



**THE GUESTHOUSE SHELTER
ANNUAL REPORT
2024/2025**

Location: 522 Elizabeth St., Midland ON, L4R 2A1
CRA Charity #: 845435007RR0001
Web Site: tghs.ca

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ABOUT US

Coverage Area: The Guesthouse Shelter serves the municipalities of North Simcoe (population 60,000+).

Midland is the hub of the region, offering year-round shopping and services to local residents, and welcoming a seasonal population that triples each summer along scenic Georgian Bay.

The Guesthouse Shelter traces its roots to 2003, when the local chapter of the Simcoe County Alliance to End Homelessness recognized the urgent need for a regional, volunteer-driven shelter. This need had become particularly pressing after the closure of the Salvation Army Men's Shelter in the **late 1990s**.

In **January 2004**, Midland Out of the Cold opened three evenings a week. By its second season, demand had grown so quickly that the shelter expanded to operate nightly from November to April. Initially rotating between Midland-Penetanguishene churches, the model proved unsustainable for guests, police, and volunteers alike.

A turning point came in **2007**, when funding secured a permanent space in Knox Presbyterian Church's basement. Modest but vital amenities—a washer and dryer, shower, small kitchen, and dining area—helped sustain more than 1,000 volunteers in serving over 100,000 meals and 18,000 overnight stays in the decade that followed.

Recognizing the increasing complexity of community needs, the shelter board moved toward professional staffing and government partnerships. With the support of local politicians and police services, operations expanded to year-round on **November 15, 2012**. The following year, the shelter became The Guesthouse Shelter, a registered charity, and in **January 2014** began receiving County of Simcoe funding through the Social and Community Investment Fund, supporting their “community hub” operations.

That same year in **December 2014**, The Guesthouse Shelter purchased its permanent home at 522 Elizabeth Street, Midland. Renovations completed by 2017 provided space for 18 beds, a commercial kitchen, dining room, and health clinic.

By **2019**, the Guesthouse had become a professionally-operated organization, integrating harm reduction and trauma-informed care. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 required a temporary shift to motels, with food prepared at the shelter and delivered to both motel guests and the wider community. By early 2022, the shelter was serving an average of 60 guests daily, including many children.

Operations returned to Elizabeth Street in **June 2022**, with a 21-bed capacity on site, supported by continued motel accommodations. As of **March 2025**, occupancy rates remain high for a rural shelter. Despite ongoing challenges, staff remain committed, and volunteer involvement is once again growing—evidenced by record regional participation in the Coldest Night of the Year on February 22, 2025.

Today, The Guesthouse Shelter continues to be a vital lifeline in North Simcoe. Thanks to the dedication of skilled staff, volunteers, community partners, and supporters, our value is evident, our vision bold, and our future stronger each day.

OUR MEMBERSHIP

Any individual, 18 years or older, may be a member of the Guesthouse Shelter. All members, except employees and honorary members, have the rights to participate at a General Meeting: to make or second motions, to speak to motions, to vote and to stand for election to the Board of Directors.

To participate at a General Meeting of the Corporation, members must become members at least thirty days before the General Meeting at which she/he wishes to actively participate.

Employees of the Guesthouse Shelter have full rights to participate at General Meetings but may not serve on the Board of Directors. There are three types of membership, with some conditions around each. They are:

1. Volunteer Members:

Volunteers, who are regularly scheduled on one of the daily teams during the fiscal year of the Corporation, in whatever capacity, are automatically members of the Corporation. Each will be advised of this and can decline membership. Volunteer membership automatically ceases when a volunteer is no longer part of the regular schedule of volunteers.

2. Members at Large:

Any individual from the community may become a member of the Corporation, upon application to be a member. Membership will be for the fiscal year of the Corporation and must be renewed annually. Employees of The Guesthouse Shelter are deemed Members at Large.

3. Honorary Members:

From time to time the Board of Directors may deem it appropriate to name an individual or company as an Honorary Member of the Corporation, because of extraordinary contribution to The Guesthouse Shelter. This may include significant financial support, specific contributions of expertise or other similar reasons. Honorary members of the Corporation have the right to speak to resolutions or other matters at a General Meeting, but do not have rights to make or second motions, vote on resolutions or serve on the Board of Directors. Honorary members may become Members at Large in the same manner members of the community join the Corporation. Honorary members retain their status until she/he no longer wishes to be so designated.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday, September 23, 2025

- 1. Welcome**
- 2. Land Acknowledgement**
- 3. Call to Order**
- 4. Opening**
- 5. Approval of the Agenda**
- 6. Conflicts of Interest**
- 7. Approval of Minutes from 2023-2024 Annual General Mtg**
- 8. President's Report**
- 9. Chief Executive Officer's Report**
- 10. Our Auditor's Remarks**
- 11. Re-appointment of Auditor**
- 12. Plans for Future Legal Support**
- 13. Approval of the Actions of the Board of Directors**
- 14. Nominations Report**
- 15. Other Business**
- 16. Next Board Meeting**
- 17. Adjournment**

The Guesthouse Shelter
FY2023-2024 AGM MINUTES

Tuesday September 24, 2024 – 5:30 PM

Via Zoom

Chaired by: Bob Bruer

Present: See attached list.

Director regrets: Robert Walton, Sylvia Bumstead

Paper Reports: 2023-24 Annual Report (a pdf copy was available in the Zoom chat window and key pages were shared on screen per items noted below)

NOTES:

- i. On May 21, 2024, The Canada Revenue Agency granted the Guesthouse permission to change it's Fiscal Year-End from May 31 to March 31. Due to the lateness of this permission, the Guesthouse auditor was challenged not only by a shortened timeline for completion of the 2023-24 audit, but also by unique challenges for reporting on a ten-month fiscal year (Jun 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024). As a result, and as occurred twice already by the times of Guesthouse's 14 AGMs to date, the audit was not ready by the time of the announced AGM.
 - ii. During a Sept 17, 2024, board meeting, following Rob Walton's announcement of his intent to resign from the Guesthouse presidency, the board appointed Bob Bruer as the Interim Board President of the Guesthouse.
 - iii. Up until the morning of this year's AGM, out-going president Rob Walton was expected to chair the AGM, given that he had been the president throughout FY2023-24. Due to a last-minute emergency, Bob Bruer had to step into chairing the meeting.
-

Prior to the start of the meeting, Guesthouse board member Louise Maurice welcomed everyone to the meeting. Louise asked everyone to note the contents of the Annual Report relevant to the meeting. After personally noting her gratitude for the large, continued role played by Guesthouse staff and volunteers in FY2023-24, Louise called on Rev. Barry Doner from First Presbyterian Church in Penetanguishene to provide a Land Acknowledgement.

1. Welcome – Louise Maurice

2. Land Acknowledgement – Rev. Barry Doner

3. Called to Order and Opening Remarks – Bob Bruer at 5:41 PM

- 4. Approval of Agenda:** (Shared to Screen) Zena Pendlebury asked if the audit was not part of the AGM. BB clarified that similar to two other times in the history of the Guesthouse, the audit is again not ready by the time of our announced AGM (i.e., today). An invitation will be sent out later to attend a public report by the Guesthouse accountant, once the audit is complete. In lieu of the audit not being ready, Bob Bruer will present an Operation Report later in the AGM, including financial details that we have available already. Zena indicated her approval of the answer given.

A motion to approve the Agenda was made by Cyndy Coté; seconded by Louise Maurice, carried.

5. Conflicts of Interest:

6. Approval of 2023-2024 AGM Minutes: (Shared to Screen) A motion to approve by Cyndy Coté; seconded by Leslie Lynn, no discussion, carried.

7. Out-Going President's Report: (Shared to Screen) With Rob Walton's unexpected AGM absence, Bob Bruer stepped in to provide a summary of Rob's President's Report, noting his wide thanks, beginning with the shelter staff, followed by the shelter volunteers, the County of Simcoe and the North Simcoe municipalities. Rob also contrasted the slowness of our lift construction as opposed to the sudden collapse of main street buildings in Penetang, noting with the latter emergency, the shelter staff were there when needed, providing shelter, food and other basics for the suddenly unhoused Penetanguishene residents.

Beth Prost moved acceptance of Rob Walton's President's Report, seconded by Leslie Lynn, no further discussion, carried.

8. Operations Report: (Shared to Screen) In lieu of a Financial Report from the Guesthouse auditor, Bob Bruer provided a summary of various non-financial statistics comparing Jan-Mar 2023 to Jan-Mar 2024.

Some questions arose regarding the actual number of beds in operation at the Guesthouse (21). Bob continued on to a look at 5-yr fiscal trends, highlighting the large rise in both revenue and expense during the pandemic, the continued rise in Guesthouse Donations over the five years, the small portion of shelter expense relating to food and the continued \$600K+ in Long-Term Debt.

Further questions arose around the payroll expense. Bob noted that the board did act early in the pandemic to increase starting wages and to provide benefits. Nonetheless, total wages remain essentially the same now as before the pandemic.

Cyndy Coté moved acceptance of Bob Bruer's Operation's Report notwithstanding the need for a full Financial Report by the Guesthouse auditor at a later date, seconded by Rosemary Sykes, no further discussion, carried.

9. Appointment of Auditor: Cyndy Coté also moved the re-appointment of NVS as our auditor for FY2024-25, seconded by Leslie Lynn, carried.

Ad Hoc: The chair interrupted the planned agenda to invite MP Adam Chambers to bring greetings from Ottawa.

MP Chambers began by noting the importance he felt to attend the AGM and express his thanks to the GH staff and volunteers for their ongoing care for the most vulnerable in our community. He noted that he and his family were at the CNOY last Feb, where his heart was filled with joy, seeing so much community support for the walk and the shelter.

The chair turned next to ask Midland Deputy Mayor, inviting her to bring greetings on behalf of all the regional municipalities.

Deputy Mayor Beth Prost spoke about her many years of involvement with the unhoused in our area. With regards to the Guesthouse, she feels honored and privileged to recently become an active volunteer at the Guesthouse. In that role, she described what she is seeing at the shelter these days as “amazing!”

(Return to agenda.)

10. Plans for Future Legal Support: Louise announced that as with last year, the current board feels adequately knowledgeable in this area, and we will again be considering any task requiring legal expertise on a case-by-case basis and hiring the lawyer best suited to the task at hand. No motion.

11. Approval of the Actions of the Board of Directors: Volunteer Fran Hill made a motion to approve the 2023-2024 actions of the board; seconded by Zena Pendlebury, carried.

12. Nominations Report: (Leslie Lynn's Nominations Report was shared to the screen) Leslie noted that normal term limits were put on hold at the start of the pandemic. No one left the board – instead, the board continued meeting via Zoom. Only recently, we lost Father Michael Knox and Grace Kidd from the board. In their places, and with a return to staggering of appointments, the board has appointed Rosemary Sykes to a 2-year term and Jennifer Schuler to a 3-year term.

After pausing, board member Louis Maurice moved acceptance of Leslie's nomination report, seconded by Cyndy Cote, carried.

13. Other Business: The chair offered all the opportunity to bring up further items. No one added anything further. The chair thanked all for their support by attending the AGM tonight.

14. Next Board Meeting: Chair announced the next scheduled board meeting is October 23, 2024 at 5 PM.

15. Adjournment: Chair declared meeting closed at 6:25 PM.

16.

2023-24 AGM ATTENDEES

Bob Bruer
Cyndy Coté
Louise Maurice
Leslie Lynn
Rosemary Sykes
Jennifer Schuler
Zena Pendlebury
Fran Hill
Rev. Barry Doner

MP Adam Chambers
Midland Deputy Mayor Beth Prost
Tay Mayor Ted Walker
Midland Councilor Howie Major
GH SOM Stephanie Vaillancourt
Charlene McTague
Gord McKay
Dr. Keith Rose
Deacon Rev. Tim Dunlop

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bob Bruer

Position: President, Secretary & Executive Committee Officer **Entry Date to Board:** Aug 13, 2010
Term End Date: Sep 30, 2026

Involvement and Background:

Bob has volunteered with the Guesthouse Shelter in various roles, including serving as its founding president from Aug 2010 to Jan 2020 and Sep 2024 to the present.

Born in Scarborough and raised in Mississauga, Bob first moved to North Simcoe in 1978, teaching piano and music theory privately for 25+ years from a studio in his home. Leaving the region (and teaching) in 2004, Bob studied psychiatric epidemiology at Washington University in St. Louis Medical School. Since his return to Canada, Bob worked from 2010 until last Mar 2024 as a health-care researcher at Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital. In Apr 2024, Bob began work at the Rural Ontario Medical Program, mentoring a team of medical students with particular interest in Rural Health Care Research. He remains active musically, serving since 2015 as the music director at St. John's United Church in Elmvale.

Bob is proud father of the Reverends Sarah Bruer & Beth Kerr (Collingwood, ON). Equally proud father to Anne McChesney (Orillia). And (in theory only) equally proud grandpa to Adalynn and Kai McChesney.

Cyndy Coté

Position: Vice-President & Executive Committee Officer **Entry Date to Board:** Mar 8, 2016
Term End Date: Sep 30, 2026

Involvement and Background:

Cyndy was born in Penetanguishene and was raised in Midland. Apart from 6 years in Saskatchewan, she has lived most of her life between Midland, Penetanguishene and Tiny Township.

Cyndy graduated from Georgian College's Law and Security Program with honours in 1980 and many years later from the Library and Information Technician's Program, with honours, at Mohawk College. Cyndy worked at the Penetanguishene Public Library for almost 25 years. First as a volunteer, then as the Head of Public and Technical Services and finally retiring in October of 2019 as the CEO.

Cyndy has had various volunteer roles in the area, most involving fundraising for causes she feels strongly about. Her volunteer experience, coupled with her thorough understanding of local issues, contributed much to the Guesthouse board in 2017-2018, as she assumed the role of board vice-president.

Cyndy currently lives in the Township of Tiny with her husband Jamie.

Jennifer Schuler

Position: Board Director & Executive Committee Officer **Entry Date to Board:** Sep 24, 2024
Term End Date: Sep 30, 2027

Involvement and Background:

Jennifer was born in Barrie and now resides in Oro-Medonte with her husband, Aaron, and their 13-year-old son. Her sister and nephew live less than a km away, allowing for plenty of quality family time.

Professionally, Jennifer is a registered nurse with more than 20 years' experience in pediatrics, mental health and addiction, and research. She currently holds a management position at a regional hospital leading multidisciplinary teams in professional practice, clinical workforce development, and patient safety, integrating philosophies of trauma and violence informed care, harm reduction, and cultural safety into her work. This and past roles have provided Jennifer with many opportunities to connect with people and contribute to the community. Past volunteer involvement includes the Gilbert Centre, Out of the Cold, Barrie Fire & Emergency Services Boot Drives, and Canadian Blood Donor events, each of which shaped Jennifer's understanding of service and teamwork.

When asked why they chose to serve on the Guesthouse Board, Jennifer points to a desire to give back to the community through offering support and opportunity to others.

Outside of work and volunteering, hobbies include camping, gardening, meditation, and weight training. On the lighter side, Jennifer admits that a bucket-list dream is to visit Iceland and see the volcanoes, black sand beaches, and Aurora Borealis.

Jennifer brings compassionate and thoughtful energy, experience, and a sense of humour to the Board, and looks forward to supporting the Guesthouse in its important mission.

Leslie Lynn

Leslie Lynn

Office: Board Director

Entry Date to Board: Nov 12, 2013

Term End Date: Sep 30, 2026

Involvement and Background:

A graduate of the University of Alberta, Leslie brings to the Guest House Board a strong background in volunteer board involvement, corporate Human Resources and small business ownership.

Her volunteer background includes serving two nine-year terms on the Board of Directors of Community Living Huronia, originally during the 1980's and again from 2001- 2010, during which time she took her turn as President for a three-year term.

Leslie's Human Resources career included training, recruitment, career counselling, strategic corporate change programs, management assessment, organizational development and consulting to executives of both large and small businesses. Later, she owned and operated Midland Printers as well as commercial rental property in Midland, in partnership with her late husband, Moreland.

As a Guesthouse board member across much of shelter's challenges and achievements, Leslie has assumed many needed roles, particularly around human resources, governance and fund-development.

Louise Maurice

Position: Board Director

Entry Date to Board: Nov 18, 2014

Term End Date: Sep 30, 2027

Involvement and Background:

Louise was born and raised in Perkinsfield and moved to Lafontaine after marriage in 1977. Her first language is French. Louise graduated with High Honours from Seneca College in Legal Administration and Government Operations. She retired in 2022 after 40 years with HGR Graham Partners, working at the time of her departure as a conveyancer and senior municipal law clerk. Louise is currently the board chair for North Simcoe Community Futures and Development Corporation. In addition, she is serving a second term on the Committee for Adjustment for Tiny Township.

Louise ran a youth club for 3 years in Lafontaine, has three grown children and four grandchildren. She also currently serves as director of St. Croix church choir in Lafontaine, a position she has held since 1982.

Fr. John O'Brien

Position: Board Director

Entry Date to Board: Mar 25, 2025

Term End Date: Sep 30, 2028

Involvement and Background:

Fr. John O'Brien, S.J., is the director of the National Shrine to the Canadian Martyrs in Midland, Ontario. His undergraduate degrees were in communications (University of Ottawa) and philosophy (Gregorian University, Rome) **and** has graduate degrees in theology from the University of Toronto.

For two years, Fr. John volunteered weekly at Mother Teresa's house for the homeless in Rome. He taught underprivileged students in inner-city Kingston, Jamaica, and led university students on service trips to First Nations communities in Northern Canada.

In 2023 he spent two months as a pastor in the James Bay community of Attawapiskat. Prior to his appointment to the Martyrs' Shrine in 2023, Fr. John was the Vocations Director for the Jesuits of Canada.

Jennifer McConnell

Position: Board Director

Entry Date to Board: Nov 26, 2024

Term End Date: Sep 30, 2027

Involvement and Background:

Jennifer McConnell was born in Windsor ON but has called Midland home for the last 25 years. She is the proprietor of FreshBaked Consulting (Midland), offering artisan food provisions, culinary workshops & business consulting services. Jennifer has been an apprenticeship-trained pastry chef for 35 years & still enjoys getting up at 4am to start her day.

Community Engagement has been a lifelong passion for Jennifer. Starting from the age of 13, she has been volunteered with many programs including The AIDS Committee (Windsor, Toronto, Barrie), The Downtown Mission, Elmvale Food Pantry, Parkdale Food Cooperative, Covent House, Holy Family Food Bank, CMHA (Weber House, Midland), Big Brothers, Big Sisters (Midland) & Simcoe PRIDE... all with a focus on sharing her passion for food as a way to foster community & togetherness for all people, particularly youth at risk & adults in marginalized communities.

Jenn has always admired the work of the Guesthouse, being a longtime volunteer on the Overnight intake desk, where she realized how important our guests' need for safe, stable accommodation, nourishment & community. Later, she worked with her son Liam (former shelter staff) preparing breakfast & often stopping in to help make dinner. Now that Liam left the shelter (to become a Franciscan), Jennifer was pleased to have a more involved role on the Guesthouse board.

Outside of work & community involvement, Jennifer enjoys camping, hiking regional trails & spending time in her back yard with her wife & rescue dog Lulu. Every morning over coffee, she catches up with her adult children Libbie/Justin (London) & Liam (Edmonton), enjoys hearing about their plans for the day. Jenn is especially looking forward to December 2025 and meeting her first grandchild.

Murry Truax

Position: Board Director

Entry Date to Board: Sep 16, 2025

Term End Date: Sep 30, 2028

Involvement and Background:

Murry Truax is a husband, father, retired business owner and active community volunteer. He has called Springwater Township home his entire life.

He has been married to his wife, Sheryl, for 47 years. His daughters, Erin and Emma, are his pride with their own philanthropic nature, often volunteering with nonprofits.

Murry owned and operated Roto-Static Carpet Cleaning in the Huronia and surrounding area for 40 years. He has spent the last 30+ years honing his fundraising skills as a member of the Elmvale Lions Club. He has been on the fundraising committees for Hospice Simcoe, Shelter Now, Community Reach, Hospice Huronia, and the Georgian Bay Cancer Support Centre.

Murry is excited to join The Guesthouse Shelter committee to help improve the housing and food insecurity challenges in the North Simcoe area.

BOARD COMMITTEES

The 2024-2025 Standing Committees of the Board of Directors, listed here with past and current members, was (and remains) formed around specific areas of interest identified by the Board that will further the success and ongoing sustainability and operations of The Guesthouse Shelter, its employees and its guests. Each Committee provides advice to the Board and coordinates activities and projects related to its area of focus. Each Committee is accountable to the Board and is usually chaired by a member of the Board who reports to the Board at its regular meetings and coordinates the activities of the Committee. At least one Board member should be a member of each committee. Membership is not restricted to board members but can be drawn from any interested ongoing volunteers and individuals from the community wishing to contribute their interests, skills, time and energy to the work of the Committee. The President of the Board is automatically an 'ex-officio' member of all committees. Subcommittees may be formed, at the discretion of the Chair of the committee, to undertake specific tasks or projects as well as the membership being accordingly flexible. Individual members are usually tasked with undertaking specific actions, as determined by the committee.

Human Resources:

Chair: Leslie Lynn

Members: Bob Bruer
Cyndy Coté
Louise Maurice
Rosemary Sykes (ex officio)
Rob Walton (ended Sep 2024)

Governance:

Chair: Leslie Lynn

Members: Cyndy Coté
Bob Bruer (ex officio)
Rob Walton (ended Sep 2024)

Executive Committee (Finance):

Chair: Bob Bruer

Members: Jennifer Schuler
Cyndy Coté
Rosemary Sykes (ex officio)
Silvia Bumstead (Treasurer: ended Sep 2024)

Coldest Night of the Year:

Co-Chairs: Stephanie Vaillancourt & Rosi Martin

Members: Crissy Proulx
Tanya Howell
Suzanne Prosser
Darlene Lucas
Paige Jakobczak,
Ally Whelan
Deborah Neary
Rosemary Sykes

Fund-Raising: (idea of pickle-ball tournament)

Murry Truax & Kimberly McCormack

COMMUNITY



Contributed photo

The Out of the Cold co-ordinators include, from left: David Jones, Rosemary Sykes, Nancy Harris, and Bob Bruer.

Planning for the cold in the heat of summer

DOUGLAS GLYNN

While many North Simcoe residents have shifted into summer mode, a handful of people are already thinking about the freezing temperatures next winter will bring.

They are the co-ordinators of Out of the Cold, a program that offers meals and a warm place to sleep to the homeless in the worst winter months.

help with the meals and other duties."

"All assistance is treasured, whether it is someone willing to occasionally stay awake through the night; someone willing to make a casserole or a pot of chili, or someone with a license and car available to transport volunteers and food to the program."

Launched in December 2002, Midland's Out of the Cold experienced logistical difficulties in its

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

On the prior page, you'll see an old photo of our CEO, Rosemary Sykes, and myself. That picture and article, from 15 years ago, capture a moment shortly after Midland Out of the Cold became incorporated ... just a year before we began the serious work of creating a year-round, funded, and legally recognized emergency shelter for North Simcoe. I won't retell that story here, since you can find a full account on page 3 ("Our Story") of this report. And on page 17, Rosemary's CEO Report provides a thoughtful overview of all the many achievements of FY2024–2025 by her and her team.

That leaves me with the best part—expressing gratitude. First and foremost, to Rosemary. It has been an honour and privilege to support a skilled and passionate social worker of her calibre. Time and again, I've watched her training lead us toward solutions I would never have imagined. More than once, she has stood firmly in the face of challenges I might have preferred to avoid.

To my fellow board members: thank you for your patience as I've worked to re-learn chairing skills—never my strongest suit...even before the pandemic.

Looking at the statistics on the next page, you'll notice that last winter was especially harsh, with extreme cold and endless snow. We owe special thanks to the Guesthouse team, our regional social service partners, and our county funders who stood by us through that long season. Let's hope the coming winter is gentler.

The data also show that over the past three winters, the unemployment rate remained stable. Unfortunately, this past August it rose sharply, up more than 50% from March 2025, now sitting at 8.6%. Even if the weather proves milder, I worry this trend may bring more unhoused guests to our door in the months ahead.

Finally, one piece of encouraging news: our Coldest Night of the Year partnership with United Way has significantly boosted community engagement...14 new sponsors, 123 additional participants, and \$18,500 more raised. These efforts directly support our shared goal of reducing the risks faced by those struggling with inadequate food, shelter, and social connections.

Thank you all for being here this evening. Your presence means so much...it shows that you care.

Bob Bruer
Sep 23, 2025

OUR STATISTICS ¹

	Quarter		
	Jan-Mar 2023	Jan-Mar 2024	Jan-Mar 2025
Regional Weather ²			
Days of Operation	90	91	90
Bitter Cold Days (minimum was below -15° C)	11	6	23
Total Precipitation over Quarter (mm)	184	165	235
Economy ³			
Unemployment Rate (Central ON Jan-Mar Range)	4.6 - 5.4%	5.6 - 5.7%	5.0 - 5.6%
Guests ⁴			
Unique Monthly Guests (average)	30.0	41.3	38.0
Identified as "Male"	76%	76%	68%
Youth (16-24 years of age)	13%	10%	9%
Shelter Use ⁴			
Maximum Beds in Operation	20	20	21
Occupancy Rate (%)	85.3%	84.3%	83.3%
Community Engagement (Coldest Night of the Year) ^{5, 6}			
Teams	20	25	26
Sponsors	2	1	14
Total People Engaged (Walkers, Donors & Volunteers)	693	655	778
Total Raised	\$43,700	\$36,600	\$55,100

Note and Sources:

1. As Guesthouse operations continued in FY 2024-2025 to recover from the extreme changes during the pandemic, we again chose to focus our statistics report down to the most challenging quarter of operations, Jan to Mar. Our hope for FY 2025-2026 is to return to reporting of the full year.
2. https://climate.weather.gc.ca/climate_data/daily_data_e.html?StationID=42183
3. https://srv129.services.gc.ca/EI_Regions/eng/tab.aspx
(13 weeks, across most of Jan to early Apr)
4. <https://gisportal.simcoe.ca/arcgis/apps/sites/#/county-of-simcoe-data-portal/pages/shelter-utilization>
5. In 2025, the Guesthouse began a CNOY partnership with *Simcoe-Muskoka United Way*, sharing the total raised albeit towards a common North Simcoe goal: supporting individuals struggling with insecure housing.
6. <https://cnoy.org/home>

CEO BIOGRAPHY

Rosemary Sykes has been a long-standing and dedicated supporter of people experiencing homelessness in North Simcoe. Before moving to this region nearly 30 years ago, she completed a Social Service Worker diploma at Mohawk College in Hamilton and worked at a women's shelter there. Locally, her shelter journey began 20 years ago as a volunteer during the second season of Midland Out of the Cold. She played an active role through the transition to a year-round Guesthouse Shelter and Community Hub, always working alongside volunteers with energy and compassion. Rosemary served on the founding Board of Directors and later became the Guesthouse Operations Manager.

After she officially retired in 2022, Rosemary never really stopped, continuing to help by preparing meals, organizing donations of food, clothing, bedding, and other essentials. For many in the community, her name remains synonymous with The Guesthouse itself. In September 2024, she graciously returned once again, stepping into the role of Interim CEO, where she continues to share her experience, dedication, and commitment with employees, guests, volunteers, and the broader North Simcoe community.

GUESTHOUSE STAFF

Interim Chief Executive Officer: Rosemary Sykes

Shelter Operations Manager Stephanie Vaillancourt

Program Supervisor Crissy Proulx

Bookkeeping: Brenda Fraser

Alicia Simranjeet

Brian Sukhmandeep

Subhan Sukpreet

Tanya Ebenezer

Sandeep Trevon

CEO'S REPORT

On September 18, 2024, I became the CEO of The Guesthouse Shelter.

I quickly found I was walking into a very different Guesthouse than the one I had retired from 4 years earlier. Specifically, half of the shelter was in a construction zone and not available for our use.

In addition, as I met and got to know staff, it became apparent that most of them were inexperienced and had little training for our work. Finally, our building was in poor repair, and the elevator was not nearing completion.

But what a difference a year makes. Staff now receive training on an ongoing basis. Two of our staff now have diplomas from community college as mental health and addiction workers. We welcome college students to the shelter to complete their training with us as both Mental health and Addiction or Social Service workers.

Three external doors have been replaced and are now fully weatherproof and securely lockable. Two new skylights have been installed in the back lounge bringing sunshine into a dark space in the shelter.

A team of volunteers from the Midland Y's Men's Service Club donated their time, expertise and supplies to renovate offices into attractive, useful space. Our thanks for this generous donation of skilled labour go out to Rene Oulette of A and R carpentry and his team.

Also, our gratitude goes out to the Elmvale Lion's Club for their gift of a brand-new washing machine.

The Salvation Army is renting space from us for use by their Outreach Worker.

Some of our guests have proven to be quite skilled and volunteer their time and talents to do regular maintenance in the shelter from plumbing to painting.

And on that note, I would like to invite all of you to an open house on October 1 from 1-4 . We will be celebrating the use of our elevator and the upgrades that have taken place at the shelter over the past year. We will also take that opportunity to welcome back volunteers to the shelter.

The Elmvale Lions club will be hosting a barbecue on the King St. lawn of the United Church in support of the Guest House at this time as well.

Sep 23, 2025
Rosemary Sykes

NOMINATIONS REPORT

Per the Letters Patent of the Guesthouse Shelter, the Board of Directors consists of a minimum of three directors. Ten years ago, based on new provincial legislation, we began nominating board members to appointments of varied numbers of years, to provide future staggered term expirations and smooth transitions by departing or arriving directors.

Then the pandemic hit, and it was all hands-on deck. We suddenly all learned Zoom.

I am proud to remind you all that during some of our busiest months of 2021, 2022 and 2023, none of our directors left. We met at least monthly and continued to listen, reflect and vote on hundreds of items that legally needed deciding, so that our North Simcoe shelter could stay open. No one left. Until summer 2023 when Father Michael Knox was called away by the church to Lebanon. Over the past year, we also were sad to see the departure of Grace Kidd, Rob Walton and Sylvia Bumstead from the board.

One could not overstate the wide breadth of skills the above four brought to our board. But we are also aware that almost by definition, good governance requires change. Thus we welcomed the arrival to our board of Jennifer Schuler Sep 2024, Jennifer McConnell Nov 2024, Fr. John O'Brien Mar 2025 and Murry Truax earlier this month Sep 2025.

In addition, we are somewhat back to our goal before the pandemic, staggering all directors' terms to end across the next three years. Thus, terms for Bob, Leslie and Cyndy end Sep 2026, Louise and the two Jennifers end Sep 2027 and finally, Fr. John and Murry end Sep 2028. Of course, every single one of the above could be asked to stay on another term. But more hopefully, some like myself will soon be happy to see the shelter growing stronger, yet true to its mission, and so gradually we will all hopefully step comfortably aside to make way for someone else... perhaps one of young guests... perhaps one of our current employees who has moved on to other work but still want to serve our mission.

As to the officers, Bob Bruer and Cyndy Coté has agreed to continue as our president and vice-president. In Cyndy's case, without any expectation that she be the one to assume the presidency in the future.

To meet the attention required for finances, following the departure of our long-time treasurer Sylvia, we have convened an interim Executive Committee to manage her job, consisting of Bob Bruer, Cyndy Coté and Jennifer Schuler. Once we have audits up to date, it would be our plan to appoint a treasurer to properly replace Sylvia.

Guesthouse members should know that the board regularly reviews its skill mix to identify gaps and opportunities. You can be certain that we are always on the lookout to improve our membership but given the high value we place on the Guesthouse's mission, we do not act with haste.

With the above decisions, we hope to continue providing solid dependable board support to Guesthouse workers, their leaders Stephanie and Rosemary, and the many guests who come to us for help.

Leslie Lynn