

2020-21

Driven by
Respect, Compassion
and Excellence

ANNUAL REPORT



Dedication

This annual report is dedicated to the thousands of VON employees and volunteers who brought their best to VON every day, intent on ensuring that the people we serve – and their families who rely on us – received the care and support they required.

This wasn't easy. The early days of the COVID-19 pandemic were a chaos of shifting public health information, changing practices and great professional and personal uncertainty. Our employees and volunteers – front-line and back-office alike – rallied together and did the work required with skill, ingenuity, and most of all, compassion.

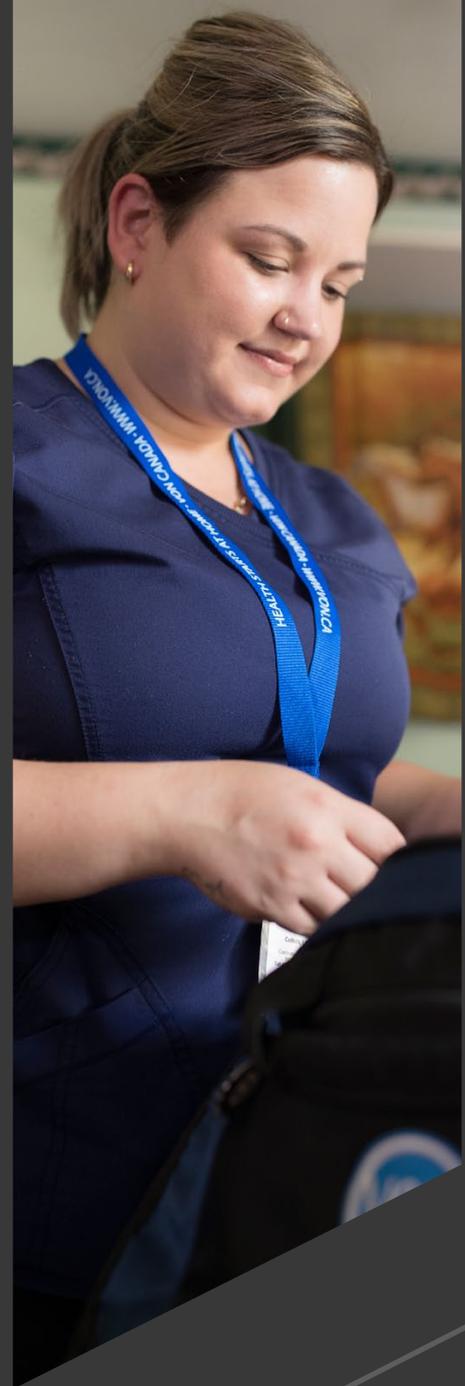
Our senior leaders in Operations did their utmost to support and sustain their teams.

Our leaders in Corporate Services led their own back-office teams with a focus on supporting our front line and each other.

Our Community Corporation boards and committees adapted along with us, helping where and how they could to strengthen our local care delivery.

And, working with all of these leaders, thousands of VON employees and front-line volunteers donned masks, gowns, visors and gloves, and left their homes each and every day to care for others.

This annual report tells a few of their stories.



VON Canada Board of Directors

CHAIR Peter Currie*

PAST CHAIR Malcolm Mercer*

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Chair, Quality, Risk and Client Safety Committee: Dafna Carr, MBA*

Chair, Human Resources Committee: Pete Larocque, MBA*

Chair, Pension Committee: John Peddle, ICD.D

Chair, Governance Committee: Darrel L. Pink*

Chair, Finance and Audit Committee: Monique Porlier*

DIRECTORS

Anna Babin

Cyndy De Giusti

Cynthia Dorrington, CPA, CMA

Dr. Annette Elliott Rose, RN, PhD

Estelle Jacquemard, CPA, CMA

Amy K. Lee, MBA, BSc(OT), CRM, RF

Dr. Marilyn Macdonald, RN, PhD

Alison McKay, BA, BAdmin,
CPA, CMA, ICD.D

* Executive Committee Members

Senior Management Team

President and Chief Executive Officer

Jo-Anne Poirier, ICD.D

Senior Vice President, Business Optimization and Chief Financial Officer

Roxanne Anderson, MBA, FCPA, FCA, ICD.D

Senior Vice President, Home and Community Care

Dr. Sharon Goodwin, RN, MN, DHA

Vice President, Marketing, Communications and Philanthropy

Beth Green

General Counsel and Chief Privacy Officer

Michele Lawford, LLB

Vice President, Human Resources

Wendy Steele, MBA, CHRL

CONTACT US

Victorian Order of Nurses
for Canada, 2315 St.

Laurent Blvd., Suite 100,
Ottawa, Ontario K1G 4J8

von.ca

VON is accredited with
Exemplary Standing by
Accreditation Canada.

VON Canada has been
pioneering care at home
for over 120 years. Today,
we are a highly trusted
registered charity that
works with our clients,
employees, volunteers
and partners to provide
innovative clinical,
personal and social
support to people who
want the comfort and
peace of mind of living in
their own homes and
communities.



Table of contents

CONTENTS 2020-2021

01 Stories of determination, dedication and adaptation A message from Peter and Jo-Anne



Helping clients live every day to the fullest

- Staying connected, remaining active: The SMART Exercise and Fall Prevention Program
- From feeding students to feeding communities: The Ontario Student Nutrition Program
- Remote guidance of hands-on care: Virtual care platform makes at-home palliative care possible for more clients

09 Recognizing employees and volunteers as the heart of VON

- #VONcares: Celebrating our employees and volunteers during VON Week
- The best of the sector: Staff and teams recognized for outstanding leadership, team excellence
- Honoured by peers: The VON Canada annual awards program



The unwavering commitment of our donors and supporters

- Exceeding expectations: Donors and supporters show incredible generosity during a difficult year
- The “Joy” of giving: Remarkable centenarian inspires philanthropy
- Hope’s Hugs: London teenager is making a difference, one blanket at a time



Leading change in the health-care system

- A wise investment: A strong home-care sector is critical to a strong health-care system
- Doing more, together: Improving access to Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners in Nova Scotia
- “We’re all in this together” VON staff answer an urgent call for help



Creating infrastructure for a sustainable future

- Creating a culture of safety: Making safety second nature is up to all of us
- Listening to lived experience: Advisory program and focus groups give clients and families a voice
- Enhancing our technology infrastructure: The launch of the Digital Health Transformation project

FINANCIALS

35

Stories of dedication, determination and adaptation

When an entire organization rises to the challenge

It has been a year unlike any other. The pandemic turned both our professional and personal lives upside down, yet in the face of unprecedented challenge and change, we have demonstrated tremendous resilience and resourcefulness as an organization.

If there is a silver lining to be found, it is that the pandemic was a case study in the critical role that home and community care plays in our health system. Canadians are clear: they want to stay in their own homes for as long as possible. We now know beyond a doubt that, for those who cannot thrive on their own, home is more than the preferred place to receive care – it is also the safest.

With the additional attention paid to the health sector during the past year, it was an important time for VON to shine, and shine we did. From the commitments we made to increasing engagement with all partners, to surpassing our fundraising goals, the dedication and skills of our employees and volunteers who

found ways to meet the needs of our clients and their families despite the restrictions of the pandemic. We are very proud of what VON was able to accomplish.

There was no handbook outlining how to adapt our operations for a global pandemic. We knew from SARS what practices to put in place to limit spread of the virus. We knew that our clients and their families were relying on us more than ever. We knew that we had to respond – even if in entirely new ways, and from entirely new places. Guided by our values – respect, compassion and excellence – our employees and volunteers invested incredible effort in adapting our programs and services to meet the needs

of clients and their families. We are so impressed by the willingness of all involved to embrace new technologies and new ways of doing things. Care may not always have been delivered in person, but our client-centred culture and thorough understanding of our clients' needs ensured there was no lack of personal attention. There is no doubt that technology cannot replace human touch, but it can enable organizations like ours to provide safe, effective care and community-based services when our traditional approaches aren't an option.

We also managed to secure over \$7.4 million in donations this year. In addition to gifts received from 17,773 individual donors, we were also grateful for the \$2 million gift from the Scheinberg Relief Fund, and significant first-time donations from the Nova Scotia Credit Unions and Sobeys. We found new and creative ways to connect with donors and supporters, since in-person events weren't an option. The 18th Annual Hike for Hospice in support of Sakura House in Oxford County, for example, was held virtually this

Part of that new normal must be a better approach to caring for seniors in this country.

past year – but still exceeded its fundraising goal, thanks to the amazing leadership and support of VON volunteers. We are all so grateful for the generosity of our donors and supporters, and for your belief in this organization.

We don't know when the pandemic will be over. What we do know is that for the foreseeable future, long after the WHO declares that COVID is no longer a global health emergency, there will be a "new normal". Part of that new normal must be a better approach to caring for seniors in this country.

We've learned over the past year the important role that technology can play to support the right care being provided to the right person in the right place. We learned that it is not the resistance of our clients, but perhaps the health-care system's assumptions that have been the true barriers to its incorporation into standard care. This does not mean we normalize things like saying good-bye to a loved one

over FaceTime, but we need to embrace its use when and where appropriate as part of the new normal. Moving home and community care into the twenty-first century will be a focus of our work over the coming years.

Our work will also build on the momentum gained at policy tables and in the public consciousness. We will continue advocating for a stronger home and community care sector and we will continue to speak up for the importance of what we do. This means transforming home and community care, a different funding mechanism and wage parity for our health-care workers. Most important of all, we will continue to deliver the best in home and community care, so our clients can live every day to the fullest.



A blue ink signature of Peter Currie.

Peter Currie
Chair, Board of Directors



A blue ink signature of Jo-Anne Poirier.

Jo-Anne Poirier, ICD.D
President and
Chief Executive Officer



We help clients live every day to the fullest.

"The care and services we provide are centred on the needs and preferences of clients, their families and the communities we serve."

- VON Strategic Plan: Towards 2025

With a little ingenuity, the use of technology and a lot of dedication and hard work, we were able to adapt existing programs and services to the restrictions and realities of the pandemic, ensuring our clients could continue to live every day to the fullest.

1

Staying connected, remaining active

SMART Exercise and
Fall Prevention Program



The staff and volunteers who lead our SMART exercise and fall prevention classes went above and beyond to help hundreds of seniors to safely remain active despite stay-at-home orders.

Inclusion is a fundamental principle of SMART, our exercise and fall prevention program. There are a range of classes of varying intensities offered to VON clients across Ontario, and each class can be adapted to participants of any ability.

When the pandemic struck, hundreds of attendees in the Waterloo Wellington Dufferin area of Ontario feared they

would lose their sole option for staying active and making new friends. But thanks to the dedication, resourcefulness and hard work of VON program staff and volunteers, the delivery of classes was adapted to include as many of their clients as possible. “As soon as we were unable to offer in-person classes, we personally phoned each of the over 700 clients to ask if they were interested in live Zoom classes”,

explains Kelly Gee, SMART program coordinator for the region. “We even explained how Zoom worked if they were unfamiliar. We offered them several other options if they weren’t comfortable with Zoom or if they didn’t have access to the technology. We also trained volunteer residents and recreation staff at retirement homes so they could offer classes in person in their own residences.”

Helping clients feel connected has always been a huge part of the SMART exercise program. "Its social benefits are just as important as the physical ones!" says Kelly. "We made sure that there was time set aside at the beginning and the end of each Zoom class for clients to socialize. A lot of clients would log on 10 minutes before the class and stay 10 minutes after, just to chat with the instructor and the other participants. We were surprised how quickly clients embraced Zoom. Some of them even started giving us tips on how to best use the program!"

The team will continue offering Zoom classes even after they're able to offer in-person classes again. "It will be great to have an option for all those times when a site isn't available or when the weather is bad or if an instructor is sick."

"Given the circumstances, I think we did a pretty good job keeping as many of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin's seniors as possible active during the pandemic!"

Program staff offered clients six options for continuing classes:

- 1 – Live classes via Zoom
- 2 – Pre-recorded classes on YouTube
- 3 – Pre-recorded classes uploaded to Facebook
- 4 – A USB key of pre-recorded classes
- 5 – Three live classes each week on local cable TV
- 6 – A hard-copy exercise booklet

SMART by the numbers

From April 2020 - March 2021
Waterloo Wellington Dufferin
region only

378

clients participated in one of 906 Zoom classes, a total of 12,850 visits

697

Staff phoned clients each month, making a total of 7,185 calls. These calls determined that clients completed 19,973 total classes

124

clients participated in classes at their retirement residences, totaling 6,058 visits to a live class

"ZOOM classes have been a blessing to me and countless others who have been abiding by the social distancing and stay-at-home orders. Kudos and well done to all involved for a community service that is truly needed and appreciated in these stressful times!"

Kathy

SMART participant, Waterloo Wellington Dufferin



From feeding students to feeding communities

The Ontario Student Nutrition Program

With schools closed, our student nutrition program quickly adapted to meet the growing nutrition needs of entire communities.

The “pivoting” of our Ontario Student Nutrition Program (OSNP) staff due to the pandemic would make anyone dizzy. As the designated provider of the provincial government’s student nutrition program in the southwest region of the province, VON provides nutritious snacks and meals to students in hundreds of schools stretching from Grey Bruce to Windsor and encompassing eight counties. When their main distribution channel “schools” closed, then opened, then closed again, it required the team to move quickly, get creative and partner with other community organizations and suppliers to ensure students, their families and other members of the communities had enough to eat.

When the schools first closed in the spring of 2020, the teams in London, Windsor and Huron-Perth knew they needed to find other ways to distribute nutritious meals and snacks to students, even though they were learning from home. The teams switched their focus to provide fresh food boxes and frozen meals to families in the community, a service that continued during the summer months.

Despite schools being open again in September, many students opted to learn virtually from home, and the OSNP team had to find a way to support both in-school and virtual learners. Our program coordinators in each area rose to the challenge, working directly with schools and supported by the provincial government and organizations like the United Way and Breakfast Clubs of Canada.

For example, Holy Family Catholic School in London offered “snack bags at home”, which were pre-portioned, daily snacks for virtual learners that were identical to what students in school received. Families picked up their snack bags from the school, providing virtual learners and their families an opportunity to connect with school staff in person once a week.

When schools closed again in the new year, the teams resumed the food boxes and frozen meals, and began distributing grocery gift cards. These made it easier for students and their families to select options appropriate to their unique nutritional needs.

Another complicating factor that the teams had to work around was that when schools were open, no volunteers were

permitted in the schools, and all food had to be pre-prepared and pre-packaged to meet COVID restrictions. School staff were busy with their own pandemic challenges, so the OSNP teams found a way to make the distribution as easy as possible. Schools could opt in to a food delivery program, in which produce was centrally procured, and through which pre-washed, pre-packaged snacks were delivered once a week. Two local produce wholesalers stepped up to help the teams meet the new requirements. A total of 232 schools, more than half of the schools in the program, have opted for this service for September 2021.

Student nutrition by the numbers

440 schools served

109,373 students receive a meal or snack each day

12,335,826 meals are served each school year

When schools were closed due to the pandemic, the staff forged 81 new community partnerships and were able to distribute

715,582 meals, food boxes and gift cards within the communities they serve

“The creativity and determination that our teams have shown over the past year has been amazing. The pandemic presented many challenges, but also gave us the opportunity to work with new partners and try new ideas. I look forward to working more closely with these groups next year and into the future.”

Amy Donaldson

Program Manager, OSNP Southwestern Ontario region

Remote guidance of hands-on care

Virtual care platform makes at-home palliative care possible for more clients

The Hospice at Home program has proven that with skilled and dedicated staff and the use of a virtual care platform, more palliative care patients can receive quality end-of-life care in their own homes.

Our eHomecare model involves a registered nurse remotely guiding the work of unregistered care providers, called health-care technicians. Health-care technicians are personal support workers (PSWs) who have received additional specialized training. This technology-enabled model has evolved into a mature program in the southwestern and central regions of Ontario. Over the last decade, it has successfully increased the number of clients who can access care in their own home.

“Our health-care technicians are essentially the eyes, ears and hands of the nurse and they are sending observations to the nurse on a regular basis,” said Victoria Vandermeulen, home and community care manager eHomecare. “The nurse then assesses those observations and provides instruction or direction to the health-care tech at the bedside.”

In 2020 we were approached by the Southwest Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) with a proposal to create an eHomecare 26-bed “virtual ward” for hospice clients, to be known as Hospice at Home. The project went live in November, with a phased roll-out to allow for recruitment, onboarding and orientation of 57 new staff, with an addition of new beds at the end of each phase.

“The program has been very successful,” says Deborah Schmidt, senior manager, “despite the pandemic making recruitment more challenging and necessitating the use of Zoom for some of the training. Staff were able to pivot quickly. And we’ve hired a clinical education manager who created a training manual that has proven to be a valued resource for all.”

As of March 31, 2021, five phases of the roll-out had been completed, with 16 beds in operation.

My Virtual Care
Alternative care for eligible Ontario residents during COVID-19



Our employees and volunteers are the heart of VON.

"Our people represent the best of the sector, see themselves as core to a healthy and engaged workplace and are champions for VON and those that we serve."

- VON Strategic Plan: Towards 2025

We have some of the most highly qualified and compassionate staff and volunteers anyone could ask for. The appreciation shown during VON Week and the individual recognition members of our team have received throughout the year made it clear we aren't the only ones who think so!

2



Celebrating our employees and volunteers during VON Week

This year more than ever, our staff and volunteers delivered exceptional care under exceptional circumstances...and received more kudos than ever.

VON Week, the third week in May, offers us an opportunity to recognize the efforts of our employees and volunteers and to raise our profile in the communities we serve. This year's theme was #VONCares. A campaign website enabled socially distanced recognition with numerous ways to express gratitude to VON caregivers. VON Week was proclaimed in

many municipalities in Ontario as well as across the entire province of Nova Scotia. Notable buildings and landmarks in both provinces were lit up in VON blue, including the CN Tower, Niagara Falls, Nova Scotia's Province House and the *Bluenose II*.

We received heartfelt video greetings from a wide range of well-known Canadians including the Governor General, Lieutenant

Governors, provincial and federal politicians, senators, municipal leaders and many well-known entertainers.

Our staff and volunteers make a remarkable difference in the lives of our clients and their caregivers, and we were thrilled with the recognition and support they received.



#VONWeek2020

Greetings in Nova Scotia

“If it wasn’t for the VON my nanny wouldn’t be able to stay in her own home where she’s comfortable and happy. It means the world to me. I’ll forever be grateful.”

George Canyon
Canadian country singer



Thank you!



Notable accolades from outside our own organization reaffirm that we truly do represent the best of the sector

The best of the sector

VON staff and teams recognized for outstanding leadership, team excellence



VON's Sharon Goodwin Receives 2020 Nursing Leadership Award.

"I want to dedicate this leadership award to every health-care worker and leader at VON as well as health-care workers across Canada, for their courage, compassion and self-sacrifice during an uncertain and difficult time."

Dr. Sharon Goodwin
Senior VP Home and Community Care, VON Canada

Each year, the Canadian College of Health Leaders (CCHL) honours one Canadian nurse leader who demonstrates excellence in patient-centred care and leadership. In April, the CCHL announced that it had chosen Sharon Goodwin, VON's senior vice president of home and community care, as the recipient of their 2020 **Nursing Leadership Award**.

Sharon has been part of the VON team for 16 years and has made outstanding contributions to quality care. Among her most notable contributions are the development of VON's care and service model, introduction of Lean methodology to the organization and founding the Client and Family Engagement councils.



In November, the VON Erie St. Clair team was recognized with two awards from the local health unit in Windsor Essex County as part of its 2020 Healthy Workplace Awards.

The *Health and Safety Gold Award* and the *Organizational Social Responsibility Award* honour the team for their outstanding efforts to prioritize the health, safety and mental well-being of their employees, clients and communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

VON president and chief executive officer Jo-Anne Poirier was honoured twice in her own community in 2020 – once for lifetime achievement, and once for community service.

The **University of Ottawa Alumni Association Awards of Excellence** are presented every year to honourees who represent the best in several categories. Jo-Anne was honoured with the **Award for Community Service**, recognizing outstanding volunteer contributions in her community. The inaugural **Distinguished Women Ottawa** also recognized Jo-Anne for her **Lifetime Contribution** to the city, recognizing her for her professional and volunteer leadership.



The VON Canada annual awards program

Honoured by peers

Every year, during the **VON Canada Annual General Meeting**, we honour employees and volunteers nominated by their peers. This year's VON Canada Awards were a bit different, in that we recognized many teams and individuals for their outstanding work in response to the pandemic, in addition to the honours we traditionally give.

The **Lifetime Associate Award** is presented to a volunteer who has given exceptional service to VON over a sustained period of time.



Robert Estabrooks volunteered with the VON Cumberland Community Corporation board for 22 years, including two terms as chair. His contribution as both a volunteer and a donor supported the growth of VON community programs including the Adult Day Program and respite care for families in the region, benefitting hundreds of families over the years.

VON Canada Awards

LADY ISHBEL ABERDEEN
AWARD (HIGHEST HONOUR)

Joy Saunders

LIFETIME ASSOCIATE AWARD

Robert Estabrooks

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Carlton Sanford

Nan Cleator

The Award of Distinction for Ontario and the Award of Distinction for Nova Scotia recognize volunteers and employees who have given outstanding service and who have made significant contributions to furthering the work and goals of VON Canada.

As VON's National Practice Consultant, **Nan Cleator** was instrumental in ensuring that VON's infection prevention and control (IPAC) practices were top-notch – not only during the pandemic, but for many years prior. Nan contributed significantly to VON excellence in standards and practices during her 30 years with VON. She helped guide practices and set standards in areas such as intravenous (IV) therapy and IPAC, including VON's COVID response.



Nova Scotia recipient **Carlton Sanford** has been volunteering with VON since 2000 when he helped create the transportation program in the greater Halifax area, which he has been a key part of ever since. Carlton embraced safety protocols to ensure clients would have a safe and reliable method of transportation.



Finally, Nova Scotia's thoroughly wonderful **Joy Saunders** was the recipient of VON's highest honour, the **Lady Ishbel Aberdeen Award**. Lady Aberdeen was VON's founder, and a remarkable woman in her own right – bringing family-focused health-care innovation to Canadians when our country was just 20 years old.

See Section 3 for more about Joy.

COVID-19 Response Excellence Award recipients



Colchester East Hants site led by Janet Watt

Practice quality and risk team led by Irene Holubiec

Code Bronze clinical response team led by Irene Holubiec

Pandemic pay processing team led by Tansy Antonini and Andrea Robinson

Virtual year-end audit team led by Andrea Robinson and Tansy Antonini

Grey Bruce Perth Huron home care client service associates led by McKayla Schurr

Operations executive assistants led by Sharon Goodwin

Regional executive directors led by Sharon Goodwin

Nova Scotia redeployment team led by Chantal Davie, Janet Watt, Kayla Smith, Karen Marr and Mona Teed

National occupational health and safety led by Karen Guy and Lorna Blair

Nova Scotia community support leadership team led by Derrick Babin

Fund development team led by Christine Joannette

BEE-R team led by Beth Green and Christine Joannette

PPE procurement team leads led by Roxanne Anderson

Senior leadership team led by Jo-Anne Poirier



**Our donors and supporters
have a deep commitment
to our work.**

“We have a knowledgeable, growing, loyal and diverse donor base developed and stewarded in full partnership with our Community Corporations.”

- VON Strategic Plan: Towards 2025

Over the past year, we exceeded our annual fundraising goal, thanks in part to the largest single donation by a living donor, major donations from community-minded organizations, virtual fundraising events, a successful virtual Hike for Hospice and a very special woman from Lunenburg, Nova Scotia.

3



Exceeding expectations

Donors and supporters show incredible generosity during a difficult year

Significant donations, including the single largest donation by a living donor, allowed us to exceed fundraising targets and meet the rapidly changing needs of the communities we serve.

It seems counterintuitive that our fund development efforts would be so successful during the pandemic, given the financial hardships it caused and our inability to hold any in-person events. Individuals and organizations gave at a time when we so needed support to continue our work. Perhaps it was the pandemic itself that reminded people how important home and community care is, particularly when other areas of the health-care system are facing incredible pressures.

“The community genuinely wanted to hear about how we were doing and how they could help,” says Christine Joannette, our director of philanthropy. “We are so grateful for all of the support we received. We were able to exceed our annual goal, thanks to outstanding generosity during a difficult year.”

“For the first couple of months I worked to procure personal

protective equipment and hand sanitizer,” says Emily Mansour-Hemlow, manager of fund development in Nova Scotia. “It was wonderful to have organizations donate and/or give significant discounts on items that were in such high demand.”

We were honoured to receive a \$2 million donation from the

Scheinberg Relief Fund, the largest gift from a living donor in the history of our organization. The fund was established by businessman Mark Scheinberg to provide immediate COVID-related relief in four specific areas, three of which (medical equipment and supplies, food security, the elderly) are applicable to our

We were honoured to receive a \$2 million donation from the Scheinberg Relief Fund

| The largest gift from a living donor in the history of our organization |



organization. The money has supported the continued safe delivery of care by our staff and volunteers in Ontario, specifically education and training for staff and volunteers, support of our food security programs and of our safety practices and equipment.

A portion of the money is being used to enhance tools and training for delivery of reassurance calls, supporting VON's front-line staff and volunteers in providing best-in-class virtual support to elderly clients. Reassurance calls were introduced across VON as a virtual way to check in on clients who may be missing the in-person connection of a program or facing other barriers. Additional training is helping staff and volunteers gain the confidence to assess risk levels, properly report and escalate emergency situations and

better provide virtual coping support to clients.

Over the year we received 1,200 donations from organizations, including gifts from Sobeys and from Nova Scotia credit unions. Sobeys donated \$100,000 in gift cards, enabling VON to add a selection of products to every frozen meal delivered to clients in Nova Scotia via our Meals on Wheels program. These "nourishment packs" were much appreciated as an easy source of extra nutrition.

Credit unions across Nova Scotia, led by the Atlantic Central Credit Union and the East Coast Credit Union, joined forces to raise \$50,000 to support the continued delivery of our meals and transportation programs for residents in Nova Scotia.

"Our success was of course due to the community's generosity," explains Emily, "but it was also the result of collaborating with so many different teams across VON. For example, with the funds raised, VON was able to grow our Meals on Wheel program from approximately 3,000 meals per month before the pandemic to more than 6,250 per month. It's amazing what we can do when we work together!"

Fund development by the numbers

Annual goal:

\$4,914,115

Total funds raised

\$7,400,439

151% of target

+60% over 2019/20

+86% over 2017/18

17,773 donors

2,770 new donors

29,536 gifts

28,335 gifts from individuals

1,201 gifts from organizations

4,504 in-memoriam gifts

47 gifts from estates

Note: numbers above represent consolidated results for VON Canada and VON Community Corporations.

"You have no idea how much these meals help me, and to receive the extra treats made my month!"

Meals on Wheels client
Nova Scotia

The “Joy” of giving

Remarkable centenarian inspires philanthropy

Joy Saunders’ vow to walk 102 times before her 102nd birthday helped raise thousands to support our work in Nova Scotia communities.

Inspired by the tragic loss of two VON employees, Kristen Beaton and Heather O’Brien, in the mass shooting in Nova Scotia in April, 2020, Lunenburg resident Joy Saunders vowed to walk 102 times before her 102nd birthday in October 2020 to raise money for VON programs in Nova Scotia. This remarkable woman managed to accomplish her goal in mid-September, and raised more than **\$79,000**. Joy’s Walk is attributed with attracting 1,051 donors to VON.



Joy's Walk is attributed with attracting 1,051 donors to VON.



It's apparent to anyone who meets Joy how much she lives up to her name. She has been described as an incredible storyteller with a warm sense of humour who is generous in spirit and is beloved by everyone who knows her – someone you could talk to for hours.

Joy volunteered at the VON foot clinic in Lunenburg for 30 years, and strongly believes in the value of what we do. The funds raised have supported our work including meal delivery and transportation programs in Nova Scotia communities.

Joy was recipient of VON's 2020 Lady Ishbel Aberdeen

Award, VON's highest honour. In February 2021, Joy was recognized by Canada's Governor General for her outstanding contributions with the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers. And, in August 2021, Joy was recognized by the Government of Canada, who awarded her a Canada's Volunteer Award for Community Leadership. True to form, Joy directed the charitable contribution made by government in her name to VON. The gift will support VON's Digital Health Transformation Project – and helping to enhance care for all VON clients in Nova Scotia.



Hope's Hugs

London teenager is making a difference, one blanket at a time



Sydney Vickers has touched the lives of more than a thousand Canadians by sharing the warmth and comfort of a hug when it's most needed.

In 2017, Sydney Vickers had a school assignment to think of a way to make a difference in her community. She recalled a story told to her by her mother, Dee Ann Vickers, manager of home and community care and community supports with VON in London, about a VON client whose church gave him a special blanket when he was ill. The blanket meant so much to the man that it was draped on his casket when he died. Dee Ann's story of how a simple gift meant so much at such a difficult time inspired her daughter to start Hope's Hugs.

Hope's Hugs gives out hug blankets – homemade blankets that provide the warmth and comfort of a hug when it is most needed, but there is no one to provide it. A copy of a poem Hope wrote titled

“A Hug” accompanies each one. Hug blankets are given to anyone in the community who may need one, including many VON clients. The first VON clients to receive hug blankets were a group of nine children completing the Kids Circle program – a program providing bereavement support to children – at VON Oxford. From there, Hope's outreach to VON clients has grown to include clients of Assisted Living, Adult Day and OASIS programs, as well as hospice clients and members of other bereavement groups. Blankets were included in care packages sent by VON to the families of the two VON employees killed in the Nova Scotia shooting in April 2020.

Prior to the pandemic, Sydney made a point of visiting with as many recipients of hugs as she could. More than once she

has held a recipient's hand and read them her poem only hours before they passed away. Faced with pandemic restrictions, Sydney had to find new ways to deliver hugs to those in need – a need that was greater than ever at a time when physical contact wasn't possible.

In November, 2020, the grade 11 student, who is also a volunteer facilitator with VON Oxford's Kids Circle program and a registered volunteer at VON in Middlesex Elgin, gave out her 1,000th hug and was honoured by the city of London as a change maker.

“I was raised to believe that you need to give more than you take from society. I don't believe I can change the world on my own, but I'm a piece of puzzle that can.”



We are health system leaders and partners.

“We develop and promote innovative services, care models, initiatives and practices that benefit the health system as a whole.”

- VON Strategic Plan: Towards 2025

We continued to speak out about the importance of strong and sustainable home and community care – but it wasn't just talk. We presented governments with concrete examples of how we can help relieve some of the pressures that the pandemic was placing on our health-care systems. We introduced new initiatives that provide more access to care, when and where it's needed.

4



A wise investment

A strong home-care sector is critical to a strong health-care system

The pandemic has given us a glimpse into our future if we continue to neglect home and community care.

The health-care system is like a balloon: if you squeeze it in one spot, it will just expand in another. Many of the measures put in place to limit potential exposure and transmission of COVID-19 resulted in a squeeze, or a significant reduction in capacity, of home and community care. The home and community care sector faced early-year shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE) and challenges recruiting and retaining personal support workers, continuing care assistants and nurses. The resulting destabilization of home care put pressure on other areas of the system and increased the burden on family caregivers.



**Ontario
deserves
more
homecare.**

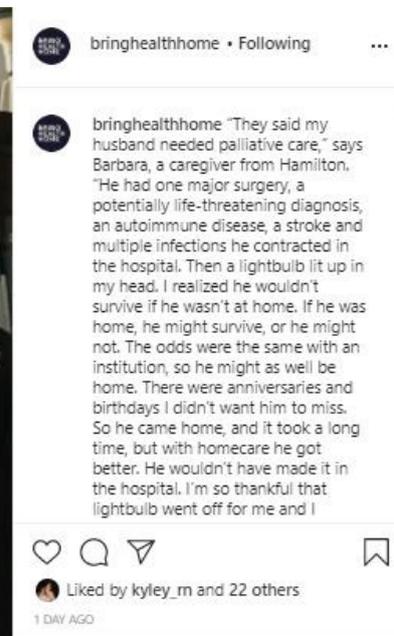
Home care is the lowest-cost component of our health system. It enables people to remain at home where they want to be and it relieves the pressure on other, more costly areas of health care. We don't just deliver home and community care, we have long advocated for increased support of, and a sustainable future for, the sector. The pandemic gave us a glimpse of the alternative, and it wasn't pretty.

We did not spend the past year just shining a light on these issues, but also putting forward concrete recommendations on how we can help alleviate some of the pressures. For example, we recommended making it easier for hospitals to move alternative-level-of-care patients into their homes where their needs can be met by home care providers. We also recommended allowing doctors and hospitals to refer home care services directly to the provider organization.

We are grateful for the ongoing support of our government

fundors and partners, but we know that there is more to do. As Canadians everywhere look to the future, we know that the home and community care sector must become more visible and better understood. Canadians want to receive care, to age, and even to die, at home. We will continue to advocate for our employees, for a better-understood and better-supported sector, and most of all, for all of those who we help to meet their own aspirations to live their best lives.

We partnered with other large providers to launch **Bring Health Home** (bringhealthhome.ca, [#bringhealthhome](https://twitter.com/bringhealthhome)), a campaign to amplify the voices of Ontarians who want more government support for home care. Investing in home care will make the province's health-care system safer, stronger and more patient-centric.



Doing more, together

Improving access to Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners in Nova Scotia

Residents of the Colchester East Hants, Cumberland and Eastern Shores regions of Nova Scotia now have 24/7, in-person access to Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE).

24/7

Setting up a new program is never easy, but imagine setting up a program that's the first of its kind for your organization, having to ensure your policies and processes align with those of a partner organization, while both organizations focus on developing, implementing and updating protocols and practices for safely delivering care during a pandemic. This was the challenge faced – and overcome – by program manager Carol Rock-Altenhof, RN, and the VON SANE project team.

The SANE services are delivered by registered nurses working for VON, but the services are conducted in hospitals run by Nova Scotia Health. Both VON and Nova Scotia Health have their own established systems and policies, however VON's were created specifically for home and community care clients. Adaptations had to be made to ensure they were appropriate for the SANE

program, acceptable for VON and aligned with those of Nova Scotia Health.

Carol is quick to praise the VON SANE project team. "We wouldn't be at this point without their dedication and hard work. They knew just who to reach out to to help us move forward so we could officially launch the program in February."

During the initial wave of the pandemic, the roll-out was put on hold, including hiring nurses for the program. "Once we were finally able to hire, we had to adapt the training to follow proper pandemic protocols. Not to mention that two of our nurses were unable to attend the skills lab portion due to travel and isolation restrictions. So we've been down two nurses all year," adds Carol.

Carol has been focusing on finding ways for the team to remain confident in their skills, as the demand for SANE

services can be less frequent in more rural areas. "We ensure our team keeps their skills up to date through ongoing education, things like mock patient exercises or sharing case studies, with all identifying information removed, of course."

"Some aspects were more challenging than I anticipated, but it's really very satisfying to be able to offer these services in these formerly underserved areas of the province."

“We’re all in this together”

VON staff answer an urgent call for help

More than 50 VON registered nurses (RNs), licensed practical nurses (LPNs) and continuing care assistants (CCAs) volunteered to be redeployed to keep residents of several long-term care homes in Nova Scotia from being relocated to hospital in the face of a critical staffing shortage.



The call came in after supper: a continuing care facility thirty minutes outside of Halifax had an urgent need for LPNs or RNs. Some residents had tested positive for COVID-19, resulting in most of the staff isolating due to potential exposure. The alternative, if no additional staff could be found, was to move residents to hospital; ambulances were ready for the possibility. Staff at VON in Halifax began contacting nurses who lived nearby.

“It was possible that no one would volunteer to be redeployed, considering what we were asking. But we’re Maritimers, and helping others in times of need is part of who we are,” says Jeff Densmore, regional executive director of Nova Scotia’s Central and Western Zones. “When all was said and done, we had over 50 staff answer the call.”

“They dropped everything they were doing and went to the facility as fast as possible to help keep those residents in their homes,” said Chantal Davie, senior manager with VON Greater Halifax. “They worked all night. Some had no relief as expected at 7am. One nurse worked a full shift at VON beforehand and then worked all night at the facility and had no morning relief. She ended up working 20 hours straight.”

In total, **58 VON staff** – RNs, LPNs and CCAs from VON sites across the province – would be redeployed to six different long-term care facilities over the next three months.

“The time I had at Northwood was one of the most amazing experiences I’ve ever had and something I will forever cherish,” said Bonnie Rowan, a CCA from Annapolis Valley. “We were all in this together, for the same reasons: to help our fellow healthcare workers in their time of need and to care for the residents.”

“The time I had at Northwood was one of the most amazing experiences I’ve ever had and something that I will forever cherish.”



We were all in this together, for the same reasons — to help our fellow healthcare workers in their time of need and to care for the residents.”

—Bonney Rowan, CCA
VON Annapolis Valley Employee

Northwoods

LIVE MORE

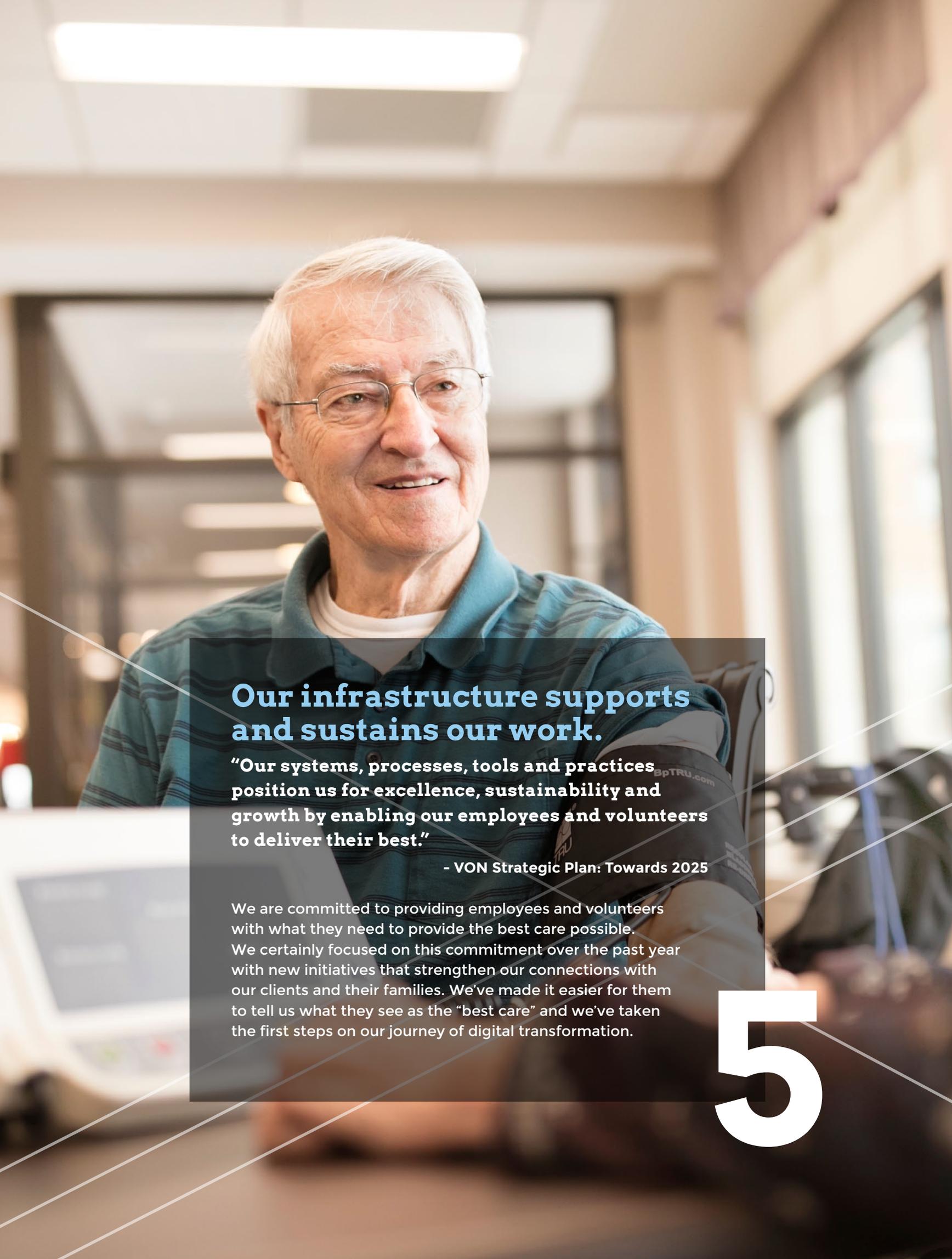
Nova Scotia redeployment, by the numbers

Six different facilities in Halifax, Dartmouth, Enfield and Antigonish were in urgent need of staff.

8 RNs, **29** LPNs and **21** CCAs from VON offices across the province volunteered to be redeployed.

- 1 LPN and 5 CCAs from Annapolis Valley
- 1 RN, 5 LPNs and 8 CCAs from Colchester East Hants
- 3 CCAs from Cumberland
- 5 RNs, 19 LPNs from Halifax
- 1 RN, 2 LPNs, 5 CCAs from Pictou
- 1 RN, 2 LPNs from Tri County

58 VON staff worked a total of **639** shifts between March 30, 2020 and June 22, 2020.



Our infrastructure supports and sustains our work.

"Our systems, processes, tools and practices position us for excellence, sustainability and growth by enabling our employees and volunteers to deliver their best."

- VON Strategic Plan: Towards 2025

We are committed to providing employees and volunteers with what they need to provide the best care possible. We certainly focused on this commitment over the past year with new initiatives that strengthen our connections with our clients and their families. We've made it easier for them to tell us what they see as the "best care" and we've taken the first steps on our journey of digital transformation.

5



Creating a culture of safety

Making safety second nature is up to all of us

With the right infrastructure in place and an understanding of the role each of us plays, we can make safety second nature in all we do.

We have always strived to make VON a safety leader in the field of home and community care. But safety is not the job of a single person – or even a single team – at VON. To empower each of our staff and volunteers to be part of the solution, we needed an updated infrastructure – the systems, processes, tools and practices – to support a culture

of safety. We want to ensure that safety becomes second nature in everything we do.

The year began right after the declaration of a global pandemic by the World Health Organization, necessitating an immediate focus on keeping our staff, volunteers, clients and their families safe from COVID-19. While this work began in January 2020,

March 13 marked the day we moved into Code Bronze in our disaster and emergency protocol framework. Directives from federal and provincial public health bodies evolved constantly as the pandemic progressed, and we continuously monitored and shared this information so that our staff and volunteers had the most up-to-date information, the personal protective equipment (PPE) they needed to do their work safely and any training they required. We also stayed in close contact with our clients and their families during this stressful and uncertain period to provide reassurance that we were doing everything we could to keep them safe.

The events of last year demonstrate why it is important for us to maintain a continuous improvement philosophy – as underscored in our core value of excellence. Constant examination and improvement of our own policies and procedures ensure we are as prepared as possible for whatever new threats emerge. Although much of the year was spent reacting to new and unexpected threats to our safety, we have also been working proactively to improve safety in the home and community care sector.

In Nova Scotia our safety work is led by a safety steering committee chaired by VON CEO Jo-Anne Poirier, and including representatives from the Workers' Compensation Board, AWARE-NS, the Nova Scotia De-



partment of Health and Wellness, Nova Scotia Health, the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union, the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union and VON. Based on the committee's recommendations, we worked with AWARE-NS to perform safety audits and we created joint occupational health and safety committees in the province. Seventy-four staff members are now part of such committees, ensuring a broad range of perspectives are represented.

We are also working with partners in Ontario, specifically the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board and the Public

Sector Health and Safety Association, on a new, multi-year safety excellence program. The program will focus on ensuring everyone knows their own roles and responsibilities when it comes to workplace safety, building a robust plan and procedure for two-way sharing of health and safety information at VON, improved injury, illness and incident reporting procedures, and supporting effective incident investigation and analysis.

Listening to lived experience

Advisory program and focus groups give clients and families a voice

The best way to determine if we're meeting our clients' needs is to ask.

There is no single source of policies and procedures, no best practice guideline on how to offer home care and community support services during a global pandemic. We did our best as skilled professionals to safely meet the needs of as many clients as we could, despite stay-at-home orders, social distancing requirements and quarantines. Whether our adapted programs and services were meeting needs and expectations during the pandemic, however, is best gauged by those with direct experience: our clients and their families.

To find out, we held virtual focus groups in Nova Scotia and Ontario. The insights gained through My Home Care Journey During COVID-19 (held in June 2020) and My VON Community Support Services Journey During COVID-19 (held in September) helped us improve our delivery

of home care and community support services that are safe and meet the needs and expectations of those we serve.

In March we launched our Advisors Program by inviting current and past clients and family members willing to share their VON experiences receiving home or community care.

Unlike the focus groups, the Advisors Program is an ongoing initiative with a broader scope, enabling current and past clients and their family members to contribute their voices to a range of projects, programs, policies and methods of service delivery, helping to improve every aspect of our care. Arshia Ali, VON's director of client and family engagement is herself a strong voice for ensuring that we have the infrastructure in place to hear and incorporate suggestions from these experts.



Enhancing our technology infrastructure

The launch of the Digital Health Transformation project

We're investing in new technology that will help our clients stay connected with VON and other parts of the health system.

Like others in the health sector, VON is highly focused on ensuring the security of the personal health information that we safeguard for our clients. Like our physical safety programs, this work evolves constantly – driven by our commitment to client privacy. It's a big part of the work done by VON information technology and systems directors Gabriel Carneiro and Kevin Agnew and their teams, and last year they drove significant system change to ensure our information remains secure.

Technology supports our work in other ways as well – whether that work is with clients, or behind the scenes. While home and community care is an intensely

personal and high-touch business in which excellence is truly defined by the care and support provided directly to our clients, it can be considerably enhanced by technology.

Last year saw the internal launch of a new project team at VON, whose work – VON's Digital Health Transformation project – will transform care delivery for our front line, and enhance the relationships that VON care providers have with our clients and their families. Electronic health records for VON clients will facilitate client care across all parts of the health system, and will help improve our clients' journeys through VON programs and services as well as with other parts of the sector. Our client portal

will give clients and their families and supporters greater visibility into their own care, and greater choice. And for our service providers – the nurses, personal support workers, continuing care assistants and others – it will reduce administrative time so that more time can be spent with the people we care for.

VON has established an Innovation Fund to support this work, and a capital campaign is being launched to attract needed resources to the fund. Our Community Corporations are playing an important lead role in this campaign by providing grants and helping to attract donations.

Summary of consolidated revenue and expenses

For the year ended March 31, 2021

	2021		2020	
		% of revenue		% of revenue
Revenue				
Fees for service	222,050,127	71.4%	236,080,953	76.7%
Program grants	67,740,241	21.8%	65,871,959	21.4%
Miscellaneous income	16,996,859	5.5%	3,441,742	1.1%
Donations and other	4,370,529	1.4%	2,352,798	0.8%
	311,157,756	100.0%	307,747,452	100.00%
Expenses		% of expenses		% of expenses
Salaries and benefits	253,180,121	83.6%	252,310,755	83.5%
Mileage and travel	12,495,526	4.1%	14,596,261	4.8%
Direct program costs	11,269,904	3.7%	8,221,657	2.7%
Bad debts	72,257	0.0%	71,648	0.0%
Occupancy costs	7,979,483	2.6%	7,906,379	2.6%
Administrative, office and general	7,983,531	2.6%	9,679,681	3.2%
Telecommunication costs	4,607,005	1.5%	4,445,769	1.5%
Information technology services	3,041,100	1.0%	2,651,977	0.9%
Amortization of capital assets	2,085,938	0.7%	2,229,350	0.7%
	302,714,865	100.00%	302,113,477	100.00%
Net revenue for the year	8,442,891		5,633,975	

VON Canada has been pioneering care at home for over 120 years

Today, we are a highly trusted registered charity that works with our clients, employees, volunteers and partners to provide innovative clinical, personal and social support to people who want the comfort and peace of mind of living in their own homes and communities.

von.ca



Please note that some of the images are from pre-COVID-19 times and do not represent VON's pandemic infection prevention and control practices.

Charitable Business #129 482 493 RR0001

VON is accredited with Exemplary Standing by Accreditation Canada