



ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2021

Together, we are making a *SHIFT* for good

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S.H.I.F.T.
SUPPORT AND HOPE
FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES TODAY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from Executive Director & Board Chair	2
Emergency Overnight Shelter Program	2
Participant Impact Story #1	2
Street and Community Outreach Program	2
Participant Impact Story #2	2
Community Dinner and Drop-In Programs	2
Participant Impact Story #3	2
Looking Ahead	2
Fundraising	2
Financial Summary	2
THANK YOU	2

Moving Forward, Making a SHIFT For Good

Where to begin?

Looking back at the growth of our organization, **it's incredible what we have been able to accomplish in 4 short years!** Though 2020 brought about incredible difficulties for the South Simcoe community, across Canada and the world, 2021 prolonged the ongoing health and safety measures and the world around us grew weary of the unceasing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the province struggled with constant uncertainty and the frustrations of multiple lockdowns and isolation mandates, S.H.I.F.T.'s regular programming remained open and accessible to our participants.

While our focus has always been on safe, welcoming, and respectful services, never has the need for a safe space to access shelter, food and supports been more important than in the last 2 years. **Our frontline workers have fought through fear and uncertainty each day to provide lifesaving services. They have remained flexible and steadfast in their commitment to provide consistent and outstanding services.** Our leadership rallied with other community partners to strategize ways to cope in this "new normal".

Throughout the pandemic, the message was delivered loud and clear to "stay home and stay safe". This has been an impossible task for those experiencing homelessness in our community, with no safe and affordable place to call home. Capacity in emergency shelters has remained limited due to ongoing safety precautions, most drop-in programs continued to stay closed limiting access to supports, and access to public spaces was restricted diminishing options for respite from the elements. Above all of this, with the skyrocketing cost of housing in general and the dire lack of affordable housing in our region, **it continues to be a terrifying time to experience homelessness.**

Our Mission

To partner with the individuals and families we serve to make a meaningful *shift* in their circumstances.

Our Vision

A community that empowers change.

While the challenges of 2021 seemed unending, we successfully managed full operation of several regular programs, serving New Tecumseth and the surrounding municipalities that make up South Simcoe, and adapted to include interim programming as the need arose in our community. We actively participated in weekly calls with other service providers and peripheral supports in the area to provide updates and collaborate on strategies to continue protecting the community's most vulnerable.

Not only that, but amid the ongoing challenges of our world around us, our organization underwent some much-needed change. In recognition that we are a great deal more than the traditional model of 'out of the cold', we set out to find a name for our organization that better reflected what we do in our community. With some input from the community and those we serve, we proudly settled on S.H.I.F.T – Support and Hope for Individuals and Families Today. **Our goal is to support individuals and families in feeling that they belong to and are engaged in the community, encouraging, and assisting them in "making a shift" in their circumstances.**

Your support has allowed S.H.I.F.T. to adjust during an ever-changing pandemic to ensure people always have a place to turn to for help. You helped us to ensure that we have sufficient and appropriate supplies to carry out our work and helped sustain the adaptations we had to make to provide emergency shelter, food and supports safely. **But beyond addressing urgent needs; your generosity gave so many the precious gift of hope.** Through the launch of our Daytime Drop-In Centre program, your contributions assisted us in providing people daily access to supports and resources helping them to make positive steps towards reaching their housing goals. Your donations helped us to equip our staff with the tools and skills necessary, to ensure that our programming remained open and accessible. Your passion for helping the community ensured that our shelves were stocked, and ready-made meals were available for those experiencing food insecurity and struggling with accessing their next meal. At a time when, now more than ever, a home is essential to survive, you helped to provide shelter for nearly 50 individuals experiencing homelessness and supports to hundreds more in our community, needing help to find or sustain housing. **You are truly helping us to make a *shift* for good.** Thank you for bringing hope to a challenging and unpredictable year.

The work we do at S.H.I.F.T. can be challenging, but we find great pleasure in seeing the lives of those we serve transformed through the building of consistent trusting relationships, honest communication and promotion of participant choice and empowerment. The support we have received from our community has been nothing short of amazing! What a blessing, that our community can pull together with compassion to help those who are struggling to move forward!



Jenifer Pergentile
Executive Director




Lisa Nicol
Chair,
Board of Directors



Emergency Overnight Shelter Program

Housing-Focused Shelter, Providing Resources for Community-Building

This year our Emergency Overnight Shelter (EOS) Program saw its highest number of participants since we first opened our doors to provide shelter for those experiencing homelessness in Alliston and the surrounding area. Despite ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, our program was at or near capacity for many times throughout January through April, and nearly every night of November and December.



The EOS Program offers overnight shelter to individuals and couples experiencing homelessness, with no housing alternatives. As a short-term, housing-focused shelter, the program is intended to bridge the gap between entering homelessness and moving into safe and sustainable housing. Our focus is on provision of shelter while providing resources for community-building. Our aim is to support participants in feeling that they belong to and are engaged in the community.



Though program Participants are encouraged to work independently to create a sustainable plan to move to a safe longer-term location in the community, staff partner with them to assist them in reaching their goals and completing housing-related tasks. Through this partnership, we saw 18 individuals obtain permanent housing or temporary housing solutions at the time of discharge in 2021, and in total the EOS program provided over 600 nights of safety to individuals experiencing homelessness in our community.

600+

Overnight stays

54

Unique Participants

15

Days at capacity

18

Participants housed

Making Transitions with the Help of a Team of Supporters.

As S.H.I.F.T works from a Housing First perspective, success can come in many forms. Shirley first came to S.H.I.F.T. at a time when our shelter programming was operating out of a local motel, as part of the pandemic response. At the time, Shirley was fleeing a domestic abuse situation and was forced to place her children in adoptive custody to get out of her situation safely. She sought safety and stability in our programming, and it took time for her to open up and begin to trust our staff. In time, she learned that our team would support her in making important life transitions as she moved forward in her journey towards independence. Through working with a team of supporters from S.H.I.F.T. and other community partners we were able to connect her with, Shirley was able to transition into a long-term supportive shelter that better met her unique needs.

Months later, Shirley returned to us with a vehicle and employment and utilized the services of our Outreach program to help support her with completing paperwork, accessing clothing and food items,



and making connections to other service providers that could assist her in reaching her housing goals. With this safety net of support from shelters, outreach, and other community partners, Shirley's strength and determination allowed her to flourish. In time, with hard work and a team of supporters in her corner, Shirley found safe and appropriate housing for herself and was able to reunite with her children.

While now housed, Shirley continues to access our Outreach support to not only remain housed but build more community connections for herself and her children. Shirley is grateful for the supports and care she received while accessing S.H.I.F.T. programming. Knowing that we are partnering with Shirley towards meeting her housing-related needs, she feels empowered to create lasting change and reach her full potential. With our help, she is motivated to continue to improve her quality of life, and together we are moving forward, making a *shift* for good!



**Names, dates, and photos have been changed to ensure confidentiality and respect of privacy.*

One measure of success we have seen is how fluidly individuals can access the different programs S.H.I.F.T. offers and those offered in the broader South Simcoe community.

Building Connections, Linking to Resources & Empowering Resiliency

2021 was the Outreach Program's first full year of operations. Throughout the year the Outreach Team has worked diligently to establish regular stops and service provider partnerships throughout South Simcoe, which has allowed them to access space for participant appointments and to make connections with community members in need. With an increased presence in the community, the team has seen a significant increase in participant interactions and steady incline in average number of unique participants per month.



In 2021 the Outreach program expanded to include a second Outreach Worker and offer services 6 days per week, through funding agreements administered by The County of Simcoe. This increased capacity helped to build a stronger presence in South Simcoe, allowing the Outreach Team to develop deeper connections with participants and offer improved quality of services. In addition, we moved forward with the purchase of our S.H.I.F.T. Outreach van, to assist the Outreach Team in carrying out their duties safely and effectively. Outfitted with all necessary

supplies and resources, the team can ensure consistent recognition and visibility in the community, while using the Outreach van.

With a specific focus on prevention of homelessness the Outreach Team seeks to connect with and offer lifesaving supplies and supports to those at-risk of or experiencing homelessness and/or food insecurity (housed or otherwise) throughout South Simcoe. Outreach Workers, with the support of specially trained volunteers connect with participants where they are at, to provide access to food, basic needs, information and much more.

7

Community
partnerships
established

950+

Participant
interactions

48

Participants
per month
(average)

Support through Partnership and Collaboration



Phillip was first connected to our Outreach team during the warmer months, through our referral from CONTACT Community Services. For several years, Philip had been couch-surfing and living rough in the Alliston area, with no connection to services or supports to assist him in obtaining housing. Over the next several months, Phillip remained connected with our Outreach team to access supplies, food, resources, and attended our headquarters space to take a hot shower and chat with our Outreach team for some companionship.

As winter approached, the team worked hard to convince Phillip to access the Emergency Overnight Shelter program as an interim solution while working actively on his housing-related goals. Having grown up in Alliston, he was full of stories about the surrounding area, and he brought his enthusiasm and joy into our shelter when we opened in November. At this time, the Outreach team could transfer the work they had done with Phillip over the summer to our Shelter staff for a seamless soft referral.

While it is a common misconception that S.H.I.F.T. 'imports' homelessness to the New Tecumseth area, we are proud to support individuals and families from our very own community, as well as those from all over South Simcoe.

Having our Shelter Support team to help where needed and having a safe place to stay provided Phillip with some piece of mind while he waited to obtain the necessary assistance and find safe, sustainable housing. With Phillip safely in shelter, our Intake Workers and CONTACT's housing staff were able to maintain communication with Phillip, partnering with him in his housing journey. Within several weeks of entering the shelter program, Phillip was able to find housing, and began planning

his move for early into the new year, but not before finding decorations and helping us make the shelter a bit more festive.

Phillip still drops by occasionally to access our Community Dinner program and is doing well. He is thankful for the kindness and support that the dedicated and compassionate staff at S.H.I.F.T. have offered him while accessing our programs. He is grateful for the role S.H.I.F.T. played in assisting him to make a meaningful *shift* in his circumstances.



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Community Dinner and Drop-In Programs

Where Participants Can Feel They Belong to and are Engaged in the Community

With ongoing restrictions for COVID-19, the Community Dinner program continued to see low turnout numbers throughout the duration of 2021. Although open to anyone in the community looking for a warm meal and some friendship, the program predominantly served those accessing the Emergency Overnight Shelter Program and active Outreach participants in the Alliston area. The addition of programming staff available onsite, at the end of 2021, saw an increase of connections to resources and several soft referrals to local service providers for additional supports.



The Daytime Drop-In Centre program, operated café-style, offering a warm place for vulnerable populations to access during the daytime hours, was initially started as an emergency response to lockdown measures during the winter of 2020-2021. Building from this successful model, we implemented the program again, as a pilot, for the duration of the 2021-2022 winter operating season.

The program is open to anyone experiencing homelessness, as a safe, warm place to access food and housing-related supports, with access to internet, computer, and phone. Staff will assist Participants to access housing-related resources to assist individuals and families to obtain and/or retain permanent and safe housing.

In both the Community Dinner and Drop-In Program, our focus is on provision of a safe place to access supports and supplies throughout the day, while providing resources for community-building. Our aim is to support participants in feeling that they belong to and are engaged in the community.

1000+

Meals served to those in need

2000+

Participant interactions

100+

Unique Participants

Learning to Trust while Finding a Place to Call Home



Born and raised in Alliston, Rory has been accessing S.H.I.F.T.'s services for several years. The progress he has made since that time, while it may seem small to some, has been immense when we think back to his behavior in the past. When he first began accessing S.H.I.F.T. programs, Rory was withdrawn and closed off. He would only come into the shelter space for a few moments at a time, and never allowed staff to get to know him. With patience and consistency in building rapport, though, Rory began to open up. Soon, we saw that the withdrawn, sometimes angry man we had come to know was simply a defense mechanism used to protect the much softer, gentler, and kinder person he truly is. When asked about this, Rory would say "I guess I just feel like everyone judges me... I'm not used to people caring about me, because I've been like this for so long". Rory was referring to the almost four years he had spent living rough, and a lifetime of challenges, feeling isolated in his experience of traumatic brain injury and mental health struggles. As he began to trust the staff, he shared more and more about his life experiences. He learned that S.H.I.F.T is a space where people of all backgrounds can be vulnerable without judgment. Building a strong rapport and trust with Rory allowed us to finally match him with the support services he'd been desperately lacking.

Through our connection with CONTACT Community Services, Rory was assigned a Housing First Case Manager. With her support, he was able to finally consider housing as a realistic option for him. After so long on the street, he had given up on the idea of having a place to call his home. Simultaneously, our Shelter Support Team worked on getting Rory proper identification and referred him to Simcoe Muskoka Brain Injury Services and the local Canadian Mental Health Association. While Rory searched for housing, S.H.I.F.T helped to set him up for success by connecting him to a network of supports which will allow him to maintain housing. Today, Rory is housed and remains connected to our services for support and ongoing encouragement and empowerment.

Born and raised in Alliston, Rory has been accessing S.H.I.F.T.'s services for several years. The progress he has made since that time, while it may seem small to some, has been immense when we think back to his behavior in the past. When he first began accessing S.H.I.F.T. programs, Rory was withdrawn and closed off. He would only come into the shelter space for a few moments at a time, and never allowed staff to get to know him. With patience and consistency in building rapport, though, Rory began to open up. Soon, we saw that the withdrawn, sometimes angry man we had come to know

With care and patience, S.H.I.F.T. staff and volunteers were able to show him that there are people who genuinely care for him, who are worthy of his trust, and who want to see him succeed.



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Looking Ahead to a Bigger and Brighter Tomorrow

While 2021 brought about great change and exciting new adventures for our organization, we are even more excited about our outlook for an equally promising future. **We have transitioned from being a simple solution for emergency overnight accommodations for those experiencing homelessness, to gathering the support of our community and establishing strategies to END homelessness.**

It is incredible to know that we have the support of our local governments, our staff, and our community in acquiring the necessary resources to reach our goals. This collective support enables us to continue to launch new strategies and establish new partnerships. As a result, we can ensure that those we serve have a safe and stable place to access the supports they need.

Among our most important assets is our well qualified and passionate staff and volunteers. They empower the individuals and families we serve to make a meaningful shift in their circumstances. From our Board and Executive staff to our Leadership Team, and front-line service delivery team, **S.H.I.F.T. is committed to delivering programming rooted in best practice solutions and providing outstanding service to our participants.**

S.H.I.F.T. is committed to the communities we serve throughout South Simcoe. We are dedicated to the Built for Zero blueprint, working alongside the many service providers and municipal leaders that have made preventing and ending homelessness in Simcoe County a priority. Working in partnership with other homelessness service providers in the community, we continue to advocate for and collaborate on opportunities to bring year-round emergency shelter, transitional and supportive housing, and additional housing-related programming to South Simcoe.

As our community strengthens, each new day offers a chance for us to work together, pursue new opportunities and improve upon the past. Through collaboration we establish strong relationships with our participants by learning about their situations and the challenges they face. In doing so, we are better equipped to offer tangible solutions.

We continue to build our programming around the evolving needs of our community – and that puts us at the forefront of changing lives!



Coldest Night of the Year

February 22nd, 2021

2021 marked our 2nd annual Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY) fundraising walk. A little different from our inaugural year, in 2020, over 200 walkers stepped out into the cold, in their COVID-safe bubbles to walk their own route, or a route suggested by our CNOY event planning team on February 22nd, 2021, in Alliston, Ontario to raise funds for our community's most vulnerable.



An exceptional group of staff, volunteers, friends, family, community members and local leaders raised over \$110,000! What an incredible community we come from – in spite of the lockdowns and inability to carry out the event in person, our supporters showed up when it mattered and helped us to surpass our original goal of \$90,000!! This event reminded us that when community members do not have a safe place to stay in the winter, every night, is the coldest night of the year for them.

\$110,000+

RAISED

200+

WALKERS

1250+

DONORS

Your support fundraising helped...



A mother to get back on her feet and reunite with her children.



A man in his 60s to access the right supports to find and stay house after so long on the street.



Hundreds of vulnerable individuals and families get connected to food, supplies, supports, resources and more.



A young man to learn to believe that he has value and that with the right supports he can be successfully housed.

Revenues



- Grants (44%)
- Fundraising (30%)
- Donations (26%)

Expenses



- Operations (83%)
- Fundraising (9%)
- Administration (8%)

We would like to thank the following generous donors and grant funders for their significant financial or in-kind contribution of \$500 or more in 2021.

Alice Buchanan	Knox Presbyterian Church (Alliston)
Alliston Alliance Church	Kyle Coleman Foundation
Alliston Christian Fellowship	Michael & Kim Beizshuizen
Alliston Pentecostal Church	Patrick & Mary Gail O'Donnell
Barbara & Darin Lawson	Royal LePage RCR Realty
Barbara Hustler	Society of St. Vincent de Paul
Beeton & District Agricultural Society	Somerville Nurseries
Blue Sea Foundation	St. Andrew Anglican Church
Bradley & Amy Matheson	St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
Carol Struthers	Stevenson Memorial Hospital Medical Staff
Carolyn Knowles	Susan Leach & Dave Green
Christian Reformed Church of Alliston	The Benevity Community Impact Fund
Church of the Evangelists	The County of Simcoe
Dan Berry	The Leonard & Betty Jeffery Foundation
Donna & Tod McGoey	The Rotary Club of Barrie Huronia
Erwin Van Laar	The Simcoe County Elementary Teacher's Foundation
Gary Teeter Excavating Inc.	The Town of New Tecumseth
Government of Canada	William T. Brown
Government of Ontario	
John Hawes	

We would also like to thank the following people, who have generously partnered with us in carrying out our mission in 2021.

Board of Directors

Lisa Nicol (Board Chair), Andrew MacKenzie (Board Vice-Chair),
Melissa Marshall (Treasurer), Cindy Poole (Secretary),
Tina Molenaar, Alicia Kalozdi-MacMillan,
Jennie Dollin and Jennie Nadeau (Directors)

Volunteers

Volunteers, in all aspects of our programming, dedicate their time and passion, to lifting people out of poverty and homelessness. Thank you for persevering through this challenging year alongside us.

THANK YOU

Moving forward together, making a *SHIFT* for good.

2021 was a year of great change.

But we have hope.

Since 2017, S.H.I.F.T. has been providing emergency overnight accommodations, meals and supports to individuals and families who are experiencing or at-risk of facing homelessness and food insecurity in South Simcoe. We know that we are just at the beginning; there is so much we can achieve together.

We are determined to reach the day when homelessness in Simcoe County no longer exists. A day when everyone has access to safe, sustainable, and affordable housing.

With your support, that day will come.



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