



PILLAR
nonprofit network

2023

**CONNECTING
FOR
COMMUNITY
IMPACT**



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Land Acknowledgement

Pillar Nonprofit Network would like to acknowledge the history of the traditional territory and honour the longstanding relationships of the three local First Nations of this land and place in Southwestern Ontario. The Attawandaran once settled this region alongside the Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee, and this land served as their traditional hunting grounds. The three longstanding Indigenous groups of this geographical region are: The Anishinaabeg, The Haudenosaunee and the Lunaapeewak.

We would also like to recognize the three First Nations communities neighbouring the City of London: Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames and Munsee-Delaware Nation.

Ontario is covered by 46 treaties and other agreements, such as land purchases by the Crown signed between 1781 and 1930. Treaties are the legally binding agreements that set out the rights, responsibilities and relationships of First Nations and the federal and provincial governments. We acknowledge the inherent rights of the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island while understanding that we are all treaty people. We honour and commit to the Two Row Wampum Treaty and Dish With One Spoon Agreement; holding their teachings close as we commit to our responsibilities as treaty people. Please use this [interactive map](#) to learn about the traditional territory on which you live and work.

Pillar Nonprofit Network recognizes the inequities connected to colonization and commits to working towards [creating a just, inclusive and vibrant community for all](#). It is our duty to reconcile, continuously learn, and intentionally work to cultivate and nurture safe and ethical spaces for this to happen.

We invite you to reflect upon this land acknowledgement, what it means to your personal story, and what the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action](#) mean to you.

In the spirit of equality and inclusion, if we can improve on this statement, please contact us.

Message from our Board Chair and CEO

As we reflect on the past year and look forward to the next year, we are filled with gratitude for the collective journey we've embarked upon—a journey marked by resilience, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to our community. Together, we've navigated the complexities of change, celebrating successes and embracing challenges as opportunities for growth and learning. Our endeavours, from launching the Inclusive Community Events program to the expansion of our policy and advocacy efforts, have fortified our network, allowing us to strengthen a dynamic impact sector.

Our provisional strategic plan for 2024-2025, shaped by your feedback and collaborative efforts, aims to address the immediate needs of our sector while laying the groundwork for long-term sustainability. This plan reflects our dedication to affordable training, advocacy, and the vital task of data and knowledge sharing—each element a cornerstone of our mission to empower the community we serve. As we move forward, your engagement remains crucial. We invite you to join us in this journey, to share your insights, and to participate actively in the realization of our shared goals.

We warmly invite you to delve into the impact stories we've prepared in this report, each narrative a testament to the strength and resilience of our network. These stories not only highlight the remarkable achievements of the past year but also illuminate the path forward, showcasing the profound difference we can make together.

Thank you to all of our donors, sponsors, partners, volunteers, and staff. The work that we do is work that we do together. Thank you for being an integral part of our community and network.

In community,



Kapil Lakhotia
Board Chair

Maureen Cassidy
CEO



Empowering Advocacy: Pillar Nonprofit Network's Policy Impact



In 2023, Pillar Nonprofit Network rebooted its program in building the ‘policy muscle’ of local purpose-driven organizations. Following on the success of 2019’s ‘Policy Conversations,’ we hosted a series of #PolicyTalks, using the development of the City’s Multi-Year Budget as a container for larger questions of how to define shared goals, build our collective voice, and influence decision-makers to make positive change in our community. The series had 120 unique participants and over 160 total registrations, and a wide array of good outcomes, not least of which is a good idea of how to do better in future.

Though the eventual budget wasn’t what we’d worked for, we saw successes also. One of these is the increase in the City’s investment in the London Arts Council and the significant profile and preparedness of arts organizations in the budget deliberations.

Forest City Gallery is an artist-run centre that, in their own words, “strives to be an alternative, advocacy-focused exhibition and artistic venue.” No wonder, then, that Gallery Director Ruth Skinner and Board Chair Hailey Edge were among those participating in #PolicyTalk events throughout 2023, and that FCG was a ready partner in the work that needed doing.

Among the wins from #PolicyTalk was a growing ability to identify the knowledge and tools needed to do effective advocacy, including a way to track alignment with government priorities. In response, Pillar developed a tool to map strategic alignment between an organization and any potential collaborator. We demonstrated the use of the tool on a number of organizations, including FCG. “We found this activity, and Pillar’s fresh perspective, deeply informative,” Ruth Skinner wrote to us, “both for helping us to better articulate our activities to potential granting bodies but also to inform the upcoming renewal of our Strategic Plan in 2024. The fact that Pillar offered this service to a member organization free of charge and in very short order was a bonus.”

IMPACT STORY
(Contd..)

We were pleased to see FCG among those that took an active role in the budget deliberations, appearing at a Public Participation Meeting, and we look forward to their voice in future advocacy work. Seeing our impact on our members and the community encourages us to offer #PolicyTalk 2024, so keep an eye out for that.



Access to Pillar's #PolicyTalk events have been a huge asset to the board and staff at Forest City Gallery. Each installment has informed meaningful conversation at meetings and challenged the way Forest City Gallery engages with its own policy writing. The session on advocacy prompted a conversation amongst our board and staff of what type of advocacy Forest City Gallery is responsible for: Who do we hold ourselves accountable to? When we represent an artist, how does this advocacy shift? What are we doing to ensure the people we represent are advocated for effectively? These are all crucial questions to ensure we are representing our community effectively and transparently, and we are so grateful to have Pillar's #PolicyTalk events to help stimulate these types of conversations.

-Hailey Edge, Board Chair, Forest City Gallery



NUMBER OF POLICY TALK PARTICIPANTS



130

SDG Cities

SDG Cities is a collaborative, community-driven project supporting the localization of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Guelph and London.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), put forward by the United Nations as a part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, represent a shared vision for a just, sustainable, and prosperous future. SDG Cities is being developed and delivered locally by Pillar Nonprofit Network in London. The SDGs have been at the heart of much of the work of Pillar, and our members, since the beginnings.



1467

people were engaged



38

events hosted, presented or participated in



91

People directly worked with in London alone



29

New assets created including reports, graphics and tools



Find The Stories Here:

Transforming Champions: A Journey of Youth Leadership

The pilot program with Champions of Change (COC) was a transformative journey, both for the organization and its leadership. As a consultant, Pillar Nonprofit Network stepped in during a crucial phase when Catalina, the President/CEO, was assuming her role. The organization faced challenges, and our involvement began with mentoring Catalina, who was initially uncertain about the immense responsibility.

Throughout our sessions, we focused on nurturing Catalina's leadership skills, emphasizing practical applications within COC and beyond. This personal growth radiated through the organization, leading to a more effective and connected team. Under Pillar's guidance, COC developed strategies for deeper engagement with the youth community, employing mutual mentorship and coaching tactics that resonated throughout their team. The outcome was a revitalized organization with a clear direction and a stronger, more cohesive team.

Catalina's testimonial reflects this journey. It could be enhanced to more vividly convey the transformative impact:



"Hello, I'm Catalina, President/CEO of Champions of Change. Faced with daunting responsibilities, I was guided by Aditi, an impact consultant at Pillar Nonprofit Network, through mentoring sessions. Her expertise not only bolstered my leadership abilities but also permeated throughout our team, invigorating our approach to youth engagement. Aditi's mentorship transcended professional boundaries, impacting us on a personal level and fostering a profound sense of community and purpose within COC. We are deeply grateful for the remarkable change she ignited within us."



Colours of the Heart: City Art Centre

In the heart of the city, exists a sanctuary known as the City Arts Centre at Innovation Works. Here, people who experience disconnection and, at times, loneliness, can find solace and acceptance. For people who believe in the transformative power of art, it is not merely about strokes and colours; it's a lifeline, a way to belong.

As individuals immerse themselves in the act of painting, the outside world fades away, leaving only the warmth of each stroke on the canvas. Indeed, the City Arts Centre is a tapestry woven from the threads of diverse experiences and shared struggles. It's a place where the artist transcends the limitations of their diagnosis.

City Art Centre provides a safe place, free art supplies, peer support, and encouragement for those 18 years and older who self-identify as struggling with mental health challenges.

Through art, individuals reclaim their narratives, shaping their identities beyond the confines of their struggles. "I don't want to be known as a guy with PTSD," one member asserts. "I would just like to be known more as someone who does art."

In this haven of creativity, resources are freely available, allowing artists to explore without fear of financial constraints. But beyond the tangible materials lies something more precious: a sense of community, of camaraderie forged through shared passions and shared humanity.

In the colours splashed across the canvas, lies the promise of hope, of healing, and of the boundless potential of the human heart. And amidst the chaos of the world, the City Arts Centre stands as a beacon of light. We are so honoured to be able to house City Art Centre at Innovation Works. They are the heartbeat of our co-working space and help fulfill our commitment to inclusive placemaking.

For more information check out <http://www.cityartcentreondonontario.ca/>



Watch the Full
Story Here



VERGE Capital

VERGE Capital supports local economies and communities across Southwestern Ontario by investing in social enterprises that put people and planet first. In 2013, a number of individuals and organizations from the London, Ontario region came together to imagine a different kind of economy. VERGE Capital is the result of their vision, dedication, and collaborative spirit. VERGE Capital is now a social finance program of Pillar Nonprofit Network in collaboration with Libro Credit Union, London Community Foundation, Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada, and SVX.



\$ 750 K
In 2023

Verge distributed \$750K in loans to social enterprises in Southwestern Ontario

Highlights: In 2023 VERGE launched its third Fund (a partnership between Pillar Nonprofit Network and SVX).

The Breakthrough Fund II is the third place-based impact investment fund introduced by Verge to demonstrate the organization's unwavering dedication to catalyzing positive change in Southwestern Ontario. The focus of the Fund is to help nurture local social entrepreneurs, create job opportunities, and foster local community development to have a lasting social, environmental, and economic impact.

- VERGE supported Windmill Microlending, a national charity providing affordable loans to skilled newcomers, to help restart their careers in Canada and bridge the gap of income inequality & labour shortage in the country.
- VERGE partnered with London's community members to support the London District Renewable Energy-Co-op, through GoParity Canada, an impact investing platform. London District Renewable Energy Co-op is a cooperative that invests in renewable energy projects.

Libro Social Enterprise Incubator

Sponsored by Libro Credit Union, our Social Enterprise Incubator allows learning from Pillar Nonprofit Network Social Enterprise staff and other social entrepreneurs to develop a sustainable social enterprise model. Read an excerpt from the experience of Amarachi Kejeh from A.S.K - one of our participants from the 2023 cohort.



Over the course of four months, I participated in ten group sessions, five 1-1 coaching calls, connected with a legal subject matter expert, alongside enjoying multiple perks from the Pillar Nonprofit Network.

Although I knew this program held promise, I probably did not realize how much I needed it at the time I enrolled in it

Flash back to October 2023 when I was laying the groundwork for my DIY Strategic Plan program. Three months later, I would end up welcoming my first cohort, with plans set for the next intake in May 2024.

1. The more you say it, the better it becomes:

Keep sharing your vision, polishing your pitch, and improving your ideas. The more you do it, the more valuable feedback you will gather, and the clearer and more confident you'll become.

2. Celebrate the small victories:

It is easy to get caught up in the pursuit of perfection and overlook the progress we have made. Our group sessions and bi-weekly coaching provided a space to celebrate small victories. Whether it was a promising conversation with a potential client or conquering personal challenges, these moments of progress served as reminders of our growth and kept us motivated to keep pushing forward.

3. Self-care is non-negotiable:

Being an entrepreneur requires dedication, but neglecting self-care can lead to burnout. My coaching sessions served as a continuous reminder to prioritize my well-being, ensuring I had the physical and emotional energy needed for success.

4. Learning never ends:

The journey of knowledge is never-ending. There is always more to learn and apply. Whether absorbing new concepts or reinforcing existing ones, the program offered a chance for insightful reflection and continuous growth.

5. You get out what you put in:

Just like in any venture, the more effort and energy you invest in the learning experience, the greater the insights and rewards you will gather. I am glad I had the space and energy to dive into the incubator experience.



Impact Coaching & Consulting

Impact Coaching & Consulting by Pillar Nonprofit Network provides consulting services designed to amplify the social impact of nonprofit organizations, social enterprises and social purpose businesses.



Impact Coaching & Consulting leverages the experience and knowledge of Pillar staff, associates and our network of 600+ social innovators to strategically scale your impact.

Through a variety of approaches, tools and resources, we strengthen the capacity of individuals and organizations to develop innovative solutions to complex problems, advance their social purpose and generate greater impact.

1526
PARTICIPANTS

Across 26 Organizations

26
INITIATIVES

In 2023

14
REGIONS

Greater Toronto Area (GTA), London, South Western Ontario, Huron, Perth, Waterloo, Saskatchewan, Hamilton, Hilton, Brant, Wellington, Durham, Hills of Headwaters and York

6
FOCUS AREAS

Social Enterprise Development, DEI Training, Strategic Planning, Governance Best Practices, Policy Review and SDGs

Unlocking Opportunities: The Benefits of Pillar Nonprofit Network Membership

Becoming a member of Pillar Nonprofit Network isn't just about joining a community; it's about tapping into a dynamic ecosystem designed to elevate the impact and sustainability of social impact organizations. Here are several compelling reasons why membership in Pillar Nonprofit Network is important:

Collaborative Networking

Membership opens doors to a diverse network of nonprofits, businesses, government entities, and community leaders. This network isn't just about making connections; it's a platform for forging partnerships, sharing resources, and fostering innovative collaborations that amplify the collective impact of members' work.

Capacity Building Resources

Through workshops, training sessions, and consulting services, Pillar Nonprofit Network equips members with the tools and knowledge needed to enhance organizational capacity. From governance and leadership development to fundraising strategies and operational efficiency, members have access to a wealth of resources aimed at strengthening their organizations.

Collective Advocacy

As a member, your organization gains a stronger voice in advocating for systemic change and addressing community challenges. By joining forces with other members, you can amplify your advocacy efforts, influence policy decisions, and drive positive outcomes that benefit the entire nonprofit sector.

Access to Funding and Resources

Membership in Pillar Nonprofit Network opens doors to funding opportunities, partnerships with philanthropic organizations, and access to grants and resources that can support your organization's growth and sustainability.

In essence, being part of Pillar Nonprofit Network offers far more than just affiliation; it's a strategic investment in your organization's success, providing access to a supportive community, valuable resources, and opportunities for collaboration and impact that can propel your mission forward.

Member Testimonial: Forest City Gallery



"We're thrilled to be back in the Pillar Nonprofit Network after a brief pause, and a big part of that was a Pillar member reaching out to inquire how your organization might support our small nonprofit, Forest City Gallery. Since that conversation, our staff and Board have benefited greatly from Pillar's ED/CEO Support network, the awesome resource that is its regular emails, and being in immediate contact with other nonprofit leaders in the city.

Most immediately, Pillar offered to map FCG's vision and Strategic Plan to assess where our goals align with both the City of London's strategic priorities and Sustainable Development Goals. We found this activity, and Pillar's fresh perspective, deeply informative—both for helping us to better articulate our activities to potential granting bodies, but also to inform the upcoming renewal of our Strategic Plan in 2024. The fact that Pillar offered this service to a member organization free of charge and in very short order was a bonus."

Ruth Skinner

Forest CityGallery

Member Testimonial: Forest City Film Festival



"I want to express sincere gratitude to Pillar Nonprofit Network for its invaluable role in fostering the growth of our arts organization within this community. Nine years ago, when the Forest City Film Festival was just a concept, Pillar Nonprofit Network provided essential guidance for us and offered us affordable shared office space for occasional work and brainstorming our future. The board management training proved instrumental in setting up our organization, and the steadfast moral support from Pillar's leadership kept me moving forward.

In our inaugural year, our budget was a mere \$35,000. Fast forward to our 8th year, and we've expanded to over \$525,000—15 times our initial budget, despite facing three years of challenges due to COVID. Looking ahead, our projections promise more growth and a substantial impact on the city and region over the next five years and beyond.

Pillar serves as the foundation for organizations like ours to create, grow, and make a lasting impact in London."

Dorothy Downs

Executive Director of Forest City Film Festival





Ways to Support and Belong in Our Network

- **BECOME A MEMBER:** Join our network of individuals, organizations and enterprises to bolster your resources, amplify your voice, and collaborate with other network leaders on the causes and communities you care about. Pillar Nonprofit Network members are committed to doing the work together to make positive change through shared learning and executing bold ideas to build a more equitable, vibrant and resilient community. For more information, visit: pillarnonprofit.ca/membership
- **JOIN THROUGH INNOVATION WORKS:** More than bricks and mortar, more than offices and desks, Innovation Works is a place to connect, where we create opportunities for people to convene and collaborate for community impact. When you join our flexible leases, you automatically become a Pillar member and enjoy the benefits of joining our network. For more information, visit: innovationworkslondon.ca/work-here
- **MAKE A DONATION:** Your donation is an invaluable investment in community growth. By supporting us, you're driving positive change and joining a vibrant network of like-minded individuals. Your contribution enables us to provide essential resources, training, and support to nonprofits, amplifying their impact and strengthening our community. Donate today at pillarnonprofit.ca/donate-now

PILLAR
MEMBERS **263**

&

INNOVATION
WORKS



TOTAL NUMBER
OF CO-TENANTS **132**

A Journey of Connection and Community



For as long as I've worked in the charitable sector (over 20 years!), Pillar Nonprofit Network has been an important and integral part of my life. I remember going into Pillar when it was in the Central Library and accessing the early Foundations Directory through their Imagine Canada subscription that was offered free to in-house users. When I was teaching a fundraising course at Western, Pillar staff came into our class to educate the students about regional non-profit opportunities. In turn, I placed students in regional charities (all Pillar members) for them to get "real-life" experience while working on their course assignments.

When I started up my own charitable research consulting business and worked primarily from home, Pillar was a great network to stay connected to people, which was then taken to the nth degree when Innovation Works opened! I was one of the first flex tenants to sign on and have enjoyed the space, using it for meetings, training, and networking. I've even used their partner spaces such as CSI in Toronto!

Since COVID, I realized I wasn't using the flex space as much, so I have switched to being a small business member and supporter. Honestly, when I talk to other communities about Pillar and the great work they do, I realize that we are indeed lucky to have such a resource and supportive network in our region. Not everyone has this you know! I am happy and very grateful to continue supporting this very important part of London and region!"

Tracey Church, MLIS

Principal, Researcher & Consultant of
Tracey Church & Associates



Bridging Community: A Donor Impact Showcase

Hosting the Bridging Community: A Donor Impact Showcase event at Innovation Works on October 26, 2023, marked a significant moment last year. It served as a cornerstone in recognizing and celebrating our supporters' invaluable contributions. The event provided a unique opportunity to express profound gratitude for their unwavering commitment to our mission and vision, while also highlighting the collective impact achieved together.



Our CEO, Maureen Cassidy, warmly welcomed everyone and expressed appreciation for our supporters, emphasizing Pillar Nonprofit Network's vital role in supporting nonprofits. Pam Tobin Vice-Chair of the Board, shared impactful updates on strategic planning for our community's future.

Mystery Furtado, Founder of Type Diabeat-It and Pillar Member, shared her organization's journey, showcasing Pillar's transformative support. The event fostered networking and collaboration, facilitated by sponsors SDG Cities and the London Economic Development Corporation.

Concluding the evening, we appealed to our community to continue supporting us in addressing upcoming challenges, highlighting three key ways they could contribute: financial support, connections to new opportunities, and spreading awareness of Pillar's work and co-working space. We are grateful to those who join us on this journey, shaping a stronger, more vibrant community.



Capacity Building & Support: Summer 2023

Pillar Nonprofit Network extends profound gratitude to the London Community Foundation for their grant of \$200,000 and the Lawson Foundation's \$240,000 grant over 3 years to significantly bolster our capacity-building initiatives within the nonprofit sector. Their investments have enabled amplified impact through public policy development, advocacy, and storytelling as well as facilitated outreach expansion through board and membership restructuring, and enhanced support services for nonprofit professionals. Thank you!



Financial Summary

In this financial summary, we present an overview of our financial performance over the past fiscal year. As we reflect on the challenges and opportunities of the past year, this report also sets the foundation for future strategic directions and initiatives. We invite our members, donors, investors, and partners to review these details to better understand our organization's financial trajectory and our commitment to sustainable growth and value creation. You can access the [2023 Audited Financial Statements](#) here.

PILLAR NONPROFIT NETWORK
SUMMARY CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
DECEMBER 31, 2023

PILLAR DONORS

- 10C Shared Space
- Richie Bloomfield
- Steve Bolton
- Carl Cadogan
- Camp STEAM Canada
- Canada Life
- Maureen Cassidy
- City of London
- Lynn Davis
- Jen Denys
- Vince Di Liello
- Libro Credit Union
- Lissa Foster
- Christina Fox
- Kate Graham
- Janet Grantham
- Mary J. Greenwood
- Cecile Klerks
- The Lawson Foundation
- London Community Foundation
- The Municipality of North Perth
- Sharron O'Brien
- Dirka Prout
- Melanie Riley
- Joseph Santarelli
- Paul Seale
- The Sifton Family Foundation
- The Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada
- Cathy Smith
- STEM Camp
- Tracey Church & Associates
- Shelby Weaver
- Westminster College Foundation
- Lisa Widdifield

PILLAR COMMUNITY IMPACT PROGRAM SPONSORS

- Rogers TV
- Canada Life
- Bell Canada
- Libro Credit Union
- Tricar Developments Inc.
- Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada
- Tepperman's London
- BlueStone Properties
- rTraction
- Take5 Digital

PILLAR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT SPONSORS

- Western Continuing Studies
- Fanshawe Corporate Training Solutions
- Fanshawe Employment and Student Entrepreneurial Services

VERGE Capital Funders

- Cambia Development Foundation
- Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada
- Hamilton Community Foundation
- Ontario Trillium Foundation



VERGE Volunteer Review Panel

- Garrett Vanderwyst
- Randy Sheffield
- Jeff Campbell
- Peter Shi
- Mano Majumdar
- Dr. Ada Barlatt, PhD
- Melissa Jean
- Sheila Simpson
- Melissa Aveiro
- Chris Healy
- Laura Wimperis
- Lori Atkinson
- Lynn Davis
- Sigried Janzen
- Ben Cecil
- Joyanne M Howell
- Heather Cabral
- Dale Holland
- Jamie Kruspel
- Jennifer Slay
- Frazier Fathers
- Sebastien de la Lande
- John Marshall
- Wen Teoh
- Lauren Segedin
- Brandon Stanley
- Cassie Price
- Mark Stacey
- Tom Tao
- Kitty Stafford

2023 PILLAR NONPROFIT NETWORK BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Vice Chair



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Wendy Arnott,
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David Hill,
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Janet Grantham,
Director



Joseph
Santarelli,
Director



Pillar Nonprofit Network is dedicated to enhancing the operational capabilities of the impact sector. We promote equity through shared knowledge and community collaboration. We act as a catalyst and advocate for transformational change.

Mission

We are a force for positive change in our community. We strengthen individuals and organizations through inclusive advocacy, comprehensive capacity building, and by cultivating collaboration.

Vision

A trusted leader that empowers, connects, and inspires community - forging a just and vibrant tomorrow for all.





KEEP IN TOUCH



Phone
519-433-7876



Email
info@pillarnonprofit.ca



Website
www.pillarnonprofit.ca



Office Address
201 King St., London, ON
N6A 1C9



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