

The Bridge Youth Resource Centre

2024-2029 Strategic Plan

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	3
A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD.....	3
A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.....	4
ABOUT THE BRIDGE.....	5
HISTORY .....	6
THE BRIDGE IN 2024 .....	8
2024 – 2029 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES .....	9

# INTRODUCTION

The Bridge Youth Resource Centre is pleased to announce their 2024-2029 Strategic Plan. We look forward to better serving the community as we move into the future with passion and intentionality.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD



*As a founder and the exiting Board President of The Bridge, I am incredibly proud of the remarkable advancements our organization has made over the last five years! Through prayer and discernment, we started with a dream to “bridge the gap” between the multiple services youth needed to navigate, with God’s provision and direction we created the Resource Centre, supportive housing, and long-term housing.*

*Not only have we achieved our initial goals, but we also have exceeded them by creating the Take Your Shot young entrepreneurs’ competition and post-secondary grant program. With the help of our community partners, we established two foundational fundraisers the SleepingOut event and the Giving Spoon lunch. Through the efforts of our incredible staff, board members, and support from the community we have had the privilege of seeing lives changed. These accomplishments are a testament to our unwavering dedication to seeing every youth reach their potential. It been an honour and a joy to serve as the Board President and I am excited to pass the baton along to the new Board President and staff!*

George Bergen (founding member, Board President 2014 - 2024)



*Prior to opening our doors 6 years ago, our board set out with a vision to provide an opportunity for every youth to reach their potential. Through God’s guidance and wisdom we arrived at the creation of the Bridge. A place where all youth can find the services they need under one roof. A place where we could “bridge the gap”. Since our onset the Bridge has diligently built new connections to multiple services to meet the needs by our youth under one roof. Through these services, we feed, cloth, teach, counsel, and invest in those who come in through our doors. All throughout, we have been blessed with the results as we see lives being changed before our eyes. We are at a new chapter for the Bridge, and we couldn’t be better prepared.*

*I've been fortunate to be board member since 2017 as the Bridge took its first steps. It's clear to see how far we've come. Now, as the incoming Board President, I'm honoured and humbled to work with our boards, staff, donors, and community as we continue to build the Bridge to better serve our community going forwards. Our board has discerned a path forward for the next 5 years that is marked by 3 pillars: strengthen, serve, and shine. We set forth to strengthen the connections that we have made and to build new ones to provide a strong hand up for our youth and community. We invite our community to serve with us as we work together to invest in our youth. Finally, we shine as the Bridge presents a new model for charities to meet the needs of their communities while challenging the conventional path to sustainability.*

*I invite you to join us as we take our next steps forward and be with us as realize this next chapter.*

William Good (Board President 2024 – forward)

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*Over the last 5 years our organization has grown substantially. We have introduced new programs and services through partnership support within our Resource Centre collaborating on focused activities in education and job support, life and coping skills, mental health and addiction services and social inclusion. We built and have been operating the Quiring Family Fresh Start supportive housing facility for youth ages 16-24 for the last 4 years working towards youth living independently, re-integrating with family or moving on to permanent housing with support services.*

*Through 2022 and 2023 we built 12 new homes, including a partnership project with Habitat for Humanity to complete the first 3D printed home permitted for residential use in Canada. This history making building is also the first multi-unit 3D printed building in North America.*

*Our next 5-years focuses on strategies through the pillars of strengthen, serve and shine. We want to continue to strengthen our people and programs, serve youth and our community clearly and effectively as well as shine by sharing our successful outcomes and models. We wish to undertake projects that focus on the central challenge of building long-term organizational sustainability.*

*As we transition to these new goals, we want to thank the community, our funders, donors and volunteers for their unwavering support throughout the years. We want to continue our success forward through intentional collaboration while continuing to help maintain our vision of supporting every youth in reaching their potential.*

Krista Rempel, Executive Director

# ABOUT THE BRIDGE

The Bridge Youth Resource Centre is a non-profit organization that began informal operations in Leamington, Ontario in 2015, helping youth 14 to 24 by providing a safe, welcoming space for help with food, housing, jobs, addiction, mental health, and more. The Bridge exists to bridge the gap by providing youth with resources and hope for the future. Within the first 5 years of formal operations, The Bridge opened its Resource Centre, a 24/7 supportive housing facility, built 12 homes, and became debt-free while initiating new programming. The organization has successfully received multiple grants and secured a partnership with the County of Essex to support on-going annual funding for the supportive housing program as well as operating costs for the Rapid Housing Initiative grant homes.

Their work is guided by the following vision, mission and steps to success:



## HISTORY

The concept for The Bridge emerged when a local Leamington church (Meadow Brook Church) felt called to address community needs that had been previously overlooked. The Bridge took on its current form when a high school principal called together a group of community stakeholders, including local churches and community organizations, to discuss needs that were being identified among the high school population, specifically food insecurity, mental illness, housing, and overall wellbeing.

Recognizing that housing was a large undertaking, the concerned stakeholders who formed a rough working group called Building Bridges Erie Shores, decided to start by addressing food needs. They connected with ACCESS, a local community agency that had an established drop-in centre. Through offering a food program, the collective and ACCESS learned more about young people's needs in the community, particularly those related to mental health and housing. Of particular concern were reports that young people needing specific services would leave their homes in Leamington, Kingsville, and surrounding areas to access services in Windsor, thereby disconnecting them from their established systems of support, namely friends and family. Couch surfing was also an alternative with many negative outcomes, including a lack of rules or expectations of unlawful activity to remain in various houses or apartments.

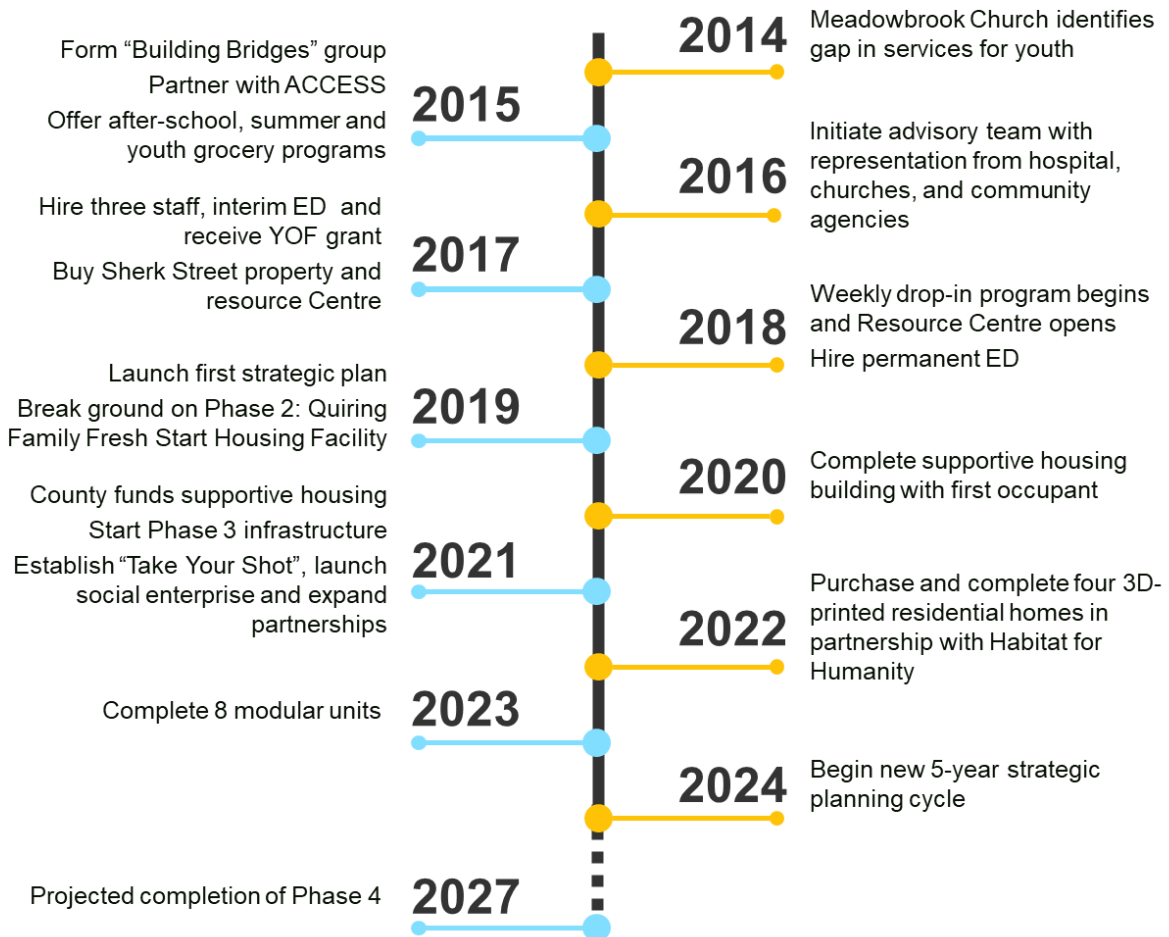
Local hospitals, which had been supporting high schools around the issue of youth mental health, were invited to the collective conversation to ensure that young people could access mental health and addiction services within their home communities. Each agency or support service was offering something specific to young people, but there was a gap in access: services were disconnected and young people had to seek multiple providers to receive the support they needed.

The collective realized that all parties: high schools, churches, hospitals and community agencies, were needed around the table to ensure young people in the community were being properly supported. As well, those services needed to be bridged to provide wrap around services for youth in need. The collective then determined that Leamington and Kingsville required a single location where youth could access any number of services that they might need. Together, they built The Bridge to address the gap between the needs of youth and the agencies that could help.

Since that time, the passion of these early visionaries and those more recently added has never wavered and as a result, The Bridge has grown very quickly and achieved what many organizations that have been around for far longer have yet to realize. Figure 1 provides a glimpse into the organizational timeline for The Bridge over the past 10 years and into the near future.

Figure 1: Organizational Timeline for The Bridge

## ORGANIZATIONAL TIMELINE



# THE BRIDGE IN 2024

Right now, in 2024, The Bridge is supporting youth by providing wrap around support, housing and opportunities to build a future.

## SUPPORT



### RESOURCE CENTRE AND DROP-IN PROGRAM

A welcoming space providing...

- Mental health and addiction service help
- Support for life learning and coping skills
- Job and education assistance
- A homework area and chapel
- Computers and games
- A clothing closet, shower and laundry facilities
- A hot meal at night, and a nutrition program with 3 days worth of groceries
- Nightly activities Monday through Friday
- A place to share your story
- A place to make your story

## HOUSING



### HOUSING

A place to call home...

- #### SUPPORTIVE HOUSING
- The Quiring Family Fresh Start Housing Facility houses youth for up to a year providing wrap around supports

- #### ATTAINABLE HOUSING
- Safe and inclusive community providing attainable, mid-level and market rate options

## OPPORTUNITY



### TAKE YOUR SHOT

A chance to soar into the future with...

- Professional coaching to support educational or business endeavors and an opportunity to win up to \$20,000 in funding
- An opportunity to win up to \$20,000 in scholarship monies



## 2024 – 2029 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Based on the environmental scan and strategic planning activities, and acknowledged challenge of building long-term organizational sustainability, Board and Staff identified three mutually reinforcing pillars for strategy:

**STRENGTHEN** People and Programs

**SERVE** Youth and Community Clearly and Effectively

**SHINE** By Sharing Successful Outcomes and Models

Figure 2 provides a graphical depiction of the pillars, goals, and objectives, while Table 1 includes an expanded objectives associated with strategies.

Figure 2: The Bridge Strategy Map 2024-2029

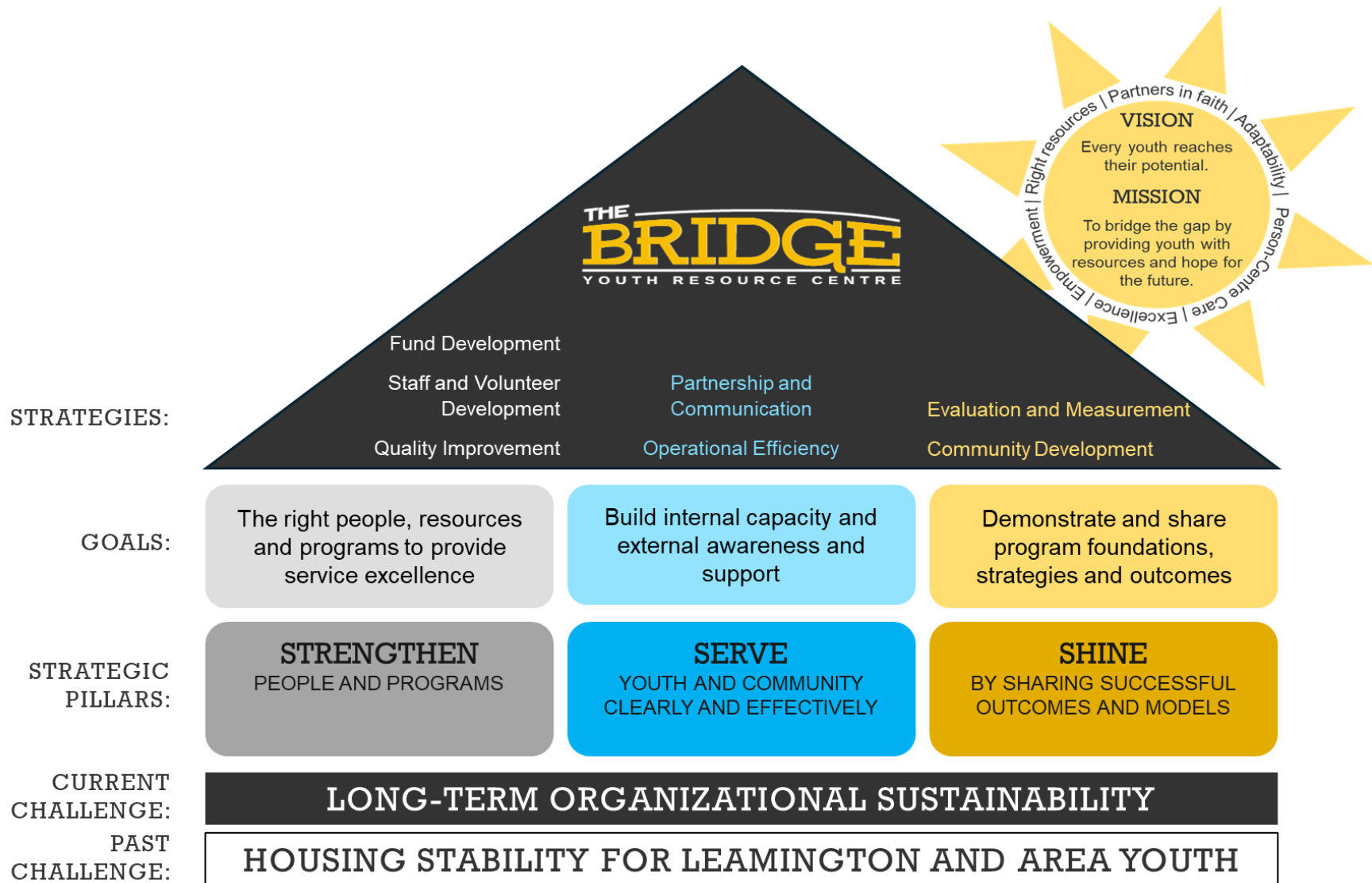


Table 1: Expanded Strategy Map

<b>CENTRAL CHALLENGE: BUILDING LONG-TERM ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY</b>	
<b>PILLAR 1: <u>STRENGTHEN</u> PEOPLE AND PROGRAMS</b>	
GOAL: The right people, resources and programs to provide service excellence	
<b>STRATEGIES</b>	
1.1 Fund Development	Be robust to risk and build beyond mere sustainability of current programs through a dedicated Development Plan
1.2 Staff and Volunteer Development	Enhance staff capacity, knowledge and satisfaction through a concerted Staff Development Strategy and grow volunteer resources and reliability via improved volunteer management
1.3 Quality Improvement	Use stakeholder feedback and best practices to drive ongoing program improvements and expansion of services through the County as appropriate
<b>PILLAR 2: <u>SERVE</u> YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CLEARLY AND EFFECTIVELY</b>	
GOAL: Build internal capacity and external awareness and support	
<b>STRATEGIES</b>	
2.1 Partnership and Communication	Raise broad awareness of and support for The Bridge through dedicated communications strategy
2.2 Operational Efficiency	Refine internal communications efficiency and effectiveness through process mapping, gap analysis and a remediation plan
<b>PILLAR 3: <u>SHINE</u> BY SHARING SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES AND MODELS</b>	
GOAL: Demonstrate and share program foundations, strategies and outcomes	
<b>STRATEGIES</b>	
3.1 Evaluation and Measurement	Strengthen program evidence through comprehensive performance measurement
3.2 Community Development	Capture Bridge process and model for information sharing, historical record and community capacity building