



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

November 1, 2024 to  
October 31, 2025



## Our vision

Communities where all young people flourish.

## Our mission

To build healthy communities by training and equipping young people to lead change. Activating all sectors to work together towards an asset-building culture.

## We believe

- In a “Train the Trainer” model. Through training and mentoring older youth to mentor and guide younger youth, they are able to build important skills.
- All youth have interests and passions (sparks) that can inspire and motivate them.
- In building developmental Assets and developmental Relationships to improve outcomes, Healthy Youth Network uses five principles that guide every interaction with youth.



- Through collaboration, we can create communities that work together to achieve better outcomes for youth.
- Everyone has a role to play in building healthy relationships and helping young people to be successful.

## Purpose

- To address and prevent specific problems faced by youth, and to advance education by providing programs, workshops and training on topics such as leadership, self-esteem, mental health, positive gender roles, employment assistance, and career coaching.
- To address and prevent problems faced by youth and their families by providing accessible online portals that provide resources, training, workshops, and links to community resources and experts in various fields to assist youth and their guardians/parents with issues they face.
- To carry out activities ancillary and incidental to the above charitable purposes.

We bring together expertise in education, mental health and business to give our approach balance and ensure that the whole community has representation.

Healthy Youth Network uses Search Institute’s Developmental Assets Framework to guide our work, focus our efforts and evaluate outcomes. We follow Search Institute’s Developmental Relationship Framework to guide our interactions with youth and effectively engage them. By embedding assets & relationships in young people’s lives, we improve mental health, reduce at-risk behaviour, and create better outcomes.



## HYN Board of Directors

Andy Burnside, *Co-President*

Samantha McGregor, *Co-President*

Dr. Zobia Jawed, *Ph.D., M.Eng., MBA*  
*Vice President*

Karen Turkstra, *Treasurer*

Robert McCann, *Member*

Kelly Rizzo, *Member*

Penny Deathe, *Secretary of the Board/  
Executive Director*

## President's message

### Healthy Youth Network — 2026 Annual Report

Reflecting on 2025, the Healthy Youth Network Board of Directors are inspired by the momentum our community has built. This past year reaffirmed our belief that when youth are supported, connected, and empowered, they become catalysts for healthier, more resilient communities. Across Flamborough, Hamilton, and Halton, we saw partners, young people, and the business community come together with a shared commitment to helping all youth flourish.

### Strengthening youth well-being through HEART

One of the most significant areas of focus in 2025 was the continued expansion of our HEART Program, which focuses on building Healthy Education About Relationships (HEART). Empowered by Mackenzie Boers, program coordinator, our student-led HEART teams focused on peer-led activities and events, and has reached more students than ever before. We saw youth develop stronger leadership skills, emotional awareness, and build supportive peer connections—skills that are essential in today's complex social environment. Positive feedback from students, educators, and community members means that the HEART program will remain one of our top priorities in 2026 and beyond.

### Helping youth explore their future through What's Your Path

Our What's Your Path initiative continued to be a cornerstone of our leadership and career-readiness efforts. In 2025, we expanded the program to include new events and community partnerships that helped youth explore a wide range of pathways—academic, skilled trades, entrepreneurship, and community leadership. Our Career-A-Palooza in November helped young people learn about non-traditional career paths, directly from professionals, and our Future-Ready speaker

series connected current students with Waterdown District High School (WDHS) alumni who shared real-world experiences to help guide teens on their post-secondary journey.

### Growing our impact through community support

While our flagship annual fundraiser, The Flamborough Paint Challenge, had run its course (pun intended), we were grateful to partner with Radiant Girls on the Family Adventure Race. While we are experiencing increasing challenges to raise sufficient funds, HYN's fundraising efforts continue to evolve in response. Stay tuned for a new fundraising series, launching in Q2 of 2026.

### Looking ahead to 2026

As we move into 2026, we are energized by the opportunities ahead. We are expanding HEART into additional schools, enhancing What's Your Path with new mentorship opportunities, and strengthening our collaborations with educators, mental health partners, and community organizations. We are also committed to elevating youth voice in decision-making spaces, ensuring that young people continue to shape the programs and partnerships that impact their lives.

The challenges facing youth are real, but so is their potential. With your continued support—whether as a partner, donor, volunteer, or advocate—we will keep building communities where young people feel valued, connected, and empowered to lead.

Thank you for standing with us and for believing in the power of youth leadership. Together, we are creating communities where every young person has the opportunity to thrive.

Warmly,

Samantha McGregor and Andy Burnside,  
Co-Presidents, Healthy Youth Network

# Message from our Executive Director



## Understanding the “WHY”

Most of you know who **Healthy Youth Network** is. You know we serve the youth of Flamborough, and you’ve likely heard us champion the phrase “positive youth development.” But do you know the “WHY” behind it all?

As Simon Sinek famously says, “*Start with Why.*” So, let me start there.

When we launched in 2009 as a community initiative, we intentionally adopted the **Search Institute’s Developmental Assets** as our framework. The “Why” was clear: Assets build protective factors. The data shows that the more assets a young person possesses, the less likely they are to engage in high-risk behaviour and the greater their chance of long-term success. We have never strayed from this mission; every program we create is designed to intentionally build these vital building blocks.

However, while our mission remains steadfast, the world around us has transformed. The truth is, **the challenges may change, but the solution does not.**

## A shifting landscape

Today, we see students who are no longer engaged and educators who are desperate for solutions. The landscape has shifted fundamentally beneath our feet in three specific ways:

- **Digital & Global Pressure:** Social media and the volatility of world politics have fundamentally altered what young people believe and, more importantly, how they act.
- **The AI Shift:** AI is already reshaping their future career goals. In many classrooms, this has created a creeping sense of “Why bother?”—a belief that their effort is being replaced by algorithms.
- **The Parenting Paradox:** We’ve watched “Helicopter parents” (who hover) be replaced by “Bulldozer parents” (who clear the path). Now, we see the rise of the **Concierge Parent** who functions like a 24/7 hotel service, proactively removing every obstacle, failure, and negative consequence from their child’s life. While well-intentioned, this is stripping our children of their armour. When we remove every obstacle, we remove the opportunity to build resilience.

We cannot ignore the impact of these changes. Binge drinking, drug abuse, gender-based violence, and a total lack of motivation are frequently cited as the “problems” facing our youth.

## They are not the problems. They are symptoms.

The root cause is a lack of the protective factors needed to navigate a complex world. Our “Why” is more urgent than ever: young people need these Developmental Assets to thrive in a high-pressure, automated, and over-protected world.

With the continued support of our community partners and funders, Healthy Youth Network is committed to building that armour. We aren’t just reacting to symptoms; we are providing the “Why” that gives our youth a reason to engage, to grow, and to lead.

With gratitude,

**Penny Deathe**, Executive Director

# Our 2024/25 Priorities



## Organizational

### Increase visibility within the Hamilton community.

- Joined Hamilton Chamber of Commerce
- Joined Hamilton's Child and Youth Network
  - » Member of Data & Decision-Making Group that developed and launched a Data Dashboard
- Joined YSAN's Training & Resources Committee - Recognized as leader in asset-building
  - » Developmental Assets/Relationships included in training/resources for YSAN members
  - » HYN coordinated training for YSAN members

### Increase local funding

- Increased funding through local community foundations
- Replaced the Flamboroug Paint Challenge with new fundraising event

## Program

### Stay focused on scaling up What's Your Path and HEART

- HWDSB agrees to act in an advisory capacity to create a licensing model for HEART
- HWDSB Pathways Team support expanding WYP into other schools

### Increase partnerships to strengthen programs

- The Offord Centre at McMaster University to assist in data collection and research of HEART
- HYN invited to share challenges with McMaster Psychology students
- Met with Young Entrepreneurs group from Hamilton Chamber of Commerce to support WYP
- Added new member from Flamborough Chamber of Commerce to our WYP Advisory Team
- Collaborated with Hamilton Industry Education Council on career events

### Embed youth leadership in all programs

- City of Hamilton Youth Summit - HYN presented the Youth Portal and WYP Portal to students from across Hamilton to review and provide feedback
- WDHS students given opportunities to choose speakers for events
- McMaster Psychology students research ways to engage males in conversations on gender-based violence and healthy relationships, and generate suggestions for HEART to implement



# What's Your Path Program



Discover. Explore. Create.

Helping young people refine their skills, passions & interests in order to develop a path for the future based on their priorities and goals. Through building confidence, reducing barriers, and connecting them to the resources and support they need, we will ensure young people are future-ready.

## Highlights from the Year

- WYP Portal - 1100 Active Users
- 65 career profiles
- Future-Ready Event
  - » 13 speakers booked including Alumni Panel
  - » Over 60 parents & students attend
- Alumni Panel speak to over 30 students as part of Take Your Child to Work Day
- Diverse speakers address challenges students face
- Financial Advisor Professionals speak to teachers, parents and students on planning for post-secondary education.
- Summer student hired through Canada Summer Jobs updates the Portal and adds new resources including a new section for students with IEP's.



### What's Your Path Steering Committee

Sherrí Cully, *Program Manager, Chair*

Derek Zuccolo, *Head of Student Services, Waterdown District High School*

Sophie Boers, *MediaBay Creative*

Spencer Edwards, *YMCA Employment Services*

Andy Burnside, *Desjardin Insurance*

Shelly Coleman, *Luci Boutique*

### Funders



# HEART Program



## Our vision

A safe school environment for all genders, where everyone feels heard, supported, and treated equally.



## Our mission

Tackling gender-based violence in our community by raising awareness and educating youth about healthy relationships.

## Highlights from the Year

- HWDSB approves adding Healthy Relationships+ training.
- Participated in 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, which included a school-wide assembly at Sir Allan MacNab where HEART students acted in an interactive skit on how to Be More Than a Bystander.
- Sir Allan MacNab participated in Pink Shirt Day, creating a school-wide display of pink shirts designed with positive and encouraging messages.
- WDHS HEART hosted a Period Drive Bake Sale to raise money to support Help a Girl Out's efforts to reduce period poverty, and to donate menstrual products to Interval House of Hamilton.
- HEART teams held their annual Empowering Breakfasts. Sir Allan MacNab invited Help a Girl Out to break the stigma around menstruation, and to encourage body positivity. WDHS invited Brittany Krystantos, a mental health speaker and bestselling author, to share her story. Through the breakfasts, HEART reached 300 students across the two schools.

### HEART Committee

Penny Deathe, *Program Manager*  
Mackenzie Boers,  
*Program Coordinator*  
Kelly Rizzo, *Research Team*

### Waterdown District High School

Kaila Thomas, *HEART Teacher Lead*  
Julie Buckle, *HEART Teacher Lead*

### Sir Allan MacNab Secondary School

Chrissy McComb, *Teacher Lead*  
Lisa Sidorkewicz, *Teacher Lead*

### Funders

Patrick J. McNally  
Charitable Foundation

The Ward 15 Community Council

Ted McMeekin  
CITY COUNCILLOR WARD 15



HAMILTON  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION

TURKSTRA  
ALWAYS ON THE LEVEL

Rotary  
Club of Waterdown

## Empowering Breakfasts Impact (survey respondents)

### WDHS

- **200** students attended
- **48.6%** had attended a HEART event before and retained information
- **88.5%** found the event engaging
- **70.6%** learned something they expect to remember

### Sir Allan MacNab

- **100** students attended
- **50%** had attended a HEART event before and retained information
- **70%** found the event engaging
- **80%** learned something they expect to remember

# Youth Portal & Parent Place



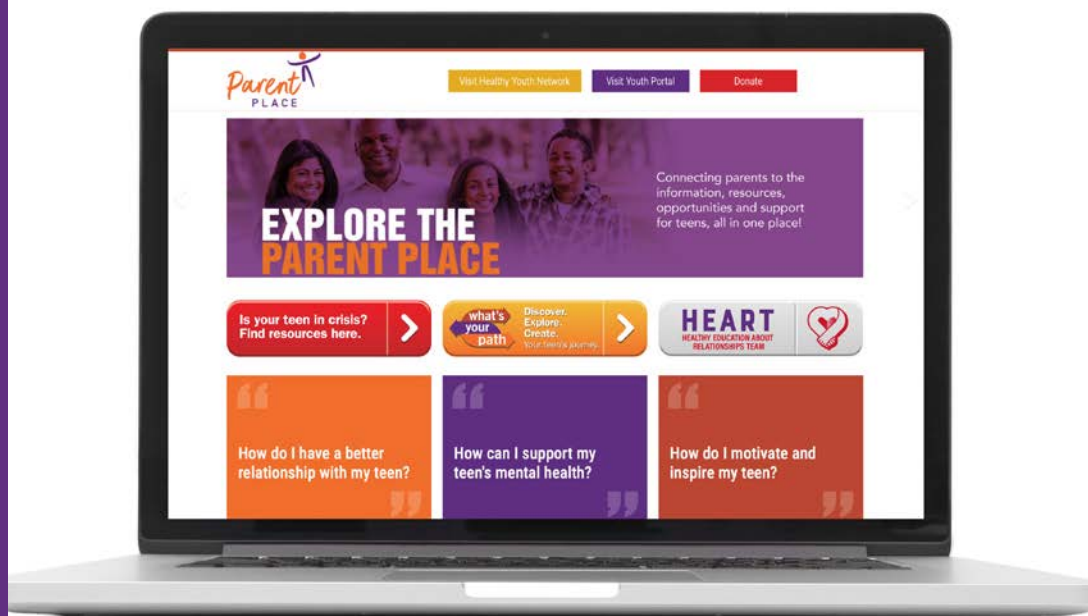
**1,469**  
Visits to Youth Portal

**Youth Portal:** A website for youth, with information, resources and support for some of the biggest issues teens experience today.

**Parent Place:** A website for parents, with resources to navigate through difficult situations and help on how to strengthen relationships.

## Highlights from the Year

- High school students from across Hamilton explore the Youth Portal and provide feedback through workshop at HamOnt Youth Summit
- Summer student hired to update and expand information in the portals.



### Website Steering Committee

Bert McMallum, *Market Mechanics, Website Developer*

Sophie Boers, *MediaBay Creative*

Derek Zuccolo, *Head of Student Services, WDHS*

Sherril Cully

Mackenzie Boers, *Communication*

### Funder



# Financial Statements

## 2024/25

### Statement of Operations For the year ended October 31, 2025 (Unaudited)

	2025
<b>REVENUE</b>	
Grants, note 2	\$ 105,476
Donations	13,917
Fundraising and sponsorships	-
Event tickets	-
	<u>119,393</u>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	
Advertising and promotion	2,890
Insurance	2,208
Materials and supplies	1,215
Office and administration	2,226
Professional fees	9,672
Refreshments and supplies for meetings	3,923
Telephone	405
Wages and benefits	104,112
	<u>126,651</u>
<b>(DEFICIENCY) EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURES FOR THE YEAR</b>	<u>\$ (7,258)</u>

# Financial Statements

## 2024/25

### Statement of Cash Flows For the year ended October 31, 2025 (Unaudited)

	2025
<b>CASH PROVIDED BY (USED FOR) OPERATIONS</b>	
<b>OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>	
(Deficiency) excess of revenue over expenditures	\$ (7,258)
Change in non-cash operating working capital terms	
HST PSB rebate receivable	7,228
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	3,136
Government remittances payable	327
Deferred revenue	-
<b>CHANGE IN CASH POSITION</b>	<b>3,433</b>
<b>CASH POSITION, BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>	<b>47,701</b>
<b>CASH POSITION, END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 51,134</b>

\*Deficit balances 2023/24 excess

# Financial Statements

## Statement of Net Assets

### Statement of Net Assets For the year ended October 31, 2025 (Unaudited)

	2025	2024
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 15,416	\$ 9,201
(DEFICIENCY) EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURES	(7,258)	6,215
<b>BALANCE, END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 8,158</b>	<b>\$ 15,416</b>