

Annual Report

Rapport annuel

2025-26



St. Leonard's
Society of
Canada

Société
St-Léonard
du Canada





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*Audited financial statements are
available upon request.*



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About SLSC

SLSC is a national, membership-based charitable organization that brings together a network of individuals and independent community-based agencies to collectively advance our purpose. Together, we proactively address the needs of people involved in the criminal justice system to achieve safer, healthier, and more inclusive communities.

For over fifty years, we have amplified the voices in our network, and researched effective and humane ways to improve individual and collective well-being. SLSC remains dedicated to sharing what we learn so that we—and others—can contribute to meaningful changes that enhance every person's ability to live safely in their community.

À propos de la SSLC

La SSLC est un organisme de bienfaisance nationale composé de membres, qui rassemble un réseau d'individus et d'agences communautaires indépendantes pour faire avancer collectivement notre objectif. Ensemble, nous répondons de manière proactive aux besoins des personnes impliquées dans le système de justice pénale, afin de créer des communautés plus sûres, plus saines et plus inclusives.

Depuis plus de cinquante ans, nous amplifions les voix de notre réseau et recherchions des moyens efficaces et humains d'améliorer le bien-être individuel et collectif. La SSLC s'engage à partager ce que nous apprenons afin de contribuer, avec d'autres, à des changements significatifs qui améliorent la capacité de chaque personne à vivre en sécurité dans sa communauté.



Purpose

Our purpose is to promote humane and informed criminal and social justice policy, practice, and responsible leadership to foster safer communities. We achieve this by:

- supporting our members;
- conducting research and developing policy;
- advocating for and applying evidence-based approaches; and,
- advancing collaborative relationships and communication.

Vision

Our vision is to be an organization that participates in transformative change within and beyond the criminal justice system to cultivate safe, healthy, equitable, and inclusive communities.

Objectif

Notre objectif est de promouvoir des politiques et des pratiques informées en matière de justice pénale et sociale humaine, ainsi qu'un leadership responsable afin de favoriser des communautés plus sûres. Nous y parvenons :

- en soutenant nos membres ;
- en menant des recherches et en élaborant des politiques ;
- en défendant et en appliquant des approches fondées sur des données probantes ; et,
- en favorisant les relations de collaboration et la communication.

Vision

Notre vision est d'être un organisme qui participe à des changements transformateurs au sein et au-delà du système de justice pénale afin de cultiver des communautés sûres, saines, équitables et inclusives.





Values

Accountability

ensuring transparency and evaluation

Social responsibility

acting ethically and effectively to promote community well-being

Integrity

acting with consistency, honesty, fairness, and respect

Commitment

being resolved to achieve positive social and systemic change inspired and informed by our organization's history, and sustained through determination and collaboration

Human Worth

promoting the inherent worth and potential of all individuals

Valeurs

Responsabilité

garantir la transparence et l'évaluation

Responsabilité sociale

agir de manière éthique et efficace pour promouvoir le bien-être de la communauté

Intégrité

agir avec cohérence, honnêteté, équité et respect

Engagement

être résolu à réaliser des changements sociaux et systémiques positifs, inspirés et informés par l'histoire de notre organisme, et soutenus par la détermination et la collaboration

Valeur humaine

promouvoir la valeur inhérente et le potentiel de tous les individus



President's Report

by: Dr. Samantha McAleese

"What we pay attention to grows."

- adrienne maree brown

So much has happened since we met last year in Brampton! As I sit down to write my second President's Report, I find myself reflecting on the *Day of Impact Exchange* that preceded our AGM (hosted by St. Leonard's Place Peel) and on the network members who shared what they have built and were candid about what they are still trying to figure out. We heard about programs that meet complex health and mental health needs, substance use work grounded in trust and compassion, transitional housing for youth and older adults, violence interruption and prevention programs, and the relationships with funders and community partners that make all these initiatives possible. The theme of the day, *Sharing What Works, Sparking What's Next*, truly captured this network's orientation, rooted in what has been built and curious about what comes next.



This year marked meaningful growth for the SLSC team. **Anita Desai** continues to lead as Executive Director, with **David Whiteley** as Director of Operations, providing the steady foundation that makes SLSC's work possible. **Dani Kouri** has stepped into a new role as one of the inteGREAT System Navigation Coordinators. They have been joined this year by **Liana MacDonald**, also as an inteGREAT System Navigation Coordinator; **Natalie Balan** as Outreach Coordinator; and **Roshana Rana** as Research Assistant. Each new team member brings skills, perspectives, and commitments that expand what SLSC can offer to the network and the communities it serves.



As the SLSC team has grown this year, so too has the work it carries. Much of that work has concentrated around the intersections of justice, housing, and the supports people need to live full lives in their communities.

With support from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, SLSC launched [*Pursuing Housing: Scaling Affordable Housing Options for Justice-Involved Youth*](#), a multi-year project that combines workshops, research, and networking to address a persistent problem affecting young people impacted by the criminal legal system. SLSC also engaged with the Office of the Federal Housing Advocate, with conversations underway about how the two organizations might continue to collaborate to ensure that efforts to end homelessness consider those who have experienced criminalization and incarceration.

Alongside this housing work, SLSC launched a new project focused on people with life and indeterminate sentences in Ontario, as well as those involved in their case management and community integration. Developed in partnership with the Lifers' Liaison Group and supported by The Law Foundation of Ontario, *inteGREAT* (Generating Resources & Equitable

Access Together) will co-design a system navigation service to improve access to legal information, education, and resources. Closely connected is a new demonstration with Correctional Service Canada on the needs of Black individuals with a life sentence.

Public awareness and engagement have also grown this year. SLSC's *Community Connections* webinar series has become a valued space for partners and member organizations to share their practices and programs with audiences across the country. Thank you to those who have presented so far!

I also want to take a moment in this report to thank all the students and volunteers who supported SLSC this year. Thank you to **Oz Ackerman, Maya Bachour, Kyra Basque, Kiwahna Martin, and Sumaiya Rahman.**

Thank you
to the St. Leonard's
Place Peel team for
hosting our gathering
in June!





- **Deborah Riddle:** *Community Collaborator Award*
- **Rizwan Hassan:** *Excellence in Mentorship Award*
- **Jaleesa Brown:** *Continuing Education Award*
- **Sylvia Kucinska De Ocampo & Laena Leandro Starr:** *Community Impact Award*

Congratulations! It was a pleasure to meet and celebrate you (To read more about the awards, please visit [SLSC's website](#)).

One of the privileges of my role as President is sitting at a table with board members who show up for one another across time zones and across the different contexts we each work within. Thank you for everything you contribute, both to our shared work and to the communities you serve, along with all your other important care duties.

SLSC has a big year ahead! The projects that took root this year will deepen, the partnerships behind them will continue to be nurtured, and the conversations sparked during various gatherings will continue to shape what comes next.

I remain grateful to be connected to this organization and the network that continues to grow from it.

Each year at our Annual General Meeting, SLSC recognizes those who have committed to caring for their communities in various ways. Last year in Brampton, the SLSC Board of Directors was pleased to recognize the following individuals as award recipients:



Executive Director's Report

by: Anita Desai

I'll be quite honest: this year there were times that I thought, "Can we really do all of this?!" 2025-26 kicked off one of the most project-intensive years as far back as I can recall – with not one, but *four* different projects that were approved and launched between spring 2025 and winter 2026.

These incredibly meaningful projects are grounded in topics that resonate closely with SLSC: housing, and access to justice for people who have a life sentence. It's no surprise that we rose (and continue to rise) to the challenge of undertaking these initiatives that hold true to our research and advocacy goals as an organization. They offer us a unique angle into the good work that happens across our national network every day, consider new ways to share information, and bring greater awareness about the work of SLSC and its member organizations into different spaces.



My most heartfelt gratitude goes to the SLSC Team: **David Whiteley, Danielle Kouri, Roshana Rana, Natalie Balan, Liana MacDonald**, and our placement students **Sumaiya Rahman, Kyra Basque, Oz Ackerman, and Maya Bachour**. The team's dedication to SLSC saw us through the excitement of this year's successful research project announcements, and enabled us to also continue doing as much of our usual day-to-day operations as we could manage across our small team. Here's a glimpse at the work that took place over the past year:



Youth Justice & Homelessness

In July 2025, we launched our CMHC-funded Solutions Lab: [Pursuing Housing: Scaling Affordable Housing Options for Justice-Involved Youth](#). This Solutions Lab uses a collaborative process that brings together service providers, government agencies, housing organizations, and justice system partners over an 18-month timeline. The objective is to co-develop and pilot scalable housing frameworks that ensure youth exiting the justice system can access safe, stable, and supported living options.

Closely tied to the *Pursuing Housing* Lab, we were fortunate to be engaged by the [Office of the Federal Housing Advocate \(OFHA\)](#) to leverage our initial Lab findings, and past research findings, to inform an area of interest for their team. Research Assistant **Natalie Balan** led the efforts to take these findings and document and analyze systemic barriers at the intersection of housing, homelessness, and the justice system, with a focus on preventing youth homelessness and advancing the right to adequate housing. We look forward to seeing how this work may inform a future policy review panel with the National Housing Council!

Collaboration

We have undertaken collaborative efforts with new partners such as [Operation Come Home](#), [Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa](#), and [Wyndham House](#); and, re-engaged member organization [St. Leonard's Hastings · Prince Edward](#) via this year's Solutions Lab. Additionally, SLSC continues to collaborate with other established partners to advance our purpose and vision. We are also fortunate to have strong working relationships with partners in the federal government, including: the **Department of Public Safety's Community Safety, Corrections and Criminal Justice Directorate; Correctional Service Canada (CSC)** both nationally and in the Ontario Region; **Parole Board of Canada; Justice Canada**; and, the **Office of the Federal Housing Advocate**.

The Community-based Residential Facility [CRF] Stakeholder Working Group (CRFSWG) continues to meet regularly and I am happy that SLSC can play a leadership role in convening our members and liaising with government partners like CSC. It was also a pleasure to be invited to attend the Ontario CRF Alliance Symposium in Kingston, ON this past fall and provide a national perspective on matters of significance to the community corrections sector.



Ahead of the federal election, SLSC was able to participate in meetings and events such as a webinar hosted by [The Centre for Research into the Processes, Outcomes, and Impacts of Incarceration \(CRPOI\)](#), and provide insights and resources related to making submissions related to the criminal justice system from a 'smart on crime' perspective.

Thanks to support from the Law Foundation of Ontario, one of the most significant collaborative undertakings we have launched this year, in partnership with Lifers' Liaison Group (LLG), is the [inteGREAT \(Generating Resources & Equitable Access Together\)](#) initiative. This two-year grant will allow us to create inteGREAT as a system navigation service within and beyond the federal prison system. It will bring different partners and strategies together to improve access to legal information, education, and resources. The goal is to advance access to justice by reducing systemic silos, improving collaboration, and empowering people to better understand their rights, responsibilities, and options. Since receiving the funding in January, project co-leads, **Dani Kouri** and **Liana MacDonald**, have been focused on laying a strong foundation to build on for the year ahead.

SLSC is so fortunate to continue its collaboration with the [National Youth Justice Network \(NYJN\)](#), which has been a key partner to for engaging service providers on our *Pursuing Housing Solutions* Lab. I also enjoy the opportunity to support the network's planning and oversight working group to help with planning meetings, bringing in new presenters, and considering new directions that might be taken to grow the network's impact.

I continue to serve as the Chair of the [National Associations Active in Criminal Justice \(NAACJ\)](#), which offers a variety of challenges and opportunities to consider how to maximize the association's impact on a national level. It was particularly special to attend the 50th anniversary events for the Mennonite Central Committee Ottawa's at Parliament Hill on November 26th!





Advocacy

At the 2025 Annual General Meeting (AGM), the SLSC membership approved an [updated policy on electronic monitoring](#), the development of which was led by **Roshana Rana**. She also created the foundation for an updated version of SLSC's privatization policy, which will be considered for adoption at AGM 2026.

This year, on behalf of SLSC and our members, I was invited to serve as a member on the **Patient Advocate Services Advisory Committee (PASAC)** that is coordinated by CSC National Headquarter. Attending the quarterly committee meetings presents the opportunity to advocate on matters related to the healthcare of incarcerated persons, and health-related issues that impact their transition to the community.

Though we were just getting the Solutions Lab up and running in the early fall, I was able to attend the **National Conference on Ending Homelessness** in Montreal, QC, to represent the Solutions Lab team and do some collaborative recruiting for our project. In addition to that effort, being at this major conference event also enabled me to participate in sessions that impact advocacy and awareness in relation to housing and housing rights for justice-involved youth and adults. This is often a significant gap in learning, and I appreciate

that we can leverage our projects to widen the scope of issues that impact our members more broadly across the spectrum of service delivery in community corrections.

Dr. Erin Dej (Wilfrid Laurier University), **Dr. Jessica Braimoh** (York University), and I were pleased to be invited by Justice Canada to liaise with some of their federal and provincial/territorial counterparts at the **Coordinating Committee of Senior Officials on Youth Justice. Together**. There we mobilized findings from the public launch of our [Pursuing Justice](#) research project report, and its various pathways for changemakers at the [federal](#) or [provincial/territorial](#) levels. Additionally, we were able to publish [a blog post](#) for the **Homeless Hub** on the *Pursuing Justice* project to make our findings more widely available.





Engaging Our Members

We were delighted to be part of the grand opening events for **St. Leonard's Hastings · Prince Edward** (SLH·PE)'s new [Supported Independent Living transitional housing](#) and [emergency housing](#) programs – a vision that has come to life after many years of advocacy. A huge congratulations to **Kelly Nolan** and the SLH·PE team for such an important contribution to youth in their community.

It was really fun to be able to engage with our members in a new way this year, and we really appreciate everyone from our membership and their local teams that facilitated some of the monthly webinars in our [Community Connections series](#). Personally, I always take away something of value whenever I get to be immersed in the incredible work that is done by our affiliates in their communities.

Community Outreach

The [Community Connections](#) webinar series started as a small idea last summer, with the hopes that a summer student might get us on the right footing to do something different in relation to public education and awareness. That student was **Roshana Rana**, who diligently laid the groundwork for establishing this monthly series that has demonstrated incredible promise for continuing on in future years. We hope that many of you have had the opportunity to attend or [watch those sessions](#), and learn from inspiring presenters from both within and beyond the SLSC network.

Reconciliation & Indigenous Justice

Last year, we committed to continuing to develop our work plan on reconciliation and Indigenous justice in a way that would enable us to share what we have learned, continue expanding our collective knowledge, and turning it into action. This year, we made progress toward this commitment in several ways.

In an effort to see how we could contribute to more national understanding and advocacy related to activities in different communities utilizing [Section 84](#) of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* (CCRA), SLSC convened an informal meeting with people who are meaningfully undertaking S. 84 activities in their communities.



This opportunity aligned with a specific initiative that was getting underway on the west coast, which has established some great momentum alongside community-based experts on S. 84 towards this goal.

It was an honour to be invited and represent SLSC on the newly formed **S. 84 Steering Committee** being led by the [Circles of Eagles Lodge Society \(COELS\)](#). This committee has been established to support a multi-year project on increasing awareness and improving access for people to achieve S. 84 release from prison to Indigenous communities.

I have also signed up to be part of this group's research sub-committee, which is focusing on the perspectives of communities that have used or are considering using S. 84, as well as those with lived expertise of navigating the process. The research that is being conducted, in collaboration with CSC, is grounded in Indigenous methodologies, including: relationships, respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility. The project's ethical frameworks include [OCAP](#), [TriCouncil Policy Statement Ch. 9](#), [Métis and Inuit research principles](#), and [CARE principles](#).

As a member of the steering committee, I was also fortunate to be invited to attend and present at their gathering, [Kwanatul](#), in November in Vancouver, BC. 'Kwanatul' means 'together', and this event was about communities coming together to share real experiences, ceremony, and ideas about how to address the mass incarceration of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

SLSC is also grateful to pro bono law students **Oz Ackerman** and **Maya Bachour** for adding additional content and legal context regarding S. 84, to a paper produced by last year's pro bono law student Michael Setrak on Section 81. We anticipate that this paper will be reviewed with the S. 84 Steering Committee and adapted for advocacy purposes as appropriate, based on the guidance we receive from committee members.





I continue to hold deep gratitude for SLSC’s Board of Directors who have supported our team to get through this year’s achievements. In particular, I would like to thank **Linda Seeley** and **Merris Centomo**, two directors that are leaving our Board this year. They both have deep knowledge of service provision and operational processes that have been of great value to our work at SLSC!

Beyond the SLSC Team and our Board, I am grateful for the excellent financial stewardship that is provided to SLSC via our bookkeeper **Kandice Redmond** from KR Bookkeeping Services, and our wonderful auditors at Kelly Huibers McNeely. We rest easy knowing we are in such good hands.

No matter how this report has made its way to you, I appreciate that you have taken the time to read about the work that SLSC has been advancing. All of it is done with a deep commitment towards achieving our purpose as a national organization. With your support, we will continue the relentless pursuit towards participating in transformative change within and beyond the criminal justice system to cultivate safe, healthy, equitable, and inclusive communities.



Membership & Support

We would like to thank the many individuals and organizations whose generous support over the past year helped us to carry out our purpose and goals.

Funding for SLSC is gratefully acknowledged from Employment and Social Development Canada, the Canadian Human Rights Commission, Correctional Service Canada, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and the Law Foundation of Ontario.

DID YOU KNOW

that in 2025-26,
the SLSC team...

...spent
more than
1,500 hours
working on
**research &
policies?**



We are also grateful to have received donations in honour of Doug Caldwell, and in memory of John Greer, John H. Rogers, and Larry Monger.



Adhésion & soutien

Nous désirons remercier les nombreux organismes et individus dont l'aide généreuse offerte l'année dernière nous a permis de poursuivre la réalisation de nos objectifs.

Merci à Emploi et Développement social Canada, Commission canadienne des droits de la personne, Service correctionnel Canada, la Société canadienne d'hypothèques et de logement et la Fondation du droit de l'Ontario subventionner les activités de la SSLC.

The Team | L'équipe

SLSC is grateful to all the individuals who dedicate their time and energy to our purpose. We know we're better, together!

Board of Directors | Conseil d'administration

Jason Beck
Merris Centomo
Natalie Garnett
Rebecca Howse

Dr. Samantha McAleese
Anne Murphy
Leslie Nykilchuk
Lia Paradis

Jessica Rumboldt
Linda Seeley
Ryley Tennant
Stacy Van Acker

Staff | Personnel

Natalie Balan
Hannah Chan
Anita Desai

Dani Kouri
Liana MacDonald

Roshana Rana
David Whiteley

Placement Students & Volunteers Stagiaires & bénévoles

Oz Ackerman
Maya Bachour

Kyra Basque
Kiwahna Martin

Sumaiya Rahman

*Special thanks to **Anne-Marie McElroy** for volunteering her time to be our Pro Bono law student supervisor!*

*After 12 years serving as a loyal member of the SLSC team, Anita's dog, **Mask**, passed away at the age of 14.*

We thank him for all of his contributions and support over the years!



DID YOU KNOW
the students & volunteers collectively contributed more than **800 hours** to SLSC in 2025-26?



Affiliate Members

Organismes Affiliés

Do you know the 10 amazing members of SLSC?

Together, we proactively address the needs of people involved in the criminal justice system to achieve safer, healthier, and more inclusive communities.



**The Alberta Seventh Step
Society**
(AB7S)
Calgary, AB



St. Leonard's Place Peel
(SLPP)
Brampton, ON



Maison Cross Roads
(MCR)
Montreal, QC



**The St. Leonard's Society
of Hamilton**
(SLSH)
Hamilton, ON



**St. Leonard's
Community Services
London & Region**
(SLCS)
London, ON



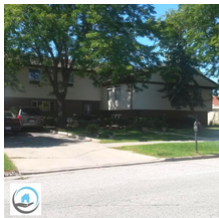
**St. Leonard's Society
of North Vancouver**
(SLNV)
North Vancouver, BC



**St. Leonard's
Hastings · Prince Edward**
(SLHPE)
Trenton, ON



**St. Leonard's Society
of Peterborough**
(SLSP)
Peterborough, ON



**St. Leonard's House
Windsor**
(SLHW)
Windsor, ON



**St. Leonard's Society
of Sudbury**
(SLSS)
Sudbury, ON

Learn more at: www.stleonards.ca/about-our-members/



How to Get Involved

Comment s'impliquer

Like what you've read?
Then get involved - there's a path for everyone!

Become a member!



Join our Board of Directors!



Join our mailing list or follow us online!



Become a volunteer or placement student!



Donate!



Collaborate with us!



Learn more at: www.stleonards.ca/get-involved
or reach out to us at: info@stleonards.ca