



2023

PEARCE WILLIAMS Annual Report 2023

Pearce Williams (United Church) Christian Centre



PEARCE WILLIAMS

**SUMMER CAMP & RETREAT FACILITY
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Report of the Chair

In sitting down to write this report, and as I reflected back on the year 2023, the chorus of an old Beatle's song came to mind – "Will you still need me, will you still feed me, when I'm sixty-four". While Pearce Williams officially turned sixty-four in September of last year it isn't slowing down. As a well-respected children's summer camp and year-round retreat facility we continue to meet and fulfil the needs and expectations of the families and communities we serve.

Our cautionary approach to fiscal management is fundamental to achieving long-term viability and stability for Pearce Williams. Camper registration continues to rebound from the shutdown years of the pandemic and rental group numbers and revenues are growing. These primary revenue streams continue to be supplemented by grants, donations, and generous givings from churches and estates.

Capital grants have again enabled building and accommodation upgrades to be completed including extensive work in and around the dining hall to make it more energy efficient and accessible. The new deck and ramp built by a dedicated group of talented and skilled volunteers and local contractors is a tremendous addition to the facility. The installation of solar panels on the Director's home, Pearce Hall, and the Barn supports our stewardship mandate and should help reduce our reliance on purchased electricity.

Work on adapting our governance documents to align with the new legislation governing not-for-profit (NFP) corporations continued in 2023. Amendments to the special provision of the Articles of Incorporation were approved by the Province in August. Clean-up and amending the Purposes section of the Articles is on hold as we await completion of a review by the Charities Directorate of the Canada Revenue Agency.

However, the amendments made to date allow us to operate in accordance with the new special provisions and by-laws. I would particularly like to recognize the work of Helen R. Button of Gunn & Associates in guiding our amendments through the regulatory process.

A governance policy manual is in preparation to guide the Board of Directors and the organization in meeting its new legislated and regulatory requirements. The policies and associated procedures give greater clarity and direction to help ensure we operate in accordance with our own by-laws.

The Board continues to recognize that we are gifted with a team of talented and dedicated staff who turn the vision for Pearce Williams into the high quality day-to-day operations we are known for. The Executive Director, Joe Richards, has had his challenges re-building that team after staff departures. His patience and perseverance are appreciated and we all hope things have settled down on the staffing front.

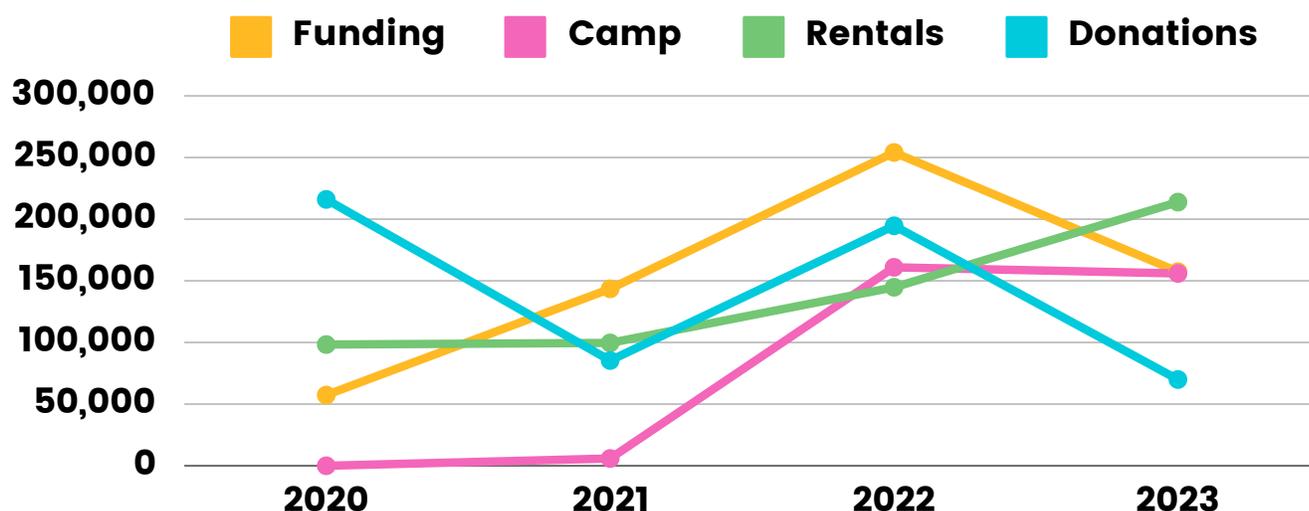
And yes, Pearce Williams is still needed as a treasured and sacred space that continues to feed peoples physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

Please come visit the "senior citizen" and wander the trails, tackle the hills, listen to the wind in the trees, and open yourself to its gentle magic. As always, we welcome all who come, teach those who wish to learn and serve God in all we do. Thank you for your continued support and belief in the mission of Pearce Williams.

Respectfully submitted,
Brad Graham, Chair – Board of Directors

Financial Points of Interest 2023

Here is how 2023 compared with 2022, 2021 & 2020 for Pearce Williams finances:



It is important for Pearce Williams to recognize the following organizations:

- Antler River Watershed Regional Council of the United Church of Canada funded \$32,400 toward operating costs in 2023 (Down from \$37,760 in 2022).
- The Ontario Trillium Foundation funded \$110,000 toward Dining Hall Renovations & \$143,700 toward Solar Panels & Fundraising Planning.
- Westminster College Foundation funded \$11,510 toward a Disability Hiring Pilot Program

In 2023 Individual Donors Gave:

\$46,950

Thank you to our donors for helping kids get the Pearce Williams summer camp experience. This amount was 30% lower than the \$66,630 given in 2022.

Plans have already been put into place to increase this amount for 2024 and beyond.

Bookkeeper Report

My first year as bookkeeper at Pearce Williams can be summed up as adapting to a dynamic environment.

My primary responsibilities were to manage financial transactions and records, however, as summer camp was starting up, I was asked to increase my duties by assuming the role of office administrator and rental agent.

As the Pearce Williams' bookkeeper, I was given the task of cleaning up financial accounts and ensuring reconciliations were up to date. I was able to streamline invoicing processing both for campers and rentals. This allowed me to conduct regular audits of our accounts to track expenditures and revenues.

The sudden transition into Office Administrator and Rental Agent required me to swiftly adapt to new responsibilities including overseeing camper registrations and payments were prepared prior to camper arrival, tuck shop, conducting rental orientations, replying to rental/camper inquiries, and hosting walk-through showings of camp.

One of the key challenges from the summer was the ambiguity surrounding my role within the camp hierarchy. As both the bookkeeper and office administrator, I often struggled to distinguish between my responsibilities and determine the appropriate supervisor to report to. This led to occasional confusion and inefficiencies in communication, highlighting the need for clearer delineation of role and reporting structure.

In conclusion, my first year at Pearce Williams was a valuable learning experience filled with growth opportunities and challenges.

Despite initial difficulties, I successfully managed financial operations, facilitated administrative tasks, trained new personnel, and contributed to the overall success and high employee morale of Pearce Williams.

Moving forward, as I focus mainly on my role as bookkeeper, I am committed to further enhancing efficiencies and fostering effective communication to support camp's mission and values.

Justine Wright, Bookkeeper



Camps, & Programs Highlights of 2023

Our second year of being open after the pandemic showed improvements in our summer staffing - but still leave room to grow to get back to the pre-pandemic levels of staffing and camper's served.



New Campers

2023 saw more than half of our camper come for their first year at Pearce Williams.

Total Camper Weeks

265 summer campers in 2023 totaling \$155,981 in revenue

Partnerships

20 campers were funded through our partnership with Elgin St. Thomas Family & Children's Services



Inclusion

12 campers & adult volunteers attended as part of our Inclusion Program. 2 adults with disabilities were paid with a grant by Westminster College Foundation.

Scholarships

8 camper scholarships were awarded, totalling \$3,000 in scholarship funds granted by PW and \$2236 granted by Kids In Camp

Retreat Groups

48 site rentals in 2023 equated to 11,928 person nights & \$213,835 in revenue to help fund camp.

Report of Director of Camps & Programs

As another summer camp season comes and goes I can reflect on how the year of 2023 went. There were new challenges presented but also great strides forward for the future of Pearce Williams. I am in an interesting position writing this report because I started working for Pearce Williams at the end of June under the supervision of Jill Lunn, then transitioned into working in the office during the fall into the end of 2023.

One of the most immediate challenges we faced in preparing for the summer was the change in permanent staff, Jory "Campbells" Elliot left his role as Director of Camps, Programs & Marketing on June 20, 2023. Knowing that Jory was leaving, Jill "Auntie" Lunn began work on May 1, 2023 - this created a challenging transition and learning period during the months of May & June, while the summer quickly approached.

Another challenge we are still facing is recovering from the year lost due to the pandemic. We are still bouncing back with camper and staff numbers on a rise from the season of 2022. I anticipate that it will take a few more years to have the similar camp culture as pre-covid as we get back into the same cycle as previous years.

Staff interviews happened in January and February of 2023, we were able to run group interview days to get the majority of our hiring done. We had a smaller staff team in 2023, which led to a smaller camp season. During the fall we worked on marketing of both staff and campers to ensure a greater number of applications for the 2024 camp season.

Something Jill Lunn worked on during her time at camp was providing truth and reconciliation training for our staff and adapting some programs like jumpstart and staff meetings and incorporating the medicine wheel and holistic approaches into our program planning.

Summer Camp was an overall success with programming. We had 6 successful Counselors-in-Training, based on camper survey's programming was a hit, and we had 12 inclusion campers/volunteers throughout the summer. Our enrollment was low for one Wilderness week and it was cancelled, and World Camp - programming was adjusted.

We ended the year with lots of efforts in marketing to bring up our enrollment from consistent social media posts, a camp referral program, and outreach to schools and community centers. We also opened our scholarship applications and parent surveys.

To end on a positive note, in December based on our data comparing summer of 2023 to the summer of 2024 we were already exceeding our targeted camper enrollment rates!

Ila "Hiccup" Manderson
Director of Camps & Programs



2023 In Photos



Maintenance Highlights of 2023



Dining Hall

Main deck was rebuilt (bigger and better). It was a huge undertaking which Brad Graham took on as our general contractor.



Co-op Student

Diego "Swiper" Silva a co-op student who finished his term with us in January 2023. He helped with many projects around camp.



Accessibility

New Dining Hall deck allows for a path of accessibility all the way from Williams Hall to the Dining Hall. We just need to replace parking lot sidewalk to complete path.



Wilderness Shed

Volunteers tore down and rebuilt the Wilderness Shed in memory of Tyler "Cherrio" Smith. A huge thank you to Cameron "Cinema" Stover for taking the lead on this project.



The Barn

The Barn had electrical work done to install proper lighting (interior and exterior), at the same time as the solar panels were installed.



Water Lines

New potable water lines were installed to East Camp. Exterior water lines were installed to the pool and wilderness area.

Report of Maintenance Team Lead

2023 was a great year at Pearce Williams. There are always improvements being made around the site. My goal is to go over some of the biggest projects from the past year, and also look forward to plans for 2024.

- The Dining Hall deck was rebuilt with a Trillium grant. It was a huge undertaking which Brad Graham (Board Chair) took on as our general contractor. Special thanks to him, as well as other volunteers who helped get the project done at all stages from design and beam work, to cutting and laying boards. John Mannering, Ron Meertens, Pete Afman, and Chris Graham were dedicated to seeing this project through. I'm looking forward to eating lunch on the porch this summer!
- Diego "Swiper" Silva was our highschool co-op student who finished his term with us in January (September 2022-January 2023). He helped with many projects including the Dining Hall deck removal, Barn roof bracing, and building our new "Basketball Wagon".
- A culvert was replaced by Volunteers Trail and assorted drainage tiles were repaired.
- Volunteers were out at various times to work on planting and weeding gardens. A special thank you to Union United Church members who took on the Hume's Hall garden bed.
- Volunteers came out to tear down and rebuild the Wilderness Shed; funds were raised in memory of Tyler "Cheerio" Smith who passed away in 2023. A big thank you to Cameron "Cinema" Stover for taking the lead on this project and securing a \$5000 donation from Doug Tarry Homes to help with it.
- The Picnic Shelter received a new metal roof as well as some sorely needed structural repairs.
- Our architects (A-Link) moved offices in London, and we were able to go in to salvage doors, desks, chairs, light fixtures and much more. These have been put into use around camp.

As always, volunteers played a huge role in keeping the site looking great. To the volunteers for specific projects such as those for the deck as listed above or Wilder Shed builders, those who come out for a day like

the gardeners, workbee volunteers, or Matt Breen who brought over his chainsaw (or his tractor to get trucks unstuck), or Bill Stevens who continues to be our onsite volunteer extraordinaire; I can't thank you enough. Pearce Williams would not be the same place without your hard work.

Looking forward to 2024, some projects we are hoping to fund include:

- Completing the insulation under Cabin B. Most ductwork was wrapped in 2023. The floor itself will be insulated with foam and a windbreak skirting installed.
- Repairs to Chapel Hill 6x6 structure
- Building of new picnic tables
- Building of a hammock village
- Rebuilding popup trailer for use as the Tuck-shop
- Replacing Woodshed barnboards wall by wall, and adding extra structural support
- Building a deck on Bill's house (Seniors on site residence)

As we move into our busy season, problems always arise to create new opportunities to improve camp (a fridge dying results in a new fridge and updated wiring for example!). I look forward to another year of new possibilities here at Pearce Williams.

Geoff "Flash" Auckland
Maintenance Team Lead



Executive Director Report

As I reflect on another year at Pearce Williams, it is clear that 2023 has been both challenging and rewarding. Despite the lingering effects of the pandemic, we have made significant strides in improving our facilities and programs while facing some operational challenges.

Facility Enhancements and Sustainability Efforts

This year, we invested substantially in upgrading our infrastructure, enhancing both the functionality and accessibility of our camp. We completed a major renovation of our dining hall, which now features new windows, doors, a heat pump, and an accessible ramp. Additionally, we constructed a new deck to improve the overall aesthetics and usability of the space. These improvements make the building more sustainable as well.

In our commitment to sustainability, we installed over 30 kilowatts of solar panels, a significant step towards powering Pearce Williams with renewable energy. These projects, funded by Ontario Trillium Foundation grants, not only reduces our environmental footprint but also secures our energy needs for the future.

Tributes and Community Engagement

This year was also marked by the passing of Tyler "Cheerio" Smith, a beloved former staff member. In his memory, our community came together to fund and construct a new Wilderness Shed, aptly named "The Cheerio Box." I extend heartfelt thanks to all volunteers, especially Cameron "Cinema" Stover, who coordinated these efforts and secured a major donation to fund the shed.

Staffing Dynamics

Staffing posed significant challenges this year. We bid farewell to Jory Elliott, our director of camps and programs, who decided to pursue new opportunities. This led us to a comprehensive search that culminated in the hiring of excellent new team members, including Jill Lunn as our new director and Justine Wright as our bookkeeper. These changes necessitated additional training and supervision, highlighting the need for robust staff support systems. Jill moved on in October to return to her home community.

The end of 2023 saw the hiring 3 permanent staff members: Ila "Hiccup" Manderson as our new Director of Camps & Programs, Nikki Lavoie as Office Manager & Guest Services, and Sarah Kirk as Donor Relations & Fund Development. The future looks bright.

Program Participation and Future Focus

While we observed a decline in summer camp enrollments, likely due to difficulties in recruiting summer staff, we experienced a remarkable increase in year-over-year rental group usage. Recognizing these trends, we've raised staff wages in an effort to attract and retain quality summer students.

I took a three-week sabbatical to reflect on our strategic direction and the future of camping. It is imperative that we continue to adapt and plan for the future, considering both short-term needs and long-term societal shifts. My focus is on ensuring Pearce Williams remains a relevant and cherished part of our community and an essential experience in the lives of children and youth in Southwestern Ontario.

As we approach my 20th year leading Pearce Williams, I am as committed as ever to guiding our beloved camp into a promising and sustainable future. Thank you for your continued support and dedication to our shared vision.

Joe Richards, Executive Director

Acknowledgements

A huge thank you goes out to the summer camp team from 2023 lead by Jill "Auntie" Lunn as the Camp Director:

Allen "Stumps" Barnier, Emily "Doodle" Brewster, Allie "Rio" Brown, Rachelle "Blast" Charron, Madz "Bowz" Cooper, Kelsey "OG" Currie, Max "Etch" Doxtator, Amanda "Blades" Emery, Lindsey "Butter" Feltis, Louisa "Chica" Flock, Itongwa "Jumbo" Florient, Evelyn "Alto" Gadsdon, Emilee "Nimbus" Gillings, Leah "MooMoo" Heard, Alyssa "Rayz" Hollingsworth, Kristov "Olaf" Loebus, Jill "Auntie" Lunn, Ryan Lunn, Eliza "Athena" Manderson, Ila "Hiccup" Manderson, Angelus "Kaboom" Ndayisaba, Mandy "Fnelly" Penner, Hailey "Fezzik" Pineau, Kayla "Roo" Richards, Hailey "Twitch" Scott, Sharlene "Momma Bear" Scott, Anne "Dusk" Strain, Shayne "Ecko" Tangredi, Jessica "Ica" Tenhor, Artemis "Baron" Timmermans, Isabelle "Zukes" Tyson-Paradis, Dylan "Woot" Walker, Holly "Bacon" Wilson

The official board of 2023:

Brad Graham, Chair
Laura Penner
Mark Emery
Alexandra Morrison
Christine Freeman
Lynn Bishop

Permanent Staff 2023:

Joe Richards, Executive Director
Justine Wright, Bookkeeper
Geoff Auckland, Maintenance

Finished PW Employment in 2023:

Melissa Jackson, Bookkeeper
Jory Elliot, Director CP&M
Jill Lunn, Director CP&M

Contact

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