



HAMSMART

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# ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024



# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRS

This last year has been marked by distinct change in both staffing and clinic direction.

We have said goodbye to staff that made vital contributions to the growth of our clinic. To those who left for other opportunities, thank you for your work and we wish you the best in your personal and professional life. We are also thankful for the new staff that joined our team, bringing with them new ideas and experiences.

In addition to this, our funding has changed which led to us reevaluating our clinic priorities. While we have been lucky to be able to participate in local and provincial advocacy and activism over the past few years, we will now be streamlining our focus to prioritize our current clients and their needs. We will continue any local advocacy specifically needed for our clients and continue enhancing clinic operations.

The shifting political climate leaves our clinic in an unpredictable spot and we are unsure of what the next years look like. However, no matter the elected government, we continue to commit to holistically caring for our clients while being led by harm reduction principles.



**In Solidarity,  
Marcie McIlveen  
& Tim O'Shea**



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# Mission

To address the social determinants of health through integrated community centred care, education, research, and community organizing.

# Vision

Healthcare that is a liberatory force for patients, practitioners, and communities alike.



# Principles



**Harm Reduction**

**Reciprocal Learning**



**Building the Community We  
Want to Live In**



**Community-Centred Care**

**Centring the Social  
Determinants of Health**





# MEET THE TEAM

**Shabeeh Ahmad (until Aug. 2024)**

Director of Community Engagement and Mobilization

**Claire Bodkin (on leave)**

Co-Medical Director, Family Physician

**Laren Cook-Chaimowitz**

Emergency Physician

**Lorna Fothergill**

Finance Manager

**Sarah Glen**

Board of Directors

**Bill Guyatt**

Member, Board of Directors

**Nala Ismacil (until Dec. 2023)**

Clinic Administrator

**Nisha Kansal**

Member, Board of Directors

**Rachel Ann Lamont**

Psychiatrist

**Mike Lavelle**

SASS (Support and Safer Supply Program) BIPOC Support Worker, Keeping Six Organizer

**Amanda Lee**

Family Physician

**Robin Lennox**

Family Physician

**Anna Malla (on leave)**

Director of Organizational Development and Operation



**Tosh Mizzau**

Family Physician

**Marcie McIlveen**

Program Director, Keeping Six Member

**Elise Nagy**

Member, Board of Directors

**Priyanka Jani**

Outreach and Clinic Registered Nurse

**Matthew Lewis**

Outreach and Clinic Registered Nurse

**Lisa Nussey (until Oct. 2023)**

Strategic Director, Chair, Board of Directors, Keeping Six Founding Member

**Tim O'Shea**

Co-Medical Director, Secretary, Board of Directors

**Kelly Rattray**

Keeping Six Coordinator

**Rami Safi**

Treasurer, Board of Directors

**Marie Sinclair**

Keeping Six Arts Coordinator

... and all Keeping Six members, our peers, our patients, our service users, our members, our students, our advisers, and our community partners!

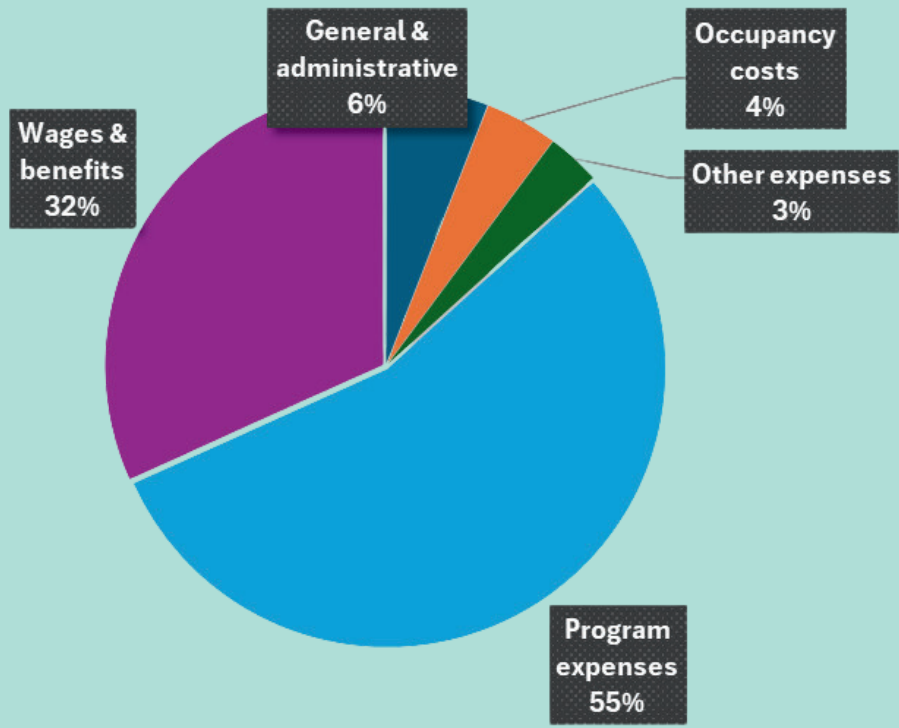
**Thanks for all that you do!**



# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

**March 2023 Total Cash: \$230,035**  
**March 2024 Total Cash: \$220,944**

**In the last fiscal year HAMSMART received operating grants and donations totalling \$1,086,240 and \$84,088 to pay for capital equipment purchases.**





# THANK YOU!

Thank You to our donors, partners, supporters and funders who helped to make all of this work possible, including:



The Ontario HIV Treatment Network

*Karen and Peter  
Turkstra  
Family Foundation*

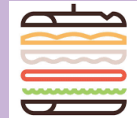


Family Medicine

HAMILTON  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION



THE BURTON  
CHARITABLE  
FOUNDATION



Santé Canada Health Canada



POSITIVE HEALTH NETWORK

THE SH/FT  
#RIGHT2HOUSING

Funded by the Government of Canada's Community Services Recovery Fund



...and our many community donors, volunteers and supporters!

# KEEPING SIX

HAMSMART is honoured to continue its partnership with Keeping Six.

Keeping Six (K6) is a Harm Reduction group made up of people who use drugs and those that love and support them.

We asked Keeping Six members about what the HAMSMART x K6 partnership means to them:

It allows for street smarts and book smarts to work together and provide the best care and support for our most vulnerable

We are alive still because of HAMSMART and Keeping Six

Both are giving me tools and supports to make better decisions

Art is an advocacy tool

We are given more than one chance and an opportunity to learn

This is a place of belonging, a community of friends

# K6 ARTS PROGRAM



The K6 arts program continues to be an invaluable part of K6 and partner to HAMSMART. It has created a safer space for people who experience systemic marginalization to connect, find community, and express themselves through art.

“I’ve almost completed the colouring book from the kits you gave out. I do it almost every night I can’t \*\* sleep and I just started colouring - sometimes I wake up at four in the morning and I just start colouring. I just focus on the colouring  
- **Peer support worker**

“I’ve been dealing with social workers all my life and I hated them until I started coming to places like keeping six and I met ... staff who were not sterile, they were real. Normally I would not want to make a friend out of a children’s aid worker but I think about all you guys all the time. I get to say I’m working at a medical office as a peer support worker, I gotta job because of them and I’m pretty good at it. They met me where I was at.” - **Johnny**

# K6 HIGHLIGHTS

This year Keeping Six has:

**Partnered with YWCA to do a Gender-Based Violence Safety Audit**



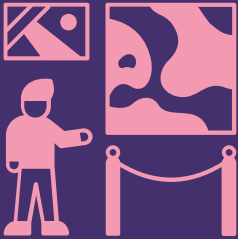
**Continued Weekly Encampment and Street Outreach with the Positive Health Network (PHN)**

**Provided Volunteer and Employment Opportunities for Community Members**



**Lead Naloxone Training, Organized Campaigns and Protests, & Delegated to City Council**

**Continued Weekly Art Drop-in  
with Attendance Increase  
from 12-15 members to 25-30**



**Unveiled “This is Our  
Space Too” Exhibition at  
Art Gallery of Ontario**

**Collaborated with  
Fringe Fest to Host Two  
Open Mic Nights &  
Consulted on Inclusivity**



**Continued Advocacy Work  
at Events like IOAD, the  
Butterfly Art Memorial, Say  
His Name, and Homeless No  
More Memorial**

**Tabled at Festivals such  
as Art Crawl, Supercrawl,  
and Sundays Unlocked**





# OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Our organizational team has been working hard to expand our work and capacity. Some of the highlights of this fiscal year include the following:



We were officially approved for charitable status as a non-profit organization! This has opened up a large avenue of funding options and community collaborations.

We gained financial and organizational independence from The Positive Health Network (formerly The Aids Network). Thank you for your support over the years.



We hired a financial administrator to take care of our increasingly complicated organization.

We moved into our own office space to accommodate our growing clinic and program needs!



We launched our first membership drive.

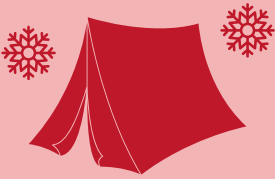
We held our first Annual General Meeting and elected our new board.





We worked with Shoreline Collaboratives to audit our organization, develop our organizational governance, and build development goals for our agency. More on this in our future reports!

We had some staff turnover in our small but mighty organization, saying goodbye to some amazing and wonderful people, and saying hello to new team members.



We launched our first Winter Survival Kit fundraiser to provide basic supplies to unhoused neighbours to help survive the winter.





# CLINICAL & FRONTLINE WORK

We continued with our trailblazing work in providing a patient- and community-led alternative model to health care services. Our focus this year was primarily for people who are unhoused and those who use drugs and included the following.



**Drop-In Medical Clinics:** 3 half-day medical clinics per week providing primary care for mental health, addictions, infectious disease management, wound care, and other areas as they come up.

**Drop-In Psychiatry:** Patient-led drop in with weekly access to psychiatrist without a waitlist or a referral.



**Safer Use Space:** Weekly space for women and gender diverse people through the YWCA's Carol Anne's Place that allows people to both safely use substances and build community.

**Outreach Work:** Supporting Keeping Six with their weekly outreach programs in providing basic needs and supplies to over 200 people across Hamilton.





**Outreach Clinical Services:** We provide regular outreach medical care to our patients to meet people where they are at, whether in community, in their homes, or in encampments.

**Supporting K6 Programs:** HAMSMaRT provides some support to K6 in their outreach, drop-in and arts programs both to build community and care as well as to stay connected and rooted in the people we work alongside.

**KEEPING  
SIX  
HAMILTON**



**Systems Navigation:** In partnership with Good Shepherd and the Shelter Health Network, we have a community connector who works with our patients and service users to give referrals to community resources, and provide support and advocacy in order to survive and thrive.





# RESEARCH

Our research projects are derived from and inform our clinical and organizing work. Our research aims to centre the experiences of people deprived of housing and/or those who use drugs. This past year, our cutting-edge research projects included the following:

**Drug Laws:** We explored the enforcement and prosecution of drug laws in Ontario during an ongoing toxic drug crisis



**Nowhere To Go Study:** We examined the physical and mental health impacts on people who have been service restricted from shelters and drop-in programs

**Second Hearts:** We explored the impact of peer support and wrap around care for people with endocarditis



**Review of Homeless Encampments:** We documented the human rights violations people in encampments faced from City workers and through inadequate living conditions and building housing policy solutions for all levels of governments to implement. This research went on to inform the Office of the Federal Housing Advocate's interim and final reports reviewing encampments across Canada.



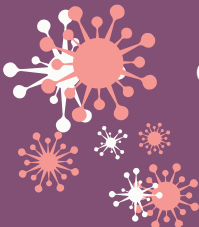
# ONGOING RESEARCH

**Patient Advisory Council:** In partnership with McMaster University's Department of Family Medicine, the Patient Advisory Council is composed of people who access HAMSMaRT's clinical care. They provide essential feedback on research questions, methods, and results.



**Hamilton Homeless Mortality Data Project:** We are researching the deaths of people deprived of housing in Hamilton and collecting relevant data.

**Safer Opioid Supply:** We are examining the feasibility and outcomes of safer opioid supply prescription in primary health care.



**Ontario HIV Treatment Network study:** Our team just started this 2-year project exploring the effects that access to low barrier medical care has on patients living with HIV.



# COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Through the generosity of private donors and organizations, we were able to do a number of different community organizing projects this year focusing in on the dire issues of housing and drug policy. Here are some highlights:

We created a draft of housing and other policy initiatives that all levels of government could work on to both solve the housing crisis and provide people with basic needs for their health and well-being



1

We created the People's Protocol on Encampments, which is a resident-led protocol that seeks to minimize the harms of living within the encampments while reorienting the governments' priorities back to housing

2



## People's Roundtable

Alongside Keeping Six and folks with lived experience, we discussed the challenges facing encampment residents and worked on these initiatives:



3

We began an Encampment Manifesto, a communal guideline for encampment residents on providing care and community with each other and with housed and unhoused residents

4



We presented the People's Protocol to the City of Hamilton in August 2023 as an alternative to the City's encampment protocol. The City ultimately rejected the People's Protocol



We supported rallies and events led by unhoused residents demanding affordable housing and basic needs for their survival



We hosted workshops on various issues to build knowledge and capacity with encampment residents

We continued our Internal Social Medicine workshop series covering a wide range of topics



We engaged with City officials and the wider public to educate them on systemic failures of housing and drug policy and to demand change through delegations, stakeholder meetings, community panels, engaging in community events and town halls and having formal and informal conversations with various folks throughout the community.

We published a semi-regular newsletter highlighting the social determinants of health in local, national and international issues



We participated in solidarity campaigns to support a number of local, national, and global justice issues and initiatives.



# HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICE WORKER EDUCATION

HAMSMaRT provides training opportunities to health and social service workers that challenge the conventional power relations in healthcare. Instead of the “healthcare provider knows best” model that other systems follow, we teach that providers should and can leverage their power to better listen to and serve the patients in their community. Our work in this field this year has included the following:



We had many medical residents, fellows, and learners cycle in and out of our clinics throughout the year.

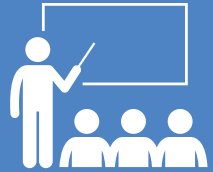
We had two placement students this year doing amazing work: a Mohawk College student from September until April who helped to support and lead peer training; and a McMaster University student who wrote a thesis on safer supply programming and clinical operations.



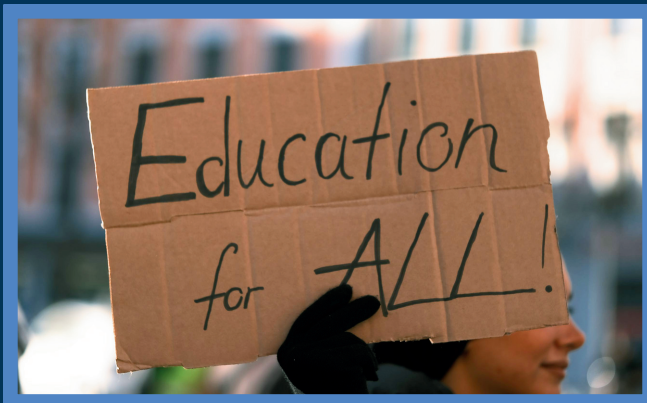


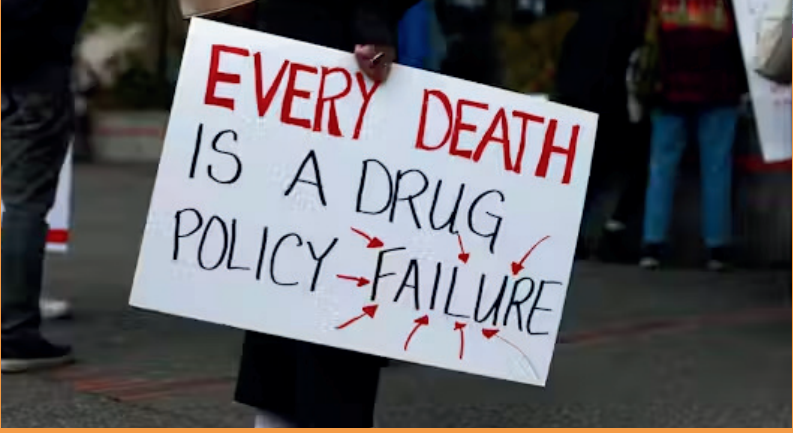
We expanded our peer training program led by our program director. The program ran twice in 2023 with 16 new students! Some peers went on to get hired by HAMSMaRT, while some others went on to successfully pursue other opportunities in the community.

Two of our employees taught undergraduate courses at McMaster University based on their leadership roles at HAMSMaRT this past year.



Some of our staff and peers provided guest lectures to health and social service workers in different classrooms and workshops.





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