



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Pillar Nonprofit Network Members Elect New Board**

*Members of the London region's nonprofit umbrella organization elected a completely new board of directors Wednesday, April 26.*

**LONDON, Ontario, April 28, 2023** – The London region's nonprofit umbrella organization has a completely new board of directors, elected by members of Pillar Nonprofit Network who gathered for the organization's annual general meeting Wednesday, April 26. The slate of candidates was recommended by a community advisory panel, appointed by the outgoing board to coordinate the transition. None of the past board members stood for re-election.

The new board met briefly after the members' meeting to elect officers. **Kapil Lakhotia**, President & CEO of the London Economic Development Corporation is the new Board Chair; **Pam Tobin**, CEO of Oneida Nation of the Thames is the new Vice Chair; **Shahrzad Pooya**, Financial Reporting Manager at Libro Credit Union was elected Treasurer; and **Vikas Sharma**, Principal Lawyer at VS Law Professional Corporation is now Secretary. Other directors elected Wednesday are:

- **Wendy Arnott**, Master Trainer, Senior Consultant, Crucial Learning (formerly VitalSmarts);
- **Janet Grantham**, (Past) President and CEO of Mainstreet Credit Union Limited (Retired 2021);
- **Teri Hibbs**, (Past) Project Coordinator for Housing Stability for Women;
- **David Hill**, WFS London; and
- **Joseph Santarelli**, Senior Advisor, Business Development, Mitacs Inc.

Incoming Board Chair Kapil Lakhotia stresses that the new board is committed to action in support of Pillar's mission and sustainable growth.

“Pillar was formed to make sure the nonprofit sector was highly visible, well-resourced, well-connected, and able to engage productively in cross-sectoral collaboration and advocacy. And that work is ongoing,” he says. “With an entirely new board that’s just met for the first time, we’ll take some time to deepen our understanding of the organization, learn about the skills and experience each new board member brings, and determine how we can best support the mission. So we’ll be moving forward, but we’ll be moving at the speed of trust.”

Pillar’s Interim CEO Maureen Cassidy delivered a similar message to the 70+ attendees of the AGM, promising that the organization will be “methodical and purposeful as we strive to seek healing for what has been broken, all while we honour the important work started by those who came before me and carry that work forward.” She also unveiled early plans for The Forest City Landing Pad, a new partnership with the London Economic Development Corporation. Housed at Innovation Works London, it will be a space for those “who wish to invest in London to collaborate and to build a community around their growing businesses and organizations.” Cassidy says details will be announced soon, but that the initiative will create opportunities for cross-sectoral collaboration, enhance efforts toward recovery in the city’s core, and “highlight the connection between economic recovery and social recovery.”

There was much praise from all parties for the volunteer members of the Community Advisory Panel for their work in recruiting a new board. They had also recommended a reduction of the board to 9 members from 15, a measure approved by the outgoing board and adopted by the membership in a bylaw amendment. Advisory panel member Steve Bolton noted in his remarks to attendees at the AGM that the recommended candidates have “the skill set required and the diversity to govern,” leaving a pool of interested and qualified candidates “who can be available to ensure that a renewal process is appropriate, and proactive.”

Carl Cadogan of the London Black History Coordinating Committee, and also a member of the Community Advisory Panel, delivered a unique and personal land acknowledgement ahead of the business portion of the meeting. Cadogan is also one of the founding directors of Pillar Nonprofit Network and was among many former

directors in attendance, including founding chair Willy Van Klooster who addressed the new board members in their inaugural meeting.

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**About Pillar Nonprofit Network:**

Pillar Nonprofit Network strengthens individuals, organizations and enterprises invested in positive community impact. We support nonprofits, social enterprises and social innovators by sharing resources, exchanging knowledge, and creating meaningful connections across the three pillars of nonprofit, business and government. We believe that a connected network sparks collaboration and a willingness to lean on each other to help build an engaged, just, inclusive, and vibrant community.