



Donor Impact Report 2024

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Letter From Our CEO



**Maureen
Cassidy**

I am continually inspired by the individuals and organizations in the nonprofit and impact sector, whose work strengthens our communities, making them more vibrant, inclusive, and resilient. At Pillar Nonprofit Network, we are committed to equipping nonprofit leaders with the tools, connections, and support they need to amplify their impact and drive meaningful change. Through collaboration and innovation, we can achieve far more together than any of us could alone.

The dedication and generosity of our donors and supporters make this work possible. Whether through partnerships, volunteering, or championing community causes, your contributions matter deeply. I encourage you to stay connected, share your insights, and explore new ways we can collaborate to strengthen our collective efforts.

Because of your support, we've been able to introduce new initiatives like the Pillar Community Membership Program and the Inclusive Community Events Program, ensuring that cost is not a barrier to the capacity-building resources and connections that small nonprofits and grassroots groups need to thrive. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to building a better and brighter future for all. I look forward to all we will achieve together.

In Community,

Maureen Cassidy
CEO, Pillar Nonprofit Network



About Pillar Nonprofit Network

Pillar Nonprofit Network strengthens the impact sector to build a just and vibrant community for all. We enhance the operations of nonprofits, charities, and social enterprises through collaboration, innovation, and advocacy. By sharing knowledge and fostering connections, we champion equity and drive transformational change. Guided by anti-racism and anti-oppression principles, we work toward systemic change, resilience, and best practices. Focused on excellence and sustainability, we support individuals and organizations in leading with purpose. Together, we're creating a connected, inclusive society where ideas spark action and every voice matters.

Thank you for shaping a brighter tomorrow for our community.

Pillar Nonprofit Network's Community Membership Program



To ensure our membership program remains equitable, inclusive, and sustainable, we completed our first major restructure since 2010. This refresh prioritizes community access and long-term viability - making the program self-sufficient and able to support Pillar's overall operations for the first time.

To comply with new ONCA regulations, we've streamlined membership categories. Membership is now open to nonprofits, charities, grassroots organizations, granting agencies, and current or past members of Pillar's Board across Southwestern Ontario. We've also launched new philanthropic and sponsorship programs to connect businesses and individuals with meaningful opportunities to support community impact.



**Pillar
Community
Membership
Program**

Brought to you by Canada Life

As part of our equity commitment, the Pillar Community Membership Program - brought to you by Canada Life - offers free membership to small nonprofits and grassroots groups with annual budgets under \$100,000. We anticipate more than 100 organizations will benefit from this new initiative this year!

Our Members

**215
Pillar
Members**

**75%
Participate in at least
one Pillar program or service**

**80
Grassroots
Organizations**

The Inclusive Community Events Program (ICEP)

The Inclusive Community Events Program provides complimentary meeting and event space to small nonprofits and grassroots organizations that are led by or that serve equity-deserving communities. In 2024, we supported five (5) organizations! This program is made possible by donors to the Dharshi Lacey Catalyst Fund.

The Cultural Gully was one of the ICEP program recipients in 2024.

The Cultural Gully is passionate about bringing communities together from all South Asian backgrounds and strives to create oneness within all.

Through the Inclusive Community Events Program, they were able to run the first Diwali Mini-Market in London. Their goal was to recognize and educate the public on the meaning of Diwali and to celebrate in an approachable way through this market. This event was a great opportunity for local small South Asian business owners to have a platform to sell their products, including food, art, jewelry, and clothing.

They also featured several performances, music, and cultural activities for attendees to celebrate and learn more about the meaning of Diwali.



“With the support of the Dharshi Lacey Catalyst Fund, we were able to keep costs to participate low for vendors and free for community members to attend, which eliminated a barrier. The event was a great success, and we look forward to potentially hosting this or other events in Innovation Works in the future.”

- Raunak Seth and Kayley MacGregor, Co-Founders of the Cultural Gully

Innovation Works Thrives Despite Downtown Vacancy Rate

While London's downtown core faces an unprecedented vacancy rate in office spaces, Innovation Works, a community coworking space owned and operated by Pillar Nonprofit Network, **has maintained an 83-89% private office occupancy rate over the last 12 months.** Innovation Works provides flexible and accessible work and meeting environments for nonprofits, purpose-driven organizations, businesses, and social enterprises.

At a time when reports highlight that London has the highest downtown office vacancy rates in Canada at 31.4%, Innovation Works stands out as a flourishing hub of activity. Inspired by the concept of third spaces, Innovation Works has been intentionally redesigned as a welcoming, inclusive, and accessible space. It offers flexible packages to accommodate the evolving needs of today's workforce—both in the nonprofit and business sectors—creating an environment for individuals and organizations seeking hybrid alternatives, connection, collaboration, and community in a central, accessible location.

"We recognize that the way people work has fundamentally changed, and our approach reflects that shift. We offer a flexible environment that feels more like a gathering space than a traditional office," said Maureen Cassidy, CEO of Pillar Nonprofit Network. "Our co-tenants come here not just to work, but to connect with like-minded individuals, collaborate, and engage with their community in meaningful ways."



Read the Full Article



Stories of Impact You Made Possible



Maria Daniella Quinones: Fostering a Connected Community

As a Brescia University College student in 2015, Daniella Quiñones interned at Pillar through a placement program, where she developed a business case for an Equity & Inclusion Community of Practice. The experience strengthened her leadership and built lasting community connections.

In 2020, Daniella and her partner launched Culturx (pronounced Cultura), a volunteer-run nonprofit celebrating the Latin community in Canada. Their first Latin Community Festival in 2022 drew over 10,000 people to Dundas Place.

In 2023, Culturx was a recipient of the TD Zone at Pillar Nonprofit Network, a program made possible through the generous support of TD Bank Group. Through this initiative, they received a one-year Pillar membership along with complimentary access to desk and event spaces at Innovation Works. They made full use of the space to host community activities and volunteer gatherings.

Seeing the value of the space and network, Culturx chose to continue in 2024 by self-funding their membership and tenancy.

In early 2024, Culturx opened Casa Latina, a nonprofit social enterprise. Casa Latina is a community space designed by Latin community members, for Latin community members.



Daniella became the first Executive Director of Heart-Links in 2024, its first since its incorporation as a registered charity in 2003!

Planting the Seeds for Impact: LEN's Growth with Pillar

The London Environmental Network (LEN) began in 2014 as a collaborative program between Thames Talbot Land Trust and ReForest London. That same year, they joined Pillar Nonprofit Network as a member - eager to build their capacity and connect with others in the social impact sector. Through Pillar, LEN accessed workshops, strategic guidance, and networking opportunities that helped shape their path. These early supports played a key role in their evolution, and by 2018, LEN had officially become an independent nonprofit. That same year, they joined Innovation Works, Pillar's co-working space for changemakers - a move they credit as a catalyst for deeper community engagement and greater impact.

In the years that followed, LEN staff and board immersed themselves in Pillar's learning and leadership programs - gaining skills in grant writing, public policy, and network building. In 2023, they participated in Pillar's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) self-guided learning, and now use the SDGs to measure the success and alignment of their programs with global goals.

Over the years, Pillar's programming has played a key role in LEN's evolution. Staff and board members soaked up every learning opportunity—from grant writing and public policy workshops to community events and peer learning sessions. These experiences didn't just build capacity; they helped cultivate a network of peers, mentors, and collaborators across the sector.



Most recently, in 2024, Past Interim Executive Director Leah Derikx joined Pillar's ED/CEO Nonprofit Support Network, connecting with fellow leaders and strengthening her confidence as a changemaker. "It was a valuable opportunity to learn from other EDs and CEOs. Their insights helped validate my own experiences and made me a better leader", she says.

This is what your support makes possible. With your help, Pillar nurtures nonprofits like LEN - providing the tools, space, and community they need to grow their mission and make a lasting impact.

Forest City Film Festival: Cultivating a Strong Film Culture



Dorothy Downs, Founder and Executive Director of the Forest City Film Festival (FCFF), brought together a small group of passionate individuals dedicated to enhancing local film culture. Beginning modestly with informal meetings around the kitchen table, FCFF recognized the need for more structure and governance to help meet their goals. The FCFF formed a Board of Directors to steer their mission forward, and quickly sought out their registered charitable status. They become co-tenants at Innovation Works in 2016, using the space for board meetings and networking with other arts organizations.



Over the years, their impact multiplied exponentially. They expanded their reach, attracting more films and participants, solidifying FCFF's position as a premier destination for film screenings and industry networking as a host of the Ontario Screen Creators Conference.

In 2024, FCFF hosted their annual Leg Up Lab workshops at Innovation Works, a networking opportunity for emerging filmmakers to connect with industry experts. The space was provided through the Forest City Landing Pad, a partnership between the London Economic Development Corporation and Pillar Nonprofit Network. Leg Up Lab workshops have led to many local films being created!

"I want to express sincere gratitude to Pillar for its invaluable role in fostering the growth of our arts organization within this community... Pillar serves as the foundation for organizations like ours to create, grow, and make a lasting impact in London."

- Dorothy Downs, Executive Director, Forest City Film Festival

Donor Spotlights: Why You Give



Yvette Scrivener: The Journey To Community Connection

Pillar introduced me to London.

In 2007, just weeks after moving to the city, I walked into Pillar Nonprofit Network's office, curious to learn more about the organization - and hopeful it could help connect me with volunteer opportunities. I was new to the community and eager to find a way to get involved, invested, and engaged. The Executive Director greeted me at the door, offering welcoming words and referring me to Pillar's website which featured, and still does, a wide range of opportunities. She encouraged me to consider not only my interests but also my skills as I explored where I could best contribute.

That moment marked the beginning of my volunteer journey in London. Since then, I've served on the boards of Childreach, the Fanshawe College Foundation, and Pillar itself - experiences that deepened my civic pride and connected me with organizations driving real impact in our community. Along the way, I met inspiring change makers and champions for London, and I took part in training through Pillar that strengthened my skills in board governance, fundraising, and financial stewardship.

More than that, my understanding of community investment and impact has grown through every step of this journey.



Yvette Scrivener
Executive Director, Childreach

Nearly 20 years later, I'm proud to continue my relationship with Pillar - as a member, a workshop participant, a donor, and a collaborator. Pillar has evolved to meet the changing needs of the community, and I'm grateful to still be a part of its story.



Tepperman's London: Supporting The Whole Sector

There is a lot going for the London community. However, it can be difficult to understand how everything links together and to call out what is important for healthy community growth. Pillar Nonprofit Network represents the many faces of London and provides insights and tools to help us leverage the current state to create a better future state.

There is no denying that Pillar is important to have in London. Change is happening fast in our community – the people, the demographics, as well as economically and socially. Pillar helps navigate the changes by understanding what type of ideas and programs should be offered to strengthen the community.

Pillar has also supported my own personal and professional growth. I attended the All About Boards series last year, which easily translated into how I could improve the governance and board relationships at my company.

When you support Pillar, you're really supporting the whole community and sector. Tepperman's London is proud to support Pillar.

-Andrew Tepperman, Executive Chairman, Tepperman's London



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