



northstar
FROM ADVOCACY TO IMPACT



annual report



WE ACKNOWLEDGE

We acknowledge this land is situated within the traditional and treaty territory of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, signatories of the 1788 Gunshot Treaty and 1923 Williams Treaties.

This land is home to the Indigenous Peoples. Let us acknowledge the deliberate acts and traumas of the past through authenticity, solidarity, truth, and reconciliation. Let us celebrate Indigenous communities by being leaders of action in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations.

Let us move forward together with kindness and respect.



MISSISSAUGAS OF
SCUGOG ISLAND
F I R S T N A T I O N



Northstar walks alongside justice-involved youth as they navigate complex life challenges, offering pathways to pro-social opportunities, higher education, and personal growth rooted in dignity, accountability, and connection.

Walk with us.

Our Annual Report, a showcase of our achievements, progress, and commitment to excellence throughout the year.

These youth know the other side.

This past year has been one of partnership, purpose, and progress for Northstar. Across our programs and community engagements, we have seen clearly that sustainable change happens when relationships are strong, voices are respected, and organizations are willing to work together toward shared goals.

The Board is proud of Northstar's growing collaboration with educational institutions across Durham Region and the GTA. This partnership represents an important step forward for the organization, bringing research, evaluation, and learning into a closer relationship with practice. Through this collaboration, Northstar is strengthening its ability to reflect on its work, document impact, and contribute knowledge to the broader sector. Just as importantly, it affirms Northstar's role as a leader in community-based innovation, where lived experience and academic insight can inform each other in meaningful ways.

Another significant milestone this year has been Northstar's collaboration with Durham Community Health Centre, which has expanded access to primary care for members of the Durham community. This partnership reinforces Northstar's holistic approach to well-being, recognizing that legal, educational, mental health, and health needs are deeply interconnected. Being able to support access to primary care alongside Northstar's existing services strengthens our ability to walk alongside youth and families in more comprehensive and dignified ways, and reflects our shared commitment to community health.

Throughout all of this work, it is Northstar's staff who continue to make the difference. The Board has witnessed a team that leads with integrity, compassion, and professionalism, often in challenging and high-pressure environments. Staff have shown remarkable adaptability, consistently balancing direct service delivery with advocacy, collaboration, and community leadership. Their willingness to engage across systems, center the voices of youth and families, and uphold Northstar's values in practice is a source of deep pride.

None of this would be possible without the trust of the communities Northstar serves, the dedication of our partners, and the support of funders and allies who share our vision.

These relationships speak to the credibility Northstar has built over decades and continues to strengthen through accountability, transparency, and impact. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I extend my sincere gratitude to Northstar's staff and leadership for their unwavering commitment and care. As we look ahead, the Board remains confident in Northstar's direction and inspired by the collective work underway, building stronger connections, advancing equity, and supporting safer, healthier communities for all.



Jonathan Kahane
Board Chair

The more they see, the further they will reach.

Northstar's work over the last year has been deeply collaborative. Staff engaged consistently with schools, justice partners, health care providers, researchers, and community organizations across Durham Region, bringing people together to respond thoughtfully to complex challenges facing youth and families. These collaborations were not merely meetings, but opportunities to align systems, share responsibility, and improve access to meaningful support. Through this collective approach, Northstar continued to strengthen its role as a trusted and responsive community partner.

A particularly important area of focus has been Northstar's advocacy and engagement with Black communities. Over the past year, staff have supported community conversations and learning opportunities aimed at increasing awareness of rights, responsibilities, and pathways for advocacy, especially for Black youth and families navigating education, justice, and social service systems. This work reflects Northstar's commitment to equity, dignity, and informed participation, and to addressing the disproportionate impacts of systemic barriers through education, dialogue, and community-led solutions.

Looking ahead, we remain dedicated to our core values, fostering a culture of innovation, and delivering sustainable value to our stakeholders. We are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and confident in our ability to navigate the evolving landscape.



On behalf of the entire leadership team, I assure you that we will continue to prioritize transparency, integrity, and responsible growth in everything we do. Together, let us embrace the future with optimism and determination, knowing that our collective efforts will shape a brighter tomorrow.

Thank you for your unwavering support, and I invite you to delve into the following pages of this report to discover the milestones, achievements, and exciting prospects that define our organization.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Jai Sahak". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "J" and a cursive "Sahak".

Jai Sahak
Executive Director

A YEAR IN ReVIEW



*Over the past year, Northstar
has experienced a period of
meaningful transition, growth,
and authentic collaborations
resulting in renewed momentum.*

This is our Year in Review.

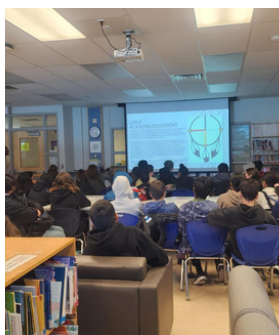
Solidarity, Collaboration, and Renewed Connections



In 2026, Northstar deepened its role as a trusted hub of collaboration across Durham Region, strengthening authentic partnerships that directly benefit justice-involved youth and their families. Through meaningful engagement with community organizations, system partners, and grassroots initiatives, Northstar co-developed programming and created spaces where young people could build confidence, leadership, and awareness.

These efforts align with Northstar's broader commitment to integrated and community-based service delivery.

Northstar made staff retention and well-being a clear organizational priority. The organization focused on fostering psychological safety and strengthening internal supports to reduce burnout and sustain high-quality service delivery.





Northstar's Navigating the Youth Justice project, funded by the Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) grant, was a collaborative initiative designed to strengthen outcomes for justice-involved youth by raising awareness of a structured case conferencing model at the point of sentencing.

The project brought together multidisciplinary partners, including justice officials, educators, and mental health professionals, to develop coordinated, trauma-informed, and strengths-based plans that aimed to reduce reoffending and connect youth to meaningful, pro-social opportunities.

In parallel, the initiative prioritized community education, particularly within racialized communities, by increasing awareness of rights, court processes, and available supports, enabling youth and families to make informed decisions at critical stages in the justice system.

Empowering Partners, Building Community.





In November 2025, Northstar participated in a youth justice symposium that brought together system partners, practitioners, and community leaders from across the region. During the session, Northstar provided a comprehensive overview of its programs and services, highlighting how the organization supports justice-involved youth and families through a continuum of mental health, legal, and community-based interventions.

The presentation emphasized Northstar's commitment to operating from a place of equity and social justice, centering the experiences of Black and racialized communities and addressing systemic barriers within the youth justice system. This engagement reinforced Northstar's role as a trusted leader and advocate, advancing more equitable and responsive approaches to supporting young people in conflict with the law.





In January 2026, Northstar launched a Primary Mobile Clinic in partnership with the Durham Community Health Centre, marking an important step toward improving access to healthcare for youth and families in Durham Region. The clinic was established on-site at Northstar to remove barriers to care and provide accessible, community-based primary health services, including health assessments, preventative care, and referrals to specialists.

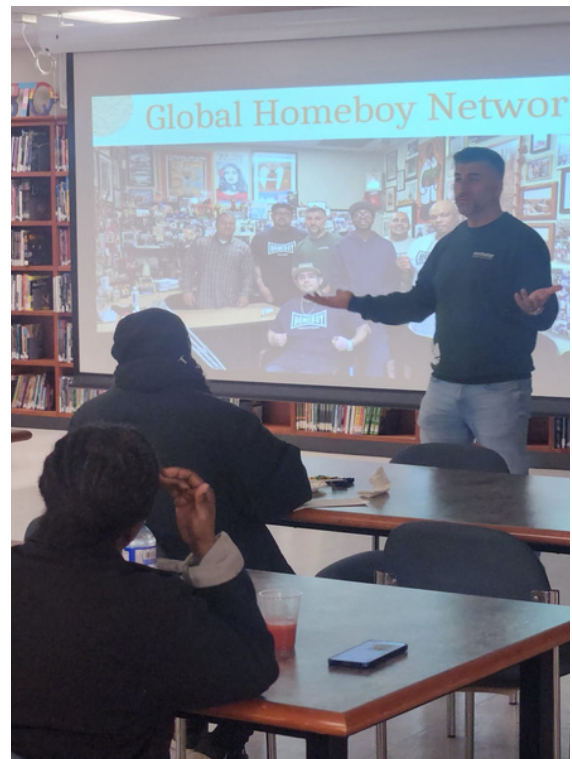
This partnership reflected a shared commitment to addressing the intersection of health, justice, and social determinants of well-being by meeting clients where they are. By integrating healthcare into Northstar's service environment, the initiative strengthened holistic support for justice-involved youth and enhanced the organization's ability to respond to complex needs through coordinated, wraparound care.





Through the Community Safety and Well-Being Grant, Northstar organized and led numerous community engagement and public education sessions throughout the year to increase awareness and understanding of the Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA). These sessions created accessible and welcoming spaces for youth, families, and community members to learn about their rights, responsibilities, and the range of options available to them within the youth justice system. Through workshops and presentations held across the region, Northstar focused on breaking down complex legal concepts into clear, practical information that could support informed decision-making at critical moments.

A particular emphasis was placed on reaching Black and racialized communities, who are often disproportionately impacted by the justice system. Northstar facilitated targeted education sessions that addressed systemic barriers, built trust, and empowered participants with knowledge about court processes, sentencing considerations, and available supports. By strengthening community understanding and confidence in navigating the system, these efforts advanced Northstar's commitment to equity, early intervention, and improving outcomes for justice-involved youth and their families.



Voices of Change

CLOCK IT

YOUTH LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

**KNOW YOUR RIGHTS. PROTECT YOUR FUTURE.
BUILD YOUR POWER.**

MARCH 21ST

4:30-7:30 PM

AGES: 13-17

#102-1895 Clements Rd., Pickering, ON, L1W 3V5

northstar FROM ADVOCACY TO IMPACT

Bell

me to Moi

AFAM GROOVE

Interwoven

Co-Creating the **Future** of
Child and Youth Mental Health

April 20-21, 2025 | Toronto, ON

Register now for Canada's
**largest youth mental
health** gathering this
spring!

Don't miss our session at CMHO2026:

Policy Shift: Raising the Youth Justice Age for Better Outcomes

Presented by:

Keynote by:



Jai Sahak
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - NORTHSTAR



Cindy Blackstock
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - FIRST NATIONS CHILD
AND FAMILY CARING SOCIETY OF CANADA
PROFESSOR - SOCIAL WORK AT MCGILL
UNIVERSITY

DBEN **YOU'RE INVITED!** **FREE EVENT**

ROOTS & RESOURCES

A Community Connection Event

WE ARE COMING EAST

Join us as we exchange information, bridge the gap to vital resources, and strengthen the bonds that make our neighbourhoods thrive. This gathering is an intentional space for the East Durham community to connect directly with Black organizations.

FOOD WILL BE SERVED

Resource Fair | Discussions | Networking

WHEN & WHERE:
Wednesday, March 25th
6:00 PM - 7:30 PM
EASTDALE COLLEGIATE
265 Harmony Rd N, Oshawa

SCAN TO REGISTER

DBEN DurhamBlackEducatorsNetwork

Black Parent Collective

Durham Family & Cultural Centre

IFARADA Centre for Excellence

northstar FROM ADVOCACY TO IMPACT

Ontario

**PICKERING AFGHAN ASSOCIATION
& NORTHSTAR COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Eid & Nawrooz Celebration

Friday, March 27, 2026 | 5:00 PM - 11:00 PM
Quaker Meeting House,
457 Kingston Rd W, Ajax

Hosted by
Pickering Afghan Association & Northstar Community Services

Special Presentation by
Jai Sahak Executive Director of Northstar
"Unlocking The Youth Justice System in Durham"

4 Live Music • Henna & Kids Activities • Dinner

RSVP by March 19th
Telephone: 416-706-3550 & 416-602-2857



Our People



Northstar's strength continues to be rooted in its people. Over the past year, our staff have navigated a period of significant transition and steady organizational growth with remarkable resilience, professionalism, and care. Amid leadership changes, restructuring, and the evolution of our programs and identity, staff have remained deeply committed to delivering consistent, high-quality support to youth and families.

Their adaptability, collaborative spirit, and unwavering dedication have not only ensured continuity in service but have also strengthened our internal culture, one grounded in trust, learning, and shared purpose. In a field that is both demanding and emotionally complex, this collective resilience has been essential, enabling Northstar to move forward with stability, confidence, and a renewed sense of momentum.



Northstar celebrates 45 years.



Always on the move!



Staff appreciation at Northstar.



**Show
your
colours**



In the SPOTLight



“At Northstar, I’m proud to be part of the Care and Treatment Education Program (CTEP) as a Child and Youth Worker, where I focus on building trust with young people, providing consistent support, and helping them navigate challenges with confidence and care. Outside of my role at Northstar, I bring that same passion to my work as a youth football coach. Coaching gives me another way to connect with young people, helping them grow through teamwork, discipline, and self-belief both on and off the field.”

Dawson Jordan

Child and Youth Worker



“I am a Primary Care Nurse Practitioner with experience across emergency, long-term care, and primary care settings, alongside roles in teaching and research that reflect my commitment to education and evidence-based practice. A key highlight of my career has been supporting the launch and clinical leadership of a mobile clinic across Durham Region over the past two years, providing low-barrier care to individuals who are unhoused, marginalized, low-income, and newcomers to Canada, while delivering comprehensive primary care services and helping patients access consistent, trusted healthcare and community supports.”

Najeem Popal

Primary Care Nurse Practitioner

Primary Mobile Clinic at Northstar



In the SPOTLight



Ben Loder has been teaching Math, Science and Canadian and World Studies, in various CTEP and ECPP programs at Grove School, since 2008. His extensive background in Special Education helps him to create a classroom environment that encourages curiosity, confidence, and academic growth for students of all ages and abilities. "Every student communicates, learns, and grows on their own timeline; my job is simply to listen closely enough to provide the right roadmap"

Before joining Grove School, Ben worked as a high school teacher in Belleville and Ottawa. He earned his Biotechnology Diploma at St Lawrence College, his undergraduate degree at Carleton University and his teaching degree at Windsor University.

Outside of teaching, Ben enjoys hockey, volleyball and weight training. A central pillar of Ben's life is caring for an individual with a severe developmental disability. "Alongside my work as an educator, I am deeply committed to my role as a lifelong caregiver for a family member with special needs. This task shapes my perspectives on resilience and empathy."

Ben Loder

Educator - CTEP Classroom Teacher



Board Member of the Year ▶▶



Christopher J. Squire

CPA, CA

Health System Executive,
Corporate Services &
Chief Financial Officer

Christopher J. Squire is a senior healthcare executive with more than 15 years of progressive leadership experience in financial management and corporate services within complex, integrated health systems. He currently serves as Health System Executive, Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer at Lakeridge Health, where he plays a key role in advancing organizational performance, financial sustainability, and strategic system integration.

Christopher is a Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA, CA). His expertise is further supported by advanced executive leadership training through LEADS Canada, certification in Management Information Systems from the Canadian Institute for Health Information, and credentials in Lean and continuous process improvement.

In addition to his professional responsibilities, Christopher is an active contributor to his community. In addition to serving on the board of Northstar, he has previously served for five years on the Executive Committee of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 13, as well as two years on the Board of the Newfoundland and Labrador Lung Association—demonstrating his long-standing commitment to community well-being and social impact.

Staying Connected, Authentically



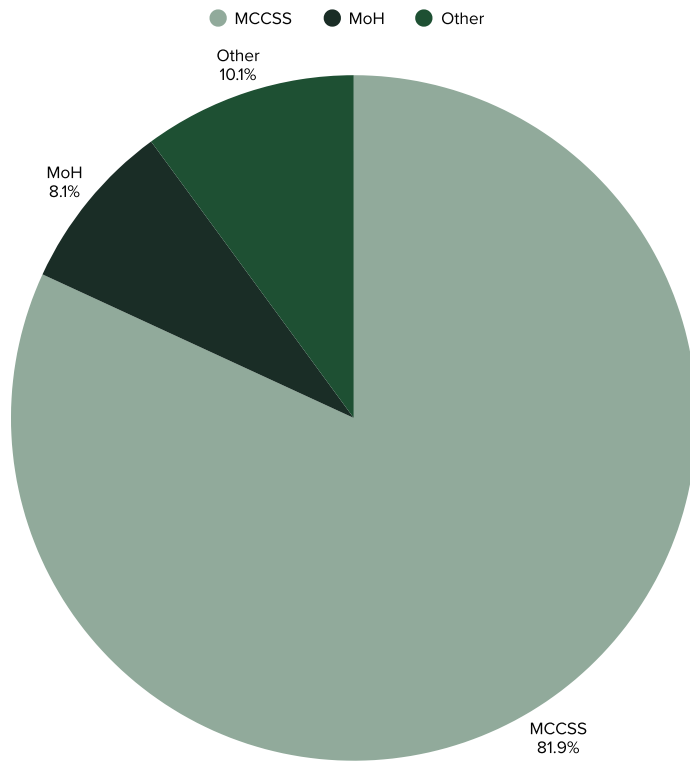
By the Numbers



Explore our financial highlights, and key metrics that reflect our ongoing service delivery.

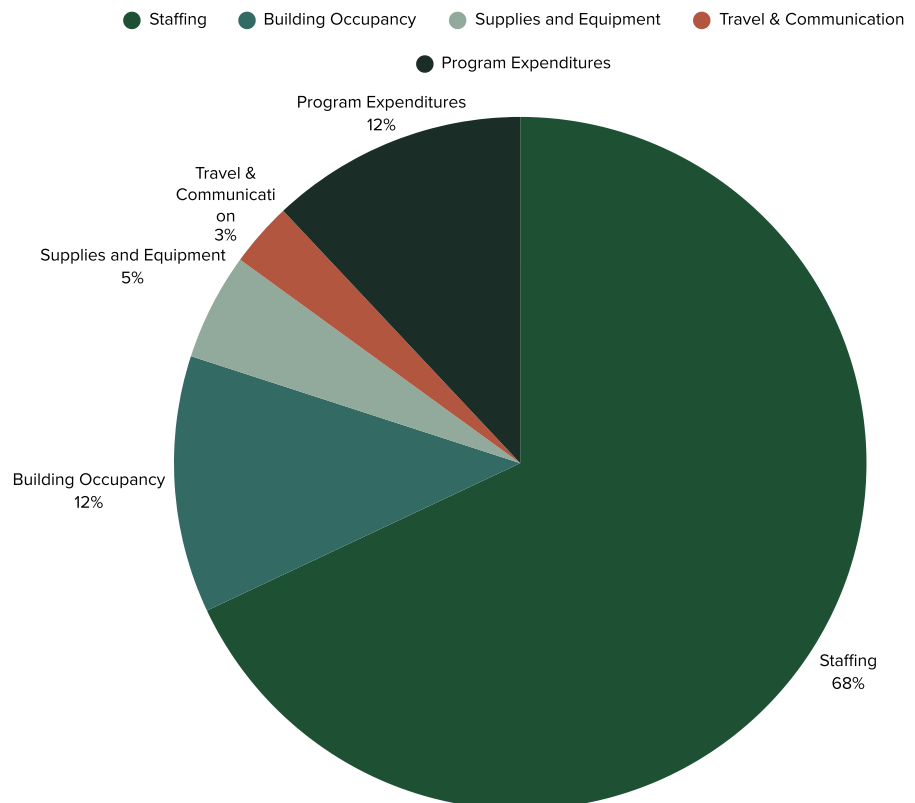
Financial Highlights

2026



Revenue

Expenditure



Celebrating Breakthroughs, Inspiring Progress

↓ Below Target

↑ Exceeded Target

↓ 47

Community Support
Team Youth Served

↑ 16

Intensive Support and
Supervision Program
Youth Served

This year, Northstar continued to deepen its impact across Durham Region, delivering a high volume of services to justice-involved youth and families while exceeding the majority of our funded targets.

↑ 29

Youth Served by
the Enhanced
Youth Outreach
Worker

↑ 4,106

Students Trained on
Violence Prevention
Across Durham
Region

Through programs such as CST, ISSP, CTEP, and court-based supports, our team responded to growing community need with consistency, professionalism, and care, surpassing expectations in service participation, engagement, and completion rates.

7

Community Justice
Sessions



293

Attendees

These results reflect not only strong operational performance, but also Northstar's commitment to accessible, evidence-informed supports that meet youth and families where they are and help them move toward stability, connection, and long-term success.

3

Service Partner
Education Sessions



125

Attendees

with **GRATITUDE...**

A special thank you to everyone that makes our work possible.

Board of Directors:

Officers:

Jonathan Kahane - Chair
Belinda Gruber - Vice Chair
Chris Squire - Treasurer

Directors:

Dwight Townsend
Usma Qureshi

Senior Staff:

Executive Director

Jai Sahak

Clinical Director

Lisa Fabian

Director of Executive Operations:

Sotanya Thompson

Finance Manager

Angela Wilson

Supervisor - Integrated Youth Services

Nadia Judunath

Administrator - Programs and Court Services

Anusha Francis

Child and Youth Workers

Dawson Jordan
Jennifer Johnson
Mawadi Franklin
Yaadavi Uthayakumar

Community Safety Facilitator

K'Lee Watson

Community Support Team

Carissa Ross
Christopher Lindsay
Hope Kurtesi

Enhanced Youth Outreach Worker

Walter Lopez

Family Worker

Iram Mansoor

Finance Coordinator

Sabrina Hasledon

Intensive Support and Supervision Program

Stefhy Lincoln
Usama Mehmood



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