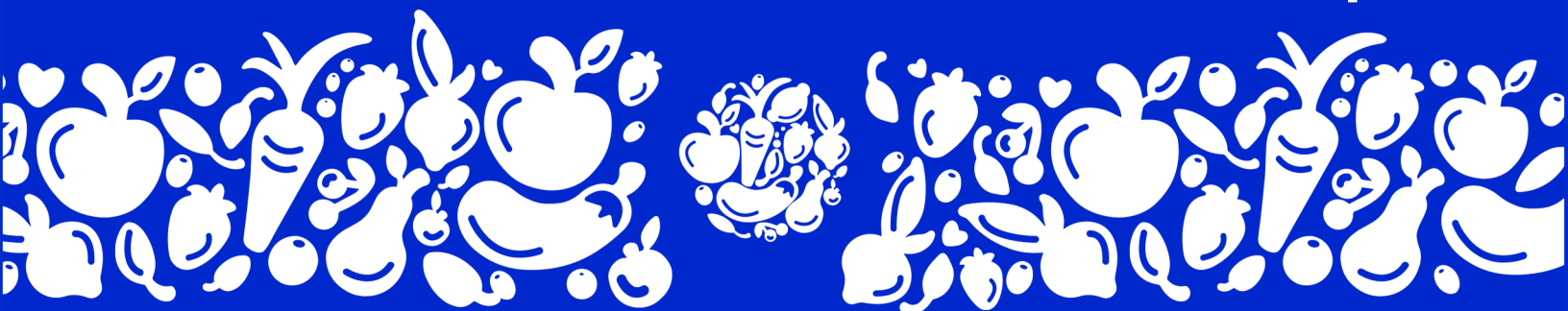


# HALTON FOOD FOR THOUGHT



2025 Annual Report





**“One of the biggest connections I have seen in setting up students for a good day ahead is a nourishing breakfast through our Student Nutrition Program – a fundamental piece for their success and well-being. ”**

**- Principal Jaz Sahdra, Frontenac PS**



Welcome to our 2025 Annual Report!

It has been another incredible year here at Halton Food for Thought where we have reached more schools and students than ever before. One year into our roles as Chair of the Board and Executive Director and there is a lot to reflect on and be thankful for. We were in a fortunate position this year, receiving some much-needed funding support from the Federal Government, in addition to the funding we receive from the Provincial Government. Our programs have expanded rapidly over the past decade along with the growing population in Halton; the base funding we receive each year allows us to plan program budgets in a rapidly changing environment. Even with this support, there are still many schools on our waitlist that we need to reach to be able to support every student across Halton.

The support from the community was felt through our biggest Breakfast Bash to date, raising over \$98,000 to support the strength of our operations. This was made possible by our generous sponsors, local restaurants, everyone who purchased tickets and our community who bid in our silent auction, took part in our 50/50 raffle and donated to our cause. We were blown away by the support we received at this event and can't thank everyone enough.

We added five new schools this year thanks to funding from Community Partners like Halton Region, Burlington Foundation and Corporate Partners CanLift Equipment Rentals. Through the support of the community, our donors and our staff building relationships with new schools, we provided access to more than 1,000 additional students this year. Getting us one step closer to having a program in every school in Halton.

As an organization, we continue to push harder to raise more funds through different initiatives, including the introduction of a Monthly Donor Program, a Year-End Campaign, and expanding the Breakfast Bash fundraising goal. Our team continues to navigate the challenges our programs face like increased food costs and increased need across the community working with our schools to ensure we are offering the best programs possible for our students.

One thing that hasn't changed is the support we feel from the community - this year we had more community support than ever, from hosting fundraisers for our work, community volunteers asking to support different school programs, to increased engagement on social media and our website. No matter how you have engaged with us, we are grateful that you are here showing up for our students each day helping us nourish each day at school and supporting them in reaching their full potential.

Thank you for another nourishing year.



**Eleanor Ramuscak**  
Chair Board of Directors



**Aliya Khawari**  
Executive Director





## Mission

We connect Halton students with healthy food in school, so they can reach their full potential.

## Vision

Our Vision is a Halton Region where no student goes hungry at school.

## Values

**Community Building:** We believe that sharing food is a powerful way to build a sense of community.

**Universality:** We strive to connect all students to nutritious food without barriers.

**Partnership:** We convene unique and valuable partnerships that enable us to better connect students to food.

**Youth-Led:** We empower students to be active contributors and leaders in all aspects of our work.

**Stewardship:** We value our relationships with partners, donors, volunteers, and staff. We are intentional about nurturing those relationships over the long term.

**Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:** We celebrate the diversity of our community and are thoughtful and intentional about inclusion and equity in all of our work.

Our School Board Partners





Eleanor Ramuscak , Chair

Courtney Simkins, Treasurer

Annita Pospisil, Board Member

Kimberly Bowman, Board Member\*

Katherine Aikenhead, Board Member

Lisa Cadotte, Board Member

Adriano Perusin, Board Member\*

Prasad Samala, Vice-Chair

Joanne Jones, Secretary

Chelsea Bristow, Board Member

Jay Poitras, Board Member

Brett Moodie, Board Member

Sara Harwood, Board Member

Ian Chan, Board Member\*\*



\*Departed June 2025

\*\* Joined June 2025





**United Way Halton & Hamilton Show Your Local Love -**  
Thank you to everyone from FirstOntario Credit Union, John Deer Financial and IG Wealth Management at Clarksdale PS, Tom Thompson PS in Burlington and and Abbey Lane PS Oakville for the UW Share Your Local Love Campaign. We are a proud United Way Funded Organization and are grateful for the support we receive each year from this organization. This vital funding helps us plan our operations each year to ensure the strength of what we do. This year, we were happy to be able to participate once again in their Share Your Local Love campaign where UWHH partners can sign up to go out and visit the programs they help support through their UW fundraising helping to spread local love.



## Fuel Their Future Campaign

Our programs need support more than ever to ensure their smooth operations while facing rising food costs, population growth and increased demand. Last year our year-end campaign was blown out of the water, raising over \$9,000. With our initial goal of \$5000 we were overwhelmed by the support from the community to help us surpass our goal and support our work. Thank you to everyone who donated and helped spread the word about our campaign.



## Welcoming five new schools to Halton Food for Thought!

This past year we were able to secure funding to help us launch five new programs across Halton. These schools included: L'École élémentaire Renaissance (Burlington), Alexander's PS (Burlington), L'École élémentaire catholique du Sacre Coeur (Halton Hills), St. Cecilia CES (Oakville) and St. Vincent Catholic Elementary School (Oakville). With over 1,000 students between these schools, adding these programs helps to strengthen our support across the region. With this expansion we hit another milestone as well, we are now offering programs across the four publicly funded school boards in Halton - Halton Catholic District School Board, Halton District School Board, CSC MonAvenir and CS Viamonde.



## Community grants play a vital role in the work of Halton Food for Thought

During the 2024/25 school year Halton Food for Thought launched five new Student Nutrition Programs. Two new programs in Burlington were made possible with funding received from the [Burlington Community Foundation](#) and [Halton Region's Community Investment Fund](#). These funds supported programs at Alexander's Public School and L'École élémentaire Renaissance bringing our total to 50 Burlington schools that provide over 26,000 students with access to nutritious food at school daily during the school year.

Our new schools are grateful for the support they received to help them start these programs for their students. Not only does it provide healthy food options for the students to support their learning, but both schools have also incorporated volunteer opportunities for students to get involved in the delivery of their programs.

When we asked Principal Wassila Yalla at L'École élémentaire Renaissance about the impact of the program at her school for students, she let us know, "This makes a tremendous difference in their day. The students can be hungry for many different reasons and having healthy snacks removes one major barrier and helps set students up for a successful day."



Rachel Keller-Krueger, a Teacher at Alexander's PS, also expressed her gratitude towards the program, "We are extremely grateful for funding support in launching our snack program. Thank you for all the assistance and the opportunities it has created for our students."



A student volunteer at Alexander's PS lent their insight to the impact of the program, "The Halton Food for Thought snack carts have made a meaningful impact on our school community by ensuring that all students have access to nutritious food throughout break time. This program supports student well-being, helps improve focus and energy in class, and makes sure that everyone is in an environment where they are able to work!"

Being able to support the health and well-being of Halton students is one of the major benefits of Student Nutrition Programs and demonstrates their importance within a school community. Halton Food for Thought is grateful for the support we received this year from funding partners to help continue our program expansion.



## A Decade of Student Volunteers at River Oaks PS

Student Nutrition Programs provide numerous benefits to a school's community - one of the most important is providing nutrition for students to help provide them with the energy they need for the school day. In addition to this, there is the opportunity to build on the school community through connections between students. Student volunteer opportunities offer the chance for peers to support peers; help break down the stigma of participating in programs and support the development of leadership skills of students.

At River Oaks PS in Oakville, Teacher Richard Bernard has been engaging his Grade 8 students with their Student Nutrition Program for 10 years now. When asked about his motivation to do so Richard let us know, "I wanted to have my grade 8 students be active in the community and take on a leadership role at our school. For this age group, it is very important to lead by example and to play a larger role in their school to simply make it a better place."

Through this leadership, the grade 8 students get the opportunity to develop ownership of the program, helping to ensure it runs smoothly throughout the year. It also displays community spirit and a caring attitude for other students, demonstrating the importance of giving back to your school community and allowing younger students to connect with older students - an opportunity that may not always present itself. "They are leaders - they are developing an understanding of the impact they can have on the larger community, and they are connecting with the younger students in a positive way," confirmed Richard.

After a decade of supporting student involvement in River Oak's Student Nutrition Program, Richard confirmed there is a great opportunity for other schools to do the same. When asked why he would encourage other schools to get their students involved Richard said, "I would say that it is important to have the students connect with their community and that being active in a volunteer role helps them develop empathy and leadership within the school. I fully believe that these kids are an important part of making our school one of the best places to learn."

Halton Food for Thought is grateful to Richard and all the schools who support student volunteer opportunities within their programs. Thank you for helping students connect students to the nutritious food they need at school to fuel their day ahead.



## Our Team



4 full-time staff

12 Board Members



## Our Programs



157 school partners

5 new school partners

1,500 Volunteers



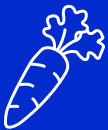
96,000+ students with access

1,000+ new students

4.5 million meals served



## School Reported Impact



96% increased readiness to learn



95% improved academic success/school performance



94% greater engagement in school community



98% greater energy levels

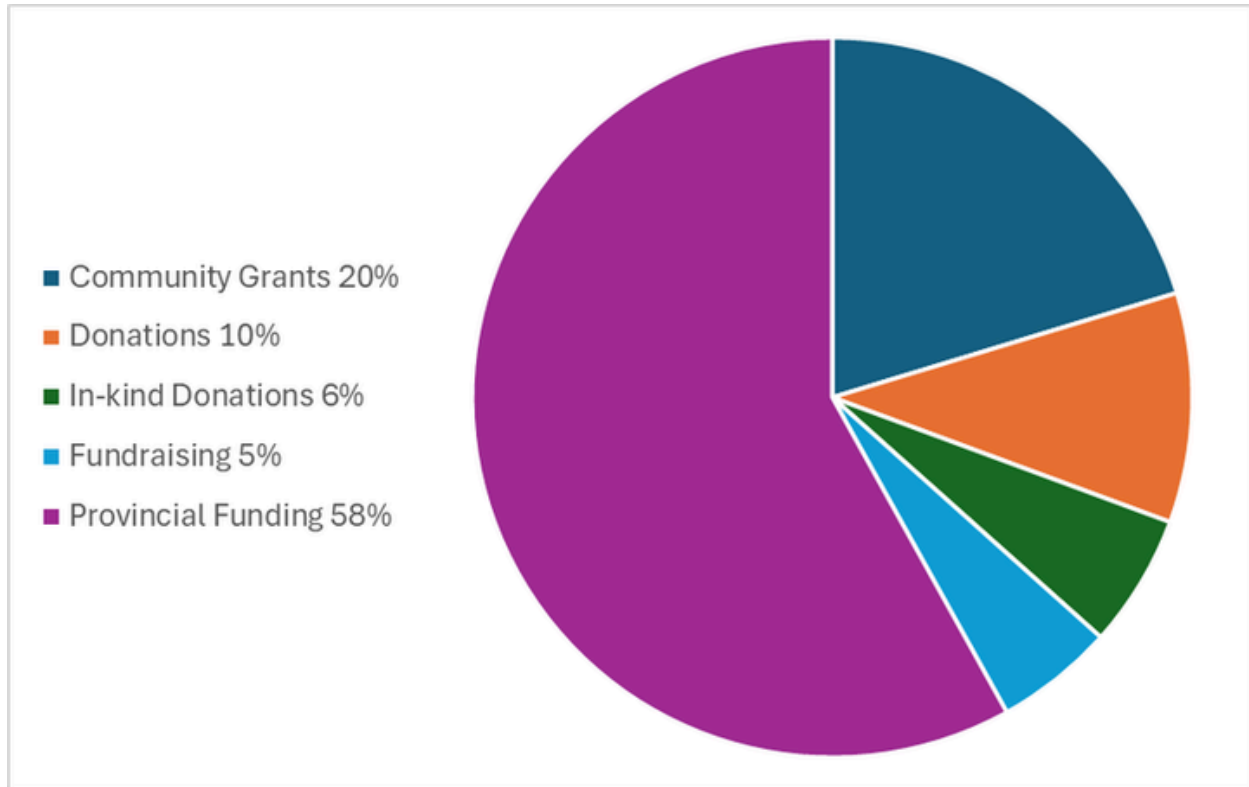


## 2024/25 Financial Highlights

Total Revenue: \$1,746,940

Total Expenses: \$1,742,226

[Full Audited Financial Statements can be accessed here.](#)



Halton Food for Thought is pleased to acknowledge the following sponsors whose contributions to the organization have helped ensure our strength and stability as we work towards a Halton where no student goes hungry at school.



AWB Charitable Foundation

Bailie Family Foundation



Frank & Janice Lochan Private Foundation





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