to the program, helping us rebuild and reimagine what 3D printing could look like at The Door.

Bingchen took the lead in **revamping the program**, getting the equipment back up and running, and reintroducing it to our youth members in a way that was **hands-on, fun, and accessible**. With his support, we were also able to **purchase a new 3D printer**, which expanded the program's capacity and allowed more youth to participate and experiment with **design and creation**.

Since then, and specifically on **Friday nights**, our **Art & Tech room** came alive again with **curiosity and excitement**, as young people explore design ideas, learn new technical skills, and bring their creations to life. It has quickly become a **space where creativity and technology meet**, and where youth can see their ideas turn into something real.



Making new 3D Printing creations with Bingchen (left)

DINNER PROGRAM & YOUNG CHEF

With core funding support from the **City of Ottawa** and our incredible partner the **Ottawa Food Bank**, in **2025** our **dinner program** continued to grow and strengthen throughout the year. We were also fortunate to welcome a new staff member, **Rabah**, who brings a real passion for cooking and consistently ensures that young people are **well cared for** through her **delicious and comforting meals**.

In 2025, we served more than **12,000 snacks and meals**, including seconds and thirds, to our members. This level of support would not have been possible without the City's **Sustainability Funding** and the **ongoing partnership of the Ottawa Food Bank**, both of which play a key role in helping us meet the **needs of young people every day**.

Funding from the **Ottawa Food Bank**, allowed us to continue growing our **Young Chef program**, with a strong focus on **cultural awareness and inclusion**. On Fridays, the youth learned how to cook and ensured the meals they prepared were **Halal products**, giving them **hands-on experience in the kitchen** while building **confidence, responsibility, and pride** in preparing food that reflects the needs of the community we serve.



Cooking a delicious meal with Rabah (right)

IMPACT IN NUMBERS

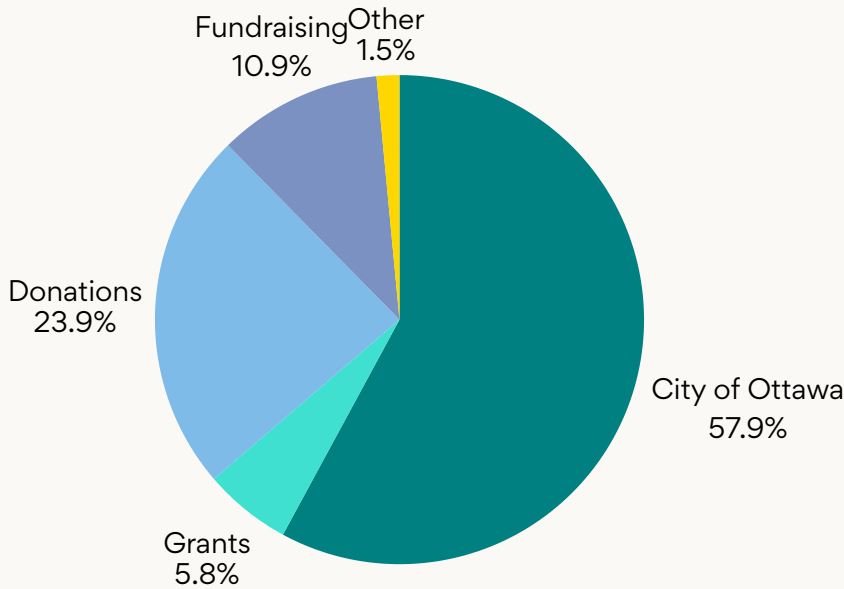
Behind every number is a young person supported, a connection built, and a community strengthened. These statistics reflect the reach and impact of our programs, services, and supports throughout the year.



FINANCIALS

Revenue **\$337,550**

Total Revenues in **2025** are relatively even with **2024**. Although there was a slight drop in donations in the year, it was offset with an **increase in fundraising revenues**.

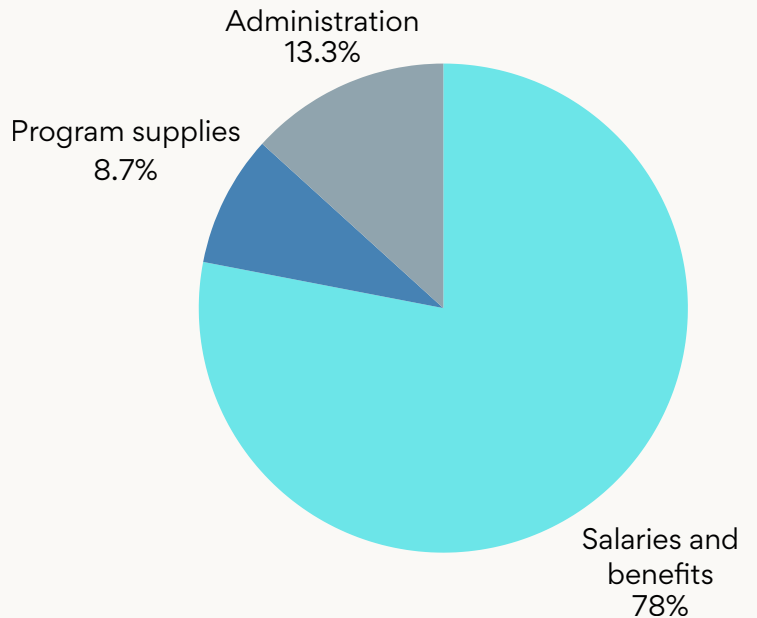


City of Ottawa	\$195,460
Grants	\$19,587
Donations	\$80,757
Fundraising	\$36,676
Other	\$5,070

Total Expense in 2025 **increased by almost 10%** due to the **commencement of a rent expense**.

Expenses **\$326,016**

Salaries and benefits	\$254,376
Program supplies	\$28,373
Administration	\$43,267



CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE: HONOURING OUR YOUTH MEMBERS

This scholarship is awarded, annually recognizing the outstanding contributions and dedication of our youth members. We celebrate candidates who demonstrate leadership, responsibility, and perseverance as they navigate the transition from adolescence to post-secondary education. Successful recipients will receive a monetary honorarium to support their upcoming academic journey.



**The Door Youth
Centre Scholarship
Award**

Sean Reeves

**The Door Youth
Centre Scholarship
Award**

Christina Kifle

**The Door Youth
Centre Scholarship
Award**

Mel Wan

**The Door Youth
Centre Scholarship
Award**

Mohammed Hajras

**Art Stinson
Achievement Award**

Gabriel Morales

In the memory of one of the founders of The Door Youth Centre, this award is granted annually to a current youth member who is a role model for others.

OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

2025 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Elijah Dorval, a **registered social worker** with both a **Bachelor's and Master's degree in Social Work**, first joined **The Door Youth Centre** in **2022** as a placement student during his undergraduate studies. What began as a placement learning opportunity quickly evolved into job opportunity. After the completion of his placement, Elijah **stepped into a youth worker role**, where he built **strong, meaningful relationships** with young people and made a lasting impact through his dedication and care.

Although **Elijah** later transitioned to a more specialized professional role at a different organization, making the difficult decision to step away from his position at **The Door**, his commitment to the youth we serve remained strong. Within weeks, he **returned as a volunteer**, continuing to share his **time, energy, and passion**.

Today, Elijah brings **creativity and joy** to the centre as our resident **karaoke expert** and co-facilitates the monthly **Young Men's Motivational Tuesdays** alongside **Vincent**, creating a space for **connection, growth, and mentorship**.

We are honoured to have Elijah as part of our community and deeply value his ongoing contributions to our team. In recognition of his **unwavering dedication, positive spirit, and continued commitment to supporting youth**, Elijah has been selected as the recipient of **The Door Youth Centre's Volunteer Appreciation Award**.



Previous Volunteer of the Year Recipients

- 2024 - **Armaan Bhulla**
- 2023 - **Jordan Montoya**
- 2022 - **Daniel Desir**
- 2021 - **Taysham Shaw & Dorian Reid**
- 2020 - **Dan Kingsbury & Carley Morris**
- 2019 - **Maria Schriemer**

BEYOND THE DOOR: AN ALUMNI STORY

MAYLIE-ANN IMBEAULT

“



Recently, I found myself feeling nostalgic and thinking about my time at The Door Youth Centre. As I looked back through old memories on the centre’s Instagram, I was reminded of just how **meaningful that space was for me** during my teenage years.

I will never forget the first time I walked through the doors. I remember feeling so relieved to have found a **safe place where I could build friendships, learn new things, and grow in confidence**. The **staff** were incredibly **supportive and inspiring to my younger self**. At one point, I even dreamed of becoming a volunteer there one day if I still lived in Ottawa.

So many small moments made a lasting impact. I remember the **meals delivered by volunteers**, even though I lived farther away than many other youth. The **bus tickets** that helped me get home. The **boutique**, the **resources**, the **homework help**, and of course the **delicious dinners shared together**.

The Door was **more than just a youth centre for me**—it was a place where I could **take a break from the worries of everyday life and simply be myself**.

Some of my favourite memories include bingo nights, **karaoke evenings** where I first found the confidence to sing into a microphone (even if I wasn’t very good!), playing volleyball in the yard, and the special night when I was allowed to bring my younger brother, even though he wasn’t quite old enough yet. That evening gave us a chance to bond and share a fun experience together that I will always remember.

For all of this and more, I want to say thank you. **The world truly needs more places like The Door**. I hope the centre continues to make a positive impact in the lives of young people for many years to come.

“

The world truly needs more places like The Door.

”

CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY

2025 PILLAR OF THE COMMUNITY AWARD

The logo for Stolen Goods features the words "STOLEN" and "GOODS" stacked vertically in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font. A horizontal grey line with a slight curve passes behind the letters of "GOODS".

The **Pillar of the Community Award** is given to an individual or organization who has made a significant positive impact in our community. This year's recipient is the **Stolen Goods Cocktail Bar**.

Our relationship with Stolen Goods Cocktail Bar began with a simple but heartfelt email from co-owner **Mike Campbell**, who reached out with a vision that extended far beyond building one of Canada's top cocktail bars. From the very beginning, there was a clear intention to **use their platform to give back** and make a meaningful impact in the Ottawa community.

What started as an idea of donating a portion of merchandise sales to support **The Door Youth Centre**, quickly grew into a lasting and impactful partnership. **Since 2021**, Stolen Goods Cocktail Bar has been a consistent and generous supporter of our work. Through **fundraising initiatives, in-kind contributions** to our events, and **ongoing advocacy**, they have demonstrated a genuine commitment to the youth we serve.

Their support has gone beyond financial contributions; it has reflected a **deep belief in community, creativity, and opportunity** for young people.

Previous Pillar of the Community Recipients

- 2024 - **Ottawa Community Foundation**
- 2023 - **Ottawa Food Bank**
- 2022 - **Ottawa Chrome Divas**
- 2021 - **Tracy Arnette**
- 2020 - **Andrew Frank**
- 2019 - **David Baird & Carolyn Mackenzie**

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS!

The Door Youth Centre relies on the support of our generous volunteers, donors and community partners to help us support local youth reach their full potential.

2025 VISIONARY PARTNERS



COMMUNITY FRIENDS & DONORS

- Actua's STEM Programs
- Air Canada
- Algonquin College - Dental Hygiene
- Alterna Savings
- Benevity
- BIA Chinatown
- The Box of Life
- Carleton University
- Charities Aid Foundation Canada
- Chrome Divas
- City of Ottawa
- Community Housing Foundation
- Dave Massine - Massine's YIG
- Domino's Pizza
- Fund Tell Publishing
- Gabriel Pizza
- Georgina Foundation
- GiftFunds Canada
- House of Targ
- Hydro Ottawa
- Jade Dental
- Just Foods
- Kelly Funeral Home - Somerset Chapel
- LaBarge Weinstein LLP
- Laheeb Shawarma & Grill
- Let's Talk Science
- Linda Dickson
- Manphong Supermarket
- Massine's Your Independent Grocer
- McPhail Memorial Baptist Church
- Mr. Lumsden
- Ottawa Community Foundation
- Ottawa Food Bank
- Ottawa Humane Society
- Ottawa Rowing Club
- ParticipACTION
- The Period Purse
- RBC Foundation
- Rickshaw Publishing
- Rideau-Rockcliffe Community Resource Centre
- Somerset West Community Health Centre
- Sunshine Psychotherapy
- Sweet Willow Community Garden
- Robert Smart Centre
- Season's Pizza
- Shiraz Market
- Skills Ontario
- Taggart Group
- The Rotary Club of Ottawa
- University of Ottawa
- Willow Youth Network
- Yogatown