



Annual Report 2025–2026:
Grounded in Purpose, Growing in Impact



Grounded in Purpose

Message from the Executive Director & Board Chair

This year, Stride adapted with purpose in a rapidly shifting health and social service landscape. Guided by our mission, we strengthened partnerships, refined systems, and focused on creating meaningful pathways to employment for individuals living with mental illness and addiction.

We deepened our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion by expanding relationships to reach people where they are. This included Stride’s presence at new low-barrier access points: the Open Window Hub at Hazel McCallion Central Library in Mississauga, Brampton’s HART Hub, and the Oak Park Neighbourhood Centre in Oakville.

Furthermore, we advanced our Inclusive Employment Partnership Program, building the foundation to launch non-traditional career pathways for job seekers facing individual and systemic employment barriers. This progress underscores Stride’s dedication to innovation and our commitment to addressing critical system gaps for those furthest removed from the labor market.

We extend our deep and sincere appreciation to everyone who played a part in driving Stride’s mission forward this past year. Thank you to our dedicated Board of Directors for your guidance and sound stewardship, and to our incredible staff team for your steady support and resilience through another year of change. To our funders, community collaborators, and business partners: thank you for your investment and alliance. Stride’s vital work thrives on strong partnerships rooted in trust, shared values, and a collective endeavour to build opportunity, inclusion, and hope across Halton and Peel Regions.

In partnership,

Julie Henshaw

Executive Director

Stride

Fatima Ul-Haq

Board Chair

Stride



Our Vision

Stride envisions a world in which barriers to employment have been eliminated for people living with mental health and/or addiction challenges.



Our Mission

Stride is committed to providing person centered support to empower people living with mental health and/or addiction challenges to gain and maintain meaningful employment.



Our Values

Stride recognizes that employment and self-determination contribute significantly to a person’s sense of dignity, independence and quality of life.

Stride believes that people living with mental health and/or addiction challenges make significant contributions to society.

Stride respects the individual needs and strengths of each person. We work collaboratively with partners and individuals we serve to assist them in identifying and achieving their employment goals.

Centering Equity

Grounded in Stride’s Land Acknowledgement and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement, this commitment reflects our ongoing responsibility to build inclusive services, respectful relationships, and meaningful pathways to employment.



Land Acknowledgement

Stride acknowledges that our offices are located on the Treaty Lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Traditional Territory of the Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat and Anishinabek. We recognize the enduring presence of Indigenous peoples and the systemic barriers, past and present, that continue to affect Indigenous communities. As part of our commitment to Reconciliation, Stride aims to centre Indigenous voices, develop Indigenous partnerships, and strengthen our capacity to meaningfully support the communities we serve through continued education, participation, learning and unlearning.



Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Stride is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion in all that we do. We strive to create a workplace culture that embraces the uniqueness of individuals and reflects the communities we serve, including those with lived experience. We aim to provide programs and services that are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to diverse client needs, so every person can receive support with dignity and respect. We value the learning and unlearning required to create an inclusive culture, and we are committed to open dialogue, brave conversations, and ongoing growth.

Driven by People

Leadership Team

Julie Henshaw — Executive Director
 Bonnie Trimble — Manager, Specialized Employment Services
 Terri Skov — Manager, Specialized Employment Services
 Matthew Wadlin — Manager, Specialized Employment Services
 Christine Villanueva — Financial Services Specialist
 Stephanie McCann — Quality & Operations Analyst
 Julie Lange — Human Resource & Finance Coordinator

Board of Directors

Fatima Ul-Haq — Chair
 Amanda Burkholder — Vice Chair
 Dania Ciampini — Treasurer
 Zoe Vulic — Secretary

Zoe Mitchell — Director
 Joydip Banerjee — Director
 Allyson McElwain — Director
 Seth Holland — Director
 Urooj Faisal — Director
 Colin Sell — Director

Enduring Legacy & A New Era



Anita Lloyd



Julie Henshaw

Leadership transitions represent a bridge between an organization's rich history and its next chapter. This year, Stride celebrated the retirement of Executive Director, Anita Lloyd, after 35 years of visionary service. We are profoundly grateful for her steadfast commitment and the lasting foundation she built. In December, we warmly welcomed Julie Henshaw as our new Executive Director. Having served as a dedicated manager at Stride for seven years, Julie brings deep organizational wisdom, vibrant energy, and a true heart for our community to the role. Together, we honour our strong foundation and step forward into a future filled with possibility.

Employment Connections Program

Ashley Soares
 Danielle DeFreitas
 Bridget Williams
 Pamela Brown
 Ramesh Pandey
 Taylor Edan
 Crystal Dainard

Youth Employment Program

Anna Singh
 Cassandra Dworaczek
 Giselle Figueroa
 Alyssa Smith
 Danielle Larocque
 Shante McKenzie

Pre-Employment Program

Giselle Glover
 Marian Lara
 Grace Bruch
 Kristen Whattam

Employer Engagement & Inclusive Employment Partnership Program

Ayesha Siddiqi
 Rajni Shridhar

Employment Peer Mentor Program

Nina Mamula
 Genevieve Blazik
 Justin Chin
 Karen Jacela

Intake Program

Vayola Patel
 Tanya Sanabria

Re-Engagement & Retention Program

Monique Clarke



Delivering Impact

From Referral to Retention

Having begun his recovery journey with a partnering community mental health organization, Daniel was referred to Stride's Youth Employment Program when he felt ready to take on his next goal: employment. With support to build routine, develop work readiness skills, and complete training, Daniel began volunteering to gain practical experience. It wasn't long before Daniel obtained his first job and later transitioned to a role with a new company that offered a stronger overall compensation package. With individualized on-the-job support and collaboration with his manager, Daniel is thriving and has remained successfully employed six months later.

Communicating Her Value

Despite extensive credentials and international experience as a medical doctor, Dr. Amara was struggling to find employment in Canada when she connected with Stride. Through resume support from her Pre-Employment Specialist, she has learned how to better communicate her achievements, experience, and transferable value to employers. While her job search continues, Dr. Amara feels encouraged, motivated, and better equipped to present her strengths in the Canadian labour market as a result of the support she is receiving at Stride.

Upskilling for Success

Taylor had been applying for animal care roles without success. With guidance from their Employment Specialist, they began exploring education as a pathway toward their employment goal. Through Stride, Taylor received support to apply for college and accessed financial assistance to cover their application fees. Taylor was accepted into their chosen program and learned about accommodations that could support their learning. Now working through their studies, Taylor is moving closer to a meaningful career in the animal care industry with increased confidence and hope.

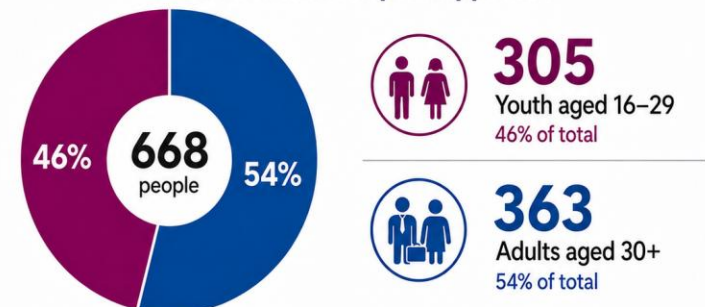
Rebuilding a Future

Samir came to Stride as a refugee from a war-affected country while also navigating homelessness, justice system involvement, and recovery from substance use disorder. Despite these challenges, Samir stayed engaged with Stride and continued working toward his employment goal by volunteering in the community. Within three months of connecting with his Employment Specialist, Samir secured a skilled labour position earning more than he expected; one year later, he remains gainfully employed. Best of all, Samir is now stably housed — a critical foundation for his health, wellness, and continued recovery.

Individualized Support to Overcome Employment Barriers



Breakdown of People Supported



Support. Planning. Goals. Engagement.

306 people

strengthened their employment readiness or retention through **peer-supported wellness planning.**

EMPLOYMENT READINESS | RETENTION



Connection. Recovery. Resilience. Success.

With Stride's support,

152 people

secured employment, increasing stability, finding purpose, and experiencing belonging.



Stability. Purpose. Belonging. Employment.

437 participants

built practical and interpersonal skills through employment **readiness** workshops.



74 workshops

- Learn new skills
- Build confidence
- Advance toward goals

561 participants

found connection and supportive **community** through peer-led workshops.



80 workshops

- Connect with others
- Support one another
- Belong in community

Skills. Readiness. Community. Confidence.

Opening Doors Through Connection

Nadine was discouraged in her job search and hesitant to reconnect with former colleagues while unemployed. With guidance from her Employment Specialist, she began to see networking as a way to access opportunities and encouragement, rather than something to avoid. Reaching out to past contacts led to an interview for a role she was excited about and helped rebuild her confidence as she continued moving forward.

Regaining Stability After Job Loss

Marcus connected with Stride when he learned that layoffs were coming at his workplace. Understandably, the uncertainty brought significant anxiety, and Stride was there to help him work through it. After losing his job, Marcus stayed focused on next steps and secured a new role with an employer where he feels safe, supported, and hopeful about his future.

Gaining Confidence

Jordan joined the Power of Possible workshop series unsure whether the program was the right fit for him. As the sessions continued, he built confidence, developed connections with other participants, and strengthened his ability to speak about his skills and experience. By the end of the program, Jordan felt more prepared to re-enter the workforce and proud of himself for completing all ten sessions.

Strengthened by Partnerships

Partnership Moments That Shaped Our Year

The partnerships featured in this section represent meaningful moments of collaboration from the past year. They are not an exhaustive list of Stride's partners, but they offer a glimpse into the relationships, opportunities, and shared efforts that strengthened our work in 2025–2026.



Peel Career Assessment Services

Touring the immersive Ability Works Program, which offers various work-simulation experiences, run by our friends at Peel Career Assessment Services.



HART Hub Brampton

Meet and greet with our partners at HART Hub Brampton. Service navigation, nursing, therapy, and employment support – all under one roof.



Excellence through Quality Improvement Project

Stride's EQIP team with QI Coaches Seema Dave and Lori Derry, as well as AMHO CEO, Jennifer Holmes Weier, and CMHA Ontario CEO, Camille Quenneville.



Oakville Chamber of Commerce

Inclusive Employment Partnership Coordinator, Rajni Shridhar, delivers a 'Pitch from the Podium' at the Chamber's 'Good Morning Oakville' meet-up.



Recovery West Vocational Expo

Stride presents at CMHA Peel -Recovery West's Vocational Expo. Two of Stride's job seekers share their experiences.



Piper Foods

David Armitage of Piper Foods shares information about careers with McDonald's. Stride's Rajni Shidhar, and Terri Skov, celebrate McHappy-Day!



Mental Health + Addictions Alliance

Alliance members honour Glen Ricketts at his retirement following 38 years of service with ADAPT.



Mental Health Awareness Week

MPP Zee Hamid, pictured with Executive Director, Anita Lloyd, and Manager, Terri Skov, visits Stride during Mental Health Awareness Week.



Old Navy

Celebrating the opening of Old Navy at Burlington Centre and their inclusive employment efforts through This Way ONward.



University of Guelph-Humber

Celebrating Stride's partnership with UofGH whereby placement students are offered experiential learning while supporting Stride's Intake Program.



Canada Summer Jobs

MP Kristina Tesser Derksen visits Stride to celebrate the Canada Summer Jobs Program.



Support House Community Health Centre

MH+A Alliance members celebrate with Support House as they open Halton's first Community Health Centre.

Additional Partnership Highlights

Open Window Hub – Mississauga Library — Weekly on-site service delivery

Oak Park Neighbourhood Centre — On-site service delivery

Adult Learning Centre Halton — Co-located at Stride's Oakville office

Community Development Halton — Host of the Halton ED Network and Halton Impact Coalition

Celebrating Excellence



Fedcap Award of Excellence

Stride was honoured to receive Fedcap’s Award of Excellence as the winner of the In-Work Support Exchange Competition. Employment Specialist, Ashley Soares (centre), was also recognized as a Frontline Staff Member winner of the competition.



Power of Possible Awards Celebration

Pre-Employment Specialist and Power of Possible Facilitator, Kristen Whattam, received the Lifelong Learning Award at Fedcap’s Power of Possible Awards Celebration.



Outstanding Job Start Performance

Stride’s Peel Team was recognized by WCG for Outstanding Job Start Performance in Q1. Stride secured a top-five ranking in the network, standing out as the only specialist provider to achieve this milestone while navigating the unique needs of the populations we serve.



Celebrating Service Milestones

Employment Peer Mentors Karen Jacela (left), and Genevieve Blazik (right), were recognized for their service milestones at Stride: Karen for 5 years, and Genevieve for 10 years.



Fedcap Awards Gala

Stride celebrated a year of recognition, innovation, and impact alongside sector partners and colleagues at the Fedcap awards gala.



Fedcap BEST Awards

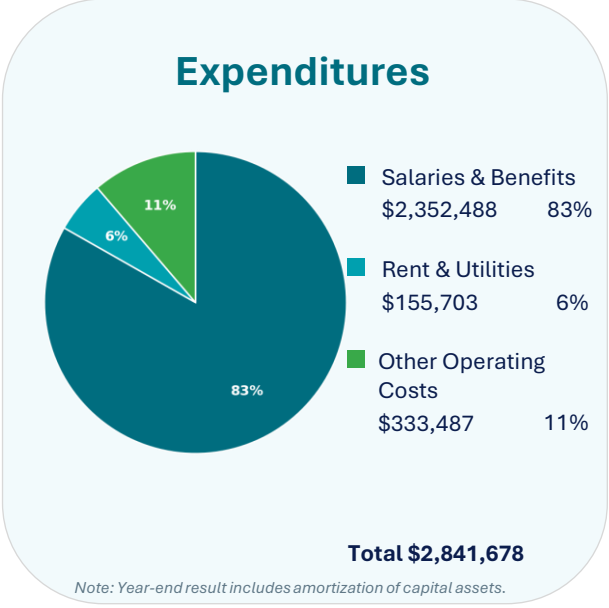
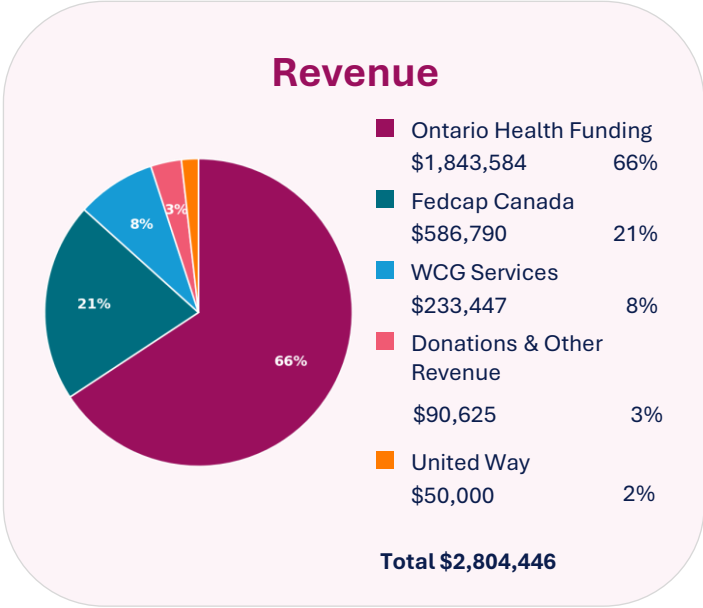
Stride was recognized as the winner for Innovation in Employment Services at Fedcap’s *Brilliance in Employment Service Transformation* (BEST) Awards Gala.

Stewarding Resources

ACCOUNTABILITY

Summary of Revenue & Expenditures - Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Total Revenue \$2,804,446	Total Expenditures \$2,841,678	Year-end Result (\$37,232)
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With Gratitude to Our Funders

CONNECTION

Staying Connected



Visit our website
stride.on.ca

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STRIDE4WORK



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strideyoucanwork



STRIDE Employment Services