



KWhabilitation
2024 ANNUAL REPORT





For more than 50 years, KW Habilitation has been growing, working, helping and living, along the Haldimand tract, land promised to the Haudenosaunee people of Six Nations, which includes six miles on each side of the Grand River. This land is traditional Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe and Chonnonton Territory.

We give thanks to and acknowledge their enduring presence, achievements and contributions to our community both here and all across Turtle Island. We are grateful to the original keepers of the land for looking after the rich resources and cultural teachings so they can be shared with us today and with future generations. We will continue to work with, include and collaborate with the original stewards of the land and promise to continue to build a community where everyone belongs and participates.

KW Habilitation

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Our Vision Statement:

A community where everyone belongs and participates.

Our Mission Statement:

Together with our community, KW Habilitation inspires abilities to enrich the lives of children, youth, adults and families.

A Message from Ann

Celebrating Progress and Purpose

It is my pleasure to present KW Habilitation's 2024 Annual Report. This year has been one of meaningful progress, strategic alignment, and deep commitment to our mission. Our achievements reflect the dedication of our staff, the strength of our partnerships, and the continued evolution of our services to meet the needs of those we support.

Achieving ONCA Compliance

A significant milestone this year was achieving full compliance with the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (ONCA). As part of this process, KW Habilitation updated its organizational purposes, which received approval from the Canada Revenue Agency. These revised purposes now more accurately reflect our mission, goals, and the essential work we do in the community.

Committees Driving Engagement and Excellence

Employee engagement continues to be a cornerstone of our success. Staff-led committees provide critical insights and foster a culture of continuous improvement. These include the Committee for Excellence, the Employee Resource Council, and the Equity Council

These groups empower staff to be active participants in shaping our workplace culture and service delivery.

Recognizing and Appreciating Our Staff

Our commitment to valuing staff is evident in the many ways we recognized and celebrated their contributions:

- Staff appreciation events throughout the year
- Recognition programs that highlight exceptional work
- Ongoing engagement activities to foster connection and morale

Our staff are the heart of KW Habilitation, and their commitment continues to inspire.

Cultivating Community Wellness

At KW Habilitation, we recognize that employee well-being is essential to organizational success. Our Wellness Program continues to expand, offering a comprehensive suite of supports, including:

- Mental Health First Aid training
- Regular sharing of wellness resources to support emotional, physical, and psychological health
- A robust Employee and Family Assistance Program through Homewood Health, offering confidential, 24/7 support services for staff and their families
- Ongoing efforts to build a culture of connection, openness, and community wellness

These initiatives are not one-time efforts, they reflect our deep, ongoing commitment to fostering a workplace that prioritizes the health and resilience of our people.

Aligning with Ontario's Vision: Journey to Belonging

KW Habilitation proudly aligns with the Ministry's long-term vision for developmental services, "*Journey to Belonging: Choice and Inclusion.*" We are committed to a future where:

- People with developmental disabilities fully belong in their communities
- People are supported to make their own choices and;
- Everyone is empowered to live the life they choose

This vision guides our service delivery, advocacy, and community partnerships.

Our Future: Growth, Innovation & Resilience

We are thrilled to share that construction has begun on our new 18-unit affordable housing project, a continuation of our commitment to the "neighbour helping neighbour" model. This initiative will provide a diverse community of people in need of affordable housing with a welcoming, inclusive place to call home. It is a tangible expression of our belief that everyone deserves access to safe and supportive housing.

As part of our continued investment in high-quality Inclusive Living supports, two additional apartment units are now being completed at our Complex Care location at David Fisher Residence. These new units will allow us to enhance the capacity of our Complex Care team, ensuring a safe, stable, and supportive environment for people with complex needs. This aligns directly with our mission to provide individualized care and promote long-term well-being.

As we look forward, we recognize that our future will also bring challenges. Rising costs in all areas will require careful planning and resource management. Work is already underway to ensure our organization remains strong, adaptable, and responsive to change. Success will come through collaboration, innovation, and shared purpose, working together is our greatest strength.



I extend my heartfelt thanks to our board of directors, dedicated staff, community partners, and, most importantly, the people and families we support. Your trust, commitment, and collaboration fuel our continued success. Together, we are building a more inclusive, connected, and compassionate community.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ann Bilodeau". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ann Bilodeau
CEO, KW Habilitation

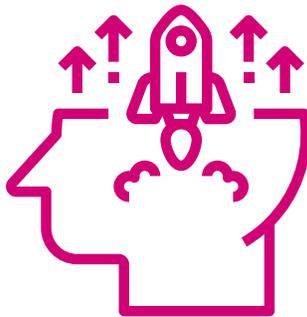


Strategic Pathways



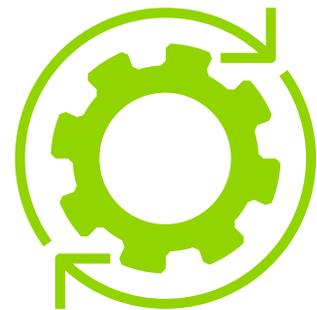
STRENGTHEN

what helps people to explore possibilities, to belong & connect in meaningful ways.



CREATE

and innovate next generation approaches and solutions.



ALIGN

operations to deliver on priorities and to create systemic change.

Board of Directors

At KW Habilitation, the Board of Directors plays a vital leadership role through a policy governance model that ensures we remain focused on our mission and mandate. Meeting every other month—and with subcommittees connecting in between—our Board maintains a steady rhythm of thoughtful oversight, strategic input, and strong accountability. Over the past year, the Board has continued to champion the values that guide our organization. We provided governance and financial stewardship, supported the continued implementation of our Strategic Pathways, and strengthened our advocacy for the people and families we support. Notably, this year saw us dive deeper into fund development and long-range strategic planning—critical areas that will shape our future impact and sustainability. We're proud to support an organization that continues to lead with compassion, purpose, and innovation.

Satish Mistry, President

Mark Sauve, Vice-President

Bill Strachan, Treasurer

Jeff Collins, Secretary

Corey Bechtel, Past President

Patricia Moore

Lori Trumper

Patrick Carson

Abhay Patel

Rawan Hussein

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee plays a crucial role in safeguarding the financial health and sustainability of KW Habilitation. Tasked with providing ongoing financial oversight, the committee carefully reviews the organization's annual budget, monitors financial performance throughout the year, and helps shape long-term financial goals that support our mission. In addition to analyzing financial data, the committee advises the Board of Directors on key financial decisions and risk management strategies. We also help guide where fundraising efforts can have the greatest impact, ensuring resources are aligned with our priorities. As in previous years, much of our fundraising has been dedicated to supporting our affordable housing initiatives. It is an essential part of creating inclusive communities and providing stability for the Region of Waterloo. We are proud to help drive this important work forward with transparency, accountability, and purpose.

Bill Strachan, Treasurer

Corey Bechtel

Jane Tuer

Mark Sauve

Frank Thompson

Jamie Moffat

Patrick Carson

Ann Bilodeau

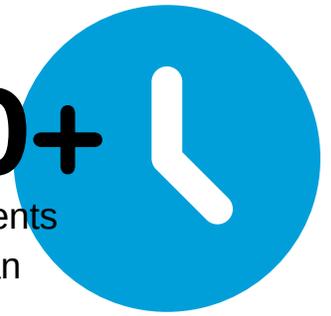
Fast Facts

115



people are connected to KW Career Compass working with 65 employers.

12,000+



volunteers and students have given more than 12,000 hours to KW Habilitation.

1,162



hours of extra training completed by staff, above and beyond Ministry requirements. All training was developed or led by our own team.

156



people are connected to all our housing supports.

\$46,000+



worth of organic produce was grown at Our Farm to share with people at KW Habilitation and our community.

77



people are connected to Out and About Waterloo Region.



559

Our Farm pick-ups from people connected to our housing supports.



2,460

spaces filled in LEG Up! activities.



24

children supported through our Crisis Child Care Pilot.



18-Unit

affordable Housing Project is under construction.



12,065

children attending licensed child care programs in Waterloo Region receiving tiered support from our Early Learning Program.



362

spaces filled in YEP summer, social, and skill building sessions.



Inclusion

What does inclusion really mean? As we continue to align with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services' long-term vision, *Journey to Belonging: Choice and Inclusion*, we are both challenged and inspired to ensure that the people we support lead lives that are not only person-centered but person-directed. At KW Habilitation, inclusion means supporting people to direct their lives, build meaningful relationships, and participate in their communities on their own terms.

This past year, our Inclusive Living programs, community supports, and advocacy efforts reflected a bold commitment to belonging in action. We focused on strengthening capacity, creating innovative solutions, and aligning our work to meet people's evolving needs, especially in areas such as aging, complex care, and transition supports. Some highlights include:

- We broke ground on our 18-unit Affordable Housing Project.
- We began construction on two new Complex Care units at David Fisher Residence.
- We completed dementia screens for any person supported in Inclusive Living over age 40. This process will be completed annually (or more often if needed) and will offer a tremendous resource in the future should cognitive decline be suspected. It will position KW Habilitation as an advocate for proper assessment and supports.
- We led the coordination of Canadian Master dementia trainers providing train the trainer certification training to a number of agencies in southern Ontario .
- We partnered with the Research Institute on Aging (RIA) and supported a research proposal that will include people with developmental disabilities as a focus group
- We led many regional and provincial initiatives including: Transitional Aged Youth Community of Practice, Specialized Accommodations Networking group, and Dementia community of practice
- We brought together Community Support teams from across Waterloo Region to work through ways to better collaborate and increase connections for people accessing our various supports.
- Out and About Waterloo Region (OAAWR) shifted focus from planned group activities and events to increased participation in activities and programs that take place at local

Community Centres; allowing people more voice and choice in how they spend their time in the community.

- We partnered with Colour Paradise Greenhouses to offer LEG Up! classes in their workshop space.
- Based on participant feedback, we expanded Youth Exploring Possibilities to offer skill building courses in addition to our social and summer activities.
- Two people supported by KW Habilitation, along with a team member, attended the Listen Include Respect conference—bringing back tools and principles from Inclusion International and Down Syndrome International. The experience deepened our understanding of how to ensure people with disabilities are heard, included, and treated equitably, and helped strengthen our commitment to meaningful participation in community life.

Our Impact

-   156 people supported across Inclusive Living, Supported Independent Living, Complex Care, and Affordable Housing
-   LEG Up! filled 2460 spaces in 153 different courses, emphasizing independence and mentorship among participants
-  People accessing OAAWR helped us build and strengthen partnerships with local organizations by working in volunteer roles at places like Tiny Home Takeout, Meals on Wheels, Thrift on Kent, Retail Therapy, and The Green Door. This increased visibility and inclusion and helped us build strong community connections that are laying the groundwork for larger collaborative initiatives launching in 2025.
-  YEP filled 362 spaces in their summer, social and skill building sessions.
-  With support from our Local Community Connectors (LCC's), people who were once hesitant are now independently navigating community spaces and travelling within their community via Grand River Transit.
-  With support from our LCC's, people are forming new social connections and building a sense of pride and ownership in their community roles.
-  We have seen a noticeable increase in self-advocacy and decision-making, with more people voicing their interests and shaping their own weekly schedules.

Remembering Ron Koch

In 2024, we said goodbye to several cherished members of the KW Habilitation community. Each person left a meaningful impact on their families, friends, and all of us who had the privilege of knowing them. Their presence is deeply missed, and their memories continue to shape the spirit of KW Habilitation.

Among those we lost was Ron Koch, who passed away peacefully at the age of 71. Ron was a vibrant, unforgettable presence who lived his life fully and authentically. Ron started accessing services and supports from KW Habilitation in 1981 and his journey embodies the heart of Journey to Belonging—not just accessing community, but making space within it to be truly seen and celebrated.



Ron's style, humour, and generosity made him a well-known figure across Kitchener-Waterloo. Whether sipping a Tim Hortons "4x4" or sharing stories over Swiss Chalet, Ron had a way of turning everyday moments into meaningful connections. He brought joy to every outing, every conversation, and every friend he made along the way.

His bold and creative spirit came through in everything he did—from reworking thrifted fashion into signature looks to amassing a custom collection of Elvis jumpsuits, with the iconic White Aloha suit being his absolute favourite. His love for music, good food, companionship, and style wasn't just self-expression, it was a declaration that he belonged, exactly as he was.

When Ron passed, the community responded. Messages, memories, and tributes poured in from across social media, neighbourhoods, and local businesses. Each one was a testament to the deep impact he had simply by being himself. As one tribute read: "He taught us all the importance of living unapologetically."

Ron may have "left the building," as Elvis would say, but his spirit, his warmth, humour, and individuality remains with us. He was a reminder that belonging isn't about fitting in. It's about being welcomed just as you are.



Big Screen Inclusion: Cory's Revenge at PIFF

In 2024, KW Habilitation was proud to participate in the Pegasus Incredible Film Festival (PIFF), a celebration of creativity, talent, and inclusive storytelling. A dedicated team of people created *Cory's Revenge*, a short film that was written, filmed, directed, and edited by the members of the cast and crew.



With a large cast of enthusiastic performers, the project was more than just a movie, it was a collaborative, confidence-building journey that showcased the creativity and leadership of everyone involved. Attending the festival alongside other film-makers and organizations in the Developmental Services sector was a powerful reminder that when people are given the opportunity to express themselves, magic happens.

As one cast member said after seeing the film on the big screen:



I never thought I'd get to be in a movie—and now I want to make more!



“It was a long, long road, but it was worth it.” – Devin Staub

After years of dialysis and waiting, Devin Staub received the call he’d been hoping for: he was getting a new kidney.

“I waited a long, long time—and I’m getting my life back,” Devin says, smiling. On January 8, 2025, he had a successful transplant and is now focused on recovery, getting stronger, and returning to the things he loves.

The journey hasn’t been easy. Devin began dialysis in 2020, going three times a week, following a strict diet, and staying as active as he could. “The hardest part was the dialysis. But my parents helped me a lot,” he says. “I’m proud I followed my diet—I couldn’t have my regular foods.”



Even through the tough days, Devin kept moving forward. He used the treadmill at home to stay healthy and ready. He volunteered at The Museum, helped with clean-up duties, walked through the neighbourhood, and stayed connected with his friends and housemates. “Being around my housemates helped me feel like myself,” he says.

Now, back at home after the surgery, Devin says he feels healthier and is happy to no longer be doing dialysis. He has plans to rejoin LEG Up and get back to day trips and activities with Sports for Special Athletes.

He wants others on a similar journey to know:



You will have to wait a long, long time—but it’s worth it.

—Devin Staub





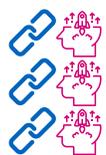
Employment

KW Habilitation continues to break barriers to employment through inclusive support, skill-building, and community collaboration. With a focus on relationships first, our employment team at KW Career Compass (KWCC) provides personalized support for job seekers while actively engaging employers in building inclusive workplaces. This year, we strengthened our role as a community leader in employment supports by offering real-world training, building new partnerships, and empowering people to define their own goals and career pathways.

Project SEARCH, a partnership with St. Mary's General Hospital, Cambridge Memorial Hospital, and the Waterloo Catholic District School Board continues to open doors to inclusive employment pathways. This year, 12 students started with Project SEARCH and graduates from 2023/2024 are already seeing success! Two are now employed, two are actively volunteering, and one has been accepted into Conestoga College's Community Integration Through Co-operative Education program. These outcomes reflect the real-world value of hands-on experience, mentorship, and inclusive education. Additional highlights from KWCC include:

- 5 job readiness courses were offered this year, supporting over 30 job seekers with skills in resume building, interview preparation, and workplace expectations.
- Our team partnered with the Waterloo Catholic District School Board to present workshops like Financial Fitness and Ability Awareness: Reframing Disability to students.
- We continue to offer hands-on training, including skill-building workshops in customer service, kitchen safety, and workplace communication.

Our Impact:



We provided employment supports to 115 people in our community.

We worked with 65 inclusive employers.

We collaborated with 12 different volunteer organizations in Waterloo Region to help people build skills toward employment.

Simon Garcia Shares His Voice for a More Inclusive Kitchener

In November 2024, Simon Garcia, who accesses employment supports from KW Career Compass, took the stage as a panelist at the inaugural Kitchener 2051 Speaker Series on Ability and Mobility, hosted at the Kitchener Public Library. With over 170 people in attendance, Simon helped launch a city-wide conversation about accessibility, connectedness, and what it means to thrive in a growing city.

Simon worked with a KWCC job coach to prepare for the panel and although he admitted to feeling shy at first, Simon's confidence grew as the conversation unfolded. He spoke about real-life barriers to mobility like long commutes and winter travel challenges, as well as his vision for better transit, improved trail access, and public Wi-Fi in community spaces. He even suggested innovative solutions, like all-direction crosswalks.

Simon's ideas reflected a deep understanding of what makes a city both connected and caring. As one of the evening's most memorable voices, he reminded everyone that community planning must include the lived experiences of all residents.

KW Habilitation is proud to support opportunities like this one, where people are not only included in the conversation but are helping to shape the future of our community. Simon's advocacy, honesty, and leadership are exactly what Journey to Belonging is all about.



“

I did enjoy it. I was on first and when they gave me the microphone I was a bit shy... but once halfway through, I felt much better because we were all talking together.

– Simon Garcia

Early Learning

KW Habilitation's Early Learning Child Care and Family Resources team supports children, families, and early learning professionals to build strong foundations during the most critical years of development. We work alongside families and community partners to ensure that every child, regardless of ability, has access to inclusive, meaningful, and responsive early learning opportunities.

In 2024, our work focused on advancing equity, deepening collaboration, and addressing urgent community needs through innovative pilot projects and inclusive programming. Whether empowering kinship caregivers, strengthening EarlyON supports, or advocating for trauma-informed care, our team remained committed to creating systems where every child can thrive. Some highlights include:

- Our team partnered with EarlyON programs to provide tailored materials and professional learning opportunities. This helped staff and caregivers navigate the child care crisis and support inclusion at the community level.
- Team members certified in resilience-focused and inclusive teaching methods are now training others across the child care sector, contributing to a more skilled, compassionate workforce.
- From team-wide anti-Islamophobia education to participation in a regional EDI pilot, our work has evolved through a lens of inclusion and cultural responsiveness.
- A group of six Resource Consultants, in partnership with SPOT Therapists from KidsAbility, presented at the Annual Professional Learning Day for Child Care Professionals in Waterloo Region. Two workshops were presented to approximately 1200 ECE's.

Our Impact:

-  We provided tiered supports to 12,065 children in licensed child care programs across Waterloo Region.
-  In 2024 we supported 112 licensed child care centres and 123 home child care programs in the Region of Waterloo. (19 more than in 2023)
-  1241 SNAP referrals were submitted and processed to help support children in our community.
-  85% of families reported increased confidence after supports were provided by our Resource Consultants.

Kinship Care: A Story of Resilience and Support

This year, we saw the power of collaboration come to life through a kinship family's journey to secure inclusive care.

A preschool-aged child entered our services through the Special Needs Access Point (SNAP), placed in kinship care with his uncle, who was already caring for five children, including two of his sister's. Working with a SNAP Coordinator, the uncle secured a child care space and accessed a special needs subsidy to ease financial pressure.

From there, a network of support was built: KW Habilitation's Resource Consultant, KidsAbility's Speech and Behaviour Services, and a Family and



Children's Services worker collaborated to ensure the child received personalized, consistent support. Through our Enhanced Staffing program, the child adapted well to their new child care environment and began to thrive.

Looking ahead, the Resource Consultant and SNAP Coordinator are helping plan for a smooth transition to school. They also nominated the family for KW Habilitation's end of year sponsorship initiative, providing meaningful holiday support and ensuring the whole family was included. This story is a powerful reminder of what's possible when community, compassion, and coordination come together.



Crisis Child Care Pilot

To address urgent needs in the community, we partnered with the Region of Waterloo to pilot Crisis Spots in licensed child care. This program supported children whose families were facing complex challenges, offering short-term placements with trauma-informed care.

As of December 2024, pilot outcomes include:

- 26 referrals received and 24 successful placements.
- 12 children referred to SNRC services .
- 2 children supported with Enhanced Staffing.
- 3 families received transportation assistance.
- 2.5 hours average application support per family.
- A mother coping with trauma was able to prioritize her own well-being after her children entered care.
- A parent found employment and began planning to move out of a shelter.

We heard directly from families describing this opportunity as an “answered prayer”. We believe that this pilot demonstrated how a compassionate, flexible approach to crisis support can restore hope and stability when families need it most.



The Habber Effect

At KW Habilitation, our greatest strength is our people. Across every program, home, classroom, and office, our staff (Habbers) are the driving force behind our mission to support people to live their best lives. Through their everyday work, as well as through peer-led initiatives and professional leadership, our teams are shaping a more inclusive, collaborative, and responsive organization, one where everyone belongs.

This year, the voices and leadership of our Habbers came through in powerful ways. Whether through formal committees, advocacy, or innovation in practice, our team played an active role in contributing to the agency's growth and culture. From launching new orientation tools and leadership training to strengthening peer support and wellness programs, Human Resources and our leadership team worked alongside front-line staff to build a workplace that prioritizes inclusion, accountability, and professional growth.

We also saw increased staff retention, strong engagement with new development opportunities, and leadership that reached far beyond our walls. These achievements reflect the collaborative culture and excellence we're fostering at KW Habilitation.

Staff Committees in Action: Equity, Connection, and Excellence

Habbers continued to lead meaningful change through the Equity Council, Employee Resource Council (ERC), and Committee for Excellence—three staff-led groups that represent the pulse of our culture and the momentum behind much of our progress.



Equity Council

Made up of 12 members contributing 600+ hours in 2024, the Equity Council advanced equity, diversity, and inclusion through education, action, and advocacy. Some highlights include:

- Hosted booths at Tri-Pride and Staff Appreciation Day.
- Led EDI presentations at team meetings across all sites.
- Organized a learning visit to Crow Shield Lodge.
- Reviewed policies to enhance inclusivity
- Shared EDI resources, made and distributed over 1,000 buttons.

Employee Resource Council (ERC)

This 12-member team contributed approximately 1,000 hours to staff wellness, feedback collection, and peer support. Some highlights include:

- Achieved 56% participation in the Employee Engagement Survey.
- Worked with a group of students to complete 137 stay interviews to gather actionable feedback from employees.
- Increased EFAP engagement to 8.36%, leading peer organizations.
- Launched peer support training.
- Began development of a formal evaluation and goal-setting framework.



The Equity Council is a diverse group, full of Habbers with ideas to promote positive change throughout KW Habilitation.
– Meghan Churchill



The ERC gave me the opportunity to support my peers and contribute to positive change.
– Krista Keim



Committee for Excellence

Made up of 10 members contributing over 1200 hours in 2024, the Committee for Excellence worked hard to foster a culture of learning and innovation by sharing ideas, celebrating success, and building capacity. Some highlights include:

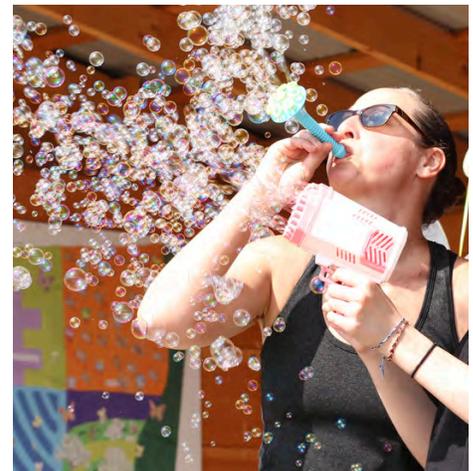
- Ensured employee appreciation is at the forefront of all the recognition we do at KW Habilitation.
- Developed and provided learning opportunities that elevated peer knowledge and internal best practices.
- Laid the groundwork for KW Habilitation's first province-wide Developmental Services conference, planned by and for sector professionals.

Together, these committees demonstrate how Habbers lead from every level—bringing voice, value, and vision to the future of KW Habilitation.



The Committee for Excellence has been a great way to meet and talk to others across the organization that I wouldn't normally come across and I gain leadership skills.

– Maxx Papineau



Sector Leadership and Recognition

In 2024, KW Habilitation continued to demonstrate leadership within the Developmental Services sector, sharing knowledge, influencing practice, and championing innovation.

At the Specialized Clinical Developmental Services Network Conference, team members Kassie Harvey, Ryan Guitard, and Darren Rene presented a powerful case study on effective collaboration between health and developmental services. Their presentation, delivered to over 150 professionals from across the province, highlighted Owen's journey from nearly two years in hospital as an Alternate Level of Care patient to successfully transitioning back home at KW Habilitation. This case not only underscored the value of advocacy, planning, and sector coordination, but also KW Habilitation's commitment to leading in complex care transitions.

In partnership with Karis Disability Services, we hosted 65 people from organizations across Ontario at the Intentional Community Consortium Housing Forum. This event was created to encourage and inspire other Developmental Service agencies to create affordable housing in their communities. Attendees had the opportunity to learn from organizations who have completed affordable housing projects or are in the process of completion, discover new construction options, as well as learn about affordable housing partnerships that have been successful in different communities.

Jamie Russell, Director of Human Resources was recognized with the "Making a Difference in Leadership" award from the Provincial Network on Developmental Services. The award honoured her dedication to building leadership capacity within our organization and across the sector.

In a reflection of our global engagement, CEO Ann Bilodeau participated in the 2024 Global Leadership Exchange, spending time in the UK learning about Local Area Coordination and the innovative ways British communities are building inclusive, person-directed systems and then learning and connecting with leaders from all around the world at network meeting in Utrecht, the Netherlands. Her involvement in this international learning exchange brings fresh insights to KW Habilitation's ongoing work and reinforces our role as thought leaders at home and abroad. Together, these efforts reflect our team's growing impact as leaders, collaborators, and change-makers in the broader movement for inclusion.

From Home to Harvest

From accessible housing to fresh vegetables, the work of our Facilities and Our Farm teams is rooted in care, sustainability, and community connection. Whether we're building a new complex care wing, installing irrigation systems, or growing lettuce for local families, we're focused on creating spaces where people can thrive.

In 2024, construction officially began on our long-anticipated Complex Care Wing at David Fisher Residence. This custom-built, two-unit space will support people with high and complex needs in a safe, person-directed environment. The project remains on time and on budget, with completion expected in summer 2025. Across all sites, upgrades like new heating recovery ventilation units, secure monitoring panels, paved parking, and energy-efficient renovations have improved both quality of life and operational reliability.

Meanwhile, Our Farm marked its 11th growing season with record productivity, and an expanded Community Supported Agriculture program. Our farmers, interns, and volunteers worked tirelessly to grow and harvest high-quality, organically grown produce that nourished people accessing our services and beyond.

Some highlights include:

- Our 18-unit Affordable Housing Project is under construction
- The Complex Care Wing demolition and rebuild is underway with completion expected summer 2025. The project has been custom designed to support high needs with dignity and accessibility
- We leased 15 new Kia Carnival vans to support transportation for people accessing our services
- We hosted 26 market days, 371 Inclusive Living and 188 SIL produce pickups!
- We installed a new irrigation system at our 115 University Avenue location.
- We grew over 850 heads of lettuce, 365 bunches of green onions, and 377 bunches of radishes!
- We launched our CSA program and sold 17 shares to community members
- We made donations to Soup Sisters, House of Friendship, and the Humane Society of Kitchener, Waterloo & Stratford Perth
- A grant from the Region of Waterloo supported the development of new community garden plots and new fruit trees. We prepped the garden beds and made plans for them to be used in 2025.
- We installed a new outdoor vegetable cooler, growing tunnel, and 15 new beds.



Volunteers

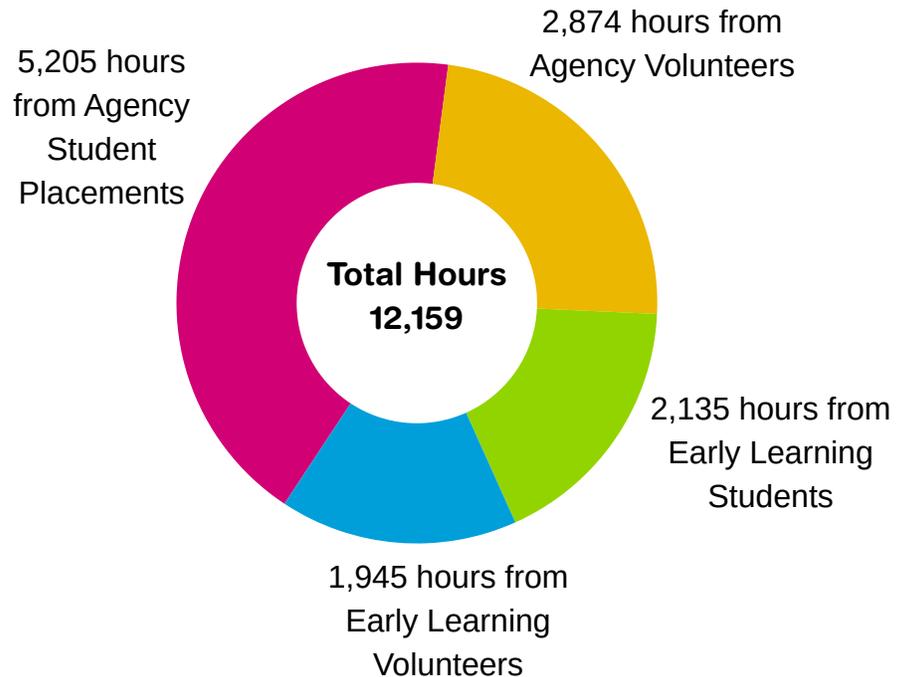
Volunteers and student placements are essential to the culture and capacity of KW Habilitation. Each year, we welcome people from all walks of life who are eager to learn, contribute, and connect. In doing so, they contribute to building a community where everyone belongs. From classroom support to visuals creation, one-on-one inclusion to administrative assistance, volunteers help expand what's possible across our organization.

Student placements, in particular, serve as a gateway to deeper engagement. Many students who come to KW Habilitation through co-op or practicum experiences stay with us as long-term volunteers. Their continued involvement speaks to the welcoming environment, meaningful experiences, and sense of impact they find here. This year, student groups also supported organizational initiatives like stay interviews, offering real-time insights into staff experiences and helping shape our future.

Through their time, skills, and presence, volunteers and students strengthen connections, create new opportunities, and align their efforts with our mission to support people in living their best lives.

In 2024, 135 Volunteers and Students contributed a total of

12,159
hours to KW Habilitation!



Information Technology

In 2024, the IT Department at KW Habilitation played a pivotal role in strengthening our digital foundations and aligning technology with the needs of the people we support. Our work is about more than systems, it's about enabling connection, improving workflows, and supporting teams in delivering person-directed care.

This year, IT officially became part of the Human Resources team. This shift reflects the growing integration of people systems and digital tools, helping us better support onboarding, training, and workforce development. Whether through infrastructure upgrades or smarter data processes, we continued building a foundation for innovation and inclusion. Some highlights include:

- Improved internet reliability through network upgrades.
- Completed EMHware training and began raw data reporting preparation.
- Supported GoEasyCare implementation.
- Improved case documentation and cross-departmental data collaboration.



Looking Forward

As we look to 2025 and beyond, KW Habilitation is focused on innovation, collaboration, and responsive growth. The coming year will see the continuation of key projects and the launch of new initiatives that deepen our commitment to inclusion, strengthen our infrastructure, and align with the evolving needs of our community. We plan to:

-  Launch a new two-day orientation experience for all new hires to support smoother onboarding and connection.
-   Implement a formal employee check-in and goal-setting framework, helping staff and leadership align on performance and growth.
-  Introduce a new HRIS system to streamline scheduling, payroll, and attendance tracking across the organization.
-   Support the onboarding and success of internationally recruited staff with specialized resources and mentorship.
-  Expand the Peer Support program, with new training sessions and outreach led by the Employee Resource Council.
-   Pilot an employer training course to increase awareness of the value of inclusive hiring.
-  Explore expansion of our job readiness training to private schools, building on success with the Catholic school board.
-   Continue building partnerships to increase employment opportunities and inclusive hiring through KW Career Compass.
-   Continue integrating Journey to Belonging principles through increased choice, autonomy, and co-design in programs.
-  Deepen supports for people aging in place, including expanding dementia-friendly initiatives.
-   Build on success at the Pegasus Incredible Film Festival by developing new creative storytelling projects.
-  Reopen and rename Grant's Cafe to the Hangout at Grant's Cafe, a space "where community happens".
-   Continue the development of the Crisis Child Care pilot and seek additional funding to sustain urgent care spots.

-  Further embed EDI-informed practices across all Early Learning programs, including expansion of culturally responsive resources.
-  Complete the Complex Care Wing at DFR and prepare for occupancy by summer 2025.
-  Continue construction on our 18-unit affordable housing development, with a focus on accessibility and inclusive living.
-  Add 10–12 new garden beds and install pollination strips to increase food security and biodiversity.
-  Promote the Our Farm Trail more widely to encourage greater community engagement with outdoor spaces.

Why Our Work Matters

The work we do at KW Habilitation speaks to one truth: belonging transforms lives. When people are empowered to direct their own lives, when families are supported, and when staff are equipped to lead, our whole community thrives. Whether it's inclusive employment, early years supports, peer support, or fresh produce, these efforts are about dignity, connection, and possibility.

KW Habilitation's work impacts lives across generations. From a young child learning to thrive in inclusive child care, to a youth gaining confidence at Youth Exploring Possibilities, to an adult returning home after hospital discharge, the common thread is meaningful support grounded in relationships. Our programs don't just fill gaps, they unlock potential.

We are not just building homes and employment opportunities, but networks of belonging where people are seen, supported, and celebrated. When our staff lead with empathy and mindfulness, when people shape their own experiences, and when volunteers and community partners come alongside with care and purpose, we create real, lasting change.

Our commitment to inclusion is not aspirational, it's operational. It's woven into the housing we build and maintain, the partnerships we foster, and the everyday moments where people choose what belonging means to them. We do this work because it matters, to the people we support, to their families, to our staff, and to the broader community. Together, we are **building a community where everyone belongs and participates.**

Inspiring
Abilities.
Enriching
Lives.

