

*Guided by
our Principles:*
**Our Foundation,
Our Future**

**ANNUAL REPORT
2024-25**



YSSN
YOUR SUPPORT
SERVICES NETWORK

A MESSAGE FROM THE Board Chair and Executive Director

At YSSN, our guiding principles—Compassion, Accountability, Resilience, Initiative, and Collaboration—not only ground the work we do, they also inspire us to keep growing, adapting, and finding new ways to meet the changing needs of the communities we serve.

Every day, our dedicated professionals lead with compassion, meeting people where they are and offering support tailored to each person's unique journey.

Being accountable to the people we serve includes looking for ways to do better. This year, we took important steps forward through new partnerships with York Region Children's Aid Society, Community Living Central York, and Sunbeam Community & Developmental Services—helping us reach more people, strengthen trust, and be as responsive as possible with solutions that people truly need.

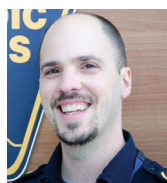
In a climate of financial restraint and rising demand, resilience is as important as ever. Our team's unwavering commitment to walking alongside people on their journey was clear in the 32,171 people we served this year—an increase of 9.2% over last year, and a powerful reflection of the resilience and dedication of our staff.

We've also taken the initiative to improve services for people with complex needs. With support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and in partnership with other service providers, we launched the Dual Diagnosis System Navigator initiative—a response to the very real challenges faced by people living with both developmental and mental health needs.

Collaboration remains at the heart of how we work at YSSN—whether it's through cross-sector initiatives, community partnerships, or sharing vital data to strengthen services. In September we partnered with Indigenous-led organization Anishnabeg Outreach (AO) to pilot AONest, a self-guided online resource supporting mental health and emotional well-being.

As we look to the future, we know challenges will continue—and so will our resolve. Our principles will guide us in how we meet growing financial demands, navigate the increasing complexity of needs identified by people seeking support, and strengthen our service delivery.

Thank you to everyone who brings these principles to life on behalf of YSSN and the people we serve. We are grateful to be on this journey with you.



Bryan Laviolette
Board Chair



Kimberly Thorn
Executive Director

WHO WE ARE

YSSN is a not-for-profit organization that connects people, along with their families and caregivers, to the services and supports they need to live their best lives. As a social services hub, we support children and adults with developmental disabilities, mental health needs, and people experiencing crisis.

With direct 24/7 crisis support, access services and service coordination, YSSN provides a streamlined process for people to navigate the right supports for their unique needs, at the right time, across every stage of their lives.

OUR VISION

**A Meaningful Life for All:
Relationships, Community,
Well-Being.**

OUR MISSION

Communicate. Connect. Collaborate.

LIVING OUR *Guiding Principles*

Over the past year our guiding principles continued to shape every aspect of our work. From expanding access and forging partnerships to meeting complex challenges, our teams stayed grounded in these shared commitments.

The following pages highlight our principles in action—through new programs, partnerships, and progress.

Compassion

We are kind and patient with those we work with and with ourselves. We take the time to listen attentively, without judgement.

This year, we took meaningful steps to support the well-being of the people and communities we serve. We expanded services for caregivers—who often experience significant emotional strain—by piloting counselling for those supporting children in the Ontario Autism Program and leveraging Caregiver Peer Mentoring to address compassion fatigue and provide connection through shared experience.

In our developmental services programs, we introduced another Peer Mentor role, further embedding peer support so individuals with developmental disabilities can find understanding and encouragement from those who have walked a similar path.

Recognizing the importance of inclusive care, we expanded outreach to newcomers and equity-deserving groups with renewed support from the Region of York, ensuring our services are culturally appropriate and accessible to all.



HOPE THROUGH CARE

A YSSN Crisis Services team member, participated in a 911 call from a person on an unknown subway platform who was actively suicidal and hesitant to share details.

She maintained a compassionate connection, building rapport while sharing any information she could gather with the team. This real-time communication allowed Toronto Police and Paramedics to locate the high-risk caller, ensuring they were able to find and help them.



Accountability

Individually and mutually, we hold ourselves responsible for our actions and results. We are answerable to all our stakeholders, including each other.

This year, we improved our ability to track outcomes and identify service gaps by implementing automated data submissions through the Centre of Excellence.

We also improved efficiency and client experience by introducing DocuSign to streamline Passport service agreements, reducing delays in getting people the help they need.

YSSN received the Non-Profit Employer of Choice Award, with 94% of staff agreeing that they are treated with respect and supported in achieving a healthy work–life balance—an outcome that reflects our commitment to being accountable not only to the community, but to each other.

This was the fourth time YSSN received this award since it was introduced 10 years ago.



OPEN HOUSE MARKED 25 YEARS OF YSSN CRISIS SUPPORT

In November 2024, YSSN opened the doors to its Aurora offices for a special Open House celebrating 25 years of community crisis response services. Guests had the opportunity to meet YSSN staff, explore how YSSN supports people in crisis, and discover how crisis services connect people to a range of mental health and developmental supports.

The event was well attended by partners, local elected officials, staff, and many friends of YSSN. It also marked the launch of the latest *Up Your Life* guide. The day provided an opportunity for YSSN to share our commitment to supporting people through the most challenging points in their journey.

Resilience

We see setbacks as an opportunity to build skills and strengths by seeking positive solutions.

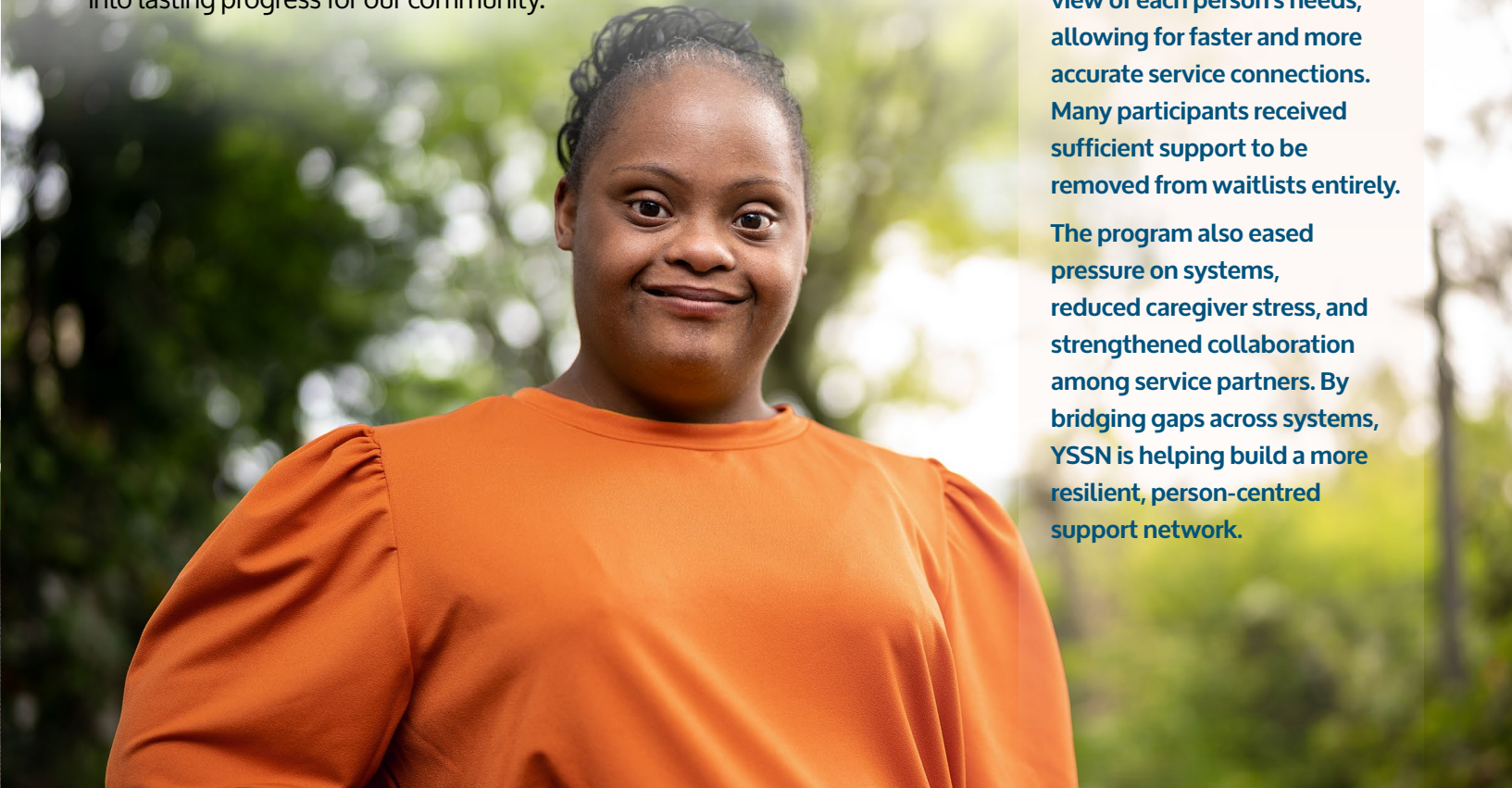
Resilience defines YSSN's approach to challenges, viewing setbacks not as obstacles but as opportunities to find innovative solutions and grow stronger.

This year, we realigned YSSN services to better support people with dual diagnoses, enabling us to partner more effectively in the community. This includes the System Navigator initiative (see story on this page) and working with Ministry of Health, Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) and local hospitals to help divert people from unnecessary hospital stays back to home with community supports.

To guide future growth, we broadened our organizational mandate by revising our charitable purpose statements with the Canada Revenue Agency, laying the foundation for expanded programs and services.

We also contributed valuable data and insights to provincial planning tables, helping to inform more effective service planning across the region.

Internally, we adapted key functions like DSO navigation and Passport services by setting new goals shaped by client and caregiver feedback, ensuring our work remains aligned with those we serve. Through these actions, YSSN continues to embody resilience—transforming challenges into lasting progress for our community.



BRIDGING SERVICE GAPS TO BUILD RESILIENCE

This year YSSN introduced its Dual Diagnosis System Navigator initiative, funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation's Resilient Communities Fund. The program supports individuals with both developmental and mental health challenges—people who often struggle to access care as they navigate multiple, disconnected service systems.

A key feature is a redesigned bio-psychosocial assessment tool that gives staff a complete view of each person's needs, allowing for faster and more accurate service connections. Many participants received sufficient support to be removed from waitlists entirely.

The program also eased pressure on systems, reduced caregiver stress, and strengthened collaboration among service partners. By bridging gaps across systems, YSSN is helping build a more resilient, person-centred support network.

Initiative

With creativity and leadership we explore, build and pursue opportunities.

At YSSN, initiative drives us to lead with creativity and purpose and we are constantly seeking new ways to expand and enhance our services. This year, we grew our Ontario Autism Program Foundational Family Services with additional funding from Kinark Child and Family Services, enabling more families to receive early support and guidance.

Demonstrating leadership on a national scale, we joined the 911–988 Working Group to help shape mental health crisis line procedures across the country.

We broadened our reach through new partnerships with organizations such as York Region Children’s Aid Society, Community Living Central York, Sunbeam Community & Developmental Services, and the Centre for Behaviour Health Sciences, enabling us to offer more diverse and coordinated supports.

Collaboration

We engage each other in a cooperative process, internally and externally, to create solutions of mutual benefit.

This year, we renewed our partnership with York Region Children’s Aid Society, securing additional funding to provide consultative support and direct assistance to families in need.

Internally, we launched our new “Staff Hub” secure website as a centralized resource for staff to access administrative tools, gain deeper understanding of YSSN programs, stay informed, and engage with one another.

Externally, we participated in regional and provincial planning sessions through Streamlined Access, helping to inform and influence the future of coordinated mental health and addictions services in alignment with Ontario’s “Roadmap to Wellness.”

We also contributed valuable data on Developmental Services Ontario and Passport programs to local and provincial partners, supporting system-wide planning by highlighting trends and service gaps.



INITIATING NEW CONNECTIONS IN THE COMMUNITY

With funding from United Way Greater Toronto, YSSN expanded its Crisis Outreach work—meeting people where they live, work, and gather. This initiative created new, meaningful connections with 818 professionals, 2,382 community members, and 204 caregivers through visits to schools, libraries, and trusted local spaces.



PILOTING AONEST WITH ANISHNABEG OUTREACH

YSSN partnered with Indigenous-led Anishnabeg Outreach (AO) to pilot AONest, a self-guided online resource supporting mental wellness and life skills. Through this collaboration, YSSN introduced the platform to clients across York Region and provided feedback to support its growth. Together, YSSN and AO expanded access to culturally grounded supports and created a model for future cross-sector partnerships.

Our Impact *by the numbers*



32,171 people received services from YSSN
↑+9.2%



YSSN engaged in **106,156** service contacts and visits
↑+2.2%

Access Services

Working with individuals, families and caregivers to navigate available supports and services and provide seamless access to the right services at the right time.



9,812 people served
↑+8.4%

Streamlined Access

2,618 people
1,906 referrals received

6,645 contacts/visits

DSO Central East Region

7,194 people
↑+15.1%
30,013 contacts/visits

1,546 intakes completed
↑+18.4%
1,028 applications completed

Coordination Services

Supporting people to plan their goals and connect them to resources, supports, services and community partners.



3,716 people served
↑+17.7%

Mental Health

1,075 people
29,172 contacts/visits

Developmental Services

2,641 people
↑+43%
11,771 contacts/visits
889 children and youth served

Passport Program

3,884 people served
↑+11.4%

Crisis Services

Responding to people’s urgent needs through a continuum of services including 310–COPE, Crisis Beds, Safe Beds, Mental Health Support Teams, and the Call Diversion Unit.



17,438 people served
35,053 contacts/visits
↑+3.5%

Mobile Crisis Response Teams

4,173 people served
↑+28.0%

Call Diversion Unit

2,399 contacts
↑+32.2%

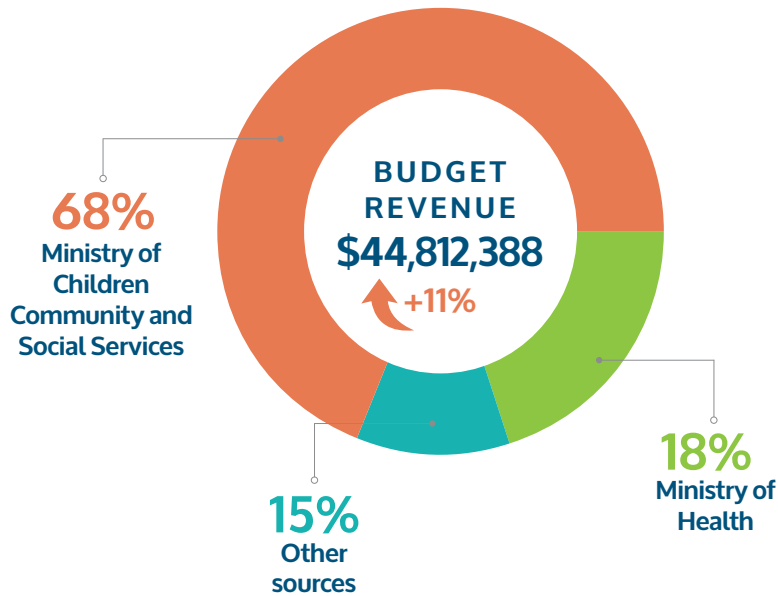
594 Calls diverted from direct police involvement through CDU intervention



Crisis and Safe Beds

117 people
↑+19.4%
2,445 resident days
↑+54.5%

FINANCIALS



HUMAN RESOURCES



259
Total employees

31
New hires

94%
Staff retention

OUR BOARD OF *Directors*

Bryan Laviolette – Chair
Demetre Rigakos – Vice-Chair
Brad Smith – Treasurer
Bijesh Balan – Director
Susan Dobson – Director
Melissa Enmore – Director
Emma Esselink – Director

Rosalyn Gambell – Director
Rose Luo – Director
Patricia (Trish) Maxwell – Director
Oluwakemi (Kemi) Oduwole – Director
Marcel Price – Director
Kimberly Thorn – Executive Director/Secretary

THANK YOU TO OUR *Supporters*

We are deeply grateful to everyone who supported YSSN this year. Whether you gave your time, shared your resources, or partnered with us to strengthen our work, your contributions reflect the principles that guide us. Thank you for standing with us.



Your Support Services Network
240 Edward St., Unit 3, Aurora, ON L4G 3S9
905-898-6455 or Toll Free 1-866-257-9776
YSSN.CA

Connect with us!



CARF has accredited YSSN for its Access Services, Coordination Services and Crisis Services.