



THE COMPASS
Help for Today ♥ Hope for Tomorrow



2023

**Annual
Impact
Report**

Message From Board Chair



We experienced unprecedented growth in demand in 2023 – a 63% increase in the number of individuals served! High inflation, severe housing shortages, and a huge influx of newcomers all contributed to this growth. Yes, we struggled to meet the challenge, however I'm so thankful to report that we largely succeeded.

I am so grateful for the full team effort that enabled us to meet the needs of our vulnerable neighbours. Our staff worked incredibly hard to keep things moving while overcoming obstacles at every turn. **Our 400 active volunteers did so much to keep the shelves stocked, fill client orders with great care and efficiency, create and serve nearly 70,000 delicious and nutritious meals,** and keep the back-office operations humming.

The support from our member churches and the broader community has never been better, **with a 24% increase in food donations, a 29% increase in financial donations and a 26% increase in fundraising results – including an amazing Walk event with over \$160,000 raised.**

All of this incredible support enables The Compass to continue living out our mission: **“Together, we provide help for today and hope for tomorrow.”** Our hearts are full of gratitude, and we are blessed to be a blessing to those we serve.

John W. Nyholt
Chair Board of Directors, April 2024

 **6,567**
unique clients served in 2023
(a 63% increase from 2022)

 **69,650**
meals served in 2023
(up 79% from 2022)

1,025,613

pounds of food was distributed to our clients!



That's an increase of 45% from 2022.

We are MORE than a food bank

From the outset 22 years ago, the vision for The Compass was to be an excellent food bank, but also to be more than that.

We value relationships, which we build by enabling weekly shopping visits instead of the more common/traditional monthly visits.

We supplement food donations with significant purchases of key market commodities so we can provide a consistent market for our clients. With the faithful support of our donors, **we spent \$740,000 on market purchases in 2023, over 50% more than in 2022.**

We treasure our 400 active volunteers, as a volunteer-centric organization with our 7 staff members we serve our client needs.

We serve as a community hub for our clients, providing office space for other community agencies so that our clients can conveniently access the assistance they need.



Creating Community

When we moved to our new location, we did not have a name for our large multipurpose room but it didn't take long before we started calling it the "Community Room". Here during the week, we host our Men's Group and Women's Group, where meals are shared and activities and discussions follow. On Saturday's, we host Refresh to explore issues of faith, and a Film and Fellowship event in the evening.

Throughout the summer we host weekly BBQ dinners here. We also provide a unique dining experience for our clients with special dinners for Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas. **We value creating these opportunities for our clients to experience community over a shared meal and to build relationships with each other, and with staff and volunteers.**

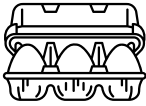
Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow

In 2023, with the help of our community, we distributed:



34,528

Litres of milk



19,693

Dozen eggs



7,623

containers of yogurt



86,320

pounds of frozen protein



103,860

pounds of fruit and vegetables. A five time increase from 2022!



Partnering Agencies at The Compass

PAARC

Peel Addiction Assessment & Referral Centre
Helped 288 Compass clients in 2023

SHIP

Services & Housing In the Province
Helped 259 Compass clients in 2023

Bloom/Wellfort

A harm reduction clinic for Hepatitis C
Helped 157 Compass clients in 2023

Homeless Health Peel (HHP)

Healthcare/nursing services for people experiencing homelessness
Helped 175 unhoused Compass clients in 2023

The Region of Peel

Housing Support Services
Helped 176 Compass clients in 2023

Regeneration (ID Clinic)

Helped 55 Compass clients in 2023

MOYO

Harm reduction support for people living with or affected by Aids/HIV

Family Services of Peel

General employment information, job search strategies and interview techniques

Campaigns

Back to School

With the help of our community, **The Compass provided backpacks filled with supplies to 430 children between the ages of 4-17.** In 2022, we provided 310, an increase of 39%.

Summer Camp for Kids

76 children were enrolled in camp for a total of 167 weeks this year. In 2022, we enrolled 53 kids for 148 weeks.

Tax Returns Completed

273 tax returns were prepared in 2023 versus 201 in 2022. **A total of \$521,175 were submitted to CRA on our clients' behalf.**

Winter Support for Homeless Clients

69 people experiencing homelessness were fully outfitted with new winter clothing and supplies to help them cope with the winter on the south Mississauga streets. In 2022, 40 people were clothed.

"Spread The Joy" Christmas Gift Cards

In 2023, with the help of the community, 1,259 households received Walmart gift cards totalling \$110,375 to help them get through the holiday season. **Due to the tremendous increase in clients the amount per family was reduced from 2022.**



Meet Laura

Laura moved from Saskatoon to Ontario where she rented a room from a friend after having separated from her husband. When her friend moved, Laura was left in a position where she could either take over the lease herself, paying the entire rent, or find a new place. **Unable to afford the full rent, she quickly found herself experiencing homelessness.**

Eventually she was able to stay in a friend's one-bedroom apartment, but it was also occupied by three other people. Nonetheless, Laura remained motivated to have a place of her own. When outreach workers were able to put her name on a byname list, her relentless determination finally got her approved for housing.

Laura never gave up and was more than willing to tackle the responsibility of searching for apartments – that tends to be overwhelming for most people in her situation.

After several viewings, she settled into a unit very close to The Compass, where she was overjoyed with excitement and pride! **Laura's story is an inspiration to the community. Our volunteers were eager to help Laura settle into her new place, connecting her with local resources to furnish her new home!**

“I came to Ontario three years ago. **The Compass has helped me start a new life.** Without their support, I probably wouldn't be where I am today.”

Laura (Single Income)



Meet Dom

I was introduced to The Compass by another client, who I connected with during a difficult time. I am grateful that he encouraged me to go with him to The Compass to see how they could help. The staff and volunteers have changed both of our lives forever.

The Compass fosters a strong sense of community through its services and programs and primarily through togetherness among staff, volunteers, and clients. Many clients share everyday experiences like overcoming personal challenges, securing housing, and battling hunger.

No one faces their struggles alone at The Compass. The shared experience of enjoying home-cooked meals while socializing bolsters morale and creates a feeling of security.

This sense of belonging encourages me to engage with regular and new clients, sharing information about available programs while boosting my spirits.

Beyond its offerings, **The Compass has become my vital support network over the past six months. I've formed friendships with fellow clients and feel genuine appreciation from everyone who enters its doors.**



“The Compass is a central hub of hope. They produce feelings and experiences of help, hope and joy, even during my darkest moments.”

Dominic
(Experiencing Homelessness)



Our Volunteers

Our 400 active volunteers donated 45,534 hours of their time to The Compass in 2023 - that's the equivalent of 25 full time positions! The Compass was founded as a volunteer-centric organization, and we remain true to that vision.

We love our volunteers, and appreciate their commitment to making a difference in our community for people experiencing food insecurity and homelessness in south Mississauga.

Volunteers are the heart of The Compass!



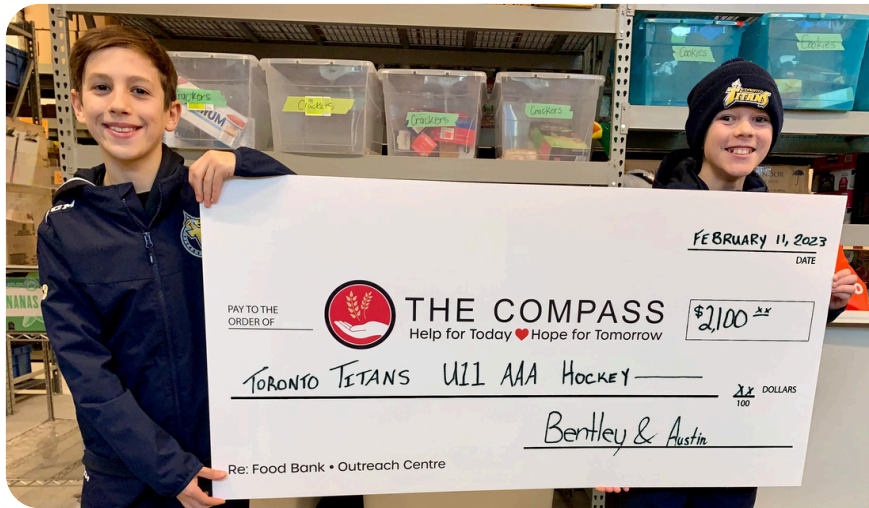
Thank you

I enjoy the serving role in the kitchen because spending time and having conversations with clients and seeing them smile when serving them is rewarding.

Lynn (Kitchen)

What I love about volunteering at The Compass is the immediate impact I can make. With the hundreds served daily, every minute counts toward improving life experiences.

Brian (Warehouse, Market)



Community Support

We are blessed to be part of a caring community that continues to grow its support for The Compass. As reported elsewhere in this report, that support includes significant growth in food donations, fundraising efforts and financial donations in 2023.

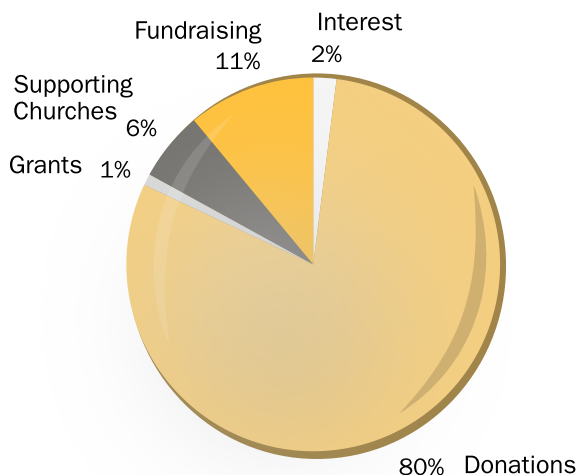
Our volunteers are an important part of our community support. Our member churches have taken turns hosting our weekly summer BBQ dinners. We have also benefitted from local schools, community organizations and local businesses hosting food drives for The Compass. And many teams from local businesses spend a half day with us, usually involving sorting food donations in the warehouse. For all of this amazing support, we are so very grateful!



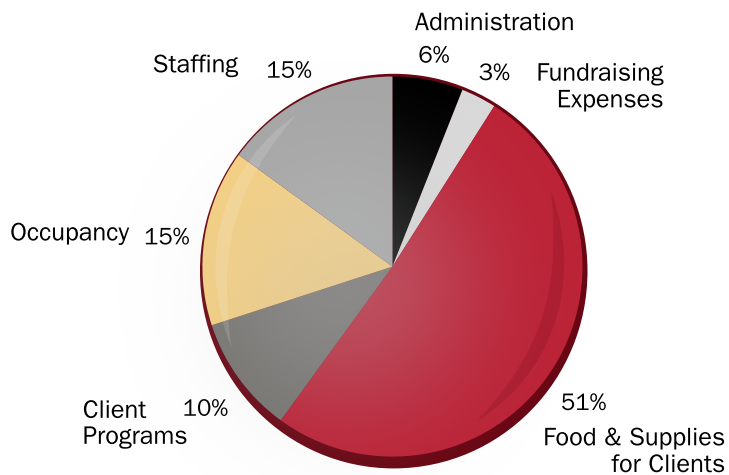


Financials

Revenue - \$1,847,000



Expenditures - \$1,857,000



2023 was a very challenging year financially for us, and for our clients. We are so grateful for our many faithful supporters who helped us meet this challenge. Donations totaled \$1.5 million, up an incredible 29% over 2022. Fundraising results were up 26% to over \$208,000, led again by another record for The Walk. **Total revenues reached \$1,847,000, a 29% increase over 2022.**

With all those incredible contributions, we were able to deploy more funds to help meet the needs of the significantly increased number of clients that we support. **Our total expenditures increased by 33% to \$1,857,000 in 2023.** We increased our purchases of food and supplies for clients by 61%, to over \$953,000. We also increased spending on client programs by 16% to \$182,000.

We work hard to keep our overheads low, with only 9% spent on administration and fundraising costs (including a portion of the salary costs for our Communications & Fundraising Manager).

Overall, we ended the year with a small deficit of \$10,000, which will be offset by the healthy operating reserves we have been able to build up over previous years. Our 2023 audited financial statements are available on our website.

We are proud to have maintained our strong rating with Charity Intelligence. The Compass is a 5-star, Top 10 Canadian Impact Charity. The charity is financially transparent and has high demonstrated impact.

What's Next?

As busy as we have been in 2023, we still have lots more to accomplish! We are making steady progress implementing key objectives from our strategic plan that we launched in early 2023: **Compass 2.0: Every Client, Every Need.**

Our Client Services team is actively building the team of staff, volunteers and community partners to better respond to client needs. **Our Advocacy team** has refined its focus on the key areas of income supports, affordable housing and mental health, working with other partners to amplify our voice in support of those we serve.

Our Volunteer team has completed a survey and is using that data to better engage with our volunteers, launching a regular newsletter and enhancing our training programs.



Our Governance team has updated our by-laws to ensure compliance with new legislation, and has begun to explore enhancements to our board structure. And **our Sustainable Funding team** is busy at work on various initiatives to ensure we have the necessary financial resources to meet the demands that come with continued growth.



Meet Diane

The Compass is not just a Food Bank; it's a place where you can sit down, have a coffee and eat. The Compass also has a lot of programs that help the community, like help with looking for a job or experiencing homelessness.

One time, I needed glasses, and The Compass helped me. They even have someone to cut your hair. The Compass means a lot to me because they help me feed my family every week. **If I need someone to talk to, I know I can rely on one of The Compass staff or volunteers, and I never feel judged, regardless of what I may be going through.**

I am not only a client of the Compass but also a volunteer, and I'm so grateful for everything that The Compass does for my family and the community.

***The Compass is a safe haven. I feel safe, comfortable, and a one stop for everything,** such as meals, counselling, client services, showers, hair cuts, employment, I.D. clinic, outreach the Region of Peel, peer support workers, etc.*

Richard (Experiencing Homelessness)



Meet Melinda

Melinda serves as the Communications & Fundraising Manager at The Compass. She has been with the organization just under three years as a staff member and before that, she spent two years as a volunteer. Having worked for two non-profits previously, she knows that having a passion for the cause is imperative.

Melinda and her two younger brothers were raised by a single mom who lived with substantial mental health problems and rarely worked. **“There weren’t any food banks back then and mental health problems were quietly swept under the rug. We often went to school and to bed hungry, waiting for the eviction letter to be posted on the door.”** Melinda says that her childhood led to her life-long drive to help others in need.

Feeding people, whether family and friends at home or at The Compass, is very important to Melinda. Having lived through the connection between food insecurity and mental health issues cemented her commitment to making a difference for others who are hungry. **“The Compass is my dream job; it’s what I was meant to be doing this life.”**



***Being a single parent can be very challenging,** but The Compass is the glue that holds the community together; I’m not sure what I would do without them.*

Andy (Single Parent)



Meet Karen

Karen has been volunteering since July 2023. Prior to her retirement, she worked as the Head, Customer Loyalty at Bank of Montreal.

Karen believes that access to healthy food is a fundamental human right so when she stumbled across The Compass, she was eager to begin volunteering with us.

She is grateful to be able to help others, while still being active and learning new skills! **Karen appreciates the days when she can welcome a new client, or when she picks up produce that's donated from the Etobicoke Farmers Market.**

How to join us!

Here are a few ways you can help make a difference for our neighbours who really do need your help:

- Volunteer
- Host A Food Drive
- Donate Food
- Donate Funds
- Corporate Involvement

www.thecompass.ca



Member Churches

Founded in 2002 by a group of churches in south Mississauga, our member churches include the following:

- Christ First United Church
- Church of St. Bride Anglican
- Clarkson Community Church
- Clarkson Road Presbyterian Church
- ClearView Christian Reformed Church
- Lorne Park Baptist Church
- Sheridan United Church
- St. Andrew's Memorial Presbyterian Church
- St. Christopher's Catholic Church
- St. Dominic's Catholic Church
- St. Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Church
- St. Stephen's On-the-Hill United Church
- Trinity-St. Paul, Port Credit Anglican Church
- WestEdge Community Church

The Church of St. Mark Lutheran
(Supporting Church)

Please remember us in your prayers