

GILBERT CENTRE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2020-2023




A LETTER FROM

THE BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Gilbert Centre for Social and Support Services has always created innovative solutions to our most pressing challenges. This has been particularly evident in our evolving and ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic. But innovation does not happen on its own. The Gilbert Centre's core strength is in our staff team, funders, donors, volunteers, and courageous clients and families.

Our purpose defines the impact we aspire to achieve, insights provide the support for ongoing critical work and our values will guide us to meet the challenges that may lie ahead. Our Strategic directions, which represent the culmination of months of engagement and consensus-building, set our path for the next three years.

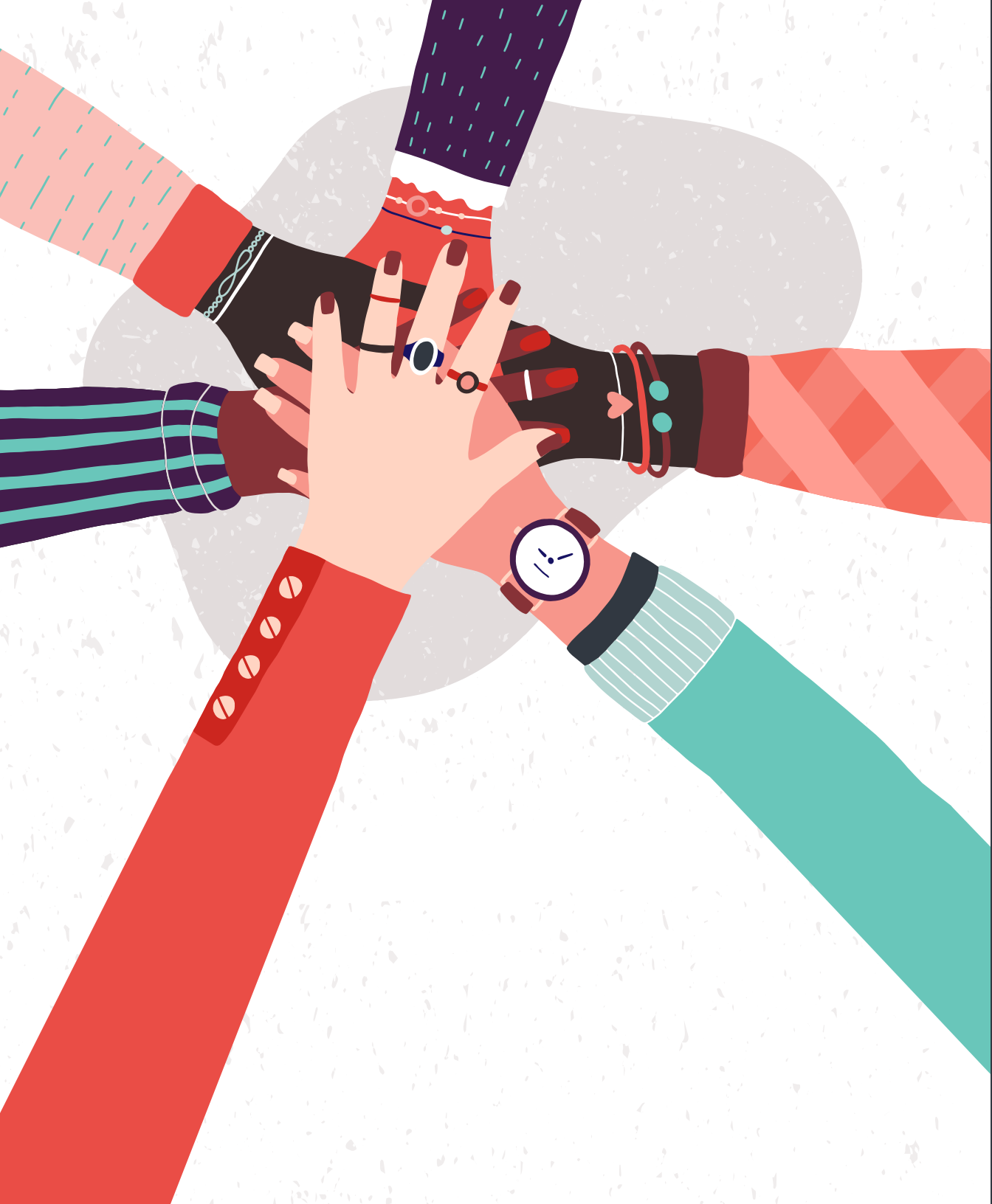
With several months focused on client, community and staff needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are confident in launching our newly finalized Strategic Plan 2020-2023. We are excited that the Gilbert Centre in 2020 has been celebrating 25 years highlighting our strength, resiliency and commitment towards our strategic plan during this unprecedented time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Himanshu Shah', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Himanshu Shah
Board Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gerry Croteau', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Gerry Croteau
Executive Director



OUR VALUES

We operate from a value system grounded in the following key areas and based on continuously working towards improving our capacity and practices.

- **Queer and trans inclusion** - committing to challenge systemic barriers that reduce health outcomes for vulnerable populations, particularly 2SLGBTQ individuals.
- **Anti-oppression practices** - acting consciously and consistently to challenge systemic and historic patterns of marginalization and oppression including racism, sexism, homophobia and discrimination in all its forms.
- **Sex positivity** - celebrating healthy sexual relationships, diversity within those relationships, bodily autonomy, and empowering individuals to control their own sex life (or lack thereof).
- **Harm reduction** - committing that people who use substances are treated with respect and without stigma and that substance related problems and issues are viewed systemically.
- **Decriminalization** - supporting efforts to support decriminalization related to social justice, specifically illegal substances and substance use, sex work and reducing unjust prosecutions against people living with HIV.

The Gilbert Centre is a community-based, not-for-profit, charitable organization that has been providing programs and services for 25 years. In 2015, in part to recognize the reality of people with HIV not developing AIDS, but living healthy lives with HIV, the organization changed its name from the AIDS Committee of Simcoe County to the Gilbert Centre for Social and Support Services. Our name change not only reflects the change in HIV, but also embraces the expansion of programming to serve 2-spirits, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer individuals and families and more recently, the expansion of harm reduction programming.

We take a broad, social determinants approach to our work that is based in social justice, health equity and human rights. We seek to engage individuals, families, organizations, institutions and communities as partners and collaborators in the work we undertake.



4

EXECUTION

Finalized strategic plan and take to market strategy with design consultant.

3

COLLABORATION

Met with staff and board members to develop content.

2

2

COMMISSIONED

Selected strategic plan committee.

1

CONSULTATION

Worked with Ontario Organizational Development Program and consulted with our community partners.

THE OPPORTUNITY & PURPOSE

In addition to the critical day-to-day work of The Gilbert Centre, a strategic plan identifies multi-year priorities based on current opportunities as well as the changing environment and needs of the communities we serve. This strategic plan acts as a roadmap, management planning and accountability tool that helps focus energy and priorities and against which progress can be monitored. It ensures activities of the organization are evidence-based, intentional and strategic and that they are informed and aligned with broader priorities and opportunities.

Our strategic planning process was led by a Strategic Planning Committee made up of Board and staff. The process included an environmental scan that involved stakeholder engagement interviews, surveys and facilitated group discussions with clients, volunteers, staff and key partner organizations. In addition, the committee reviewed changes or trends in the HIV sector, 2SLGBTQ communities, broader health and social determinants as well as changes in the levels and/or scope of staff, volunteers, clients, finances, programs and services.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Himanshu Shah
Board Chair

Guy Bethell
Former Board
member

Gerry Croteau
Executive Director

Colin Green
Program Director

Dale Boyle
Manager, Safer
Spaces Program

THE CONTEXT & INSIGHTS

Important context and insight was gained through the strategic planning process which contributed to the development of the strategic directions and confirmation of the critical, ongoing work and impact of the support provided by the Gilbert Centre.

1

Identified changes or trends in the HIV sector, 2SLGBTQ communities, broader health and social determinants were:

- a) Ontario health care system transformation,
- b) Overdose crisis,
- c) HIV Sector Provincial Reconciliation Working Group,
- d) Local homelessness and underhousing,
- e) Complex social and support needs of aging PHAs (particularly 2SLGBTQ individuals),
- f) Changing population with people relocating from Toronto to Barrie,
- g) Changing availability of provincial government support programs.

2

Key changes in the levels and/or scope of Gilbert Centre staff, volunteers, clients, finances, programs and services include:

- a) Significantly increased harm reduction programming,
- b) New Horizons multi-year seniors program grant,
- c) Completion of HIV & Hep C Self-management program grant funding in March 2023,
- d) Social enterprise and community impact opportunities with Safer Spaces program growth.

HARM REDUCTION OUTREACH SUCCESSES

20,156

Harm reduction supplies delivered by the Gilbert Centre to the community between March and September 2020

257

New clients using our harm reduction outreach services from March and September 2020

304

Teachings offered in harm reduction to the community from March to September 2020

"Folks use the Gilbert Centre as a safe space to 'try on' different ways of presenting themselves publicly in a safe space prior to coming out as trans."

3

Recognized value and impact of the Gilbert Centre included:

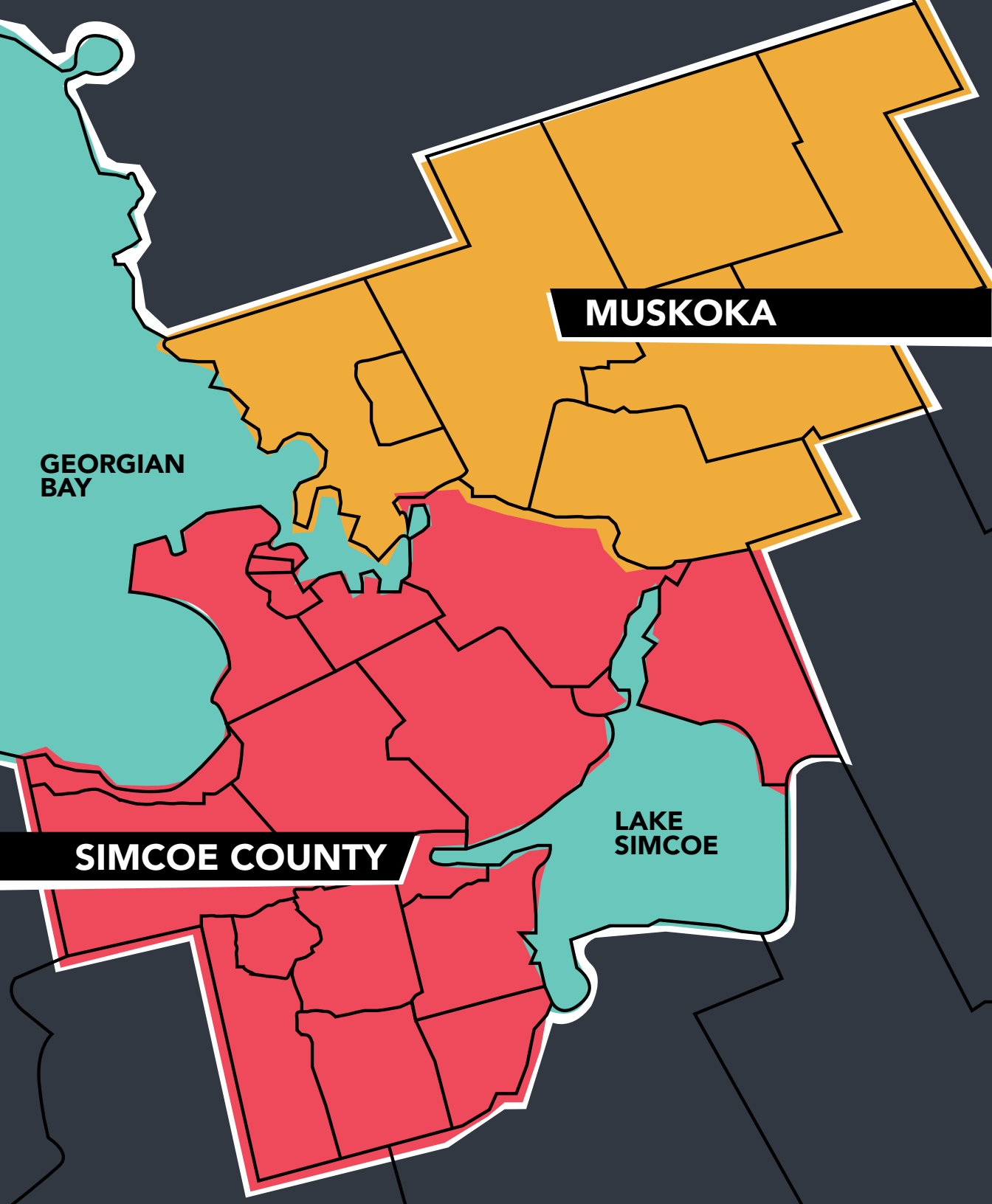
- a) Client centred impact,
"Watching folks come in really meek and a shell of themselves and then how they change their outlook and acceptance of identity – coming into their sense of worth and respect that they deserve."
- b) Safer Spaces programming,
*"Captivating and engaging, the training inspires me."
"Everyone that works with the public should have this training."*
- c) Catalyst for change, (suggest we choose one or two of these quotes)
"Respect for the Gilbert Centre brought important community validity to community discussions around U=U."
- d) Partnership driven,
*"You opened our eyes"
"The Gilbert Centre moves issues forward in non-judgment and positive ways which is a different approach than many organizations."*
- e) Creative 'above and beyond' support and engagement.
"Informal processes support conducive environment for engagement."

4

Identified unique contribution and role of the Gilbert Centre included:

- a) [Positive self-management program](#),
- b) 2SLGBTQ programming,
- c) Harm reduction services and approach,
- d) Strong Public Health partnerships,
- e) [Safer Spaces programming](#).





MUSKOKA

**GEORGIAN
BAY**

SIMCOE COUNTY

**LAKE
SIMCOE**

1 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Strengthen organizational positioning within the broader regional health and community services.

Objective #1:

By December 31, 2023, the Gilbert Centre will have identified strategic roles, partnerships, and where appropriate, developed formal agreements with local Ontario Health Teams (OHTs), with particular focus on the regional OHT application and overlapping priority on aging.

Objective #2:

By December 31, 2022, the Gilbert Centre will have completed required program development for expanded harm reduction services and fully incorporated new programming into broader health and community service efforts.

OUR DIRECTIONS

Building on the insights from the environmental scan and stakeholder engagement processes, key priorities and opportunities were identified for the next 4 years.



2 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Deepen organizational understanding, commitment and action around how to best learn, grow and engage with Indigenous community members and partner organizations.

Objective #1:

By December 31, 2023, the Gilbert Centre will be meaningfully engaged in the Reconciliation in Action: A Proposed Community Process for the HIV Sector in Ontario. The success of this process will be determined by Indigenous partners and Indigenous community members.

3 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Expand demonstrated leadership and expertise in 2SLGBTQ programming.

Objective #1:

By December 31, 2023, the Gilbert Centre will be actively engaged in research and expanding our local, provincial and national leadership role in influencing and delivering evidence-based 2SLGBTQ training.

Objective #2:

By December 31, 2023, the Gilbert Centre will have demonstrated the leveraging of our leadership and expertise back into increasing public awareness, particularly amongst service users.

Objective #3:

By December 31, 2023, the Gilbert Centre will have initiated developing a business plan for expanding the reach and revenue of the Safer Spaces program, with one intended outcome of reducing program vulnerability.







OUR IMPACT

Ultimately, by intentionally and thoughtfully developing a strong strategic plan, the Gilbert Centre will be increasing our impact in providing critical social and support services to the individuals and communities we serve.

The strategic plan situates the identified priorities, opportunities and activities within the ongoing and important work of the Gilbert Centre. Each strategic direction has one or more objectives which are structured to support monitoring, assessment and accountability of progress. Additionally, the strategic plan includes an implementation plan which identifies specific timelines, responsibilities and outcomes. The implementation plan is informed by the impact and our communities' needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The specific strategic plan activities identified for each year of the multi-year strategic plan will be incorporated into annual organizational planning and accountability structures. As the governance body for the organization, the Board of Directors will monitor progress on the strategic plan and holds ultimate accountability.



MISSION STATEMENT

The Gilbert Centre provides social and support services to empower, promote health, and celebrate the lives of people living with and affected by HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STI) and the individuals and families from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) communities of Simcoe Muskoka.

*"The Gilbert Centre changes what is seen
to be unchangeable."*



NEW HORIZONS
FOR 25+ LGBTQ+
OLDER ADULTS



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