

Working together to build a stronger
and more **connected** Waterloo Region.



Wellbeing WR Update Report
June 2022-December 2022



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The Foundation



CONNECTING COMMUNITY



JOURNEY TO RECONCILIATION



MEASURING WELLBEING



REDUCING INEQUITIES

Wellbeing Waterloo Region (Wellbeing WR) is a collaborative initiative where members work together across sectors to improve the wellbeing of residents of Waterloo Region. The foundation of our work is grounded in connecting community, reducing inequities, measuring wellbeing, and journey to reconciliation.

Wellbeing WR Updates

The Backbone Team

The Wellbeing WR backbone team welcomed two students from September-December 2022, Emma Haas and Isra Ziad. Secondment for Cynthia Martin ended in August 2022, and Paige Monck-Whipp's secondment ended in December 2022, transitioning both staff members back to the Waterloo Regional Police Services.



Read about this
Backbone Staff Transition.

The Working Groups

The **Connectors Hub** continued to meet regularly to discuss emerging social issues within the community and provide direction for Wellbeing WR as a collaborative.

The **Psychosocial and Spiritual Supports Working Group** met regularly to support and improve the mental and spiritual wellbeing of the community, read more in "Connecting Communities"!

The **Sustainability and Funding Working Group** directed Wellbeing WR's next steps and consulted with the Connectors Hub to make a final decision about the future of this network.

The **First Nations, Métis, Inuit Advocacy & Advisory Circle** has been a hub of connection and relationship building for Indigenous individuals and organizations in Waterloo Region, with efforts this season being put towards the future and sustainability of the group.

A **Wellbeing Mini-Survey Advisory Group** and a **Steering Group** formed to provide guidance on the [2022 Community Wellbeing Mini-Survey](#) and to collaborate on the creation and implementation of the survey process.

Meet the Collaborative



Connecting Community

Wellbeing WR is working to build a more connected Waterloo Region so that we can effectively respond to break down barriers to wellbeing inequity and make system-wide changes.



Mental Health and Education Training

In collaboration with CMHA Waterloo Wellington and the Psychosocial and Spiritual Supports Working Group (PSSWG) we provided free training courses to the community focusing on mental health awareness, suicide prevention and compassion fatigue. This [Mental Health and Education](#) training was made available at no cost through the generous support of the Kitchener Waterloo and the Cambridge North Dumfries Community Foundations.



A “Supporting the Supporters Implementation Team” was established to implement the [Mental Health and Education training project](#).

Learn more here.



The Psychosocial and Spiritual Supports Working Group (PSSWG)

After connecting with the Wellbeing WR Social Inclusion Catalyst Group in 2022, the Psychosocial and Spiritual Supports Working Group has evolved into a community practice that typically meets every month to support the mental spiritual wellbeing of the community.

This group works together on:

- Promoting mental, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing at a community-level
- Fostering a holistic view of wellbeing that integrates mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions of wellbeing
- Creating and supporting psychosocial and spiritual supports, practices and programs for the Waterloo Region community



Journey to Reconciliation

Wellbeing WR has made a commitment to develop meaningful relationships and work toward reconciliation with local First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities. Part of this commitment includes developing resources and tools to support education with the network and community.



Crow Shield Lodge

Wellbeing WR backbone staff with individuals from Cambridge North Dumfries Ontario Health Team, Carleton Place and the Region of Waterloo spent a summer afternoon at Crow Shield Lodge engaging in a Land-Based Allyship Workshop. Nicole Robinson led the workshop with the help of Clarence Cachagee, and Ben as the Fire Keeper. We openly shared about our personal journeys to reconciliation and how we will continue to move forward.



[Learn more here.](#)



Learn, Reflect & Practice

In each newsletter, we have continued to feature a *Journey to Reconciliation* section that provides a quick and meaningful opportunity to learn, reflect, and practice on topics related to reconciliation. The Wellbeing WR backbone staff write these pieces, with some guidance provided by the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Advisory and Advocacy Circle. All of the previous pieces are now available on our website to access at any time.

[Access Here.](#)



Acknowledgements Workshop with Tammy Webster

In partnership with Cambridge North Dumfries Ontario Health Team, we hosted a 2-part Acknowledgements Workshop with Tammy Webster in June and July 2022. These sessions created space for participants to learn about and consider why we offer acknowledgements, and Tammy shared guiding questions and learning resources with attendees.

"I intend to take on the idea of scheduling time to discuss and relate to each other in more meetings before just moving on to business. I also intend to keep encouraging my peers and coworkers to continue to build on the acknowledgements we make and find new ways to connect it to the relationships we have and work we do." – Participant

Measuring Wellbeing

Wellbeing WR uses measurement and data to understand community wellbeing, emerging issues and prevalent inequities. We also mobilize the network to assist with data sense making and taking action to improve community wellbeing.



2022 Community Wellbeing Mini-Survey

In partnership with the [Canadian Index of Wellbeing](#) (CIW) and many community organizations, Wellbeing WR ran a 2022 Community Wellbeing Mini-Survey to better understand the current state of wellbeing and inequities in Waterloo Region after more than 2 years into the COVID-19 pandemic. The data from this survey will be used to improve services for people living in Waterloo Region and identify where change is needed most.



Through collective efforts, the survey received over 5,500 surveys (with 4,958 of the surveys comprising the final sample).

The data report has now been shared with survey collaborators, and Bryan Smale from the CIW will be delivering a presentation of the results to collaborators on February 7th, 2023.

Neighbourhood Wellbeing Mapping

In early 2022, fourth-year University of Waterloo students created “Wellbeing and the Built Environment”, an interactive GIS mapping tool to display wellbeing survey data at the municipal level. In June 2022, [Smart Waterloo Region Innovation Lab](#) (SWRIL) and Wellbeing WR held innovation labs to share ideas and insights that will expand the maps to a neighbourhood level.

This project continues to evolve with Renan Cai, a Ph.D. student at the University of Waterloo, SWRIL, and Wellbeing WR collaboratively working together to map wellbeing data in a meaningful and useful way. To date, over 300 neighbourhood map layers have been created.



Learn about SWRIL [here](#). 

Reducing Inequities

We have a vision of a community where everyone thrives and no one is left behind, and addressing the prevalent and systemic inequities that exist is crucial in achieving this vision. To create meaningful and impactful change we are:



- Responding and advocating to develop new solutions
- Educating and enhancing knowledge
- Working towards reconciliation with local First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities

Circle Facilitation Training Project

In partnership with Carizon and the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Waterloo Wellington, this project aims to resource grassroots capacity for community care to support mental health and wellbeing by training members of community organizations and not-for-profits in Circle facilitation, to hold community Circles, and develop a community of practice. Together we will create safer spaces for community care and connection, take the strain off the formalized mental health system, and foster healing and nurture hope.

Emancipation Day Virtual Learning Circle

In partnership with the [City of Cambridge](#), [Idea Exchange](#) and [Rhythm & Blues](#), we provided a virtual learning opportunity about Emancipation Day on August 1st. The recognition of this day acknowledges that slavery existed in Canada and has caused intergenerational trauma for many African Canadians.

National Housing Day

To celebrate National Housing Day on November 22nd, we joined [Leadership Waterloo Region](#) (LWR) at a booth in Celebration Square to highlight their amazing work around affordable housing. For the last three years, LWR partnered with the Waterloo Institute for Social Innovation and Resilience (WISIR) at the University of Waterloo, and Wellbeing WR to pilot a [solutions lab project](#) focused on affordable housing.

Learn about LWR here.



Looking Forward

After many years of connecting, visioning, and taking action to improve the wellbeing of residents in Waterloo Region, Wellbeing WR as a collaborative is sunsetting and in the process of exploring opportunities to transfer its current programs into partnering local organizations as of March 31, 2023.



We are deeply grateful to everyone who has contributed to the work of Wellbeing WR over the years and for believing in a community where everyone thrives and no one is left behind. Through the many stages of this initiative, meaningful connection has always been at the core of this work. As the collaborative concludes, we are confident that the relationships and vision of Wellbeing WR will continue to live on in the community to impact wellbeing in transformational ways.

Join us in celebrating and commemorating Wellbeing WR on **March 20th from 1:00pm-3:00pm** for a hybrid event at the Victoria Park Pavillion, stay tuned for registration information!

Program and Resource Transitions

This report highlights the amazing work that Wellbeing WR has completed in the last eight months and projects that are still underway. Looking ahead, these programs will be transferred to local community partners who are well aligned to keep it moving forward. Stay tuned for updates on how to stay connected with the work as this transition unfolds.



Staying Connected

Stay up-to-date with this transition by following us on social media and subscribing to our bi-weekly newsletter. Follow our social media channels:



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