



2023-24

ANNUAL REPORT

Message from the Chair

Having a child with DS has change my life...
My life is brighter
My life is more wonderful
My life is filled with love
-Unknown

This wasn't the expected journey but it's a good one 🧡💙

Having a child with Down syndrome has exposed me to you. Being a part of this caring and supportive community brings me peace, joy, and laughter. Rilyn and Keegan get excited each time we are doing a DSAH event, meeting up with our friends in Hamilton, and joining mom at the office for a board meeting. I am grateful for the opportunities, the friendships, and the beauty that comes with having a child with Ds.

I've been given the honour to lead the team bringing programs, social opportunities, and support to our members. We have accomplished much this past year and continue with a focus on our mission and strategic plans into the next.



Message from the Chair

The DSAH Board of Directors are dedicated to provide support in all it's forms, invested, and focused on the organization's best interests.

Thank you to our Vice Chair Shari for fostering the big ideas that led us to where we are today. Shari also led the redesign of our information brochure.

Thank you to our Treasurer Paul, for the many hours he volunteers maintaining our finances. He has been diligent in ensuring our organization remains fiscally responsible and has been integral in setting up DSAH investments which are now producing income. We also thank Paul for his work managing Club GAIN operations.

Thank you to our Secretary, Andrea D for her accuracy and attention to detail. Andrea's guidance and expertise in directing non-profits is valuable to our Board.

Thank you to our Programming Director Stefanie, lead for our programs and always planning or helping at events. Stefanie finds activities and supports for our members in Hamilton. Stefanie assists with our Social Media accounts. She makes sure to take photos and videos at our events. We appreciate Stefanie's creativity and commitment to serving members.

Thank you to our Membership Director Rebecca for her great support to members, she is always ready to help out. Rebecca is a great resource for new parents. Her expertise as a public health nurse and knowledge of community programs and services has be invaluable.

Thank you to our Self Advocate Laura. Laura has been our main representative for our outreach and education events. Laura also organizes the Adult Dinner Club dates and venues. She is reliable and always up for something new. We appreciate Laura for selflessly volunteering her time, supporting our mission wherever we go.



Shari van de Pol, Vice Chair



Paul Arnold, Treasurer



Andrea Dalimonte, Secretary



Laura Stremble, Advocate and Stefanie Allaire, Progarmming



Rebecca Hynes, Membership

Message from the Chair

Thank you to our Self Advocate David. David keeps us updated on what is going on the community. David is often seen helping at events and we appreciate his keen eye when little ones are around.

Thank you to our HWDCSB SEAC Representative Veronica. In addition to being a committed and diligent Board member. Veronica is ready to help with any task and contributed her time to community outreach for the Walk. She also assisted with reorganizing our program and office space.

Thank you to our HWDSB SEAC Representative and is also the Chair of the SEAC Committee Judy. Judy has been and continues to be a great support to our members. She is often the first to offer help to families, babies, students, and newcomers. We are proud to have seen first hand families appreciating the support Judy has provided over the past several years.

Thank you to our Fundraising Director Andrea L.. Andrea's fundraising and project management skills are valuable to our organization. We appreciate her commitment to volunteering and fostering the relationship we have with Global Fuels.

Thank you to our Club GAIN representative, Barb. Barb commits a great deal of time and energy into Club GAIN. Her spirit of generosity has led Club GAIN to be a successful and popular social event in our community for the last 20 years.

A special thank you to Andrea, our Operations Director. She is the biggest support to the Board and it's members. She ensures our ideas come to reality, she is our Board's information hub, and she keeps us moving forward.



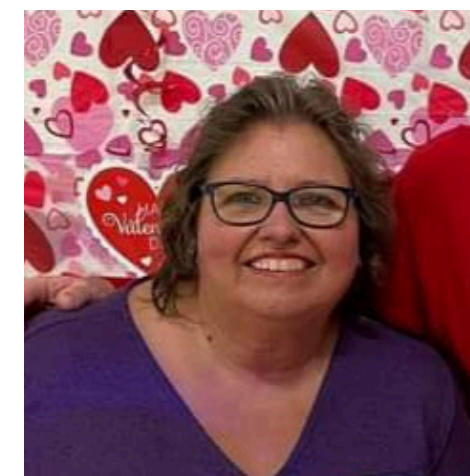
David Colantino, Self Advocate



Veronica Hannon, SEAC HWDCSB



Judy Colantino, SEAC Chair, HWDSB



Barb Accomando, Club GAIN



Andrea Sugrue, Operations

Strategic Plan

Our Mission

The Association will:

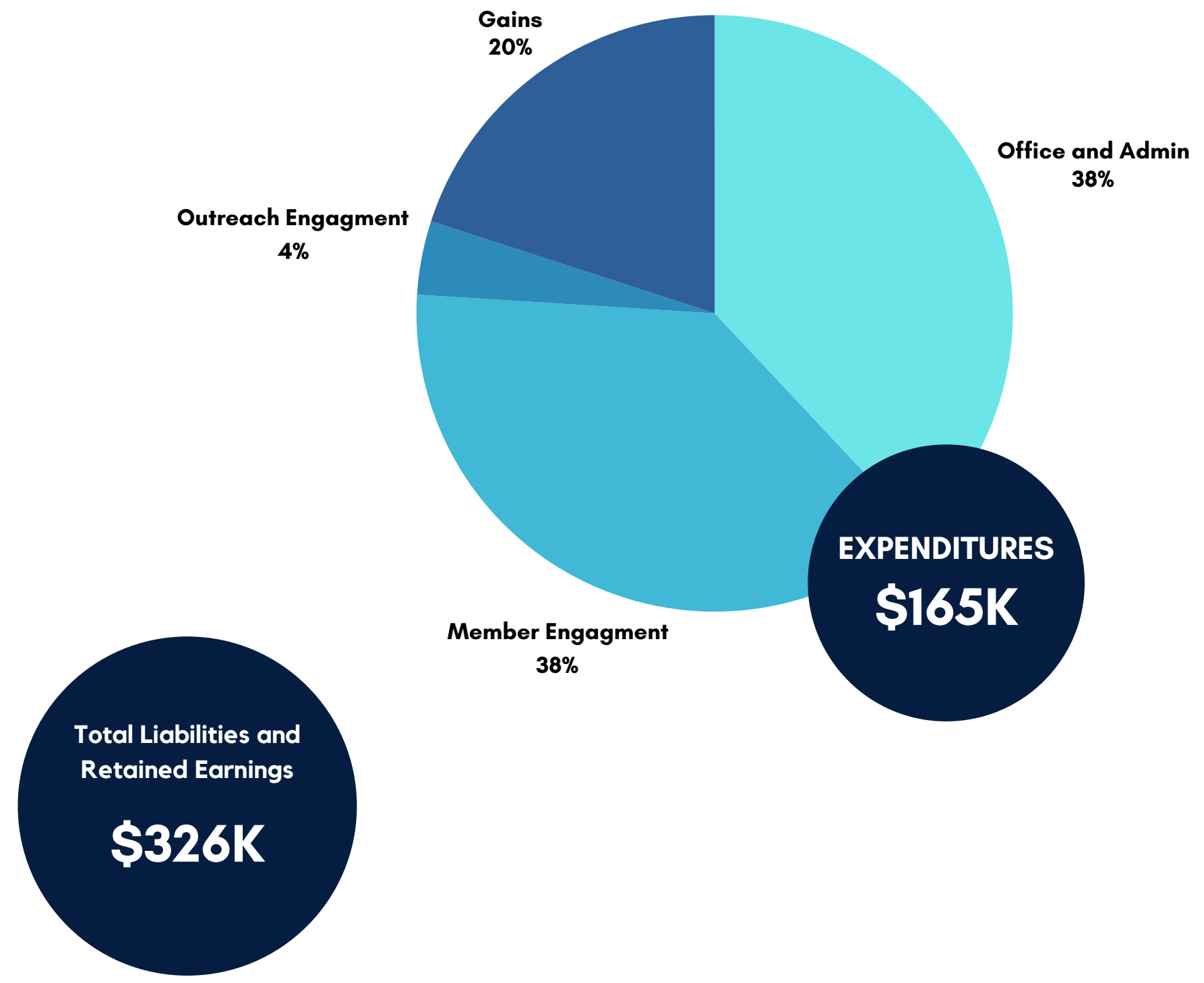
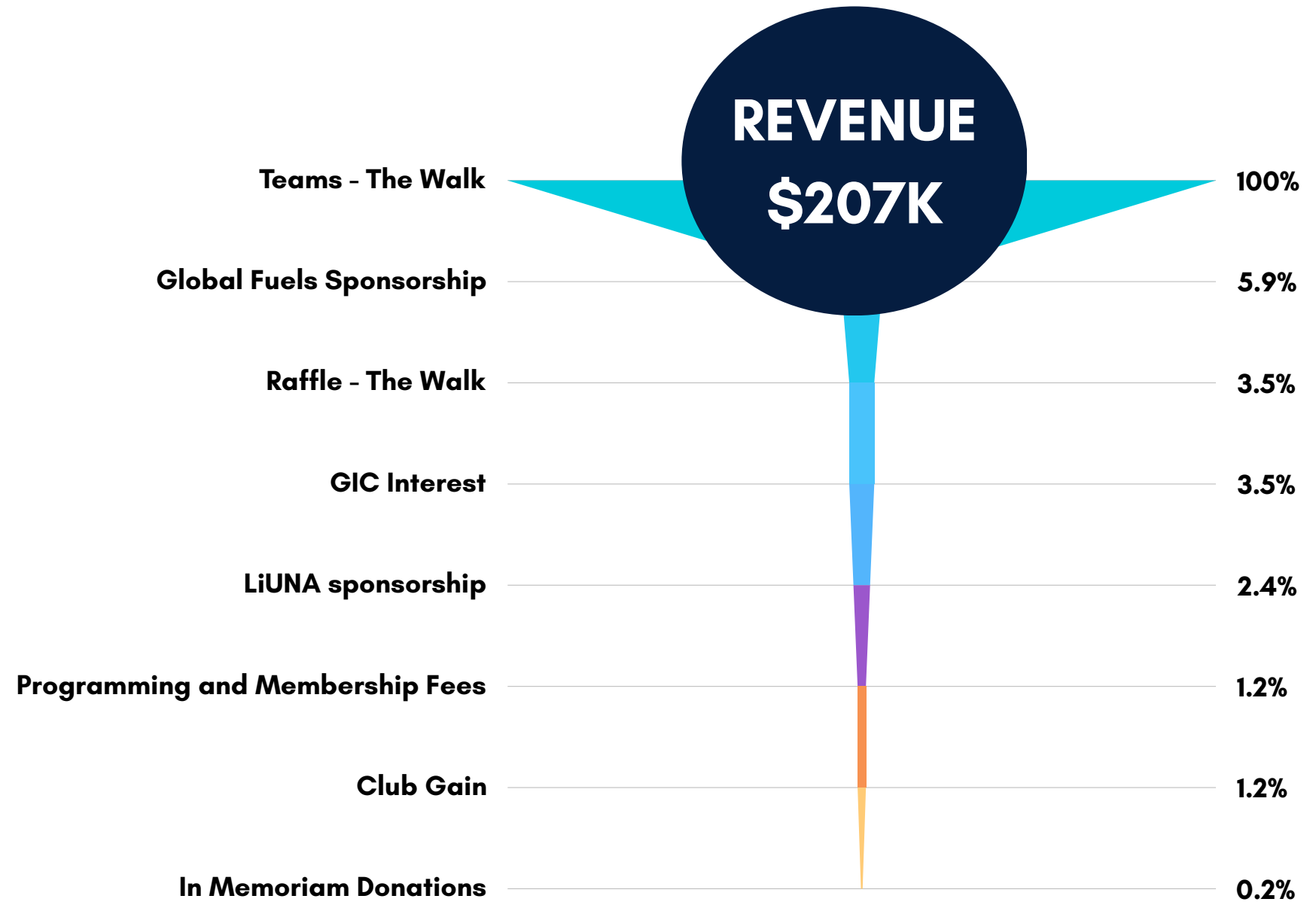
- **Support** people and families impacted by Down syndrome throughout their lives.
- **Assist** our members in accessing information, services, and supports that enhance health, development and education of people with Down syndrome.
- **Advocate** for excellent, coordinated and accessible medical, educational and recreational services and meaningful paid employment for all people with Down syndrome.
- **Create a social support network** for people with Down syndrome and their families.
- **Promote the abilities** of people with Down syndrome in our community.
- **Bring understanding** to the challenges people with Down syndrome may face and how they can be supported to reach their full potential.
- **Support local, provincial and national initiatives** that challenge stereotypes and further the health, well-being, education and economic contribution of people with Down syndrome.



How We Delivered our Mission

- **Funded \$24,000** in Financial Assistance for our members to participate in recreation and therapies
- Sponsored **2023 Provincial Conference** (DSAO)
- Contracted **Operations Director** to carry out objectives
- Established **partnerships** with community organizations and small businesses
- Gained new **sponsorship from Flamboroughtoday.com** to promote DSAH members and events
- Continued presence on **Project Search** Committee
- Created new successful programs, **Move & Groove, Teen Hangout** and **Adult Dinner Club**
- Expanded our reach by hosting and attending **community partner events**
- **Engaged significantly with the DSAO** and worked closely to support their restructure

Financial Report



Fundraising

2023 Hamilton Walk for Down Syndrome

Our 11th annual event was a success!

- 41 Teams and our raffle raised over \$180,000!
- We welcomed 19 Community Partners to our event
- Thank you to long time supporters Liuna, Team Enrico and Global Fuels for making our event possible



Community Fundraisers

Thank you to **Jacob and Karen from BU Candles** for donating a portion of their World Down Syndrome Day candle sales.

Thank you to the staff, students and parents at **Alan. A Greenleaf Public School** in Waterdown for donating funds raised on World Down Syndrome Day.





Our Major Supporters

Team ENRICO-LIUNA Lending A Hand





HAMILTON WALK FOR DOWN SYNDROME

COMMUNITY PARTNERS



DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION OF HAMILTON



CLUB G.A.I.N.

Gateway to Adult Independence & Networking



HAMILTON & DISTRICT
Extend-A-Family



BRIDGING THE GAP TO ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION



ABRARMH.CA



Membership

currently

66

member families

-9%

from 2022-23

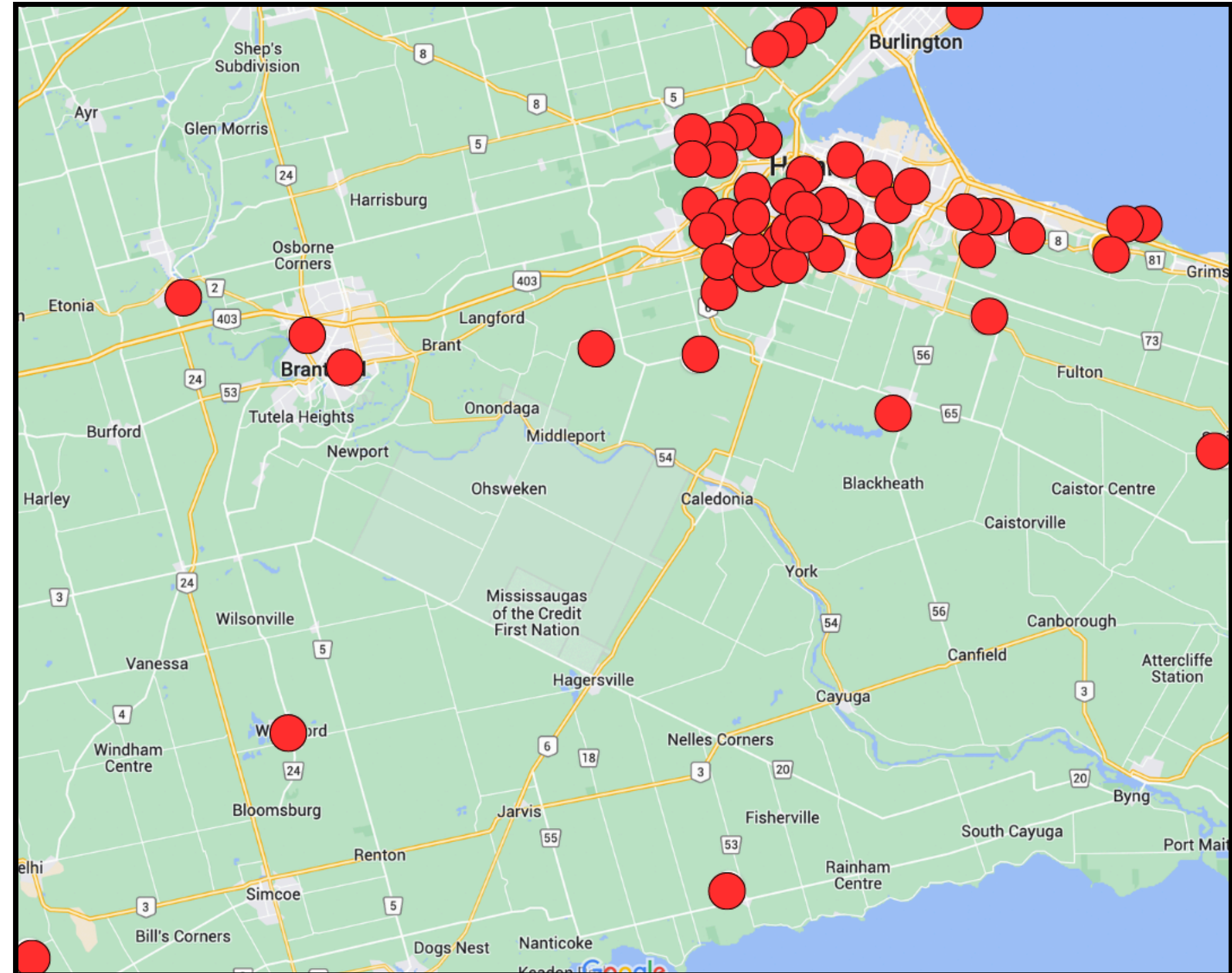
502

newsletter subscribers

1600+

social media followers

- Aligned our membership periods to January to December for all members
- Membership is down 9% from last year (Up 36% from 2021-22)
- 502 newsletter subscribers, remained same as last year
- 1600+ social media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) followers, increased moderately over last year



2023-24 Membership Map

We serve a large geographic area of Southern Ontario

Social Events



Club GAIN



Summer Picnic 2023



Halloween Party 2023



Lunch with Santa 2023



World Down Syndrome Day (3.21.24)

Programming

These programs play a vital role for individuals with Down syndrome, offering chances for socialization, physical activity, and skill development.



Teen Hangout *in partnership with Dundas Jr. Civitans*

- For teens with and without Down syndrome
- Now Recruiting teens for 2024-25!



Adult Dinner Club

- Successful launch and great feedback
- More dates coming!

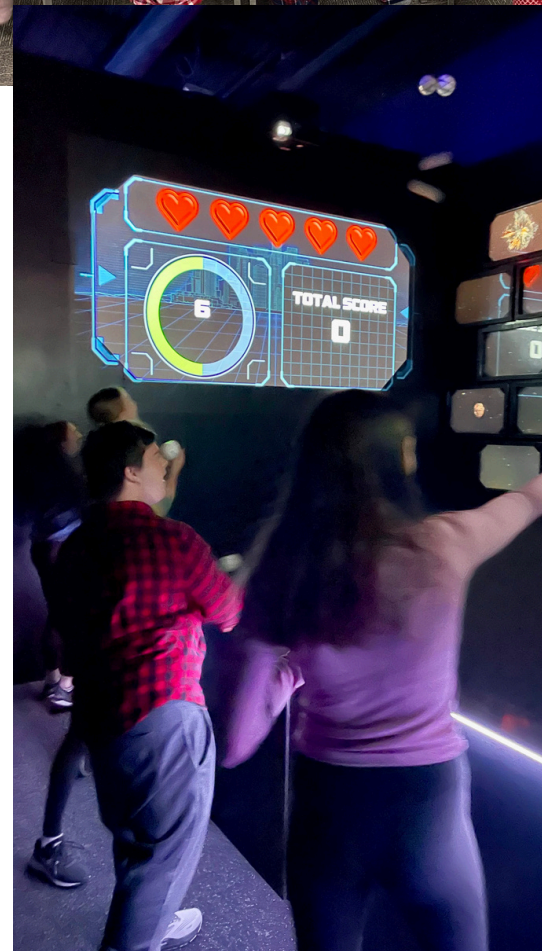
Move and Groove with Blossom Musik

- Successful launch of new music and play program



Family Social Saturdays

- No / Low participation from members
- Will not continue in 2024-25



PA Days with Fausta - Hamilton Kids Physio

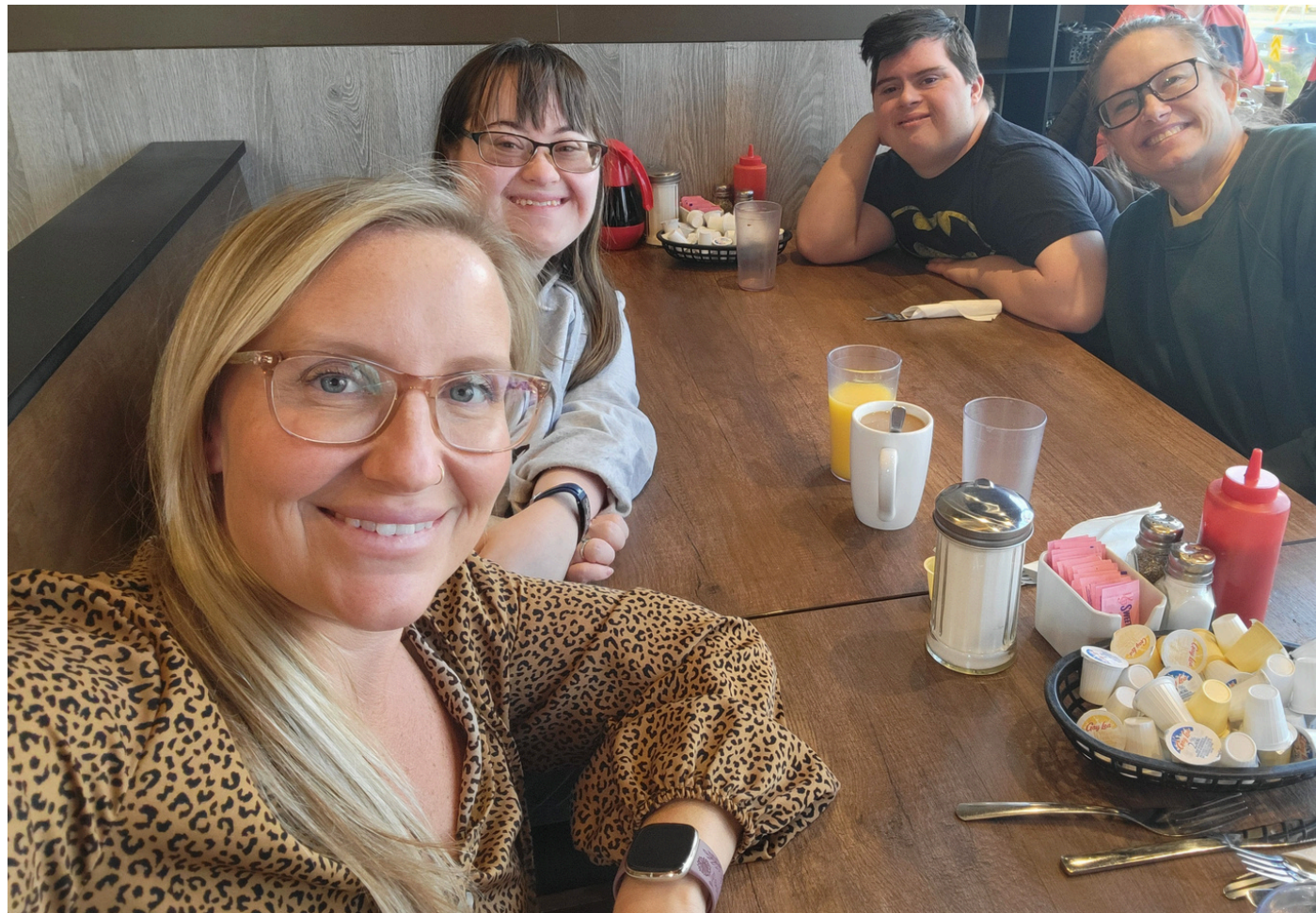
- Mixed participation levels
- Considering different delivery options for next year



ADULT DINNER CLUB

This club is for individual people with Down Syndrome to meet new friends and catch up old friends. We meet at a restaurant in the community for up to 8-10 people.

DSAH can cover \$25 for dinner and any taxi fees.



Laura Stremble, self-advocate, leads this DSAH funded and volunteer supervised program.
(Volunteers: Stefanie, Laura and Teresa pictured above)

Outreach, Advocacy, Education

Building community relationships to further our mission



McMaster University Volunteer Fair



HWDSB Project Search



Job Seekers with Disabilities presentation



Community Transition Network (CTN)- Information Night at HWDSB

Our Work with the Down Syndrome Association of Ontario



- Sponsorship of the 2023 Conference at Great Wolf Lodge, Niagara Falls, ON October 13 & 14, 2023
- **Strategic Planning Conference, Brampton, ON November 9, 10, & 11, 2023**

| Action Initiatives Profile | | | | | |
|------------------------------|--|---|--|--|----------------|
| CORE ISSUE | PLAN NAME | OBJECTIVE | DELIVERABLES (BY) | (LEADER) TEAM | TODAY'S STATUS |
| 1. Structure | Restructuring Proposal | Create and communicate a restructuring proposal that can be accepted by the local associations and empowers the DSAO to officially represent local associations on Province-wide matters. | Gather questions from locals (1/15/2024) Get legal consult (1/15/2024) Investigate provincial requirements to access funding (1/15/2024) Establish budget for process (1/15/2024) Communications plan (1/15/2024) Final report (1/15/2024) | (Carlo D.) Nicole C., Heather G., Travis D., Michelle F-S. | ○ |
| 2. Funding / Partnerships | Create Fundraising Strategy | Create fundraising strategy that diversifies and strengthens the funding sources for the DSAO and shares best practices with local associations. | Strategy for corporate sponsorship (2/1/2024) Create terms of reference for committee (2/1/2024) Requested resource list (2/1/2024) Report back to executive on initiatives (2/1/2024) Share local-focused fund raising ideas (2/1/2024) Develop mechanism for requesting support (2/1/2024) | (Paresh and Mary C.) Dan T., Andrea Su, Carlos P., Mike W. | ○ |
| 3. Marketing / Communication | Launch General Awareness Campaign for the DSAO | Develop a marketing and communication plan that raises the awareness of the DSAO in the Down Syndrome community and the province as a whole. | Website audit (links, messaging, etc.) (2/1/2024) Digital marketing strategy (2/1/2024) Obtain pictures and stories that represent the breadth of the DSAO (2/1/2024) 21 associations contributing (2/1/2024) | (Vanessa B.) Crystal B., Aaron R., Sheena S., Yma F., Kristen O. | ○ |
| 4. Resource Development | Launch Resource Library | Launch a resource library that equips local associations to more easily accomplish their mission by providing templates, best practices, recommended vendors, etc. | Master wish list from locals (2/1/2024) Delivery platform chosen (based on desired features) (2/1/2024) Collect resources from locals and partners (2/1/2024) | (Rachel D.) Berta T., Garth, Sue C., Kai P. | ○ |

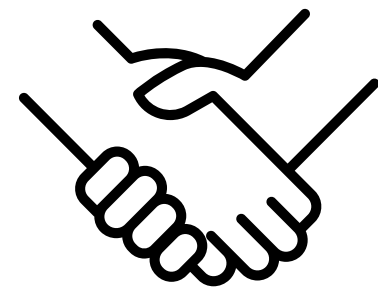


Looking ahead to 2024-25

Current Members - Complete membership survey for chance to win one (1) of three (3) \$100 grocery gift card



Increased financial support to members



Community Building



Programming for all ages



DSAHO Restructure

**Continue to support, advocate for individuals with
Down syndrome**

12th Annual



HAMILTON WALK FOR DOWN SYNDROME

BAYFRONT PARK SUN SEPT 22 2024

[DSA.H.CA/WALK](https://dsh.ca/walk)

Benefiting the Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton

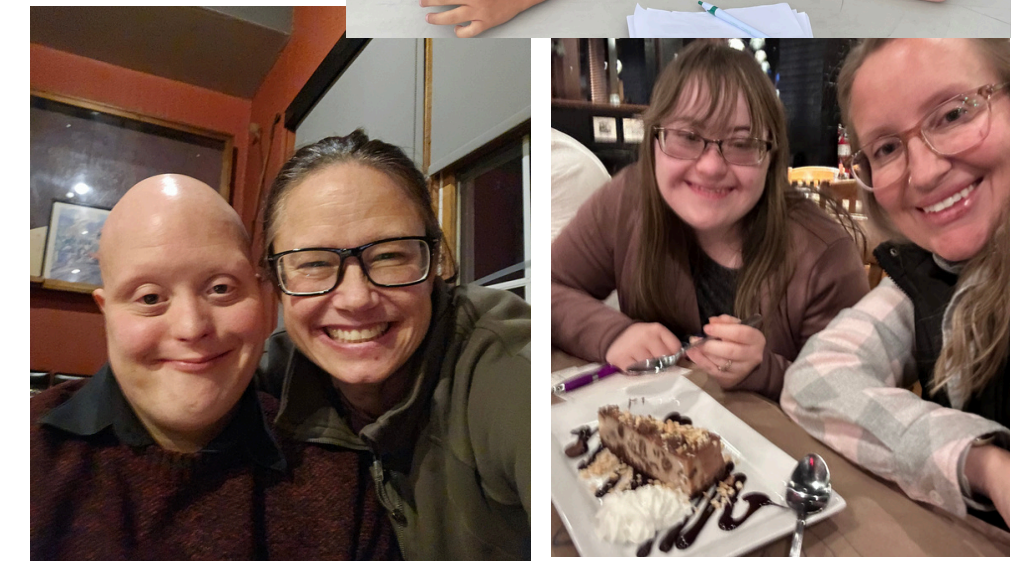
Registered Charity: 119230225 RR 0001

Thank you volunteers!

2023-24 Directors



- | | |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| Chair | Heather Gain |
| Vice Chair | Shari van de Pol |
| Secretary | Andrea Dalimonte |
| Treasurer | Paul Arnold |
| Membership | Rebecca Hynes |
| Programming | Stefanie Allaire |
| Advocate | Laura Stremble |
| Advocate | David Colantino |
| Fundraising | Andrea Landry |
| Social | Katie Kastelik |
| SEAC HWDSB | Judy Colantino |
| SEAC HWCDSB | Veronica Hannon |
| Club GAIN Rep | Barb Accomando |



Volunteers

Tracy Beck & Dundas Jr. Civitans
 Teresa Sanges, Kim Arnold, Matti Zdriulik, Juno Rinaldi

Special Thanks to the Spouses and Families of Board Members for their year(s) long contributions and support.