



Annual Report 2023/2024

Land Acknowledgement

LGBT YouthLine works in the place often referred to as Ontario, which continues to be colonized land, and is home to many Indigenous communities. Our head office, in Tkaronto (Toronto), is the territory of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, the meeting place of Tkaronto remains home to many Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island. YouthLine works in this community, in this context, on this territory.

Our Mission

LGBT YouthLine is an anti-racist, youth-led organization that connects 2SLGBTQ+ youth (29 and under) across Ontario to resources and community through peer support, training, advocacy, and referrals.

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Letter from Board Co-Chairs

Writing this letter caps off LGBT YouthLine’s 29th year of operations, as we enter our third decade of operations in 2024. It has been a year of change and excitement at LGBT YouthLine as we welcomed new permanent leadership, completed critical internal projects, and planned our 30th anniversary!

Our Peer Support HelpLine continued to be the core of all our work, providing much needed support to 2SLGBTQ+ youth across the province and supporting over 2600 youth across Ontario this year. We also had an exciting launch party in Mississauga for our youth anthology, ‘Coming Home’, featuring contributions from youth in the Peel area as we concluded three years of our YouthOrganize program!

Pride 2023 saw YouthLine emphatically state that we weren’t going anywhere, a call of resistance and celebration as we looked towards 30 years of supporting 2SLGBTQ+ youth as an organization. We were able to visit pride festivals across the province and continue important community outreach, reminding youth and their allies alike that our work continues to be as relevant and needed as it was in 1994 when our phone lines first opened.

Towards the end of our fiscal year in March 2024, we were excited to have Lauren Pragg (they/them) accept the permanent Executive Director role, having been in this position on an interim basis since March 2023. Their leadership has been critical to helping us achieve all that we have this past year. They continue to be focused on embedding our values of anti-racism, anti-oppression and equity intentionally into all aspects of the organization. We are grateful for the stability, thoughtfulness, and passion they continue to contribute to the organization.

This past year, we also said goodbye to several members of our Board of Director’s Executive Committee – we thank Juan Luis Garrido, David Yang, Natalie Elisha, and Tamara Sylvester for their years of dedication, passion, and time. LGBT YouthLine is stronger for their contributions, and we are fortunate to be able to count them among our alumni!

While there were many successes, this year was not without its challenges. With the sunsetting of key funding agreements, YouthLine had to utilize some of its reserve funds in order to maintain service levels. To address this, a core focus of our strategic plan is the implementation of a multi-year strategy to strengthen sustainability of funding sources and establish a balanced budget.

Looking back at the year and 29 years of providing anonymous and confidential peer support to queer, trans and 2-Spirit youth, we are incredibly grateful for all those in the YouthLine community who have in turn enabled us to support our community. Generations of 2SLGBTQ+ youth have turned to YouthLine, and for that we thank the staff and volunteers who show up each day, take shifts each week, and continually come together to hold space for our service users. If you’re reading this report, we thank you for being a part of our history, whether that has been through your time as a peer support volunteer, hosting fundraising events on our behalf, contributing a monthly donation, meeting with us at in person events, or engaging with us across social media. As we age out of our ‘youth’ status, we know the best is yet to come, and we can’t wait to celebrate three decades of incredible work with you all. Age is, of course, just a number!

Jerico Espinas & Ben Gillis-Kent
Co-Chairs, Board of Directors

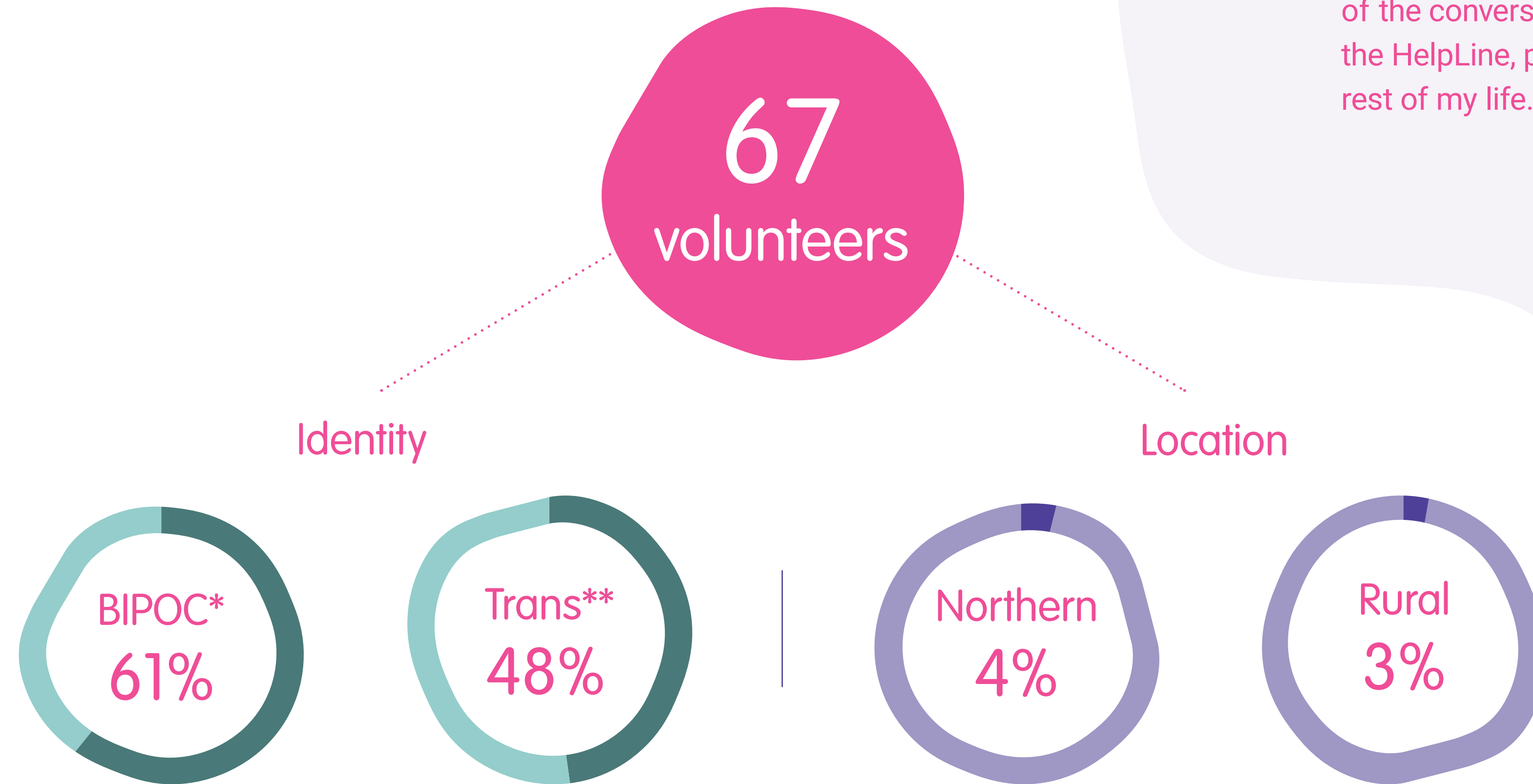
Peer Support HelpLine

In 2023-2024, we organized more socials and launched a Discord for HelpLine volunteers and alumni to connect and share their own local events, projects, and research. We updated our internal resource database to give our volunteers easier access to finding services, whether for themselves or for chatters.

With nearly half of our volunteers now residing outside the Greater Toronto Area, we continue seeking ways to build stronger regional support networks and foster meaningful connections for youth across Ontario.



Volunteer Data

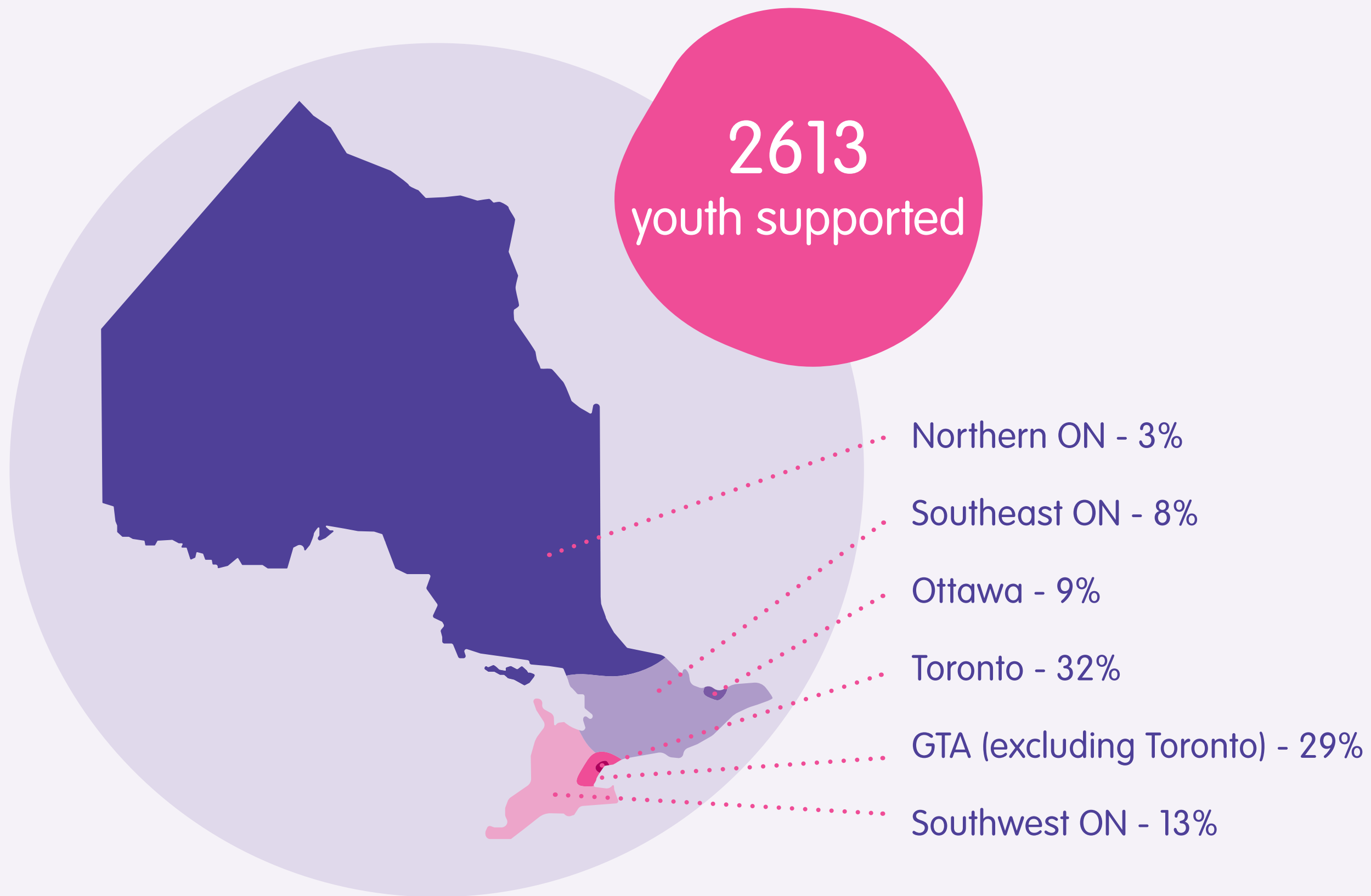


“ I will remember so many of the conversations I had on the HelpLine, probably for the rest of my life.” - Volunteer

* Black, Indigenous, People of Colour

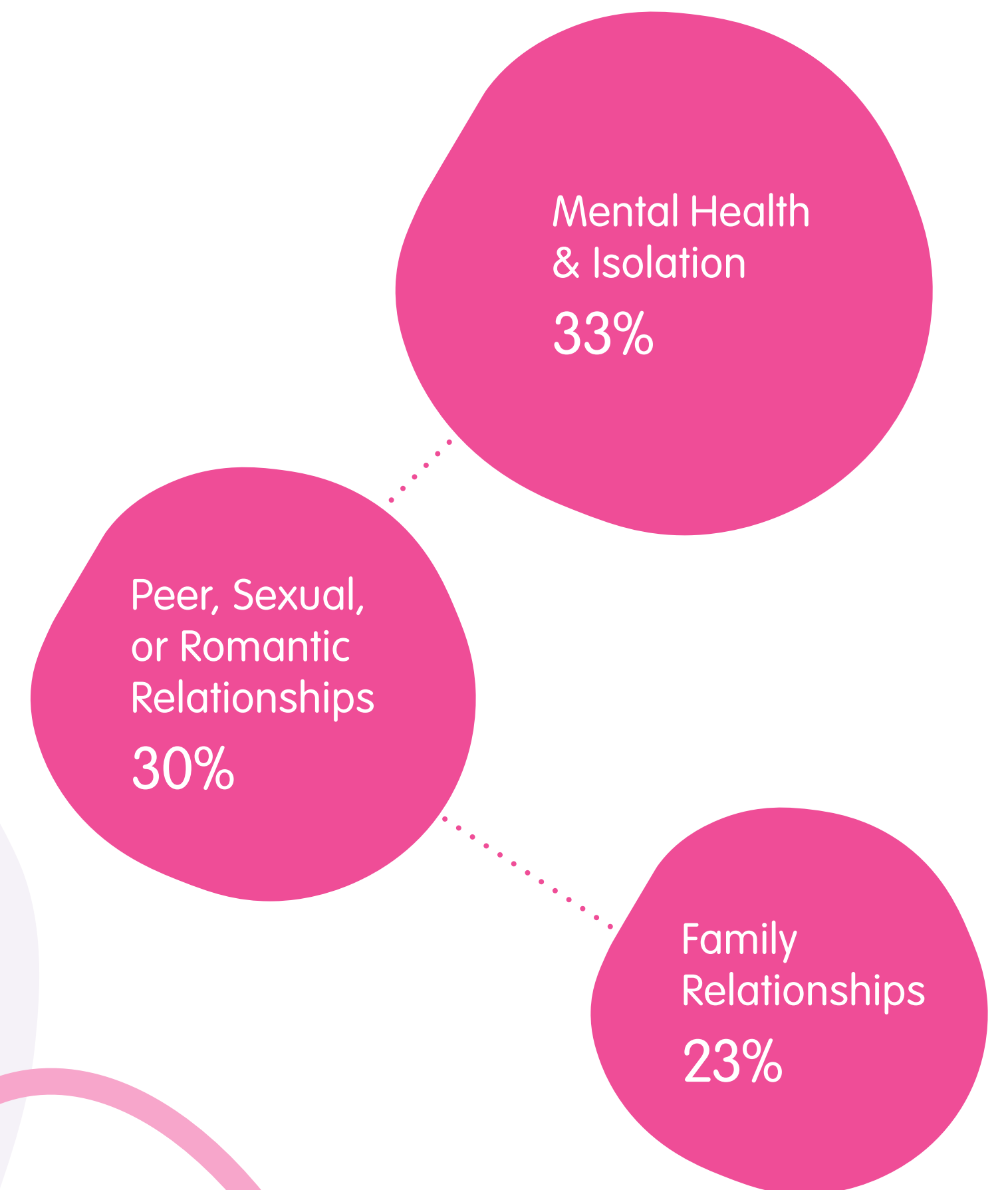
** Includes Trans, Non-Binary, Gender Non-Conforming, Genderfluid, and Questioning youth

Who We Supported



“YouthLine peer supporters are the best. It really makes a difference that YouthLine volunteers will empathize or share similar experiences.” - Chatter

Top Issues Discussed



Training and Online Learning



Improving our Online Learning Platform

Our 2023-2024 Online Learning Project's goals were to:



Complete the transformation of the Peer Support HelpLine training to create an accessible and easy-to-use virtual training for volunteers.



To create shift resources for HelpLine volunteers.

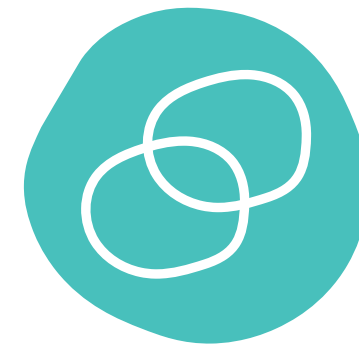


To support access to training modules for staff and board.

In Spring and Summer 2023, we launched **5 new modules** on our online learning platform, Auzmor, alongside Zoom sessions:



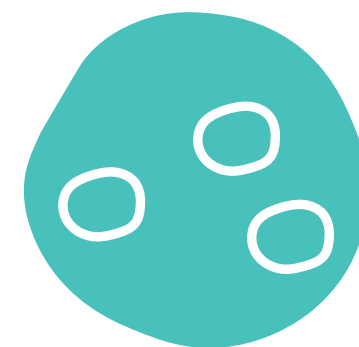
Mental Health and Crisis



Religion, Sexual Health and Vicarious Trauma



Abuse, Boundaries, and Duty to Report



Abuse, Disability Justice, Relationships and Identity



HelpLine Technology

“It was a very welcoming environment I felt comfortable talking and sharing my thoughts.” - Volunteer

Enhancing Trainee Knowledge and Confidence

We prioritized integrating adjustments into our 2023 content, informed by the feedback from trainees identified last year, which was our first year implementing Auzmor, our online learning platform.

We're thrilled to report that these enhancements have resulted in a more favorable experience for our trainees! Here is a snapshot comparing feedback from 2022 training to feedback from 2023 training, illustrating an overall positive increase in volunteer trainee experience with online learning.

“ I feel like I've learned a lot through training to be a peer supporter, and I'm excited to continue gaining more experience. I love how organized the YouthLine is with training, and how much care is put into everything to ensure that both the chatters' and volunteers' experiences are the best they can be. I would absolutely recommend the YouthLine, I honestly think it's so amazing and I'm so glad I get to be a part of it.” - **Volunteer**

Auzmor Module Feedback

Peer Support Volunteer Training Evaluation 1= Never, 5=Always



Statements	Average by Year	
	2022	2023
A I found the independent learning modules interesting and engaging	4.00	4.43
B I felt comfortable completing independent learning modules for HelpLine training	4.35	4.57
C The Auzmor learning platform was easy to use	4.12	4.93
D I felt motivated to complete each learning module	4.06	4.07

Looking Forward

We look forward to developing online booster trainings for current volunteers, and to continue updating the HelpLine Training to increase accessibility and support learning needs. We will continue to collect pre- and post- training assessments and feedback surveys to document and verify our training methodologies.

A special thank you to Desjardins for their support of our Online Learning Project from 2021-2024.



“The multimedia formatting and time needed to complete the modules + the way things were divided into separate pages was very accessible for me!” - Trainee

YouthOrganize

YouthOrganize (YO), our 2SLGBTQ+ youth leadership program in the Peel and Halton region concluded this year! YO was led by a Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) and 2 YouthLine coordinators to host arts-based workshop series and drop-in event spaces. All events were offered throughout Peel, Halton and virtual platforms, and were free for 2SLGBTQ+ youth to attend.

A Glance at our YAC

The YAC gave great insights into the needs of 2SLGBTQ+ youth in the Peel and Halton regions and led the direction of YO programming.



BIPOC YAC Members

6



Trans/NB YAC Members

2

6 Active YAC Members

Members located in Mississauga & Brampton



“YAC has helped me get involved with and connect with communities that I have long been a part of but not gotten a chance to contribute to previously.” - Volunteer



Workshop Series

YO successfully hosted four transformative workshop series for 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Peel and Halton regions in 2023-2024. Collaborating with Mississauga Arts Council (MAC) and artist Sally Co, vibrant community murals were created on 2 unique Bell boxes, uniting local artists and youth.



Workshop Series

4



Participants

42

“I really appreciate being able to be in a space with other queer youth and young adults, where we can just chill and learn new things.” - Workshop Participant

WEAVING QUEER FUTURES





Facilitated by Saadia Khan (@saadiaweaves)

***Open to 2SQTBIPOC youth from Peel and Halton, workshops located in Mississauga**





'Weaving Queer Futures' provided a space for QTBIPOC youth to learn the healing art of weaving, connecting personal narratives and connections to activism with queerness.

DRAWING FOR ENJOYMENT: CHARACTER ART



Facilitated by Alisen Montoya @alytoya

***Open to 2SLGBTQ+ youth from Peel and Halton, workshops are free and locations vary for each session.**

Lastly, 'Drawing for Enjoyment: Character Art' provided a space for artists of all types to come together and draw for themselves while learning tips and tricks to further their learning. These workshops, facilitated by YO and local artists, fostered creativity, community, and self-expression.

Drop-in events

YO successfully hosted three 2SLGBTQ+ Drop in Spaces, including: an in-person Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) High School Student Retreat, Crafting Pride, and Give & Gift: Art Trade and Supply Swap. In collaboration with the Halton Catholic District School Board (HCDSB), YO facilitated a Creative Expressions session for the high school GSA clubs at their first annual retreat, which empowered 2SLGBTQ+ youth to express themselves and their stories through artistic prompts. 'Crafting Pride' was a crafting social where local youth made vision boards, reflective commentary pieces, and other collage driven creations. Finally, 'Give & Gift: Art Trade and Supply Swap' was a mutual aid art supply exchange where participants could give and take art supplies, bonding over the art of reciprocal care.



Drop-In Spaces

3



Participants

137

The YO Anthology

Coming Home: An Anthology delves into the intricate and often transformative experiences and processes of understanding one's identity. 40 youth contributed art to the publication, which highlights the unique experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ Youth in Peel and Halton regions as they embark on their paths of self-acceptance and growth.



We launched the Anthology in April 2024 and have physical and digital copies [available now](#).



Outreach

Peer Support HelpLine
Posters distributed
1,162

Peer Support HelpLine
cards distributed
11,830

Provincial Youth Ambassador
Project summary reports distributed
308

Northern, Rural, Remote, Indigenous (NRRRI) Outreach

In 2023, the Northern, Rural, Remote, and Indigenous (NRRRI) Outreach Program was established to enhance LGBT YouthLine's engagement with 2SLGBTQ+ communities in Northern Ontario, continuing the legacy of the Provincial Youth Ambassador Project. This year, the program concentrated on the creation of a Specialist role, attending key events, and addressing outreach needs.



Highlights

Events -- Our NRRRI Specialist participated in five in-person and two online events, including Algoma District School Board Pride, Oneida of the Thames Pride, Sudbury Pride, 2S Georgian Bay Powwow, and the Sioux Lookout 2S Drag Show. The Sioux Lookout Drag Show was notably successful, being one of the highest-earning shows for the partner, Ever Sick.

Impact -- Our NRRRI efforts successfully established a presence in NRRRI communities, fostered relationships, and distributed resources. Achievements included forming new connections, especially with Ever Sick, and initiating collaborations to develop resources for Indigenous 2SLGBTQ+ communities.

Moving forward, our NRRRI efforts will focus on continuing to build connections and collaborate with regional grassroots groups and evaluating outreach strategies, refining approaches based on these evaluations to maximize impact.

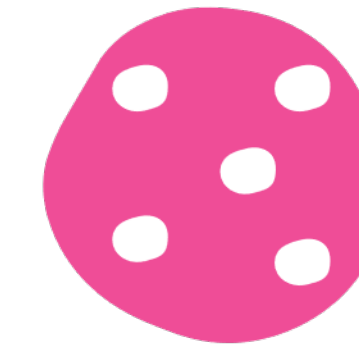
Pride Outreach

Throughout the spring and summer, staff and volunteers had enjoyable and rewarding experiences tabling at various Pride events in Ontario. These events are opportunities to engage with the community in a meaningful way and to spread awareness about our Peer Support HelpLine and the YouthOrganize program.



Greater Toronto Area - 6

- Brampton Pride
- Halton Region Pride Fest
- Pride Durham
- Supporting Our Youth's Pride Prom
- Toronto Pride
- York Region Pride



Southern Ontario - 5

- Capital Pride
- Kingston Pride
- Peterborough Pride in the Park
- Pride Hamilton
- Pride London



Northern Ontario - 2

- Algoma District School Board Pride
- Sudbury Pride



Indigenous Nations - 1

- Katatnolunkwa "I Love Me" Oneida Nation of the Thames Pride Event

14 Pride Events Attended

Canada Summer Jobs Assistants

In summer 2023, we welcomed four talented Canada Summer Job assistants who contributed significantly to various facets of our organization:



Finance & Fundraising Assistant

- Researched and drafted work plans for our fundraising strategies;
- Supported streamlining our financial processes;
- Contributed to our donor stewardship strategy.



Digital Communications Assistant

- Refreshed our style and social media guides;
- Drafted our Back-to-School social media campaign;
- Compiled media lists relevant to 2SLGBTQ+ youth.



Community-Based Trainer

- Updated the volunteer e-learning curriculum;
- Facilitated peer support training;
- Developed internal resources for HelpLine volunteers.



Resource & Referrals Assistant

- Assisted with adding and updating programs and services in our referral database;
- Developed resources and referrals database processes;
- Drafted content for volunteer training and shifts.

“As a future teacher, this role immersed me in understanding the ever-evolving needs of 2SLGBTQ+ youth significantly as anti-trans sentiments rise in Ontario schools.” - CSJ Student

Thank you to our Canada Job Assistants! Their dedication and hard work have greatly enhanced our programs and operations.

Pride: We're Not Going Anywhere!

Our Pride 2023 theme was “We're Not Going Anywhere!”, and how fitting it was that our supporters showed up as always to contribute to our yearly fundraiser.

We received 511 donations totaling \$49,375.80, and 18 community fundraisers made up more than half of that amount. We extend so much gratitude to all our donors, not only for helping us do our work, but also spreading the word about the HelpLine among their friends, family, customers, and coworkers.

Community Pride Fundraisers

< \$500

- Bella Fit Yoga
- City of Brampton, Enforcement & By-law Services
- Creamery X Inc
- Eselsohr Farm
- Hereward Farms
- Murphy's Farm Market and Bakery
- Orangetheory Fitness Merivale
- Phil Green / bodiesbyphil
- Rotman Pride

\$500 - \$1,000

- Archive Hospitality / Gladstone House
- Emergency Services Kingston
- Lauren Pragg

\$1,000 - \$2,500

- Juan Garrido
- The Piper Doves Scooter Club

> \$2,500

- The Great Gay Bake-Off - Heaps Estrin Real Estate
- Scotia's Got Talent - employees of Scotiabank Ottawa region

\$49,375.80
Total

511
Donations

18
Community Fundraisers





In 2023 our artist was Atlas! [Check out their work on Instagram.](#)

Year-End: Together for the Season, Together Always

Our Year-End 2023 theme was “Together for the Season, Together Always”. As is traditional for YouthLine, we commissioned a 2SLGBTQ+ youth to design a postcard for us to send to team members, donors, and community partners.

Many donations that we received are from those we affectionately call our “Holiday BFFs” -- people who donate every year-end -- so we want to extend an extra thanks to those for continuing to support us.



A Closer Look at Our Internal Infrastructure



Welcoming our Permanent Executive Director

Lauren is a YouthLine alum, having first joined our organization as our Community Engagement and Communications Coordinator from 2018-2019. As our interim Executive Director since March 2023, they have been instrumental in leading YouthLine with a focus on our organizational values and staff wellness. In the past year, they played a strong leadership role in overseeing a review of our compensation policies with Evenings and Weekends, implementing a new benefits plan for staff, moving towards a new focus on advocacy, and starting our strategic planning process.



New Role Highlight: Systems Administrator

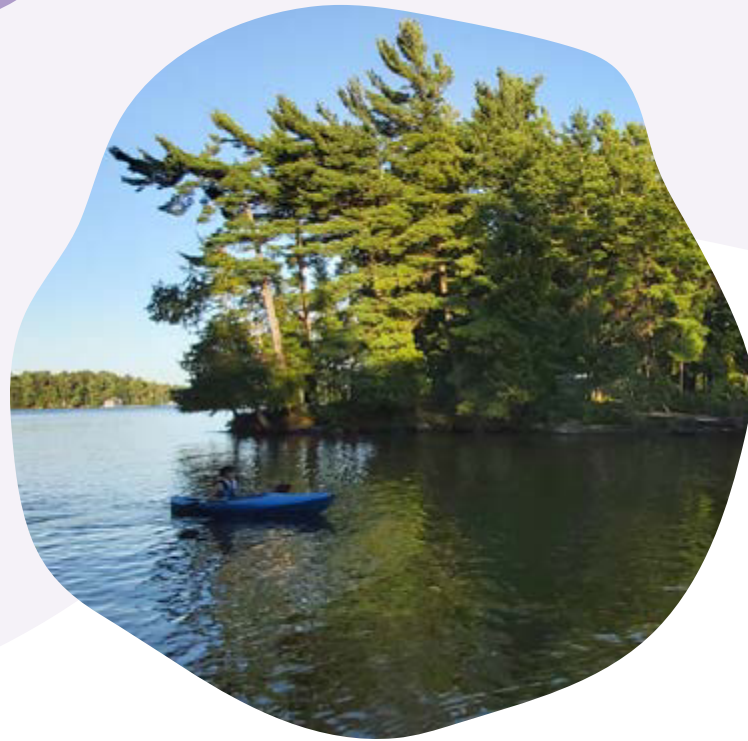
This year, we introduced the role of Systems Administrator, with Ren Lee leading the way. Ren has significantly improved our technical infrastructure, cyber security, and IT. She has enhanced our website, streamlined collaboration with IT consulting firm Mindfield, and implemented a helpdesk/ticketing system for staff support. Ren's contributions have been invaluable in elevating our organization's efficiency, security, and use of software and technology.

Introducing a New Benefits Plan for Staff

This year marked a significant milestone as we introduced a new benefits plan, our first update since 2012. Recognizing the need for a more responsive and contemporary approach to healthcare, we incorporated several key enhancements. Our new plan, administered through the Community Services Benefits Trust and GroupHEALTH, includes a gender-affirming care benefit and expanded access to mental health and wellness supports.

These updates reflect our commitment to providing comprehensive and inclusive benefits for all our staff, ensuring their well-being and support in today's evolving work landscape.





Elevate Leadership: Wasan Island Management & Specialist Retreat

In August 2023, some of our specialists and managers embarked on a retreat designed to foster connection, relaxation, and deep reflection on our work. The retreat was organized by Elevate Equity, Toronto's first trans-led organization promoting employment equity for Black, Indigenous trans and non-binary communities of colour.

Our time together was filled with moments of fun, relaxation, and meaningful conversations. We engaged in activities that not only helped us unwind but also enabled us to delve deeper into the core aspects of our work. Through shared meals, nature walks, and reflective discussions, we were able to replenish our community connections and return to our roles with renewed energy and a strengthened sense of purpose.

The retreat was a powerful reminder of the importance of taking time to rest and connect with each other, reinforcing our commitment to facing challenges together and supporting one another in our shared mission.

Internal Highlight: Guest Speakers

This year, we were honored to host two exceptional guest speakers who supported the YouthLine team in engaging with, learning about, and discussing experiences of Black and Indigenous 2SLGBTQ+ communities.

Waawaate Fobister

An accomplished actor, dancer, playwright, choreographer, instructor, and producer from Grassy Narrows First Nation, Waawaate is a proud Anishnaabe with numerous accolades, including two Dora awards, the Humber College Outstanding Actor award, and the Mark S. Bonham Centre award for advocacy in sexual diversity. Waawaate shared their experiences navigating life as a Two-Spirited person on and off reserve, highlighting the current realities and support needed in Grassy Narrows First Nation.

Godfather “King” Kingston Louboutin

King spoke to YouthLine volunteers, staff, and board members about the rich history and significance of Ballroom culture in Canada, specifically the Toronto Kiki Ballroom Alliance. He emphasized the importance of this space for Black queer and trans youth, illustrating how it serves as a vital peer support network for the 2SLGBTQ+ community.



Strategic Planning Process: A Collective Journey Forward

From January – May 2024, YouthLine embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning process, thoughtfully facilitated by Shorelines Collaboratives.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our facilitators, Kavita Bissoondial and Erika Pulfer, for their expert guidance throughout this journey. Their leadership was crucial as we engaged in a range of activities, including focus groups, surveys, and key informant interviews, all designed to gather diverse perspectives and insights from our community.

The process included an in-person retreat, where our board and staff came together to collaboratively renew our mission and vision. With the help of team-building exercises, we solidified our strategic direction and strengthened our organizational cohesion.

Stay tuned for the release of our new strategic plan, where these insights and collective energy will guide our future work.

Who Supported Us

Very special thanks to our 80 monthly donors who provide us with a reliable stream of funding throughout the year. You are our BFFs!

We do not name individual donors out of consideration for privacy, but every donation, whether one-time or monthly, is hugely appreciated. You make it possible for us to continue our work.

Foundation & Group Donations

\$100 - \$249

Attune Insights Inc.
Benz Tatto
by the lakeside
Canopy Kids
Foresters Financial
The students of Greenwood College School
HealthSpace Collective
The students of Heritage Academy
Kimberley Sanzo Therapy
KWENTO
The students of Mentor College
The Morpheus Clinic for Hypnosis
North Movement Studio
Penguin Random House
Sand & Pearl
The students of St. Mary Catholic Academy
Tinderbox
Wild Blue Bakery
Woodview Mental Health & Autism Service

\$250 - \$499

DESA Creative Group Inc.
Gay AF Comedy
LOHN
The Lowidt Foundation
The Margaret & Alexander Rea, Dora and Elly Ellsworth and Frank Lowery Charitable Fund
Northstar Access Diversity Committee
Ontario Secondary School Teacher Federation - District 11
Publicis Canada
The students of Thornlea Secondary School's Amnesty Club
The students of Zion Heights Middle School Pride Club

\$500 - \$999

Atlas Corporation
Breaker Strength Dentalcorp
The Jason Nardari Charitable Fund
Spinco Hamilton
Yogashala Wellness Centre

\$1,000 - \$2,499

Archive Hospitality
Broad Lingerie
Cabbagetown Group Softball League MIST Toronto
Canada Employment Immigration Union
Coconut Software Corporation
Griffith Group Executive Search
Ingenuity General Contracting
Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto
Klick Inc
The PrEP Clinic
Proof Strategies
Pure Yoga Ottawa

> \$2,500

Andree Rheume and Robert Fitzhenry Family Foundation
Dawn Tattle Family Foundation
Elephant Shoes Foundation
Honda Canada Foundation
QE Home

Donor Highlight: The Cabbagetown Group Softball League (CGSL)

Board member Ben and staff member Vale met with Geoff, Jack, and Mike from the Cabbagetown Group Softball League. Founded in 1975, the CGSL has been deeply involved in creating space for queer-friendly sports, particularly softball, across North America.



The CGSL presented a cheque for a \$2200 donation. These were funds raised from Midwest Invitational Softball Tournament, the first queer softball tournament that CGSL had been able to host since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was an honour for us to meet with some of the first members of the League in person, and we're very grateful for their support.

Third Party Fundraisers

Third-Party Fundraisers offer a fun way for individuals, groups, and organizations to show their love for YouthLine. Thank you to all who hosted a third-party fundraiser!

- Andrew Townsend
- Heart & Crown
- Sausage Party Toronto
- University Students' Council – Western University
- Pride of Lions – Academy of Lions
- Twitch fundraisers
- Students of JB Tyrell Senior Public School

Financial Summary

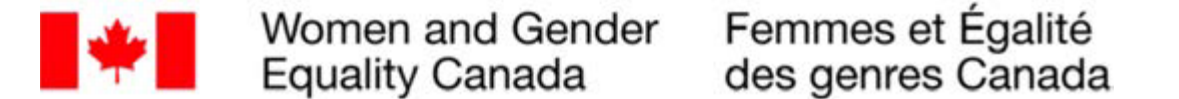
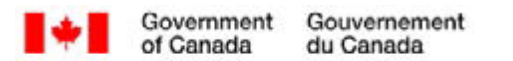


● Corporate & Foundation Grants	\$336,069	35%
● Provincial & Ontario Trillium Fund Grants	\$287,069	30%
● Donations & Fundraising	\$233,573	24%
● City of Toronto Funding	\$51,042	5%
● Employment Grants	\$40,622	4%
● Federal Grants	\$23,900	2%



● Program-related Salaries	\$857,895	70%
● Admin, Finance & Governance	\$211,358	17%
● HelpLine, Programs & Volunteers	\$78,922	6%
● YouthOrganize Project	\$50,552	4%
● Strategic Planning	\$27,764	2%
● Northern, Rural, Remote, Indigenous Outreach	\$6,949	1%

Our Funders





Our Team

Toronto

Anika, Specialist, Resources & Referrals
Aarushi, Assistant, Resources & Referrals
Beck S., Shift Supervisor
Bisma, Specialist, Communications & Development
Daniel, Assistant, Finance & Fundraising
Dean, Specialist, Volunteer Engagement
Lauren, Interim Executive Director
Olena, Assistant, Administration
Rojhin, Assistant, Digital Communications
Sierra, Manager, Outreach & Training
Tyler, Manager, Finance
Vale, Specialist, Operations

Ottawa

Noah, Manager, Operations
Nur, Manager, HelpLine

North Bay

Katrina, Specialist, Northern, Rural, Remote
Indigenous Outreach

Mississauga

Ren, Administrator, Systems

Brampton

Tavleen, Community-Based Trainer

Past Staff

Beck B., Coordinator, Peer Support
Cameo, Coordinator, Youth Organize
Maher, Specialist, Communications
Rabia, Coordinator, Youth Organize
Taashi, Executive Director

Board of Directors

Ben Gillis-Kent, Co-Chair
Jerico Espinas, Co-Chair
Karel Peters
Kimber Kunimoto
Nicole Dylan Madison, Secretary
Nira Sohi
Rohan Kulkarni, Treasurer
Vincent So

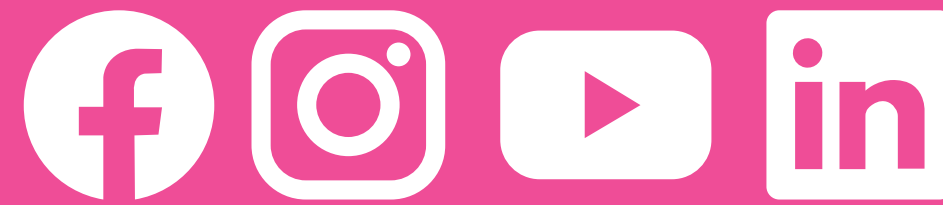
Outbound Board Members

David Yang
Juan Garrido
Mariana Cortes
Natalie Elisha
Nathan Gibson
Rae Goff
Tamara Sylvester

Report Design by [Mercury Gray](#)



www.youthline.ca



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LGBT YouthLine Merch
youthline.ca/support-us/merch/

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