

ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024

Introduction

We are pleased to submit the Annual Report on behalf of the St. Joseph's Health Care Society, (the Society) for the 2023-2024 year.

This year's Annual Report tells a story of transitions and progression. We successfully brought to conclusion one strategic plan in December 2023 and launched a new plan in January 2024 titled "Walking Forward Together 2024-2025." The new plan is intentionally designed around a 2-year timeframe and focuses on developing organizational readiness for the future.

The successful opening of Hospice of Elgin is a top priority for the Society (more on that below). From January 2024 to December 2025, the hospice will travel the journey of going from construction to "doors open" to having the first few key months of operations under its belt.

This two-year window of time also provides an opportunity – an opportunity for the Society to create readiness for the future. This is a pivotal moment that will allow us to focus on two strategic priorities: (1) Engage and Serve with Purpose and (2) Look Upstream for Future Opportunities.

These priorities are rooted in the belief that being able to respond to questions like "Who should we be serving?" and "What do we have to offer?" will strengthen the Society by bringing a clarity to direction and ensuring long term viability and relevancy.

The framework is also guided by the conviction that relationships are fundamental to who we are and what we do, and stewarding and communicating our mission is foundational. Everyone we interact with should understand what they can and should expect from the Society and conversely what is beyond our scope.

This annual report lays out the early progress we have made as an organization towards our strategic priorities and highlights the ways the Society and the organizations we sponsor continue to live the mission, vision, and values of the healing ministry as handed on to us by the Sisters of St. Joseph.

As with any reflection on the year's achievements, we must send a truly heartfelt thanks to the Society's full-time staff, contracted support specialists and our volunteer Board of Directors. We also express our deepest gratitude to the over 4,800 staff who work within the health care organizations we sponsor. Their dedication inspires us to do more for those in need, to explore

possibilities and move towards a world where all are heard, cared for and loved. We also wish to recognize the nearly 1000 volunteers who serve in a variety of ways across the sponsored organizations. A sincere thank you for saying “yes” to being involved. At the centre of the mission of Catholic health care is a belief in the sacredness and dignity of every person and through our collective efforts a better world for all is possible.

History of the St. Joseph’s Health Care Society

Founded in 1993, the Society provides sponsorship to health care organizations in three cities spanning across Southwestern Ontario. Consistent with hopes emanating from Vatican II, the Society is governed by a Board of Directors comprised largely of lay individuals, all committed to accepting responsibility to further the legacy and vitality of Catholic health care today and helping the four organizations sponsored by the Society make decisions through the lens of Catholic health care traditions.

The mission of the Society is to sustain the hospitals, hospices, and other ministries it sponsors to further the care that the Sisters of St. Joseph established through their long and honoured history. This history maintains the healing mission of Jesus and to sponsor and support other initiatives that improve the health of the community within the Diocese of London. As the sponsor of a group of organizations, the Society helps ensure that each organization demonstrates the distinct value of Catholic health care.

Activities

The two strategic priorities and five subset goals in our strategic plan have been instrumental in aligning our activities with our mission. This is one of the reasons we know we are headed in the right direction. Each priority and goal supports the next and provides a framework for all that we do. Key activities from the past year are grouped below in alignment with each strategic priority.

1. Engage and Serve with Purpose

- i. We will have a consistent way of expressing who we are and what we do.*
 - In the fall of 2020, the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada (CHAC) launched the Sponsor Roles, Relationships and Accountabilities (SRRA), a self-assessment “accreditation” process for sponsors. The goal of the SRRA process is to standardize the areas wherein a Sponsor reports annually to their ecclesial authority and to promote the cross-fertilization of leading practices to strengthen

the national ministry of sponsorship. Each year since its inception, the Society has completed the annual self-assessment process and identified key areas of focus under its main categories. The annual cycle of goal setting and self-assessment has enabled the Society to remain focused on its commitments as a Sponsor of Catholic health care. We are pleased to share the [2023-2024 SRRA Self-Assessment](#).

- Through its CEO, Richard Corneil, the Society continued to participate in Catholic health care's development of a national strategy to respond to changes in Canada's Medical Assistance in Dying legislation. Additionally, the Society signed on as a supporter of the "Mission: Assistance in Living (MAiL)" national campaign, an initiative of the Catholic Health Association of Manitoba which argues that considering the MAiD experience to date in Canada there is a critical need to re-ignite a life-affirming approach to the care and wellbeing of all Canadians based in shared values of the dignity, security and fundamental equality of all persons.
- On June 4, 2024, we were thrilled to host an event to celebrate past members of the Society's Board of Directors and their contributions to the success of the Society's 31 years of history. The event was hosted in the beautiful foyer of the residence of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Everyone enjoyed food and the inspiring speeches by Bishop Fabbro and Sr. Kateri Ghesquire, who served on the original Board.





Celebrating Past Society Board Directors Event



- This year the Society also launched a “Capturing the History” project as another way to celebrate its past. The project has two streams: 1. Interviews conducted with past Directors to capture an oral history of Society activities and 2. the review and organization of the Society’s collection of hard copy files by a professional archivist to create an archival system of records.
- Members of the Society Board gained knowledge about Catholic health care’s potential to positively impact future models of care both provincially and nationally through attendance at the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada conference “Getting to the Heart of it: Meaningful Connections and Actions” in May 2024. As well, they attended the Catholic Health Association of Ontario conference “Catholic Healthcare: Our Journey to Enhance Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging” held in October 2024.
- In May 2024 the new Officers of the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada’s Governing Council were appointed, and Richard began a two-year term as Chair. He also continued to represent the Society with Ontario Sponsor Group. The Society was also very pleased to have David Nash, Chair of the Society’s Board of Directors, as its representative on the board of Catholic Health Association of Ontario.
- In the fall of 2024, Richard traveled to Le-Puy-en-Valey, France, the founding location of the Sisters of St. Joseph, to participate in the “Mission Alive” program offered through the Centre International St. Joseph. It was a tremendous opportunity to become immersed in the Sister’s mission of “unity without distinction.” The program combined sessions on the history of the Sisters’ founding with opportunities to practice spiritual exercises in a retreat-like setting. It also included visits to sites of historical significance for the Sisters, such as the remains of the original kitchen on the property in Le Puy where the Sisters first established themselves in 1650 and the chapel in Lyon from where the first North American bound Sisters departed in 1835.



**"The Kitchen,"
Le Puy-en-Valey**



**View from Residence,
Le Puy-en-Valey**



**Chapel at
Basilica of Notre-Dame
de Fourvière, Lyon**

ii. *We will support our sponsored organizations to affirm their purpose, express their identity and animate the mission of Catholic health care through relationship building, education, and use of the reserved powers.*

- Incredible and innovative work is done every single day in our sponsored organizations, and we are proud to share their stories and accomplishments. Check out the most current annual reports or organizational information by clicking on the logos below.



- In this report we would like to put a special spotlight on Hospice of Elgin. This project was officially launched in the fall of 2019 with the announcement from the provincial Ministry of Health that the Society was awarded funding to build a new hospice for Elgin County. Since then, the level of support for the project that has come from the people of Elgin County has been positively overwhelming. Whether it has been financial support for the capital campaign or volunteers who have committed their time and talents to help get all aspects of the project off the ground and running, we are truly humbled and grateful. All of these efforts have been focused on the single goal of bringing desperately needed end-of-life care to Elgin. Under the leadership of the Society's Director of Hospice Partnerships, Laura Sherwood, who serves as interim hospice Executive Director, and with the support her team, the successful opening of the hospice is set for June 2025.

Hospice of Elgin Project



- Ensuring that the sponsored organizations have a clear understanding of the purpose of sponsorship and the history of our founding Sisters, is of central importance to strengthening the chain of mission in Catholic health care. To that end, the Society delivered the following presentations this past year for the sponsored organizations Board of Directors, senior leaders and staff:
 - History and Purpose of the Society
 - Mission of Catholic Health Care in Canada
 - Catholic Identity and Mission Integration
 - Mission and Spirituality of the Sisters of St. Joseph
- In October 2023, the Society once again partnered with the Spiritual Care department of St. Joseph's Health Care London to host an education event in honour of Spiritual Care week. Titled "Compassion in the Community," this event was a cross-sector panel presentation on the role compassion as a catalyst to reconnecting communities. The topics covered the science of compassion, homelessness, Indigenous care and spiritual care. In-person feedback from participants was excellent and will help to inform the planning of future events.
- As reported earlier, over the past 18 months the Society has facilitated a pilot Ethics Community of Practice for our Sarnia, London and Elgin hospices. The pilot was initiated in response to the fact that while hospices have many clinical and organizational ethical needs, they lack the resources to support "in-house" ethics capacity to deal with them. Most recently we have launched conversations with Hospice Palliative Care Ontario, the main advocacy and accrediting body in the province, about how to "scale up" the learnings of the pilot to serve a larger number of hospices across the province.
- Richard was pleased to be invited to provide an opening address for the World Day of the Sick celebration held on February 9, 2024. The Mass was celebrated by Bishop Fabbro in the atrium at Mount Hope which was filled with staff, residents and their families. The entire event was beautifully organized by the St. Joseph's Health Care London Spiritual Care Team.

- The Society and all of its sponsored organizations celebrated National Catholic Health Care Week on February 4-10, 2024, with resources provided by the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada. It is an important opportunity to recognize and have conversations about the work of Catholic health care organizations which serve over 5 million Canadians each year and employ over 88,000 people. Our footprint is big. Our hearts are even bigger.
- In February 2024, Richard was a panelist for a national webinar on the topic of the transition from Sisters to the Sponsorship model in Canadian Catholic health care. Hosted by Catholic Health Sponsors of Ontario, the webinar was part of a series aimed at supporting governance and operational leaders in their fiduciary duties, and to build capacity for decision makers in health and social services.
- In support of Catholic health care's continued commitment to foster the full disclosure of the truths of oppression and colonialism, the Society and its sponsored organizations recognized National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30, 2024, with activities focused on building openness, trust, compassion and humility. In dialogue with Indigenous partners, we are committed to improved whole-person and culturally safe health care that respects and enhances the physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental dimensions of the person.
- CEO Richard Corneil is part of the CHAC working group that has been active since the summer of 2024 in examining what it means for Catholic health care to create an environment where everyone who walks through our doors feels welcome, safe, and loved. This is a high priority topic for CHAC, and many different avenues for feedback on this topic are being employed with the ultimate goal of the group being to develop some guidelines that can be used across the country for what it means to be a welcoming community.

2. Look Upstream for Future Opportunities

iii. We will hold at least one board retreat with a skilled facilitator to assist us with visioning about where we can have the greatest impact in the future, especially in response to the social determinants of health.

- In adherence with the commitments of the new strategic plan, the Society hosted a board retreat on October 10, 2024, for an initial exploration of future directions and priorities. With the support of Sr. Margo Richie, CSJ, as facilitator, the Board explored essential questions around the Society's competencies, who it might serve in the future and how it will ensure long-term sustainability. This first retreat laid an excellent foundation for future conversations and planning that will take place over the course of the coming year.

iv. We will also engage in "learn-as-we-go" visioning that complements outcomes of the retreat, identifying and carrying out small scale projects that will enable us to learn, clarify and deepen our understanding of future directions, collaborations and partnerships.

- While the Society is only at the beginning of exploring and understanding the role it might play long term in responding to unmet needs of the community, there are steps that it can take in the near term in this direction. With this in mind, CEO Richard Corneil hosted a virtual conversation on September 3, 2024, the topic of providing end-of-life care to people experiencing homelessness. In attendance were leaders from St. Joseph Health Care London's Palliative Care at Parkwood as well as leaders from the Hospices in Sarnia and London. The session was led by Dr. Natalie Persaud (Executive Director) and Dr. Naheed Dosani (Medical Director) of Kensington Hospice, Toronto. Drs. Persaud and Dosani presented Kensington's recent evolution to a more equity-focused model of care called "Radical Love" that includes providing end-of-life care to homeless individuals. The discussion generated an important exchange of ideas and questions among the participants, particularly in terms of how it might be applied locally. This was an excellent way for the Society to bring the organizations under its sponsorship together for a learning opportunity that has the potential to generate new ways of thinking about care. The group will be canvassed for a follow up meeting later in the fall.

v. *We will be innovative and forward thinking in our planning for financial and organizational sustainability, while allowing for investment in new opportunities.*

- The Society is blessed to have an excellent Board, comprised of individuals with a diverse set of skills and experience, all committed to furthering the mission of Catholic health care. Board Director succession status and the recruitment of new members was regularly reviewed by the Board's Governance Committee in keeping with good governance practice. This past year, the Board welcomed its newest Director, Dr. Glen Maddison.
- As the Corporate Members of the organizations that it sponsors, the Society's Board of Directors has important duties to fulfill in both civil law and canon law. These duties were fully exercised at the respective Annual General Meetings held in June 2024 for each of the sponsored organizations.
- At its own AGM in September 2024, David Nash and Mark Adkinson were appointed Chair and Vice Chair of the Society respectively for a two-year term. The other Officers John Iannozzi, Treasurer, and Sr. Jacqueline Jannise, Secretary accepted appointments to continue in these roles. Profiles of the full Board of Directors can be viewed [here](#).
- CEO and organizational priorities were regularly monitored and measured by the Board throughout the year, primarily through reporting methods at Board meetings.
- The Society has an annual operating budget of approximately \$550,000 and holds sufficient endowment funds to secure the future of its mission for years to come. The audited statements for the year ending March 31, 2024, are enclosed.

Conclusion

We are proud of our achievements and our journey to continue the healing ministry of Jesus and animate the legacy of our founding congregation.

Thank you for the trust and confidence you have in our organization. Your comments and feedback would be most appreciated.

Richard Corneil

David Nash
Chair, Board of Directors

Richard Corneil
Chief Executive Officer

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Final Audit Report

2024-12-02

Created:	2024-11-25
By:	Richard Corneil (richard.corneil@stjosephssociety.com)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAAEGKap4Wo9bUYCCGpow_BI-XUhO8ofNM4

"Annual Report 2023 2024" History

-  Document created by Richard Corneil (richard.corneil@stjosephssociety.com)
2024-11-25 - 3:37:36 PM GMT- IP address: 184.146.38.244
-  Document emailed to David Nash (david.nash@mckenzielake.com) for signature
2024-11-25 - 3:37:42 PM GMT
-  Email viewed by David Nash (david.nash@mckenzielake.com)
2024-11-25 - 3:38:05 PM GMT- IP address: 40.86.253.167
-  Email viewed by David Nash (david.nash@mckenzielake.com)
2024-12-02 - 5:24:24 PM GMT- IP address: 4.204.208.137
-  Document e-signed by David Nash (david.nash@mckenzielake.com)
Signature Date: 2024-12-02 - 7:23:38 PM GMT - Time Source: server- IP address: 209.213.249.34
-  Agreement completed.
2024-12-02 - 7:23:38 PM GMT