



2025 Impact Report



Building Resilience, Inspiring Possibility.



Fauzia Mazhar

A Message from our Executive Director and Board Chair

In one of our earliest meetings, close to fifty people gathered to prepare for CMW's first public event, Let Us Talk. We had a vision, committed people, and.... very little money. So, we passed a basket around and everyone contributed what they could. It returned with more than enough to cover the event. We learned something that has stayed with us: when people recognize a need, believe in a shared purpose, and are invited to participate, they show up.

For CMW, 2025 was a year of both despair and hope. Our work was needed more than ever, but our capacity was dwindling. Granting opportunities were fewer, donations had reached an all-time low, and staffing and funding gaps disrupted services.

The need did not pause. Hate and discrimination did not wait for funding. Gender-based violence did not stop. Families and single women still needed safe housing. Newcomers continued to face barriers to employment and belonging.

At times, the needs before us felt like insurmountable mountains.

But despair did not have the final word.

The village protected the work.

We witnessed this when CMW began Dar-al-Aman phase 1 (Moorgate Project), our transitional housing program. More than one hundred Muslim, faith, and cultural community leaders attended our open house. They recognized the lack of culturally responsive housing support for women on their own. They came. They listened. And they acted.

The Region of Waterloo provided two townhomes. The City of Waterloo fire

department brought beds. Shamrose for Syrian Culture and the Eritrean Islamic Society helped purchase new appliances. The Muslim Society of Waterloo and Wellington, the Ismaili Council for Southwestern Ontario, other organizations, and many individuals contributed funds, furniture, household items, time, and expertise.

No single person or organization created Dar-al-Aman. Together, the village transformed two empty townhomes into places of safety, dignity, and possibility.

As a Muslim, I have learned that our responsibility is to do what we can with what is within our reach. We may not be asked whether we solved every problem, but we will be asked what we did when we saw someone struggling.

We may not end violence, eliminate racism, solve unemployment, or fix the housing crisis. But we can listen, stand beside someone facing hate, open a door for a newcomer, or help create a home.

Small acts do not remain small when they become part of a shared purpose.



Ghazala Fauzia

Following a comprehensive year-long strategic planning process that began in 2025, we became the Centre for Mutual Wellbeing, with the tagline 'For Racialized Communities'. Sixteen years ago, the name Coalition of Muslim Women of Kitchener-Waterloo spoke clearly and proudly to who we were and the work we had come together to do. Rooted in the leadership, courage, knowledge, and lived experiences of Muslim women, CMW has since grown into a strong tree whose fruits now benefit more women, more families, and more racialized communities than ever before. Our new name reflects this beautiful growth, aligns with our renewed vision, mission, and values, and makes it easier for people experiencing crisis or vulnerability to recognize CMW as a place where they can reach out for support. We continue to carry the name CMW with us, honouring the strength of our roots while allowing their fruits to reach a wider community.

To everyone who protected this work in 2025, thank you.

With gratitude and hope,



Fauzia Mazhar
Executive Director



Ghazala Fauzia
Chair, Board of Directors

2025-2026

Board of Directors

- Ghazala Fauzia, Board Chair
- Tahira Bilal, Vice Chair
- Howida Sayeed Ahmed, Director



Land Acknowledgement

CMW is located on the traditional territories of the Chonnonton, Anishinaabeg, and Haudenosaunee Peoples. We acknowledge these lands with gratitude and recognize our shared responsibility to care for them and for one another. We honour the enduring relationships that First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples have with this land, and the knowledge, cultures, and traditions that continue to shape our communities today.

As we work to build communities where everyone can thrive, we are committed to learning, listening, and advancing reconciliation through meaningful relationships and action.



Vision

A just, harmonious, inclusive, and equitable community.

Mission

With an unwavering commitment for upstream work, CMW thoughtfully responds to emerging needs with innovative and culturally responsive programs and services for members of racialized communities, including Muslim Women – that address barriers to social and economic inclusion.

Values

- Proactive
- Courageous
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Calling In
- Outreach and Collaboration
- Safety



THINGS WE ARE CELEBRATING THIS YEAR

**All the committed women who rebuilt
their lives with us this year.**

Including Amina who came to CMW while facing rent arrears and the possibility of homelessness. Through her own resilience, determination, and the support of CMW's integrated services, she moved from housing instability to full-time employment and stable housing, demonstrating **what is possible when individual strengths are met with community support.**

**Everyone who reclaimed safety
after an incident of hate.**

Hassan's Family was experiencing escalating hate-motivated harassment and sought support after other efforts failed to stop the abuse. With courage and determination, they advocated for their family's safety while CMW coordinated with community partners, provided safety planning, and remained alongside them. Within weeks, the harassment stopped, and the family shared they finally felt heard, supported, and no longer alone, demonstrating the **power of compassionate advocacy and community working together.**

**All the courageous women who
stepped away from violence.**

Including Fatima, who was experiencing family violence and came to CMW at immediate risk of homelessness. Drawing on her courage and determination, and with support from CMW, she learned about her housing rights, navigated unfamiliar systems, and secured safe, affordable housing within four weeks, demonstrating how **timely, culturally responsive support can help people move from crisis to stability on their own terms.**

12

language groups
represented among
people supported by
CMW.

1800

people supported
through CMW
services.

850

people engaged
across 26 events for
Global is Local.



Everyone has strengths, talents, and something valuable to contribute. We believe that when people are given the chance to learn, grow, and lead, they strengthen not only their own lives but also the communities around them.

At CMW, we see people's strengths before their circumstances. Our approach is rooted in trust, encouragement, and creating the conditions for people to build confidence, develop new skills, and discover what they are capable of. Every CMW program reflects that belief. Through peer support, volunteering, and student placements, people gain experience, strengthen their leadership, and create lasting change in their own lives and the communities around them.

Every person who discovers their potential creates new possibilities for others. We believe the greatest measure of success is how people go on to achieve their goals, support others, and strengthen their communities.

289

reports of
experienced hate
were made through
our Anti-Hate
Services program.

64

people built bridges
through the Tea &
Tales program.

292

youth built
community for
themselves through
our YL4C program.

EVERYONE DESERVES TO BELONG

"I stay there to let them know that **I am not going anywhere.**"

-Maryam Farooque, AHS Coordinator

Why being there at the right moment matters.
Hear Maryam's story.



Sometimes, the most important thing we offer isn't a service, it's the certainty that someone won't have to face hate alone. Day after day, Maryam, our Anti-Hate Services Coordinator, helps people find support, healing, and the reassurance that someone will stay beside them through their hardest moments.

When a gap in funding forced that support to pause, Maryam described it as standing on the shore watching people struggle in the ocean, desperate to help but without a boat to reach them. By the time funding returned, it was too late for some. That's why sustaining this work matters.

Hate doesn't wait, and neither should the support people need to begin healing.

"I wish I could contribute more. CMW has been a pioneer in helping the Muslim community in KW through their visionary grassroots work that very few have had the courage or the expertise to attempt."

-Ali Saeed, Donor



Everyone deserves to feel safe. We believe in communities where people can live free from gender-based violence, hate, and discrimination, and where everyone has the opportunity to rebuild their lives and create a brighter future.

Whether someone is leaving gender-based violence, experiencing hate, or searching for a safe place to call home, no one should have to face those challenges alone. Our approach is rooted in trust, compassion, and respect for each person's culture, identity, and lived experience. We meet people where they are, walk alongside them without judgment, and help them take the next step toward the future they deserve.

At CMW, safety is about more than protection from harm, it creates the conditions for hope, stability, and possibility. Every person who finds safety, every family that gains stability, and every barrier that is removed brings us one step closer to a community where everyone has the opportunity to move forward with confidence.

43

families and
individuals were
supported by our
GBV services.

22

families and
individuals were
supported in
securing housing.

34

families and
Individuals received
support with their
experience of hate.



SAFETY CREATES POSSIBILITY

"I hope to see more people like me in this work, so everyone can find **support that truly understands who they are.**"

-Nasim Rasoulipour, Housing Caseworker

Hear Nasim share how language, culture, and trust can transform someone's journey.



When Nasim joined CMW, she hoped her language, culture, and lived experience could become part of the support she offered others. That hope became reality when her first client was an Iranian woman escaping gender-based violence. Through a shared language and cultural understanding, trust grew quickly. Together, they reached a point where Nasim was able to close the file, having watched the family's life improve, the children settle, the mother begin creating new connections, and the family move forward on a better note. For Nasim, it reinforced a simple truth:

When people feel truly seen and understood, support reaches far beyond services alone.

TOGETHER AGAINST ISLAMOPHOBIA

HELP BUILD MORE INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES

Everyone deserves to feel safe, respected, and welcome at work. But creating inclusive workplaces requires more than good intentions. It requires understanding, honest conversation, and practical tools. Through Together Against Islamophobia, CMW provides customizable training on cultural sensitivity, Islamophobia, racism, xenophobia, gendered Islamophobia, and implicit bias, and active allyship.

Trusted by organizations including the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, City of Kitchener, City of Waterloo, Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance, and KW Habilitation, our facilitators help teams recognize bias, navigate difficult conversations, respond to discrimination, and strengthen relationships across differences.

**Let us help your organization
turn its commitment to inclusion
into meaningful everyday action.**



226-499-2269 EXT. 4001



training@centreformutualwellbeing.org





Everyone has strengths, talents, and something valuable to contribute. We believe that when people are given the opportunity to learn, grow, and lead, they strengthen not only their own lives but also the communities around them.

At CMW, we see people's strengths before their circumstances. Our approach is rooted in trust, encouragement, and creating opportunities for people to build confidence, develop new skills, and discover what they are capable of. Every CMW program reflects our belief that people thrive when they are trusted, encouraged, and given opportunities to grow. Through peer support, volunteering, and student placements, CMW helps people build confidence, develop their leadership, and create lasting change in their own lives and the communities around them.

Every opportunity created, every skill developed, and every person who discovers their potential becomes an investment in a stronger, more connected community. We believe the greatest measure of success is in how people go on to achieve their goals, support others, and strengthen their communities.

145

people supported
through our Peer
Program.

14

wonderful and
talented volunteers
supported our work
in an ongoing way
this year.

6

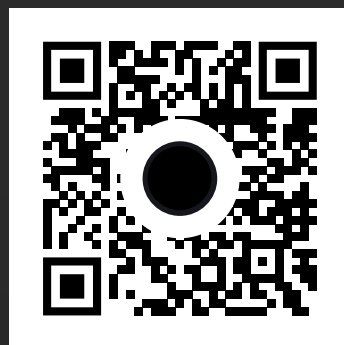
emerging leaders
learned with us as
placement
students.

INVESTING IN PEOPLE'S POTENTIAL

"I feel healing for me also, you know, personally... **I needed that space.** So when I hold that space for them, I am also healing with them."

-Stephy Lopez, Case Manager

Hear how Stephy, once supported by CMW, now helps others discover their own potential.



Sometimes, the greatest investment isn't in a program but in a person. Stephy knows that because CMW once invested in her. She navigated the immigration process, travelled across two countries, and arrived in Canada with no one waiting to pick her up. At CMW, she found the connections she had been searching for, a place where she belonged, grew, and discovered her potential. Today, she walks alongside women rebuilding their own lives, believing that the greatest measure of success isn't doing things for people.

The greatest measure of success is helping them discover what they're capable of themselves.



When I first came to Canada, I knew that building Canadian experience and becoming involved in the community would be important for my personal and professional growth. I decided to volunteer with CMW because I wanted to give back to the community. I also like learning, meeting new people, and developing skills that would help me build my career.

“From the very beginning, I felt valued, respected, and encouraged to contribute.”

The staff and volunteers were always supportive, and I appreciated the positive environment they created. Throughout my volunteer experience, I received guidance, encouragement, and opportunities to participate in community events and workshops. These experiences allowed me to work with diverse groups of people, strengthen my communication and teamwork skills, and better understand the Canadian workplace culture. One of the biggest things I gained through volunteering was confidence. I also developed stronger organizational, problem-solving, teamwork, and interpersonal skills.

“Every volunteer opportunity helped me grow both personally and professionally.”

I am proud to share that I have now started a full-time position, and I truly believe that my volunteer journey with CMW helped me reach this milestone. Thank you to everyone at CMW for believing in me.

- Hiba (CMW volunteer & proud new full time hire)



Lasting change happens when people, organizations, and communities work together, support each other, learn from one another, and share responsibility for creating a more inclusive future.

At CMW, relationships are at the heart of everything we do. We work alongside residents, grassroots groups, community organizations, and public partners to build trust, share knowledge, and create solutions together. By contributing leadership, lived experience, and a culturally responsive perspective to community planning, advocacy, and systems change, we help strengthen both relationships and the communities they serve.

Whether responding to the local impacts of global events, partnering on initiatives like Mooregate, or working alongside grassroots organizations, every relationship helps build understanding, strengthen collaboration, and create lasting change. We believe stronger communities are built when people choose to work together, listen to one another, and recognize that everyone has something valuable to contribute. We're proud to create space for just that.

850

people built
relationships and
supported each
other through
Global is Local.

7

community tables
were supported by
CMW staff through
their insights and
leadership.

13

other grassroots
organizations
partnered with us
to deliver
programming.

**STRONGER COMMUNITIES START
WITH RELATIONSHIPS**

"Everything they touch is in the effort of **improving our community.**"

-Selin Jessani, Ismaili Council for Southwest Ontario

Hear from Selin on why shared values matter.



For Selin, the partnership between Ismaili Council for Southwest Ontario and CMW began with the realization that they shared the same values, a commitment to improving the quality of life for everyone in the community. That shared vision came to life through CMW's transitional housing project at Mooregate, where Ismaili Council for Southwest Ontario donated furniture and helped create welcoming homes for women and families starting a new chapter. As Selin reflects, when organizations lead with shared values, they create meaningful, lasting change together.



Mooregate: Relationships That Continue to Grow

Mooregate felt like a community discovering its own strength. It began with conversations, shared concerns, and a willingness to imagine something better together. Around the table, people brought experiences, cultures, relationships, and resources. Yet there was an understanding that women and families deserve safety, dignity, and a place to begin again.



What emerged was more than a project. People who may not otherwise have met came to know and trust one another. Organizations found common purpose. Community leaders became advocates, neighbours became contributors, and relationships moved beyond meetings into genuine care and shared responsibility. There was a growing sense that this work belonged to all of us.

That spirit continued long after the Mooregate project. The trust, connections, and confidence built through Mooregate created a foundation that CMW could draw upon when Dar-al-Aman began. People already understood the need. More importantly, they understood one another and knew how to come together.

In this way, Mooregate became a bridge. It connected communities not only to a housing initiative, but also to one another. Its greatest legacy may be the relationships it left behind: relationships that continued to grow, respond, and create new possibilities for women and families through Dar-al-Aman and beyond.





No one builds a stronger community alone. Every donation, sponsorship, volunteer hour, in-kind contribution, partnership, and act of generosity helps create a place where people feel welcomed, supported, and valued.

This year, our donors chose to invest in CMW and the people we serve, even during a time when giving was not always easy. Businesses and organizations sponsored programs and events. Community members attended celebrations, fundraisers, and learning opportunities, creating spaces filled with connection, joy, and belonging. Together, these acts of generosity made it possible for CMW to continue responding to community needs with care, compassion, and courage.

Our supporters are more than contributors, they are part of the village we are building together. Every gift, every partnership, and every person who stands alongside CMW strengthens this work and helps create a future where more people experience belonging, find safety, discover their potential, and build stronger communities.

15

businesses and organizations stepped forward and sponsored our events.

511

people attended our program and report launch events and our annual gala.

232

unique financial contributions were made to the organization to support our work.

OUR VILLAGE POWERS THIS WORK

"They should have the right
to **live out their beliefs**
without having to defend
themselves."

-Scott Morton Ninomiya, Donor

Hear Scott's story of
welcome, belonging,
and why he chose to
give.



Belonging begins with the small choices we make every day. When the CMW moved into Scott's workplace at 50 Kent, he wanted them to know they were welcome. A simple "Salam" sign on their door, care packages during Ramadan, and later a donation to sustain their work were all expressions of the same belief: everyone deserves to live as they are, free from fear and hate.

Supporting CMW wasn't just about giving, it was about standing alongside a community creating the kind of future we all deserve.



I benefitted greatly from participating in a virtual CMW Islamophobia session, and a delightful Tea and Tales event. Both of these experiences were very educational and impactful for me as an educator with the WRDSB, and as a community member.

I was moved by your organization's willingness, and your members' bravery and commitment, to educate others about the joys, and challenges, of being Muslim in Waterloo Region.

I chose to become a donor at that time because I wanted to support these ongoing educational programs, and help CMW to continue your beneficial work throughout our region.

Since that time, my attendance at CMW's Radiant Ladies Nights and other community events, has provided me with memorable opportunities to bond with and celebrate so many strong and remarkable women in our community. I am so very grateful for CMW's welcome and inclusion of all. When I learned of the Dar-al-Aman project, I wanted to support such an essential and needed service for women and children in crisis in our region. I know how critical and lifechanging this transitional support can be for families.

And so I feel very strongly about continuing to support the many projects of CMW! I can't wait to see what you do next. :)

- Lara Shantz, Monthly Donor

“We really respect the organization and the people that are involved, and the **extreme care that they take with every way that they approach their work in the community.”**

-Juanita & Trent, Donors

Hear from Juanita & Trent on how CMW’s courageous leadership inspired their support.



Juanita and Trent chose to support the Centre for Mutual Wellbeing because they saw an organization willing to meet challenges head-on with courage, compassion, and deep care for community. Whether creating spaces for Muslim women to connect, inviting neighbours into conversations through Tea with Muslim Women, or launching an anti-hate reporting system before anyone else would, CMW has consistently responded to community needs instead of waiting for permission. For Juanita and Trent, that's what makes this work worth investing in: the courage to lead with care, build understanding, and create change that reaches far beyond the women directly served.

Sometimes, the greatest act of courage is refusing to wait for someone else to act.

2025 FINANCIALS

Our finances tell the story of what we can achieve together. This year, more than 89% of our revenue came from grants and partnerships, allowing us to **invest more than \$1 million into programs, housing and services.**

Thank you to the funders who partnered with us this year and saw our vision, and our village who protected and invested in our work and trusted our leadership.



REVENUE	Total			
	\$1,068,172	Grants	Fundraising & Sponsorship	Membership & Other Income
		\$955,956	\$30,050	
		Purchased Services	Donations	\$360
		\$52,631	\$29,175	

EXPENSES	Total		
	\$1,067,065	\$466,034	\$21,039
		Administration	Transitional Housing
		\$203,497	\$376,495

Audited financial documents available upon request.



Thank you for believing in this work, in our community, and in the people whose courage and strength inspire us every day.

Your generosity creates places where people find belonging, families move toward safety, young leaders discover their potential, and communities grow stronger. Every gift becomes part of that impact. A generous one-time gift can respond to an urgent need, furnish a safe home, strengthen a program, or create a new opportunity. Monthly giving provides steady support that helps CMW remain ready when someone experiences hate, violence, housing insecurity, or isolation and reaches out for help.

We invite you to give in the way that is most meaningful and possible for you. Consider a larger one-time contribution, one dollar a day, five dollars every Friday, Saturday, or Sunday, or another amount within your reach. Your donation, whatever its size or frequency, helps ensure that someone is there tomorrow to answer, listen, and walk beside a person through a difficult moment. Your giving does more than sustain services. It protects hope, strengthens relationships, and creates possibilities for people and families.

Being the change doesn't mean doing everything. It means becoming part of something. **Be part of the change. Take your place in the village**



GIVE TODAY

