

# 2025

# Creating Alternatives



# Annual Report



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# Welcome from the Board Chair & Executive Director



Together, we are proud to present Creating Alternatives' 2025 Annual Report—a reflection of a year defined by celebration, transition, and the enduring strength of community.

Our theme, *"Honoured by many, driven by community"*, captures the spirit of this past year. In 2025, Creating Alternatives was recognized with the Vaughan Business Achievement Award in the non-profit category, featured in City Life Magazine, and highlighted through a special radio segment. While we are deeply grateful for these honours, they are a testament to something far greater—the collective dedication of our community. Our participants, families, staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters are the true driving force behind every success we celebrate.

This year also marked an important and meaningful transition in our organization's leadership. With deep appreciation, we recognize our founder and former Board Chair, Phyllis Santone, whose vision, passion, and commitment have shaped Creating Alternatives into what it is today—and continue to guide us forward. While Phyllis has transitioned from her role as Board Chair, we are grateful that she remains an active member of the Board, continuing to share her insight, leadership, and unwavering dedication. Her ongoing involvement ensures that her vision as founder remains deeply rooted in our work as we move ahead. We are excited to build on this strong foundation under new leadership, with Janelle Walsh stepping into the role of Board Chair, who has been a member of our Board and served on our Finance Committee.

We are united in our commitment to advancing our mission, strengthening our impact, and continuing to foster a community where everyone feels valued, included, and empowered. The achievements of this past year remind us that when we come together, we can accomplish extraordinary things.

Thank you for being part of this journey and for helping us continue to move forward—honoured by many, and always driven by community.

With gratitude,

*Janelle Walsh, Board Chair and Danielle Dang, Executive Director*



# This Year's Highlights & Honours

## 2025 VAUGHAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNER (NON-PROFIT CATEGORY)

This recognition reflects Creating Alternatives' unwavering dedication, passion and commitment to the participants and families supported.



## FEATURE IN CITY LIFE MAGAZINE

Creating Alternatives was featured in the May/June edition of City Life Magazine helping raise awareness in the Vaughan community about the individuals supported and the programs provided.



## INTERVIEW ON VOICES 4 ABILITY RADIO



Creating Alternatives was interviewed by Voices 4 Ability Radio highlighting its role within the community and the continued need for support services within the sector.

# Driven by Community - Partner Spotlight



## C.M.S. GROUP



### Community Leadership

C.M.S. Group demonstrated exceptional commitment to strengthening the community by recognizing Creating Alternatives' impact on families and supporting its mission.

### Meaningful Financial Impact

Proceeds from the tournament directly supported programs, helping Creating Alternatives continue delivering the high-quality person-centered programs participants and families count on.

### Corporate Leadership That Drives Impact

By choosing Creating Alternatives as the beneficiary, C.M.S. Group transformed a corporate event into a powerful act of social responsibility that directly strengthened Creating Alternatives' ability to reach out to the most vulnerable.

# A Year of Impact



## EXPANSION

A new unit was secured, offering extra office space and a calmer, low-stimulation environment for participants who benefit from this setting.



## VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

With the theme “Volunteers Make Waves,” Creating Alternatives recognized how every act of volunteerism creates ripples that grow into waves of change. Two family members were recognized for their outstanding contributions.

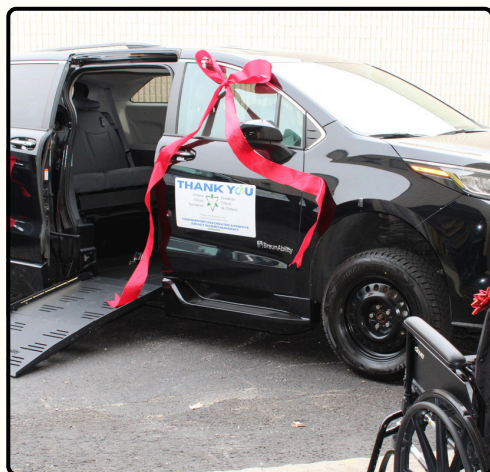
## CELEBRATION OF COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Vaughan's inaugural Celebration of Community Spirit was hosted by Mayor Steven Del Duca highlighting the Spirit of Generosity initiative by honoring local charities and organizations supported by community giving.



## ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION GRANT RECOGNITION

Funding from the OTF Resilient Communities Fund grant allowed the organization to purchase two new vehicles, including a fully accessible one, to support the expansion of its Community Connections program.



## HATCHABLES

Through the innovative educational program Hatchables, participants raised and hatched six chickens, offering a unique hands-on learning experience about life cycles and animal care. This program fostered responsibility, empathy and core life skills.

## VISIT FROM MP GUGLIELMI

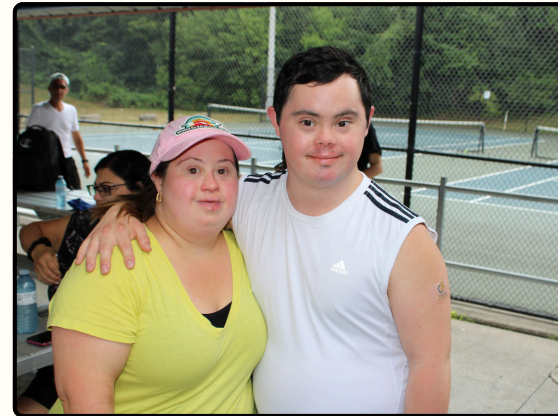
Creating Alternatives was pleased to welcome MP Michael Guglielmi, Member of Parliament for Woodbridge, to its site. During his visit, MP Guglielmi met with participants and staff, taking the time to listen and engage with everyone.





### FESTA D'ITALIA

Creating Alternatives took part in Festa D'Italia in June at Boyd Park, engaging with the community during this vibrant cultural celebration. The event provided valuable visibility for our organization within the community.



### SUMMER BBQ

The Annual Summer BBQ was held at Maxey Park with great success. Around 80 participants and their caregivers and families joined Alternatives for festivities, food and fun along with many dignitaries from the community.



### NEW PARTNERSHIP

The Down Syndrome Foundation partnered with Creating Alternatives to co-locate its new skills development apprenticeship program.

### ELEVATE ABILITIES

This year's dinner event raised more than \$90,000. It was a great opportunity to come together as a community as the incredible abilities of the participants was highlighted.



### WOODBIDGE FAIR

Creating Alternatives had a booth at the Woodbridge Fair showcasing the participants' work, building local connections and elevating its visibility within the community.

### TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY & FRIENDSMAS

The annual Holiday Open House & Tree Lighting Ceremony provided families with an opportunity to meet staff, mingle, and spend some time with friends. Participants enjoyed lunch at Magnolia Banquet Hall at the Friendmas Lunch.



# Board Member Spotlights

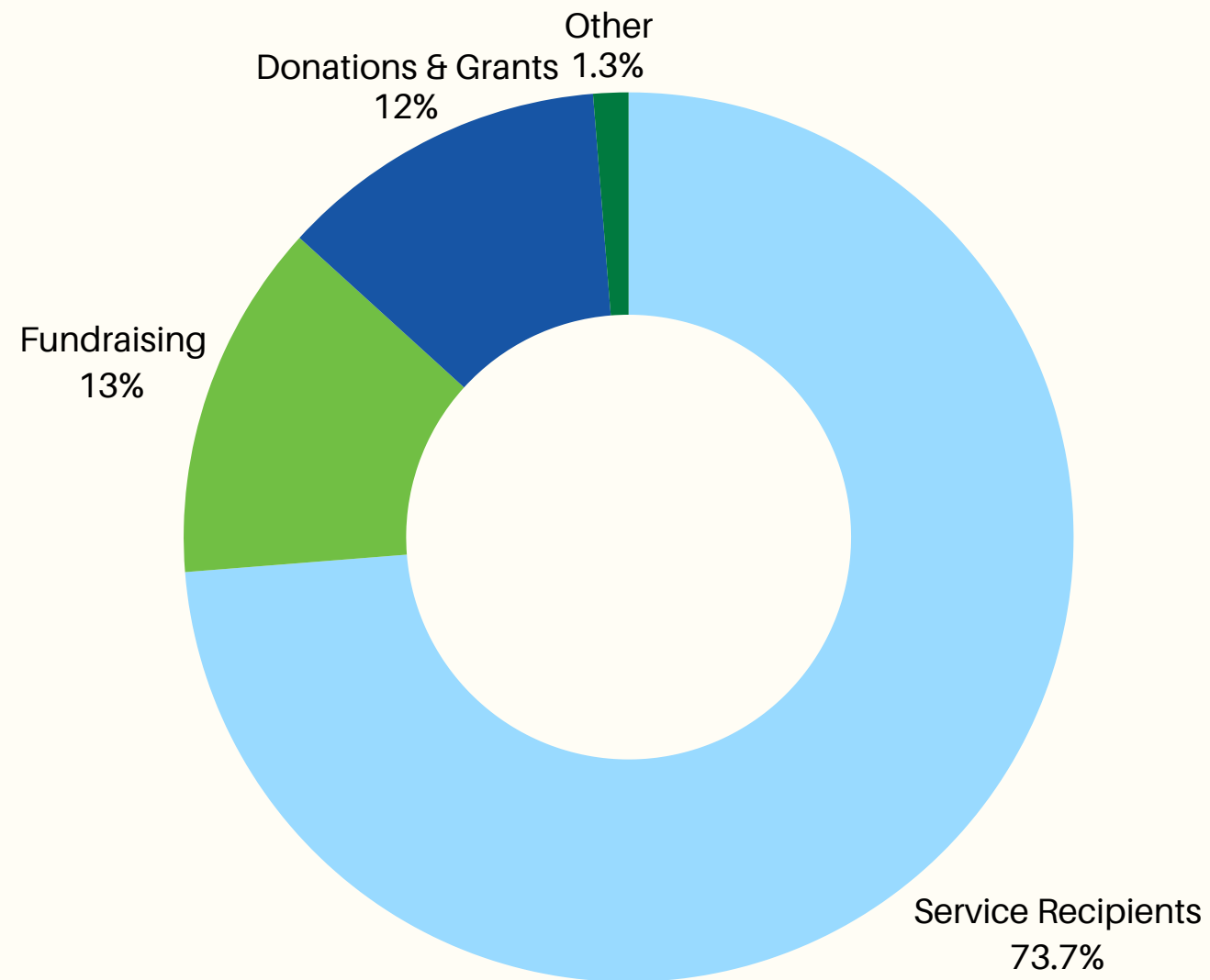


Creating Alternatives is incredibly proud to share that board member, **Kimberley Gadwah**, was awarded the *King Charles III's Coronation Medal*, a prestigious honour recognizing individuals who have made a significant contribution in their communities and country. Kimberley's unwavering dedication to service, leadership and advocacy is a true inspiration. Her presence on the Creating Alternatives board strengthens its mission and impact in countless ways.

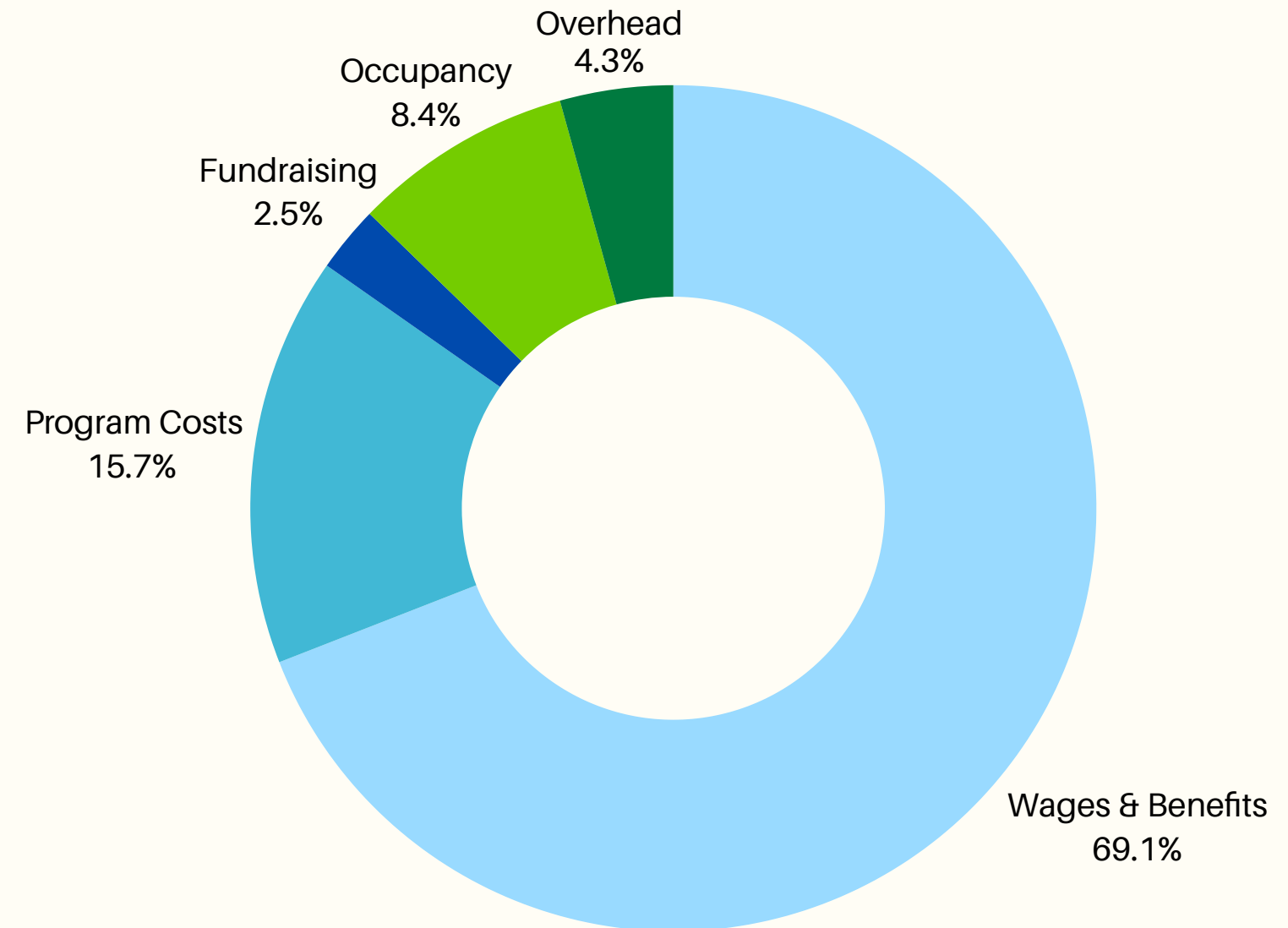


Board Chair, **Janelle Walsh**, was selected as the *2025 Altruvest BoardMatch Leaders Spark Award* recipient for Ontario. This prestigious recognition is awarded to alumni of the BoardMatch Leaders program who have made a significant impact on a Canadian charity's board. It celebrates leaders who strengthen the non-profit sector through exceptional governance, commitment, and service. Janelle's leadership, dedication, and thoughtful guidance have made a meaningful difference at Creating Alternatives, and this award reflects the positive impact she continues to have on the organization and the broader community.

# Financial Summary



**+ Total Revenue**  
**\$1,496,044**



**+ Total Expenses**  
**\$1,468,755**

# By the Numbers



**79**  
Individuals  
Supported



**5399**  
Personal Care  
Hours Provided



**950**  
Community  
Based Outings



**2700**  
Hot Lunches  
Served



**8813**  
Day Program  
Attendances



**2880**  
Rides Per Year

# Board of Directors



Janelle Walsh  
Board Chair

Rob Fox  
Co Vice-Chair

Chris Sulway  
Co Vice-Chair

Pat DiFrancesco  
Treasurer

Kimberley Gadwah  
Secretary

Shavone Lazarus  
Director

Rob Campagna  
Director

Veneza Baptista  
Director

Phyllis Santone  
Founding Member

Ron Gruenberg  
Honourary Member



info@creatingalternatives.ca



<https://creatingalternatives.ca>



905-264-9007



4300 Steeles Ave West, Unit 18  
Vaughan, ON, L4L 4C3