

Community Connection

2021-2022 Annual Report



Connecting People to Services Since 1969



Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Community Connection is a nonprofit corporation and registered charity. We are committed to building a more just and equitable community.

We recognize the history of oppression that has resulted in ongoing disparities for the people and communities we serve and the limitations of a nonprofit framework to address them.

Yet, we have a network of organizations and inspirational partners with opportunities before us to create positive systemic change. We believe we can positively affect people and communities by prioritizing engaging diverse perspectives and ensuring equity for all.

Community Connection is committed to transforming our organization by confronting our own biases and operationalizing our values. We know that intention alone will not change things. In doing this work, we bring the successes and mistakes of our continuing efforts toward equity.

Our mission and vision inspire us to challenge ourselves to deconstruct frameworks of oppression while building opportunities for learning, change, and accountability.

We know this work is pressing, and we will always be learning.

Community Connection is committed to our equity journey, the diversity of our volunteers and employees, and contributing to an inclusive and equitable community.

Sincerely,



Board Chair
Christine Gordon (she/her)



President & Executive Director
Pamela Hillier (she/her)

The background of the page features a silhouette of several people in business attire, including a man in a suit and a woman in a dress, standing in front of a city skyline. The skyline includes a prominent skyscraper, likely the Transamerica Pyramid, and other buildings. The scene is set against a warm, orange and yellow sunset sky. The entire image is reflected in a dark, horizontal band at the bottom.

2021-2022 Board of Directors

Executive Committee

Christine Gordon, Chair
Allison Hunwicks, Vice-Chair
Linda Flemington, Treasurer
Jennifer Parker, Secretary
Not Renewing Second Term, Charlene Scime

Directors

Karen Peirce
Diane Brown-Demarco
Heather Ratz
Lynn Silverton

Senior Management

Pamela Hillier, Executive Director & President
Michelle Fisher, General Manager & Vice-President

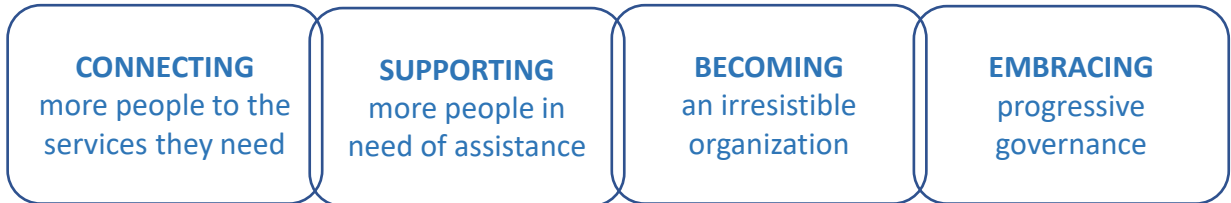
Our Vision:

Healthy communities in which everyone has access to the services they need

Our Mission:

Creating and improving access to services for people

Our Priorities:



Our Values:

COMMUNITY	We foster relationships with people and organizations to respond to social issues and inspire change
EQUITY	We use our privileges as an opportunity to learn and create change for a more just and inclusive society
EXCELLENCE	We are committed to personal and organizational development to improve outcomes for the people we serve
NIMBLENESS	We adapt in continuously changing social contexts and accept change as growth opportunities

Office ♦ People ♦ Finance

Collingwood Common Roof / Rotary Community Hub

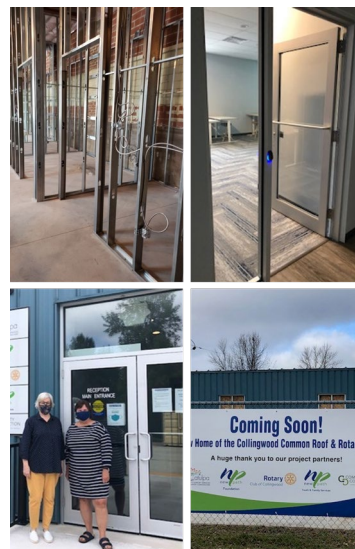
Social Purpose Real Estate: a space for our community. One of our collective impact commitments is with the New Path Foundation and our tenant partners New Path Child and Youth Services, Catulpa Community Services, Community Action Program for Children, and the Rotary Club of Collingwood.

In June 2020, we moved into our new custom-built offices with 1,360 square feet of private space and access to 2,226 shared common areas and meeting spaces. Infrastructure services are cost-shared with our tenant partners.

While the pandemic continues to limit our use of our spaces, we will be re-establishing our many in-person networks, seniors' programs, and team activities onsite.

Access to an accessible and inclusive environment is essential for our team members, volunteers, the local groups and committees we meet with, and the public we serve.

We envision a social services campus in the future, with numerous organizations and meeting rooms, surrounded by green space for outdoor activities. The goal is to make it easier for residents to access the services they need and enable more community engagement activities in a safe and welcoming space.



Reframing Governance

Community Connection does nothing alone. We operate within multiple shared governance and shared service delivery models. Even our core service model, 211, is delivered within an integrated technology and service delivery network. We are also leading and participating in multiple collective impact initiatives with community tables guiding our work.

As our work demonstrates, we no longer operate as a single organization. Operationally we view success from a systems perspective – our mission cannot be achieved unless other sectors or other organizations succeed as well. Traditional governance design hasn't kept pace with the demands of our complex environment.



In 2020-2021 we conducted a governance review that identified opportunities for improvement in an effort to create a strong, effective, and collaborative governance structure.

This creates significant future opportunities for us to embrace modern governance approaches for adaptable organizations, working within complicated financing models, overseeing multi-faceted accountabilities and risks, and leveraging digital transformation opportunities.

Office ♦ People ♦ Finance

Our People

At the end of 2021-2022, our team members included 29 personnel, including 21 full-time, 6 part-time, and 2 contracted specialists.

Our technology infrastructure enables our entire team to work remotely in their home-based office or take advantage of a hybrid home/office environment.

This year like many other employers, we experienced several changes in our personnel - two team members didn't return from parental leave, two didn't renew contracts and three transitioned into new employment opportunities. During the year we onboarded four new team members and established contracts with one new consultant.

Meaningful Roles and Continual Learning

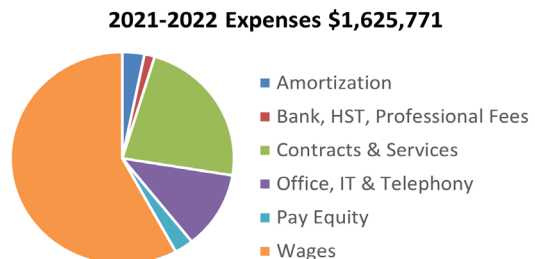
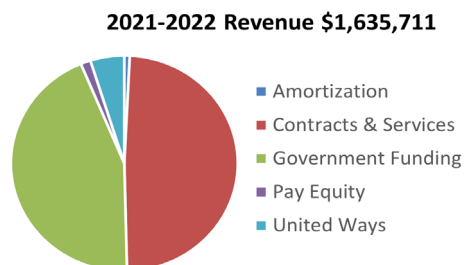
To manage the complexity of over 100 active partnerships, collaborations, projects and shared services we leverage roles and function structure that visually flat-lines our organization.

We dynamically create teams and squads from across the organization for short or longer term activities. This nimble operating style supports our goals for continuous learning and new skills development, and enables employee engagement by changing up routines and team partners for new opportunities.



Finance

Community Connection has diversified revenue. Our largest contract is for 211 service delivery (Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services), funding agreements with the Counties of Grey, Bruce and Simcoe, the United Ways of Bruce Grey and Simcoe Muskoka, Ontario 211 Services (specialized phone lines) and the provincial Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative. This year three major projects were underway, two funded by Employment and Social Development Canada (New Horizons and Reaching Home), and the United Way Simcoe Muskoka (Collaborative Project for Poverty Impact on Health).

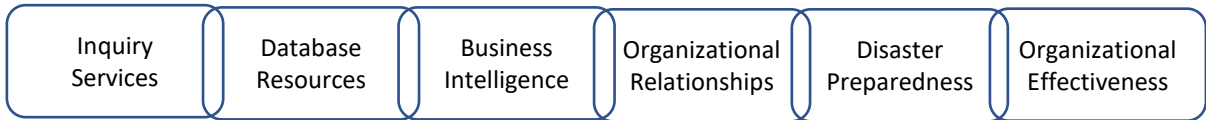


Our 2021-2022 Audit was conducted by Baker Tilly. Audited statements are available upon request.

Service Delivery ♦ Impact Areas

Service Delivery

As an information and referral organization, our work is to help individuals, families, and communities identify, understand, and effectively use the programs that are part of the human service delivery system. We do this through these areas of focus:



We benchmark our service quality by the standards established for information and referral organizations, administered by the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems. These standards and their quality indicators are used to guide our program development and quality improvement activities for training, staff credentialing, and organizational accreditation.

211 – Dialing Code and Brand

Three-digit dialing codes (211, 511, 811, 911) are approved by the CRTC as public utilities -- assisting people with easy access to special services. Essentially, three-digit codes are digitally programmed by telephone companies to direct the call/text to a seven-digit telephone number.

211 service is nationwide in the US and Canada. In Canada there are currently fifteen, 211 contact centres and each are licensed to use the 211 logo, which is trademarked by United Way Canada.

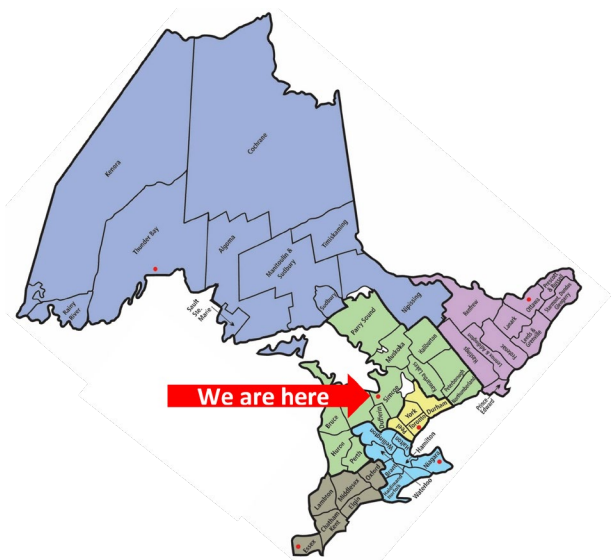
In Ontario Community Connection is one of six independent organizations integrated through technology to enable an efficient, seamless province-wide service. All 211 contact centres operate Monday through Friday 7am to 7pm, with evening, overnight and weekend service provided by the Toronto based contact centre, our colleagues at Findhelp Information Services.

Ontario 211 Services is the organization overseeing technology infrastructure, supporting service coordination, and provincial partnership development, and serves as the transfer payment agency with the Ontario government.

Our region is Central East Ontario - highlighted in green on this map. Our region includes the counties of Bruce, Grey, Simcoe, Perth, Huron, Dufferin, Haliburton, City of Kawartha Lakes, Peterborough and Northumberland, and the Districts of Muskoka and Parry Sound. While calls flow across all contact centres, we are responsible for the resource database, outreach activities, and partnership development in the Central East Region.



211 Ontario – Six Regions with Integrated Contact Centres



Service Delivery ♦ Impact Areas

Inquiry Service

Our Community Navigators help people better understand their problems/needs and to make informed decisions about possible solutions. Community Navigators will advocate on behalf of those who need additional support and reinforce the inquirer's capacity for self-reliance and self-determination with follow-up calls and case conferencing. Navigators are prepared to provide short-term crisis intervention for inquirers experiencing emotional, mental, physical, or behavioral distress.

211 Ontario Inquiry Service

The following chart shows the historical 211 calls by each regional contact centre for the past 5 years and shows the increase in 2020 due to the pandemic.

2017-2021 Historical 211 Calls by Regional Contact Centre						
Regional Contact Centre	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	5-Yr Tally
After Hours & Weekends (all regions)	70,509	69,196	63,433	79,925	90,946	374,009
Central Region (Toronto)	99,780	89,059	82,191	112,255	118,107	501,392
Central East Region (Collingwood)	18,826	21,932	19,426	24,346	25,442	154,363
Central South Region (St. Catharines)	23,291	25,688	30,566	34,648	21,426	207,092
Eastern Region (Ottawa)	31,506	30,537	31,830	29,474	24,273	207,452
Northern Region (Thunder Bay)	27,261	29,018	30,927	38,622	38,587	207,298
Annual Total	262,143	256,013	254,115	312,589	313,275	2,135,548

2021 Central East Region Inquiry Service

This chart shows all inquiry services provided by our Community Navigators in 2021.

As an integrated service system, 211 calls are routed first to the nearest regional contact centre of the caller. If there are no available Community Navigators at that moment, the call is instantly rerouted to another contact centre with an available Community Navigator.

The chart colours indicate:

- 211 Ontario phone calls, chat, and email contacts, and the region the caller was located
- Provincial Specialty lines
- Faxed referrals received
- Outbound calls to provide inquiry services

Our Community Navigators are skilled in supporting inquirers from communities across the province, where service delivery systems are as diverse as the people we serve. Assisting people while transitioning between 211 and specialty lines, online chats, email inquiries, and inbound and outbound calls require significant training and practice and essential digital skills.

Note: The historical calls data includes 425 calls for Central East that were dropped after the call was answered. The chart below does not.

2021 Inquiries Handled by Community Connection	
Calls from Central East Region	7,198
Calls from Central Region	783
Calls from Central South Region	5,899
Calls from Eastern Region	5,888
Calls from Northern Region	4,131
Calls from Southwest Region	303
Ontario After Hours Calls	49
Online Chat Inquiries	636
Email Inquiries	130
Total 211 Ontario	25,017
Specialty Lines and Services	
Good2Talk Helpline	2,550
Ontario Caregiver Support Line	582
ReportON Helpline	78
Total Provincial Specialty Lines	3,210
Faxed Referrals from Clinicians/Paramedics	1,224
Outbound Calls	
Outbound Calls to Provide Inquiry Services	9,135
Total Inquiry Services	38,586

Service Delivery ♦ Impact Areas

Inquiry Service – Needs and Trends

The delivery of information and referral service generates valuable information about the problems (or needs) of a community and the availability of resources to meet those needs.

We use a secure, confidential system for collecting and organizing inquirer data collection that provides a basis for describing requests for services and unmet needs, identifying service gaps, and informing decisions about the scope of the resource database.

The following chart shows the top ten inquirer needs from Central East Region over the past three years, sorted by the highest number of calls.

Sorted by Highest # Calls

2019-2021 Top Ten Inquirer Needs by # of Needs Identified	2019	2020	2021	% of Total 2021 Needs	% Change 2019-2021
Health	3,743	4,644	6,838	20%	83%
Housing	3,219	4,233	4,893	15%	52%
Income Support/Financial Assistance	1,740	3,655	2,656	8%	53%
Mental Health/Addictions	1,978	2,626	2,950	9%	49%
Individual/Family Services	2,444	2,490	2,891	9%	18%
Other Government/Economic Services	1,807	2,355	1,488	4%	-18%
Legal/Public Safety	1,764	2,144	2,020	6%	15%
Information Services	1,564	2,084	1,943	6%	24%
Food/Meals	1,142	1,914	1,584	5%	39%
Transportation	1,473	1,319	1,457	4%	-1%

The following chart shows the top ten inquirer needs (Central East Region) over the past three years, sorted by the highest increase.

Sorted by Highest % Increase

2019-2021 Top Five Inquirer Needs by Largest Increase	2019	2020	2021	% of Total 2021 Needs	% Change 2019-2021
Health	3,743	4,644	6,838	20%	83%
Income Support/Financial Assistance	1,740	3,655	2,656	8%	53%
Housing	3,219	4,233	4,893	15%	52%
Mental Health/Addictions	1,978	2,626	2,950	9%	49%
Food/Meals	1,142	1,914	1,584	5%	39%
Information Services	1,564	2,084	1,943	6%	24%
Individual/Family Services	2,444	2,490	2,891	9%	18%
Legal/Public Safety	1,764	2,144	2,020	6%	15%
Transportation	1,473	1,319	1,457	4%	-1%
Other Government/Economic Services	1,807	2,355	1,488	4%	-18%

Service Delivery ♦ Impact Areas

Pandemic Impact on People and Services

The pandemic has created new inequalities in our society and exacerbated existing ones. Calls for assistance are increasing in complexity. Inquirers' situations are direr, and people are more desperate and angrier.

The chart below demonstrates the increasing gap between the needs of inquirers and the capacity of community resources to meet the demand. Unmet needs are often a result of affordability, eligibility, waiting lists, and depleted agency resources.

Sorted by
Highest #
Unmet Needs

2019-2021 Central East Region Unmet Needs	2019	2020	2021	% Change 2019 to 2021
Housing	104	295	410	75%
Income Support/Financial Assistance	92	358	254	64%
Health	90	199	237	62%
Food/Meals	38	148	117	68%
Individual/Family Services	62	105	111	44%
Transportation	35	81	89	61%
Community Services	34	102	82	59%
Mental Health/Addictions	27	61	66	59%
Utility Assistance	31	83	66	53%
Volunteers/Donations	5	19	35	86%

Achieving Improved Outcomes for Vulnerable People

The term vulnerable people can describe many populations, including people who are racial or ethnic minorities, elderly, pregnant women, children, migrants, refugees, homeless, substance users, those with mental health or medical conditions, or people impacted by economic or social conditions.

Vulnerable people are more likely to be impacted by trauma and shame, and the experience of shame can lead to unhealthy coping strategies. Our Community Navigators support vulnerable people by taking more time to apply specialized skills and training and provide as many follow-up calls as needed to ensure barriers to services are reduced and connections to services are made.

Trauma Informed

- Being aware of the prevalence of trauma and how common it is;
- Recognition of the signs of traumatic impact;
- Engaging in taking steps to avoid re-traumatizing inquirers

Stages of Change

- Using stages of change assessments to identify the inquirer's stage in the change process;
- Guide inquirers along the stages of change, not try to change behavior

Empowerment

- Engage in 3-minute empowerment conversations throughout the stages of change;
- Using the power of words to confront, inform, convince and suggest actions leading to change

Service Delivery ♦ Impact Areas

Central East Region Resource Database

Information and referral organizations develop, maintain, use and disseminate an up-to-date online resource database that contains information about available community resources including details about the services provided and the conditions under which they are available.

The pandemic has had the biggest impact on our resource database, and this past year was no exception. Our team of Data Curators was challenged to keep up with the many changes to services and programs throughout the various waves of the pandemic. In addition to this, the 211 Ontario network transitioned database technology, requiring duplicate work throughout the year.

Community Connection participates in database collaboratives and data partnerships to avoid duplication of database curation, and to achieve broader and more in-depth coverage of community resources. We have two data partners, Information Barrie (Barrie Public Library) and the United Way Perth Huron. Together, our three organizations' Data Curators work together to maintain an estimated 8,640 organizations and program listings for our Central East region.

Community Connection and our data partners, along with other 211 Regional Service Providers, collectively work within a single province-wide database. Data resources are available through the provincial website 211Ontario.ca.

This year, as part of the 211 Canada network, we participated in supplying Employment and Social Development Canada with shelter service provider data for Ontario and Quebec.

The data resources for the Central East Region are continually downloaded through an API to our own database technology system that we use to support 18 online directories and calendars customized for specific regions or subject areas. This drastically increases our search engine optimization (SEO) exponentially. In 2021 we were able to serve significantly more people online:



1.7M
Pageviews

211CentralEastOntario.ca
(includes database listing search results from all regional websites, online directories and organic search results)

In addition to online directories, we use APIs to enable resource data sharing and integration with five municipal GIS mapping systems, including the County of Simcoe, City of Barrie, City of Peterborough, Northumberland County, and the District of Parry Sound.

We also participate in provincial data sharing for online directories for Employment Ontario and the Ontario Victim Support Line.

Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting

Our data collection and reporting on the supply and demand of human services facilitate our participation in community-wide data collection, analysis, and reporting activities that increase awareness of local problem needs, support community, and place-based planning, and create opportunities to bring community partners together to develop potential solutions.

In 2021, we had 15 requests for inquiry reports and data resources listings. Details are provided on the next page of this report.

Service Delivery ♦ Impact Areas

2021 Community Data Sharing Activities		
Topic Area	How we Helped / What was Shared	Impact
Child, Youth & Family	211 resource database listings of all youth programming currently available in Peterborough and Northumberland Counties shared with the City of Peterborough	Supporting planning of new programming for youth, in consideration of existing programming and service locations
	211 resource database listings of child and youth mental health and substance use services available in North Simcoe Muskoka	Supporting the planning work of the Central Ontario Health Team for specialized populations, tasked with improving access and navigation support
Community Safety and Wellbeing	211 inquirer needs data over time (pre and post-pandemic) related to intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and child abuse/neglect was shared with both the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit and Thrive Northumberland	211 data helped both organizations to better understand the direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic from a variety of perspectives. Knowing the impact is the first step in planning a community response
	211 inquirer needs data (including unmet needs details) was shared each quarter with the South Georgian Bay Roundtable	Real-time and historical needs were analyzed by the roundtable to help plan and address community needs
	211 resource database listings of all Indigenous service providers in Simcoe County	Data helped to support the work for Indigenous engagement Committee of the Simcoe County Alliance to End Homelessness Community Advisory Board
Housing & Homelessness	211 resource database listings for all housing and homelessness services in Simcoe County shared with the County of Simcoe	Data was used to help support the planning/implementation of Coordinated Access to Housing in Simcoe County
Mental Health & Substance Use	211 resource database listings of all mental health and substance use services in South Georgian Bay	Data helped to support the work of the South Georgian Bay Ontario Health Team tasked with building a local website for self-navigation. This data helped them to gain a fulsome understanding of the current state and how patients access services
Poverty	211 resource database listings of all Community Income Tax Clinics available in Simcoe Muskoka	United Way of Simcoe Muskoka shared the data with local agency partners so they could share with all clients they serve
Seniors and Volunteer Services	211 resource database listings of all community organizations in Bruce Grey	Active Lifestyles Centre Grey Bruce requested data to analyze current programming available for seniors in their area and to better understand gaps in service in order to build programs to best serve the local community.
	211 resource database listings of computer training classes offered in Simcoe County	Helping Hand Orillia was interested in knowing the existing programs available to help support the seniors they serve to get better with technology in order to help them to connect with friends, family, and community

Service Delivery ♦ Impact Areas

Our Role Within the Information and Referral System

This year Community Connection continued our work with others in the information and referral sector, establishing and maintaining meaningful working relationships, while participating in the broader service delivery system in our community of Central East Ontario.

211 Ontario

At the provincial level, we are one of six independent information and referral organizations bound together through technology and funding contracts to deliver the provincial 211 service system, overseen by Ontario 211 Services. This year, Ontario 211 Services implemented a new funding formula and adjusted service targets which had minor impacts on our program. New this year for Community Connection:

- We were contracted by Ontario 211 Services to support a new provincial role as Health Initiatives Lead. Our work together has developed stronger relationships with Ontario Health, the Ministry of Health, and numerous Ontario Health Teams across the province;
- We were awarded a contract to oversee a provincial partnership with the Ontario Caregivers Organization to deliver and report on their 24/7 Caregiver Helpline which is delivered by the 211 Ontario network;
- We were included in a research study led by the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto. Our team conducts a short needs questionnaire to identify the unexpressed needs of callers agreeing to participate. This study will be completed in 2022.

Ontario 211 Services contracted with the Silm Centre for Mental Health to address compassion fatigue and burnout of our service managers and front-line teams. This work included a mental health tool kit and one on one therapy upon request.

Ontario 211 Services began developing a business model transformation, set to be completed by March 2025. Throughout the year, numerous meetings were hosted with Board Chairs and the senior staff leadership team to provide feedback and comments.

211 Canada

The national network consists of independent 211 service providers from across the country, two provincial bodies - Ontario 211 Services and 211 Alberta, and United Way Centraide Canada.

Known as the 211 Canada Leadership Table, the group developed and adopted a data oversight and governance framework for the national 211 data and business intelligence system. The data collected and maintained by our team is fed through the 211 Ontario business intelligence system into the 211 Canada business intelligence system.

During the year, we participated in various task groups and committees around common emerging initiatives. These included strategic direction planning, diversion of personal distress calls from 911 to 211, and oversight of the project with Employment and Social Development Canada to provide specialized data for homeless service providers in Ontario and Quebec, and Ontario-Alberta Health Ministries' interest in 211 and Community Information Exchange development.

A new partnership was established with the Canadian Human Rights, National Housing Advocate's office to develop a direct referral function and explore further opportunities for 211 as a referral source for housing-related inquiries.

Service Delivery ♦ Impact Areas

Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS)

AIRS is a US-based information and referral membership association serving the United States and Canada. In 2021, Community Connection received its third AIRS Accreditation award. Our staff participates in AIRS conferences, training activities, and several committees. AIRS also offers a professional credentialing program for our team members. At the 2021 AGM, our Executive Director was elected as Vice President and President-Elect for the Board of Directors. The AIRS Board is made up of current and former information and referral professionals, representing a wide range of experience in aging and disabilities, 211, crisis, disaster, military, and government services.

Our Role Within the Broader Service System

In the broader human service system, we have cooperative relationships with many service providers. These relationships help us to advance an integrated service delivery system that ensures broad access to community services maximize the use of existing resources and facilitates the ability of people who need services to easily find the most appropriate provider.



Cooperative Service Delivery Partnerships

In these relationships, Community Connection's role varies from collaborative service delivery and case coordination activities to eligibility screening, appointment setting, initial intake, and system reporting. Last year these partnerships continued:

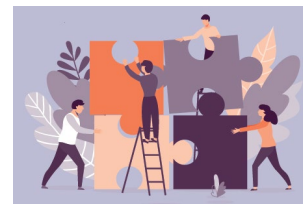
- ReportON – a 24/7 provincial line to report a suspected abuse of adults with developmental disabilities
- Good2Talk - a 24/7 provincial mental health/wellness line for post-secondary students
- Ontario Caregiver Helpline – a 24/7 helpline and chat service to access caregiver supports
- Ontario Community Support Association - Accessible Drive-to-Vaccines Program, online registration
- Bruce Grey Backpack Program – intake and referral service
- Bruce Grey Utilities Assistance – intake and referral service
- Grey Bruce Report a Drug – reporting of toxic drugs for local task force response.

New Service Delivery partnerships in 2021 include:

- Central Ontario Health Team for Specialized Populations, Simcoe Muskoka - online registration for virtual counselling, 1door.ca
- South Georgian Bay Ontario Health Team - online registration for cancer screening appointments
- Couchiching Ontario Health Team – warm transfers to a palliative care specialty line.

Our Role Within the Broader Service System

Community Connection plays many roles within and across other service systems. Operationally we view success from a systems perspective – our mission cannot be achieved unless other sectors or other organizations also succeed in the goal to improve the wellbeing of our community.



Referrals for Patients Impacted by Social Determinants of Health

Community Connection receives eReferrals from clinicians in Bruce County, Simcoe County, and Muskoka for patients impacted by social determinants of health (e.g., income, food). With these needs supported, patients can be more focused on their health and wellbeing. We also receive referrals from paramedic services in Simcoe and Grey Counties for patients in need of assistance identified when responding to a 911 call or conducting home visiting programs. These are also called closed-loop referrals as the clinician receives an outcome report for each eReferral. In 2021 we received:

- 272 referrals from clinicians
- 952 referrals from paramedics.

The top needs identified through our assessments of patients' needs were financial, housing, food, social isolation, and transportation.

South Georgian Bay Ontario Health Team – Digital Health and Innovation Project

Community Connection is one of eleven anchor partners leading the work of the SGB Ontario Health Team, and we are a member of the Digital Health and Innovation Task Group. In 2021, the Ontario Health Team invested \$106,000 to integrate Ocean eReferral software with 211. This would enable 211 and other community partners across the region to make electronic eReferrals, establishing capabilities for a shared longitudinal record for patients in the region.

Ocean eReferral software is Ministry of Health funded through Ontario's eServices program and is accessible to any organization through the EMR or a webpage. This enables patient referral information for any medical, mental health, or social program to be sent electronically, linked with the patient's physician if selected, and the patient is continually updated about the status of the referral. The project is due to be completed by the end of 2022.

UWSM Collaborative Project - Poverty

In 2019, United Way Simcoe Muskoka launched a new community investment fund for each of its six sub-regions focused on poverty impact initiatives. In 2020, a collaborative of Community Connection, YMCA Collingwood, South Georgian Bay Community Health Centre, and the Georgian Bay Family Health Team, were awarded a grant of \$233,742 over 3-years to reduce the impact of poverty on residents in South Georgian Bay. The project start was delayed to the pandemic.

During 2021-2022 the project invested \$87,000 towards the development of a digital platform to allow physicians, health care providers, and community service organizations to make electronic referrals to 211 in a secure environment that is accessible through electronic medical record systems.

Service Delivery ♦ Impact Areas

United Way Simcoe Muskoka - Urgent Needs Fund

United Way's community investment fund launched a pilot in 2019 to provide financial support to households that were experiencing poverty (or at-risk) and have an emergency or time-sensitive urgent needs that couldn't be filled by other community supports. The pilot concluded in February 2021 has allocated \$236,000 to 1,034 households. The program was launched again in February 2022 and by the end of March 131 households had received grants totaling \$32,645. The top three financial needs are food, basic needs items, and transportation.

In Simcoe County 211 is an access point for Urgent Needs Funds. Our team conducts eligibility screening, intake, and registration conducts in-depth follow-up calls and collects detailed data to measure program impact on individuals.

For clients who can provide electronic documentation, Community Connection disperses the grant by electronic transfer. Other clients are connected to a partner organization to assist with in-person fund distribution. These partners are:

- Chigamik Community Health Centre – Midland
- Catholic Family Services – Orillia
- South Georgian Bay Community Health Centre – Wasaga Beach
- Contact Community Services – Alliston
- Barrie and Area Native Advisory Circle – Barrie.

United Way Perth Huron – Urgent Needs Fund

In January 2022, the Urgent Needs Fund was launched for Perth Huron households. Community Connection partners with the United Way Perth Huron to provide eligibility screening, intake, and registration, in-depth follow-up calls, and detailed data collection to measure program impact on individuals. Funds are dispersed to clients by the Counties of Perth and Huron Ontario Works departments. From January to March 2022, 102 households received individual grants totaling \$33,224.

Simcoe County Homeless Enumeration

In 2021-2022, we received \$25,800 from the provincial Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative through the County of Simcoe, to coordinate and project manage the 2021 homeless enumeration. The information collected informs policy and program development and raises awareness about homelessness in Simcoe County. We contracted with a consultant (Kathryn Manners) to lead the project with guidance from the Regional Enumeration Advisory Committee, the Simcoe County Alliance to End Homelessness, and many service providers. The enumeration was conducted on January 25-27, 2022, using a point-in-time count methodology. The report is available on the County of Simcoe's website.

Simcoe County Community Homeless Navigation

In 2021-2022, we received \$68,000 from the provincial Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative through the County of Simcoe, to support improved shelter access service coordination for immediate needs for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, or at risk of homelessness, through our 211 helpline. Our Community Navigators responded to 2,404 calls from Simcoe County assisting 1,735 households at risk of homelessness and 744 households experiencing homelessness. This was an 11% increase over the previous year.

Service Delivery ♦ Impact Areas

Simcoe County, Reaching Home - Canada's Homeless Strategy

Reaching Home is Canada's Homelessness Strategy, a community-based program aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness across Canada. This program provides funding to urban, Indigenous, rural, and remote communities to help them address their local homelessness needs.

Simcoe County is one of 58 urban communities receiving Reaching Home funding and is required to have a Coordinated Access system. A coordinated access system consists of a centralized database (homeless management system) that collects and analyzes real-time data on clients, defined access points where people enter the system, common/standardized protocols, and prioritization criteria for matching clients to appropriate housing resources.

Simcoe County is required to have a Community Advisory Board (CAB), a local committee responsible for approving an annual Homelessness Community Plan and approving Reaching Home funding for projects that support it.

2021-2022 was the third year Community Connection has received project funding to lead the development and implementation of a coordinated access system. This year we received \$219,000 for Coordinated Access and \$16,400 to support a training program for homeless service providers. We have one team member who is the Coordinated Access Coordinator and we contacted a consultant (Karie Warnar) for project oversight and change management.

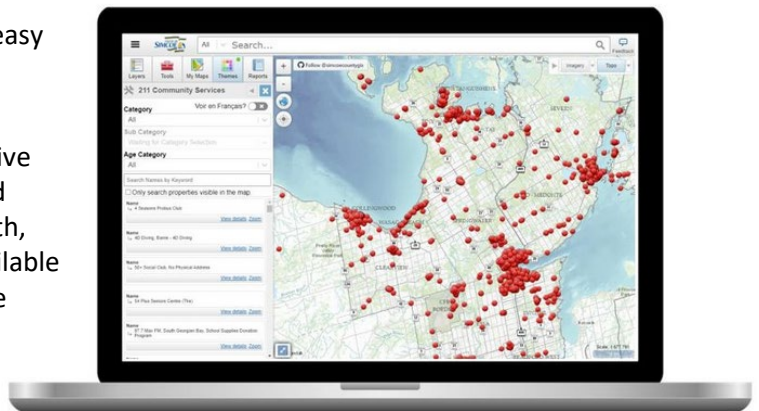
County of Simcoe. GIS Mapping Project

This year we completed a multi-year bilingual database project with the County of Simcoe for an interactive mapping application to provide an easy way to find, access and view information.

The online access offers an interactive map with information in English and French for 4,000+ community, health, social and government services available to individuals and families in Simcoe County.

The map pairs 211 community services data with a GIS system to enable specialized search criteria including a main category, subcategories and optional age categories.

The information is digitally pulled from our community services database with additions, changes, and deletions maintained by Data Curators. Agencies can also suggest updates at any time on our 211 webpages.



Service Delivery ♦ Impact Areas

Home for Life – currently paused

Home for Life was established as a volunteer-driven community program that helps connect seniors choosing to live at home with appropriate health care services and other resources. The program was launched across South Georgian Bay in 2011 as a collaborative initiative among six organizations across the continuum of care. The original collaborative was the Georgian Bay Family Health Team, Collingwood General & Marine Hospital, the North Simcoe Muskoka CCAC, South Georgian Bay Community Health Centre, Community Connection, and the County of Simcoe's Sunset Manor Long-Term Care. Over time, the program transitioned under Community Connection.



The goal of Home for Life is to help people remain in their homes as long as possible, with support from volunteers providing friendly visiting and/or help with grocery assistance, transportation, etc.

Clients are referred by the Georgian Bay Family Health Team and screened by our Community Navigators to ensure the program is appropriate for their needs. Our volunteer coordinator oversees the following activities:

- Computer Learning Cafés – hosted monthly, led by 7 volunteer Computer Pals. When running, an average of 10-20 community residents attended each month;
- Coffee Socials – volunteers organize weekly coffee and conversation socials for small groups of clients at 7 locations around the region;
- Buddies for Seniors – volunteers are recruited and trained, then matched with a client. Activities are monitored through regular check-ins. In 2019, 40 new clients were referred, 30 volunteers were matched, and there were 47 active matches. When the program was put on hold in January 2020, volunteers previously matched continued to stay connected with their clients.

At the end of 2021, our volunteer coordinator retired. We plan to implement a refreshed program model once the pandemic surges are reduced.

Volunteer Connection

Volunteer Connection is our volunteer centre. Its goal is to provide easy access to a variety of opportunities to connect people to their community through service.



The program offers an online directory of volunteer opportunities. Community organizations can post their listings for free and interested volunteers connect directly with the organization through the website. Individuals seeking volunteer opportunities can set up a private profile to receive notifications when opportunities of interest are posted.

Volunteer activity has been significantly impacted by the pandemic with a reduction of at least 50% in postings and connections made.

Service Delivery ♦ Impact Areas

Employment and Social Development Canada, Home Horizon - Reducing Seniors Isolation through Social Prescribing

In 2019 our project application was approved for \$915,000 over five years (to March 31, 2024). We were one of only 23 organizations approved to establish collaborative approaches to increase the social inclusion of seniors through a collective impact model. This is the third year of the project.



Our project team recruited a multi-sectoral group of leaders from across Simcoe County to provide guidance and oversight to the project. This Leadership Table includes a

A passionate group of leaders from black, Indigenous, 2S-LGBTQ communities and senior staff from varying service providers. This year the Leadership Table met four times to understand the project and come to an agreement on the project goals, objectives, and core values. They also participated in collective impact training and received coaching from the Tamarack Institute.

The major work streams of the project are:

- Linking isolated seniors through social prescribing to connect them to meaningful activities, including social events, and volunteer opportunities, and becoming more connected to their communities. The results this year were significantly impacted by COVID however we continued to work towards:
 - Increasing the number of medical organizations referring seniors
 - Increasing the number of providers referring isolated seniors
 - Increasing the number of seniors referred for social isolation
- To improve and increase seniors' access to volunteer opportunities and social activities and become better connected to their community to prevent and reduce social isolation. The results this year were:
 - Improve Volunteer Connection database processes collectively to ensure consistency and sustainability
 - Design of a new Simcoe Countywide volunteer database landing page
 - Outreach to organizations to grow the number contributing to the volunteer database with opportunities
- To create a centralized calendar of social activities available to older adults across Simcoe County that is easily accessible by seniors. The results this year were:
 - The calendar was created and piloted in South Georgian Bay
 - At the end of March 2022, 39 new senior activities were added to the calendar.

The project plan originally included a plan to conduct in-person focus groups. The tactic was changed to distributing a survey via email, paper copies in newspapers and at libraries, as well as by telephone. The goal was to gather the "voice of the senior" and to provide feedback on the project. In total 810 surveys were completed. Key findings from the survey will help inform and guide the project priorities.

The project has taken on an additional dimension of progressive work that will enable the social prescribing referrals from health care practitioners and the community to not only be seamless but coordinated between sectors and improve service delivery. This work has directly impacted our evolution of the Community Information Exchange model.

Our project manager participates in a Community of Practice with over 20 other organizations across Canada which also received funding to reduce senior isolation through collective impact.

Service Delivery ♦ Impact Areas

Community Information Exchange

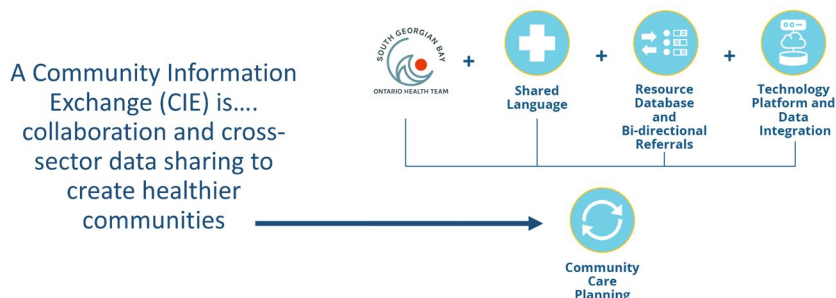
Our work in responding to the increasingly complex needs of inquirers and participating in closed loop referrals with health care clinicians and paramedics led us to develop training and improved practices to support people along their journey to resolve problems and improve their health and wellness. These practices are also addressing our:

- traditional referral processes that are not trauma-informed (clients must describe their situation repeatedly to different people); organizations receiving our referrals start from scratch (without the benefit from the details already determined by our Community Navigators);
- our anonymous service delivery relies solely on the client to self-report (clients in crisis or at risk may not be good historians); our Community Navigators can't view client history or status changes (limits a holistic understanding of their current situation and also the ability to determine interconnected needs); and technology that limits data collection (useful to support case coordination, goals or prevention work);
- our inbound call centre technology challenges our ability to effectively schedule a high volume of outbound calls needed to support people with multiple needs.

We created lots of copy/paste and work-around solutions to collect and report data which resulted in poor workflow and reduced capacity. These challenges set Community Connection on a digital transformation journey, which has evolved into a pilot project with the South Georgian Bay Ontario Health Team to implement a Community Information Exchange.

A Community Information Exchange is an ecosystem comprised of multidisciplinary network partners that use a shared language, a resource database, and an integrated technology platform to deliver enhanced community care planning. It is comprised of:

- a formal network of organizations;
- a framework for shared measures and outcomes;
- bidirectional closed-loop referrals;
- a digital platform for data integration to create a longitudinal record; and
- coordinated care planning.



Since 2019, we have leveraged partnerships and grants through our Seniors Project with Employment and Social Development Canada, COVID-19 innovation funding through United Way Centraide Canada, community investment funds through United Way Simcoe Muskoka, and digital health funding from the South Georgian Bay Ontario Health Team to develop a digital platform to enable data sharing within a Community Information Exchange Network. The project is expected to be launched in the spring of 2023.

Service Delivery ♦ Impact Areas

Disaster Preparedness

Information and referral organizations often have a role during times of disaster. Since 2009 we have supported communities impacted by 23 disasters in our Central East region. Our role can vary depending upon the community, type of disaster (short or long term), and the phase of the disaster (preparedness, response, relief, or recovery). We have a Business Continuity Plan and a Community Emergency Response Plan in place to guide our work.

Municipal Protocols

We have established emergency response protocols with 33 municipalities (6 upper tier, 27 lower tier) and are included in their emergency response plans. Our long-term goal is to have protocols with all 116 municipalities in the Central East region.

Bruce Grey Post-disaster Long-term Assistance Network

Community Connection is a member of a Bruce Grey multi-agency team that mobilizes resources during/after an event. In 2021, the network was activated in response to 15 events across both counties. The majority were house fires occurring in single and multi-tenant homes.

Simcoe Muskoka Emergency Notification and Planning Committee

The County of Simcoe, the District Municipality of Muskoka, and the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit are designated as the agencies that may activate or terminate an Emergency Plan for Vulnerable Populations. Community Connection is one of nine organizations with responsibilities to disseminate time-sensitive information to service providers supporting vulnerable populations. In 2021, we were activated 9 times. The notifications were related to warnings related to weather, opioid overdoses, and drinking water.

Grey Bruce Vaccine Line

In March 2021, Community Connection, a stakeholder in Grey and Bruce Counties' emergency response plans, was asked to help support Grey Bruce Public Health Unit with vaccination distribution by setting up and operating a vaccine information and scheduling phone line.

Our Executive Director (a Rotarian) reached out to other Rotarians and very quickly 26 Rotary volunteers and 4 community members responded to a call of action. By March 15, the volunteers were trained and equipped with software to answer calls.

During the 118 days of operation 11,978 calls were answered by volunteers who worked a total of 1,797 hours. The volunteers were available to help residents that did not have access to a computer or had difficulties using the online booking systems. The reason for calls varied from, "Can you book my appointment for me" to "When will I be eligible to get the vaccine"?

The phone line continued until July 30, 2021, when the vaccine distribution program reached its goals, and a high percentage of the population was vaccinated.

Many callers provided positive and appreciative feedback and the volunteers remained committed, engaged, and with a sense of purposefulness throughout their service.



Rotarian Tony
Sheard
(Southampton)

Service Delivery ♦ Impact Areas

2021 Outreach and Awareness Activities In Central East Region

In 2021 we made 25 presentations to organizations and groups reaching 447 attendees. The regions included Peterborough (1), Grey/Bruce (4), Muskoka (7), and Simcoe (13).

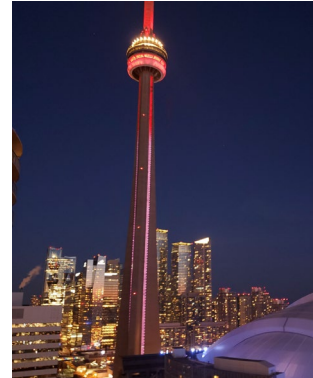
We attended only 1 outreach event in Simcoe which had 300 attendees.

We received 28 orders for promotional material, shipping over 27,000 items to Simcoe, Grey/Bruce, Dufferin, Haliburton, Huron, Kawartha Lakes, Northumberland, Perth/Huron, and Peterborough.

On 211 Day, February 11th (2/11), United Way Centraide, 211 Service providers across North America and our supporters Use the opportunity to raise awareness of the service In the community.

Buildings, monuments, and landmarks are lit up with a United Glow by illuminating their facades in 211 colours (red and white). In Ontario these included the Toronto CN Tower and 3D Toronto sign, the Mississauga Civic Centre Clock Tower and in Newmarket the Riverwalk Commons and Fred A. Lundy bridge.

Also, this year we distributed online toolkits to community partners and elected officials.



Community Connection's offices are located within the Territory of Saugeen Ojibway Nation, which includes the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation and the Saugeen First Nation, and is home to many Indigenous peoples. We recognize the Lake Simcoe-Nottawasaga Treaty 18 and honour all Indigenous peoples who have lived on these lands, and who continue to provide inspiration, contributions, and stewardship in our community, also known as Collingwood.

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