



THE WORKING CENTRE



BUILDING COMMUNITY FOR OVER 40 YEARS

SERVING OTHERS • WORK AS GIFT • REJECTING STATUS • LIVING SIMPLY • BUILDING COMMUNITY • CREATING COMMUNITY TOOLS

St. John's Kitchen & Outreach Work

St. John's Kitchen has been at the centre of the homelessness crisis since before the pandemic. It is the place where people come when they are unhoused. Every day we feel the full weight of supporting over 400 people where vital services are provided. The daily meal along with public washrooms, showers, laundry, outreach supports, medical and dental care are essential services for those without housing. This year while construction continues at 97 Victoria N, we have been fully welcomed back to our original home at St. John's Anglican Church.



Meal Preparation & Distribution

Our **Queen Street Commissary Kitchen** prepares over 700 meals each day for distribution to St. John's Kitchen, King Street Shelter and Erbs Road Shelter. The meals served at St. John's Kitchen ensure a daily free meal is available each week day in downtown Kitchener. This huge daily effort is supported by many volunteers and the Foodbank of Waterloo Region. We also continue to deliver hampers to hotel rooms.

Employment & Financial Supports

The **Job Search Resource Centre** at 58 Queen St. South is a crucial service. For much of the year we have seen line ups each morning by 8:30 am. It is a vital place for job seekers, especially new Canadians, who are looking for job search supports like job postings, resume support, employment counselling, links to employers, and connections to community resources. Our **Money Matters Hub** compliments the employment work providing income tax, budgeting, government support programs, and problem solving. During the income tax season we helped 1400 people access over \$9 million dollars in government benefits.



Providing More Safe Affordable Housing

The Working Centre provides housing to 100+ people at 11 locations. The new 21 units at the **Queen Street Apartments** is now home to 34 residents, including single new Canadian woman and their young children. This past year we recreated the **Louisa Street House** into a refugee hosting house. Through the support of generous donors we were also able to purchase a 12 person rooming house, ensuring these rooms stay affordable.



Emergency Shelter Beds and Cabins

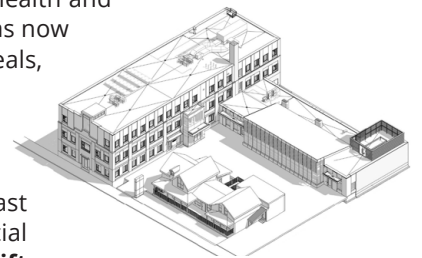
Since 2020, we have been providing 24/7 shelter beds as a direct response to growing homelessness. The 100 beds at the **King Street Shelter** and the 50 Cabins at **Erbs Road Shelter** directly help people without housing options. Both locations include a food servery, washrooms, showers, laundry, primary healthcare, and housing supports.



Making Home Project

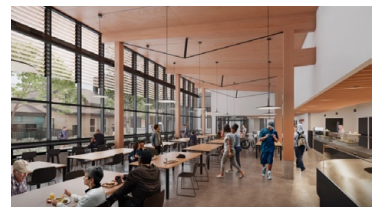
Construction progress at the Making Home project continues towards opening in the summer of 2025. We look forward to the completion of 44 units of new affordable and supportive housing. On the main floor will be a large medical clinic area to expand accessible health care with a focus on mental health and addictions. The foundation for the new home for St. John's Kitchen has now been completed. Making Home will be a crucial hub for housing, meals, medical clinic, and community supports in downtown Kitchener.

Project updates at: 97victoria.theworkingcentre.org



Community Tools

This year we completed our King St. East Community Tool campus. The three social enterprises **Worth A Second Look Furniture and Housewares Thrift Store**, **Recycle Cycles Community Bike Shop**, and **Fresh Ground Café** have now opened and rooted themselves at 37 Market Lane and 256 King St. East. These projects provide multiple benefits through affordable goods, a community gathering space, volunteer opportunities to work in a café, refurbish and repair bikes, prepare and display furniture and housewares. Come by and support these community initiatives!



Your generous support helps continue our community building efforts

donate.theworkingcentre.org



5000+ job seekers supported annually



1400+ people assisted at our free income tax clinic to receive \$9.4M in financial benefits



200,000 meals prepared and distributed in 2024



960 people supported by our SOS (Specialized Outreach Services) Team



100+ people living in affordable housing



378 individuals used the shelter service this year



400+ people daily supported at St. John's Kitchen

Dear Friends,

This past year has been a year of movement and renewal.

The structural steel beams creating a third floor for the 44 new housing units at 97 Victoria symbolizes the energy throughout The Working Centre, directed towards building and shifting spaces that make a difference in people's lives.

The Working Centre is now offering **150 beds** as 24/7 emergency shelter. This has come together through an effort of sheer will to support those who do not have a home, who are left to fend for themselves on the streets.

King Street Shelter provides 100 beds in a congregate shelter with three sleeping areas, a central community gathering area and a 24 hour servery. 268 different people used the shelter last year. During the year we prioritized women without shelter and presently the shelter has 60 women and 40 men.

Erbs Road Shelter is a new kind of shelter with 50 cabins. Last year 110 different people stayed at the shelter with 19 people securing supportive or private housing. Each month residents are supported with over 1500 supports towards stabilizing and gaining housing.

St. John's Kitchen has been located at St. John's Anglican Church at Duke and Water since November 2023 while the Making Home building project progresses. The Kitchen is a primary place providing access to meals, showers, laundry, public washrooms, outreach and medical supports. St. John's Kitchen sees 400 people per day. We estimate that there are 2,000+ different people who are unhoused or precariously housed who use St. John's Kitchen. The reality of addictions, mental health, poverty and homelessness is starkly present each day. Over the last 18 months, we have seen 80 people connected to the St. John's Kitchen community who have died.

Over the pandemic, we built a **commissary kitchen** on Queen Street which each day produces over 700 meals that are served at St. John's Kitchen and the shelters.

Outreach supports for those who facing homelessness are crucial. Our outreach teams work closely with over 600 people living precariously. We can name over 300 people living outside or couch surfing. Everyday our outreach workers are supporting people in encampments, motels and precarious living situations, helping with access to housing, medical, mental health, addiction supports, and legal issues. **Specialized Outreach Services**, our concurrent mental health and addictions team, supports 960 people.

Adding housing is an integral part of our work. Last year we completed **Queen Street Apartments**, creating 21 loft units for new Canadian single parents. The **Water Street Hospitality House** provides support to those acutely ill and homeless. Through generous donors we were able to purchase a 12 person **rooming house** that has already provided rooms for our community. The **Louisa House** is providing needed transitional rooms for refugees.

The **Job Search Resource Centre** at 58 Queen Street South has been serving those looking for work for 39 years. This fall we revitalized the resource centre changing its look substantially for the first time in 25 years. This was necessary to adjust to its growing use. Last year, 5,000 different people were supported, with 40-50 new people a day, many urgently seeking enough income to pay for high housing rents.

Your donations help us support people with creative projects that respond to growing poverty and housing instability. Supporters of The Working Centre have proven, year after year, that community donations are vital to respond to local issues. We are grateful for your ongoing support in building our community of support.

Sincerely,

Joe Mancini,

Director

P.S. We share our quarterly newspaper Good Work News with our contributors. Learn more about our community-based initiatives by visiting our website at www.theworkingcentre.org

Donate to support The Working Centre

Total Gift Amount

- \$50
 \$100
 \$250
 \$500
 Other: _____

Please direct my donation to:

- The Working Centre
 St. John's Kitchen
 Where it is needed most

Payment Method:

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To make a credit card donation please:

Visit online at: donate.theworkingcentre.org or call 519.743.1151 x111

Would you like to donate through e-transfer? Please call us at 519.743.1151 x111 to set it up.

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