

Wellspring London & Region / Stratford

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



A **Menu** of Hope and Opportunity

Welcome from the Executive Director



Welcome to our annual report for 2024! I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to each of you for taking the opportunity to learn more about Wellspring London & Region/Stratford, and the incredible impact that we are having in communities across Southwestern Ontario.

2024 has been a year for us to challenge ourselves to understand how we can reach more people in our region, create more partnerships and increase our sustainable fundraising opportunities. With the support and guidance from our Board of Directors, we have successfully launched a new strategic plan, ensuring the health and longevity of Wellspring for many years to come. We can feel

inspired knowing the impact of the support we provide to our larger Southwestern Ontario community is being felt far and wide. Increased numbers of new membership registrations each month indicate that the need is great. Outreach programs supported by Wellspring in communities such as St. Thomas, Woodstock and Sarnia will provide additional opportunities for people impacted by a cancer diagnosis – our vision is clear in that we need to better understand the gaps in services and how we can help. Our donors, volunteers and staff continue to be instrumental in helping us navigate the changing landscape of healthcare and precarious economic times.

This year marks several milestones for Wellspring London & Region/Stratford, as you will read in the full report. As we look forward to celebrating our 25th anniversary in 2025, we are asking people to consider what their engagement with Wellspring London & Region/Stratford could look like. Are you looking for a meaningful volunteer opportunity in your community? Are you able to offer financial contributions, by joining our Constant Companion Monthly Donor Club, or perhaps a one-time gift to support a specific program that inspires you? Can you help introduce us to organizations or corporations in your community that might work with Wellspring to offer a mutually beneficial partnership opportunity? In order to support the nearly 1000 active Wellspring members in this region, we need to ask our community for help. Together, we can ensure no one feels alone on their journey with cancer.

Please take the opportunity to read through our 2024 Annual Report and celebrate with us as we continue to grow our dedicated partnerships, increase our programs, and honour the amazing volunteers in our cancer community. Wellspring London & Region/Stratford has continued to redefine itself in 2024, and our report is reflective of this. We look forward to welcoming new faces to our Wellspring family as we move into 2025. Please plan to visit our centers in both Stratford and London to learn more about how you can become more active in our cancer community! A heartfelt thank you again for YOUR support in 2024.

Warm regards,
Tracey Jones

Tracey Jones, Executive Director
Wellspring London & Region / Stratford

*Our plates are full of
Hope and Opportunity
as we move into 2025*

On behalf of the Board of Directors

I am pleased to welcome you to the 2024 Annual Report of
Wellspring London & Region / Stratford

Supporting those dealing with cancer and their loved ones, continues to be a critically needed service today. As always, we acknowledge the support and valued partnerships within our community and the encouragement and positive feedback we receive from our Wellspring members.

This past year has been one of growth and opportunity under the strong leadership of our Executive Director and her capable staff. Enthusiasm is a word that comes to mind, since as well as their skills, their enthusiasm in delivering the work of Wellspring to our members, is well-noted. We extend our thanks and gratitude to the over 100 volunteers who enable our dedicated staff to continue their work.

The number and variety of our no-cost support programs has increased and covers a range of age groups providing comfort, hope and coping skills to cancer patients and their families. As well, Wellspring's presence in the community and health care settings has grown, raising greater awareness around the wonderful and important services offered.

Our Board member numbers have also expanded, as again, enthusiastic individuals have come forward, sharing their skills and expertise as well unique stories of why they want to be involved.

We are profoundly grateful to our generous donors and to the valued community groups and individuals who step forward to support the work of Wellspring, be it financially or through their gifts of time. Every effort matters.

As you read this report, we know that you will be impressed by the scope of Wellspring's work and will appreciate the ongoing benefit to those who have dealt with or are dealing with cancer.

Our sincerest thanks and gratitude,



Margo Bettger-Hahn
Chair, Board of Directors
Wellspring London & Region/Stratford



Wellspring Board of Directors

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Wellspring's 'Hero' Menu of Support

Earlier this fall, we put together a 'menu' of sorts that outlines some of the opportunities we hope will interest our donors and supporters. We gave it a 'hero' theme for two reasons ...One, because Wellspring needs heroes to help us continue to provide our no-cost programs and services and secondly and most importantly, because we

all know that the real heroes are our Wellspring Members who are living each day with a cancer diagnosis. We invite individuals or businesses interested in biting off all, or a portion of the costs needed to support one of our programs, to become a Wellspring Hero. We'll even provide the cape!

À la Carte Selections

How about starting with some Water?

Aquafit Therapy helps improve flexibility, restore balance and decrease stress. It is an excellent way to gently work multiple muscles simultaneously as the water provides resistance without adding impact on the body's joints. This program is open to cancer patients, caregivers and loved ones.

Suggested Gift:

\$5,000 at one Community Centre

\$20,000 at all four Centres

More than just Chicken Soup

Our Nourish Program provides dietician led education around healthy eating for cancer patients and caregivers. Nourish is an evidence based program that provides the latest recommendations on cancer related eating, and offers helpful advice on selecting and preparing foods.

Suggested Gift:

\$7,500 for 12 Classes

\$15,000 for all 24 Classes

The Main Objective

While huge strides are being made in cancer research, the reality is that cancer continues to affect approximately 43% of all Canadians. Understanding that supportive care is a critical component of every cancer patient, survivor and family member's wellness and recovery plan, is of vital importance.

Something to Wrap your head around

Our Meditation Program teaches adaptive coping skills and strategies to help reduce stress and anxiety thus improving the quality of life. You can help cancer patients and loved ones at two centres better manage thoughts and feelings during various stages of illness and treatment.

Suggested Gift:

\$6,750



Wellspring Specialty, Hero Sandwich

If you have an heroic appetite for helping cancer patients, then this is the menu selection for you! A gift towards our Greatest Need in programming gives us the flexibility to cater to the needs of our participants, by ensuring that the programs that benefit them the most, are available when they need them..

Suggested Gift:
\$25,000

Try something NEW

We have recently partnered with the SWRCP - Indigenous Cancer Program to explore how we can better serve this underserved population across our region. Our multi-year Indigenous Research Project includes two components, and is our commitment to improvements in indigenous health, recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report of 2015.

Suggested Gift:
\$10,000 to \$35,000



Can you Stretch to dessert?

Wellspring Yoga has been designed to help cancer patients and caregivers enhance and exercise control over their physical and emotional well-being. It is designed to provide a gentle and adaptable yoga experience while also teaching skills and techniques that support a self-managed yoga practice outside of Wellspring. Chair yoga is also included in this package.

Suggested Gift:
\$14,000



Current research is showing that social supports improve resilience in cancer patients and survivors, which leads to a higher quality of life; better mental health and improved treatment outcomes. Wellspring is an essential part of a cancer patient's care and recovery path. Our programs provide critical supports to cancer patients and their families.

Thank you for perusing our Wellspring Menu of Opportunities. Donor support helps Wellspring provide hope, comfort and coping skills to hundreds of cancer patients and their loved ones.

Wellspring helps people live better with cancer



Light UP Wellspring this Holiday Season!

How do we pay tribute to someone very special? There are many different ways, but we'd probably agree that the point of a tribute is to express our gratitude for the difference that a person has made in our lives. Some tributes are intended to support a person going through a tough time or in some cases, in memory of a loved one who has made an impact on our lives. Either way, tributes provide us with an opportunity to celebrate a life while serving to inspire ourselves and others.

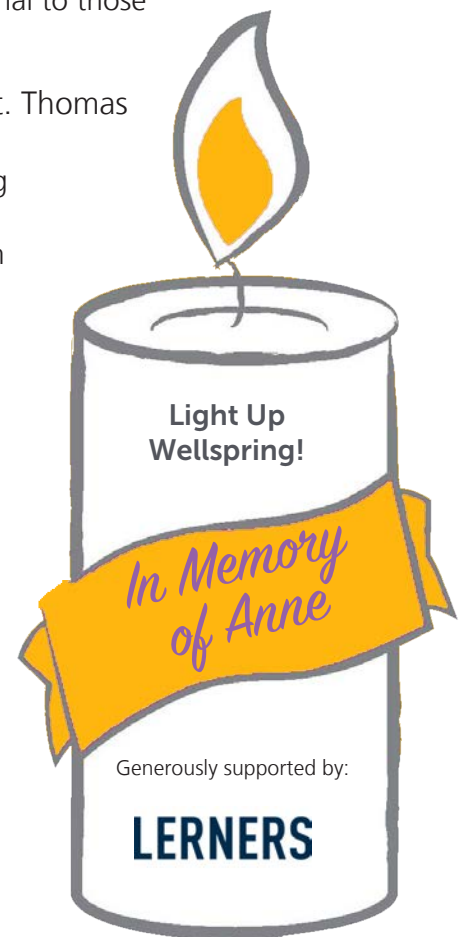
Every holiday season, we offer that opportunity here at Wellspring London & Region / Stratford Cancer Support Centre, through our **Light Up Wellspring Candle Tribute Campaign**. Each year, Wellspring supporters are invited to purchase a (cardboard) candle and dedicate it to their special someone. Individual candle tributes are suggested at \$20 each, or corporate/family/organizations or individual tributes of \$500 or more will support our **Light UP Wellspring 500 Club!** Candles are displayed in our Wellspring Centres and create a beautiful and touching memorial to those who have struggled with this devastating disease.

This year we will be reaching out to businesses in London, Stratford and St. Thomas with the opportunity to purchase a **"Light Up Lunch with Wellspring - Brown Bag Lunch"** during the month of December. Inside each Brown Bag Lunch is a (cardboard) candle and information about our no-cost cancer support programs. Staff are encouraged to dedicate their candle and post them up in a common area within their place of business. These very special Brown Bag Lunches are a perfect way for employers to recognize the contributions of their employees or simply to celebrate the upcoming holiday season with staff and a great way for us to spread the word about our No-Cost cancer support programs and services.

We plan on repeating our Light Up Lunch with Wellspring, in 2025, so if you are connected to a business who would be interested in supporting this initiative, please let our staff know!

Each year funds raised from our Candle Tribute Campaign support our slate of over 175 no-cost in-person and virtual (online) cancer support programs and services.

Thank you for your generous and loving support each and every year!
For more information please contact: Doug@wellspringlondon.ca or 519-438-7379.



Hard copy reports -
scan here



Donate



Dedicate



Support

The 'Meat & Potatoes'

Providing innovative and relevant programming options for anyone affected by cancer, is at the core of what we do. We were thrilled to have launched several new initiatives in keeping with our strategic goal of reaching more people. Below, we've highlighted two of our programs that are really 'hitting the spot' for our members.

Cancer Exercise Program

Our NEW partnership with ReActive Physiotherapy, has truly enhanced our Cancer Exercise Program. The aim is to help patients better manage cancer-related symptoms and improve quality of life. Under the supervision of a cancer rehabilitation trained physiotherapist, our members receive an individual assessment, personalized exercise plan and an opportunity to exercise with other patients twice a week for 12 weeks.

After completing our first session this past spring, 70% of participants noted a significant improvement in their stamina, and 100% noted significant improvement in their range of motion. Members let us know that the program helped them develop a better understanding of how exercise can help maintain health and wellness.

One member stated the most significant benefit to her was strength in her legs and stomach. She said "Before the program I was crawling up and down stairs. After the program I am walking up and down with only the use of a hand rail." Another member said that after the program, activities of daily living were much easier to complete.



The Healing Journey

Our newest program, The Healing Journey, guides participants through their cancer journey by providing coping skills and information, which in turn relieves cancer-related symptoms.

Level 1 of this program: Coping with Cancer Stress, introduces our members to a range of techniques and coping strategies, such as relaxation, healthy thought management, visualization, expression of emotions and goal setting.

The Healing Journey has been shown to provide participants with substantial improvements to quality of life, most notably reducing anxiety and depression while providing people with more sense of control. Evidence from related research, supported by Healing Journey studies, shows that this type of program can prolong life beyond the medical prognosis and even bring about unexpected remissions in some cases.



Wellspring London & Region / Stratford Statistics for 2023/24

175 unique in-person and virtual programs
Average of 30 new members per month
6,938 local program opportunities

432 avg # of new people registered each year
62% patients. 29% Caregivers. 9% Other
53% of our members have Breast Cancer

Celebrating Stratford House!

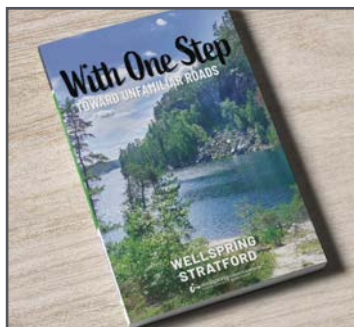
It's difficult to highlight any "one" thing on Stratford's menu of offerings in 2024, but there are a few events and programs that are stand-outs! Here are some of the reasons we are celebrating a successful year!

Growth in Our Membership! We continue to see more people finding Wellspring in our community and registering to use our invaluable resources and support programs. In October of 2024, we had 207 families registered in all of Perth County. Of those 207, 178 families were from Stratford! This number continues to grow each year.

New Volunteers Giving THEIR Time! 2024 has seen growth in our incredible volunteer pool of 6 new members, generously giving their time and talents to Stratford House! We have a total of 22 people in Stratford who are active volunteers with our organization, and we are always looking for others to help out!

Menu of NEW Fundraising Events! We added three new events to our already full plate this year, showcasing some of our creativity and collaborations in the community. These additional funds have helped to make 2024 very successful in this community! We held a wonderful intimate "High Tea with the King: Elvis Concert" in April of 2024, thanks to Rev. Matt Martin for his time and singing talents as Elvis. And we launched a beautiful poetry book called "With One Step Towards Unfamiliar Roads", written by our Wellspring members and guided by local poet, Heidi Sander. And lastly, our Light Up Wellspring Stratford campaign, which launched November 18th, includes a "Light Up Lunch with Wellspring – Brown Bag Lunch" for corporate businesses to take part in on December 11th in partnership with Black Angus Bakery & Catering. See website for more details.

Additional 'Helpings' of Programs! Wellspring Stratford House introduced two new and exciting programs in 2024 to meet the needs of our members. The first is our "Friday Fundays" – every Friday afternoon, Stratford House is offering an opportunity to get together for activities such as yoga, meditation, crafting, community lunches or educational speakers. We have seen on average 8 – 12 members out each week, participating in this excellent social program. Additionally, we have launched our first "Just Show Up Children and Family Program" in Stratford this fall, supported by the Optimist Club of Downie. This program allows kids between the ages of 6 -14 who have a parent, guardian or grandparent with cancer, to be together in a supportive group setting.



Fundraising Events at London House

A New Event to savour in 2024
to compliment our menu of fundraising activities.



Wellspring London & Region held our first annual **Wellspring Charity Golf Fundraiser** at FireRock Golf Club in August 2024. We couldn't have asked for better weather for our full day of golf. We had 44 players out for 18 holes, who then joined us after their round for some prizes, a 50/50 raffle, an amazing silent auction, and a delicious lunch buffet. Thank you to Miller Golf for being our title sponsor for this great event. We hope to see everyone back again next year!

In November, Wellspring London & Region partnered with an amazing community organization, Daughters of Penelope, to hold our second annual charity pickleball fundraiser, called **Dinking for Dollars**. We had a fun day of pickleball at the Carling Heights Optimist Community Centre with 27 teams coming out to show their support for Wellspring London & Region and Daughters of Penelope raising over \$11,000! After four hours of play, participants joined us for a complimentary pizza dinner and to award the top fundraiser and the winning team their amazing prizes. We look forward to continuing to grow this event with the Daughters of Penelope in 2025!

Thanks to everyone who participated in our 20th **Anniversary Walk for Wellspring** on September 8th, 2024 in Springbank Park. It was once again a truly moving and beautiful experience for our participants who turned out to Walk for the One They Love!

In March, we held another wildly successful **Battle of the Bands for Wellspring**. In it's 24th year, this event rocked and rolled it's way to raising over \$110,000! Londoners devoured the music put on by our fab five bands. The secret ingredient was our very special judging panel who determined that RBC/DC was our esteemed winner! We look forward to a smorgasboard of an event for our 25th anniversary, on Friday, March 7th, 2025!



Website opens in January 2025.
Wellspringbattle.ca
or call 519-438-7379

Community Support



Friends of Wellspring (FOW) is a group of like-minded members who have been raising funds for Wellspring London & Region for over 10 years. FOW also spreads awareness about Wellspring and the NO-COST programs and services that are offered to anyone affected by cancer. Throughout the year, this amazing group of volunteers, organizes and runs a variety of community fundraisers and raffles. We are fortunate to have members and friends who have knitted, crocheted, sewn, made woodcrafts, jewellery, and stained glass, painted, collected, sold, lifted, carried and more! There is so much talent within our community, and we are truly grateful for all the amazing crafts and unique one-of-a-kind items that are donated to the Friends of Wellspring.

The Friends of Wellspring (FOW) have had yet another busy year of fundraising! To date the Friends have held 12 events, and in combination with sales from the Friends of Wellspring store, book donations, and the quilt raffle, they have raised over \$10,000 to support Wellspring's NO-COST cancer support programs and services. We couldn't provide the support that we do without them!

If you're interested in finding out more information or joining FOW, please call Wellspring at: 519-438-7379.



We are so grateful to the **many** groups who have stepped up to support both of our Wellspring Centres over the course of the year through a variety of creative, fun and well-run 3rd Party events. 3rd Party Events not only raise valuable funds, but help spread crucial awareness within our community.

The logo for The Pink Dress Society, featuring the text "The Pink Dress SOCIETY" in a mix of script and sans-serif fonts, with a small pink dress icon above the word "SOCIETY".

The
Pink Dress
SOCIETY



Special shout-out to the **Pink Dress Society**, who partnered with the **Little Black Dress Event** (founded by **Nova Vita Salon**) to put on a spectacular evening of fashion, philanthropy, and community support in a unique empowering and uplifting celebration.

Everyone who attended the September event, was glammed up for a great cause and enjoyed tasty cocktails and hor d'oeuvres, shopping and visiting with vendors, and watching a high-end fashion show featuring local celebrities and designers. This incredible event raised over \$11,000 for Wellspring! Deepest thanks to both Nova Vita and The Pink Dress Society for this tremendous support!

A LITTLE PINK DRESS
MEETS
A LITTLE BLACK DRESS

The 'Bread and Butter'



Wellspring is truly grateful for each and every donation received from our amazing supporters. Your gifts help us fill our members up with the comfort, hope and resources they need to live better with cancer.

The chart below represents the approximate percentage breakdown of how Wellspring raised funds in our communities in 2023.



Total Revenue
\$594,653

Amounts taken from 2023 Audited Financial Statements and does not include revenue generated from investments and other assets.

Forkfuls of Thanks!

Wellspring London & Region/Stratford has so much to thank our communities for in making 2024 a tremendous success. New partnerships, increased volunteer engagement, increased donor engagement – the list continues for Wellspring as to reasons we should look back on 2024 and feel hopeful and inspired. Some of the highlights in 2024 are as follows:

Membership has INCREASED again from 2023; we have seen an average of 30 new individuals register to become members of Wellspring London & Region/Stratford per month. This is the largest number of new members that we have seen in the last four years! We currently have close to 1000 active members using our services in this region.

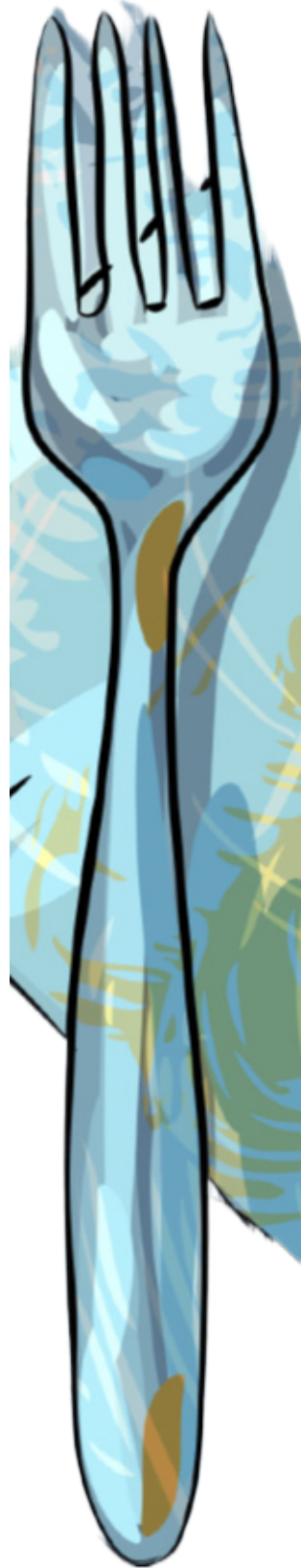
Our fundraising team has been very successful in launching **5 NEW events** this year in Stratford and London, in addition to creating new partnerships with service clubs, third party events and engaging new corporate donors. We successfully launched our first annual Wellspring London Charity Golf Tournament at FireRock Golf Club. Thank you to the Kinsmen Club of St. Thomas, St. Thomas Lions Club, IODE Eldon House, Kinsmen Club of Stratford and the Rotary Club of London Hyde Park for their financial supports and contributions in 2024.

New and existing PARTNERSHIPS with the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario, the YMCA of Three Rivers (Stratford), Childcan, St. Joseph's Breast Care Program, Southwest Regional Cancer Program (Indigenous Program) and the Verspeeten Family Cancer Centre, allow us to serve more people in our communities across the region and strengthen outreach throughout Southwestern Ontario.

We have successfully **ENGAGED 22 new volunteers** across our region to support the work that Wellspring London & Region/Stratford does within our cancer community. These volunteer roles include support group co-facilitation, peer-to-peer support, event volunteers, board committee volunteers and new board members. We are always looking for great people to join our Wellspring family!

We have expanded our program roster in our London and Stratford Centres by adding **4 NEW programs** in 2024; these include Just Show Up (Children and Family Program) – Stratford, The Healing Journey – London, Friday Fundays – Stratford and our improved Cancer Exercise Program – London.

Thank you again for YOUR commitment to Wellspring London & Region/Stratford throughout 2024; we are truly grateful to have the support of all our stakeholders. We are honoured to have served our community for the past 24 years as we ensure that those affected by cancer never have to go through cancer alone. We look forward to another year of success in 2025!



Wellspring helps people live better with cancer

A Memorable Take-Away

When my best friend Nikki was diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer at the age of 31, we were so shocked and confused. Cancer? But how does this happen to someone so happy, healthy, young and vibrant?



Within a month of discovering her cancer, Nikki was thrown into the deep end. Surgery, radiation, chemotherapy, multiple medications, invasive tests and procedures and more. As Oncology nurses, we understood what all of this meant and what it would take to make it through treatment. What we didn't think about was how to live well throughout treatment; it shouldn't just be about the medical side of things – what about the emotional and psychological aspects – where do you go to get help with that? Enter Wellspring.

Wellspring was there to support Nikki in ways no one else could. Yoga classes and reiki helped maintain her spirit and kept up her energy, the art therapy classes that she loved opened up an avenue for her to express her feelings; the

patients support group where she quickly made friends and bonded over mutual lived experiences, was extremely valuable. All of these made a huge difference in her ability to cope on a daily basis.

Wellspring brought Nikki so much light, confidence and joy throughout her treatment. I, as well as her friends and family, are forever grateful for the free, high-quality programs that were available throughout her time living with cancer.

On a Monday morning in April last year, Nikki passed away peacefully in her sleep. We miss her so deeply and it continues to be hard moving forward without her.

Wellspring Supporter, Sydney

I still want the life I believe I deserve. I want happiness and joy, while living with cancer.

Wellspring is a community and I was warmly welcomed. I always felt more hopeful after spending time there. My energy was recharged after my visits. And if I arrived feeling exhausted, it was an unspoken understanding that I did not have to worry about explaining how I felt.

When you have cancer, people unintentionally get so focused on your cancer, that it can become a repetitive narrative, and believe me your life is already consumed by your cancer and all that entails. It is such a relief to not have that as a focus.

Wellspring gives hope, joy, support, comradery, community and refuge. Here people are pulled out of their deepest, scariest, darkest thoughts and given a shimmer of something to look forward too, this can make all the difference of coping and not coping. I know because I'm one of these people."



At Wellspring, I'm just me!

In loving memory of Nikki



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