2020 Community Impact Report

Because of you, families are re-writing their stories
Message from the CEO & President of the Board

We write this message from our home offices as we continue to practice physical distancing precautions to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. This has been an experience like no other. Although the purpose of this report is to highlight our activities up to March 31st, 2020, we would be remiss if we did not address the impacts of both the global health crisis and the outcry for positive social change.

The past few months have seen several cascading series of events that captured global attention and have complex, yet interrelated effects right here in our community. Demands for our mental health and wellbeing services are increasing as families continue to process events related to systemic racism and adjust to the pandemic’s evolving circumstances.

As with many moments of crisis, these experiences present us with an opportunity to listen deeply and reflect. And we have.

We have taken opportunities to learn (and even un-learn), to adapt and grow, to understand what really matters in our communities, and realize the importance of ‘togetherness’ – even while apart. This is a time for all of us to consider the vital role we play in creating positive change and taking meaningful action to ensure that families in our community have the support to manage life challenges so that they can thrive.

At Carizon, this is what we strive to accomplish every day.

As we respond to the present challenges, we would like to share the progress we made last year and how it has helped us move forward in our mission. We entered the second year of our four-year strategic plan and the following pages are evidence of the impressive results we saw in each of our strategic directions. Deepening our family focus to better address families’ unique needs: Promoting system change through collaboration to identify, address, and advocate for effective solutions to our community’s pressing challenges. Innovating to improve customer experience and to maximize our impact. And building our Carizon culture to continue empowering our staff and volunteers to create a brighter future for this community.

Another highlight of last year was receiving a four-year accreditation from the Canadian Centre for Accreditation. This certification recognizes Carizon’s commitment to quality and continuous improvement in our services. Our accreditation journey demonstrates our relentless pursuit for a better tomorrow, and every single Carizon employee had a role in the accreditation process. We are incredibly proud of the hard work that made this achievement possible.

As you read this report, you will discover the stories of families whose lives have been changed by the support and programs you make possible. These are real stories of courage and hope, stories of the people who inspire us every day.

We know that our impact would not be possible without your support. This report is truly a testament to your generosity, kindness, care, and commitment in making our community stronger.

With Gratitude,

Tracy Elop
CEO
Dorothee Retterath
Board President
Mission 🎯
We help families thrive in their communities by strengthening their mental health and wellbeing.

Vision ⚫
Hope, Wellness, Community

Values and Guiding Principles
As we grow to meet the evolving needs of our community, we recognize that our culture and values must grow along with us. Which is why this year, we defined and launched Carizon’s new core values.

Board Members
Board President
Dorothee Retterath
Vice Chair
Lori Payne
Treasurer
Barney Strassburger
Amy Butler
Craig McNiven
D’Arcy Delamere
Derek Vollebregt
Elizabeth Sproule
Past Board President
Holly Harkins-Manning
Ryan McCartney
William Zhou

By the numbers

Our Impact
12,496
Individuals directly served

- 4319 Community Services
- 3473 Children’s Mental Health
- 4704 Counselling

Region of Waterloo
70+ Locations

By the numbers

- 191 Employees
- 282 Volunteers & Students
- 30+ Programs
- 32 Completed Quality Improvement Initiatives

Locations
70+
Because of you,
Sam is Celebrating His “Outstanding” Achievements

By Celebration Week, Sam was a strong participant and excitedly shared his learnings with his Dad, who attended the final session. He was extremely proud to receive the last Fire Fighter “badge” to show he had successfully completed the Group Program and could now go forward and deal with his angry triggers using:

STOP
Freeze and think of his feelings

DROP
Pick a calming strategy from those we covered in the group and one he liked using

ROLL
Problem-solve to make the issue smaller and then strategize how to roll on with his day

Sam has come a long way since then.
Around Christmas time, our facilitators received an email from Sam’s parents with photos of Sam at school. He was standing in front of his classroom chart and pointing to the top clothespin, indicating his name and achievement. His mom shared in the email that Sam had recently reached an “outstanding” for his school day due to his behaviour and attitude - a milestone he had not reached in the past.

Recently, we learned that Sam had achieved an “Outstanding” once again - AND that he even assisted his older brother (who had experienced a tough day) with some skills he could use to better understand and control his emotions.

Sam’s mom expressed how proud she was of her son’s emotional growth and wellbeing and looks forward to seeing what other milestones Sam will achieve in his future.

At the age of six, Sam was having trouble expressing his emotions, causing frequent outbursts and challenging behaviour both at home and in the classroom. Sam’s parents were struggling with how to help him work through these big feelings. That is when they contacted Carizon.

After speaking to one of Carizon’s Community Resource workers, Sam’s parents were relieved to learn that this was a common obstacle for families and decided to enroll Sam in a community group called “Anger Management” – Extinguish Your Fire” with hopes that he could learn skills to self-regulate and express his feelings in a more productive way.

Like many children entering the group, Sam was hesitant and tested the waters to see what the group’s routine, structure, and leadership would be - and just how much he could push the limits in his interactions with others.

As our facilitators remained consistent, firm, but fair in their approach, Sam began to settle into the group nicely. His participation and involvement in the topics and activities grew more positive each week. He grasped the concepts and was eager to provide examples of how he used the “Stop, Drop, and Roll” philosophy to “extinguish his fire” with the group.

Eventually, Sam started sharing how he used this philosophy at home, school and even brought back his own “charts” that indicated his success in moving through the steps of the program.

“We are not the same family we were a year ago and we are very appreciative of everything we learned and the people we met along the way at Carizon.”

- Sam’s Mom

Through our Children’s Mental Health Programs:

1,001 families served with our intensive at-home support programs for children and youth from ages 0 to 18

701 individuals served through our Front Door Quick Access appointments

462 individuals served through Children’s Mental Health counselling and assessment services

229 families served through our Crisis Support program

197 individuals served through family capacity building programs and supports
Because of you, 
Youth are Taking Charge of Their Stories

Neha was first introduced to Carizon through the Pathways to Education program. After witnessing her older brother’s academic success through the support of the program, she was eager to get involved once she entered high school.

Neha did not necessarily need tutoring support, but what drew her in was the people, saying, “Pathways was a hub that fostered my sense of community and belonging.”

Programming became a safe space for Neha throughout her high school journey - a space where she could connect with friends, complete her course work, and find support from Carizon’s Student Support Workers (SSW). “I knew I could come to my SSW if I ever had any issues or if I needed someone to talk to. They are always there to support their students academically and outside the classroom.”

By her last year of high school, Neha was a strong participant in the Pathways program and was asked to be a part of a Youth Consultant Committee to help inform program planning, implementation, evaluation. “By sitting on this committee, I realized how much Carizon values the youth voice. It felt amazing to have my opinion valued and listened to and it made me realize my full potential as a young person. I learned to never underestimate the impact that I as a young person can make.”

This committee soon became the backbone of Carizon’s Youth Engagement Framework. Once the framework was applied, it became clear that Carizon needed to create employment opportunities for young people in our community, so that they could gain valuable work experience and income, while having a role that contributes to program decision making.

That is when Neha was offered the position of Youth Program Facilitator. Acting as a community host at Carizon’s two community centres, Neha has built lasting relationships and helped to tailor youth programming to the needs of these areas.

Neighbourhood graduation rates over the past 10 years have increased from 37% to 78%.

"It can be easy to overlook the impact of a weekly recreational group. But, when we take a deeper look, we see that these experiences are so meaningful to the lives of the individuals that attend. It gives the youth a space to grow, to learn how to work with others, to be able to build relationships with others in their community, to be able to explore different interests, and to have positive role models in their lives. Most importantly, it keeps youth engaged within the community and allows them to see their potential at a young age so that they grow to meet that potential in their later years.”

-Neha

817 students in Carizon’s Pathways to Education programming
98 student graduates in June 2019

6 student positions and growing

Neha has come full circle. She is now studying at the University of Waterloo and continues her employment with Carizon. When asked about her experience, she says, “I thought that getting involved with programming would be a fun opportunity, not knowing that this decision would open up so many doors for me in the future.”
Because of you,
Jacob and His Son are Finding Hope Through Healing

Overwhelmed by shock and grief after losing his wife to suicide, Jacob felt like he had reached the lowest point of his life and was desperate for help. After many sleepless nights to avoid the recurring nightmares about finding his wife, Jacob decided to try a walk-in counselling session at Carizon.

Jacob opened up about his experience and told the counsellor that his wife had untreated mental health issues, which led to substance abuse, and she often talked about suicide. The couple had a four-year-old son who was also struggling, and Jacob admitted that he was not doing well with single-parenting. He told the counsellor that he was drinking heavily since being on stress-leave from work, impacting his ability to care for his son.

After Jacob shared his story, it was clear that the family needed wraparound support during this difficult time.

The counsellor told Jacob that we needed to bring in help for the family, ensuring the safety of his son while they embarked on their healing journey. The counsellor walked alongside Jacob and his son, helping them connect with Family and Children’s Services to arrange the child’s temporary kinship with their grandma while Jacob worked on getting better.

"Carizon has been my most stable support over the years and is helping me figure out that I can cope more and more. Thank you for extending the help you give to me."

Jacob missed his son immensely but visited with him regularly and was comforted by seeing that his son was doing well with his grandmother. Eventually, Jacob arranged for children’s play therapy for his son to process his own grief over the loss of his mother.

Jacob received consistent and tailored treatment for traumatic grief while adjusting to being a single parent and was also referred to addictions counselling to deal with his alcohol abuse.

Through his counselling and ongoing treatment, his flashbacks and nightmares receded. Jacob reached a turning point in his story.

He finally realized he could let go of his sense of guilt surrounding his wife’s death and embrace that she would want him to be well and be a loving parent to their son.

Jacob says that even though he will always be sad for losing his wife, he will honour her life by telling his son all the wonderful memories he has of her and by setting a strong and healthy example for their son.

Jacob is now close to 100 days sober and has begun having longer visits with his son. Together, they enjoy hiking and bonding through the outdoors: a passion he has not connected with since he was young. Jacob has returned to work and is looking forward to his son moving back home with him soon.

Jacob’s son has done extremely well in counselling and now plays and laughs like he used to. Jacob frequently connects with the children’s counsellor and feels a stronger bond with his son than he ever did before.

Over 21,000 hours of counselling

Through our Counselling Services...

1,010 individuals served through walk-in sessions, resulting in 1,515 hours of service
750 individuals served for trauma counselling
506 individuals served for violence against women
244 individuals served for sexual assault
59 individuals at high risk served in collaborative effort of Carizon and Connectivity KW4 Table
550 individuals served through our Employee Assistance Program
1,676 individuals served through Credit Counselling initiatives

3,868 individuals supported through clinical counselling
Because of you,
Setera & Her Family are Learning the Power of Connection

After making the tough decision to uproot her family for a better life, Setera and her three kids immigrated to Canada. With zero knowledge of the English language, Setera found it challenging to navigate her new environment. She began to feel hopeless, uncertain, and lonely. It wasn’t until the next year that Setera discovered the power of connection.

Setera first visited Carizon’s Paulander Community Centre to pick up a food hamper through the Food Distribution Program in partnership with the Food Bank of Waterloo Region. She was immediately welcomed by one of the resident volunteers, and Setera continued to ask her about her experiences with the centre. Eventually, this conversation made her feel comfortable enough to volunteer herself.

Setera started off volunteering for the Food Distribution Program, allowing her to interact with new people more regularly. She gained enough confidence from this experience to enroll in school part-time to study English as a second language.

Setera became involved in more and more community programs, getting her children to attend many of them as well, including English conversation circles, computer classes, and kids’ activities. Through these programs, Setera and her family have made new friends, learned about different cultures, and improved their English proficiency.

Setera is now at Level Eight in her English classes, a massive accomplishment from where she began her language journey.

When asked about her experience, Setera says, “When I go to the centre, I feel so comfortable and get encouraged to be a strong woman, and more independent. I am grateful that staff and volunteers are always welcoming and friendly with everyone, no matter where they are from and who they are.”

Setera now feels connected to her new home. She is very familiar with her neighbours and the resources available to her family in the community. She has become an advocate for Carizon, often sharing the story of how the centre played a major role in building her self-confidence, her success in learning English, and ultimately making a better life for her family.

We recognize the importance of meeting people where they are in their life story.
Thank you for all you made possible this year!

We are humbled by the incredible support we received from you, our generous donors, sponsors, volunteers, and partners. Thank you for believing in the work we do. We are thrilled to share a few of the ways our community came together this year to help families thrive.

Positive Conversations Decreasing the Stigma Around Mental Health

To kick off Mental Health Week 2019, friends and partners gathered at Bingemans for the Mindful Mornings breakfast event to listen to guest speakers Michael Landsberg, Jennifer Hedger, and Corey Hirsch share stories about their personal experiences with mental health. The event raised vital funds to support the greatest needs in mental health programs at Carizon and Grand River Hospital.

Camaraderie and Competition in Support of Families

The fifth annual Westmount Tradition Charity Doubles Tennis Tournament held in June 2019 was a huge success. The Westmount Golf and Country Club welcomed teams to three days of camaraderie and competition, supporting the families we serve. Thanks to the Tournament Committee, players, volunteers, and sponsors, we were honored to receive over $70,000 in support of our community development programs.

An Evening of Theatre & Philanthropy

Great memories were made at the Drayton Entertainment performance of A Few Good Men. We were extremely fortunate to present the event on March 11th as on the next day, Drayton Entertainment released a statement canceling all remaining performances to mitigate the potential spread of COVID-19.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year’s event was canceled, though we are looking forward to another successful event in 2021.

Another Successful Ride!

We are tremendously grateful for the 100+ people who showed their support for Carizon at the 2019 Ride for Refuge! With cool temperatures and sunny skies, we could not have asked for a more beautiful day or a better result, with over $34,000 raised to support our programs.

Good Food, Good Friends, All for a Great Cause

Special thanks to The Summit Team Realty Group, Ennio’s Pasta House, and everyone in the community who attended the first annual Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser on November 24th to support Carizon. It was a family affair with great food and good friends. Proceeds from the evening supported over 25 hours of fully funded counselling.

Bringing Hope to Our Families

Special thanks go to the event sponsors, Jack Fitzgerald and Laura Radcliffe at Remax Twin City Realty, Risolv IT Solutions, all the local businesses who donated items for the silent auction, and the 350+ theatregoers. Because of your support, we raised over $14,000 to continue providing wraparound services to individuals and families we serve throughout the Region.

It was inspiring to see the difference that donors and volunteers made through the Spirit of Giving campaign. The campaign provides gifts and holiday cheer for individuals and families in need across our community. This special time of year was brighter for many families who were touched by the kindness and generosity of our incredible community.
A Year of Impact

A New System to Make Mental Health Support More Accessible
Promoting system change through our work with the Counselling Collaborative of Waterloo Region, we implemented a new streamlined intake and case management system, Penelope. The system helps to optimize data management and streamline efficiency for staff and clients, providing a holistic approach to service provision and, ultimately, reducing stress for the client navigating mental health services.

Carizon’s Commitment to Equity, Justice, and Anti-Racism
We stand in solidarity with the Black, Indigenous and People of Colour communities. We acknowledge the devastating impacts of current and lasting discriminatory events and the deepened grief and trauma of all of those affected. This is a heartbreaking reality still lived by too many of our neighbours.

We are committed to evaluating our institutional structure and actively incorporating anti-racist policies and practices to continue strengthening inclusivity and build a stronger community rooted in equity and justice.

As an organization, we have a responsibility to ensure that our work contributes to the dismantling of systemic racism, which cannot be done without critical self-reflection, education, and dialogue. We recognize that there is more work to do. We need to speak out against injustice and racism. We need to listen, examine our own implicit biases, and continue showing humanity for each other, being there for each other, and continuing our work toward justice.

Accreditation Celebration
We are proud to share that once again Carizon has been awarded a four-year accreditation from the Canadian Centre for Accreditation this year. The accreditation journey demonstrates our accountability to the community, ensuring that we are operating responsibly and providing responsive and quality services and that we are engaged in continuous quality improvement.

Leveraging Technology to Support our Community’s Wellbeing
In partnership with the LHIN, we launched a local version of the Woebot app. Woebot uses artificial intelligence to provide tailored self-care based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy principles. The app is free to anyone in our community and can be downloaded from the Apple or Android stores using our referral code “Ontario”.

Improving Children’s Mental Health Services with Lutherwood and Capitalize for Kids
Carizon and Lutherwood are thrilled to be working with Capitalize for Kids, an organization focused on building capacity in children’s mental health services. Together, we have established a project focused on optimizing the use of our client information system to ensure that our processes, from the beginning through to the end of service, are smooth and efficient, resulting in an improved service experience for kids and families!
Thank you!

We are deeply grateful for the individuals, businesses, foundations, and government agencies who help us fulfill our mission by providing critical financial support and collaborative expertise for programs and initiatives.

- City of Kitchener
- City of Waterloo
- Cowan Foundation
- Immigration Refugee Citizenship Canada
- KW Community Foundation
- Lyle S. Hallman Foundation
- Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
- Ministry of Health
- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- Pathways to Education Canada
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Region of Waterloo
- Social Venture Partners
- United Way Waterloo Region Communities
- Waterloo Region District School Board
- Waterloo Wellington LHIN

Financial Snapshot
2019/2020

INVESTMENT IN PROGRAMS
$10,415,591

Children’s Mental Health
- 66% Quick Access (Front Door) and Crisis Mental Health Services
- 30% Intensive Mental Health Intervention and Treatment
- 4% Respite

Counselling
- 76% Walk-In and Clinical Counselling
- 16% Domestic Violence and Abuse and Assault Supports
- 8% Children’s Counselling

Community Services
- 48% Education Support
- 26% Outreach
- 15% Newcomers Support
- 11% Neighbourhood Support

REVENUE
$11,169,402

EXPENSES
$11,045,294

57% Government
18% Pathways to Education Canada
15% Donations and Fundraising
5% Fees for Service
3% United Way Waterloo Region Communities
2% Other

38% Community Services
18% Counselling
38% Children’s Mental Health
6% Corporate Services

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