



LUSO

COMMUNITY SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

One cannot talk about the last fiscal year without addressing the impact that the Covid-19 Virus had on the London community and the world at large. After celebrating LUSO's 40th anniversary, I can honestly say it was a year unlike any other. From stay-at-home orders to working remotely, our staff, volunteers, and community partners continued to focus on the needs of the community. LUSO always remained open and continued to serve clients whether virtually or in person (when it was safe to do so and when technology was unavailable), removing barriers to access support and service. The Board continued to meet virtually to ensure that the work we were doing on the fundraising and strategic plans pushed the organization forward and kept a focus on the new future of London and the ongoing needs in the community. With the tireless efforts of the ED, LUSO was able to increase funding to safeguard that LUSO survived Covid-19 and would be better situated to support those most in need in our community.

If nothing else, 2020 has taught us more about hope, perseverance, and the importance of human connection in our lives. It has really driven home the need for EVERYONE in the community to feel supported and connected; supported financially, supported in food/shelter security, supported in family and friendships, and supported in mental health. This pandemic has shed even more light on the vast disparities between different populations and neighbourhoods and I am very proud to say that LUSO is working daily to reduce that gap and working tirelessly to ensure that every person feels supported to meet their goals. Most people don't go into social service for glamour and fame but to make an impact in people's lives; this connection to each other and to our community at large is what LUSO provided to some of the most vulnerable citizens in London and that is nothing short of heroic.

Regardless of what happens in the future, our community is a stronger place with LUSO being part of it. The Board of Directors would like to say thank you to all the staff, volunteers, and community partners as your support and dedication over the last year has been nothing short of amazing. We can never thank you enough for all the dedication and sacrifices that were made and we will be forever grateful.

Thank you

KASHA MCEWEN-DOAN

BOARD CHAIRPERSON

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The most overused words of the 2020–2021 fiscal year had to be pivot, flexibility, and adaptability. While we may be tired of these three words, they never proved to be more true than this past year. Being able to pivot our services and programs was critical when government restrictions continuously changed, sometimes with only one-day notice. LUSO team members had to be flexible when planning programs to consider many possible scenarios: in-person programming, virtual programming, hybrid programming. There always had to be a plan A or B or C. Most importantly, LUSO team members had to be adaptable as they continued to provide service to vulnerable community members while needing to adapt to their own personal and family circumstances, which like many included children at home learning, lack of childcare supports, and trying to navigate multiple family members working from home. Through it all, each and every LUSOnian persevered. They did not waiver in their commitment to the community and gave 100% to make sure that those most vulnerable and disadvantaged had the supports they needed to deal with the impacts of the pandemic. I am truly proud and in awe of each LUSO team member. They showed a great deal of resiliency, commitment, loyalty and dedication during a challenging time with so many unknowns.

Our core funders were also critical during this time. They continued to support us despite the constant flux and uncertainties of the pandemic. Knowing that our funders were flexible with how services were delivered allowed us to put our energy and efforts into supporting the community. Additionally, we were extremely lucky to have new funders provide support so that we could continue to meet the increased demands in the community, especially as it related to basic needs and food security. The additional support also ensured that those most impacted by poverty could continue to participate in programming and feel a sense of connection. We did a lot of porch drop-offs for program materials since the beginning of the pandemic.

This was also a year in which we saw the community come together and support charities like no other year. Donation revenue increased by 366%. The tremendous financial support that we received from groups like St. Aidan's Anglican Church, as well as many private donors allowed us to continue to address issues of discrimination and racism in our community. With world movements like Black Lives Matter, and increased awareness and desire for action to address issues of Islamophobia and discrimination towards the BIPOC community we experienced a demand for the Multicultural Outreach program, not only from schools but also from social service agencies and groups like Start.ca, Woodstock Police, the OPP, and Leads Employment Services to name a few.

This past year has taught us many things – how to do the “pivot dance”, how to be flexible and adaptable. It has forced us to think outside the box, learn new technology and rely on partnerships and relationships differently. Most importantly, it has taught us the importance of working together to support those that are most vulnerable. It has taught us that together as a team, as a community, we can overcome the challenges and adversity caused by a world pandemic – that together we are stronger.

ELISABETE RODRIGUES

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



THE GABI SCHOTTER RED CARDINAL AWARD

Gabriel (Gabi) Schotter was a loved and valued member of the LUSO Staff team for over 4 years. Gabi had a zest for life. She loved her family and friends deeply. Her son and daughter were her greatest pride and joy. Gabi was very athletic, she was an avid runner, competing in many long distance races and extreme endurance events. She took great pride in her athletic accomplishments and staying fit and healthy.

Gabi also took great pride in her work at LUSO as the Project Coordinator for the Cultural Sensitivity Training for Landlords initiative. Gabi was committed to working with members of the housing sector to ensure that those new to Canada felt safe and included in their new community; and that housing representatives had the knowledge and skills to be welcoming and inclusive of newcomers. Gabi thrived on challenges, and opportunities to think outside the box to accomplish goals. She was not afraid to speak up for injustice and inequities.

In January of 2019, Gabi was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and took on the biggest challenge of her life. She was determined to continue working to achieve her goals despite recovering from surgery and weekly chemo treatments. While she initially responded well to surgery and treatments and was in remission, sadly the cancer returned. On January 17, 2021, at the age of 52 Gabi passed away. The impact of losing her as a loved and valued LUSO team member continues to be difficult. To honor Gabi's commitment, loyalty, tenacity, courage and perseverance, LUSO has established The Gabi Schotter Red Cardinal Award. Gabi loved to sit in her yard and watch the red cardinals, it gave her strength, it gave her hope.

The Gabi Schotter Red Cardinal Award will annually recognize a young person between the ages of 14-24 that has demonstrated positive community action while overcoming their own personal obstacles. The recipient will have exemplified strength, courage, determination and leadership while addressing pertinent community issues such as: equity and inclusivity; advocating for social justice, supporting vulnerable populations; youth advocacy. The recipient of The Gabi Schotter Red Cardinal Award will receive \$500. The first recipient will be announced at the 2021 Annual General Meeting.

MEET THE BOARD



**KASHA
MCEWEN-DOAN**
CHAIRPERSON



**RYAN
PARSONS**
VICE CHAIR



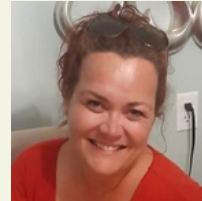
**TYLER
GILLESPIE**
TREASURER



**ALICIA
LAWRANCE**
SECRETARY



**CHRISTINE
WILDE**
PAST CHAIR



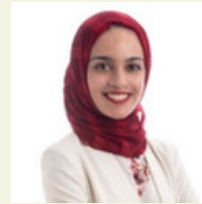
**MICHELLE
ASHBEE**
DIRECTOR



**LAURA
LEQUAY**
DIRECTOR



**HALA ABU
LUGHOD**
DIRECTOR



FATIMA HAQ
DIRECTOR

Key Funders & Supporters

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

United Way Elgin Middlesex

City of London

Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (Citizenship & Immigration Division)

Service Canada

London Community Foundation

May Court Club of London

Canadian Women's Foundation

Sifton Foundation

Government of Canada (Covid Grants - Administered through UWEM)

Ontario Student Nutrition Program, London

St. Aidan's Anglican Church

Second Harvest & Food Rescue (Covid Emergency Fund - The Spratt Foundation)

Unifor Local 27

Start.ca

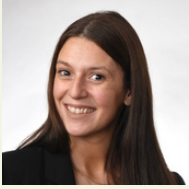
MEET THE STAFF



ELISABETE RODRIGUES
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



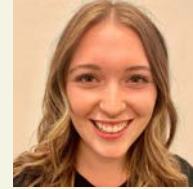
LEROY HIBBERT
MULTICULTURAL OUTREACH PROGRAM COORDINATOR



IRENA SOMPASEUTH
SETTLEMENT MANAGER



JENNIFER HENNING
LITERACY COORDINATOR



MIKYLA PRAGASHPATHY
BASIC NEEDS COORDINATOR



KATHY MILCZAREK
SWIS PROGRAM SUPERVISOR



MELISSA REYEN
SETTLEMENT SERVICES ASSISTANT



MARIAH FORD
YOUTH SUPPORT WORKER



DALMA MERINO
SCHOOL SETTLEMENT WORKER



KATERINA HERTMAN
SCHOOL SETTLEMENT WORKER



MAHA EL-ASSADI
COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS OUTREACH WORKER



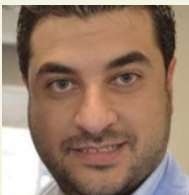
QUESTYN RODRIGUEZ
SCHOOL SETTLEMENT WORKER



SUE YANG
SCHOOL SETTLEMENT WORKER



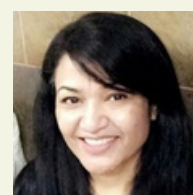
ILIRIANA ISLAMI
NEWCOMER YOUTH OUTREACH WORKER



HUSSEIN GHONEIM
SCHOOL SETTLEMENT WORKER



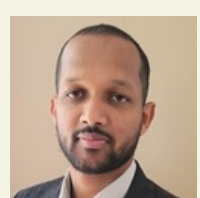
NADINE RENNO
SCHOOL SETTLEMENT WORKER



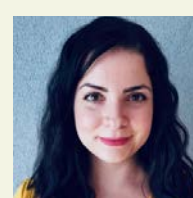
APARNA KARKY
SETTLEMENT COUNSELLOR



RANA BATAL
SCHOOL SETTLEMENT WORKER



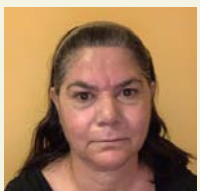
FITSUM ARGAW
SCHOOL SETTLEMENT WORKER



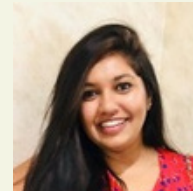
RAWAN MAHFOUD
SETTLEMENT COUNSELLOR



DIANA WANKOMO
SCHOOL SETTLEMENT WORKER



HIND OMER
LIBRARY SETTLEMENT WORKER



SANJANA PARIKH
LIBRARY SETTLEMENT WORKER



ABDULHAMEED AL-SAMMARRAIE
LIBRARY SETTLEMENT WORKER



MEINEKA KULASINGHE
PROGRAM COORDINATOR, CULTURAL SENSITIVITY FOR HOUSING SECTOR

THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

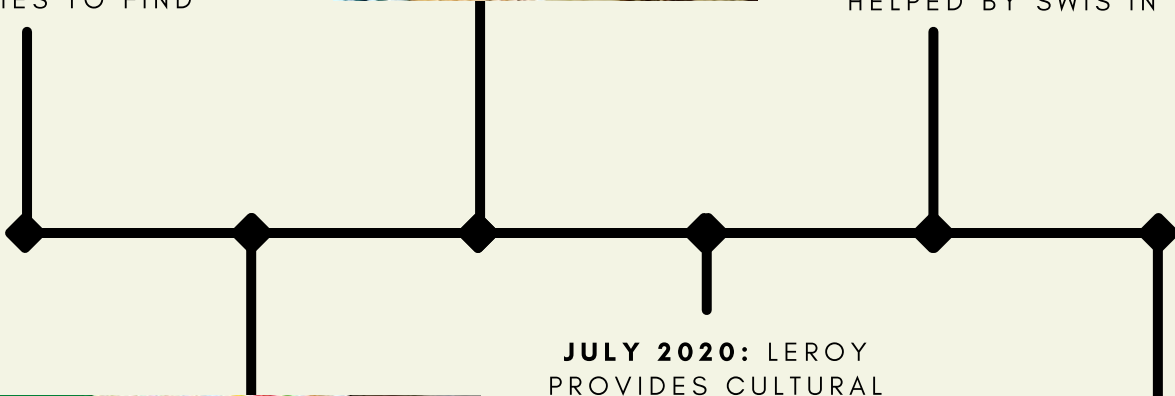
JUNE 2020: VIRTUAL SHAKE & BAKE GIRLS' PROGRAM MADE CINNAMON BUNS & CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIE BARS!



AUGUST 2020: SWEET SOULS COMPETED IN THE BAKE SALE SHOWDOWN AT COVENT GARDEN MARKET AND DONATED THEIR PROCEEDS TO LUSO! THEY HAD BEEN HELPED BY SWIS IN THE PAST



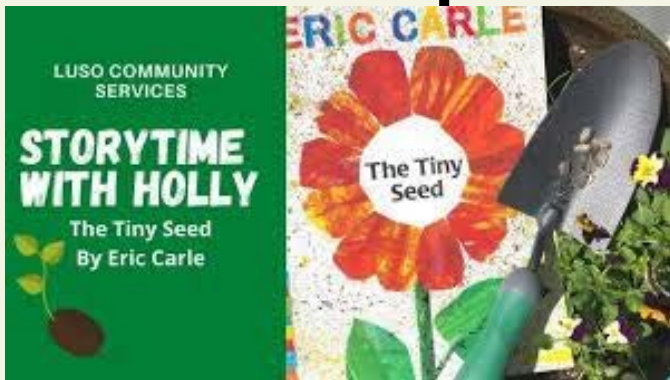
APRIL 2020: KINDNESS ROCKS WERE DISTRIBUTED IN OUR LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD FOR FAMILIES TO FIND



JULY 2020: LEROY PROVIDES CULTURAL SENSITIVITY TRAINING TO OVER 400 START.CA EMPLOYEES



SEPTEMBER 2020: LITERACY AND SWIS RAN IN-PERSON OUTDOOR FAMILY LITERACY ACTIVITIES FOR THE SUMMER, ENDING IN SEPTEMBER



MAY 2020: STORYTIME WITH HOLLY WAS CREATED TO ENGAGE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN LITERACY ACTIVITIES DURING THE FIRST COVID-19 LOCKDOWN



THE YEAR AT A GLANCE



OCTOBER 2020: BLESSED CARLO ACUTIS CONTINUING EDUCATION SCHOOL (ELEMENTARY) & LONDON CENTRAL SECONDARY SCHOOL (SECONDARY) WON THE STOP RACISM VIDEO CONTEST!

DECEMBER 2020: LUSO DISTRIBUTED 213 PAIRS OF BOOTS TO THOSE IN NEED THROUGH THE ANNUAL NEIGHBOURHOOD RESOURCE CENTRE BOOT DRIVE



FEBRUARY 2021: 130 CELL PHONES WITH BELL PLANS DISTRIBUTED TO INDIVIDUALS TO SUPPORT CONNECTION TO SERVICES



NOVEMBER 2020: THE STAFF TEAM COMPLETED A 5KM OUTDOOR WALK AS A COVID FRIENDLY UNITED WAY FUNDRAISER



MARCH 2021: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATION VIA ZOOM



JANUARY 2021: OVER \$7,500 DONATED TO LUSO BY ST. AIDAN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH'S CHURCHYARD BEES PROJECT



BASIC NEEDS & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Our Basic Needs program provides support, information, and referrals to residents in Northeast London. Residents can receive support with items such as clothing, food, baby food, and diapers.

Key Highlights:

- 4,513 unique individuals served
- 12,180 meals provided to vulnerable children and youth
- 837 unique children received breakfast through “Breakfast/Snack Bags To Go” program at 5 community locations
- 792 people received Harvest Bucks to be able to purchase fresh fruit and vegetables





LITERACY

Our programs provide a variety of literacy based activities and services for families and children up to 12 years of age. Programs aim to engage both children and their families in developing literacy and numeracy skills in a safe, fun, and supportive environment.

Key Highlights:

- 984 literacy kits were created; distributed to 328 unique children
- 18 Storytime with Holly videos were created and viewed over 9,000 times
- 81 unique families participated in in-person summer activities, representing 86 adults & 153 children
- 50 families attended virtual family literacy day with Indigenous author Monique Gray Smith





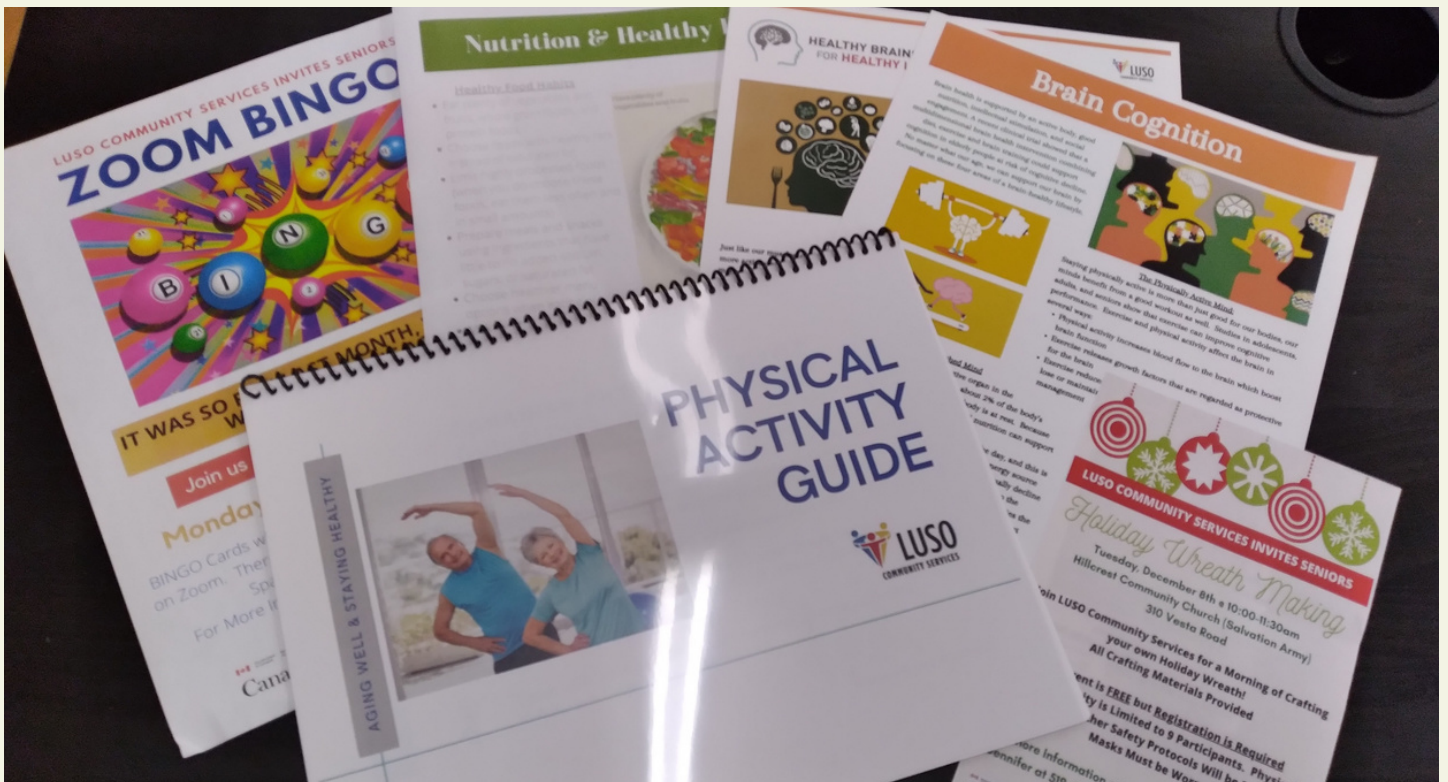
YOUTH

Our youth programs provide meaningful opportunities for young people between the ages of 11-19 to develop skills and become actively engaged in their community. We serve youth residing in Northeast London and focus on four key areas: Relationships & Inclusion, Leadership & Community Engagement, Education & Skill Building, and Healthy Eating and Physical Activity.

Key Highlights:

- 377 unique youth participated in programming
- 62 youth volunteered for a total of 1,084 hours
- 12 events organized by YOLO, with 207 participants
- Youth made valentines for isolated seniors





CO-CREATING NEIGHBOURHOOD STABILITY UNDER COVID-19

Through special funding due to Covid-19, we were able to focus on engaging two isolated populations: Seniors & International Student Families.

Key Highlights:

- We did 147 wellness check-ins with isolated seniors
- 403 individuals participated in programming
- 525 meals were provided

...for a total of **2,068** community connections with participants and **9** in-person activities!





MULTICULTURAL OUTREACH PROGRAM

This program provides workshops, presentations, and training on race relations, cultural conflict, racial identity, cultural literacy, and cultural competency.

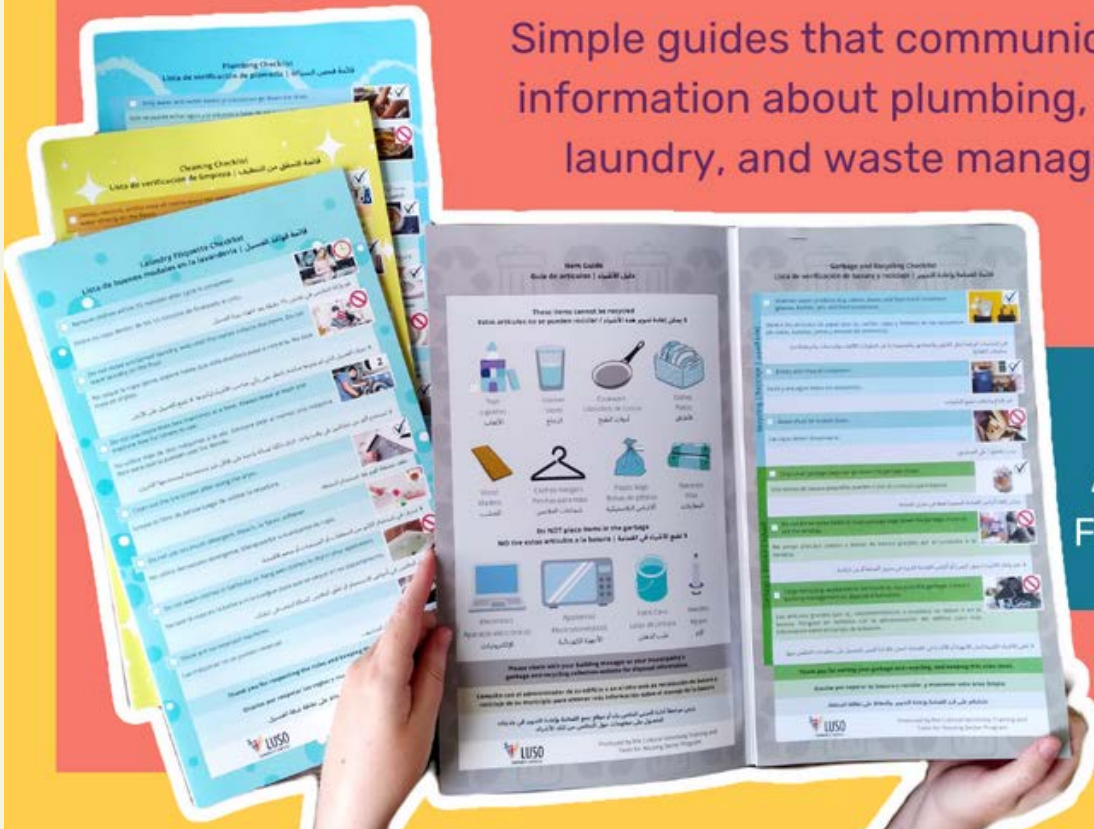
Key Highlights:

- 18,932 individuals were served through 118 workshops
 - 8,052 were in schools
 - 10,880 were from community organizations
- The program expanded to provide service to the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board
- Leroy was named to the London North Centre Honour Roll for his dedication to the community
- Hosted Anti-Racism Video Contest, sponsored by Unifor Local 27 & Start.ca



Translated Resource Checklists

Simple guides that communicate basic information about plumbing, cleaning, laundry, and waste management.



Available in:
Arabic/Spanish
French/Mandarin

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY FOR THE HOUSING SECTOR

This program provides support, resources, and customized training to landlords, supervisors, maintenance, administrative support, and property managers about various cultural groups to ensure positive relationships between building staff and tenants. The goal is to create more inclusive and welcoming environments for all residents.

Key Highlights:

- 19 housing companies received our services
- Poster-sized tools were developed for 75 buildings, impacting 3,600 rental units
- 350 postcard-sized tools were ordered by 3 separate housing corporations with intent to use with 350 Arabic- & Spanish-speaking tenants
- A poster mandating the use of masks in buildings was translated into Arabic & Spanish for 9 rental companies' use



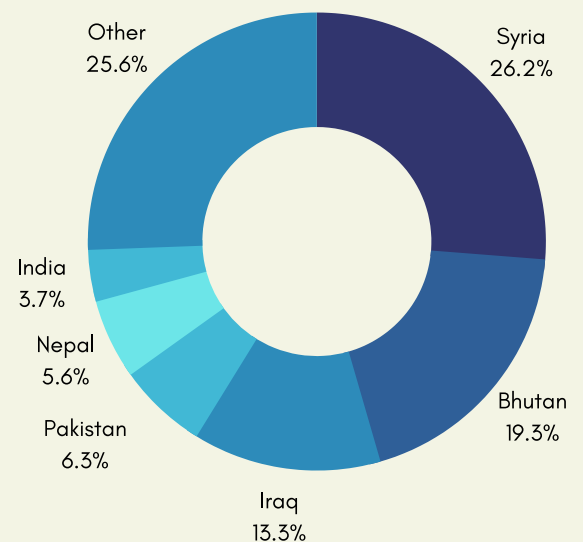
SETTLEMENT COUNSELLING

Settlement Counsellors offer one-on-one sessions to provide support, advocacy, information, and referrals on settlement- and integration-related issues such as: housing, social assistance, health care, education, employment, the legal system, and immigration.

Key Highlights:

- 310 individuals were served through 1,969 one-on-one and family sessions
 - 38% were Arabic-speaking & 24% were Nepali-speaking
 - 53% were female, and 47% were male
- 20 group sessions with 166 participants
- The program offered service in Arabic, English, French, Hindi, Nepali, and Urdu

TOP COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN





SETTLEMENT WORKERS IN SCHOOLS

SWIS help newcomer students and families with their settlement needs, as well as providing group information sessions to encourage school and community engagement. SWIS also help facilitate the NOW programs for newcomer students attending high school for the first time

Key Highlights:

- At the Thames Valley District School Board, SWIS served 451 unique clients in 3,098 sessions across 23 locations
- At the London District Catholic School Board, SWIS served 337 unique clients in 2,288 sessions across 8 locations.

LIBRARY SETTLEMENT PARTNERSHIP

Library Settlement Workers provide information & referrals on a one-on-one basis, covering a wide range of settlement topics. LUSO's LSP workers also specialize in supporting clients that are preparing to become Canadian citizens.

Key Highlights:

- Over 2,000 sessions with 620 unique clients from 48 countries
- The program expanded to 2 full-time and 1 part-time staff
- Service is offered in Arabic, Azeri, English, Gujarati, Hindi, Turkish, and Urdu; clients spoke over 35 different languages, the most common being Arabic, Kurdish, and Assyrian
- Game bags for children and youth were created and are available at the library



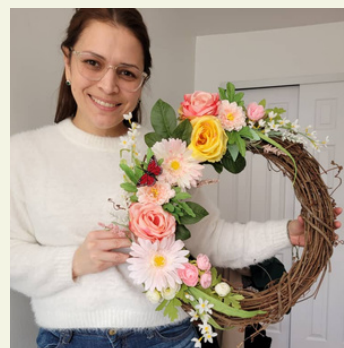


COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

This program offers opportunities for newcomer families and youth to build social connections and learn about Canadian culture, which supports integration into the community.

Key Highlights:

- 321 unique participants were served through 1,923 sessions
- 35.8% were from Syria & 22.7% were from Iraq



COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS

GARY LONGHURST



Gary has been a key volunteer since 2017. His passion to support the community with food security needs has been evident in his involvement with the Northeast Basic Needs Community Group since its inception. Gary has also been instrumental in the Good Food Box program in our community by ensuring that LUSO and the Carling Thames Family Centre get their boxes each month. Gary picks them up for us and delivers to the two locations. Additionally, Gary supported Breakfast Programs in the area by helping to prepare food on a weekly basis during the summers of 2017, 2018, and 2019. Thank you Gary for all that you have done to support food security initiatives in our community.

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS

FAMILY CENTRE FANSHAWE



Since Family Centre Fanshawe opened in 2017, they have actively welcomed LUSO into their space and supported LUSO in community programming. In the Family Centre, we have hosted Shared Beginnings, our literacy-based playgroup for ages 0-6, and youth programs including Let's Get Cooking, Babysitting, and Prism Art Program.

The Family Centre staff consistently go above and beyond in their support of our organization and programming. They often help with set-up and clean-up of program space; provide valuable feedback; and facilitate introductions to new families. They are open to sharing programming ideas and resources, and most importantly, provide an abundance of care, compassion, and welcome to our clients.

Not only has Family Centre Fanshawe supported our programming space needs, but they also have supported LUSO by providing space for our monthly staff meetings. They have truly made LUSO feel at home in the centre.



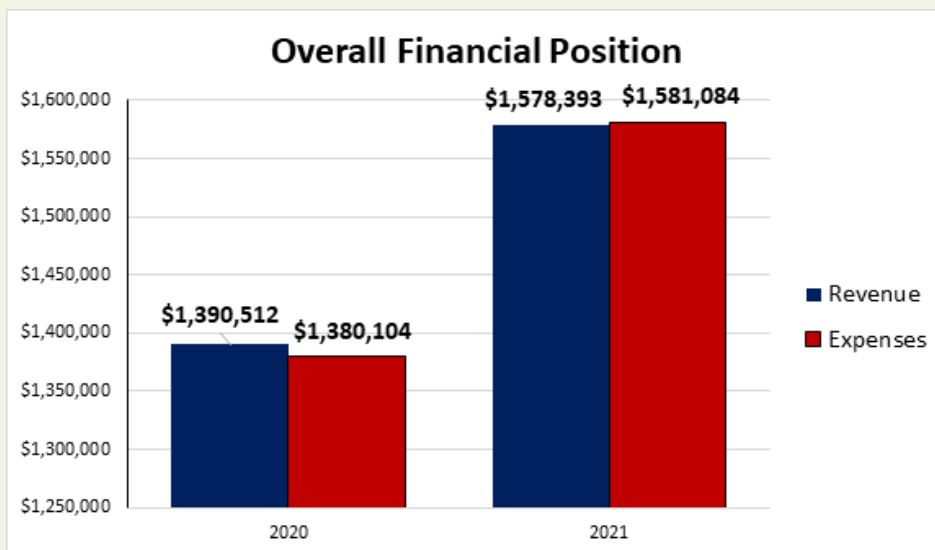
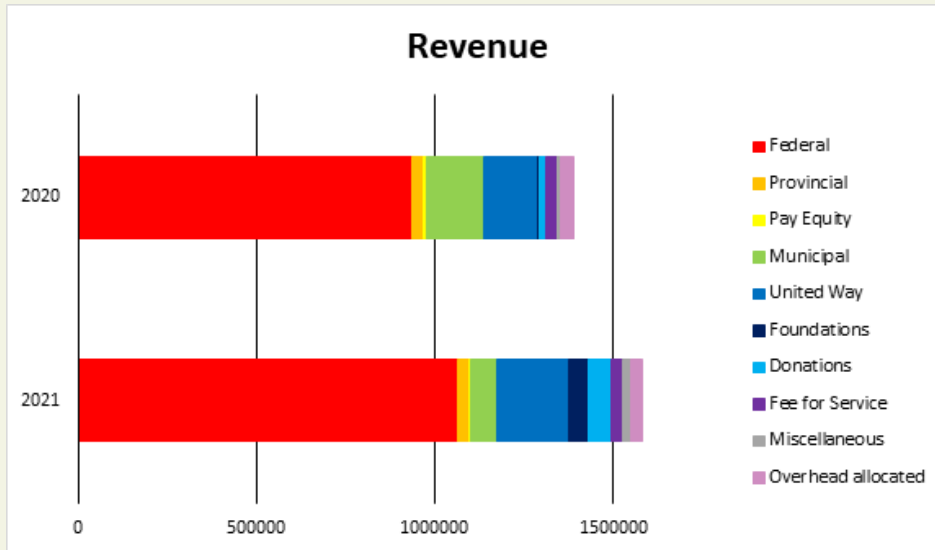
THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Partnerships were vital in 2020-2021 as we navigated through the impacts of Covid-19. We are truly thankful to those that collaborated with us to ensure we could continue to fulfill our mission and continue to provide vital programs and services to those most in need.

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| 519 School of Hip Hop | Huron Perth Catholic School Board | Pillar Nonprofit Network |
| Avon Maitland District School Board | London Cycle Link | Rowntree United Church |
| Beachcomber Hot Tubs-London | London District Catholic School Board | Siloam United Church |
| Boys & Girls Club of London | London Food Bank | South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre |
| Canada Revenue Agency - Outreach Program | London Food Coalition | St. Jude's Church |
| Child and Youth Network | London Middlesex Health Unit | St. Michael's Church |
| Classic Rock - 98.1 FM | London Police Services | Thames Valley District School Board |
| Crouch Neighbourhood Resource Centre | London Public Library | The Salvation Army-Centre of Hope |
| Family Centre Argyle | London Small Business Centre | Valleyview Mennonite Church |
| Family Centre Carling-Thames | Lord Elgin Elementary School | Virgin Radio - 97.5 |
| Family Centre Fanshawe | Meals on Wheels | YMCA of Southwestern Ontario |
| Family Service Thames Valley | Museum London | |
| Fanshawe College | NE Basic Needs Community Partners | |
| Gender Equality Coalition of Ontario | Northland Mall - No Frills | |
| Glen Cairn Community Resource Centre | Northwest London Resource Centre | |
| | Ontario Students Nutrition Program, London | |

We apologize for any partners we inadvertently missed

FINANCES



Auditor: Lunick & Company, CA
 Full audited statements are available upon request



LUSO is a multicultural neighbourhood resource centre dedicated to promoting inclusiveness, well-being, and prosperity in the London community. We provide a variety of programs and services with a holistic approach to serving our community. Our programs support children, youth, and families of culturally diverse backgrounds.

Our organization relies on community donations to support various programs including keeping our basic needs community cupboard stocked with non-perishable food items for families.

Please contact us to learn how YOU can make a difference.

