



**TRELLIS**

HIV and  
Community Care

**2023**

# **IMPACT REPORT**

Growing. Changing. Thriving.



# TAKING ACTION TO REMOVE STIGMA **SINCE 1988.**



## Our Mission

Trellis HIV & Community Care provides comprehensive services including education, prevention and support for people living with, at risk of, or affected by HIV/AIDS and STBBIs in addition to advocating for broader social change to reduce stigma and discrimination.

## Our Vision

Trellis HIV & Community Care is a leader in providing service user advocacy and innovative, high quality services for people living with, at risk of, or affected by HIV/AIDS.



## Land Acknowledgment

With great respect, we acknowledge the lands we serve on as the traditional territory of the Anishnaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Huron-Wendat Peoples. We are grateful for our collaborations with these Indigenous communities as we foster healing together.

# THE BEAUTY OF WHAT WE DO

If the last twelve months have taught me anything, it's that we can never take for granted that which we have achieved through struggle and forceful assertion of our rights. Many of you remember the 1980s and 1990s – dark times, scary times, devastating times. But also times when, by coming together as a community, by speaking truth to power, by marshalling our collective strength, and sometimes by getting up in the face of those who sought to silence us, we forced change and secured for our community that which had been denied us.

The Kingston AIDS Project emerged in 1988 as a result of collective resolve in the face of extreme adversity. This agency became the face of a community struggling for our most basic rights – to be seen, to be heard, and to have access to all the things that others in our society took for granted, like food, and shelter, and medical care, and the right to live. We showed the community what compassion really is, what selflessness looks like, and what strength in the face of catastrophic suffering can do.

Since those times – those dark but enlightening times – the Kingston AIDS Project, and then HARS, and now Trellis, has been a beacon for so many. And we continue to be that today. Our work has grown over the years and we have taken on a role in the broader community that none of us envisioned even four years ago. But we're still here, fulfilling the same mandate we embraced 35 years ago – to provide comprehensive services and support for people living with, at risk of, or affected by HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted blood-borne infections, AND to advocate for broader social change to reduce stigma and discrimination.

Personally I take that mandate in its broadest context: Yes, we are an HIV/AIDS service organization – we have never wavered from that commitment, and as far as I'm concerned we never will. But because we have learned so much in our 35 years of existence, because we have had to fight for our rightful place in society, because we have first-hand knowledge of discrimination, stigmatization, oppression, and bigotry, and because we have earned the right to be heard and valued and respected, we have a larger responsibility.

As a marginalized community, people living with, at risk of, or affected by HIV have so much to offer other marginalized and at-risk communities. We have learned through experience how to survive in a world that would rather we not be seen or heard, and we need to share that with others who can benefit from our struggle. We have a responsibility to stand in solidarity with them, and to pass on all that we know.

There are forces in our society, and in some cases within our own community, that would silence us in this broader fight. We can't let them. And we won't. We will continue to do the work we do, to support the people who need that support to get by each day, to advocate for those who feel they don't have a voice, and to fight for what is right. We've been doing it for 35 years, and hopefully together we will maintain our unity and keep moving forward for ourselves and our community.

**Ted Robinson (he/him)**  
**Chair, Board of Directors**



# POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

The Impact Report you're reading provides a very high-level snapshot of the work of Trellis HIV & Community Care in fiscal 2022-23 and the impact of what the community's support and generosity has been on the people Trellis serves.

It has been another challenging year, one impacted by the lingering effects of COVID19 restrictions and illness, the ever-growing drug poisoning crisis and the impacts of inflation on individual's ability to make ends meet and for organizations like Trellis to meet the ever-growing needs of the people the organization serves. Amid heartbreak and losses, the Trellis team continues to move forward, always thinking about how better to meet emerging challenges, confront stigma and contribute to a kinder, more equitable community.

Thanks to the generosity of our community and working with great partners, Trellis has been able to expand our service offerings and practical support. We are especially proud of the collaboration we have built with a number of local agencies, and I want to highlight a few of these:

- Thanks to our collaboration with Queens Family Health, we now operate a half-day clinic once a week for patients who are unattached to a family physician and who are unhoused and/or use substances.
- Our work with Lionhearts, ReStart and KFL&A Public Health on the Support Not Stigma initiative, which has provided crucial skill-building both to service providers and to individuals who use substances, as well as combatting stigma through the new anti-stigma campaign which you can see throughout Kingston or online at [supportnotstigma.ca](https://supportnotstigma.ca).
- Working with KCHC/Street Health, Addictions and Mental Health KFL&A, Providence Care and HomeBase Housing, the Integrated Care Hub moves into its fourth year, offering a vital service for people who often experience barriers in accessing the supports and services they need.
- Thanks to the efforts of the United Way KFL&A and its member agencies, Trellis has been part of an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Community of Practice, to grow our ability to meet the needs of equity-seeking communities.
- Along with Toronto People with AIDS Foundation and AIDS Community Care Montreal, Trellis partnered on the 25th Annual Friends for Life Bike Rally, which raised almost 1.8 million dollars for People Living With and affected by HIV.

Working together is complex and sometimes messy, but Trellis is committed to advocating on behalf of the people we serve and working collaboratively to tackle some of our community's greatest challenges.

I would like to take a moment to thank the community for its generous support of the work of Trellis, and to our funders who make this work possible. HIV & Hepatitis C Programs (Ministry of Health, Ontario), Public Health Agency of Canada, Substance Use and Addictions Program (Health Canada), and United Way KFL&A.

Finally, I want to thank the entire Trellis team, whose heart, passion and lived expertise continue to inspire me to do more and to do better.

In solidarity,

**Gilles Charette (he/him)**  
**Executive Director**



# HIV... IS IT STILL A THING?

In August, as the Friends for Life Bike Rally was making its way to Kingston, I had dinner with a group of people, and we had a conversation about how challenging it can sometimes be to raise funds for organizations supporting people living with HIV. One of the people at the table asked: "Is HIV still a thing?" This wasn't the first time I'd heard this question. And it got me thinking.

In 1995, I joined the staff of Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto, a primarily 2SLGBTQ+ congregation that was reeling from the impact of HIV/AIDS. At the time, the church ran a home hospice program (Community Care/AIDS Care) and on average the church performed two funerals each week.

Xtra, the weekly community newspaper printed pages of 'Proud Lives' tributes to people we've lost. The AIDS memorial in Barbara Hall Park was populated by longer and longer lists of names each Spring at the AIDS Vigil.

For me and the community I was part of then, HIV/AIDS was a constant preoccupation, a persistent threat, and a cause both for rallying a community in advocacy, and for grieving our collective losses. So many losses.

So much has changed since then. Growing knowledge of the science behind U=U (Undetectable=Untransmittable), the advent of HIV self-testing, better treatments including long-acting injectables and prevention tools like PrEP, means HIV is becoming a long-term, chronic health condition that many people can manage quite well with, and can enjoy long healthy lives.





So is HIV still a thing? Maybe not in the way it once was, but:

- Ask that of the person living with HIV today of the people Trellis provides support to, who, every time they take their medication, is confronted with how crucial access to these medications is for them to feel well.
- Ask that of the long-term survivors, who lost so many of their loved ones and peers, whose grief persists along with a sense of survivor guilt and the effects of early HIV treatment.
- Ask the generation of queer people who came of age during and after the worst of the AIDS-related losses in North America, whose identities have been linked, probably forever, to HIV.
- Ask that of the HIV positive person who continues to be rejected and stigmatized online and in person when they disclose their status to a potential partner.
- Ask that of the Indigenous, Black and other racialized people who face barriers to care because of the impacts of racism and colonialism, causing them to be disproportionately impacted by HIV.

A lot has changed since then, but HIV is still a thing. Here's how I know this. As long as:

- People don't understand the science of U=U... HIV is still a thing.
- We don't have access to universal basic income... HIV is still a thing.
- People are forced to decide between buying the substances they need to feel well and paying for rent... HIV is still a thing.
- There isn't broadly accessible, funded access to PrEP... HIV is still a thing.
- We don't confront Anti-Black racism... HIV is still a thing.
- We don't do the work of Reconciliation... HIV is still a thing.
- There are countries, provinces and states who are criminalizing bodies, pregnancy, poverty, and equal love, HIV is still going to be a thing.

So the work Trellis and other HIV service organizations do is crucial, not only to provide essential supports to the people we serve, but to do the work of teaching people, doing our own 'unlearning' about what HIV is and isn't today, so that we can confront, hopefully once and for all, HIV stigma.

Because it's still a thing.

- Written by Gilles Charette



# THE DRUG POISONING CRISIS – A SNAPSHOT

People who use substances continue to die tragically and at alarming rates due to a toxic drug supply with no respite from criminalization, demonization and stigmatization.

Between 2018 and 2021, there were 8,767 accidental deaths from toxic drug and alcohol use across Ontario. Data from 2021 shows that 2,886 Ontarians died from consuming a toxic substance – which equates to the deaths of eight people every day. That is five times higher than the number of people who died in traffic accidents in the province that same year, according to the report.

We continue to support and prioritize the wellness of people who use substances through our robust and diverse harm reduction programming.

**This year we distributed...**

**6,000+**  
Naloxone Kits

**23,000+**  
Condoms

**130,000+**  
Sterile syringes

**54,000+**  
Sterile smoking pipes



# WE REMEMBER



We would like to acknowledge all of the beautiful and unique people we have lost to drug poisoning.

We stand in solidarity with all who continue to struggle.

We honour the strength of the communities who continue to care for one another in the face of ongoing, intersecting crises.

We will continue to fight and advocate for better drug policy and dignified care for people who use substances.





# OUR IMPACT.



**100,000+**

## Meals Distributed

With help from its community partners, Trellis is doing its part to help individuals access healthy food. Approximately 5% of these meals were distributed through our breakfast program and takeaway meals, and the remainder have been distributed through the Integrated Care Hub.

**1,300+**

## Volunteer Hours

We are grateful for the continued support of the dedicated individuals who help us deliver our vital services.

**\$35,000+**

## In Financial Support

We are proud to provide practical supports that directly impact the lives of people living with or at risk of contracting HIV.

This is a 25% increase over 2022!

# OUR IMPACT.

**2,000+**

## Drug Poisonings Responded To

Since opening in 2020, the staff at the Integrated Care Hub and in the CTS (operated by Street Health) have responded to over 2,000 drug poisonings on property.

**HIV**

## Self Testing

Trellis is part of the 'I'm Ready' and 'Get a Kit' programs to help individuals access HIV Self-Testing.

We connected 12 people through 'Get a Kit', distributed over 100 kits through 'I'm Ready', and held 53 quick test appointments this year!

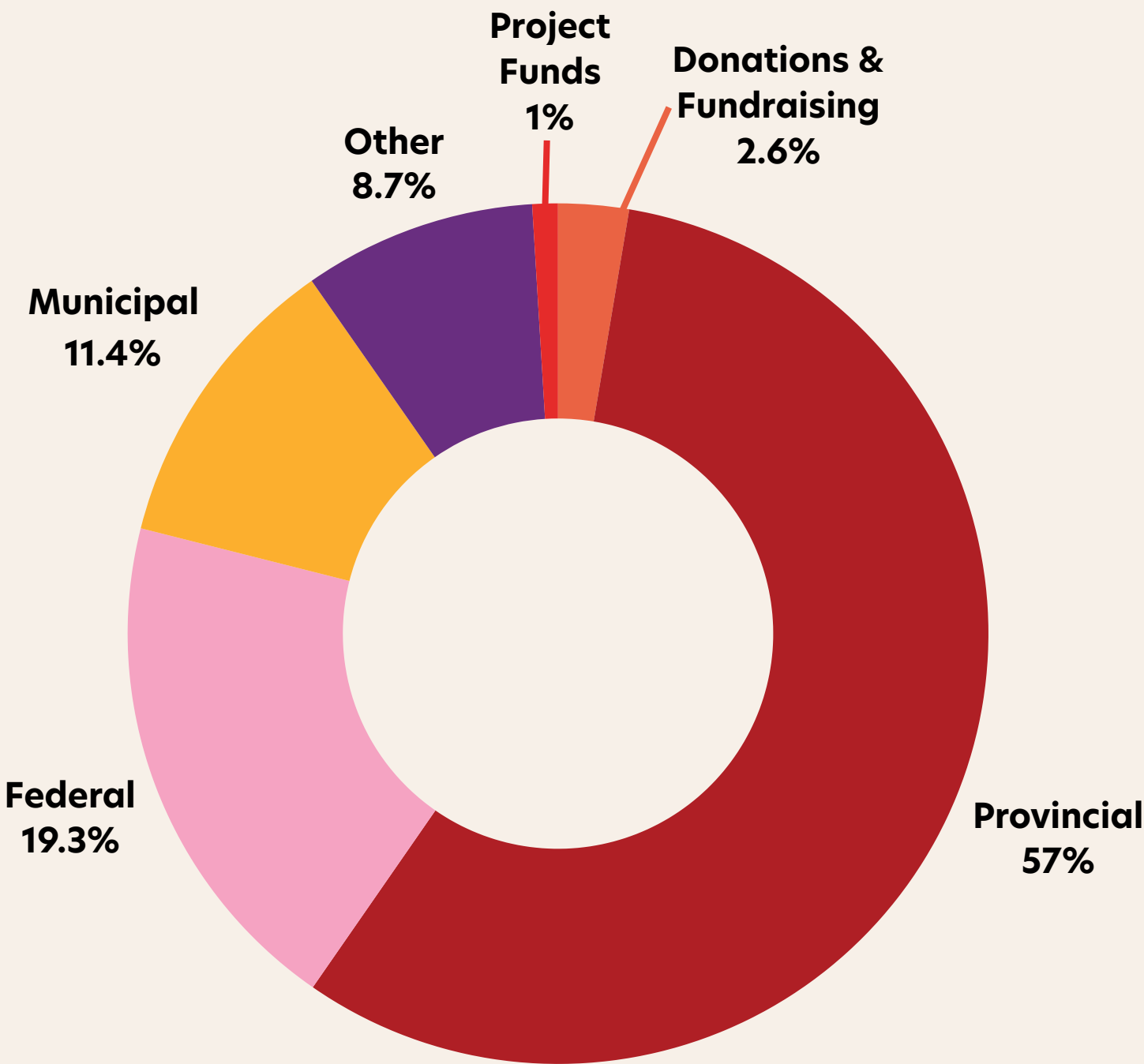
**17,000+**

## Rest Zone Stays

The 24-hour rest zone at the Integrated Care Hub has been accessed approximately 17,000 times in the past year.

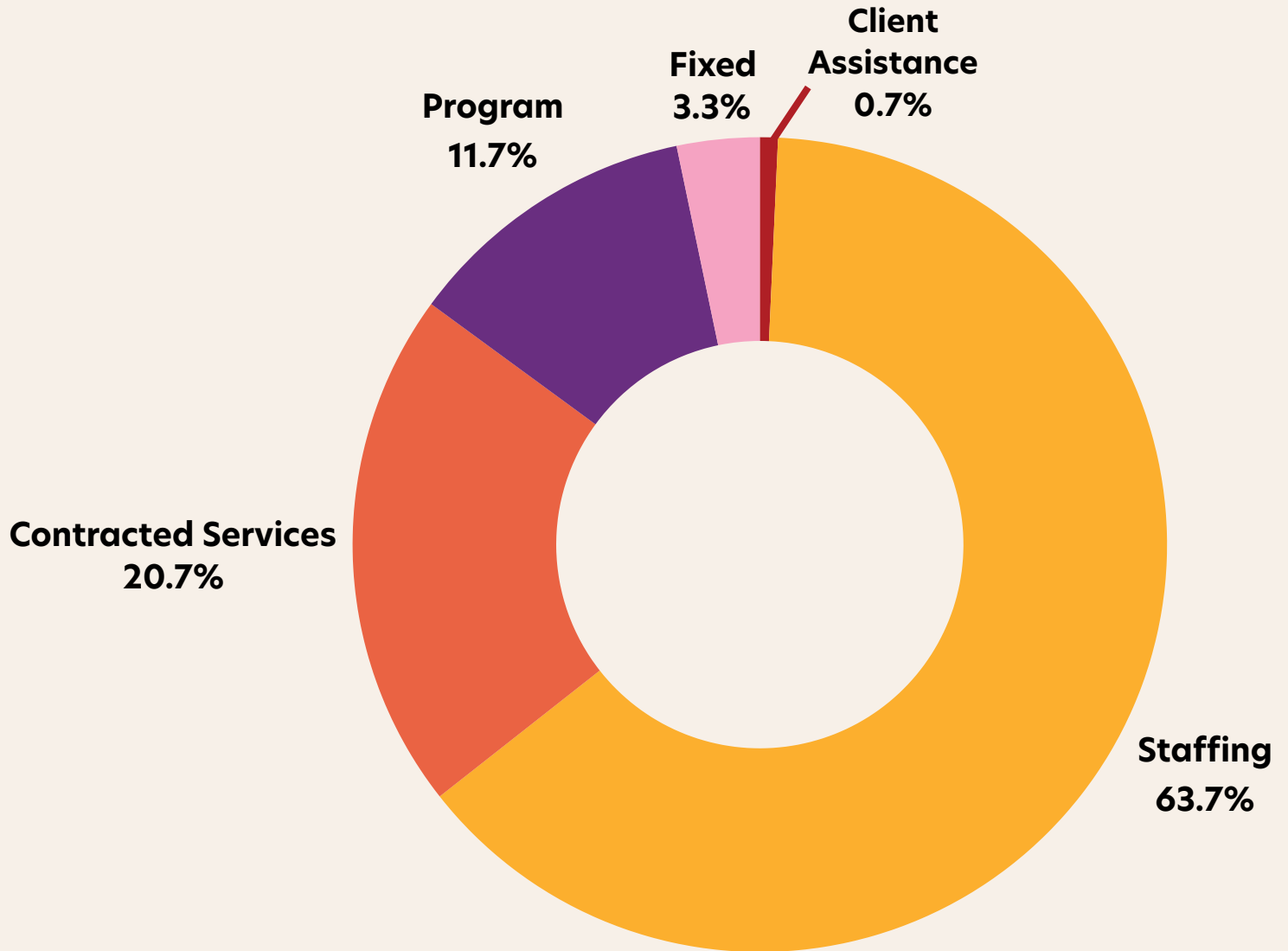
That is 17,000 times that members of our community were able to rest with a roof over their head.

# REVENUE.



**TOTAL**  
**\$5,021,905**

# EXPENSES.



**\*For a more detailed breakdown of expenditures, please see the audited financial report.**

**TOTAL**  
**\$4,904,458**



# RE-AFFIRMING OUR COMMITMENT.

Trellis HIV & Community Care is striving to do better: To hear the voices of Lived and Living Experience and to better reflect the diversity of the communities we serve. As such, we are affirming our commitment to the following principles and to participating in the process of reconciliation.

## **GIPA/MIPA - Greater Involvement/Meaningful Engagement of People Living with HIV/AIDS**

We acknowledge that greater involvement of people with HIV/AIDS (GIPA) is never achieved once and for all; it is a goal and commitment that must be continually renewed. GIPA is a practice, not a project, and is similar to all other accountabilities of healthy HIV organizing and service delivery. Our practices in AIDS Service Organizations (ASOs) must be continually re-evaluated in light of the changing realities of HIV/AIDS and of those living with it. (from OAN.red)

## **AR/AO - Anti Racism/Anti Oppression**

Used as an umbrella term that includes activities, practices, policies, ways of thinking, and initiatives that address oppression in all its forms (e.g. racism, homophobia, classism, ableism). Key to anti-oppression is an understanding that inequality and oppression exist in the world, and that all of us participate in unequal power dynamics in a variety of ways. Anti-oppression involves reflection and making choices about how to give, share, wield, or withhold power to assist and act in solidarity with people who are marginalized. (from ORGWISE.ca)

## **TRC - Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action**

Each of us has a role to contribute to the process of reconciliation. Public dialogue and action on reconciliation must extend beyond addressing the history and legacy of the residential schools. If Canada is to thrive in the twenty-first century, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples must also thrive. This requires healthy communities and real economic and social change. National reconciliation involves building respectful relationships at the community level. (from TRC.ca)

**We invite our membership to affirm these principles and commit with us to doing this work.**

# PRIDE 2023

Pride month is always a lively time at Trellis! This year we attended pride parades and festivals all throughout our catchment area, including KIngston, Brockville, Napanee, and Belleville!

We view pride month as an opportunity to reconnect with the roots of our work, reflect upon the challenges 2SLGBTQA+ communities still face, and celebrate the progress we have made!

Did you know that we often see our highest Naloxone distribution during Pride Month?





# DRAG IN THE PARK 2023

We always look forward to 'Drag In The Park', an annual fundraising event that supports the work of Trellis HIV & Community Care and raises awareness about the Friends For Life Bike Rally!

The generous support from the Kingston community never ceases to amaze us. We appreciate everyone who takes part in the event, from the Drag performers who donate their time, to the volunteers who collect donations, and of course the audience members who come back year after year!

Did you know that we raised approximately \$3,000 this year?



Photo Credit: Britian McCubbin



# F4LBR 2023



The Friends for Life Bike Rally brings people together for an inclusive, supportive, and life-changing challenge that inspires much-needed help for people living with HIV/AIDS in Toronto, Kingston and Montréal.

Interested in riding next year? Visit [bikerally.org](http://bikerally.org) for more details!





# ART SHOWS 2023

Trellis is proud to provide a space for local artists to share their work with the community. We have hosted a variety of themed art shows, including our Trans & Non-binary Art Show, Indigenous Art Show, Gay & Bi Men's Art Show, Mental Health Art Show, Women's Art Show, Queer Art Show, and more!

Follow our Facebook & Instagram for details about our upcoming shows!



[facebook.com/trellishiv](https://facebook.com/trellishiv)



[@trellishiv](https://instagram.com/trellishiv)



# THANK YOU TO OUR 2022 – 2023 BOARD

As of October 1st, 2023

**Ted Robinson**  
**April Stevens**  
**Brian McNeely**  
**Colin Ubdegrove**  
**Carolyn Smart**  
**Ita McConnell**  
**James McCarthy**  
**Cam Naish**  
**Michael Yue**

Board Chair  
Director  
Director  
Director  
Secretary  
Treasurer  
Director  
Director  
Director



On behalf of our staff & board, we want to express our deepest gratitude to every single one of our community partners, sponsors, volunteers, funders, and supporters.

**And above all else, thank you to the people we serve for their support and trust in us.**





**THANK YOU FOR A  
WONDERFUL YEAR!**

