

john
ward
society

ANNUAL REPORT
2021

OUR MISSION

THE JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY OF ONTARIO IS DEDICATED TO EFFECTIVE, JUST AND HUMANE RESPONSES TO CRIME AND ITS CAUSES.

OUR VISION

We promote practical, evidenced-based policies while providing services, programs and education to all those affected by our criminal justice system. This work includes:

- Building bridges between people leaving incarceration and their communities to help them build productive lives.
- Advocating for fair treatment for all incarcerated people in accordance with international standards for human rights.
- Raising awareness of the root causes of crime and calling on Ontarians to share responsibility for addressing them.
- Developing policies, programs, and educational material through our [Centre of Research & Policy](#).



REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – 2021

It gives us great pleasure to present our 2021 Annual Report of the John Howard Society of Ontario.

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged each and every one of us. But we did not all experience the pandemic equally. Fundamentally, COVID has revealed deep inequities in our society and how those inequities translate into differential health and socioeconomic outcomes. For instance, those who experience marginalization, racism, poverty and homelessness have increased likelihood of mental health issues. They also end up more frequently in jail. This is not a coincidence. While these trends have been true for decades, they perhaps have never been as starkly exposed as they have in the past 15 months – and neither has the imperative to keep people out of jail been so high.

On the flipside, COVID-19 has also presented us with an opportunity to change and grow. Due to the public health crisis, there's never been greater demand on our communities' social services, and JHS's across the province stepped up in significant ways to help reintegrating Ontarians secure housing, basic necessities and provide case management across the province. We acknowledge our JHS colleagues across the province, in particular those on the front lines, for nimbly adapting to meet the increased needs of our clients and communities in these challenging times.

JHSO released four major reports and public education tools in the past year, which are detailed in the Research & Policy sections of this report. These reports shed light on the disparate impacts and experiences of marginalized and vulnerable people in the justice system, and yielded significant media attention. JHSO also proudly launched our new website and brand in 2020; this refreshed look and tone centres the humanity that is core to our work, our clients and our staff. We're incredibly grateful to Media Profile for their creative talent that so effectively captured the voice of our agency, and for executing our vision.

JHSO established a new 3-year vision to guide a new strategic plan for 2020/21 to 2022/23. We also used 2020 as a critical year of self-reflection and growth in the areas of anti-racism and anti-oppression – a journey that is far from over. We recognize that this is ongoing work and not the result of a time-limited initiative. JHSO has sought out opportunities to listen, learn and strengthen our commitment to anti-oppression and anti-racism (AOAR) practices in all of our work – at the Board governance and operational levels.

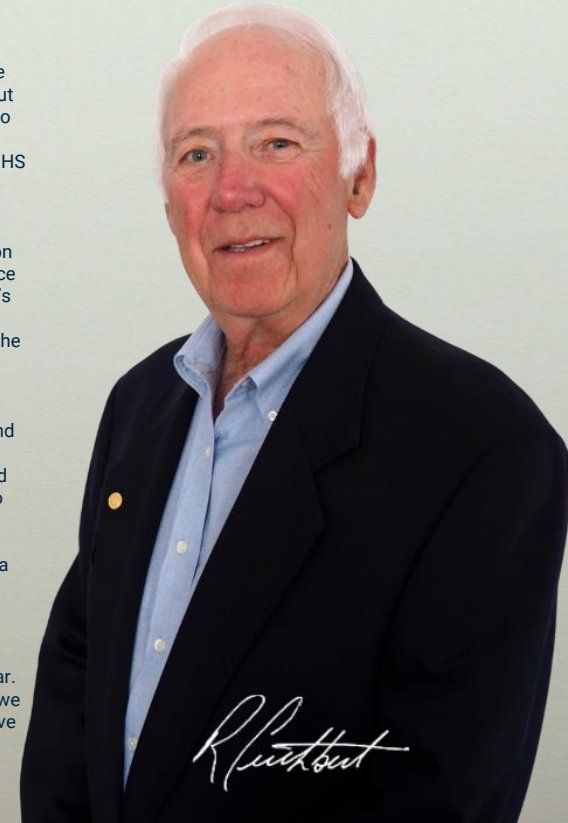
At the Board level, JHSO's Board of Directors participated in anti-black racism and anti-oppression training, with plans for more in-depth training. The Board has also mandated the Board Nominating Committee to strengthen its AOAR principles and practices in carrying out obligations to fill board vacancies. The JHSO Board has completed a board audit exercise to help focus on required next steps. In addition, the JHSO Board struck a standing Equity Committee of the Board to provide leadership on AOAR work to JHSO and throughout the JHS organization.

At the operational level, all JHSO staff undertook ABR and AO training, and the Centre of Research & Policy is in the process of establishing an African Canadian Research, Evaluation and Public Policy Reference Group made up of community leaders, academics, social service providers and advocates that will provide expert guidance and experience to support JHSO's research, policy and evaluation work, and build capacity for improved engagement and collaboration with the African Canadian community in order to counter systemic racism in the criminal justice system. Similar expertise will be sought from our Indigenous communities.

The Executive Directors Committee (EDC), an operational body comprised of all of the 19 Local JHS Offices Executive Directors, restructured its strategic plan and organized it around three key pillars, with one focussed solely on organizational equity (driven by the "Equity Committee"). In addition to Executives, JHS frontline staff with lived experience were invited to directly join the Equity Committee and participate fully in the advancement of our work to achieve an inclusive, fair and representative workplace and organization.

On a final note, we are also pleased to share that JHSO's accreditation with Imagine Canada was renewed in 2021. JHSO continues to meet all standards and rigorous requirements required to display Imagine Canada's Trust Mark of organizational accountability.

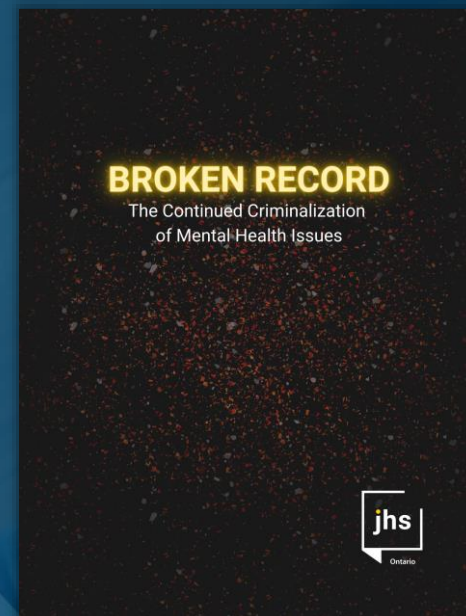
While the pandemic has presented many challenges, we are very grateful for our funders, donors, volunteers, partners and the experts that have supported our work over the past year. Thank you to the JHSO Board of Directors for its leadership and strategic governance, and we express our sincere gratitude to all of our dedicated staff. Together, we will continue to strive for a more equitable justice system and society.



RESEARCH & POLICY PUBLICATIONS

BROKEN RECORD

Broken Record: The Continued Criminalization of Mental Health Issues was launched in February this year. The new website is an eye-opening and heart-rending digital media experience created by JHSO as a follow up to its comprehensive 2015 report, *Unlocking Change: Decriminalizing Mental Health Issues in Ontario*. With vivid imagery and bold design, the Broken Record interactive site guides users through the story of how people with mental health struggles end up in Ontario's criminal justice system and the destructive consequences that result for these individuals, their families, taxpayers, and all of society. While the site drives home the costs and heartbreak of this broken system, its message and purpose are ultimately hopeful, and outlines concrete policy steps that can be taken today. The Toronto Star provided exclusive coverage of the launch and the interactive website and accompanying report got attention on CBC, CTV and other media sources, contributing to important discussions over the past year on how to respond to mental health issues in the community and support those with mental health issues in the justice system.

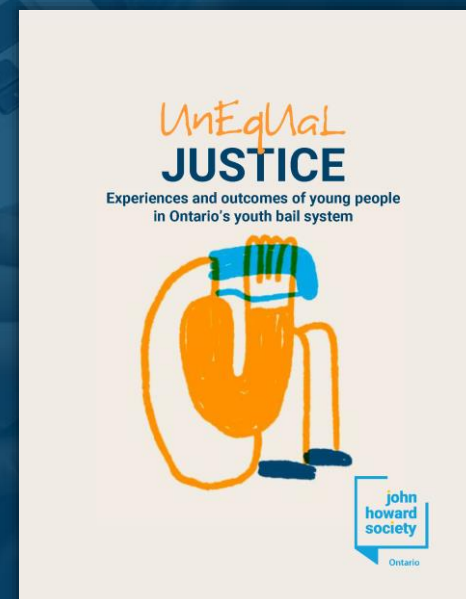


UNEQUAL JUSTICE

In March, the JHSO launched our report and interactive website, **"Unequal Justice: Experiences and outcomes of young people in Ontario's youth bail system"**.

The research shows that despite landmark legislation meant to sharply curb youth incarceration in Canada – the Youth Criminal Justice Act of 2003 – many young people are still spending significant time behind bars before trial as a result of inefficient bail court processes and minor infractions that would shock many Canadians. In fact, the data analysis revealed that some trends in pre-trial detention for youth are worsening with time, leading young people to spend longer periods behind bars or with restrictive bail conditions, often with devastating outcomes. In addition, the data showed that Black and Indigenous youth are disproportionately detained pre-trial under the most restrictive conditions in secure detention.

The project was funded by the Law Foundation of Ontario with support from the Laidlaw Foundation, which we gratefully acknowledge. The launch of Unequal Justice garnered considerable media attention including front page coverage in the Globe and Mail, features on CBC morning radio and a spread in the Lawyer's Daily. Since the launch, the Centre has presented the research findings and recommendations to government and at conferences and webinars.

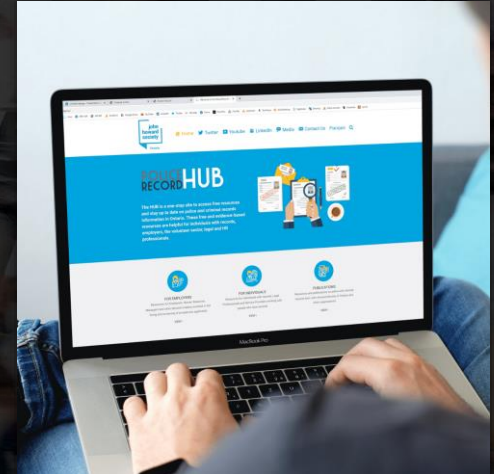


STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

REDUCING BARRIERS FOR JOBSEEKERS WITH POLICE RECORDS

In July 2020, the John Howard Society of Ontario launched a new **online tool** to help those with a police record better navigate the job-seeking process. The online tool, which can be found on policerecordhub.ca shows those who have a police record how they can proactively and transparently disclose their record to a potential employer. After consuming the material in the online tool, people will know their legal rights regarding criminal background checks and learn tips on how to effectively disclose a criminal record to a potential employer. Finding a job with a police record can be a very difficult task in the best of economic times – this tool will help support the thousands of Ontarians with police records who are seeking employment in a very difficult labour market.

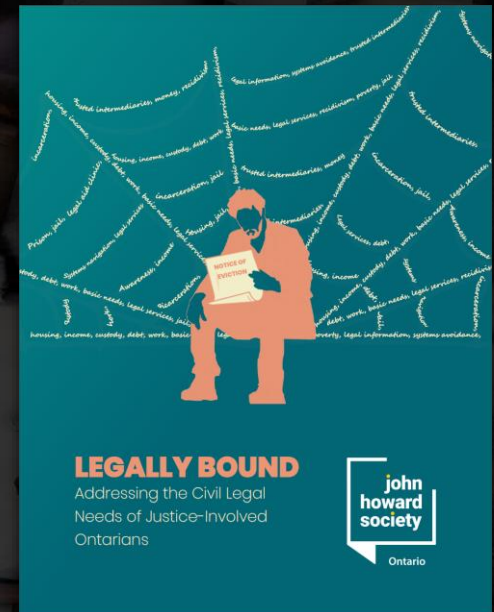
In addition, JHSO partnered with a number of different agencies to deliver public education workshops for both Human Resources professionals, as well as people with lived experience, on the impacts of police records on hiring, and best practices.



LEGALLY BOUND AND BUILDING A MADE-IN-ONTARIO CIVIL LEGAL NEEDS PROGRAM

With support from a generous grant received through the Law Foundation of Ontario's Catalyst Fund, JHSO released an in-depth report in 2020 entitled "**Legally Bound**" that found unaddressed housing, employment, and other civil legal issues are negatively impacting the lives of justice-involved Ontarians long after they have exited the criminal justice system, and that the lack of awareness and access to legal support and other programs to resolve such issues is undermining community safety. The report highlights that frontline staff at social service agencies – such as JHS – build rapport and trust with their justice-involved clients, and can become, in effect, "trusted intermediaries": people and organizations that can act as a bridge to accessing legal information, services and resources. A key way to improve access to civil justice remedies for justice-involved populations is to deliver targeted training and public legal education for frontline social service agency staff to empower them as trusted intermediaries, and equip them with the skills to recognize and address the civil legal needs of clients. However, our findings shed light on the gap in current public legal education efforts directed at these trusted intermediaries.

Based on these findings, JHSO is developing an innovative, first-of-its kind civil legal training and education program targeting frontline staff who serve justice-involved individuals in Ontario, to break down the barriers to accessing civil justice. The aim of this program – which will be publicly available via a brand new JHS Learning Hub this year – will be to provide accessible legal education content that helps frontline staff better respond to civil legal issues early, to assist with system navigation and build strong referrals to existing legal resources to stop the costly cycle of collateral justice consequences.



RESEARCH & EVALUATION

COMMUNITY RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

In collaboration with JHS Canada, JHSO has conducted a two-part research study to examine the impact that COVID-19 has had on Community Residential Facilities (CRF) operated by JHS' across Canada. First, JHSO administered a survey to CRFs across Canada to examine the overall impact COVID-19 had on CRFs. Follow-up interviews were conducted to determine the specific technology needs of each CRF and to indicate whether they acquire the necessary resources to connect with potential clients within the institutions through video call. This funding will be used to accommodate the technology needs of each CRF.

A SECOND CHANCE IN SIGHT

In collaboration with a group of eight academics across North America, JHSO is in the process of supporting a research project, **A Second Chance in Sight**, which will investigate employer perspectives towards hiring individuals with a criminal history. Funded by the **Social Science and Humanities Research Council** (SSHRC) the study will include a systematic literature review, qualitative interviews and surveys to individuals in hiring positions at various organizations.

IMPACTS OF CANNABIS USE ON DRUG TREATMENT COURT PROGRAMS IN ONTARIO

In collaboration with the **CMHA Ontario**, JHSO is conducting a research project examining the Impacts of Cannabis Use on Drug Treatment Court (DTC) Programs in Ontario. This Ontario wide community-based research project explores the impact of cannabis use on mental health, and whether it helps or hinders a participant's completion of a DTC program. In addition to understanding participants' experiences, the project explores how service providers perceive cannabis use and the resulting impact on how clients are supported. The objective is to clarify the relationship between cannabis use and mental health among diverse populations, including any disproportionate impacts on women and racialized groups, the impacts of criminalization for people who use cannabis, and how the legalization of cannabis can impact potential policy changes within the justice system.

EVALUATION

JHSO is currently in the process of evaluating 7 local JHS programs and services. Current and on-going evaluations include the **JHS Ottawa's ReSet Project**, **JHS Thunder Bay's Residential Reintegration Program**, **JHS Simcoe Muskoka's Anchor Project**, **JHS Hamilton's All 4 One program**, **JHS Kawartha's Mapping a Plan project**, **JHS Durham's Together We Are**, and the **Mental Health and Addictions Peer Support Program** delivered at JHS Toronto, JHS Peel and JHS York Region.

MEDIA

This past year saw exceptional media coverage for JHSO's various report launches and initiatives, in print, digital and radio. For instance, our media campaign to launch and promote JHSO's new eLearning tool for jobseekers with criminal records was extremely successful, getting coverage in multiple radio interviews, print and online news media across the province. In total, there were more than 177 stories, including profiles of the impact of local John Howard Society employment services.

Our Legally Bound report received front-page, prominent coverage in the Toronto Star, and generated exceptional social media uptake on Twitter and LinkedIn – it was even discussed on Reddit. Unequal Justice received front-page coverage in the Globe and Mail, was highlighted in QP Briefing, was featured in outlets like CBC and Lawyer's Daily.

JHSO was also featured in stories covering the pandemic, including an essay profiled in Toronto Life Magazine.



THE LINDSAY
ADVOCATE

KAWARTHA LAKES'
FINEST MAGAZINE

TORONTO
LIFE

THE
LAWYER'S
DAILY

OTTAWA
CITIZEN

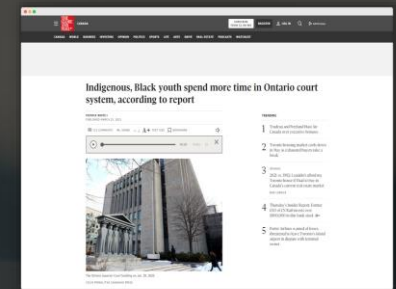
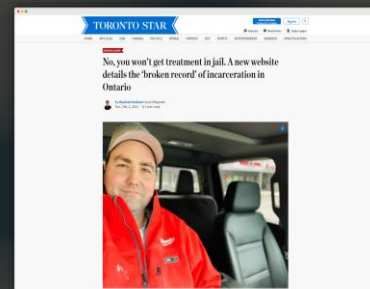
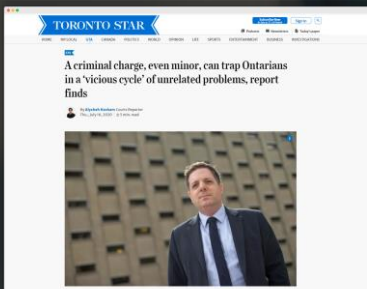


TORONTO STAR

TORONTO STAR

TORONTO STAR

THE GLOBE AND MAIL



DONOR-SUPPORTED PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

Thanks to our compassionate donors, JHSO helps families stay connected with loved ones who are incarcerated. The Transportation Program provides low-cost transportation to federal prisons in Kingston. Without this service, it would be impossible for many families to visit their loved ones – it can cost hundreds of dollars to make the trip. When people maintain or develop connections with family while they are incarcerated, they are given the gift of hope and preparation for a healthy transition back home when released.

INSTITUTIONAL SERVICES

Together, with the help of our donors, John Howard Societies across Ontario support people who are incarcerated so that they can access the support they need to start transforming their lives while they are incarcerated. Institutional Service Workers help incarcerated individuals plan for their release and build support networks in their communities. These workers meet with clients and create plans to find employment, stable housing, and/or treatment for substance and anger management issues, where needed. Most importantly, with donors' support, Institutional Service Workers help give people who are incarcerated a sense of purpose and hope. Successful reintegration planning is key to reducing risk factors of reoffending and contributes to safer communities for us all. Currently 14 local JHS offices provide Institutional Services to over 20 Provincial and Federal correctional institutions in Ontario

BY THE NUMBERS: INSTITUTIONAL SERVICES STATISTICS 2014 – 2019

3704

CLIENTS
SERVED

3933

CLIENTS
CONTACTS

985

SESSIONS
HELD

367

VISITS BY
STAFF

1072

PARTICIPANTS IN
SESSIONS

4098

CLIENT
REQUESTS

1681

CLIENT
REFERRALS

LOOKING AHEAD

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMY THAT SUPPORTS SECOND CHANCES

Did you know that 4 million Canadians have a criminal record – that's 1 out of every 9 people. We know that the vast majority have struggled to overcome social disadvantages, have paid their debt to society, and are trying to build a productive future for themselves and their families.

It's no surprise that getting a job is critical to effectively reintegrating into society after a period of incarceration. But here's the problem: the stigma of having a criminal record leads many employers to simply shut the door. The chances of getting a job drop by more than 50% when you have a criminal record. If we allow a criminal record to be a lifetime sentence of marginalization and poverty, we're not only failing our communities, we're denying people the chance to build a better life.

Enter JHSO's Fair Chance campaign. With support of the Metcalf Foundation, JHSO has been working closely with key partners such as the City of Toronto, Prince's Trust Canada to build the basis for a "Fair Chance" campaign and movement focused on employers in Toronto, encouraging them to take a pledge to give all qualified job candidates a fair chance to get hired. We know Fair Chance Hiring policies and training can make a huge difference and this year, we aim to launch Toronto's (and Canada's) first employer-facing, employer-driven campaign. Keep your eyes on JHSO's website and social media for updates on this exciting initiative.

INTERSECTION OF HOMELESSNESS AND JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT

We are excited to embark on a new project aimed at understanding the intersection between homelessness and justice-involvement in Ontario. The aim of this 2-year research project is to investigate the challenges, barriers and needs of justice-involved populations with respect to housing. The research enterprise will be a cross-sectoral collaboration between the **John Howard Society of Ontario** in partnership with **Canadian Observatory on Homelessness** and **Social Research and Demonstration Corporation**. The project will include both a macro and micro level analysis and will be a solutions-oriented research initiative with a focus on marginalized and racialized populations.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Ron Cuthbert | President |
| Rob MacLellan | Vice-President |
| Hermon Mayers | Treasurer |
| Christina Ninham | Secretary |
| Jean LeDrew-Metcalf | Executive Committee Member-at-large |
| Trisha Simpson | Executive Committee Member-at-large |
| Rob Thibodeau | Executive Committee Member-at-large |
| Bruce Simpson | Past President |

DIRECTORS

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Michael Bryant | Pauline Wainwright |
| Jill Evans | Dan Smith |
| Christopher Fleury | Jill Hillman |
| Peter Stephenson | Phil Wilkins |
| Jeff Manishen | Michael Sabo |
| Tom Hickey | Sandy Lychowyd |
| David Williams | Jennifer Rooke |
| Steve Scriven | Gyan Chandra |

RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD MEMBERS

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Voula Marinos (Chair) | Nathan Innocente |
| Lisa Whittingham | Kemi S. Anazodo |
| Jessica Sutherland | Marsha Rampersaud |
| Nicole Myers | |

OUR STAFF

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Paula Osmok | Executive Director |
| Reza Ahmadi | Director of Research & Evaluation |
| Jacqueline Tasca | Director of Partnerships & Strategic Initiatives |
| Maureen Zuniga | Human Resources & Administrative Coordinator |
| Monica Vela | Financial Director |
| Safiyah Husein | Senior Policy Analyst |
| Aileen Simon | Project Coordinator, Education & Strategic Initiatives |
| Hannah Cook | Research Analyst |
| Meaghan Costa | Research & Evaluation Analyst |
| Justin McNeil | Research & Evaluation Specialist |
| Avery Au | Project Lead, Strategic Initiatives |



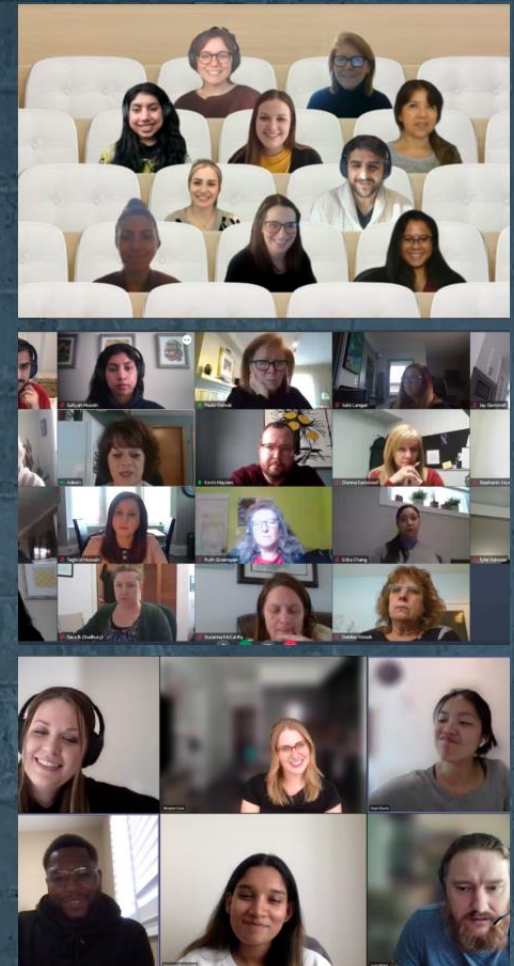
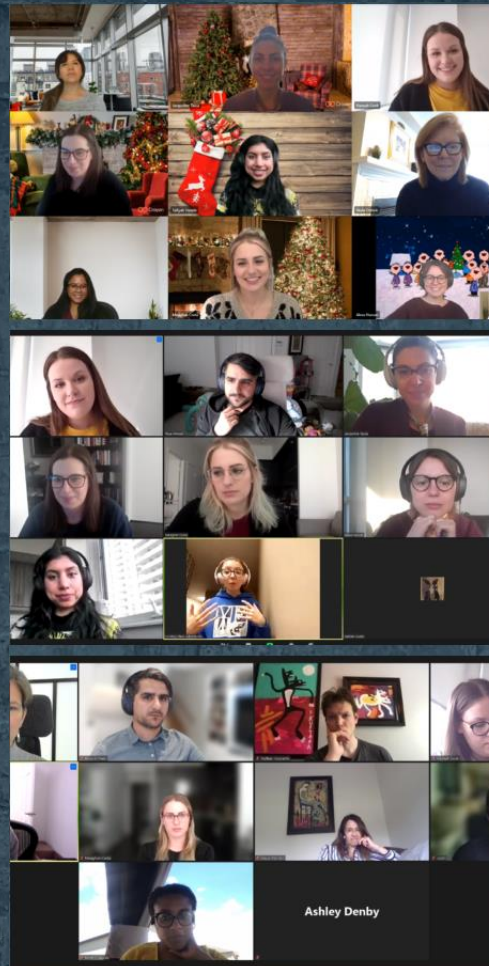
We would like to acknowledge the contributions of Jonathan Robart, Alexa Hassan and Miranda Queh who left JHS Ontario this year. We wish them all the best in the future.

VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNS

A huge thank you to our dedicated volunteers and interns, without whom our work would not be possible: Nicole, Zach, Jessica, Emilie, Krista, Genevieve, Angie, Brandon, Aliesha, Joanna, Kelsey, Sarah.

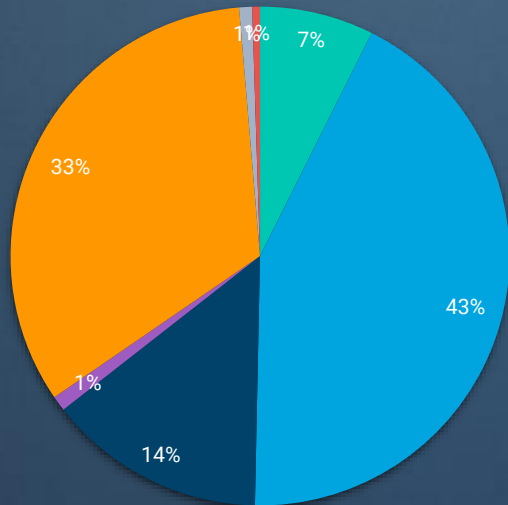
2020 AWARD WINNERS

Volunteer of the Year Award: Nicole Lefaive



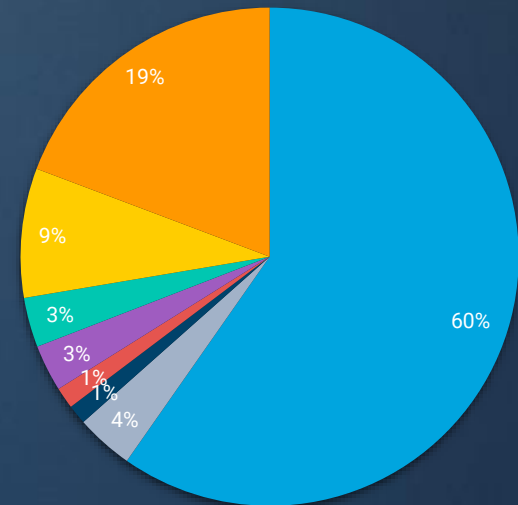
2020 REVENUE & EXPENDITURES

2020 Revenue
\$1,457,425



- National Grant
- Local Office Contributions
- Fundraising
- Cost Recovery
- Misc & Other Grants
- Amortization of Deferred Rev
- Investments

2020 Expenditures
\$1,271,359



- Salary & Benefits
- Local Office Programs
- Fundraising
- Occupancy
- Office Expenses
- Travel & Meeting Costs
- Expenses for Grant Projects
- Miscellaneous

2020 FUNDRAISING

DONORS

We are very grateful for the support of our generous donors. We have not listed names in order to protect confidentiality, but wish to thank each and every one of our supporters. Donors make it possible for us to work towards effective, just, and humane responses to crime and its causes. THANK YOU.

FUNDRAISING REVENUE:

Donations and Fundraising: \$205,773
Fundraising Direct Costs:
(Direct Mail/Break Open Tickets etc.) \$16,021
Fundraising Revenue after Direct Costs: \$189,752

DISTRIBUTION/SPENDING OF FUNDRAISING REVENUE AFTER DIRECT COSTS:

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Institutional Services Program: | \$42,482 | 82% |
| Transportation Services Program: | \$5,000 | 10% |
| Affiliate Program Support: | \$3,900 | 8% |
| Administration: | \$366 | 1% |
| TOTAL | \$51,746 | 100% |

FUNDERS & SUPPORTERS

We are pleased to acknowledge the following funders and collaborators. Your generous support is vital to our work and we thank you for your support and belief in our mission.



Ontario
Trillium
Foundation



Fondation
Trillium
de l'Ontario

An agency of the Government of Ontario.
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario.



The Law
Foundation
of Ontario

Advancing access to justice

**METCALF
FOUNDATION**



Ministère de la Justice
Canada
Department of Justice
Canada



Public Safety
Canada
Sécurité publique
Canada



Health
Canada

Santé
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SSHRC  **CRSH**

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
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