



2023-24

Annual Report

Deafblind and Sensory
Support Network of
Canada

Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer

Annual Report 2023-24

Your Journey * Our Supports * Endless Possibilities

Our single purpose statement is what drives the focus of the organization, and our values guide us along the way. These two elements are what have helped us to achieve the goals which were set out in our organizational plan that supports the strategic direction of the organization.

Invest in our team is one of the strategic pillars where the organization made significant achievements. Under the guidance of Chief Human Resources Officer- Linda Grgurich an extensive review was undertaken of all the job descriptions, positions were re-evaluated, a compensation review by an external consultant was conducted and all positions were placed in appropriate grades. As part of this process a pay equity review was also conducted.

Another substantial undertaking under this pillar was an employee engagement survey. The Survey was conducted by McLean and Company. Although this first survey had a lower than anticipated participation rate, it is our intent to conduct an annual review of employee feedback and strive towards continuous improvement.

Under this pillar the Training department continued to make significant progress, which will be highlighted later in the report.

Evolve our Services is the second pillar in our strategic plan where we have directed significant resources. Affordable and accessible housing is an urgent need in the agency. Sensity has purchased a piece of property in Brantford with the intent to have built a multi-unit apartment complex that is both affordable and accessible by 2026. In addition, we have a partnership with the Canadian Helen Keller Centre for additional affordable and accessible suites in the Toronto area. Our 3rd partnership involves the City of Brantford and the County of Brant for additional affordable and accessible suites in Paris. To support the ongoing need for housing this past Spring, a new Housing Development Director was hired to oversee our housing and accessibility needs.

Additionally, under this pillar, we have expanded the services to our families by offering workshops to families in areas of interest to them.

Build on Partnerships is the third pillar in our strategic plan and one that is focused on key partnerships, awareness, and collaboration. In this area of the plan, we have focused on partnerships in the private sector to support our housing initiatives.

Sensity has also worked with sector partners to highlight to the Ministry the challenges we are facing with the recruitment, training, and retention of Intervenor in our agencies.

Our work on an international level continues to evolve and Sensity is an active supporter of Deafblind International (Dbi). This involves supporting the management committee of Dbi through our contract as the secretariat, our participation on the management committee and our work on a variety of committees, Networks and the Board.

Awareness of deafblindness and Intervenor Services continues to be in the forefront of our work and the Communications Department will provide a more fulsome report of the exciting initiatives that occurred this year.

Under the leadership of the Board chair -Deb Garbett, the Board of Directors successfully transitioned to the new regulations under the Ontario Not for Profit Corporations Act. This involved a review and subsequent revisions to the by-laws to comply under the act, as well as a review of our governance policies to ensure alignment with the new by-laws.

In closing we would like to thank all the employees, Board members, community partners and stakeholders for your continued support of Sensity. It is through all your contributions that Sensity continues to be a successful and vibrant organization.

Sincerely,

Cathy Proll

Chief Executive Officer

Deb Garbett

Chair, Board of Directors

2023-24 Board of Directors

DEB GARBETT – Board Chair
ANDREA MATELIC – Board Vice-Chair
GABRIEL DROUIN – Board Secretary
JOANN VANSANTVOORT – Board Treasurer
BETH BENDO – Director
ANGELA JOHNSTON – Director
BAMBI PEPE – Director
TANNER STRANGES – Director

Committees of the Board

Nominations Committee

Chair – Tanner Stranges
Deb Garbett
Angela Johnston
Cathy Proll (ad hoc)

Audit and Finance Committee

Chair – JoAnn VanSantvoort
Deb Garbett
Tanner Stranges
Beth Bendo
Ed Mafa – CFO
Cathy Proll

Governance and By-Law Committee

Chair – Andrea Matelic
Deb Garbett
Angela Johnston
Cathy Proll (ad hoc)

Chief Executive Officer Performance Committee

Chair – Deb Garbett
Jo Ann VanSantvoort

Executive Leadership Team

CATHY PROLL – Chief Executive Officer

ED MAFA – Chief Financial Officer

ELIZABETH WINCHESTER – Chief Services Officer

LARS PASTRIK – Chief Administrative Officer

LINDSAY BLASDELL – Executive Assistant



Services Department Highlights

By Elizabeth Winchester ~ Chief Services Officer

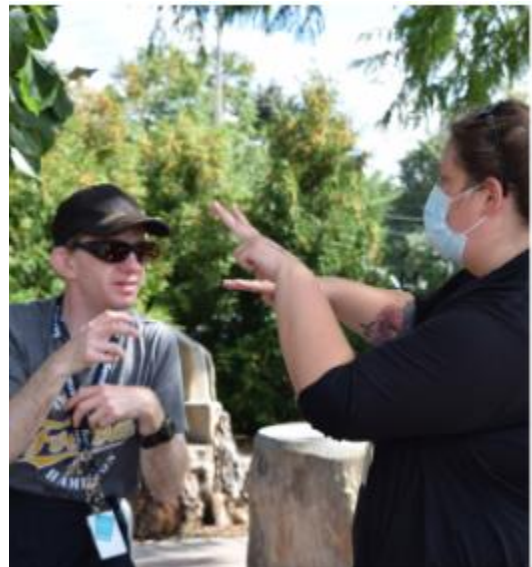
This past year our team has been working collaboratively to bring our agency's values to life in our day-to-day work throughout all our teams. Both our *Services* and *Training & Consultation* departments have been working to advance our objectives which align with our strategic plan.

Our services team has been 'focussed on FOCUS' in this past year, taking many steps towards helping our teams prepare for Accreditation. With emphasis on quality service delivery and continuous improvement, we have achieved some key deliverables over this past year. They have included the implementation of our new 'Rights & Responsibilities' policy for our services users and the important job of delivering education through each persons preferred mode of communication. Our team has reimagined and rolled out a new annual service review process which reflects our growth into a post pandemic era, with focus on inclusion of people supported and important individuals in their support networks, including family.

Gathering and receiving feedback from our service users is an important part of our organizational learning and commitment to continuous improvement. Last year we had both a satisfaction survey with individuals supported, as well as a family feedback survey which helped us to identify trends in areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

As part of our commitment to refocusing on quality service delivery and bringing back to life many elements of our person-centered plans which were significantly impacted throughout the pandemic, our team reimagined our annual service plan reviews in a way which uses a team-based approach to working with an individual supported, their families or other support network(s) and review all aspects of their service delivery.

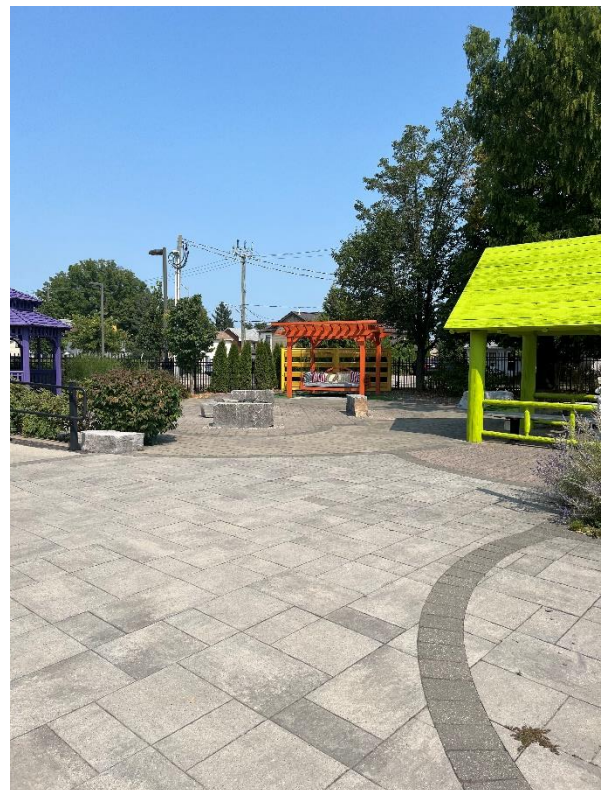
This past year we welcomed the first cohort of placement students from Conestoga's Sensory Loss Program. Since that time, we have been excited to welcome more than one of those placement students into permanent intervenor roles. Additionally, we had our third year of our self-funded summer student program which continues to offer a wonderful opportunity to provide exposure to the field of intervenor services for young adults who have a wide scope of



educational backgrounds and career goals. Summer students work alongside intervenors from late May to end of August on a term contract in one of our supported living service environments. This program has allowed us to maintain quality service delivery during our Prime-Time vacation. We have also now benefitted each season from recruiting a handful of students to remain with us as Casual intervenors. Recently, one of the individuals from our first cohort of summer students transitioned to a full-time intervenor role.

We expended our staff team through the creation and implementation of a new role this past year. The person-centered planning and navigation specialist role (PCP&NS) is an extension of the mentorship side of our training and consultation team. This role grows our capacity to guide intervenors through a supportive approach that helps them apply the theory, methods, and techniques they learn in their core intervenor services training into practical situations in providing services to each unique individual. Currently our four PCP&NS have responsibilities which directly interact with one third of the people supported by the agency, with our hope to see the team, along with its impact, grow in the future.

Our training and consultation team has been focused this year on our core curriculum refresh. Each training was reviewed with best practices in adult learning and presentation design in mind, with a priority to create training experiences which allow for stronger engagement by participants who have more opportunities for interaction and discussions.



FOCUS Accreditation

Sensity has embarked on the journey toward obtaining accreditation with FOCUS Accreditation. This significant step underscores our commitment to maintaining high standards of quality, accountability, and professionalism in all that we do.

Key Steps in the Accreditation Process:

To achieve accreditation, Sensity has been focusing on the following areas:

1. **Self-Assessment:** We have conducted a thorough internal review of our policies, procedures, and operations to ensure compliance with the accreditation standards.
2. **Staff Communication and Involvement:** All staff have been involved in this process, and ongoing information will continue to be provided as needed to ensure that everyone understands the accreditation process and our progress.
3. **Documentation and Evidence:** We have been gathering the necessary documentation and evidence to demonstrate our compliance with each standard. All evidence will be submitted to FOCUS Accreditation by December 2024.
4. **Site Visit:** By June 2025, FOCUS Accreditation will conduct a site visit to assess our organization in person.
5. **Continuous Improvement:** Even after accreditation, Sensity will maintain a focus on continuous improvement and reassessment to uphold the standards.



Awareness Report 2023-24

June was a remarkable month for raising awareness about deafblindness, marked by a series of impactful events.

The month kicked off with a flag-raising ceremony at the Council Chambers in Paris on June 1st. Paris resident Alecia had the honour of raising the flag, accompanied by Mayor David Bailey and Sensity CEO Cathy Proll, who delivered inspiring remarks to set a positive tone for the month. Later that day, we hosted a screening of "The Miracle Worker" at Lions Park, where attendees could also visit a Sensity information booth featuring simulations to deepen their understanding of deafblindness. We extend our gratitude to the County of Brant for their invaluable support in organizing this event.

On June 3rd, we traveled to the London Children's Museum where they hosted our Yarn Bombing Exhibit. The museum held the artwork on display until the end of June, allowing for engagement for the whole month.

The awareness efforts continued with another flag-raising ceremony on June 5th in Sudbury, symbolizing solidarity with the deafblind community. Katie from the Sudbury Program and Mayor Paul Lefebvre raised the flag together. The ceremony featured heartfelt speeches from Intervenor Services Coordinator Julie Mackey and intervenor Michelle Lavoie, who delivered part of the address in French representing our Francophone community.

On June 12th, Sensity engaged with the local community at the Dairy Queen Community Shed in Brantford. In the evening, Kingston's City Hall and Springer Market Square were illuminated in blue and purple, symbolizing national deafblind awareness and Sensity's colours.

The celebration continued on June 13th with a Flag Raising Celebration at Confederation Park in Kingston. Councilor Brandon Tozzo led the ceremony with a heartfelt proclamation, while Courtney, along with the Kingston and Brighton team, raised the flag. Karen Guertin, our Person-Centered Planning and Navigation Specialist, highlighted the essential role of Intervenor services in empowering individuals with deafblindness. We are especially grateful to the City of Kingston, Councilor Brandon Tozzo, Amanda Nugara, and all supporters who participated.

June 14th featured the Cambridge Celebration of the Arts, where deafblind artisan Jordan's artwork received tremendous community support. His pieces were sold out quickly, demonstrating the impact of art in fostering understanding and awareness.

Other notable events included our participation in Brantford's Pride in the Park on June 15th, showcasing our commitment to inclusivity. On June 16th,

we hosted a dynamic booth at the Hamilton Tiger-Cats home opener, which facilitated public engagement and awareness.

Additionally, on June 18th, our Person-Centered Planning and Navigation Specialists conducted deafblind simulations, offering participants a deeper insight into the challenges faced by those with deafblindness.

As Deafblind Awareness Month draws to a close, we extend our heartfelt thanks to all our partners, supporters, and the individuals we support who contributed to making this month a success. Together, we have fostered a more inclusive and supportive environment that positively impacts the lives of people who are deafblind.

Years of Service

Years of Service	Employee Name
5 Years	Justina Pasiut Racha Al Kassem Jackie Mills Cynthia Whelan Lesley Napper Kaitlyn Margraf Christine Dermenjian Heather Oppenhauser Alexandria McQuaid Teresa Farquhar Melissa Cuthbert Jennifer Foley Hayley McCurdy Kelsea Camilleri Jennifer Bisailon
10 Years	Michael Moore Jenna Hertzner (Johansen) Myrna Palengleng AJ Monette
15 Years	Jenn Himburg Donna Holmes-Dubois Victoria Gibson
20 Years	Ruth Perez Amanda King
25 Years	Heather Arsenaault Heidi Radzick

Celebrating Accessibility: Sensity Honoured with the Accessibility Award at the Salute to Brant Event

At Sensity, we believe that accessibility should empower everyone, especially individuals who are deafblind. We are excited to announce that we have received the Accessibility Award at the Salute to Brant event. This recognition highlights our deep commitment to inclusiveness and our ongoing efforts to eliminate barriers within the County of Brant business community.

Our nomination highlighted a series of impactful initiatives that represent our dedication to creating inclusive environments:

Fully Accessible Resource Centre: Our resource centre has been designed with accessibility at its core, featuring wayfinding paths and high-contrast light switches to assist individuals with disabilities, particularly those who are deafblind. These enhancements facilitate navigation and foster independence for all visitors.

Inclusive Programming and Facilities: We have developed dedicated spaces within our centre for accessible activities, programming, and training. This commitment ensures that everyone, regardless of ability, can engage in meaningful activities and professional development opportunities.

Accessible Website: We collaborated with a focus group of deafblind individuals to ensure our newly launched website meets their specific needs, further demonstrating our commitment to digital accessibility.

Sensory Garden: Our sensory garden, complete with raised beds and accessible seating, offers a welcoming outdoor space for individuals of all abilities. This initiative not only promotes inclusivity but also fosters community connections and appreciation for nature.

Physical Accessibility Features: Throughout our facility, we have implemented ramp access and textured railings to support individuals with mobility impairments and provide tactile cues for those with visual impairments, ensuring safe navigation.

Accessible Café Space: Our café serves as a community hub, offering individuals with disabilities, including those who are deafblind, opportunities to engage in culinary activities. Our kitchen is equipped with accessible features, such as pull-down shelves and an inductive stovetop, designed for ease of use.

Respite Apartment: The fully functional apartment within our centre is tailored to meet the unique needs of individuals with disabilities. Equipped with personal care lifts and an accessible kitchen, it promotes independence and comfort.

Accessible Apartment Complex: We have also constructed an eight-unit apartment complex designed for individuals who are deafblind. Each unit includes features that facilitate independent living, such as high-contrast tiles and a lift system for seamless mobility.

Receiving the Accessibility Award is a significant milestone, reinforcing our commitment to removing barriers and fostering inclusivity in all aspects of our operations. As we move forward, we will continue to invest in research and development to enhance our accessibility initiatives, ensuring that our services remain accessible to everyone.

At Sensity, we recognize that our journey toward inclusivity is ongoing. We are grateful to the County of Brant for this honour and to all our partners and community members who support our mission. Together, we are building a future where everyone can thrive. Thank you for being part of this transformative journey with us.



Financial Statements

Deafblind and Sensory Support Network of Canada Statement of Financial Position

As at March 31, 2024

	2024	2023
Assets		
Current		
Cash	2,336,887	3,197,317
Accounts receivable	145,945	298,870
Prepaid expenses and deposits	68,249	46,281
Inventory	28,125	28,838
	2,579,206	3,571,306
Capital Assets	5,783,910	5,160,663
	8,363,116	8,731,969
Liabilities		
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	669,071	1,008,431
Deferred revenue	115,741	124,944
Due to Ministries	703,959	697,456
Current portion of long-term debt	55,912	55,912
	1,544,683	1,886,743
Long-term debt	861,978	917,890
Deferred capital contributions	1,142,458	1,243,434
	3,549,119	4,048,067
Net Assets	4,813,997	4,683,902
	8,363,116	8,731,969

Deafblind and Sensory Support Network of Canada Statement of Financial Position

For the year ended March 31, 2024

	Sensity Programs	Ministry Funded Programs	2024	2023
Net assets, beginning of year	4,683,902	-	4,683,902	4,559,846
Excess of revenue over expenses	130,095	6,503	136,598	157,261
Amount to be repaid to Ministry	-	(6,503)	(6,503)	(33,205)
Net assets, end of year	4,813,997	-	4,813,997	4,683,902

Deafblind and Sensory Support Network of Canada Schedule of Operations - Sensity Programs

For the year ended March 31, 2024

	<i>Budget</i>	<i>2024</i>	<i>2023</i>
Revenue			
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services	1,580,606	1,342,690	1,291,069
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care	-	17,550	17,683
Nevada break open ticket sales	217,200	265,581	209,899
Amortization of deferred contributions	247,920	247,920	258,280
Donations and fundraising	15,500	6,836	33,489
Rental income	125,400	120,950	129,250
DBI Secretariat	15,500	18,404	13,749
Interest and other	36,000	21,319	13,803
Training and consultation	19,875	480	46,085
	2,258,001	2,041,730	2,013,307
Expenses			
Salaries and benefits	1,115,239	917,615	899,727
Amortization of capital assets	360,000	339,000	392,892
Bank charges and interest	93,450	74,002	72,119
Board	20,000	18,840	2,167
Repairs and maintenance	70,755	116,662	86,895
Children's intervenor and family services	50,000	56,623	47,454
Computer and IT support	100,000	47,696	3,006
Insurance	40,000	40,895	45,213
Nevada break open ticket costs	130,100	138,966	121,884
Office	47,700	31,990	35,774
Professional fees	65,000	52,900	42,662
Rent	24,000	-	2,392
Sponsorships and promotion	42,500	26,832	19,276
Staff training	16,500	12,915	9,517
Telephone and internet	33,900	15,903	35,350
Travel and meetings	31,000	27,410	36,800
Utilities	40,000	34,070	36,037
	2,280,144	1,952,319	1,889,165
Excess of revenue over expenses before other items	(22,143)	89,411	124,142
Other items			
Gain (loss) on disposal of capital assets	-	40,684	-
Excess of revenue over expenses	(22,143)	130,095	124,142

Schedule of Operations - Ministry Funded Programs

For the year ended March 31, 2024

	<i>Budget</i>	<i>2024</i>	<i>2023</i>
Revenue			
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services	14,024,780	13,758,840	12,278,891
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care	279,457	279,457	279,324
	14,304,237	14,038,297	12,558,215
Expenses			
Salaries and benefits	11,231,441	13,019,349	11,545,987
Repairs and maintenance	-	247,439	110,406
Computer and IT support	53,292	220,669	217,432
Insurance	62,100	30,879	19,425
Office	5,568	6,499	4,764
Professional fees	150,790	52,794	183,210
Program costs	211,987	156,945	142,073
Rent	-	7,477	19,073
Sponsorships and promotion	-	6,861	14,999
Staff training	21,420	22,008	26,240
Telephone and internet	23,280	20,927	20,201
Travel and meetings	306,408	216,154	188,873
Utilities	5,160	6,161	4,424
Vehicle	28,800	17,632	27,989
	12,100,246	14,031,794	12,525,096
Excess of revenue over expenses	2,203,991	6,503	33,119

Break Open Ticket Vendors

Sensity would like to recognize and thank the following stores. Proceeds of their sales fund our agency's Children's and Family Intervenor Services program.

8 to 11 Milk & Flower Store	Hamlet Grocery Store	Mr. Convenience, Peterborough
Bayridge Grocery	Hasty Market #421	Mulock Happy Mart
Becker's Milk	Inesons Variety	New Ranch Market
Big Bear Food Mart	Innisfil KFF	P-Jay's Video Variety
Big Bee, Hamilton	International News	Queen East Variety
Big Bee, Niagara Falls	JRS Smokey Land Convenience	Round Hill Gas Station
Big Bee, Concession	King Cigar Plus	Sam's Variety
Big Bee, James Street	Lucky Twyn Rivers Variety	SB Fuel & Collingwood Variety
Big Bee, John Street	Mac's 1019, Scarborough	Sidney Market
Big Bee, Upper Wellington	Mac's 1064, Mississauga	Smart Food Fair
Burlington Lotto	Mac's 1771, Orillia	St. Joachim Variety
Cambridge Mini Mart	Mac's 61508, Windsor	Stratford Variety (Kelly's)
Caps Fun & Variety	Mac's 61561, Windsor	Ultramar
Choice Convenience	Maplewood Market	Victoria Convenience
Circle K 365, Milton	Midland Esso	Welcome Mart
Circle K 487, Ottawa	Mr. Convenience, Colborne	Xun's Stanley Variety Store
Circle K 835, Milton		
Circle K Store 1773		
City Convenience		
Clover Food Mart		
Convenience Access		
Durham Supermarket		
Enjoy Convenience		
EZ Go Convenience		
Gateway #567, Grimsby		
Gateway #593, Oshawa		
Greer's Variety & Lottery		

