

CREATING PATHWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY

Mishka
Social Services

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND PROGRAMS MANAGER

The achievements highlighted in this annual report underscore Mishka Social Services' ongoing commitment to creating opportunities for newcomers, immigrants, refugees, and the most vulnerable. Guided by our strategic plan for 2023, our initiatives include the development of new programs, establishment of relationships with new partners, expansion of our dedicated staff and volunteers, and strategic investments to thrive in our work and maximize our impact.

Throughout 2023, the success of Mishka Social Services has been a result of the collective efforts of our board, management, staff, volunteers, and partners. Their tireless dedication ensured that those we support receive the care they need precisely when they need it.

We are thrilled to present the 2023 Annual Report. As a trusted charitable organization deeply committed to those we serve, our employees, volunteers, donors, and partners, we are confident in our ability to consistently deliver service excellence both now and in the future. On behalf of the Board of Directors and the leadership team, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to Mishka Social Services staff and volunteers for their unwavering commitment to creating a lasting impact for those we serve.



Dr. Azzam
Board Chair



Omar Mahamed
Programs Manager

ABOUT US

Mishka Social Services is a not-for-profit charitable organization that has provided essential services to the newcomer, immigrant, and refugee sector since 2015. Mishka is committed to improving the mental, physical, and social wellbeing of those we support in Hamilton, and surrounding areas.

OUR MISSION

Drawing inspiration from the Arabic term 'Mishka,' symbolizing a niche illuminated by lamps, reflecting our commitment as a guiding light. Our mission and focus is on bridging service gaps in Hamilton, particularly for the racialized newcomer, immigrant, and refugee population. However, everyone is welcome, regardless of faith.

OUR VISION

A community where everyone has pathways to opportunity.

VALUES

- Based in Islamic values and principles
- Inclusion
- Community-based
- Leadership in excellence
- Equity
- Justice

For more information about Mishka Social Services, please visit our website at mishkasocialservices.org

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE MUSLIM ASSOCIATION OF HAMILTON

The Mishka Social Services board, staff, volunteers, and clients come together to express heartfelt gratitude to the Muslim Association of Hamilton for their unwavering support over the years. Your continued commitment has been a cornerstone in our shared mission to assist the most vulnerable members of our community. The contributions you've made, including the provision of shared office spaces, have played a vital role in sustaining our endeavors.

In reflecting upon the shared offices, we hold a trove of cherished memories, and we wish to convey our deep appreciation for the meaningful impact created in those spaces. Your enduring support has not only fostered a collaborative environment but has also been instrumental in realizing positive outcomes for those in need.

As we extend our warmest thanks, we look forward to continuing this partnership, knowing that together, we can make a lasting difference in the lives of those who rely on our collective support.



QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS

In 2023, our organization underwent impactful changes and introduced new programs:

Increased Office Hours

Clients can now drop in five days a week at both locations: Tuesdays and Thursdays at 207-627 Main St. East, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 1545 Stone Church Road East.

New Programs

With the guidance of our executive team, we launched the senior wellness program, featuring a rotating 6-week computer literacy and elder abuse education initiative. We also introduced a parenting program and Mishka Counselling, with plans to revive our Sawa program.

Streamlining Services

Our Sanad social service program has been streamlined into four streams (youth, adults, seniors, and those with developmental disabilities). This ensures that staff are familiar with and knowledgeable about their assigned service stream, moving away from a mixed hub of clients with different needs.

Equipment

With support from the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility and the Electronic Recycling Association, we acquired a total of 9 laptops to support staff, volunteers, and clients, enhancing efficiency. Additionally, a Dell industrial printer and a TV were donated to support our office spaces.

Forming Committees

Identifying areas of need, we established new committees for ongoing quality improvement: the data and privacy committee, and the fundraising and outreach committee. With monthly impacts, we have witnessed increased participation and improvements in projects.

Student Placement

In collaboration with Mohawk College, Mishka Social Services will mentor students in various fields, providing on-the-job training and support. Our first student will join the Sanad social services program in early 2024.

Waitlist Management

Our waitlist management has evolved, offering clients consultations with our intake staff to receive temporary support and referrals while waiting for services.

Social Media and Communication

We increased our social media followers by 20%, engaging them through updates, acknowledgments, and awareness campaigns. Additionally, we initiated a media campaign featuring videos showcasing our impact.

Expanding Team

Throughout the year, we recruited an additional 5 staff members, and our volunteer registration reached over 30 members, all dedicated to supporting those we serve in various capacities.



EMERGENCY HALAL FOOD BANK

Barakah Box has experienced a transformative journey throughout 2022-2023, shifting away from the conventional prepackaged boxes to embrace a gift card model. Over the past year, registrants have been utilizing reloadable cards on a monthly basis to shop at our local grocery store partner, Eastern Food Market.

Thanks to the invaluable support of Islamic Relief of Canada, we've effectively addressed hunger for 125 families every month, totaling over 250 families since the inception of 2023 in Hamilton and its surrounding areas. Additionally, at its peak, we've extended assistance to 176 families, with direct funding from the National Zakat Foundation. In 2023, we dedicated efforts to forge new relationships and establish alliances in the battle against hunger. The combined backing from RBC Foundation, Show Kids You Care, and J.P. Bickell Foundation has empowered us to enhance our traditional-centric model, progressively increasing support numbers by an impressive 65% month over month. Our gratitude extends to all our partners, whose collective support has enabled us to alleviate hunger for over 500 families.

A significant milestone was reached through our collaboration with McMaster University and their CrowdFeeding Project, addressing critical issues of hunger and food waste in Canada. Our involvement in PROJECT 8: Retailer – Food-charity is aimed at contributing valuable insights. The outcomes from CrowdFeeding will guide Mishka Social Services in determining the optimal criteria to ensure that the right individuals receive food support. Furthermore, we will explore innovative processes to provide access for those unable to shop in person, leveraging the food ecosystem to serve more people effectively.



SANAD SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

In the transformative year of 2023, Sanad Social Services underwent a significant evolution, redefining its approach to better serve the diverse needs of the community.

Originally conceived as a centralized support hub for individuals from various backgrounds, Sanad has now transitioned into four specialized social service streams: adults, youth, seniors, and those with developmental disabilities. This strategic restructuring involves assigning community service workers to each stream, ensuring a depth of familiarity and expertise for tailored assistance, thereby elevating the overall quality of support provided.

Operating on designated drop-in office days—Tuesdays and Thursdays at 207-627 Main Street East and Wednesdays and Fridays at 1545 Stone Church Road East—the Sanad program has effectively supported over 100 newcomers, refugees, and immigrants on a personalized, case-by-case basis. The year saw an increased demand for support, particularly among immigrants and refugee claimants, reflecting challenges faced by settlement agencies contending with growing waitlists. The surge in cases related to homelessness and hunger has added complexity to our workload, necessitating our staff to address increasingly intricate and urgent situations.

Recognizing the imperative for additional support, the Sanad team expanded by welcoming four new staff members. This growth was made possible through the generosity of The George Lunan Foundation, La Fondation Emmanuelle Gattuso, The Traquair Family Foundation, and the Hamilton Community Foundation. This expansion enhances our capacity to meet the evolving needs of our community.

Additionally, we express our gratitude to the Hamilton Child and Family Supports for their collaboration over the past year. Together, we have worked towards finding systemic solutions to improve the welfare of Muslim children in foster care and foster better relationships with the Muslim, newcomer, immigrant, and refugee community in Hamilton. We look forward to continuing this collaborative effort to make a lasting and positive difference.

MISHKA COUNSELING PROGRAM

Mishka Counseling, a recently launched program in late August 2023

Currently offers services provided by our registered psychotherapist (qualifying), proficient in both English and Arabic. The program operates on a sliding scale, with affordable costs starting as low as \$60.00 per hour. In cases where dire circumstances and financial constraints are identified through referrals from community partners, we typically accommodate with a fee waiver.

As we continue to raise awareness and establish a positive reputation, our counselor has successfully supported numerous clients in the past months. Looking ahead to the upcoming year, our goal is to expand the program by increasing the number of therapists, broadening the languages in which services are provided, and extending our reach to make an even greater positive impact on the community.



A photograph of two women wearing hijabs and glasses, smiling and holding framed certificates. The woman on the left is wearing a pink hijab and a black top, while the woman on the right is wearing a red hijab and a light-colored top. The certificates they are holding are white with gold borders and the word 'CERTIFICATE' is visible at the top. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

SENIOR WELLNESS PROGRAM

With support from the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility, Mishka Social Services successfully launched the Senior Wellness Program on June 12, 2023. This comprehensive initiative involves 6-week rotating sessions covering computer literacy and elder abuse education. It also includes a friendly visiting component, where our multiethnic clients provide companionship to seniors in the community, engaging them in enjoyable activities, assisting with errands, and advocating for their diverse needs.

As the year concludes, we are midway through completing our fourth cohort. Each cohort has welcomed an average of 8 seniors, fostering relationships among participants. Seniors have gained valuable skills to combat social isolation, such as using social media, letter writing, email creation, and completing applications. Furthermore, they have become well-informed about resources to protect themselves from elder abuse, particularly fraud, which poses a significant challenge, especially for newcomers reliant on social services and unfamiliar with scams in their new country.

Our heartfelt gratitude extends to the Muslim Association of Hamilton for generously providing various areas of their building for the program. Their support has allowed us to raise awareness and assist dozens of seniors in the community. We also appreciate the support of Ibrahim Jame Mosque for providing a satellite office space, ensuring accessibility for downtown core seniors and those in the surrounding areas. Collaboratively, we have empowered 28 seniors with certificates in computer literacy and elder abuse education, and our friendly visits have reached over 25 seniors in the community.



MISHKA PARENTING PROGRAM

The Cross-Cultural Parenting Program, launched on September 13, 2023, initially structured as a rotating 12-week program, has evolved into a dynamic drop-in format. This flexible approach covers various topics each week, including child development, healthy disciplining, communication, problem-solving, and more. We extend our sincere thanks to the Somali Community in Hamilton for generously providing the space to effectively host this program.

Since its inception, the program has welcomed many parents through its doors on Wednesday evenings. These parents, initially uncertain about what to expect and hesitant about potential judgment or condemnation, courageously faced their vulnerabilities and parenting struggles. We express our gratitude to all those parents who have taken bold steps to join us on this parenting journey.

In exciting developments, Compass Community Health and their dedicated team have graciously offered support for our program in the first quarter of 2024. From January 17 to March 27, 2024, we will conduct the parenting program weekly on Wednesdays at 6 pm in a drop-in style. Our two facilitators, equipped with backgrounds in mental health and public health, will continue to foster a safe space. This collaborative effort aims to empower parents to navigate the challenges of raising children in a new society, ensuring the creation of nurtured and resilient families. We express our gratitude to Compass for supporting Mishka in enhancing our program and extending its reach. We eagerly anticipate the positive outcomes that will emerge from this partnership and our collaborative efforts.



SAWA SCHOOL INTEGRATION PROGRAM

In the transformative year of 2023, the revival of Sawa has gained momentum, thanks to the invaluable support of SMILE Canada Support Services and the Hamilton Downtown Mosque Islamic School.

Sawa traces its roots back to the early days of Mishka Social Services when dedicated volunteers made a meaningful impact by supporting youth in crucial areas: personal growth, social skills, and academics. Notably, these volunteers were actively present in public schools such as Cootes Paradise and Hess School.

Currently, we are in the final stages of completing orientations and training for new, committed volunteers to launch Sawa at the Hamilton Downtown Islamic School. This time, our focus extends to youth with learning disabilities, aiming to provide specialized assistance. In this endeavor, SMILE Canada Support Services, our esteemed partner, will play a pivotal role by offering training to both volunteers and staff on best practices for supporting individuals with disabilities.

While our primary focus remains on supporting newcomers, immigrants, and refugees, our commitment to addressing the specific needs identified by schools sets us on a broader trajectory. We aspire not only to enhance Sawa beyond its previous impact but also to establish connections with various schools, thereby creating a more profound and meaningful impact. The collaborative effort between Mishka Social Services, SMILE Canada Support Services, and the Hamilton Downtown Mosque Islamic School symbolizes a dedication to empowering youth and creating positive change within the community.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

In 2023, we collaborated with numerous organizations to collectively work toward noble causes, including promoting disability awareness and fostering multiculturalism.

Support Circle

On December 10, 2023, Mishka Social Services collaborated with Deen Support Services to host a support circle for newcomer, immigrant, and refugee families in Hamilton who are physically or developmentally disabled or caregiving for a loved one. The gathering provided an opportunity to share experiences, discuss challenges, and express needs, guiding Mishka and Deen on how to best offer support. Plans are underway to develop a day program specifically tailored for this group in the upcoming year of 2024.

Week Camp

In collaboration with SMILE Canada Support Services, we organized a week-long camp for individuals with physical and developmental disabilities at Ibrahim Jame Mosque during the first week of August 2023. Families enjoyed engaging in fun activities, and we extend our gratitude to Ibrahim Jame Mosque for hosting us.

Barakah Box Webinar

On December 16, 2023, Mishka Social Services conducted its first-ever food bank webinar. This initiative, planned as a periodic event, aims to provide regular updates and information to those registered with our food bank program.

Eid Festival

During late spring/early summer of 2023, Mishka Social Services raised awareness at the annual Eid Festival hosted by Golden Youth. We express gratitude to all those who donated and supported our programs.

Salam Event at City Hall

In early October 2023, we celebrated Islamic Heritage Month at City Hall, thanks to the organizers who ensured a meaningful gathering. The event was a collective step against Islamophobia and hate, fostering unity and celebration of heritage.

Back to School Drive

In late summer of 2023, in collaboration with the National Zakat Foundation, 96 children began the school year with new backpacks. We appreciate the National Zakat Foundation for including us in this impactful initiative.

Compassion Hamilton

On November 1, 2023, Mishka Social Services participated in Compassion Hamilton at the First Unitarian Church of Hamilton, contributing to the awareness of mental health issues among newcomers, immigrants, and refugees.



CLIENTS SERVED

BARAKAH BOX FOOD BANK:

600+ SERVED

SANAD SOCIAL SERVICES:

96 CLIENTS SERVED

MISHKA COUNSELING:

OVER 10 CLIENTS SUPPORTED

SENIOR WELLNESS PROGRAM:

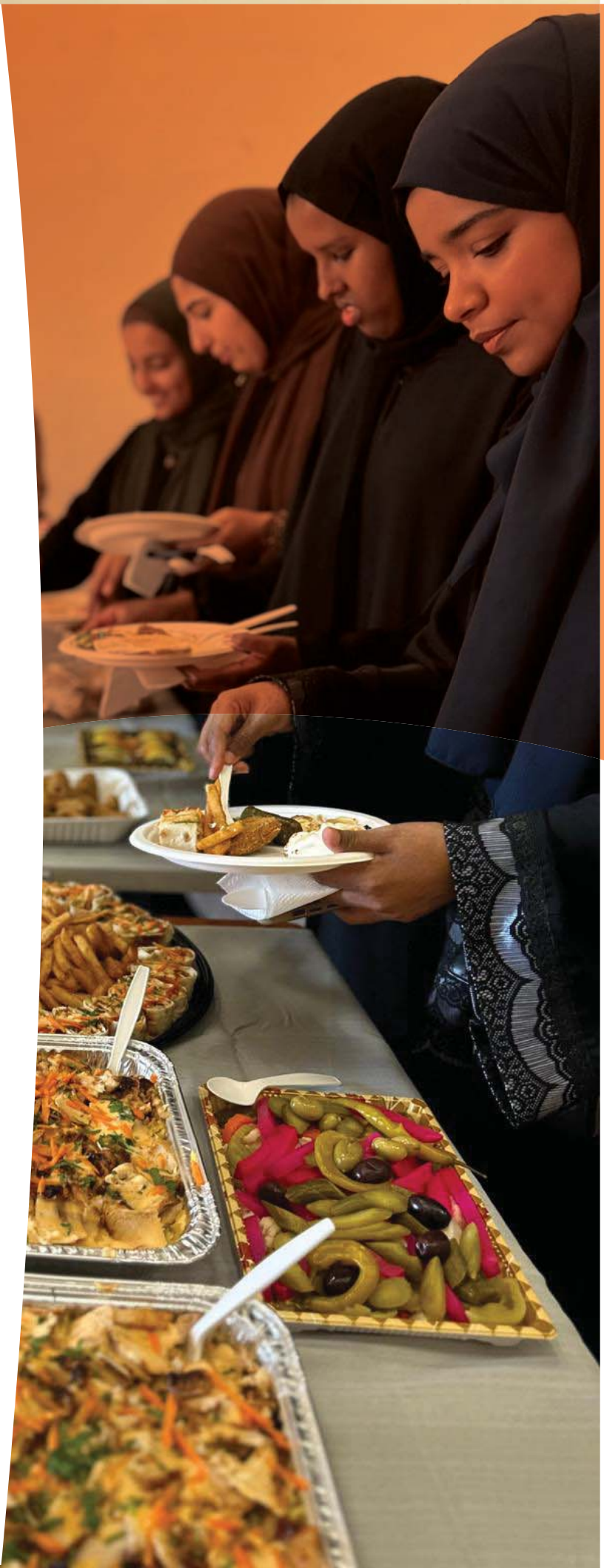
28 SENIORS REGISTERED IN COMPUTER LITERACY
AND ELDER ABUSE EDUCATION PROGRAM,
24 REGISTERED FOR FRIENDLY VISITING

PARENTING PROGRAM:

15+

EMPLOYEE AND VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

On behalf of the Board and our leadership team, Mishka Social Services wants to thank our staff and volunteers for their continued efforts in making sure those most vulnerable have the supports in place they need to lead a quality life.



FINANCIAL PROFILE

Our Funders:

Muslim Association of Hamilton: \$60,000.00

Islamic Relief of Canada: \$67,500.00

J.P. Bickell Foundation: \$30,000.00

Hamilton Community Foundation: \$25,000.00

Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility: \$15,166.00

La Fondation Emmanuelle Gattuso: \$15,000.00

The Traquair Family Foundation: \$10,000.00

Show Kids You Care: \$5,500.00

The George Lunan Foundation: \$5,000.00

RBC Foundation: \$5,000.00

*A heartfelt thank you to all our funders and donors.
Your support has touched, improved, and enhanced countless lives.*

CORPORATE PROFILE

Board of Directors

Dr. Khalid Azzam (Chair)
Mona Munim (Secretary)
Zeshan Arshad (Treasurer)
Nagham Azzam (Founder/Director)
Sabreina Dahab (Director)
Abdullahi Abdi (Director)
Dr. Waleed Kishta (Director)

Senior Management

Omar Mahamed (Programs Manager)
Abrar Mechmechia (Community Relations)
Eimaan Shahid (Administrator)

Locations

Mailing Office
154 Mohawk Rd.
Ancaster Ontario
L9G 2W9

Satellite Office
207-627 Main St. East
Hamilton, Ontario
L8M 1J5

Corporate Office
1545 Stone Church Rd E.
Hamilton, Ontario
L8W 3P8

The image features a logo for 'Mishka Social Services' in the upper left. The word 'Mishka' is in a dark grey sans-serif font with a stylized orange flame above the letter 'i'. Below it, 'Social Services' is written in a smaller orange sans-serif font. The background is a warm-toned photograph of several women wearing hijabs, focused on their work at a computer workstation. A large white curved shape overlaps the top right corner of the image.

Mishka

Social Services

CREATING PATHWAYS
TO OPPORTUNITY