2021 Impact Report
Helping families thrive through connection
As we continue to be responsive to the changing needs of our communities, we acknowledge the historical and present-day violence and systemic barriers that continue to harm members of our Region and that we must ask ourselves not if we are complicit, but how.

Carizon is committed to developing anti-oppressive practices and equitable outcomes for the families we serve while ensuring that our programs reflect and meet their needs. We recognize that we must work in collaboration with others to dismantle systems of oppression, discrimination and violence that people face as a result of their diversity, beliefs and identities.

Building equity takes time, resources, intentional commitment and behavioural change. It is an ongoing process, and we start by recognizing the racism and discrimination faced by Indigenous people, Black people, Asian communities, racialized people, ethnic or linguistic groups, members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, unhoused people, people with mental illness and people with physical and intellectual disabilities.

To help us create change and ensure that we can continue helping families thrive, Carizon has invested in antiracism and anti-oppression training for all our employees. In addition, we have engaged in an organizational assessment to identify and address gaps. We have also created an Equity Leader position to help ensure our policies, processes, and practices eliminate any existence or influence of systemic racism across our organization.

We have a lot of work to do and we are committed to keep moving forward on this learning journey. We will continue to listen, learn, and take action to ensure that everyone at Carizon experiences true equity, empowerment, and inclusion.
What a year. During the pandemic, people unexpectedly lost loved ones, jobs, homes, connections, and hope. Events shone a light on the pain in our community caused by years of systemic racism. Our overall wellbeing was challenged like never before, and we were reminded of how reliant we are on authentic human connection to thrive.

As our community navigated these crises, our team at Carizon did what we have always done – we rose to the occasion to help families. That meant remaining open and active, continuing to provide essential services, identifying emerging needs, and creating new ways to connect families to the people, places, and services they need.

Recognizing the need to dismantle systems of racism and oppression, we reinforced our commitment to listen, learn, seek a different path forward, and act. We introduced anti-racism training to everyone on the Carizon team, and we opened space for a new Equity Leader role. We know this is only the beginning and there is much more work to do - and we are committed to equity as we relentlessly pursue a better tomorrow for everyone in our community.

Throughout this report you will read stories of families who have overcome seemingly insurmountable challenges. It has never been clearer that an individual cannot thrive without the support of their family, and who that family includes is different for everyone. Your family is the people you trust and lean on for support, and those who in turn trust and lean on you. Our Family Focus framework ensures that families are at the centre of everything we do, and that every member receives the support they need, allowing the entire family to thrive.

Helping Families Thrive Through Connection

tirelessly during this time, and thanks to the support we received from generous community donors, these families (and many more) have become stronger. We are especially grateful to the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation. They stepped up to provide flexible funding that allowed us to take chances and lean into the areas where the community needed our support the most.

It was not easy. We asked for more from our team members and our supporters. But the result is undeniable - we helped more people move towards a brighter, healthier future. Our ongoing ability to connect families with the services and supports they need is only possible because of you, our donors, supporters, and partners.

The tremendous impact of your contributions is evident in the resilience of our Waterloo Region community throughout this pandemic. Healthy families that have the support they need are leading local recovery initiatives and driving positive change in our community every day. That is the true power of your support – the power of enabling those who are struggling to overcome the challenges they are facing and thrive.

With Gratitude,

Tracy Elop
CEO

Dorothee Retterath
Board President

We Never Stop Pursuing a Better Tomorrow

Building on our value of being relentless in pursuing a better tomorrow, our team didn’t let COVID hold us back. We quickly implemented systems that allowed us to provide treatment and support through a combination of virtual and in-person services, while thinking of the future. We knew that serving families in-person and returning to our offices would look different and that we needed to reimagine the ways we had been working and using our physical spaces. Here are a few ways that we are building capacity and building community.

What Has Changed

- We moved from a traditional assigned office for staff to a hotelling model
- We moved out from our leased shared space at 1770 King St. in January 2021
- Our Respite Program relocated from St. Agatha to Baden

How It Helped

- Using space and funds efficiently
- Reduced our carbon footprint
- Implemented tools to help teams use our space efficiently
- Enabled our teams to work remotely through investment in tools
- Shared our workspace with community partners
- Adapted existing space in Baden to continue to support our respite program participants in a home-like environment
- Standardized our bookable office spaces to support effective desk hotelling
Connection is Transformative

Your support helped transform the lives of

14,074 Individuals

13% Increase in demand for all of our services from last year

170 Employees
164 Volunteers & Students
8000+ Hours Volunteered

How Continuous Quality Initiatives (CQIs) support our strategic directions

- Deepen our Family Focus
- Innovate to Improve Customer Experience
- Promote System Change Through Collaboration
- Build Carizon Culture

920 Individuals supported through our Promise of Partnership program

Erb West & Paulander Community Centres and community development initiatives supported

1983 Families

Families served through Community Services

811 Students in Carizon’s Pathways to Education programming

124 Pathways students graduated in June 2020

86 Completed CQIs

4809 Families served through Community Services

7001 Families served through Counselling

140% Increase of families served through counselling from last year

23,000+ Hours of Counselling Services

830 Individuals received support related to finance through our Credit Counselling initiatives

109 Children & Youth received trauma treatment

20% Increase in referrals for trauma since the pandemic

2457 Hours of direct services to children and youth

2264 Families served through Children’s Mental Health

239 Families received immediate crisis support

40% Of children & youth received in-person support

845 Families received Quick Access support
The Polaris Program helps break the cycle of intergenerational trauma by supporting the healing of the entire family. With a trauma-informed approach, the team works closely with families in their day-to-day environments providing mental health supports to develop healthy relationships and overcome challenges together.

Overcoming Trauma Through In-Person Connection

Childhood trauma has a lasting and profound effect on a family’s ability to thrive, and early treatment gives children the best chance of healing and having a healthy life.

When Carizon’s Counselling Services and Polaris programs started working with Michelle and her two children, ages 10 and 7, they knew they needed to act quickly.

The family’s initial referral to Carizon came from the children’s school, when teachers identified behavioural issues that may be linked to childhood trauma. The Polaris team reached out to the family to assess the situation and provide support. Michelle was in the process of leaving an abusive relationship, and the children were in need of support to process and heal from the abuse they had experienced.

A Whole-Family Approach to Support

Michelle was engaged and dedicated to supporting her boys, and understood that to be the best she could be for her children she had to heal herself and manage her post-traumatic stress. Carizon’s trauma counselling team helped Michelle process her memories, behaviours, and beliefs. Helping her children overcome their challenges was also very therapeutic for Michelle, and she was dedicated to doing the work to help her children heal.

A parent mental health worker from the Polaris Program began working with Michelle, and they were able to establish a trusting relationship. With the parent mental health worker Michelle knew she had someone on her side who understood her needs, and together they were able to set realistic goals for the family. Setting achievable goals helped Michelle feel hopeful that things could be better.
Because of you,

Carizon continues to address our community’s growing mental health needs, offering no-cost and subsidized counselling services that ensure no one is turned away based on an inability to pay for service.

To get the intensive treatment they needed, the children met with Carizon’s Childhood Trauma Services team. This sensitive work needed to be done in person and was the key to establishing a trusting relationship with the children. The team ensured they could arrange in-person counselling following all safety protocols early in the COVID-19 pandemic. The use of informal activities, such as playing UNO card games, helped the children feel at ease. We are proud that Carizon pivoted to in-person sessions quickly into the pandemic. We did the right thing for this family and didn’t impose a long wait that would have been so damaging.

Having established a relationship of trust, the trauma counsellors moved into more structured counselling. Cognitive Behaviour Therapy was helpful in processing emotionally charged events, and Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR) was used to help process intense memories. Through recalling traumatic events, using EMDR’s rhythmic vibration techniques to calm the central nervous system, the children were able to gradually decrease the negative effect of the memories, and their behaviour improved. Through working with the trauma counsellors, the children were able to build a foundation for healthy relationships with their family, at school, and in the community.

Counselling, no matter how powerful, cannot change a person’s life circumstances. The children had people in their lives who were not on the same journey of healing. It was important for the counselling team to work with the mom and the children to have a strong safety plan that gave them the confidence to handle difficult situations in the future.

A recent check-in with the family found the children flushing with pride. Michelle and both children say they are hopeful for the future, because they can see a path to a happier time. Ongoing support will be essential to continuing their healing journey. The Polaris team will continue to serve the family for as long as they need, and will bring in other Carizon and community services to give this family the support they need to build a successful and happy life together.

Speaking Up to Inspire and Inform

October 2020 was the official launch of VOICES - a unique initiative through the Family Violence Project (FVP) that brings together perspectives from intimate partner violence survivors to help victims heal.

VOICES group members share their time to raise awareness about intimate partner violence, and work to break the silence that enables abusers. The group achieves this through community education, as well as empowering members and creating a safe space to share stories of hope and inspiration. “Being able to identify with other people, where you can see yourself as an advocate, is huge,” says Sofia Aresta, co-chair of VOICES.

“It provides hope, a sense of belonging, and the knowledge that other individuals who have been in similar situations have been able to mend and heal.”

- Sofia Aresta

As a collaboration between Waterloo Region support agencies, FVP is able to model services based on feedback from the VOICES group, as well as educate teams across all 12 partner agencies. The collaboration has found ways to ease access to support for victims, and brought forward digital integration that will decrease the number of times victims need to share their stories across organizations.
Connecting Communities

Mental Health is Health

Many Kitchener residents face barriers in accessing health care and that extends to mental health support as well. This year offered an opportunity to pilot a one-year partnership with the Kitchener Downtown Community Health Centre (KDCHC). With the mutual belief of easing access to health care needs and mental health support, Carizon supported KDCHC to deliver psychotherapy at the Centre as part of the Healthcare Team.

Through this partnership, patients of KDCHC received support for their short-term mental health needs at the clinic, and had streamlined access to explore longer-term specialized supports with Carizon’s counselling program. “Patients of the KDCHC are so appreciative of the support,” recounts Dan Young, a Child & Family Therapist with Carizon and KDCHC.

The partnership with KDCHC has also pushed Carizon to look at patient support in new and creative ways and valuing primary care as the foundation of the patient’s wholistic support system. To date the program has been a tremendous success, and the Carizon team will be continuing to work closely with KDCHC on future collaborations to ensure all community members have access to full spectrum health care.

Learning From Each Other

Acknowledging the past, and learning from it to inform an equitable future for everyone is a core value at Carizon. Through partnering with Anishnabeg Outreach (AO), a non-profit organization that supports Indigenous Peoples in our community, we are learning, sharing, and making space for healing.

This partnership allows us to share knowledge and best practices with the AO team, who then provide culturally-appropriate counselling and mental health support to Indigenous community members. To date, the partnership has provided mental health and wellbeing sessions to 395 Indigenous community members, and AO has helped thousands more through Spirit Bundles, outreach and social media interactions.

While Carizon is happy to share knowledge, infrastructure, and resources with the AO team, the partnership has brought so much more to Carizon. Through working with AO our team has been able to broaden our understanding of how we can take meaningful steps to aid in the reconciliation process, and have learnt to break down barriers faced by Indigenous Peoples in accessing mental health and wellbeing support.

A Fun Excuse to Bring People Together – Virtually!

As a fan of The Bachelor, Sarah took the opportunity to host a virtual viewing party while raising funds in support of families. She put together goodie bags that included homemade fudge, chocolate-covered strawberries, a chocolate-covered rose and more and safely delivered them to her friends in exchange for a donation.

This creative idea brought a generous group of friends together for a much-needed evening of self-care and connection. It’s also a shining example of how youth are looking for ways, and embracing the opportunities, to build community and give back to help others.
Finding Hope in Persistent Connection

Like many during the COVID-19 pandemic, Maria was struggling.

She was fearful for herself and her children, which led her to disconnect from family and friends, and from spending time outdoors. As a young, single mother of two, Maria was already facing several obstacles in supporting her family pre-COVID, and the added isolation was overwhelming.

Initially, Maria connected with the Children and Parents Connecting (CAPC) home visit team because she wanted to learn new activities to engage with her children, and learn positive parenting strategies. Maria’s dedication to her children was clear. As she became comfortable with the CAPC team, she began to open up about some of her life experiences, and of coping with mood changes, depression, and trust issues.

The program team learnt that Maria was seeing a psychiatrist regularly, and that she was going through frequent medication changes to help stabilize her mental illness. Eventually, Maria shared that her psychiatrist also recommended she seek out counselling support, but a past negative counselling experience left her uninterested in trying again.

With a bit more information, the CAPC team was able to connect Maria to additional services to help her get through this challenging time. Maria’s family was welcomed with open arms to the Paulander Community Centre’s food distribution program, which has become an invaluable resource for community members. During her visits Maria opened up even more and confided that she was having a difficult time getting up in the morning and leaving the house.

Carizon’s team was ready to respond to the needs of families facing many unique challenges, and easily arranged to have Maria’s food delivered to her home.

While food delivery was an excellent solution to Maria’s immediate needs, the Carizon team knew that it could also enable Maria to isolate herself even further, risking additional mental health challenges and family struggles. The team encouraged Maria to try counselling one more time, and she agreed. Unfortunately, Maria couldn’t bring herself to follow through with the counselling intake worker - despite the team’s best efforts to encourage her to seek help through counselling, she simply wasn’t ready.

A few weeks later, Maria was in touch with the CAPC team again, and this time she requested help connecting with counselling services. The team immediately took action and connected her with a counselor, and banded together to answer Maria’s questions and reassure her prior to her initial appointment.

Maria attended her first appointment, and was able to share with her counsellor about pain she had been holding onto for a long time. Without processing her pain, Maria had been unable to see a prosperous future for her family, contributing to her mental health challenges and negatively impacting her relationship with her children and the community. After her first counselling session Maria shared with CAPC:

“I am feeling really hopeful that with consistent counseling I will be able to heal and move forward.”

Thanks to Maria’s courage, the generosity of our community of donors, and the persistence and continued support of the team, Maria’s family is growing stronger. She now has the tools to create positive relationships with her kids, and strategies to cope with her mental illness.
Adapting to Connect

Food Brings People Together

Access to nutritious food is one of the most basic human needs, and early on in the pandemic Carizon’s food support team had to get creative to ensure no families were left behind. As the food support program relies on volunteers to operate, during COVID isolation periods many volunteers were not able to continue in their roles. The Carizon team quickly stepped up to fill these roles, while still attending to their regular responsibilities. “It was such a wild ride,” says Program Supervisor Brittany Kulchar when recalling the team's willingness to step in.

With the knowledge that the pandemic was leaving even more families without access to nutritious food, the Carizon team also partnered with House of Friendship to add the Victoria Hills community to the program - nearly doubling the number of families served.

Food distribution is the program’s most visible activity, but for the team it is a jumping off point to supporting these communities. Building connections and relationships in the communities they serve, then evolving the program to best speak to each community’s needs is a point of pride for the team. During the pandemic this has meant producing instructional videos focused on unfamiliar ingredients, and developing illustrations to ensure language is never a barrier in access to nutritious food.

Connecting Safely Brings Benefits

Unexpected changes can bring opportunity to grow and connect in ways never imagined before. Carizon’s Respite program was forced to find creative ways to continue supporting families when COVID social distancing measures came into effect.

Respite provides youth with complex social, developmental, and mental health challenges a safe, supportive space to play and learn, while their primary caregivers have the opportunity to pause, reconnect, and recharge. During a year when many families were forced to isolate in small spaces without access to the supports they count on, we knew we needed to adapt our Respite program in order to provide much-needed relief.

Supporting 12 children at a time in a group-based environment for full days on weekends was no longer possible, so the team brainstormed and found a creative solution. The program began offering weekday programming for two children at a time, in 3-hour blocks. The new schedule enhanced the team’s ability to serve each child as they were now connecting one-on-one with each child, establishing deeper relationships, and developing a better understanding of each child’s unique needs.

While Respite has always been a comfortable and familiar space, the important role this program plays in the lives of many families increased during the pandemic. Thanks to our team and our supporters we were able to pivot quickly to provide much-needed relief and support to these families during a highly stressful time.
A Father Connects to Help His Daughter

As a single dad trying to care for a daughter who has experienced a significant amount of trauma, Alex felt like he was in over his head and didn’t know where to turn. After reaching out to Front Door, Alex was referred to Circle of Security.

At his first meeting, Alex noticed he was the only male in the group and was feeling a bit self conscious. He told the group, “I’m really glad to be in this group, but I feel a little bit uncomfortable being the only guy, so probably I am not gonna say much, but I promise I am listening.” While establishing connection between group members is important to the success of a group program, Alex wasn’t quite comfortable and the group was happy to have him listen in. For the length of the program, Alex preferred to stay a bit late and ask the questions he was too nervous to ask in the group setting.

CAPC Circle of Security
Circle of Security provides parents with a safe group setting to share and learn parenting strategies with the goal of keeping children safe and families together.

CAPC Home Visit Program
Through the CAPC’s home visit program, our team supports children and families to reach their full potential by enhancing parent/child interaction and helping manage and eliminate stressors.

A few weeks into the program, Alex shared with the facilitator that his four-year-old daughter had been apprehended from her mom and placed in his care, and that it had happened before. His daughter had experienced a lot of trauma, and continued to exhibit troubling behaviours such as frequently hiding, hiding food, and crying.

Recognizing that Alex could use some extra support, the Carizon team connected him with the home visit program. Establishing connection between a participant like Alex and Carizon staff is key to the team’s ability to help effectively, and Alex clearly wasn’t comfortable opening up as much to female audiences. To overcome this barrier the team ensured Alex was assigned a male support worker. Working with a male staff member helped Alex feel like he could open up about the challenges he was facing as a father.

Between the Circle of Security group meetings, and opening up during home visits, in 8 weeks Alex learnt how to advocate for himself and his daughter, how to get his point across in an appropriate way, better use of language, and received parent coaching. Alex will continue to keep in touch with Carizon, but during the last week of the Circle of Security program he shared,

“I just really want to thank you. Between Front Door, this program, the home visiting, and all of the people I’ve met I feel hopeful. I feel like I have a long road ahead still - but I feel like I’m going in the right direction.”
When we think about building connections, we often look to people who we share similarities with. But what happens when we make space to welcome new voices? Ask Joana Lincho, Carizon’s Youth Engagement In Systems Lead, and she’ll tell you the possibilities are incredible.

As part of Carizon’s Youth Engagement Framework, teams look for opportunities to create paid employment positions for young people in our community. Their chance came with the Children and Youth Planning Table (CYPT) – a collaboration of over 800 partners working to improve the wellbeing of children and youth across our community.

This year, three new positions were created which welcomed Asher Andargachew, Adan Imran, and Maddie Reid as Youth Connectors. “I cannot sing their praises enough,” says Joana. “What these young people have brought to the role – their capacity, their enthusiasm, their skill sets – has been nothing short of wonderful.”

The impact of the Youth Connectors’ talent was felt immediately. Maddie’s strategic approach to online engagement saw the CYPT’s social media followership numbers skyrocket. Back-end processes, which previously took CYPT staff months to accomplish, are now done quickly through Asher’s coding expertise. With courage and confidence, Adan moderated her first panel discussion - brilliantly stewarding the conversation between the five panelists while contributing her own perspectives and experiences in front of a virtual audience of more than 80 guests.

Asher, Adan, and Maddie then took on leadership roles at a CYPT all-member meeting where they designed the youth/adult co facilitator model that was used during the event and co hosted breakout sessions.

“What these young people have brought to the role – their capacity, their enthusiasm, their skill sets – has been nothing short of wonderful.”

- Joana Lincho

“I was the only black kid in the breakout room with females of all different ages and ethnicities,” says Asher. By addressing people directly, talking about his own experiences, and asking others for their input, Asher shares that what seem like barriers to forming a connection disappear. Beyond the CYPT, Asher became a peer tutor with Pathways to Education - while still being a participating in the program. He has also shared his script writing, videography, and editing talents to help produce Carizon’s Food 4 Thought meal prep tutorial videos. He moved from being a student at CanCode – a federal initiative to engage Canadian youth in STEM courses - to being one of its first youth instructors.

Joana shared that Asher, Adam, and Maddie are examples of how Carizon’s programs provide opportunities for youth to hone their skills, build bridges to employment, and create future opportunities. She says that “placing youth as partners with adults in decision making spaces - they take their space, they use their voice, they shape their opportunities, and create opportunities for other youth in the community.”

Today, Asher, Adan, and Maddie have begun a new project with the CYPT and Smart Waterloo Region, where they are connecting with youth across the community to identify what makes someone an adult ally. “One of the characteristics on that list that really stuck with me,” says Joana, “is someone who is confident enough in themselves and their skills to learn from young people.” Joana hopes this serves as a call to each of us to have that confidence.
Healthy Connections

Sustaining Connection During Isolation

Isolating after exposure to COVID-19 can put families at risk, and isolating outside of your home can result in feeling disconnected from family, friends, and community. That’s why Region of Waterloo Public Health partnered with Carizon to provide mental health and wellbeing support to people who chose to isolate at the region’s Safe Voluntary Isolation Site (SVIS). Supports include wellness check-in phone calls, connecting with community resources, navigating the mental health system, and addressing both long and short-term practical needs.

Accessing mental health and wellbeing support while isolating at the SVIS has been transformative for many individuals and families. Participants have expressed gratitude that the SVIS exists, and highlighted the value of connecting with a mental health agency to receive emotional support during and after their stay. Carizon’s family focused approach to support allows individuals and their families to remain connected to each other and their communities - and in many cases, able to use their isolation period to work through other stressors in their lives and resume day to day living with a renewed sense of direction and connection.

Collaborating Eases Cardiac Care

Needing cardiac surgery is incredibly difficult news to hear, and the lifestyle changes that come along with post-surgery care are often daunting. To support patients who are undergoing The Ross Procedure (one method of replacing an abnormal aortic valve), Carizon and Kitchener’s St. Mary’s Hospital formed a unique partnership to provide pre- and post-operative counselling services.

Recognizing that patients who are undergoing significant medical procedures can benefit from therapeutic support, the Carizon team helps patients overcome any condition-related stress, anxiety, and depression through counselling and coaching, as well as provide support to patients as they build and maintain a healthy post-operative lifestyle.

By supporting the mental health & wellbeing of families, together we foster a healthy and vibrant community for all.
Your Compassion Inspires Hope

While the reasons people feel inspired to become donors may vary greatly, they all share one thing in common. Their kindness keeps people connected to the vital supports that strengthen families and create hope.

Increasing Impact with Monthly Giving

For Vivian, a monthly donor who has supported Carizon families for more than 20 years, her first gift arose from recognition that not everyone has mental health benefit coverage.

“I used counselling services in the late 90s and was fortunate enough to have a health benefit package at work that covered the cost of sessions.” Hearing that donors’ generosity made support possible for families regardless of their ability to pay, Vivian knew she wanted to help.

“I hope that my gift allows Carizon to continue to provide services to the whole community and not just for those who can afford it,” she says. Through monthly giving, Vivian helps sustain Carizon’s work. This means families have access to vital supports that help them create a better life and a hopeful future.

Doubling The Power of Connection

Athena Software was inspired by the Counselling Collaborative of Waterloo Region’s vision of coordinated mental health support.

In the midst of the pandemic, Athena’s staff knew that the demand for mental health support dramatically increased. They responded by rallying around the efforts of the Counselling Collaborative of Waterloo Region. This partnership of six community counselling service providers connects families to quality, coordinated treatment plans.

“(The collaborative’s) innovative and visionary approach to working together as a group to serve the community is truly inspiring.”

- Geoff Bellew, CEO of Athena

By matching donations, Athena doubled the impact of their staff’s generosity. The funds raised through their annual Matching Holiday Campaign ensured that we could offer both in-person and online counselling during COVID. This ensured families’ needs were being met when and where needed most.

A Celebration of Connection and Community!

The Spirit of Giving is a program where kind members of our community offer to support the families we work with. When volunteers began to plan for the 2020 Holiday season, we were unsure of how many families we would be able to help. With the closures and lay-offs, we doubted how many people would be able to sponsor a family, considering what might have been happening in their own home.

The campaign previously involved many in-person activities, such as going shopping and dropping off items to a collection centre. Covid forced us to re-evaluate many of our processes and make them digital. We implemented a virtual store where donors had the option to donate towards a specific item, such as PJs, toys, and meals, which translated into a gift card, that a sponsored family could safely use. Sponsors were also encouraged to provide some words of encouragement.

To our amazement, the support from our donors was unprecedented. Our goal was to support 25 families and we were able to sponsor 39 families. Despite a different approach, nice packages with encouraging notes were safely delivered to families, adding some holiday cheer.

Staff Contributions Make Care More Accessible

As a valued member of Carizon’s Talent Development team, Sheila reflects: “Not everyone has access to an EAP program to obtain the support they need, and the struggle is real.” Our Carizon staff are people with passion for serving others and strengthening our community.

“Knowing that anyone can receive access to services through Carizon warms my heart. It will bring people hope and provide them with the guidance and support that will lead the way to better days ahead.”

Sheila is one example of how our staff are giving beyond their daily role and this one of the reasons we are so proud to call Carizon our work home. Through her support, Sheila is ensuring that no one will ever be turned away due to financial limitations.

Carizon’s donors are an inspiration to us. Monthly donors who are invested in the long-term mental health of our community. Corporate partners who match their staff’s generosity and belief in a better tomorrow. Youth who drive change with their creativity and leadership. Staff who demonstrate their compassion for families in ways seen and unseen. It is with grateful hearts that we thank each of you.
Our Community Supporters

Facing significant revenue losses with the cancellation of our fundraising events and the uncertain economic climate, the community showed up strong. All of the work you read about in this report was made possible by the generosity of our friends, companies, partners, foundations and government agencies, who stood with us every step of the way. We can’t thank you all enough for your support.

- Astley Family Foundation
- Athena Software
- Canadian Women’s Foundation
- City of Waterloo
- Communitech
- Cowan Foundation
- Farm Mutual Reinsurance Plan Inc
- Immigration Refugee Citizenship Canada
- KW Community Foundation
- Launch
- Len and Helen Georgiou 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
- TD Canada Trust
- The Fairmount Foundation
- United Way Waterloo Region Communities
- Waterloo Region District School Board
- Waterloo Wellington LHIN

A Special Thank You

We would like to extend a very special thank you to the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation for their generous support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

By providing us with flexible funding they allowed us to adapt to the changing needs of our community during the pandemic, and to serve more families than ever before. Our community truly is a better place thanks to their support.

Thank You to the People Who Guide Us, Our Board of Directors

Dorothee Retterath, Board President
Lori Payne, Vice Chair
Amy Butler, Treasurer
Benton Leong
Craig McNiven
D’Arcy Delamere

Elizabeth Sproule
Kendra Ross
Ryan McCartney
Sherry Wagler
William Zhou

Financial Snapshot

Where our money comes from

In a year that tested us all, our donor community and our government funders stepped forward to support families with breathtaking results. We ended the year in a position of strength. Together, we raised $15.5 million, an increase of 30% from last year. Taking the learnings from this year, this increased revenue allows us to plan for the next couple of years, ensuring we can do even more to support people facing challenges at a time when demands for our services will continue increasing.

How your gifts were invested

In 2020/21, we spent $11.6 million on our work, making sure families were never alone in their time of need. This is $1.2 million more than last year, which meant that more families could benefit from our support. This report has featured just a small selection of the different ways we were able to support families through these funds.