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Annual Report

July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025



friendship inn

Charitable Registration
No. 11914 0937 RR0001

Saskatoon Friendship Inn
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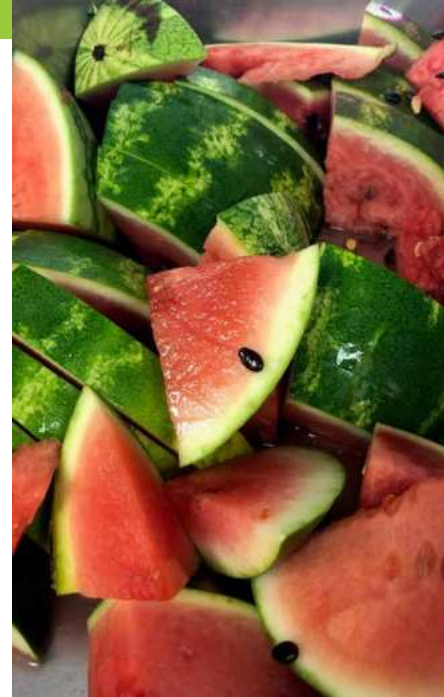


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About Us

VISION

A community without hunger, a people with hope.

MISSION

Through community partnerships and authentic relationships, the Saskatoon Friendship Inn fosters a compassionate sense of belonging for our neighbours in need by serving daily nutritious meals, offering friendship, and providing referrals and programming that meet people where they are.

VALUES

In pursuing our mission, the Inn should be sensitive to the needs of the:

- individual, including the mental, spiritual, physical and emotional aspects of the individual,
- family, including the family's physical environment, the emotional support of the family, and the development of family values, and
- community, including the cultural needs, the economic needs, and the social needs of the community.

The Saskatoon Friendship Inn – serving neighbours in need for 56 years

On March 4, 1969, the Saskatoon Friendship Inn began serving community when a small group of concerned residents provided six transient men with a bowl of soup. Their initial work with the Saskatoon Catholic Diocese evolved into relationships with numerous partners and has since become non-denominational and community-based.

Today, as a registered charity, the Friendship Inn provides the largest free meal service in Saskatoon, offering nutritious breakfast and lunch meal services, 365 days of the year. There are no qualifying criteria to eat a meal at the Inn – our model assumes every guest who comes to the Inn has a need, whether for food, friendship or to take a good step forward.

The Inn, which has always been located on 20th Street in the heart of the inner city, is presently serving an average of 1,200 to 1,600 daily meals for people who may otherwise go hungry. As Saskatoon continues to grow and prosper, we recognize the increasing needs of impoverished people in our community and work to respond through a 'food first' lens. Beyond food, the Friendship Inn provides a welcoming environment for guests and offers referral services designed to help improve quality of life and address emergent needs for individuals and families who are experiencing poverty.

The Friendship Inn relies almost exclusively on financial and food donations, as well as volunteer service to support our core staff of approximately 30 dedicated people who keep the Friendship Inn cooking, 365 days a year.

MESSAGE FROM THE Board Chair & Executive Director

AS OUR CITY GROWS and becomes more resourced to meet the needs of our community and surrounding areas, the Friendship Inn continues to be the place that many come to alleviate their immediate need of hunger, and look to find further supports. Every year has its flow, typically mirrored to the weather. When it's warm in the spring and summer, more people are able to make their way to our doors, typically making July and August our peak months. Heading into the fall and winter months requires that we adapt and serve those who are managing through the cold. Rainy seasons and biting winds are sometimes the most difficult days to get through. Day in and day out, whatever the weather, we welcome the guests of the Inn with food and friendship. This year we served just over 450,000 meals, and we know that there is still so much more we can do. Our desire is to position the organization to help as much as possible.

For the 2024 – 2025 year, two of three with our strategic plan, the focus was to enhance our connection with people, strengthen our processes, and explore new pilots and partnerships. You will find in the reporting that follows our efforts to engage with stakeholders – guests, volunteers, neighbours, community agencies, staff and board - to find ways to continue and grow our mission. Our efforts to optimize our building and make systems even more efficient have continued, and we extended our reach even further by exploring new pilot programs and partnerships to offer meals beyond our four walls.

PEOPLE: To better serve people requires inviting their input and feedback, therefore we initiated more formal methods to conduct both guest and volunteer surveys. Having an annualized process with comparative data will give us the insight we need to plan forward in order to offer an optimal experience and operational output. This was also the year we sought external experts to help audit our communications, specifically our critical incident and business continuity planning, our safety practices and functionality analysis, and our wage grid to market. All of this input is vital to ensure that current and relevant information is available for decision-making.

PROCESSES: From stakeholder and external audit information-gathering we continued to make key refinements. The CPTED and Functionality review helped us to enhance our safety measures, build our floor supervisory team and adapt the space to support the safest dining experience. At the 'back of the house' the continuing work with the 'Mezz 2' capital upgrade project neared completion, allowing us to optimize our space by creating second levels within our building footprint, and linking them so that the flow of food resources and supplies is managed with much greater efficiency. Along with this, staff dedicated to creating warehouse systems and inventory tracking is in place to support our kitchen team, giving them a strong line of sight to map food resources and enhanced menu planning. Internally, a key piece of completed work was the fulsome mapping of our capital assets and reserve fund needs in order to ensure long-term sustainability. Knowing this baseline gives the organization a strong foundation in order to consider and build for the future.

PARTNERSHIPS AND PILOTS: Exploring the future is best done in small pilot projects and engaging with a proof of concept. Learning from the previous year's engagement with the Winter Warm-up strategy, we shifted our efforts to support the men's overnight warm-up location with breakfast meals off-site of the Inn rather than hosting in our dining room. Partnering with the Salvation Army again was a win-win, as we continued our regular Free Meal Service and added in a way to effectively support meals to those in need via a trusted agency. A first for the Inn, and in order to fulfill this commitment (without relying on variable food donations), we entered into an agreement to offer an externally contracted meal, offering a very reasonable rate to cover our labour and any necessary food purchases. As the winter melted into spring, we tried a new pilot to offer an evening supper meal at the Inn. During June 2025, we offered a supper meal on Tuesdays and Thursdays and without any external advertising, easily attracted about 130 happy and hungry guests to partake. When the doors opened at 4:00 pm, we were delighted to see that many families were coming, telling us that this additional service window would likely support many that we may not reach during the breakfast and lunch hours. Layered into this pilot was the cooking of an additional 40 hot meals that were shared with the YWCA to support those staying in their women's shelter. These meals helped ease the burden for moms and kids seeking refuge and managing tight budgets to acquire groceries. Again, we found another way to support a trusted agency to fill a need to relieve hunger with those who are vulnerable.

This year has been one to reach out and reach beyond. Connecting with our stakeholders and community experts has helped us to refine our operations, get more efficient and look beyond our walls to see how we can serve the community even more. We have been well supported with donated food resources, and in moments of abundance, when we couldn't process or store produce or perishables quick enough – we shared with other community agencies.

To all our financial donors and volunteers, we are deeply grateful for trusting us to keep on cooking. Raising 95% of our operational dollars every year to continue serving meals is a unique business model, and one that can only be done when community truly feels a part of the work and heartfelt mission to serve those who are in most need. We are truly thankful for all who consider themselves a friend of the Inn – together we have done this work and share the stories of food served, needs filled and hope and friendship found.



Ashala Jacobson
Board Chair



Sandra Kary
Executive Director

Thank-you for making meals happen!

WE'RE SO GRATEFUL for your time and generosity. Your gifts of service, food and finances keep us cooking so we can respond to community need and serve vulnerable people with food and friendship.

451,035
*meals shared between
July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025*



965,782
*Pounds of Food
received from community
\$3.48M value*



30% dairy



29% produce



16% protein



13% bread



12% dry goods

1236+



**Meals Served
Daily**

100% of
*Board Members
also give financially*



5500+
*Guest Supports:
advocacy, referrals,
hygiene and care items*



15,000+
In-kind Labour Hours



3905
*Financial
Gifts made by
1599 Donors*

**Community
Fundraising
comprises**

95%

*of the
operating
budget.*



**Reclaimed or Donated
Food resources are
used to create**

95%

*of meals
served.*

Offering food & friendship

GUESTS OF THE FRIENDSHIP INN represent our city's most vulnerable population, so we strive to treat everyone compassionately and without judgment. For many people, a warm welcome from staff and volunteers at the Inn may be the only kindness they're offered in a day. Often, the Inn is someone's sole source of stability, providing a sense of belonging, connection and humanity.

In living out our mission, we feel strongly about creating a compassionate sense of belonging, and through our services we hope to help guests feel like they are a part of community and know where to turn to find someone who cares. We know not everyone who comes through our doors understands the many avenues of support the Inn provides beyond the Free Meal Service. Daily, we strive to meet people where they are, and offer help so they can focus on other emergent needs beyond a free meal.

The vignettes included throughout this annual report capture individual guests in a slice of time in their day at the Inn – with no statistics, solution or finalé attached. They are but a few in a sea of many, many individuals who come through the Inn's doors each day.

STORIES FROM THE INN



It was a joyous moment when our team welcomed a guest who'd not been seen for many months. Beth, a beloved though sometimes very challenging senior, lives with alcoholism and chronic health conditions which required frequent support from local first responders. For months, Beth survived on the streets or in temporary shelters, relapsing into addiction and health crises many times over. Upon her return, she was sober and shared with us how she'd even found more stable housing. Her smile and dry sense of humor were back!



Program Highlights & Impact

This year, our work was shaped by two powerful drivers: **partnerships** and **pilot projects**, and intentional investments in our people and processes.

FREE MEAL PROGRAM

A MEAL CAN BE SO MUCH MORE than nourishment. Every plate shared at the Friendship Inn is a symbol of kindness, an offer of dignity, a provision of hope. With each portion served, the Inn aims to provide a sense of comfort and connection, a reminder to guests that someone cares.

Serving people in need remains the heart of the Friendship Inn Mission, our guiding north star. This year, we were called upon to serve community with 451,035 meals, an average of 1236 daily. This is the fourth consecutive year of annual growth and roughly three percent higher than last year. Sadly, hunger is still very much a reality for too many people in our city.



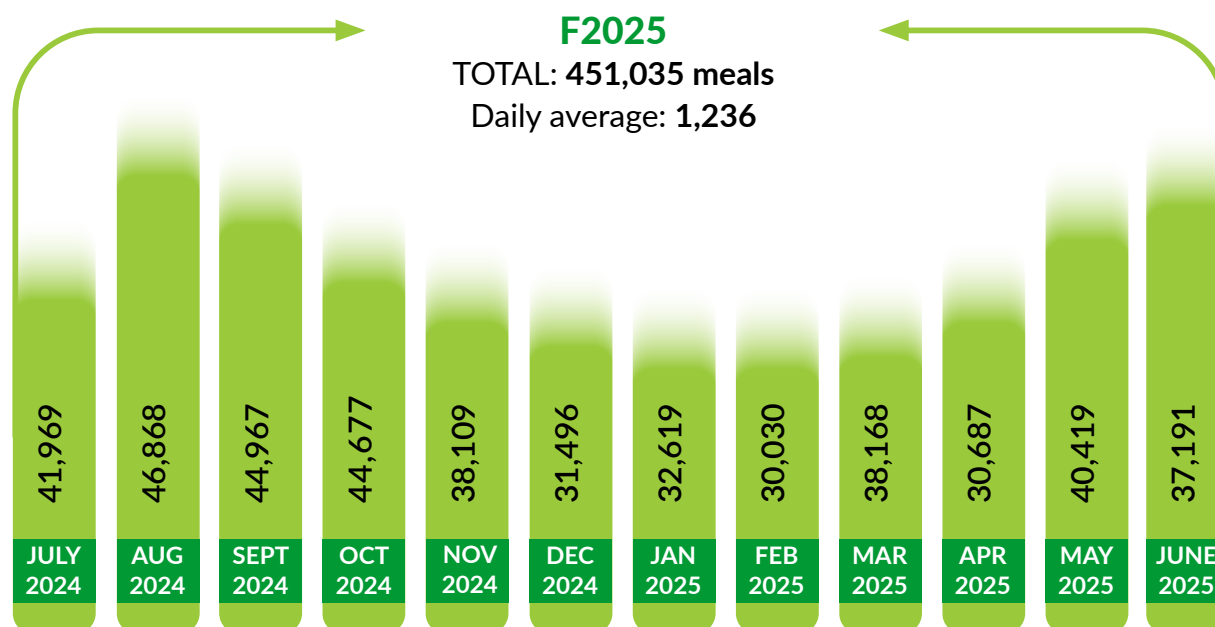
Guests of the Friendship Inn describe hunger as living in chaos, so we approach our Mission through a guest-centric, food-first lens. Success of the Friendship Inn's Daily Free Meal Service is achieved when we are alert, mindful and forward-thinking in meeting the emergent community need and when:

- *Guests receive a nutritious meal, with no person turned away due to lack of food resources*
- *Guests are treated with respect and dignity and invited into a comfortable, friendly environment*
- *Guests, staff and volunteers remain safe at the Friendship Inn.*

STORIES FROM THE INN

Unkept hair, dirty hands, disheveled clothing and blankets in tow. Blank stares, bare feet or conversations with invisible figures. These are some of the hallmarks of any particularly vulnerable guest or someone who is in acute distress. A person struggling in active addiction or homelessness will never be out of place at the Friendship Inn. They'll be noticed, served a hot, nutritious meal, and offered any additional assistance we can provide in the moment to help demonstrate compassion, honour humanity and rebuild dignity.

MEALS SERVED EACH MONTH:



2020 fiscal year =
303,680 meals

Daily average = 832
(this represents a
pre-COVID year)

2021 fiscal year =
205,860 meals

Daily average = 564
(this was the first
year of pandemic;
meal numbers
significantly reduced
due to many other
COVID emergency
food security
initiatives in the
community)

2022 fiscal year =
305,445 meals

Daily average = 837
(this evidences a
return to regular
meal service
capacity, albeit with
meal service delivery
adaptations)

2023 fiscal year =
402,797 meals

Daily average = 1,104
(this shows
significant growth of
30% confirming dual
service model of
dine-in and
take-away)

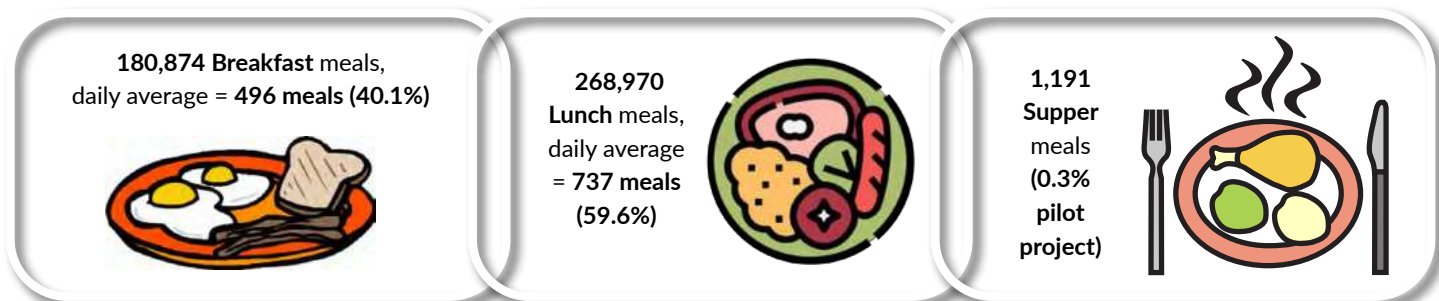
2024 fiscal year =
438,338 meals

Daily average = 1,201
(this increase of
nearly 9% further
reinforces the need
to maintain both
dine-in and take-
away meal
services)

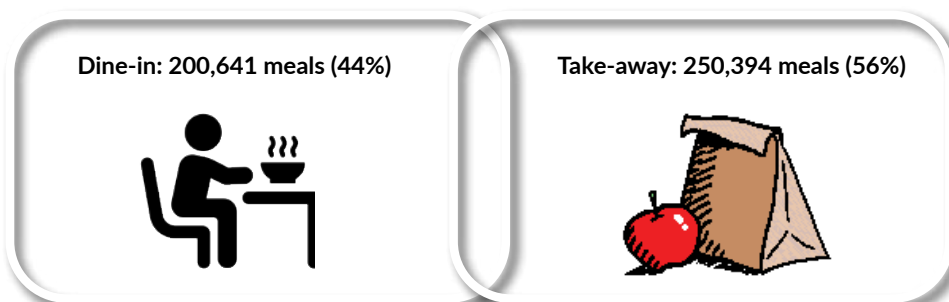
Daily, the Inn welcomes some of the most vulnerable people in our community. We meet everyone where they are and seek to provide a reliable, compassionate environment where they can experience a few moments of reprieve. 451,035 meals represents far more than plates filled, it reflects lives touched, trust built, and a community coming together in a meaningful way to support people in need. Knowing the Inn will have a meal – breakfast and lunch, offered free-of-charge and with no questions asked – can bring stability for someone who is struggling.



In keeping with our annual theme of pilot projects, the Inn experimented in offering a suppertime meal. During June, guests were invited into the dining room between 4:00 pm and 5:00 pm for a hot meal. Of course, everyone was welcome, but what emerged through the trial period was a shift to seeing more families with school-aged children, as compared to either the breakfast or lunch services. What started on a relatively small-scale of 130 meals per supper hour grew to a total of 1,191 meals shared in just a few short weeks. Our experiment established a demonstrated need for additional meal support and offers a framework for how the Inn could reach further into addressing food security needs in the community. Staffing, food and financial resources will enlighten if and how we are able to proceed with future offerings.



Both dine-in and take-away service options have continued this year, as they have since 2020. Many guests access meals through both avenues to meet their needs. For some, a take-away meal may offer a second portion, or it may provide another meal later in the day without having to return to the Inn. For others, a take-away meal may be shared with a friend or family member who was unable to travel to the Inn themselves. While the Inn's dining room can accommodate approximately 120 diners at any given time, with the average current daily offering of 1236 meals, continuing both dine-in and take-away services is necessary to accommodate those who journey to the Inn in need of a meal.



The Inn's kitchen is a hub of activity, all carefully planned and orchestrated to slice, dice, chop, simmer and sauté donated food resources to create wholesome, satisfying meals. Our Head Chef leads this work with careful attention to nutrition, flavour and texture – ensuring meals are not only nourishing and delicious but also tender enough to be easily enjoyed by every guest, including those with dental difficulties, a common challenge for those who are vulnerable.

Breakfast often includes scrambled eggs with ham, sausage or bacon, French toast or pancakes with berry sauce, fruit and yogurt parfaits and oatmeal, especially on cold winter mornings. For lunch, guests may enjoy pork, beef or chicken stir fry dishes with fresh veggies and either rice or pasta. Hearty stews or chilis made with lentils, carrots and celery are often accompanied by garlic toast or cheese buns and marinated, roasted meats – everything from chicken to turkey and pork to beef – are typically served with a side of whipped potatoes, gravy and steamed veggies or salad. Our menu is varied and unique - quite the feat considering nearly all food resources are received through donation. We do our best to only purchase groceries in a pinch.

Beyond the Friendship Inn dining room, another pilot project took shape this year, guided once again by the Inn's food-first mantra. Our aim is never to artificially inflate meal counts, but rather to live into the capacity and efficiencies we've created and thereby respond to serve into vetted need in the community. A framework for an **External Meal Program** was developed and we launched a pilot meal-sharing initiative which saw the Inn prepare and share meals with three vulnerable sector partner agencies.

The Friendship Inn dining room is a picture of humanity: a community table where those in need are served with compassion by our dedicated team and energetic volunteers who try to offer hope with every meal.

For Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, Mother's Day and each evening of our suppertime meal pilot, the **YWCA** was pleased to receive 30–40 hot meals for women and their children who were being supported in short-term stay facilities. These families were often fleeing domestic violence and accessing wrap-around support services through the YWCA.

From November through March, the **Salvation Army** operated an overnight warming shelter for men experiencing homelessness. In the year prior, those in need would shelter a few blocks from the Inn and then travel to our dining room in the early morning after the shelter closed. Receiving so many tired, cold and hungry guests at 7 am created challenges for the Inn, so this winter, breakfast was delivered to the shelter instead. Each morning, our team prepared 100 hot breakfast meals which were then taken to the shelter to be shared with those who'd spent the night.

The most recent Point-in-Time (PIT) Count conducted in April 2024 indicated 1,499 people in Saskatoon are homeless or unsheltered. The **Saskatoon Tribal Council's Sawēiyhtotān Program** offers after-hours street outreach services and transitional housing support for these neighbours in need. Daily, their Mobile Outreach team visits known encampments and attends to people who are unhoused or living on the street. To support these efforts in a food-first way, the Inn prepares and shares 200 sandwiches daily for outreach workers to offer when they connect with someone who is in need. The Inn also prepares special holiday meals for Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas to be shared with those in transitional housing.

These collaborations extended our reach and ensured our meals went to those in urgent need across the city. We remain deeply committed to nurturing strong partnerships and piloting innovative ideas with an eye to uncovering meaningful ways to strengthen our service to people experiencing food insecurity. Doing so allows the Inn to increase our support for the most vulnerable people in our community.

STORIES FROM THE INN



Jonathan, a regular guest of the Inn, has a noticeable sweet tooth. He is very focused on familiar routine and patterns, typically arriving only a few minutes before the end of a meal service and choosing to be seated at his favorite table. When returning his own meal tray to the bussing station, Jonathan habitually checks the other returned trays for uneaten cupcakes, pastries and desserts – treasures he 'sneaks' into his pockets for later.

ENHANCING SAFETY AND FUNCTIONALITY IN THE DINING ROOM

A GREATER NUMBER OF GUESTS exhibiting challenging behaviour due to mental health issues and deepening struggles with addictions, coupled with rising meal counts, created an increasingly complex environment for the Inn to navigate. We desire a safe, comfortable and welcoming dining experience for guests and volunteers alike, so this year, we strategically enhanced our Program Supervisor model to help promote safety and bring added structure during meal services. This work fit seamlessly into the Inn's strategic theme of 'people and processes'.

A fourth Program Supervisor (PS) was added to bolster the front-line team and further support the increasingly busy pace that accompanies growth in meal counts. Additional leadership capacity in the dining room created an extra resource to monitor guest entries and exists, and when necessary, limit those exhibiting violent or significantly challenging behaviour from the dine-in experience and instead encourage access to a meal through the Inn's take-away window. We want to ensure that every guest is offered food, and not turned away hungry.

The four PS team offers enhanced monitoring of guest washrooms and more effective mitigation of drug use and overdoses in the building. This was instrumental in shaping the Inn's response, particularly during the ongoing overdose crisis experienced across the city. The PS team and other key staff were also trained in de-escalation, overdose response, and building safety procedures.

Using the enhanced PS team approach, the Inn has seen several benefits, including a measurable reduction in unsafe behavior and dining room incidents, improved washroom conditions, and a more coordinated response for guests in distress. It is noteworthy to highlight these adjustments and positive outcomes all occurred while the Inn was simultaneously navigating our response to heightened demand for meals.

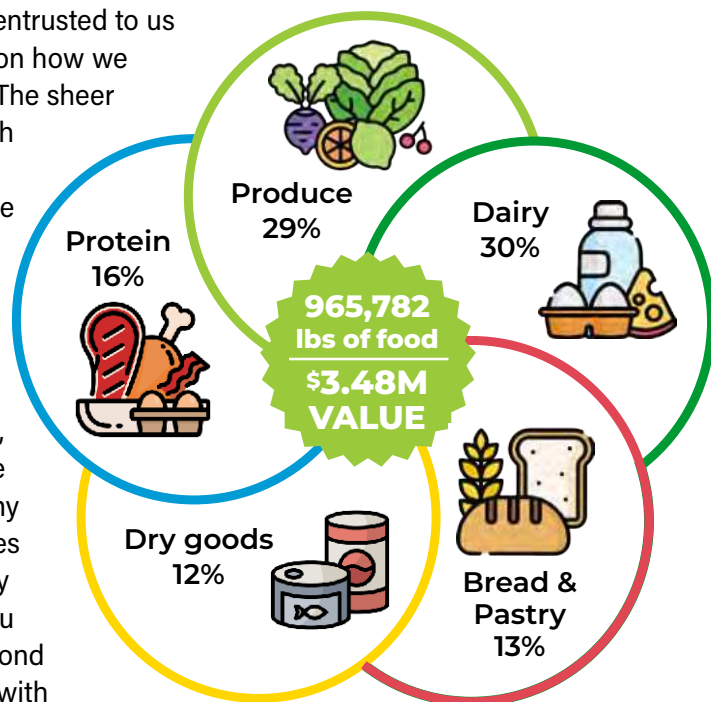
STEWARDED FOOD RESOURCES, THE STORY OF DONATIONS AND RECLAMATION

THE INN RELIES HEAVILY on partnerships within the food community to resource our Daily Free Meal Program. Food partners, together with members of the public, businesses, church and service groups donated 965,782 pounds of food this year. These donated and reclaimed food supplies drive the Inn to be creative, adaptive and deeply thankful for the incredible generosity and trust afforded us.

Using a modest multiplier of \$3.60 per pound (based on the national standard from Second Harvest) 965,782 pounds of food equates to a value of \$3.48 million in donated resources. These figures represent an increase of 10.4% in donated or reclaimed food resources year-over-year, supporting the Inn in pacing with an increased number of meals.



Serving as good stewards of the resources entrusted to us means we need to be mindful and focused on how we prepare, store and share all incoming food. The sheer volume of food received and processed each day is more than 2,600 pounds, including perishables such as meat, dairy and produce to more shelf-stable items like bread or pantry items like pasta, rice, beans and sauces. To manage the growing volume and ensure the kitchen team has a line of sight into the resources at hand, we introduced a new system to monitor, record, weigh and store all incoming food. While we can never predict incoming donations on any given day, tighter inventory control processes have enabled us to better match food supply with meal demand, create our monthly menu plan and even share surplus resources (beyond our capacity to efficiently process or store) with trusted partner agencies to further support food security.



Thanks to a generous capital grant, the Inn was able to purchase a new refrigerated transport van. Our existing vehicle was without temperature control, limiting the Inn's ability to pick-up and transport perishable items while still adhering to food safety regulations. With the new vehicle in operation, we are benefitting from the improved flexibility in pick-up routes and not having to worry about contributing to food spoilage or waste.

STORIES FROM THE INN



The Inn welcomes children of all ages. Those who venture beyond the dining room are greeted with a smile and kind words at the reception desk. On occasion, a small treat or penny toy is shared to help brighten their day. In the dining room, staff take extra care and attention to help our smallest diners navigate the self-service drink station!

INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE

OUR CAPITAL UPGRADE PLAN along with a generous capital donation from friends of the Inn helped us move forward with work on the Mezzanine 2 project. This extensive upgrade to our back-of-house makes use of previously untapped second-story space in our garage and connects the 'Mezz 1' space with a walk-way to the newly created 'Mezz 2' over the garage. The space is further connected all the way to our existing pantry storage space in the original building. A dumb-waiter to be installed in the third phase of the project will eliminate the need to move pantry items from the receiving area in the garage through the dining room, up the person elevator and all the way to the second-floor dry-storage room. It's worth noting the entire project, complete with the installation of a new bi-fold garage door to accommodate the second level Mezz 2 occurred without any operational downtime for our kitchen team. The usability, efficiency and safety of the redesigned space is a very welcome improvement that positions the Inn to grow into higher future meal counts.

STORIES FROM THE INN



One day in the dead of winter, a fight happened outside the Inn. It was 9 am and two of our regular guests, Harold and Henry, were attacked; five against two. In the days following, I noticed Harold on his usual morning walk to the Inn. I couldn't believe it - just a week ago this was where he was in a fight. Why is he still walking in the back alley? And then it hit me - who would continue their early morning habit, their daily walk, unless this was where they felt safe, where they felt close to home. In spite of the incident - this place, the Friendship Inn - this was home.



VOLUNTEERS AND FINE OPTIONS PARTICIPANTS

*“A well-oiled machine.” “You run a tight ship.” “The kitchen is amazing.”
“I’ll be back.”*

THESE ARE COMMON OBSERVATIONS and refrains from the caring people who have volunteered their time at the Friendship Inn. Corporate teams, service clubs, church groups, friends, families and individuals looking to contribute to their community in a meaningful way all help to elevate the Friendship Inn’s ability to serve. Overall, 11,139 hours of volunteer service were shared this fiscal year. Using Saskatchewan’s minimum wage as a guideline, these hours represent \$167,085 of in-kind labour. Beyond the fiscal value, volunteers bring an energy and enthusiasm that boosts the entire Friendship Inn team.

Volunteers fuel our Mission by offering support in the kitchen and managing tasks from fruit slicing to vegetable dicing. They also help with preparing and packaging hundreds of breakfast and lunch sandwiches daily. When we’re receiving and processing around 2600 pounds of food each day, every pair of hands is vital. In the dining room, volunteers support our dine-in meal service by building trays and delivering them to guests, bussing tables, interacting with guests, and helping to keep the space clean. Many volunteers have become regulars and part of the Friendship Inn family. We are deeply appreciative of everyone’s time, commitment and investment in helping us serve.



Adjacent to our Volunteer Program is an ongoing partnership with the John Howard Society which refers and supports participants who wish to complete their Fine Option hours here at the Inn. In total, 3,936 hours were contributed over the course of the year equating to \$59,040 of in-kind labour.



GUEST SERVICES, FAMILY WORKER PROGRAM, AND COMPASSION PROJECT

A toothbrush and toothpaste. A pair of warm socks or mittens. Soap and shampoo. Period products. Baby formula and diapers.

Beyond their need for a hot meal, many people who come to the Inn also seek help with other daily essentials. Through our **Compassionate Care Project**, the Inn aims to support emergent personal care needs and offer an element of dignity by sharing these supplies with guests in need. During meal services, a dedicated staff member interacts with guests, offering connection to additional resources available at the Inn. We're known for our daily Free Meal Service, but guests don't always know they can ask for help beyond food. Care items and hygiene supplies are mostly donated, and the project is supported in part (approximately 30%) by funding received from the Saskatoon Community Foundation 2024 Quality of Life grant program.

To further understand the experiences and needs of those we serve, the Inn conducted a **guest feedback survey** this spring. Participation was voluntary and encouraged guests to share how the Inn supports them and offer their own ideas for how the Inn could further support their needs. The insights gained are already shaping service delivery and informing our next steps. We remain committed to listening, learning, and evolving.

In keeping with the partnerships and pilot project theme, the Inn began supporting guests in several new ways. We invited the **Canada Revenue Agency** to visit the Inn and host **Super Clinics**, designed to help guests with more problematic tax filing situations, including people who were often multiple years in arrears due to difficult circumstances. We further partnered with an existing CRA program to have a dedicated staff and volunteer trained to offer day-to-day help for guests with more basic income tax filing, thereby unlocking access to government benefits.

A second partnership saw staff from the **Saskatchewan Housing Authority** regularly deliver the **RentEd course** at the Inn. The course is a pre-requisite for anyone wishing to enter a rental agreement for low-income properties managed by the SHA.

Synthesizing the learnings from these pilot projects inspired the Inn to develop a new avenue of support for guests of the Inn. A 5-step process called the Pathway of Hope guides guests through a framework designed to help them gain greater financial stability and independence. The project, known as **We Helped One Hundred**, will officially launch in our new fiscal year thanks to a five-year grant from the Saskatoon Community Foundation. Our goal is to support at least 20 people annually in progressing through each of the five steps and ultimately submitting a rental housing application.

There are no broad strokes to define or paint a picture of a typical Friendship Inn guest, except for their basic need for nourishment. In some way, each person is impoverished and vulnerable, regardless of their age or ability, race, religion, gender or background. We see newborn babies alongside seniors showing the toll of many years lived. We welcome those who are able-bodied and those who are painfully frail. We serve friends who are boisterous and happy together with those who are silent, agitated or traumatized. The playful squeals of a child can echo simultaneously with the voice of someone in distress or delusion.



Partnerships

THE FRIENDSHIP INN is an invited participant on the **Advisory Committee for the Saskatoon Homelessness Action Plan** convened by Saskatoon Tribal Council, Metis Nation of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership and the City of Saskatoon. On October 8th, the Inn served as the attractional event site for the **2024 Point in Time Count** (PIT Count) to support key partners manning a tent outside the Inn and gathering data from guests who rely on the Inn's services.

Our friends from **Aero Delivery** continue to play a critical role to help keep our kitchen running smoothly. The Inn receives and processes massive amounts of food. When our on-site storage space reaches capacity, the Aero team steps in to provide off-site, temperature-controlled storage, allowing the Inn to accept bulk donations we otherwise couldn't manage. This means we're able to efficiently use donated food to provide high-quality, nutritious meals for people in need. We're grateful to be in partnership with such a caring, flexible, and community-minded local business. Thank-you Aero!

Daily, our kitchen prepares peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to be shared by **Saskatoon Tribal Council's Sawēiyhtotān Program** outreach teams who work to support people who are living on the streets. Peanut butter and jam is popular because it's soft and easy to chew, especially for people who likely don't have regular access to oral hygiene. The outreach teams do amazing work, aided by sandwiches from the Inn that offer a friendly way to connect with someone in need.

Through their Returning Home program, our friends from **H & R Block Canada** again set up shop at the Inn in Spring 2025 to assist our guests with income tax filing. This free service reduces a variety of barriers for many who are trying to access their much-needed refunds and credits.

Operation Santa, an initiative of the **Dakota Dunes Community Development Corporation**, invited agencies to gather together to build Christmas food hampers and gifts to share with families in need who are directly connected to their organization. The Friendship Inn served on the organizing committee and focused their efforts to support those who are most vulnerable, and unhoused, with 45 backpacks filled with practical holiday cheer.

Working with the **Partners in Employment** program with **Sask Abilities** has been a rewarding initiative for all. Individuals referred to the Inn through this channel are doubly-supported to succeed in the workplace, having a supervisor and mentor follow their progress from Sask Abilities, and navigating our environment with focused attention offered from our Program Supervisors. This subsidized work placement builds work readiness, skills, and team connections. In 2024-2025, the Inn brought three staff members on board, with subsidies totalling about \$15,000.

Generous community support is vital as the Inn works to fundraise 95% of the resources needed to keep our daily free meal program serving people in need. **Wheaton GM Saskatoon** has been a dedicated partner over the years, so their matching gift of \$50,000 for the 2025 Spring Campaign was a powerful reflection of their long-standing commitment to giving back, supporting community, and helping others.



THANK-YOU TO A FRIEND OF THE INN

CONGRATULATIONS TO STEPHANIE HUGHES, an exemplary friend of the Inn, who received an Honoured Supporter Award during National Philanthropy Day celebrations in November 2024. Few people embody the spirit of generosity and dedication quite like Stephanie - as a long-time donor and devoted volunteer - her commitment to the Friendship Inn is evident.



Serving seven years as a member of our Board of Directors, including two years as Board Chair and additional year as Past Chair, Stephanie offered leadership, thoughtful guidance and wise counsel. She was instrumental in helping to steward the Inn through dual crises of a global pandemic and an exponential increase in the community's need for meals.

Stephanie's unwavering passion inspires those around her and makes her a true champion of the Inn. Thank-you Stephanie!

STORIES FROM THE INN



When people dine frequently at the Inn, relationships with our staff and repeat volunteers often develop. Usually, these connections are as simple as recognizing a face, knowing a guest by name, sharing a brief conversation, or inquiring how someone is doing in the moment. This means we notice when a guest hasn't been seen for a while. It was a relief for staff and volunteers alike when a 'missing' senior, Daniel, arrived for breakfast one morning following his prolonged absence. Another regular guest, Garry, who'd not been seen for several days asked his friend to let the Inn know he was safe and receiving care through another avenue. Our team was happy to learn he'd found another path forward in his journey.



MEMBERS OF THE BOARD FOR 2024 – 2025



Back row L-R: Jordan Arndt, Andrew Hodson, Sarah Wingerak, Sandra Kary (ED), Ashley Petite, Holly Kelleher (to November 2024)

Front row L-R: Dani Nichols, Denis Sirois (Treasurer), Melanie Christianson, Ashala Jacobson (Chair), Tammy Martins, Karen Lloyd

Missing: Nadine Connoly, Jonathan Huntington (to April 2025), Joelle Sparvier (to May 2025)

MANAGEMENT TEAM:

Sandra Kary, Executive Director

Robert Wyma, Director of Operations

Laura Herman, Development and Engagement Manager

Matthew Hutchings, Finance and Administration Manager



BOARD & COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

The Saskatoon Friendship Inn Board met seven times: September 17, 2024; October 1, 2024 (AGM and Board Organizational Meeting); October 29, 2024; January 28, 2025; March 25, 2025; May 15, 2025; June 10, 2025. Meetings alternated between virtual and in-person at the Friendship Inn.

Key activities of the Board included:

- Board member recruitment – strategies and successful recruitment of two new board members
- Regular oversight of annual organizational plan and Executive Director work plan; ED engagement with quarterly check-ins and annual performance review
- Board Learning Session with Salvation Army and STC Sawēyihotān Program
- Promoting and achieving the goal of 100% Board Giving (financial contribution to the Inn).
- Oversight of external CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design) and Functionality analysis to improve safety, access and flow of people and resources
- Oversight of external audit related to crisis communications and business continuity
- Annual board survey, with review of results and recommendations
- Oversight of capital upgrade projects: Mezz 2 to optimize space, increase efficiency and improve flow of resources within existing footprint

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Committee Members: Denis Sirois (Treasurer/Committee Chair); Melanie Christianson, Andrew Hodson, Dani Nichols, Ashala Jacobson (ex-officio); Matthew Hutchings (Mgmt); Sandra Kary (ED)

The committee met seven times: August 29, 2024; October 22, 2024; January 24, 2025; March 19, 2025; May 29, 2025; June 24, 2025 with a Special Joint Meeting with the Fundraising Committee on January 30, 2025.

Key activities of the Finance Committee included:

- Regular annual finance policy review and revisions
- Review of the executive summary of externally sourced CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) Report that focused on safety and functionality assessment and recommendations
- Annual meeting with investment managers (May 13/25) to review performance and alignment with internal policy
- Review of SFI's quarterly 'Risk Registry' which monitors top five risks with correlating thresholds, tolerances, and trends analysis
- Due diligence, review, and approval of the annual capital & operating budgets
- Oversight of capital expenditures in relation to annual budget and the 25-year capital spend strategy
- Quarterly review of financial reports including balance sheet, revenue, expenditures, and variances
- Review annual audit results and provide recommendations if required
- Review performance and recommend appointment of the auditor
- Explored the benefit of establishing an externally managed SFI endowment fund dedicated to supporting a percentage of core annual operating needs in perpetuity, jointly with the Fundraising Committee

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Committee Members: Jonathan Huntington (Committee Chair to April 2025); Nadine Connolly (Committee Chair, May 2025); Jordan Arndt; Joelle Sparvier; Ashala Jacobson (ex-officio); Laura Herman (Mgmt); Sandra Kary (ED)

The committee met five times: October 3, 2024; January 15, 2025; March 13, 2025; June 18, 2025 with a Special Joint Meeting with the Finance Committee on January 30, 2025.

Key activities of the Fundraising Committee included:

- Regular annual policy review and revisions related to fund development and Gift Acceptance and Valuation Policy; review of industry trends and analytics
- Oversight of comprehensive fund development, donor stewardship and external communication strategies to attract and sustain appropriate resources to support programming, with a particular focus to attract and engage Millennial demographic as both donors and volunteers (via external marketing support and shifting internal human resources to support)
- Support of National Philanthropy Day (Nov 16), nominating Stephanie Hughes as an Honored Supporter of the Friendship Inn
- Successful 2024 Fill the Plate Campaign – goal of \$1M exceeded, inclusive of \$125K matching contribution from Nutrien as Lead Sponsor. The Holiday Gala was successfully hosted as a sell-out fundraising event
- Adoption of new Third-Party fundraising form to help ensure managed expectations, safeguard brand and alignment to the Inn’s mission statement
- Explored the benefit of establishing an externally managed SFI endowment fund dedicated to supporting a percentage of core annual operating needs in perpetuity, jointly with the Finance Committee

Annually, the Inn relies on generous financial support from community in the form of donations, corporate sponsorships and grants to secure more than 95% of the operating budget.

Community Fundraising comprises

95%

of the operating budget.



HUMAN RESOURCES AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Committee Members: Sarah Wingerak (Committee Chair); Holly Kelleher; Karen Lloyd, Tammy Martins; Ashala Jacobson (ex-officio); Sandra Kary (ED)

The committee met six times: August 21, 2024; October 17, 2024; November 25, 2024; February 11, 2025; May 23, 2025, June 19, 2025

Key activities of the Human Resources and Governance Committee included:

- Effective recruitment, on-boarding and orientation of two new board members in Fall 2024, exit interviews conducted for departing board members
- Board Social event coordinated for November 13 2024, with a 'walk-about' of the Inn and capital upgrades
- Board performance – Annual Board survey with results/recommendations completed by May 2025
- Planning for Board and Management Strategic Planning for the upcoming three-year cycle (F2027 – F2029)
- Annual review and recommendations regarding: Bylaws, Board Policy Manual, Board Code of Conduct, SFI Operations Manual, Annual Board Calendar, SFI Staff Handbook, SFI Annual Organizational Work Plan, SFI Communications Plan
- Review/update of Executive Director/CEO job description. Oversight of ED Annual Work Plan, Performance Review and recommended compensation package
- Oversight and engagement with externally contracted compensation review and wage grid analysis to market, resulting in a proposed wage grid adjustment for F2026, and changes/ additions to organizational chart and correlating budgetary impact

SPECIAL COMMITTEE: INCLUSION AND INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

Committee Members: Ashley Petite (Committee Chair); Karen Lloyd; Nadine Connolly; Ashala Jacobson (ex-officio); Robert Wyma (Mgmt); Sandra Kary (ED)

The committee met twice: September 20, 2024 and February 14, 2025.

Key activities of the Special Committee included:

- Consideration and discussion regarding on-going engagement with Elders that is meaningful, relevant to the mission and vision of the Inn, and held with the understanding that building relationships is both intentional and long-term work
- Support to Management regarding on-going professional development initiatives and opportunities
- Discussion and first steps towards a specific SFI Process Document that would support the Inn's particular connections and Indigenous relations
- Development and coordination of an educational session for SFI board, staff and community partners to learn about 'Indigenous Relationship to Food.' Panelists to include Elders of Knowledge Keepers from each language group in Treaty 6. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the May 1st event needed to be postponed

Special Joint Meeting of the Fundraising and Finance Committee on January 30, 2025:

Purpose:

- To address the strategic goal of 'Exploring the benefit of establishing an externally managed SFI endowment fund dedicated to supporting a percentage of core annual operating needs in perpetuity' these committees reviewed data and trends from both the financial and fundraising lens to consider what more the Inn could do to support the ongoing work and long-term sustainability of the organization
- Regarding fund development the following was noted: strategy and communication to support stewardship of surpluses should be clear; consideration to reduce risk by adjusting the model of raising 95% of operating budget annually; review of internal campaigns (capacity) and external granting opportunities and downward trend with availability and size
- Regarding fiscal outlook the following was noted: close review of the policies pertaining to the Operational and Capital Reserve Funds, along with reporting evidencing the appropriate fund size and annual contributions to each to support sustainability and future planning; operational budget forecasting and expense trendlines related to growth and inflationary pressures
- Regarding an operational outlook the following was noted: trendlines with rising need, population and anticipated growth of the Free Meal Program; structural limits and building load with current space, including possible adaptations and adding extended operational hours; additional safety and functionality measures (and possible capital upgrades) to pace with societal changes; review of other similar sized soup kitchens in Canada to glean growth mapping
- Conclusion was to not proceed with an endowment fund strategy, however the internal organizational scan did inspire dialogue and questions that will be advanced to the Board's upcoming strategic planning session to consider responding to increasing community need and meal counts, enhancing safety and functionality, and exploring ways to support our guests and the community as effectively as possible

STORIES FROM THE INN

Melanie shared a bit of her journey to finding the Inn. Hers was a tragic story of loss. She was a victim of violence, had experienced living on the streets, and endured many seasons with literally no earthly possession to her name. Because of her experience, her mission in life is to take care of others on the street and share anything she can to ease another's burden. Being near someone who is so 'off the charts' in her generosity while still in a place of poverty – it really was breathtaking.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Saskatoon Friendship Inn

STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES

For the year ending JUNE 30 2025

	F2025	F2024
REVENUE		
Donations	1,955,393	1,955,099
Grants	306,972	293,761
Donations/Gifts In-Kind	74,518	31,077
Contracted Meals	52,606	
Property Tax Abatement	34,705	39,082
Miscellaneous	11,167	10,567
	2,435,361	2,329,586
EXPENDITURES		
Salaries/Benefits	1,520,439	1,342,245
Kitchen/Supplies	120,778	108,097
Office/Admin	116,620	98,029
Utilities	83,725	85,731
Gifts In-Kind	74,518	31,077
Repairs/Maintenance	73,072	71,926
Professional Fees	40,132	32,821
Property Tax	34,705	39,082
Transportation/Courier	28,742	17,246
Contracted meals expense	16,712	
	2,109,443	1,826,254
	325,918	503,332
OTHER REVENUE/EXPENDITURES		
Depreciation	-204,254	-179,598
Disposal of Capital Assets	2,300	2,601
Investments: interest income & unrealized gain/(loss)	316,592	238,479
SURPLUS (LOSS) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR	440,556	564,814

VARIANCE REPORT

Revenue: Increase in gift-in-kind support due to effective promotional activities. New revenue line due to contract with Salvation Army to provide daily off-site breakfast meals for their warming location (Winter 2024-25).

Expenses: Increase in Salaries/Benefits due to enhanced positions (= 1.9 FTE) and wage grid adjustments. Gifts-in-kind expense corresponds with increase in revenue. Office / Admin expense increase due to enhanced contract with social media consultant and ad spend. Professional fees increased due to consulting fees for wage grid review to market. Transportation/Courier cost increase to manage larger food reclamation efforts requiring refrigerated truck. Contracted meals expense corresponds to contracted meals revenue.

Other: Increase due to more investments and higher earnings.

Full audited financial statements available upon request.



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