

# TOGETHER, WE CAN BUILD STRONGER COMMUNITIES.



**ASPIRE FOR HIGHER**  
*IMPACT REPORT 2023*



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# Letter from the Executive Director

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Dear Friends and Supporters,

For over 12 years, we've been dedicated to uplifting the community and inspiring thousands to *aspire for higher*. This year, thanks to your unwavering support, we have expanded our reach and deepened our impact and I am immensely proud of our progress. We brought on new initiatives, partnerships, and key staff as well as planted the seeds for our future.

While we celebrate these successes, we remain acutely aware of the challenges ahead. The lessons of 2023 have underscored the critical importance of sustainability—ensuring that our programs not only continue but thrive.

Thank you for believing in our mission and for being an integral part of our journey. Together, we can build on our achievements and continue to make a significant difference in our community. I look forward to your continued support and I am excited to see what we can achieve in the coming year.

With deepest gratitude,

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



ASPIRE FOR HIGHER

# OUR STORY

**Mission & Core Values**

# Our Story



Established in 2013, Aspire for Higher (A4H) initially emerged as a youth sports organization, utilizing basketball to actively engage with young individuals and cultivate mentorship and leadership skills, contributing to the development of healthy citizens.

Over time, our organization has evolved into a multifaceted nonprofit organization that extends far beyond the realm of sports. Our mission is to holistically support families, young people, and professionals alike, fostering a better tomorrow for all. Through a wide range of programs and initiatives, we focus on power of sports, health & wellness, education, employment, and entrepreneurship ensuring that every individual has the opportunity to reach their full potential and contribute positively to society

As a leading employer of youth in Ontario, we actively harness the talents of young individuals, employing innovation and creativity to contribute to the community with an Afro-centric focus, grounded in the principles of family. At Aspire for Higher, our mission remains steadfast—to fortify community foundations through the transformative power of sports, health and wellness, education, employment, and entrepreneurship. As a data-driven organization, we are resolute in our commitment to empowering youth, young adults, and professionals through innovative and comprehensive strategies.

# Our Mission

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ASPIRE FOR HIGHER

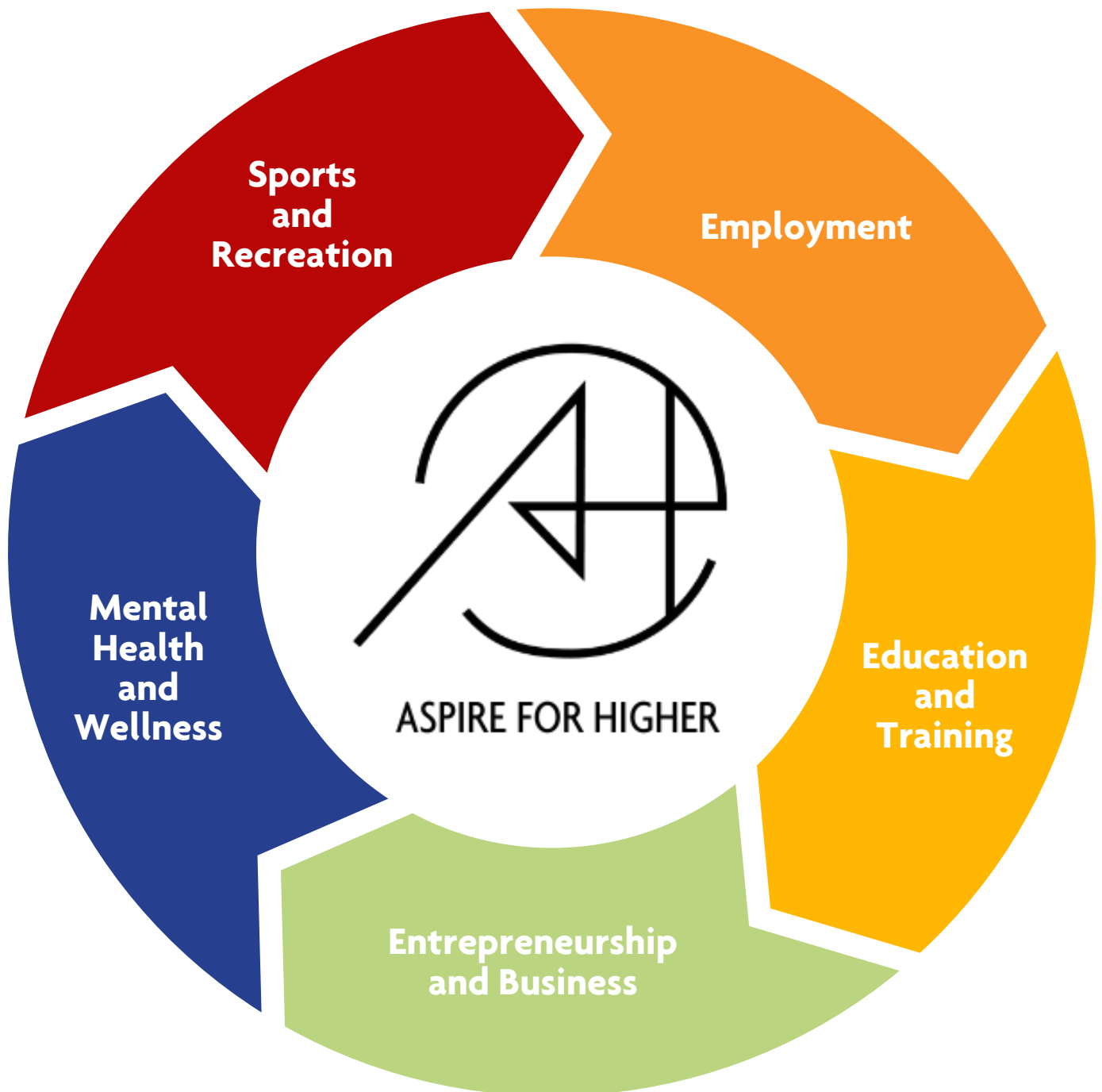


At A4H, our mission is to fortify the foundation of communities by leveraging the power of sports, health & wellness, education, employment, and entrepreneurship. We are a data-driven organization unwavering in our dedication to empower youth, young adults, and professionals through innovative and comprehensive strategies.

Our vision is to implement a social inclusion framework where people can develop, learn, work and play in a context that is responsive and supportive of their needs, aspirations, and interests.

# Core Pillars

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# Our Initiatives

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At Aspire for Higher, we lead two key initiatives: A4H Sports and the Black Healthcare Professionals Network (BHPN). This year we also planted the seeds for our another initiative, skilled trades and are working to expand this in 2024.



# Key Impacts



JOBS CREATED

207

YOUTH SERVED

7609

COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIPS ESTABLISHED

37

BUSINESSES SUPPORTED

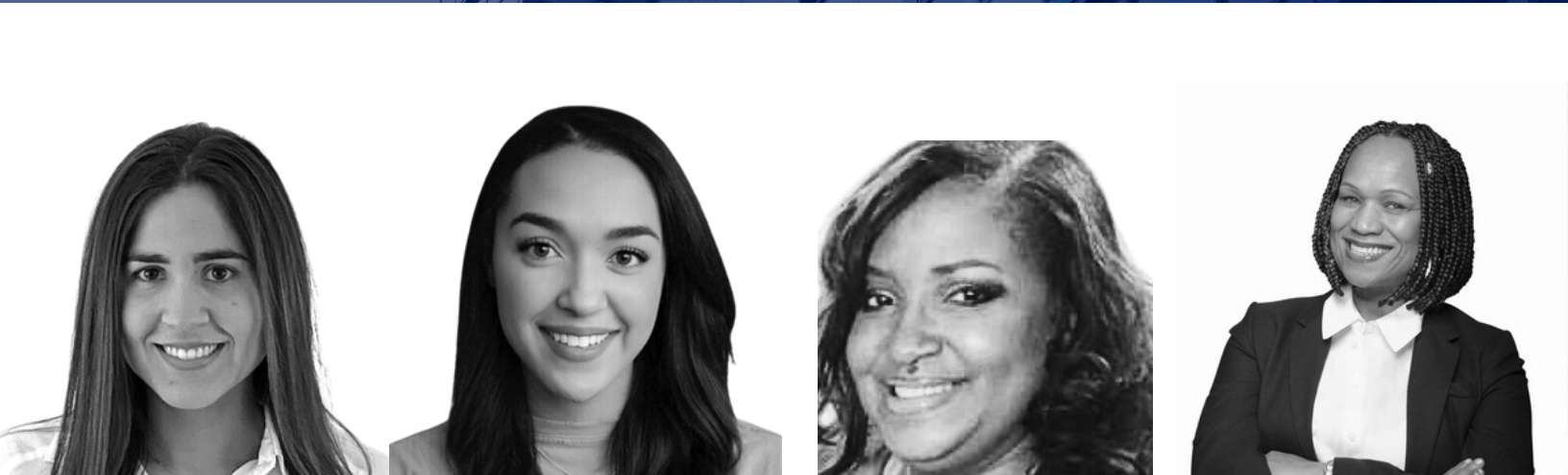
90

LISTINGS ON ONLINE HEALTHCARE  
DIRECTORY

200+



# Board of Directors



**Roya Assadi**  
Treasurer

**Nicole Morris**  
Chair

**Mitsy Clennon**  
Board Member

**Nicolette Stewart**  
Board Member

# Our Staff



**Abena Addo**

Executive Director & Founder



**Eldon Holder Jr.**

Director of Social Impact & Stakeholder  
Relations



**Alanna Garner**

Director of Camps & Programs



**Cassandra Brady**

Marketing & Communications Manager



**Kareen Smith**

Executive & Administrative Assistant



**Nemi Adoki**

Business Advisor



**J'mar Williams**

Wellness Basketball Program Manager



**Hailee McGibbon-Corbin**

Program Coordinator



**Jennelle Robb**

Events & Membership Coordinator



**Christian Poyser**

Head Coach

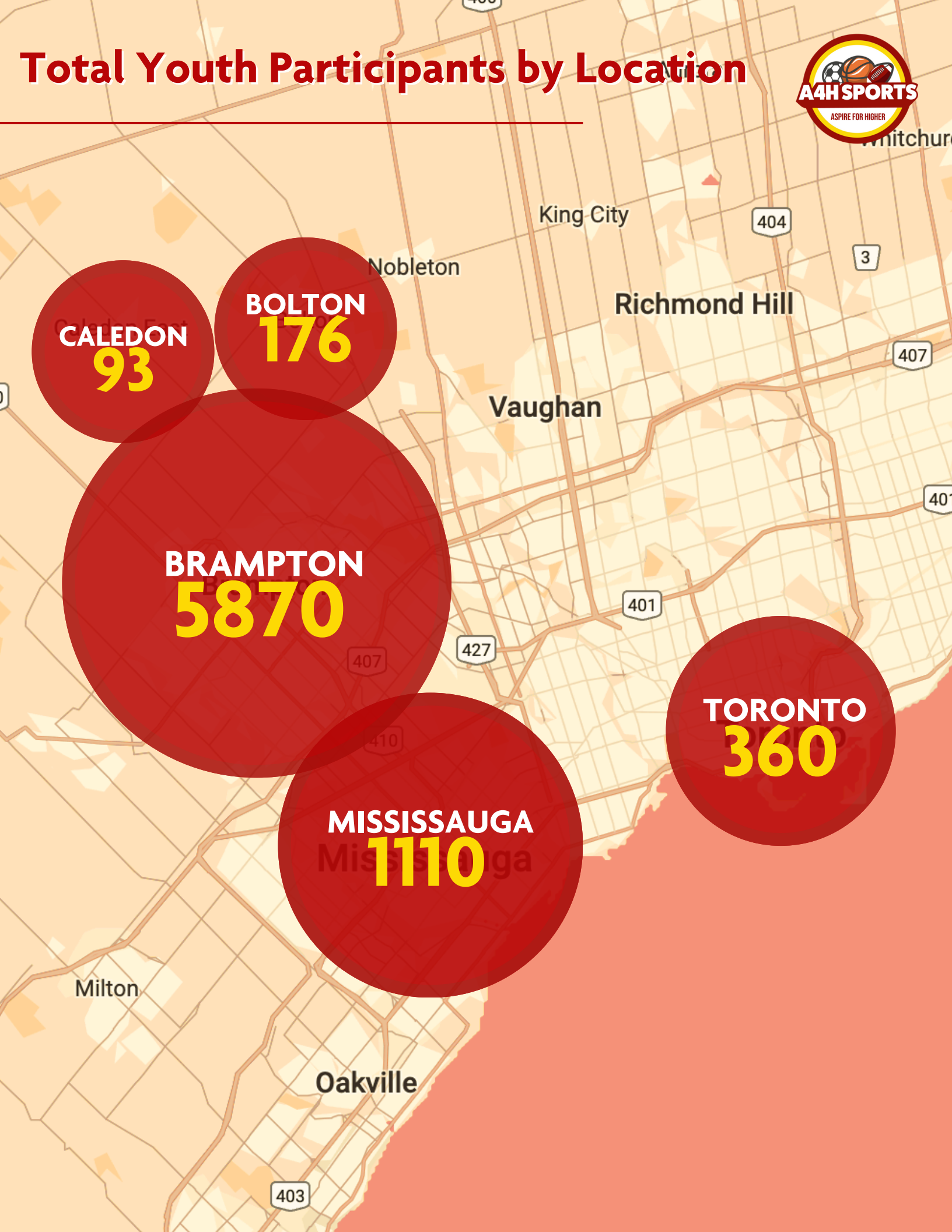
## Statement of Operations

	2023	2022
Total revenue	\$ <b>1,295,611</b>	\$ 1,558,449
Total expenses	\$ <b>1,533,208</b>	\$ 1,143,514
Excess (deficiency) revenue over expenses	\$ <b>(225,761)</b>	\$ 414,086
Net assets, beginning of year	\$ <b>609,823</b>	\$ 194,737
Net assets, end of year	\$ <b>384,062</b>	\$ 609,823



**A4H SPORTS**

# Total Youth Participants by Location



# Fall and Winter Programs



PARTICIPANTS

**301**

JOBS CREATED

**32**

## Programs Offered

- Jr. NBA ( 4 -7 years old)
- Development League (Grade 3 - 4)
- Development League (Grade 5 - 6)
- All Girls Basketball Program (Grade 1 - 8)
- Wellness Basketball Program (Grade 7 - 8)

**13**

# Wellness Basketball Program



Youth  
Served

**423**

Jobs Created

**13**

Instruction  
Hours

**203**

**Funded by:**



Public Health  
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé  
publique du Canada

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# Wellness Basketball Program



**96%**

of youth participants reported on the post program survey being satisfied with the program and would recommend the program to others.

**86%**

of youth participants reported on the post program survey that they were more knowledgeable about mental wellness after they participated in the program.

**84%**

of youth participants reported on the post-survey their mental health had improved as a result of participating in the program.

**100%**

all parents who completed the survey reported the program improved their children's physical fitness and mental wellness.

**93%**

of parents reported being satisfied with the program and would recommend it to others.



# A4H Summer Camps



Participants

**1832**

Jobs Created

**162**

**15**

# A4H Summer Camps



## Dufferin-Peel School Board

Aspire for Higher partnered with Dufferin-Peel to support their camps by providing multi-sport, STEAM, and mental wellness sessions for students in grades 3-8. These sessions were held at two locations, each accommodating over 100 kids, offering a balanced focus on physical fitness, creative learning, and mental health. The partnership aimed to engage and empower the youth through a well-rounded camp experience.



## Toronto Catholic School Board

Aspire for Higher partnered with the Toronto Board to deliver multi-sport and mental wellness sessions for students in grades 3-8. These sessions promoted physical activity through various sports, while also focusing on mental health and well-being. The goal was to engage youth in both physical fitness and personal growth.



## Peel School Board

Aspire for Higher Sports successfully partnered with the Peel School Board at their Africentric Camp to deliver physical literacy and wellness sessions to campers in Kindergarten to Grade 6. The young participants engaged in a variety of activities, including running and dodging games, target games, soccer, and basketball. These sessions helped the children develop essential teamwork and cooperation skills while fostering a growing passion for physical activity. Additionally, they learned about the importance of maintaining a healthy body, laying the foundation for lifelong wellness habits!



## Skilled Trade Truck Activation

The Skills Ontario Skilled Trade and Trades Truck Event in Brampton aimed to inspire Black youth between 10 and 17 years old to pursue careers in the trades. Over 200 students participated in hands-on activities, including building birdhouses and learning about career pathways in the trades.



# Phys-ed Takeovers



PARTICIPANTS

**4578**

SCHOOLS VISITED

**19**

## Impact

- **New Perspective on Teaching:** Observing different teaching styles, drills, and activities can inspire fresh ideas and broaden the approach to physical education.
- **Reflection on Physical Literacy:** A successful takeover can reinforce the importance of physical literacy and overall well-being in school curriculums.
- **Increased Engagement:** A new instructor can re-energize students, making them more engaged and excited about the class.

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# BHPN

## The Black Healthcare Professionals Network

[View BHPN's complete 2023 Impact Report](#)

Funded by:  
Federal Economic Development  
Agency for Southern Ontario

Financé par :  
Agence fédérale de développement  
économique pour le Sud de l'Ontario

Canada

# Advisory Board



**Chantel Smith**  
Sr. Manager,  
Marketing  
Partnerships | NBA



**Raquelle Forrester**  
Director, Primary  
Healthcare Services



**Shelley Philip LaForest**  
RN, BN, MN, CVAA(c),  
PhD Student



**Lyndsay O'Brecht**  
MD



**Sean Wharton**  
MD



**Millicent Dampare**  
Human Resource  
Professional



**Gladys Osien**  
JD



**Michael Yat**  
Real Estate Broker,  
Entrepreneur, Investor



**Manny Ewara**  
Strategic Team Lead -  
Oncology in the  
Market Access &  
Strategic Customers  
Department

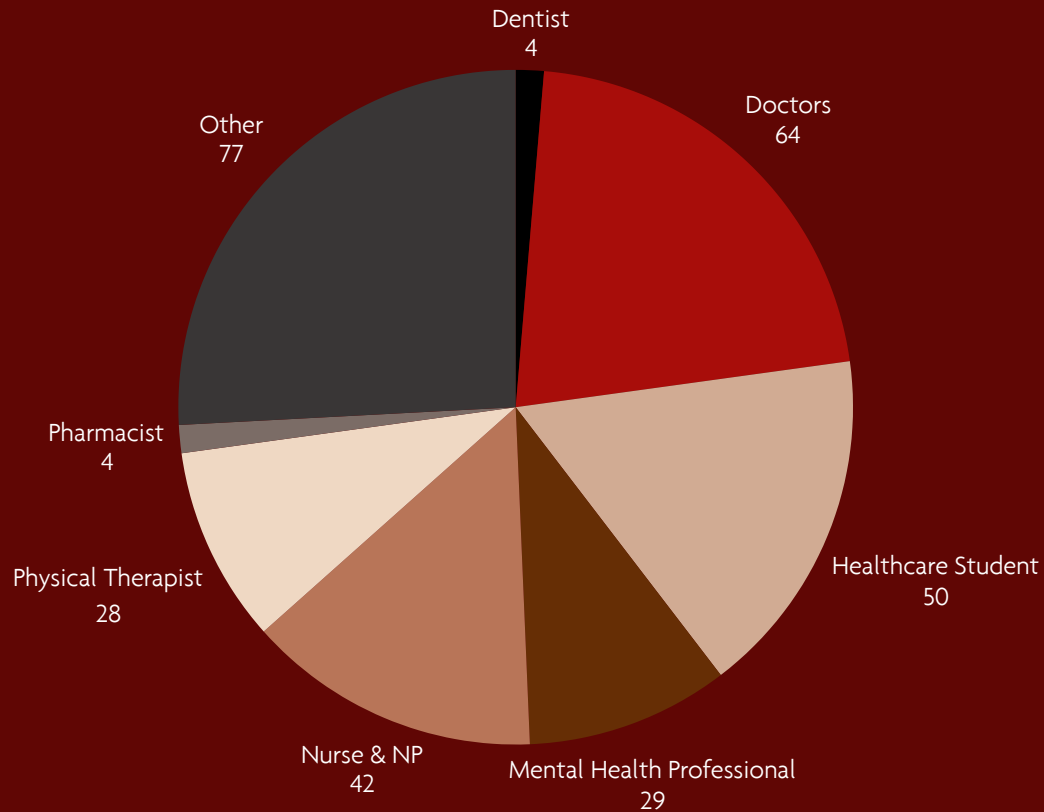
# Key Impacts

## Our Community

BHPN MEMBERS

300

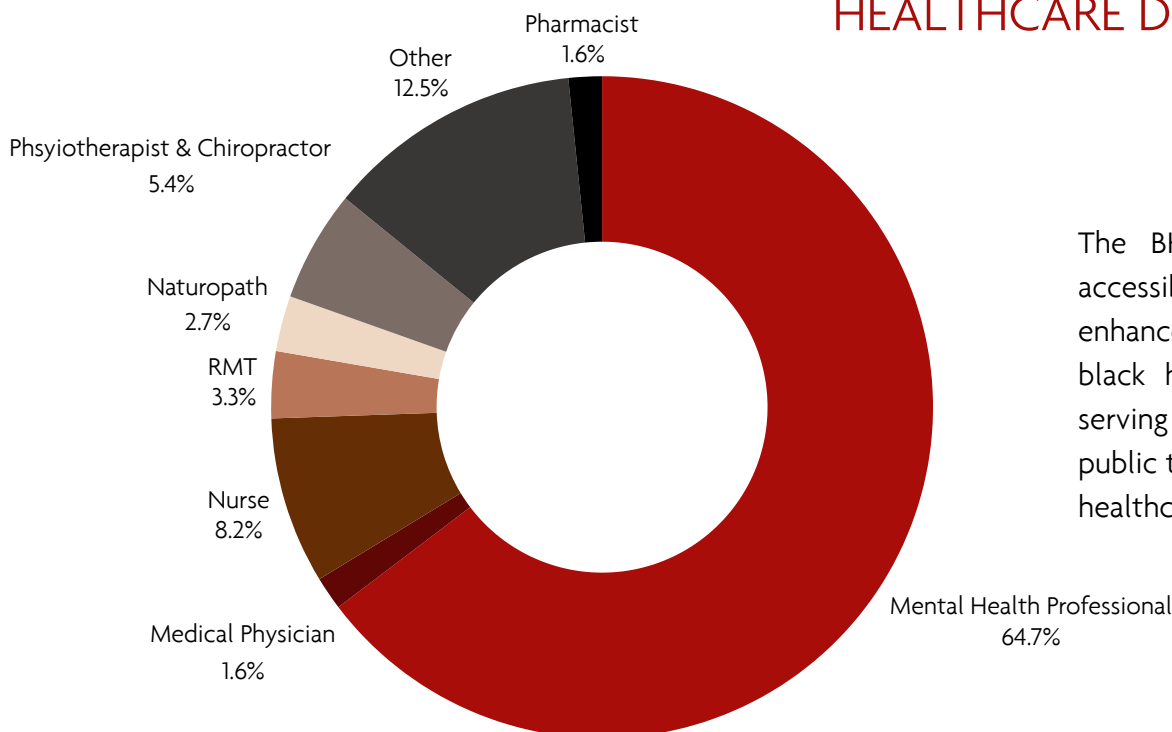
BHPN members are a diverse community of healthcare entrepreneurs and business leaders who benefit from a comprehensive range of services, including mentorship, business advisory support, networking events, and strategic business partnerships.



LISTINGS ON ONLINE  
HEALTHCARE DIRECTORY

200+

The BHPN Directory is a publicly accessible directory in Canada that enhances business opportunities for black healthcare professionals while serving as a valuable resource for the public to easily locate and access their healthcare services.



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# Key Impacts

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TIMES WE'VE SUPPORTED MEMBERS

**357**

HOURS OF CLIENT-FACING SERVICE IN TOTAL

**346**

WORKSHOPS EXECUTED & CURATED

**23**

UNIQUE BUSINESS ADVISORY SERVICES ADMINISTERED

**119**

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

**31**

**22**



**BHPN**

Black Healthcare  
Professionals Network

# 2023 TIMELINE

## February

- Meeting with the Honourable Minister Tassi
- Hired Events Manager and Project manager
- Partnership with BPAO for symposium

## March

- BHPN grows to 100 members

## May

- Beta version of the directory is complete

## June

- 4 community consultations for directory
- Onboarding of full-time in-house Business Advisor

## July

- BHPN partnered with BPAO at the Incoming Medical Student Social Boat Cruiser
- Hired 5 Community Engagement Coordinators
- Launched “Be Found” directory campaign
- Dinner & Drinks networking event in Markham

## September

- Official launch of BHPN Directory
- Hosted sold out “Healthcare Connections” launch event in Toronto
- Co-Founders completed 19 unique interviews with media

## November

- Hosted a sold out networking dinner in Ottawa
- BHPN grows to 300 members
- Launched Mentorship Program Cohort 1

## December

- Attained 200 profile listings on BHPN Directory
- Delivered over 300+ hours of business advisory to members through 1 on 1 support and workshops



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Events were hosted, partnered or attended by the Black Healthcare Professionals Network in 2023.

	HOSTED	PARTNERED	ATTENDED
YEAR TOTAL	7	4	3
TOTAL ATTENDEES REACHED			2280

## Healthcare Connections: Directory launch + Building Businesses with Purpose & Improving Access

The BHPN Directory Launch Event on September 16th marked a momentous occasion as we commemorated the introduction of a groundbreaking directory designed to address gaps in Canadian healthcare. The event featured a panel discussion moderated by Abena Addo, joined by panelists included Dr. Nik Whyte MD, Carl Carter RMT PTS, Dr. Sean Wharton MD, Alice Wiafe, M.A. RP. PSY(D), Can, and Dr. Joan Samuels-Dennis, RN, PhD.

# Contact Us



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