

RECOVER REMODEL REBUILD



RE-IMAGINING A MORE EQUITABLE
AND RESILIENT SECTOR

2020 IMPACT REPORT



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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As a settler organization, we would like to acknowledge the history of the traditional territory and honour the longstanding relationships of the three local First Nations of this land and place in Southwestern Ontario. The Attawandaran once settled this region alongside the Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee, and this land served as their traditional hunting grounds. The three longstanding Indigenous peoples of this geographical region are: The Anishinaabeg, The Haudenosaunee and the Lunaapeewak.

We would also like to recognise the three First Nations communities neighbouring the City of London: Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames and Munsee-Delaware Nation.

Pillar Nonprofit Network recognizes the inequities connected to colonization and commits to working towards creating a just, inclusive and vibrant community for all.

We invite you to reflect upon this land acknowledgement, what it means to your personal story, and what the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action mean to you.

MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & BOARD CHAIR

Since the COVID-19 crisis began, Pillar responded quickly to the urgent needs of our network. You requested vital information, connection to resources, access to each other and pathways to voice your concerns. In this report, we share the stories of how we've supported the network and our community through collaboration towards COVID-19 recovery, building virtual communities of support, advocating for the sector, enabling the development of women entrepreneurs and journeying to be allies for equity-seeking communities as we build a framework for an equitable recovery for all.

While we could never have predicted the nature or extent of the crisis we currently face, we have seen the community come together in so many incredible ways and we believe wholeheartedly in this community's desire to take care of one another. We believe in the power of networks—of people coming together, leaning on each other, and lending a hand.

Everywhere we look we see good people doing the right thing. We see generosity, care and courage. At the same time, we also see systems that have served to uphold deeply embedded historical injustices and oppression. We are all being called upon to confront problems of pandemic proportions. Our eyes are now wide open to problems that racialized and under-represented communities endured long before COVID-19 amplified the inequities they face.

As Pillar steps into a new chapter, our primary commitments to the network remain unchanged. In all that we do, we aim to listen deeply, walk alongside, act swiftly and lead when we are being called upon to shift oppressive systems.

It is a long journey to building equitable structures and communities, and it will require different strategies. This critical transformation will depend on reinventing how we define recovery, growth, sustainability, restoration, reconciliation, nurturing and belonging.

We believe in this community's fundamental desire to do better. We invite you to imagine a bright future where everyone belongs, so we can build one, together.



Michelle Baldwin,
Executive Director 2006 - 2021



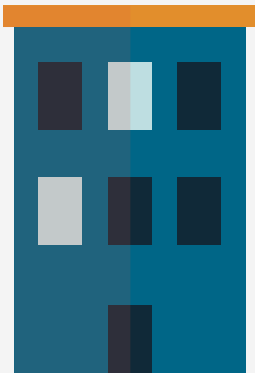
Nicole Spriet,
Board Chair 2019 - 2021

OUR IMPACT 2020

SPARKING COLLABORATION

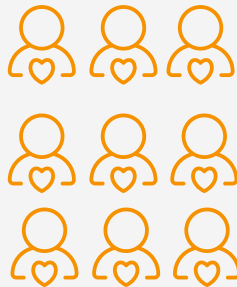
381

Individuals working at
Innovation Works



37

Welcome Desk
volunteers
1910 volunteer hours

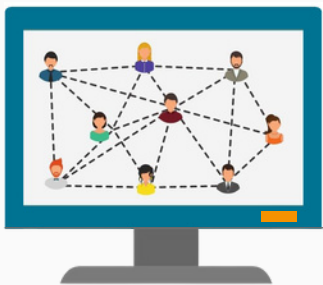


6177

Participants at
Pillar-led events



EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EVENTS



391

Events held



Attendees at the
Pillar Community
Innovation Awards

LEADERSHIP AND BOARD GOVERNANCE



10

Customized board
governance training
sessions provided

We helped match



50

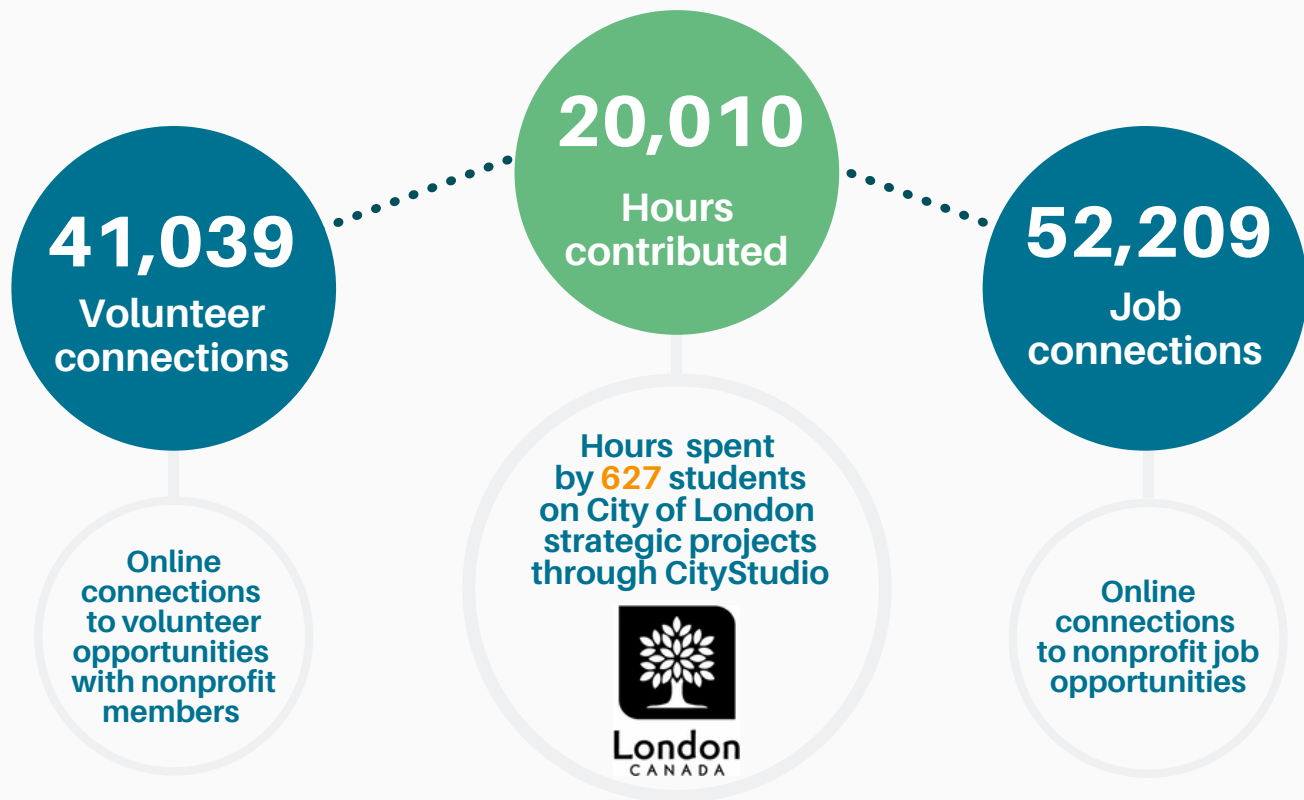
candidates to **40**
nonprofit boards

canada **life**™

50

Board candidates were
sponsored by the Canada
Life Young Leaders Program
Pillar offered in partnership
with Young London

CONNECTING COMMUNITY TO OPPORTUNITY



BUILDING INCLUSIVE ECONOMIES

\$250,000

Invested in
3 social
enterprises
& 1 charity
by VERGE
Capital



77

I'M IN.

Local investors supported
the Innovation Works
Community Bond



11

Investees provided with loan
repayment relief to support
them through COVID-19

SUPPORTING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

500



Women and nonbinary
entrepreneurs supported
through WOSEN

New and existing businesses
supported to grow and pivot
during COVID-19
through WOSEN

87



Libro
CREDIT UNION

+ 32

Individuals and **24** businesses
supported through the Libro
Social Enterprise Incubator

STORIES OF OUR IMPACT

**“Those who share the vision
of a world of belonging
must focus on a new story.”**

- John A. Powell

COLLABORATING FOR COVID-19 RECOVERY

Pillar's network approach is about finding ways to bring individuals and organizations across sectors together to achieve positive community impact. We know we can achieve more when we join forces to meet challenges in our community. In 2020, the need to work together to support those systematically disadvantaged was more clear than ever. Pillar stepped up to facilitate connections and partner with other organizations on several COVID-19 recovery projects and continues to be an active member of other community groups working towards recovery, equity and inclusion, including the Community Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership and the London Community Recovery Network.

In April, the Mayor's Economic and Social Impact & Recovery Task Force raised the question of how to get meals to our most vulnerable. Pillar connected RBC Place London and London Food Bank and helped to spark a partnership along with Youth Opportunities Unlimited and Cargill to answer this call. The partners came together to support the creation of Homeless Lunch Program, providing daily lunches for those most vulnerable. In August, we also teamed up with a collaborative of local businesses and nonprofits to launch the London-Middlesex Restaurant Support Fund. The fund was seeded by Club House for Chefs and McCormick Canada and was operated by our project partners, Middlesex London Food Policy Council, rTraction and Western Fair District. Through this initiative, 38 local restaurants received \$1,000 to help ease the heavy financial burden caused by the ongoing pandemic.

This year, we also partnered with Libro Credit Union and TechAlliance to launch the Recovery & Rebuilding the Region Design Challenges, created to accelerate and scale "Made in Southwestern Ontario" solutions to challenges brought about by the pandemic with a \$20,000 financial investment and business supports. The first recipient, Go Fog It—a fogging disinfectant company—used the capital to expand their business and help stop the spread of COVID-19. Beecuz—a nonprofit offering skill-based workshops and educational curricula to support the mental health of youth—was the recipient of the second challenge. The funding allowed the organization to create an online platform that has enabled them to bring their services to more youth across the region.



BUILDING VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES OF SUPPORT

Being in community allows us to learn from each other and lean on one another. In a year when we were physically distanced, the need to find new ways to connect to ease isolation and loneliness and support each other through this challenging time was immediately evident. As a place-based network, accustomed to facilitating connection in person through avenues like workshops, training, events and connections in our co-working space, we had to pivot to online avenues to continue to facilitate learning and collaboration. This past year, we were able to shift all of our events and Learning and Development programming online, as well as create new opportunities for networking and support.

We know that nonprofits, especially those offering frontline service, have been particularly hard hit by the pandemic. Increased service demands, and a decrease in giving, put a strain on already tight budgets for many organizations and executive directors have carried the brunt of this burden. To help support nonprofit executive directors, we initiated the ED Support Network last March which saw over 142 participants convene to help each other through a range of challenges. Each month the group discusses topics like managing grief and loss, human resources and planning in uncertain times, and all benefit from the sharing of resources across the group.

At Innovation Works, we believe that conscious collisions within our space inspire us all to solve challenges creatively. We also know that interpersonal connection is key to our wellbeing and we pride ourselves on the inclusive community we have created. Faced with the challenge of animating our community remotely, we launched a variety of weekly virtual connection events. Our volunteers helped us shift our Wellness Works weekly yoga and meditation classes online, and we connected with our co-tenant members via events like virtual Salad Club, a GatherTown beach day and weekly Nonprofit Connector Calls for our members. These calls have focused on topics from fundraising during COVID-19 to impact storytelling. All of these events have allowed us and our members to lift each other up during these challenging times.



ADVOCATING FOR THE FUTURE OF THE SECTOR

A core commitment for Pillar remains to be a voice for the nonprofit sector in public policy and government relations. Last March, we saw that chronic issues facing our sector, including funding instability and precarious work, would be amplified by the pandemic. In March, we conducted a COVID-19 Member Survey to confirm how we could best support our members through this time. From the survey, and ongoing connection with our members, we know that our local sector has seen tens of millions of dollars in revenue losses. Our members have endured adverse effects to business continuity and staffing, changes in program delivery and concerns about their capacity to serve vulnerable clients. We heard loud and clear that they continue to depend on us to advocate for relief from government and funders.

For nonprofits to be able to deliver on their missions, our regulatory environment must enable and support the sector. On a local level, Pillar submitted a City of London Budget recommendation calling for an anti-racist and anti-oppressive lens, attention to environmental sustainability, and a continued call to partner with and support local nonprofits to be considered in the budget. Michelle Baldwin, Executive Director, joined a roundtable discussion at the 2020 Ontario Budget Consultation with Ontario's Minister of Finance and submitted an Ontario Budget recommendation calling for red tape reduction—including multi-year funding and reducing reporting burden, the introduction of a social enterprise strategy, and advocating for decent work in the nonprofit sector.

We also added our voice to conversations in the call for support of volunteer centres and the introduction of an ongoing sector support fund. As an extension of our participation in the Mayor's Economic Impact and Recovery Task Force, we worked with our network to strengthen formal and informal volunteering and signed an open letter from volunteer centres across Canada calling for government support and recognizing the vital role volunteer centres play in pandemic recovery. In May, Michelle Baldwin appeared at a House of Commons Finance Committee Meeting to advocate in support of Imagine Canada's proposal for a COVID-19 Sector Resilience Fund expressing the impact of the pandemic on the sector, the contributions of our sector to our economy and the ongoing need for increased government support and partnership.



UNLEASHING THE CAPACITY OF WOMEN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

In August 2019, a grant from the Government of Canada through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario enabled Pillar Nonprofit Network—along with partners, the Centre for Social Innovation (CSI), SVX and NORDIK Institute’s Social Enterprise and Entrepreneurship (SEE)—to launch an ambitious project to support and develop women and non-binary social entrepreneurs, the Women of Ontario Social Enterprise Network (WOSEN). WOSEN offers a suite of programs for women interested in starting or growing ventures that seek to have a positive social, cultural or environmental impact through their operations, and/or the sale of their products and services. The program aims to elevate the profile of social entrepreneurship within the entrepreneurship ecosystem and do it from a gender and equity lens.

WOSEN fills a gap in the current entrepreneurial and social services ecosystem that often underserves women and non-binary entrepreneurs, especially those from Indigenous and other marginalized communities. One-size-fits-all programming in traditional business systems can be exclusive and prevent those from underrepresented communities from accessing knowledge, capital or supports. Effectively engaging and serving women and non-binary founders and coaches required a new approach, centered on their unique knowledge and experiences. To ensure that all program partners approach and deliver programming with the same lens, the collaborative co-created a series of design principles focused on equity and inclusion. Most importantly, all program partners share a common understanding of the importance of building trust-based relationships within the collaborative and with participants.

In April 2021, WOSEN will see the completion of one year of curriculum delivery with a total of 21 completed programs. So far, more than 500 women business owners have participated, developing entrepreneurial skills and gaining networking and mentorship opportunities. WOSEN has also helped to develop 15 ecosystem partners—business coaches, advisors, mentors, and community leaders—in learning how to respond to the needs of social entrepreneurs and innovators. While time will tell if the program helps shift the under-representation of women in the social entrepreneurship ecosystem, feedback from participants has offered positive affirmation. For program leaders, the project has been immensely rewarding and provided many opportunities for growth. They continue the work, recognizing that reaching people who have historically felt excluded won’t yield immediate results, and continue to focus on building relationships and centering the needs of women founders as they evolve the programming for its next iteration.

WOSEN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- **Inclusive & Accessible**
- **Decolonized**
- **Anti-Oppression**
- **Ecosystem-Approach**
- **Systems-Informed**
- **Responsive**



JOURNEYING TO BE ALLIES OF EQUITY-SEEKING GROUPS

To achieve our vision of an engaged, inclusive and vibrant community, we have always believed that a focus on equity and inclusion must underlie our work. We intensified our focus on this aim in the early 2000's when research on the nonprofit sector demonstrated that people of colour and other equity-seeking groups weren't adequately represented in our sector. We have since launched many initiatives to support equity and inclusion in our organization and in the nonprofit sector. Internally, our practices include a common language document and staff learning plan to strengthen our understanding of concepts ranging from power and privilege to anti-oppression. This year, we established an Anti-Oppression Task Force, with representatives from our board and staff, to help evaluate and direct our efforts. Externally, we have offered learning and development programming and consulting services to help embed equity and inclusion practices across our network.

Over the years, the language we've used to introduce this work to our network and inform our own understanding as a team has evolved. We started with cultural competency and cultural humility, then diversity, equity and inclusion. This past year, as the Black Lives Matter movement rose to the top of the news following multiple, tragic examples of violence against members of Black communities in this country and around the world, we felt it was critical to make a conscious shift to explicitly naming anti-racism, anti-oppression, white supremacy and white dominant culture. This moment called us all to look to Canada's history and the disproportionate undervaluation of the lives of Black, Indigenous and people of colour. While we have done, and continue to do, work to share the truth of Indigenous Canadians, we knew we had work to do to address anti-Black racism within our network.

In June, we began reaching out to members of the local Black community to discuss hosting a community conversation about anti-Black racism. Our ongoing consultation in the months that followed presented an opportunity for humility and learning. We approached the work from a traditional systems lens and focused on discussing the content and logistics of the session, but Black community leaders met us with important questions and challenges. These leaders engaged in discussion with generosity and thoughtfulness, and rightly inquired about our motivation, our commitment to advocacy, and our role and responsibility. As we continue to work alongside the Black community and commit to sharing their experiences, we have learned to take a step back and prioritize the deeper reflection and trust-based relationship-building required for us to act as allies to the Black community and all equity-seeking groups.



MEMBER TESTIMONIALS



Pillar Nonprofit Network has been an incredible resource for LondonFuse New Media Collective. As a volunteer-run nonprofit, we've been able to access training and resources that we otherwise could not afford on our own. We've also had great success posting LondonFuse volunteer opportunities on Pillar's online volunteer board and have been able to recruit new volunteers from a wide variety of backgrounds and skill levels.

Laura Thorne, President, LondonFuse

We've reached so many people because of the volunteer posting, and it's helped us get a strong and diverse group of people together to help create positive change in the world right now. And it helps with ongoing recruitment which is necessary for a virtual volunteer project like ours.

Samanta Krishnapillai, Founder, ON Canada Project

Pillar has been so amazing at keeping everyone updated during this pandemic. I can literally find everything I need and it allows me to accurately respond to so many of the inquiries coming in. Just wanted to let you know how valuable your services are and how much you are appreciated!

Karen Pischedda, Grants Manager, The Lawson Foundation

Pillar has stepped in to be the resource that I've needed as a community nonprofit during this time of unprecedented crisis—reaching out, communicating regularly, promptly sharing relevant resources, discussing strategies—just supporting the community, and the individuals within it, through this situation and providing us with an opportunity to network with and learn from one another. Please know that the Pillar team is making a difference.

Dr. Rhonda Bathurst, Executive Director, Museum of Ontario Archeology

We joined Pillar a month ago and already our access to their resources and supports have significantly extended our reach and improved our impact into the community. We are looking forward to deepening our relationship with Pillar and further enriching our capabilities to positively impact the community.

Dr. Benjamin D. Hill, Chair, Middlesex-London Food Policy Council

I very much appreciate all the work that Pillar is doing with respect to advocating on behalf of the nonprofit sector during this period of uncertainty and change. Thank you.

Yasmin Hussain, Manager, Public Education and Community Programs, Muslim Resource Centre for Social Support and Integration (MRCSSI)



WAYS TO SUPPORT AND BELONG TO OUR NETWORK

We're changemakers. You're a changemaker, too. We can do more together. We invite you to explore the various ways to engage with our network so we can grow together and work together toward an engaged, inclusive, and vibrant community.

BECOME A MEMBER

Join our network to bolster your resources, amplify your voice, and collaborate with other network leaders on the causes and communities you care about. Pillar members are committed to doing the work together to build a more equitable, vibrant, and resilient community. Learn more: pillarnonprofit.ca/membership

BECOME A SUSTAINING MEMBER AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE INNOVATION FUND

Flexible funding through the Innovation Fund is a critical component to the sustainability of our mission. Your participation helps ensure Pillar can remain a vital and reliable resource for our sector, and to create positive impact in our communities. Learn more: pillarnonprofit.ca/sustainers

JOIN PILLAR THROUGH INNOVATION WORKS

Innovation Works is a place to connect, where we create opportunities for people to convene and collaborate for community impact. When you join with our flexible leases, you automatically become a Pillar member and enjoy the benefits of joining our network. Learn more: innovationworkslondon.ca/work-here

PILLAR SUPPORTERS

- Brescia University College
- Canada Life
- Centre for Social Innovation
- Cheshire
- City of London
- CityStudio Network
- CityStudio Vancouver
- Connect Dot Management Inc.
- Centre for Research & Innovation, Fanshawe College
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Fanshawe College
- Government of Ontario
- Huron University College
- Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada
- Innoweave
- Ivey School of Business
- King's University College
- The Lawson Foundation
- Libro Credit Union
- London Arts Council
- London Community Foundation
- Young London
- Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, Multicultural & Anti-Racism Initiative
- Ministry of Economic Development & Growth
- NORDIK Institute
- onBoard Canada
- Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities
- Ontario Nonprofit Network
- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- RBC
- Sisters of St. Joseph
- SVX
- TD Bank
- U.Lab
- United Way Elgin Middlesex
- Ursuline Sisters
- Western Continuing Studies
- Western University

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

PILLAR COMMUNITY INNOVATION AWARDS SPONSORS

PLATINUM



AWARD



GOLD



SILVER



PILLAR COMMUNITY INNOVATION AWARDS SPONSORS

BRONZE

Auburn Developments | McCabe Promotional
Miller Thomson LLP | Sisters of St. Joseph | Start.ca
TD Bank | The Londoner
Tool & Cutter Supply Company

COMMUNITY

Bell Canada | BlueStone Properties Inc. | Boston Pizza
Davis Martindale | Decade Group Inc.
The Co-operators - Sam Castillo | Gay Lea Foods
Horizon Leadership Institute Inc. | KPMG
Nothers The Award Store
Scotiabank, London Main Branch & ScotiaMcLeod
snapd London | SportsXpress | Spriet Associates Ltd.
Teppermans

PILLAR SUSTAINERS

- Architects Tillmann Ruth Robinson
- Alkin Corporation
- Michelle Baldwin
- Albert Brule
- Canada Life
- Canada Medical Hall of Fame
- Canadian Mental Health Foundation
- Clintar
- Connect Dot Management Inc.
- Desiderata Group
- Digital Evidence International Inc
- John Drake
- Fanshawe College
- Forest City Sport & Social Club
- Goodwill Industries - Ontario Great Lakes
- Mindy Gordon
- Kate Graham
- Larry Myny Investment Group
- The Lawson Foundation
- Libro Credit Union
- London Community Foundation
- MacNeill Edmundson Professional Corporation
- Brian Meehan
- Kelly Regan
- Phyllis Retty
- Kristi Sargeant Kerr
- Barry Scott
- Randy Sheffield, IG Wealth Management
- Westminster College Foundation
- Peter Whatmore
- Zavitz Insurance & Wealth

INNOVATION WORKS SUPPORTERS

Visionary

(\$250,000 or more)

- Anonymous
- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- Ursuline Sisters of the Chatham Union

Innovator

(\$150,000 to \$249,000)

- Enabling Accessibility Fund – Government of Canada
- Canada Life
- The Lawson Foundation

Game Changer

(\$50,000 to \$149,000)

- Anne Bergeron
- architects Tillmann Ruth Robinson
- BMO Financial Group
- City of London
- GoodLife Fitness
- Libro Credit Union
- London Community Foundation
- Lynn Davis
- McCormick Canada
- Ontario150 Community Capital Program
- RBC Royal Bank
- TD Bank

INNOVATION WORKS SUPPORTERS

Trailblazer

(\$25,000 to \$49,000)

- Cram Family
- Highstreet Asset Management
- Norlon Builders
- ON Communication
- Paul Cocker
- Smith Family Foundation
- StarTech.com
- The Cowan Foundation

Catalyst

(\$10,000 to \$24,900)

- Agape Foundation of London
- in2space
- Jones Packaging
- Miller & Co. Wood Studio
- PricewaterhouseCoopers
- The Walter J. Blackburn Foundation
- Westminster College Foundation

Leader

(\$5,000 - \$9,999)

- 3M Canada
- Bowden Family
- Budweiser Gardens
- Chaun McLellan
- Denis & Nancy Lemieux
- Donna & Brandon Gilbert
- Helen & Andy Spriet
- Joanne & Tom Cowan
- Larry Myny
- Michele Davies
- OE Canada
- Tides Canada Foundation - Dragonfly Strategic Grantmaking Fund

INNOVATION WORKS SUPPORTERS

Forward Thinker

(\$2,500 to \$4,999)

- London Major Appliances
- Nerds On Site

Mobilizer

(\$1,000 to \$2,499)

- Downtown London
- Howard & Lynda Rundle
- Jason Gilliland
- Kate Graham
- Ryan Fraser
- Tracey Church & Associates, Research + Consulting Services

VERGE CAPITAL SUPPORTERS

- Bowden Family Fund
- Cambia Development Foundation
- Congregation of Sisters of St Joseph
- Lynn Davis
- Investment Readiness Program
- Ontario Trillium Foundation

VERGE CAPITAL VOLUNTEERS

- Anne Alexander
- Laura Allan
- Lori Atkinson
- Melissa Aveiro
- Ada Barlatt
- Heather Cabral
- Jeff Campbell
- Lynn Davis
- Sebastien De La Lande
- Frazier Fathers
- Chris Healy
- Michael Herbert
- Mike Hodgson
- Sigried Janzen
- Melissa Jean
- Jamie Kruspel
- Manosij Majumdar
- John Marshall
- Richard McKenzie
- Terry Off
- Prachi Oza
- Dipesh Parmar
- Alicia Samuel
- Randy Sheffield
- Sheila Simpson
- Jennifer Slay
- Fred Steciuk
- Janet Tufts
- Garrett Vanderwyst



PILLAR
nonprofit network

**CONNECTING FOR
COMMUNITY IMPACT**

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