



Muslim Social Services Waterloo Region

Annual Report 2022-2023

www.muslimsocialserviceskw.org





Our Mission

MSS aims to foster a healthy, inclusive environment and provides various opportunities of learning and personal growth through its educational, outreach, and support initiatives; it seeks to create an understanding of Islam and Muslims in Canada, build bridges with other faith communities as well as mainstream social service and community organizations.

Our Vision

MSS envisions an inclusive community that understands everyone's needs and provides support for all.

Our Values

- Faith Based Principles: Demonstrating strengths and caring of the Islamic Faith.
- Inclusivity: Filling the gaps that prevent people from feeling they are valued members of the Kitchener Waterloo community.
- Compassion: Treating everyone in a sincere, generous, kind and compassionate manner.
- Respect: Treating all persons equally and fairly in an accepting and non-judgmental manner.
- Confidentiality: Holding the highest regard for trust and privacy and upholding the highest professional ethical standard.
- Social Justice: Creating a society that encourages and celebrates the value of all persons.

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Message from the Board Chair

Assalamualaikum Ladies and gentlemen,

As the Board Chair, I am honored to address Muslim Social Services and reflect on our remarkable growth during the 2022-2023 year.

First and foremost, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you. We stand here today, united and stronger than ever, because of the unwavering dedication of our amazing volunteers, staff, community connections, and board members.

I also want to acknowledge the outstanding leadership of MSS' Executive Director, Duaa Al-Aghar. Her phenomenal strides and unwavering commitment have expanded our organization's capacity to support our community and have made a lasting impact across the KW region. Each of you, along with Duaa's leadership, has been the backbone of our organization. On behalf of the board, I am profoundly grateful for your invaluable contributions.

Equally deserving of our appreciation are our internal teams who have worked tirelessly to ensure the smooth operation and success of our programs and initiatives. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to all the new staff members who have joined us during this past year; *Sally Alkarmy, Takunda Mahere, Shiwan Ibrahim, Amina Andulqader, Annalise Baker*. I want to recognize the dedication of our MSS summer students; *David, Yasmin, and Abdul*, who have brought fresh energy and enthusiasm to our organization. Their hard work and passion have been truly inspiring. We also welcome two new board members: *Br. Anwer Arkani and Sr. Ashoo Anand*. Your talents and perspectives will continue to enrich our organization.



Message from the Board Chair

At the same time, we bid farewell to those who have left us; *Humera Javed and Sue Hummel*. We appreciate the time and effort they have dedicated to our cause, and we wish them well in their future endeavors.

Now, let me provide you with a summary of the top-line activities that have taken place over the previous period. It has been an eventful year, filled with numerous highlights and best moments. We have cultivated many new partnerships with a variety of local organizations including the *Waterloo Police Services, Porchlight, Sexual Assault Centre, Waterloo District School Board, Catholic School Board, Community Justice Initiatives, White OWL, and Camino* (to highlight a few), we have had the blessing of connecting with new community members through the range of programs that we have offered over this past year. Thank you also to all the political and community leaders throughout our Region that continue to walk alongside our organization's growth through their unwavering support.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and express our heartfelt thanks to our external donors, stakeholders, and partners. Your continued support and belief in our mission have been instrumental in our success. Specifically, I would like to extend our gratitude to *Upstream Waterloo Region, Capacity Canada, the Astley Foundation, the Resiliency Project, the Canadian Women's Foundation and Waterloo community Foundation* for their invaluable collaboration and partnership. We look forward to further strengthening these relationships in the future.

From the bottom of our hearts, we pass along our gratitude to our members, volunteers, board of directors, sponsors and funders. It is because you believe in our work that we can continue to be of service to the communities that rely on us for crucial programs and counselling services.

Thank you, and may this year be filled with continued success and fulfillment for all of us.



Message from the Executive Director

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the incredible funders, donors, and sponsors who have wholeheartedly supported our organization. Their unwavering commitment has been instrumental in driving our mission forward. I am immensely proud of our dedicated staff and board members who work tirelessly to make a profound difference in the lives of those we serve. Together, we share a vision of fostering an inclusive and resilient community, with a particular focus on empowering women including those facing gender-based violence. Our aim is to create an environment where those who benefit from our programs and services will not only survive but truly thrive. For example, through our Progressive Leadership Program, we empower women to become catalysts for change in our community. Also, our Healing Through Arts Program offers therapeutic benefits through various art forms. With the support of our generous partners and the unwavering determination of our team, we are committed to building a better life for these women and ensuring their voices are heard and respected.



Summary of Programs

Muslim Social Services Kitchener-Waterloo is a charitable organization that provides culturally- and spiritually-sensitive humanitarian and social services to the Muslim and non-Muslim communities of the Waterloo Region. MSS aims to foster a healthy and inclusive region where people can live with dignity and respect. We aim to create a deep sense of belonging in community members from collectivist contexts through programs aimed at leveraging the resilience of children and youth, creating safer families, through community outreach initiatives, counselling, bridge-building, and capacity-building.

Our approaches to service are integrated and reflective of unique community contexts. We are a small organization that has been able to offer a wide range of programs and service and build our reputation through strong community partnerships.

We reach out and serve a multitude of people through the many programs and services we offer at MSS. Several of these services can be seen under the Programs and Support page as well as under their own individual pages that highlight them in detail.

Through our various programs, services and community events such as Ramadan and Eid, we have served up to 4,005 individuals over the course of the 2022-2023 year. We hope to see this number increase yet again in the future.

4,005 *Individuals served over this past year.*



Programs and Support

- Counselling
- Progressive Leadership Program
- Healing Through Art and Music
- Hear Me Out: Resilient Youth
- Neighbors Helping Neighbors
- Ramadan Food Drive
- Psycho Educational Workshops
- Community Iftars
- Cooking Meals for Unhoused People

Counselling

Spiritually and culturally sensitive counselling provided for all individuals/families- in many languages (English, Arabic, Urdu, Pashto, Hindi, Punjabi, etc.).

Our counseling services are growing; during the last year, we've provided 20 psychoeducational workshops and 500 individual counselling hours.



READY TO CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE?

READY TO DO SOMETHING POSITIVE FOR YOURSELF?

Counselling Services Talk with MSS professional, licensed counsellors



MUSLIM SOCIAL SERVICES WATERLOO REGION

The Family Centre Hub, 65 Hanson Avenue,
Kitchener, ON, N2C 2H6

<https://www.muslimsocialserviceskw.org/>

 info@muslimsocialserviceskw.org

 (519) 772 4399 ext. 2707



IMPACT REPORT

COUNSELLING SERVICES

Muslim Social Services strives to provide a safe and culturally **sensitive** therapeutic environment that aims to help its diverse community of clients through their journey in understanding and achieve a sense of healing in the area of Mental Health. Our Psychotherapy/counselling services is often **tailored** to the client's needs and goals for therapy, with a **cultural** perspective at hand as well as the open mindset to learn about each clients own cultural background. Our specialty at Muslim Social Services Waterloo Region is our counselling service. MSS provides professional and confidential counselling for clients of all backgrounds ensuring **nobody** is turned away.

Our service is carried out by highly qualified trained therapists registered with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers, providing expert assistance. We provide various forms of therapeutic approaches to clients from various backgrounds. Our therapeutic approaches include trauma-informed practice, family therapy, couples therapy, youth therapy, and talk therapy. We at MSS provide our service on a sliding scale cost model so that we ensure it is **accessible for everyone**, even providing counselling for free to those who cannot afford it. Here is some feedback from our clients:

“ I have embraced my authentic self, overcome emotional wounds, and built resilience. ”

“ Thank you for making a **significant** difference in my life. ”

“ Your support has **empowered** me to live life on my own terms. ”

“ Thank you for **changing** my life for the better. ”

“ I have gained self-awareness, and developed the confidence to face challenges. ”

“ Helped clients changed their lives and see things **differently**. ”



THREE OFFICES
OVER 100 CLIENTS



Progressive Leadership Program

The progressive leadership program not only focuses on empowering women to become future leaders but also extends support to those who have experienced gender-based violence and trauma. We offer specialized assistance and resources to help survivors heal, recover, and rebuild their lives. Graduates of the program are equipped with the knowledge and skills to advocate for themselves and others, raising awareness about coping mechanisms and promoting healthy ways to address adversities. Through their outreach and educational efforts, they become agents of change, inspiring their communities to foster a safe and inclusive environment for all women. Our program aims to provide comprehensive support, empowerment, and education to help women overcome challenges and thrive as leaders.





IMPACT REPORT

PROGRESSIVE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

The progressive leadership program not only focuses on **empowering women** to become future leaders but also extends **support** to those who have experienced gender-based violence and trauma. We offer specialized assistance and resources to help survivors heal, recover, and rebuild their lives. Graduates of the program are **equipped** with the knowledge and skills to advocate for themselves and others, raising awareness about coping mechanisms and promoting healthy ways to address adversities. The program has greatly aided in the **development** of their careers by providing invaluable skills, knowledge, and opportunities to enhance their leadership abilities and navigate challenges with confidence.

Through their outreach and educational efforts, they become agents of change, **inspiring** their communities to foster a safe and inclusive environment for all women. Our program aims to provide comprehensive support, empowerment, and education to help women overcome challenges and **thrive** as leaders. It has empowered victims of gender-based violence, instilling them with strength and hope, enabling them to **reclaim** their lives and emerge as **resilient individuals**. Here is some feedback from our participants:

“ It was the **best experience** I had, learned a lot.”

“Great opportunity to build **connections** with wonderful ladies.”

“ I really like MSS's **dedication** towards their community.”

“ I look forward to **attending more sessions** in the future.”

“ Thank you for organizing an **amazing** program.”

“ I would like to **congratulate** Muslim Social Services on their hard work.”

“ Greatly impressed by the **organization** of the workshops and the values.”



**OVER 65 PARTICIPANTS
ACROSS 10 WEEKS**





Healing Through Art for Kids

Making art is a fun and creative way to tell stories about our feelings and experiences. This program is designed to look after the mental health of the kids. They use their creativity to make art that shows their feelings and experiences. Through this program, children can develop coping mechanisms to manage their emotions and build resilience, promoting their overall mental well-being.



IMPACT REPORT

HEALING THROUGH ART FOR KIDS

Healing Through Art is a program that integrates **creativity, belonging, and growth**. This program is designed to give immigrant and refugee children the tools to understand and express themselves, reduce stress, improve mood, and to build relationships through others. A safe, inclusive space for all kids, this program uses art as a tool for kids to **tell their story**.

Incorporated into this program are learning mindfulness skills, understanding emotions, developing compassion, addressing themes of identity and belonging, grief and loss, healthy relationships, and positive self-talk. Children are given an **opportunity** to celebrate their unique diversity and personal story of immigration to Canada and to grow to **understand** their place in this world. Here is some feedback from parents, kids, and facilitators:

“ The **highlight** of my week is art ”

“ She is so **excited** to start the program again! ”

“ I wish I could come here **every day** ”

“ Such a beautiful, creative space where kids can **express** themselves ”

“ It is incredible seeing the kids **open up** and **grow** ”

“ They learned how to **support** and **nurture** their friends ”



2 SEPARATE SESSIONS FROM JANUARY AND MAY
20 PARTICIPANTS PER SESSION



Healing Through Music

This program is a transformative experience designed to promote well-being and personal growth through creative expression. It is open to all, regardless of previous musical experience or skill level. Our focus is on fostering a sense of unity and connection through group music making and art exploration. Participants will discover the therapeutic benefits of engaging in various art forms, such as dancing, singing, and visual art, allowing for profound self-expression and emotional release. Through this inclusive community, newcomers and individuals seeking new experiences will find a welcoming environment to share their stories and engage in narrative sharing.





IMPACT REPORT

HEALING THROUGH ART AND MUSIC FOR PARENTS

Introducing our Healing Through Arts and Music Program, a transformative experience designed to promote well-being and personal growth through **creative expression**. This program is open to all, regardless of previous musical experience or skill level. Our main focus is on fostering a sense of unity and connection through group music making and art exploration. Participants will discover the therapeutic **benefits** of engaging in various art forms, such as dancing, singing, and visual art, allowing for profound self-expression and emotional release.

The program provides a safe and supportive space for individuals to process and **heal** from different experiences, nurturing personal growth and resilience. Through this inclusive community, newcomers and individuals seeking new experiences will find a welcoming environment to share their stories and engage in narrative sharing. Together, we will build relationships, practice mindfulness, develop confidence, and empower each other on our **healing journeys**. Join us and embark on a transformative path of self-discovery through the arts. **Here is some of the feedback from our participants:**

“ **Amazing** to be able to work with other people with love and excitement.”

“ Enjoyed the painting because it helps to **express** your feelings and mentality.”

“ The program was **enjoyable** for me and for my daughter.”

“ I feel very **comfortable**.”

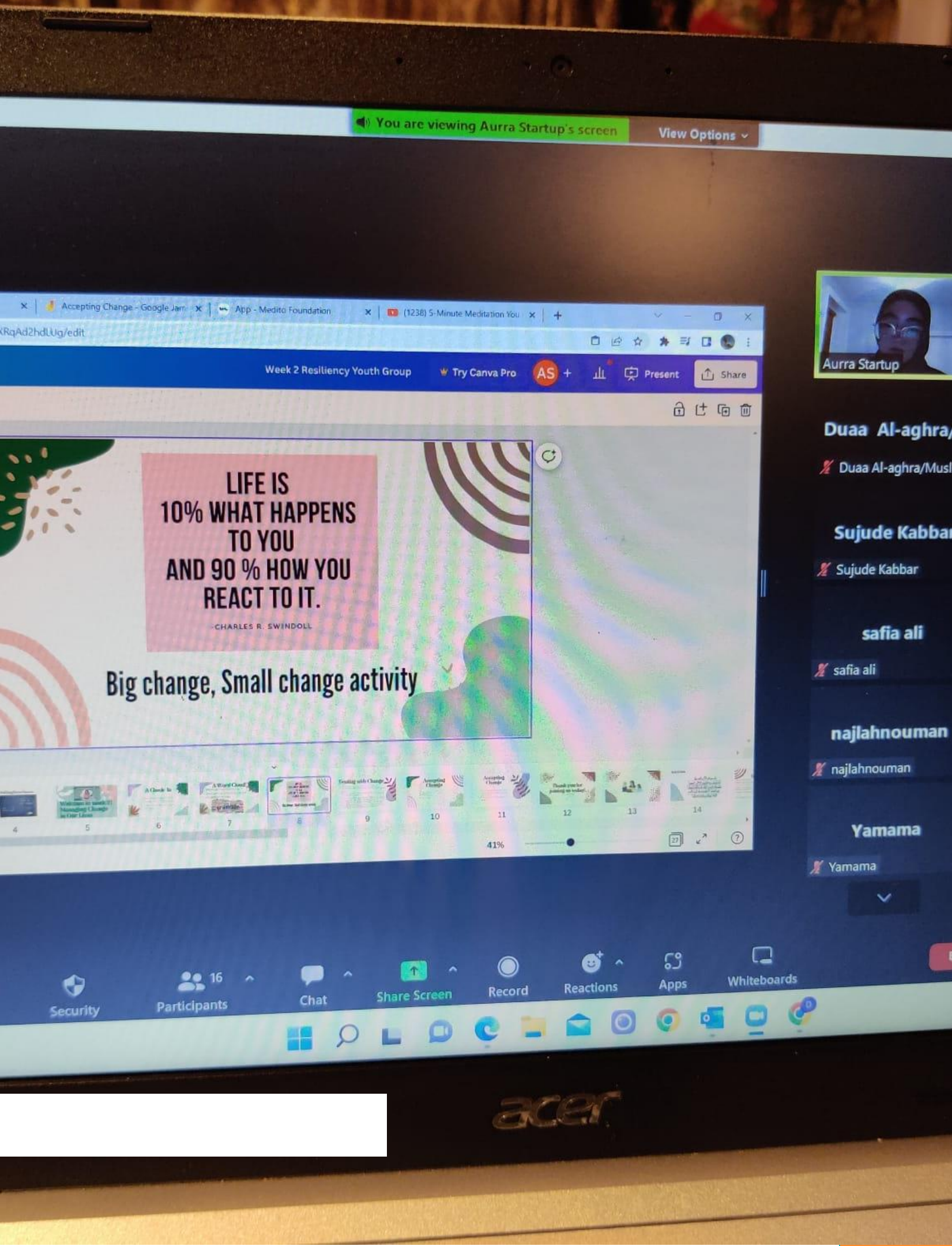
“ I love the music and singing in the program.”

“ The program was **fantastic**, and brought positive energy.”



FOR EACH PROGRAM
OVER 15 PARTICIPANTS





Hear Me Out: Resilient Youth

Hear Me Out (HMO) is a Youth program that focuses on resilience and community connectedness through a cultural and spiritual lens. Hosted through weekly zoom sessions, content delivery consisted of a mixture of guest speaker-led, and facilitator led sessions on various topics such as discipline, goal setting, positive psychology, emergency response tactics, community involvement, and social determinants of mental health. Additionally, participants were encouraged to engage in guided "brave space" circle talks where they shared their perspectives on these topics. The goal of the program is to instill the tools necessary for self-love and resilience in our participants while also encouraging them to be a source of positivity and encouragement in the community.



IMPACT REPORT

HEAR ME OUT: RESILIENT YOUTHS

Hear Me Out (HMO) is a Youth program that focuses on **resilience** and **community connectedness** through a cultural and spiritual lens. Hosted through weekly zoom sessions, content delivery consisted of a mixture of guest speaker-led, and facilitator led sessions on various topics such as self-discipline, goal setting, positive psychology, emergency response tactics, community involvement, and social determinants of mental health. The goal of the program is to **instill** the tools necessary for self-love and resilience in our participants while also **encouraging** them to be a source of positivity and encouragement in the community.

The facilitators in this program were **intentional** in fostering a healthy and safe environment for the youth to express themselves. Program delivery was designed with the goal of **personal growth** through educational sessions from proven theories regarding resiliency and lived experience of the participants. HMO's session planning was constant in including Islamic faith-based principles that closely aligned with the topics delivered in each week. Here is what some of the participants have to say:

“ I have learned to not undervalue myself.”

“ I love the part where we are free to share our opinions and take turns speaking ”

“ Its so fun and engaging to talk about important topics together ”

“ Brought our teams closer and we could discuss easily about mental health ”

“ I have learned to respect people's opinions and choices ”

“ Taught me so much things including patience, respect for others ”



**PROGRAM RAN FOR
10 MONTH DURATION**



Neighbors Helping Neighbors

The Neighbors Helping Neighbors program is an inclusive weekly initiative designed to create a welcoming and supportive community for women, including refugees and newcomers. The objective is to address feelings of isolation and foster diversity and integration by offering access to valuable resources and creating a healthy environment. By participating in the Neighbors Helping Neighbors program, women from diverse backgrounds can connect, share experiences, and receive support in a safe and inclusive space. We believe that by building strong community bonds, we can collectively work towards personal growth, empowerment, and the overall well-being of all participants.





IMPACT REPORT

Neighbors Helping Neighbors Program

The Neighbors Helping Neighbors program is an inclusive weekly initiative designed to create a **welcoming and supportive community for women**, including refugees and newcomers. **Our primary objective** is to address feelings of **isolation** and foster **diversity** and **integration** by offering access to valuable resources and creating a healthy environment.

In addition to facilitating a sense of belonging, we are pleased to offer biweekly yoga classes as part of the program. These classes provide an opportunity for physical and mental well-being, promoting relaxation and stress relief.

By participating in the Neighbors Helping Neighbors program, women from diverse backgrounds can connect, share experiences, and receive support in a safe and inclusive space. We believe that by building strong community bonds, we can collectively work towards **personal growth**, **empowerment**, and the overall **well-being** of all participants. Here is some **feedback** on the program from the **participants**:

“Helps **lessen** the feeling of **alienation**.”

“Ladies get to develop a sense of **belonging** in our **community**.”

“We feel very **comfortable** with the **Program Facilitator**.”

“It is **amazing** and we are **learning** so much.”

“Made me **excited** to attend each session.”

“It added tremendous **experience** to my professional life.”



OVER 75 PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



Ramadan Food Drive



During Ramadan, MSS was busy with the distribution of social assistance to the families in need, all identified by our partner agencies.

MSS served 2430 iftar meals throughout the month of Ramadan. It was an extraordinary accomplishment for us. Our volunteers cooked and delivered the iftar dinners every night to over 100 students from the University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University, the University of Guelph, and Conestoga College. In addition, through our Ramadan Food Hamper Program we were able to reach out to hundreds of families to provide them with food and gift cards. All through the month of Ramadan, we felt blessed by our volunteers and donors, without their support we couldn't do it.

Psycho Educational Workshops

Muslim Social Services Waterloo Region

AEROBIC EXERCISE FOR WOMEN

Every Tuesday from
7:30 - 8:30 PM

CARIZON, 645 WESTMOUNT ROAD E, KITCHENER

Aerobic exercise has been shown to be extremely beneficial for improving our health, reducing risk of heart conditions, and relieving stress. Women, come join our new aerobic exercise sessions!

Muslim Social Services Waterloo Region

Will Writing Program

Learn to write a will in Canada

Presented by guest speaker lawyer Soha Al-Masri.

Soha is an Ontario-licensed lawyer with a Master's degree in Business Administration (MBA) and more than fifteen years of experience in practicing. Her goal is to inspire new immigrants to challenge the perceived barrier to success and see that anything is possible.

Her contact info:
Soha Al-Masri Law Professional Corporation
Sohaalmasri@outlook.com
(226) 749-2901

October 25th, 7:00 PM
Chandler Mowat Community Centre
222 Chandler Dr, Kitchener

info@muslimsocialserviceskw.org 519 772 4399 ext. 2707

Muslim Social Services

Positive parenting

A series of workshops about parenting in different cultures

Thursday, January 21
5 PM - 6 PM

For more information
info@muslimsocialserviceskw.org

Muslim Social Services Waterloo Region

Food and Nutrition Session

by **Katie Pajooman**
Certified Nutritional Practitioner

Learn about proper nutrition and food choices to help us live our best healthy lives.

7:00 PM, Tuesday November 8th 2022
Chandler Mowat Community Centre,
222 Chandler Drive, Kitchener

MUSLIM SOCIAL SERVICES WATERLOO REGION

GYNECOLOGIST SESSION

Guest speaker
Dr. Khulood Murad
Gynecologist (OB/GYN)

Covering all the Gynecologic concerns that the ladies face

6:00 PM
FRIDAY NOVEMBER 18
CHANDLER MOWAT COMMUNITY CENTER
222 CHANDLER DRIVE, KITCHENER

MUSLIM SOCIAL SERVICES WATERLOO REGION

CANADIAN RED CROSS PRESENTATION

INTRODUCING THEIR SERVICES AND LEARNING IMPORTANT SKILLS

PRESENTED BY
ERIC LUCKO
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL

6:00 PM
NOVEMBER 25TH

Chandler Mowat Community Centre
222 Chandler Dr, Kitchener

MUSLIM SOCIAL SERVICES WATERLOO REGION

CYBERSECURITY AND HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM FRAUD

Presented by the Waterloo Region Police Service
guest speaker **Detective Constable Joshua Rhab**

6:00 PM, JANUARY 18TH 2023

CARIZON
645 Westmount Road E, Kitchener, ON

for more information, feel free to contact us
info@muslimsocialserviceskw.org

Muslim Social Services

Come Join Us Sunday for

WOMENS ONLY SWIMMING

MUSLIM SOCIAL SERVICES KW

Sunday, every week from
11:00 AM to 12:30 PM

@ Cameron Heights Pool, 301 Charles St E

To register for free please email us: info@muslimsocialserviceskw.org

Muslim Social Services and Focus for Ethnic Women

FOCUS ON TECHNOLOGY

FREE COMPUTER WORKSHOP FOR WOMEN BASIC LEVEL

Muslim Social Services and Focus for Ethnic Women invite you to join our computer literacy workshops every week.

ON ZOOM

Program will be in Arabic and English

TO Register
Email: info@muslimsocialserviceskw.org OR
Email: focusonethnicwomen@gmail.com

WHEN
Thursdays
12:00-1:30 PM
From Feb. 10th to Mar. 31

WHO
Newcomers, Visible minority and immigrant women

MUSLIM SOCIAL SERVICES

Healthy Lifestyle Management

with the Registered Pharmacist
Nour Al-Maghazachi

Join Muslim Social Service Women Wellbeing program to promote and learn about healthier lifestyles and diets.

Tuesday Feb 15th 2022
4:30 - 6:30 PM
ON ZOOM

- 1 Ideal Weight vs Healthy Weight
- 2 Food Choices
- 3 Medication & Supplements, Herbal Remedies
- 4 Adverse Effects of Medication to Body Weight
- 5 Balanced Lifestyle

Community Iftars

We organized Iftars for the community at the Community Centers and Family Center, fostering unity and diversity during Ramadan. The events received an excellent response, with a large number of attendees eagerly partaking in breaking their fasts together. People from various backgrounds and religions joined us, and we were honored to have community and political leaders share meals with the public.

[Watch the CTV News Report Here!](#)



Cooking Meals for the Unhoused People

Muslim Social Services Waterloo Region and the Muslims of KW conducted an event in collaboration with Ray of Hope called Food for Hope. Volunteers with Muslim Social Services Waterloo Region helped cook and serve a fully halal meal at Ray of Hope in Kitchener. Here they provided meals to the broader community in need by cooking for the unhoused and those living in the Addiction Treatment Centre. We hope to continue to cook and serve the unhoused and underprivileged individuals in our community and look forward to building stronger relationships in the months.



Volunteer Appreciation Party



2022 Financial Statements

	2022	2021
Net Assets	\$221,557	\$86,573
<u>Revenues</u>		
Grants	\$282,608	\$163,984
Social Assistance	\$30,559	\$18,733
General Donations	\$14,710	\$4,826
Counselling Services	\$10,898	\$180

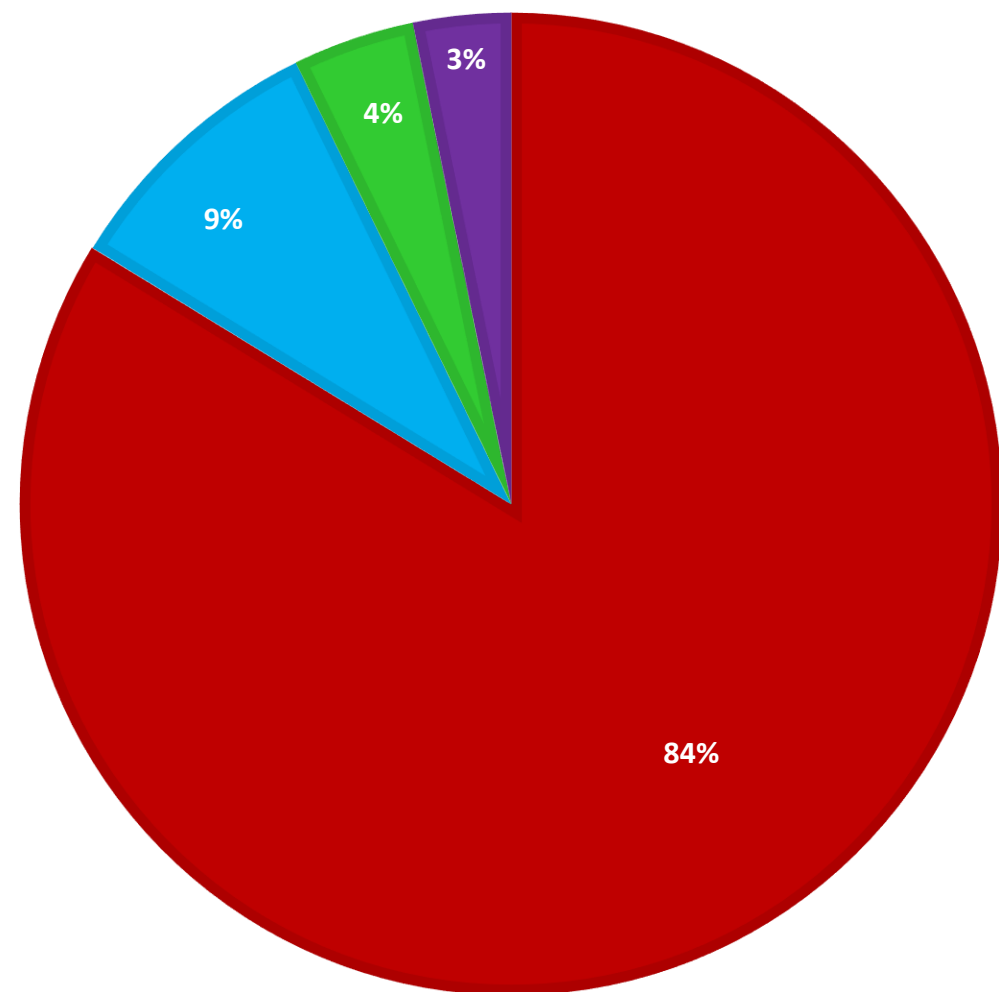
2022 Financial Statements

<u>Expenses</u>	2022	2021
Salaries and Benefits	\$122,173	\$103,936
Program Costs	\$50,078	\$22,073
Social Assistance	\$11,197	\$10,245
Occupancy Costs	\$6,262	\$7,844
Sub-contracts	\$4,048	\$3,565
Legal and Professional Fees	\$3,400	\$3,600
Fees and Dues	\$2,250	\$1,038
Office and General Expenses	\$2,006	\$832
Insurance	\$1,997	\$1,970

2022 Financial Statements

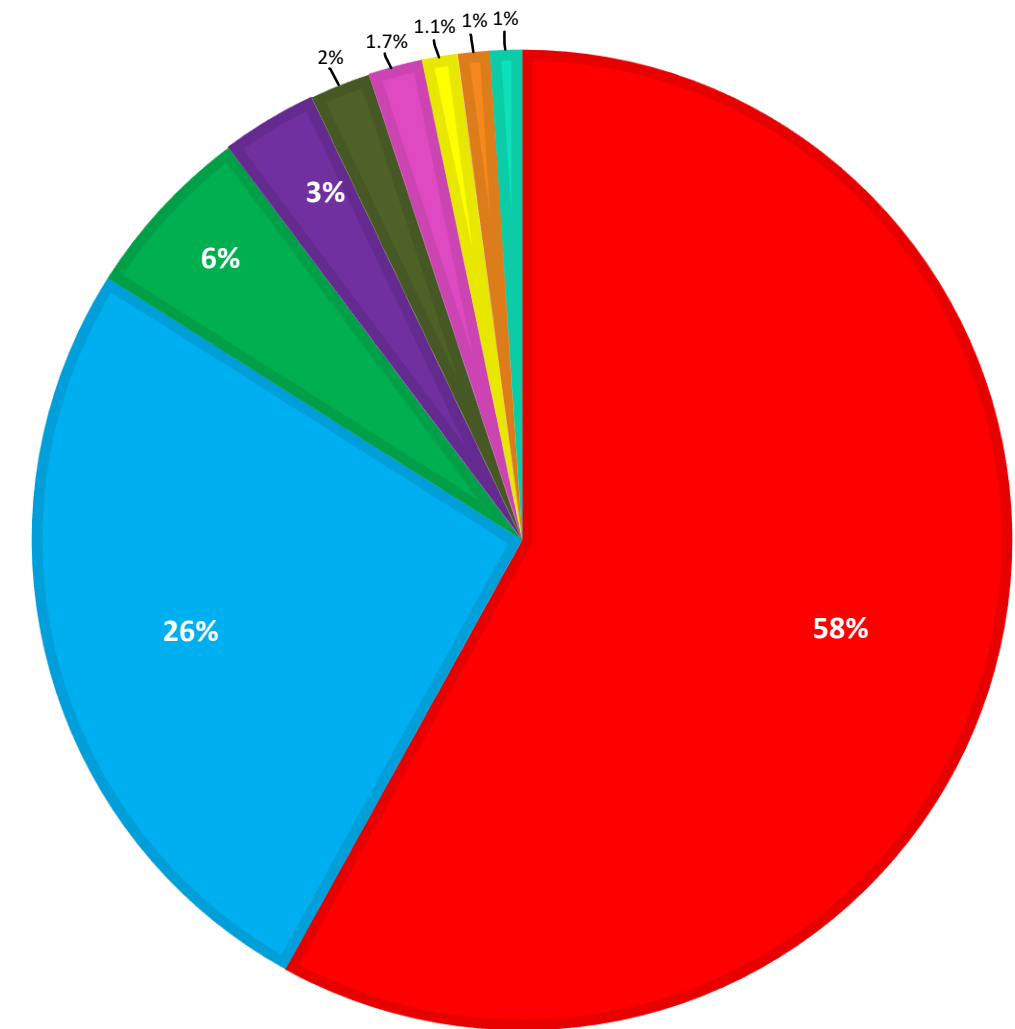
Breakdown Of Revenues

■ Grants ■ Social Assistance ■ General Donations ■ Counselling Services



Breakdown Of Expenses

■ Salaries and Benefits ■ Program cost ■ Social assistance ■ Occupancy cost ■ Sub-contracts ■ Legal and Professional fees



Thank you to our Funders and Partners



Thanks For Reading!









Muslim Social Services Waterloo Region

Contact us

The Family Centre,
65 Hanson Avenue,
Kitchener, ON, N2C 2H6
519-772-4399 ext. 2707
info@muslimsocialserviceskw.org

Follow us

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