

**Nurturing
Community,
Dignity &
Spirit**



Our Mission

Inspired by the legacy of the Sisters of St. Joseph, we foster community and wellbeing through welcoming and inclusive programs for the most socially isolated among us.

Our Vision

Nurturing community, dignity, and spirit.

Our Strategic Priorities 2024 -2027

Foster a Vibrant Community Through Inclusive Programs

We will sharpen our focus, align programs with our mission, and evolve services to support participants in an integrated way.

Cultivate Strategic Partnerships for Mission Excellence

We will collaborate with like-minded partners, provide effective referrals, and share resources for greater impact.

Ensure Long-Term Financial Viability & Growth

We will strengthen our financial systems, secure sustainable funding, and uphold the legacy of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Strengthen & Develop Our Organization and Its People

We will empower our team, strengthen and diversify our Board, and enhance operational efficiency.



Our Values



Respect

We value each person as a distinct expression of God's love and invite each other to discover and celebrate our unique gifts.



Advocacy

We respond to society's evolving needs and mobilize positive change through transformational leadership.



Community

We work together with neighbours and partners to build strong relationships that are mutually supportive and collaborative.



Compassion

We give our full attention to each person and show understanding, empathy, and sensitivity to their needs.



Accountability

We use the resources entrusted to us with care, and make sustainable choices that will benefit future generations.

Message from the Board Chair and Executive Director

Dear Fontbonne Community,

At Fontbonne Ministries, we believe that every act of kindness, every shared moment, and every open door has the power to nurture community, dignity, and spirit. As the cost of living rises, social isolation grows, and more people turn to us for support, we remain as committed as ever to creating welcoming spaces where everyone feels seen and valued.

In our early days, our vision was to be a sustainable expression of the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph. It is not just about what the Sisters did, but how they did it—respecting, and valuing each person they encountered and fostering a climate of mutual support and collaboration.

In 2023, we developed a new strategic plan supported by the values which have always guided our work and will be our legacy.

- We have sharpened our focus, evolving our programs to meet the ever-changing needs of our participants. Whether it's a nourishing meal, accessible healthcare, creative expression, or meaningful companionship, we ensure that every service upholds the dignity of those we serve.
- By building new relationships and strengthening existing ones, we're expanding our reach and deepening our impact—connecting people with the support and resources they need to move forward with hope.
- Looking ahead, we are building on this momentum: fortifying our financial sustainability to continue to serve confidently; investing in our staff and leadership to ensure our organization flourishes; and deepening collaborations to have a more significant collective impact.

The stories in this report reflect how we stay true to our mission while embracing new opportunities and partnerships. None of this would be possible without the generosity of our donors, the dedication of our staff and volunteers, and the resilience of the individuals who walk through our doors.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we are creating a future where everyone is met with dignity, care, and the connection and support they deserve.



Joan Breech
Director and Board Chair



Hailee Morrison
Executive Director

Sharing Food and Space with the Community



Allan in the lobby of Fontbonne Ministries

Allan Finds a Place Where He Belongs

For those navigating the harsh realities of homelessness, addiction, and isolation, finding a place of respite can feel impossible. But, at the Fontbonne Drop-in, participants find more than just a hot cup of coffee or a meal—they find community, dignity, and a space where they are truly seen.

Antonio, one of two Fontbonne Drop-in Coordinators, understands the profound impact of creating an inclusive and accommodating environment. "The drop-in is about space-making," he explains. "We do everything we can to nurture the wellbeing of our participants and ease their anxieties. For many, this is the only place they can be without feeling on display."

Participants at the drop-in come from a wide range of backgrounds and face a spectrum of challenges. They may be newcomers to Canada, recently rehabilitated ex-convicts, isolated seniors, substance users, and/or facing temporary or long-term homelessness. Some stay for just a few minutes, while others spend hours enjoying the quiet safety the space provides.

"People want to feel like they have a place where they belong," Antonio says. "Without money, it's tough to feel like you're part of society. Our staff and volunteers prioritize connecting with each participant—learning their names and being there if they need someone to talk to."

“We invite them to partake in the meals we serve, share our space and participate at their own pace,” Antonio continues. “When applicable, we direct them to other internal resources they may need, like the Footcare Clinic, Clothing Boutique, or the Friendly Visiting program here at Fontbonne, as well as external services like medical care and the harm reduction program at South Riverdale Community Health Centre (SRCHC).”

Fontbonne’s partnership with SRCHC is an excellent example of working with like-minded organizations to fulfill our mission. By teaming up with partners who share our values and offer complimentary services, Fontbonne ensures participants receive the comprehensive support they need, from essential services to effective referrals. Collaborations like this make it possible to help our participants navigate their challenges with dignity and respect.

One of those participants is Allan. He has been coming to Fontbonne Ministries for 24 years, ever since he was invited in for lunch one day by the Sisters of St. Joseph. At 61, Allan has faced a lifetime of struggles, from heroin addiction in Vancouver to his ongoing battle with fentanyl use in Toronto.

“Fontbonne is my first stop of the day,” Allan shares. “I come here for coffee, food, and the clothing program. But mostly, I come because Antonio and the others actually care. He asks how I’m doing and what my plans are. And he listens without judgment.”

Allan is a valued presence at the drop-in. He follows the news, loves to talk sports, and shares his insights with staff and participants. Antonio calls him an informal mentor. “Allan has helped us understand addiction in a way we never could on our own. He’s open about his experiences, which has informed how our team interacts with our participants.”

Allan’s journey is far from easy. He struggles with arthritis and pain, and the toll of years of drug use has left him without teeth, making it difficult to eat. He describes his life as bleak and is often in conflict with himself over his opiate use. Yet, he has hope.

“I want to be at peace with myself and my God,” Allan says. “I’m trying to ease off the fentanyl—it’s really hard, but I can do it. Antonio gives me moral support and never judges me. That’s what I love about this place—it makes me happy. If Fontbonne weren’t here, I don’t know where I’d be.”

The Fontbonne Drop-in continues to be a community pillar, offering care and compassion—one welcoming moment at a time.

Supporting the New HART Hub at South Riverdale Community Health Centre

Fontbonne Ministries will be partnering with SRCHC as one of 9 partners in the HART (Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment) Hub, an initiative funded by the provincial government.

The South Riverdale HART Hub aims to provide low-barrier, evidence-based health care, treatments, social services, and housing support for individuals struggling with addiction, mental health, housing, and other related issues.

Making Footcare Accessible



Adam outside of Fontbonne Ministries

Relief for Adam

The Footcare Clinic serves a community that often faces significant barriers to care—poverty, unstable housing, transportation challenges, and a deep-rooted lack of trust in the healthcare system. Many clients arrive with concerns they’ve carried for a long time, unaware that medical relief was even an option. Some have complex health needs, while others come in for what seems like a routine visit only to uncover deeper issues.

Dr. Minh Nguyen, the Chiroprapist who leads the clinic, sees firsthand how untreated foot problems can take a toll. “If you can’t walk without pain, just getting through the day becomes hard,” he says. “Many of my clients who are homeless spend all day outside, walking from place to place just to meet their basic needs—food, a bathroom, a place to rest. They don’t have the means to afford proper footwear or pay out-of-pocket for treatment. They do what they can to manage, but it’s not enough to maintain good foot health.”

Over time, the clinic has developed a strong reputation. Social workers, community agencies, and family doctors regularly refer their low-income clients to Fontbonne, knowing it may be their only chance at getting foot care. The clinic serves a wide range of people—those living in shelters, individuals on ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program), and seniors struggling to care for themselves. “Many seniors physically can’t care for their feet,” Dr. Minh explains. “Arthritis, Parkinson’s, and poor eyesight make even basic tasks—like trimming toenails or managing callouses—impossible.”



Fontbonne and the other members of the Downtown Toronto East Footcare Clinic gratefully acknowledge the generous support of La Fondation Emmanuelle Gattuso.

For Adam, a regular at the Fontbonne Drop-in, foot discomfort was just something he learned to live with. Having spent years on the streets, he knew what it was like to have no choice but to keep moving, often in shoes that had long since lost their support. Now housed not far from Fontbonne, walking is still his primary mode of transportation. And between playing hockey, football, and baseball, he had always pushed through the discomfort. “You just deal with it,” he says. “But after a while, it catches up with you. It was through word of mouth at the drop-in that I heard about Dr. Minh and decided to see what he could do for me.”

“Adam had a thick callous that made every step painful, along with hammer toes and a bad fungal nail infection,” says Dr. Minh. “His situation isn’t unusual. A lot of people come in with foot problems that could be managed with the right shoes or custom insoles, but those things are expensive and out of reach for many. For Adam, our approach has been maintenance and education.”

“Dr. Minh talks to me like a friend,” Adam says. “He explains what’s happening with my feet, why it’s happening, and what I can do about it. Nobody has ever taken the time to explain that to me before.”

The Fontbonne Footcare Clinic exists for people who can’t wait months to see a specialist or afford private treatment. “My clients don’t have the money to pay for the regularly prescribed treatments,” says Dr. Minh, “and our clinic budget requires that we go back to basics—there are no excess expenses here.” That means making adjustments, like creating his own anti-fungal solution, because the prescribed medication is too costly. “But that’s one of the things I like most about working here—because it’s more challenging, I have to think outside the box to find solutions.”

But Adam’s journey isn’t just about foot care—it’s about rebuilding his life. He is recovering from addiction, something he’s open about. Beyond foot care, Fontbonne is a community for Adam. He attends the drop-in several times a week, using the computers for research, grabbing a coffee with friends, and connecting with the staff, volunteers, and other participants.

“I’ve been through a lot, but I’m still here,” he says. “I try to stay positive, and I like to make others happy. I know what it’s like to feel like you’re on your own. So, if I can make someone’s day a little better, why wouldn’t I?”

For Dr. Minh, that’s part of the bigger picture. “The work goes beyond diagnosing and treating—it’s about creating an inclusive environment where people feel seen and heard. The goal is simple: care that is consistent, compassionate, and accessible.



Encouraging Connections that Bring People Together

Peter and Gordon outside their weekly meeting spot

Peter and Gordon's Weekly Bond

Friendly Visiting (formerly In Good Company) connects dedicated volunteers with individuals in need of emotional, spiritual, and social support. For Peter and Gordon, a year-long connection has blossomed into a meaningful relationship filled with joy, learning, and mutual respect.

Louisa Loucareas is Fontbonne's Associate Manager of Community Engagement. She matches Fontbonne volunteers with participants and understands how vital connection is to health and wellbeing. "People are social creatures, but our family structures are more fractured than ever, and we have less community than we used to," she explains. "Even with strong social networks, health issues can derail everything."

Gordon's story is a perfect example. Once a husband and father with a stable job, Gordon now lives alone in subsidized housing. Headaches and health issues from working with harsh solvents led to depression and, eventually, substance abuse. He entered rehab a decade ago and has been sober ever since. Though Gordon struggles with agoraphobia, he's finding ways to navigate the world. His love for antique cookbooks and science fiction keeps him engaged, but when his case worker noticed he was isolating, she suggested *Friendly Visiting*. After Louisa met with Gordon to learn more about him, she introduced him to Peter.



Research suggests many health and social benefits are associated with volunteering, including improved quality of life, and enhanced perceived psychological wellbeing and happiness.

“It was a good fit right from the start,” Gordon says. “We’re never at a loss for conversation— there wasn’t a single hiccup.”

Peter, a volunteer for over six years, is no stranger to building meaningful relationships.

“When I meet a new participant, it’s about building trust and confidence,” he explains. “Everyone has a story, and listening—really listening—dignifies them.”

Now, the two meet weekly, discussing everything from history to science fiction to Gordon’s elaborate cooking experiments. In the year since they were first introduced, Gordon says his world has expanded. “Before, I didn’t leave my neighbourhood much. Now, I’ll go across town for a book or special ingredient. I do it during off-peak hours, but still—it’s more than I was doing before.”

Peter finds just as much value in their time together. “This isn’t just altruism,” he admits. “We’ve found this rhythm where we’re both learning from each other. I enjoy these conversations. It’s invigorating.”

Louisa also emphasizes the importance of supporting volunteers. “All Fontbonne programs foster belonging—not just for participants, but for volunteers, too. We bring Friendly Visiting volunteers together at least four times a year to share food, listen to speakers, or simply talk about their experiences. It helps them feel connected and supported.”

Peter knows firsthand how crucial this support is. “I used to visit with someone who couldn’t communicate,” he recalls. “I felt useless, but another volunteer reminded me that just being there mattered. Those meetings help so much—they give you perspective and confidence.”

Gordon also appreciates the care that went into matching him with Peter. “Louisa has a real talent for bringing people together,” he says. “Peter respects my time, and I respect his. It’s an equal exchange. He doesn’t come to solve my problems—he just listens; and that’s enough.”

Rooted in the Sisters of St. Joseph’s legacy, Fontbonne fosters community and well-being through inclusive programs for the most socially isolated.

Louisa sums it up best: “If you don’t have social connections, you don’t have anything.”

Creating Space for Healing



Ricardo and Christine showcasing their pottery creations

Ricardo and Christine Find Relief Through Clay

At Studio on the Hill, creativity isn't just about making art—it's about finding calm, connection, and community. The Fontbonne Ministries program offers a welcoming space where participants can explore different pottery techniques while embracing mindfulness and self-care. For many, the experience has been transformative.

Shaun Kelly, the Recreation Manager and Instructor who leads the sessions, sees this transformation in every class. "We've had participants from all backgrounds—seniors, individuals with complex health needs, people with disabilities—come here and leave their worries behind, if only for a couple of hours," he says. "There's something about working with your hands that shifts your focus—it pulls you into the present. At the studio, people are not defined by their challenges; they're potters."

Recognizing the need for programs that promote self-care and stress relief, Studio on the Hill partnered with the South Riverdale Community Health Centre (SRCHC) to offer customized mindfulness pottery classes.



“We’ve seen participants come out of their shells, develop new coping strategies, and even build friendships. For many, it’s a place where they can just be themselves, free of judgment or expectation.”

-Gurpreet Karir, South Riverdale
Community Health Centre

Gurpreet Karir, a Health Promoter at SRCHC, works closely with the social workers, harm reduction teams, and clinicians at her organization to recruit participants. “Many of our clients experience chronic stress, anxiety, and health issues,” she explains. “I approached Studio on the Hill to see if they could incorporate our mindfulness techniques into their pottery sessions to give our clients tools they can apply in daily life. It’s a diverse group, but the one thing they all have in common is a need for self-care,” she says.

Among those who took part in the eight-week mindfulness pottery program were Ricardo and Christine, a married couple of 26 years. Christine, a caregiver to her elderly mother, and Ricardo, who suffered a stroke two years ago and lives with diabetes, were both looking for something to help them manage stress and physical recovery.

Ricardo was hesitant at first. “I don’t see myself as an artist. But Gurpreet told me to just try it, and I’m glad I did.

The weekly classes quickly became a highlight of their week. “It was just a break—a real break—from everyday worries,” Christine says.

“For those two hours, I wasn’t thinking about caregiving or errands. I was just in the moment, shaping clay, focusing on my breath.”

Shaun led the group with hands-on demonstrations, teaching techniques that helped Ricardo improve his motor skills following his stroke. But the biggest lesson wasn’t technical—it was learning to let go of the outcome.

“At first, I was worried about making something perfect,” Ricardo says. “But then I realized it was about the process—being present, feeling the clay, letting things unfold naturally. And that was really therapeutic. I’m still a work in progress, but the mindfulness tools I’ve learned here have helped me get a better handle on things.”

Christine also found the program deeply beneficial, particularly in managing the stress of being a full-time caregiver. “The mindfulness techniques—breathing, slowing down, being present—they aren’t just useful in class. I use them every day now. Even if it’s just five minutes, I remind myself to stop and be in the moment.”

Through their partnership, Shaun and Gurpreet hope to expand these opportunities for more individuals who need them. “The collaboration has been a huge success,” Gurpreet says. “We’ve seen real change in the SRCHC clients who participate.”

Fontbonne Ministries continues to create spaces that nurture community, dignity, and spirit. “Creativity is healing, but so is community,” Shaun says. “When people feel safe to express themselves—without judgment, without pressure—that’s where the real magic happens.”

Fontbonne By the Numbers

September 2023 – August 2024

THE DROP-IN:

Had **12,107** visits and served **16,618** meals

Our meals pack a nutritious punch. Our Vegetarian Enchiladas and Lentil & Mushroom Stew aren't just dishes—they're crowd favourites.

THE CLOTHING BOUTIQUE:

Welcomed **5,065** clients and distributed **18,260** clothing and hygiene items

Travel-sized hygiene products are a big deal! Small items like toothpaste, deodorant, and shampoo are easier to carry and can make a huge difference in someone's day.

FRIENDLY VISITING:

Facilitated **1,414** visits and accounted for **1,958** volunteer hours

Age is just a number! The oldest participant in our Friendly Visiting program is 107 years young and still lives independently in her house.

THE FOOTCARE CLINIC:

Accommodated **968** visits

Fun fact: Did you know that nearly $\frac{1}{4}$ of our bones are in our feet?

STUDIO ON THE HILL:

Hosted **52** events for South Riverdale Community Health Centre and brought together over **2,000** participants

People from all walks of life love the Studio on the Hill creative space. One in every five participants returns after completing a program or course to remain an active part of our community.



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

From left to right: Grand Knight Allan Cobham, Deputy Grand Knight David Klust, Trustee Eddie Camilleri, Trustee Larry Gagnon.

Knights of Columbus

Since its founding in 1882, the Knights of Columbus have built a legacy of service and charity dedicated to meeting the needs of underserved members of the community. Their mission aligns seamlessly with Fontbonne's goal to offer programs that address some of today's most pressing societal challenges: affordable housing, outreach to isolated individuals, and creating inclusive spaces where people can connect, grow spiritually, and express themselves creatively.

For the past 13 years, Allan Cobham has served as the Grand Knight (CEO) of the Knights of Columbus Council at St. Joseph's Parish in Toronto. His leadership has been instrumental in advancing their charitable impact.

"There are over 17,000 Knights of Columbus councils around the world, most of them based in Catholic parishes," Allan explains. "At St. Joseph's Parish, I oversee everything from setting goals to managing finances to ensuring the wellbeing of our council. We're fortunate to receive support from an east-end Toronto bingo and gaming hall."

Since Allan's appointment as Grand Knight, St. Joseph's Parish Council has donated \$27,000 in support of Fontbonne's clothing and hygiene and food security programs.

"We're proud to support an organization that is making such a positive impact on our neighbours in need."

"With food prices rising, it's hard not to wonder how individuals experiencing homelessness or seniors living on fixed incomes can afford to eat—especially in a city like Toronto," Allan states. "When I toured Fontbonne, I saw firsthand how their programs—providing food, clothing, computer access, and recreational opportunities—make an incredible difference to the participants who access them, and by extension, to our broader community."

Fontbonne Ministries would like to thank the Knights of Columbus for their ongoing support. Regular monthly contributions provide the financial stability we need to plan for the future, confident that we can continue working together to create a more compassionate world.

Fontbonne Ministries

General Fund

(September 1, 2023 - August 2024)

Revenue and Other Funding

	2024	2023
Donations	\$ 1,672,961	\$1,518,888
Rental Income	213,347	192,548
Studio Income	59,106	67,383
Other Income	13,565	25,494
Transfer from Endowment Fund	435,020	599,756

Total All Funding Sources

\$2,393,999

\$2,404,069

Expenses

Salaries and Benefits - Management/ Administration/Fundraising	\$692,800	\$429,108
Property	417,513	381,623
Program - Salaries/Benefits, Supplies and Support	672,614	950,772
Audit/Legal/Accounting	104,067	145,645
Office/Other	186,124	181,523
Amortization	54,230	53,067

Total Expenses

\$2,127,348

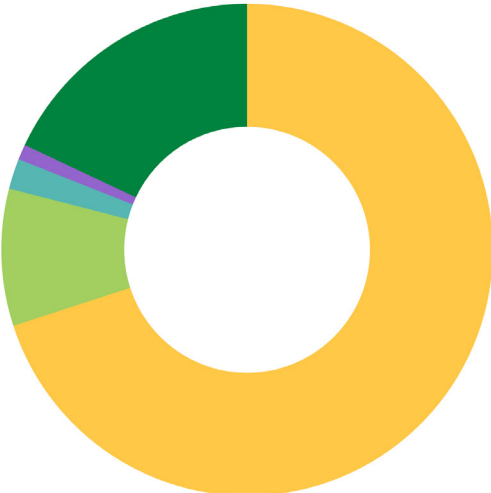
\$2,141,738

To receive a full copy of the financial statements, please contact Fontbonne Ministries at:
791 Queen Street East, Toronto ON M4M 1H6
Telephone: 416.465.2889 • Email: info@fontbonneministries.ca

Fontbonne Ministries

Where the Money Goes

(September 1, 2023 - August 2024)



Revenue and Other Funding: \$2,393,999

- Donations 70%
- Rental Income 9%
- Studio Income 1%
- Other Income 18%
- Transfer from Endowment Fund 2%



Expenses: \$2,127,348

- Salaries and Benefits - Management/ Administration/Fundraising 32%
- Property 19%
- Program - Salaries/Benefits, Supplies and Support 32%
- Audit/Legal/Accounting 5%
- Office/Other 9%
- Amortization 3%

2023-2024

Board of Directors

Joan Breech

Director and Board Chair

Sister Annette Lacroix, CSJ

Director

Hume Martin

Director

Patricia Stoddart

Director

Helen Vander Hoeven

Director

John West

Director



Fontbonne Ministries

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Charitable Registration No. 86408 4090 RR0001