

# TOGETHER, WE CAN BUILD STRONGER COMMUNITIES



**ASPIRE FOR HIGHER**  
*IMPACT REPORT 2024*



ASPIRE FOR HIGHER

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# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Dear Friends, Partners, and Supporters,

2024 was a milestone year for Aspire for Higher. After two years of development, we proudly launched the A4H Skills Lab - a skilled trades program designed to expose youth to hands-on training and career pathways in the trades. This initiative marks a bold step in our mission to expand economic opportunities for youth and young people, and we are deeply grateful to the passionate and talented staff who joined our team to bring this vision to life.



This year also saw us deepen our relationships with school boards. Through enhanced partnerships, we expanded our reach and delivered high-quality wellness, STEAM, and physical literacy programming to even more students across the GTA. These partnerships remain a cornerstone of our community impact.

In April, the Black Healthcare Professionals Network (BHPN) hosted its first-ever sold-out awards ceremony, recognizing Black excellence and leadership in healthcare. It was a powerful evening that underscored the value of community, connection, and celebration. We continued building on that momentum by launching our subscription-based membership model in September—strengthening our network and creating a more sustainable foundation for growth.

Each milestone we've achieved this year - whether through a new program, an expanded partnership, or a moment of celebration - has been made possible by the incredible support of our community. To our partners, funders, team members, and participants: thank you for believing in this work.

With gratitude and continued resolve,

**ABENA ADDO**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



ASPIRE FOR HIGHER

# OUR STORY

Mission & Core Values



# OUR MISSION & VISION

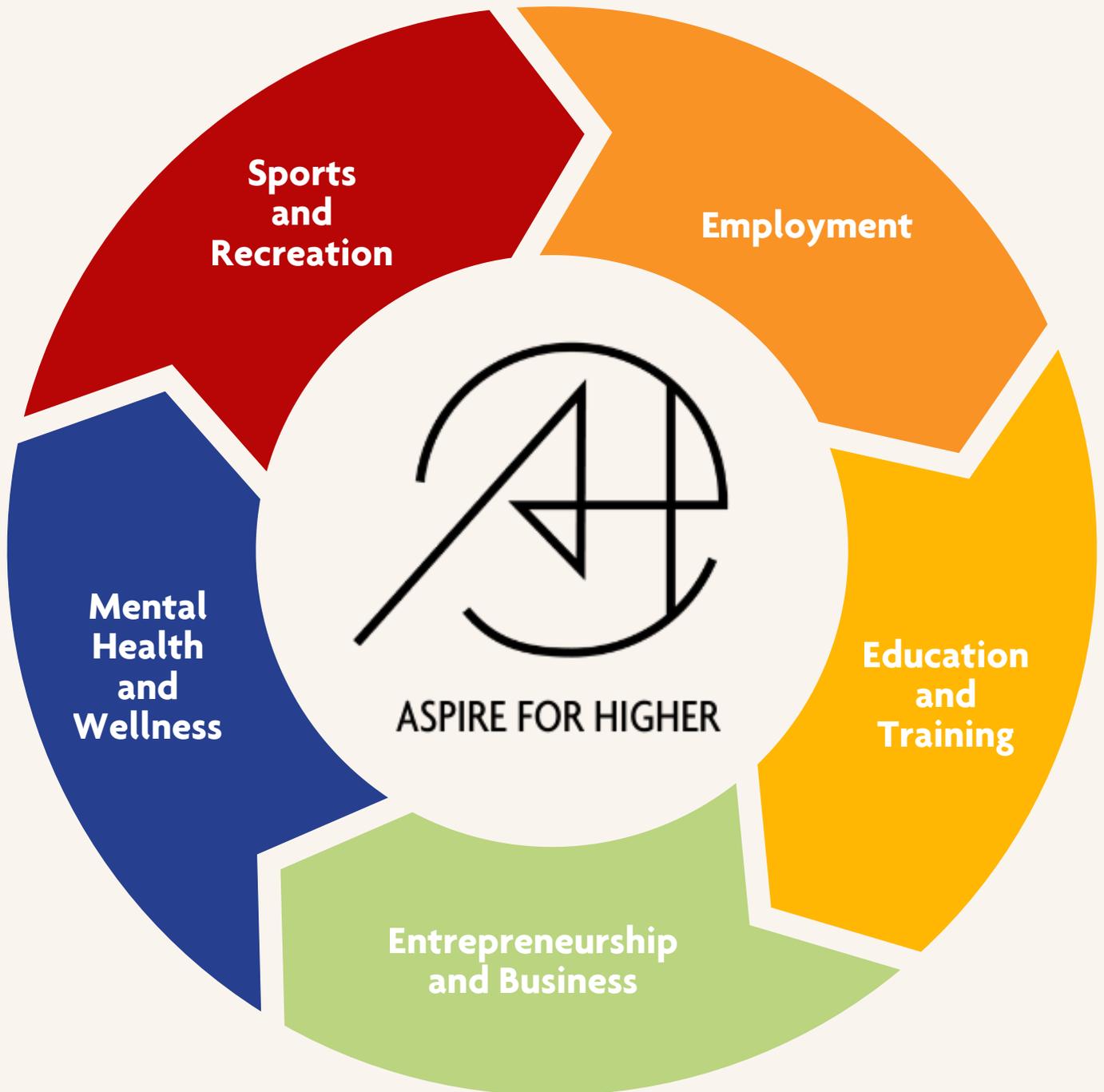
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At A4H, **our mission** is to fortify the foundation of communities by leveraging the power of sports, health & wellness, education, employment, and entrepreneurship. We are a data-driven organization unwavering in our dedication to empower youth, 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 three key initiatives:

- **A4H Sports** - launched in 2013 to foster mentorship, leadership, and wellness through youth sports.
- **Black Healthcare Professionals Network (BHPN)** - established in 2021 to offer business support and advancements for Black healthcare entrepreneurs.
- **A4H Skills Lab** - launched in 2024, is dedicated to providing accessible and tailored learning opportunities in skilled trades and other in-demand industries.



# KEY IMPACTS

JOBS CREATED

125

YOUTH SERVED

7415

ADULTS SERVED

770

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS ESTABLISHED

75

BUSINESSES SUPPORTED

260



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**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



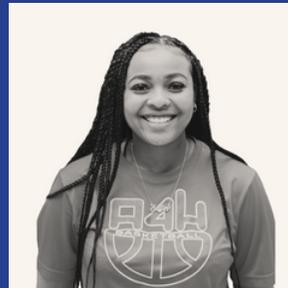
**Nemi Adoki**

Business Advisor



**J'mar Williams**

Wellness Basketball Program Manager



**Hailee McGibbon-Corbin**

Program Coordinator



**Jennelle Robb**

Events & Membership Coordinator



**Christian Poyser**

Head Coach



**Marissa Birkett**

Community Outreach Coordinator

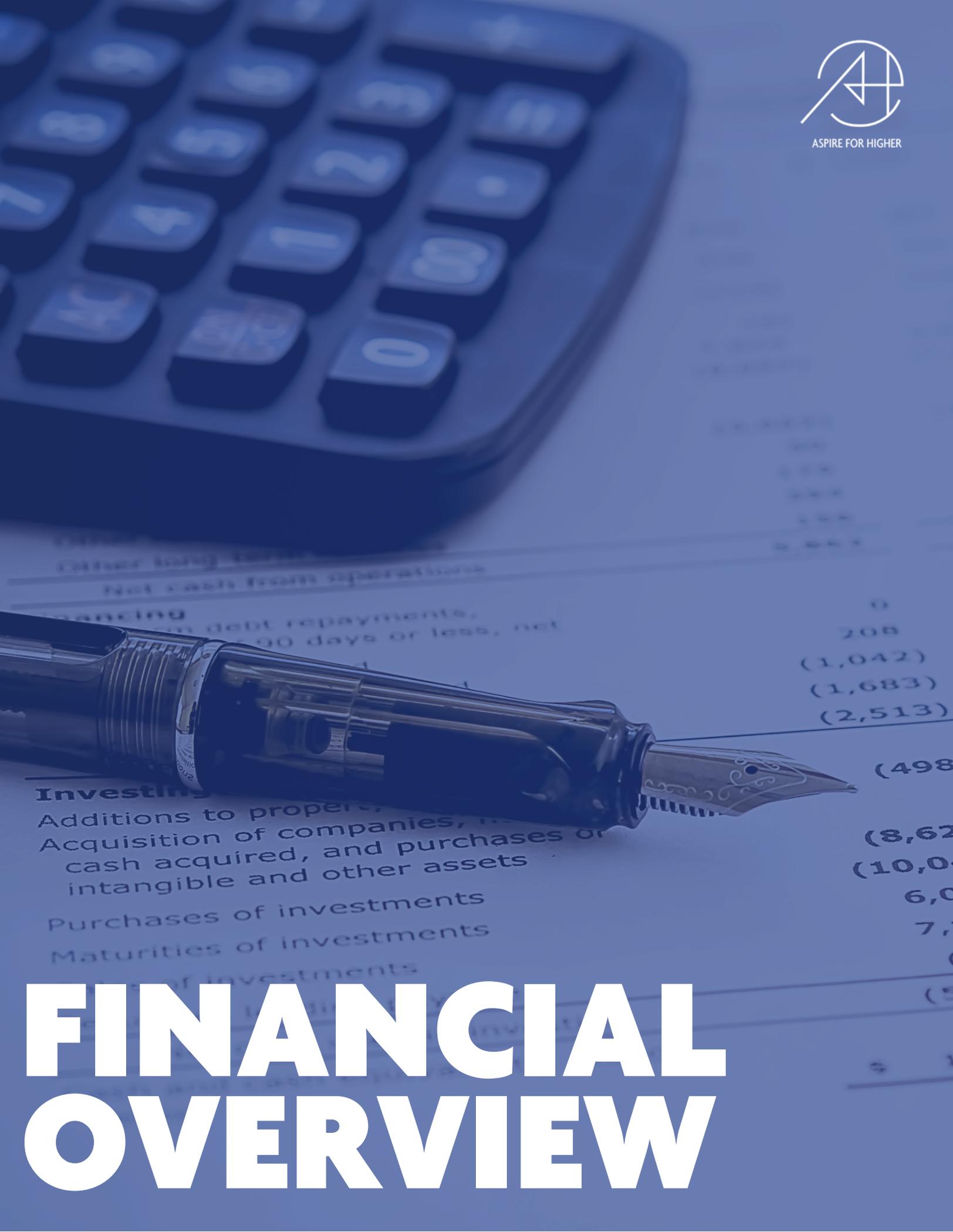


**Arka Roy**

Program Outreach Coordinator



ASPIRE FOR HIGHER



# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

# FINANCES

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## Statement of Operations

	2024	2023
Total revenue	<b>\$ 2,106,474</b>	\$ 1,295,611
Total expenses	<b>\$ 2,124,333</b>	\$ 1,533,208
Excess (deficiency) revenue over expenses	<b>\$ 25,132</b>	\$ 225,761
Net assets, beginning of year	<b>\$ 384,062</b>	\$ 609,823
Net assets, end of year	<b>\$ 406,194</b>	\$ 384,062



# A4H SPORTS

Program Highlights



# SCHOOL PROGRAMS



## Programs Offered

- Jr. NBA (4 -8 years old)
- Basketball Skills & Drills (9-14 years old)
- All Girls Basketball Program (6-14 year old)
- PLASP
- Physed Class Takeover

Jobs Created

16

Schools visited

48

Youth Served

6,070

## PARTNERED WITH:



# A4H SUMMER CAMPS



Participants

**1110+**

Jobs Created

**60**

# A4H SUMMER CAMPS



## **A4H Camps:**

We successfully hosted four independent sport camps this season, employing over 60 youth and serving more than 1,000 campers. The camps focus on developing physical literacy by introducing participants to a variety of sports while fostering teamwork, communication, and leadership.

## **Active Harmony Camp:**

Through the Active Harmony Camp we equipped 10 high school youth with transferable leadership skills, employment experience, and confidence to succeed beyond the camp setting. At the same time, it provided 60 children in Grades 1–6 with accessible and inclusive opportunities to engage in sport, art, and wellness activities that fostered creativity, teamwork, and healthy habits. By developing young leaders and connecting them with younger children, the program strengthened mentorship and built a more resilient community.

## **Africentric Camp:**

We partnered with the Peel District School Board's Africentric Camp to run physical literacy and wellness sessions for Kindergarten to Grade 8. Rooted in African-Centred Pedagogy and Caribbean cultural traditions, the program fostered self-confidence, pride in identity, community connection, and teamwork through music, art, dance, storytelling, and sport. 200 students left with stronger wellness habits and the empowerment to take on leadership roles in their schools and communities.

# TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

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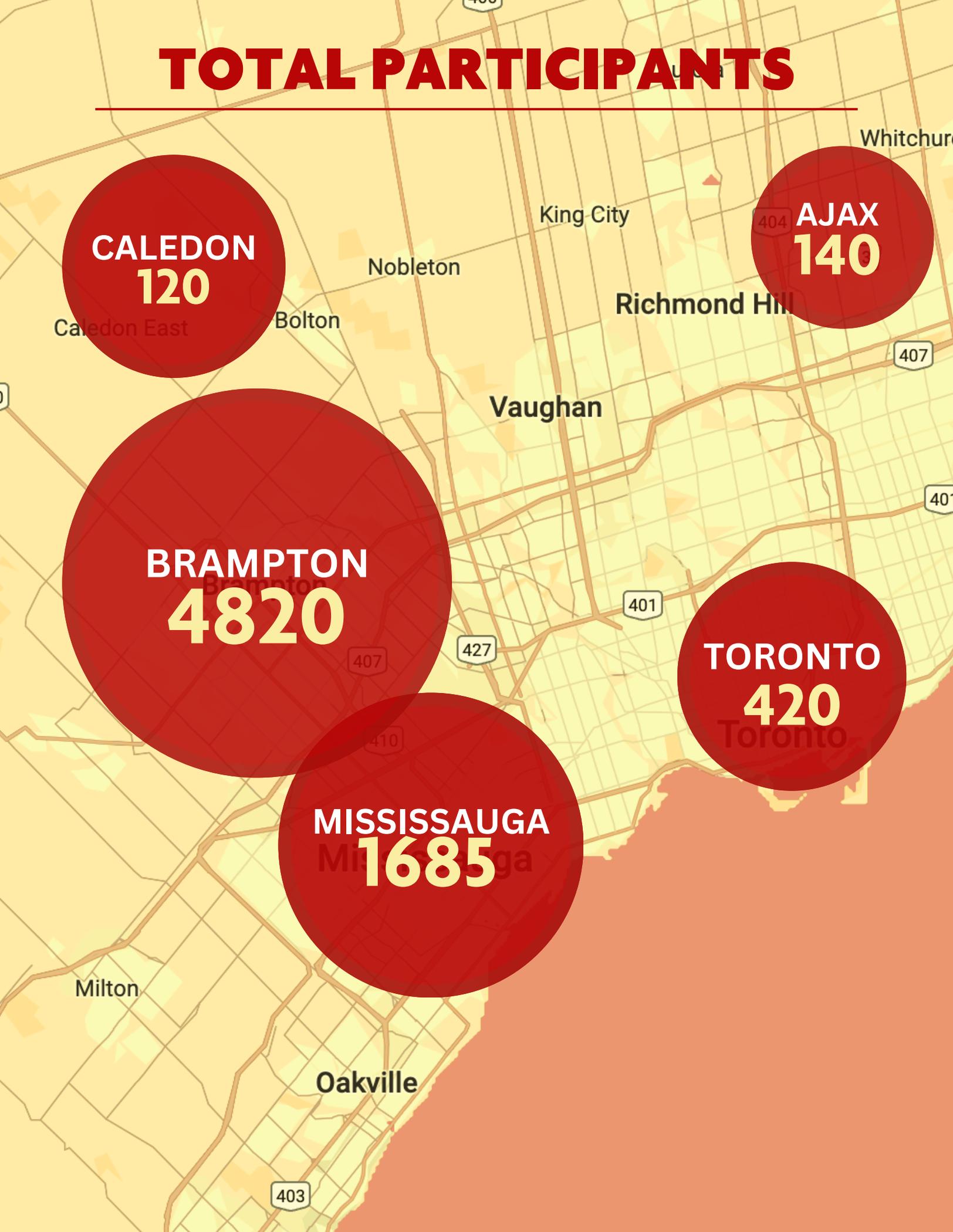
CALEDON  
120

AJAX  
140

BRAMPTON  
4820

TORONTO  
420

MISSISSAUGA  
1685



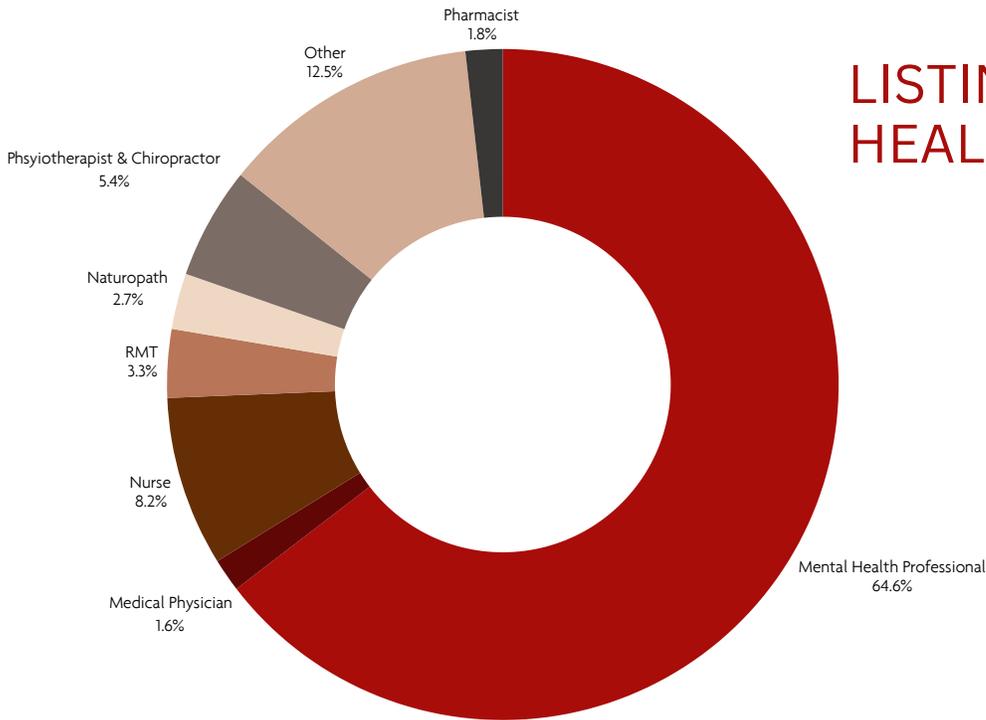
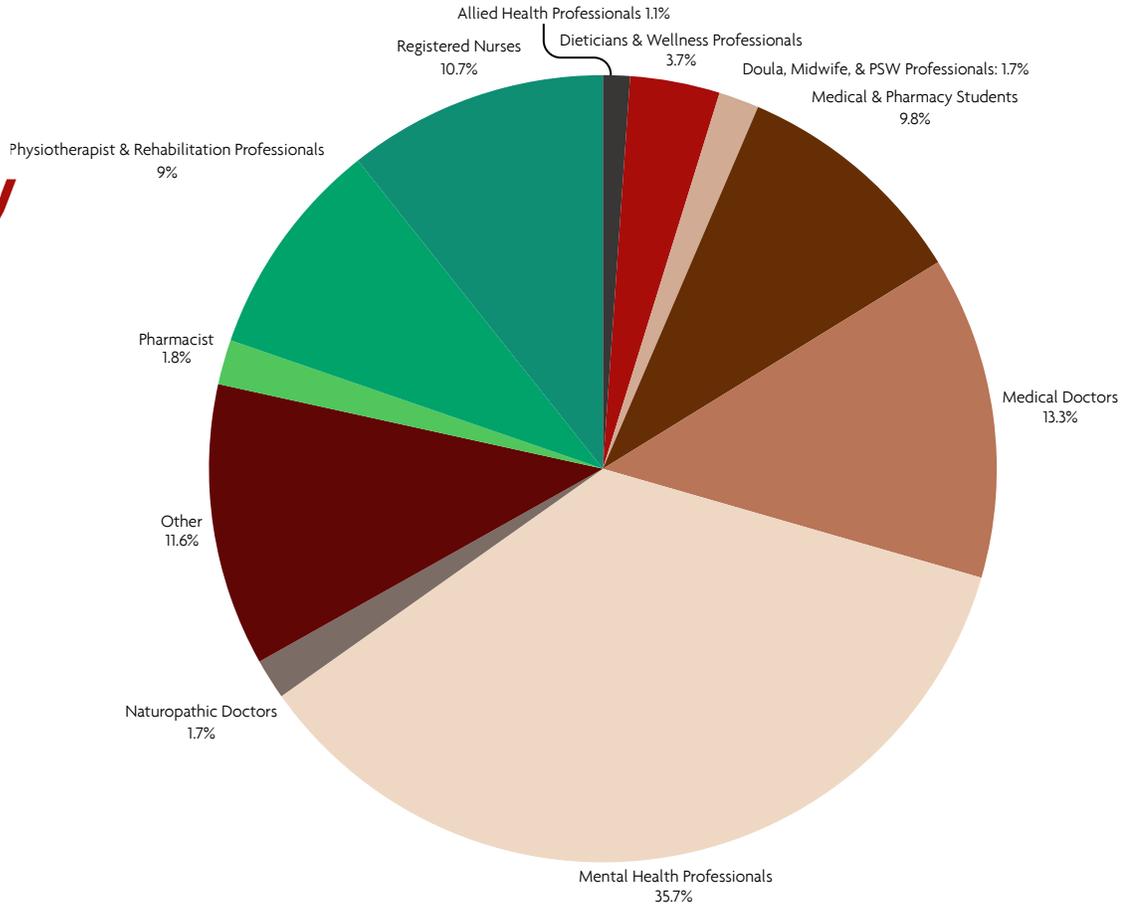


# BHPN

The Black Healthcare Professionals Network

# KEY IMPACTS

**Our Community**  
**BHPN MEMBERS**  
**543**



**LISTINGS ON ONLINE  
 HEALTHCARE DIRECTORY**

**272**





# 2024 TIMELINE

## January

- Participated as a vendor at the 15th Annual Health Symposium hosted by the Black Physicians' Association of Ontario (BPAO).

## March

- **Major milestone of 300 members.** We also hosted an impactful Human Resources Workshop supporting members in navigating hiring, compliance, and workplace culture.
- Launched Business Advisory Services College - a 10 part webinar series to support members with business growth and strategy.

## April

- Hosted its inaugural **Canada Health Heroes Awards** in collaboration with CIBC. The sold-out event welcomed over 300 guests and honoured three healthcare professionals making a significant impact.

## May

- Launched a 3-part webinar series, Unleashing AI in Healthcare, in partnership with WaiveTheWait, exploring the role of AI in equitable care and innovation.

## July

- Launched a member outreach campaign to assess the needs and concerns of our community. The insights gathered helped shape upcoming initiatives and partnerships.
- **BHPN reaches 500 members.**

## September

- Hosted Evolving with Purpose, an intimate networking event in collaboration with Intuit Canada at The Well in Downtown Toronto.
- **Launch of tiered subscription model**

## November

- BHPN entered the final stages of completing its internal member portal.

## December

- BHPN finalized a strategic partnership with Practice Better to expand access to business tools and EHR support.

# ADVISORY BOARD

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**Manny Ewara**

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



**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

# EVENTS



9

Events were hosted, partnered or attended by the Black Healthcare Professionals Network in 2024.

	HOSTED	SPONSORED	ATTENDED
<b>YEAR TOTAL</b>	5	3	1
<b>TOTAL ATTENDEES REACHED</b>	1855		



# EVENTS



## Canada Health Heroes Awards

April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024 | CIBC Square



The inaugural **Canada Health Heroes Awards**, BHPN's flagship event, was a sold-out evening that welcomed over 300 guests. Attendees enjoyed a **three-course dining experience** and an engaging **panel discussion** before celebrating the achievements of three remarkable healthcare leaders: **Marci Gray** – 2024 Enterprise Excellence Award Recipient, **Dr. Onye Nnorom** – 2024 Community Healer Award Recipient, and **Leila Springer** – 2024 Health Humanitarian Award Recipient.



# OUR HEALTH HEROES AWARDS RECIPIENTS



**Marci Gray**  
Enterprise Excellence Award



**Dr. Onye Nnorom**  
Community Healer Award



**Leila Springer**  
Health Humanitarian Award

## Testimonials

*"Last week's gala was the pause I needed to confirm, remind and inspire me in this very impactful work."*

**-Simone Donald**

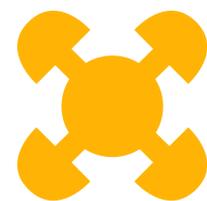
*"Thank you BHPN for the Community Healer Award! It feels so good to know my colleagues and community feel that I'm making a difference. It's been a long journey, never give up!"*

**-Dr. O Nnorom**

*"Yesterday was truly epic and a shining example of excellence within our community and the healthcare landscape. It was an absolute honor to attend and witness the brilliance of the melanated Kings and Queens who grace the event."*

**-Ovie Onagbeoma**





# A4H SKILLS LAB

In 2024, A4H launched the A4H Skills Lab to open pathways into skilled trades and in-demand industries. Our mission is to make these careers more accessible through hands-on training, mentorship, and support. By equipping participants with practical skills and confidence, we are helping bridge workforce gaps and empower individuals to build sustainable futures. This program focuses primarily on underserved groups: women, newcomers and justice involved youth.

## Program Highlights

# OVERVIEW



PARTICIPANTS SERVED

200

YOUTH SERVED

250+

In 2024, A4H Skills Lab advanced its mission through programs like the Extra-Judicial Employment Fast Track Program (EJEFT), the Skilled Trades Workshop, and Building a Better Workforce, equipping youth, newcomers, and early-stage trades professionals with the skills and support to succeed. By fostering workforce readiness and opportunity, A4H Skills Lab continues to build stronger, more inclusive communities.

Partnered With



# EXTRA-JUDICIAL EMPLOYMENT FAST TRACK PROGRAM (EJEFT)



Over 12 weeks, the fully subsidized EJEFT Program empowered adults to gain real-world experience in skilled trades like electrical, plumbing, and home renovation. Participants emerged ready to build meaningful careers, equipped with both practical skills and the confidence to succeed.

# OF GRADUATES  
**52**

JOBS CREATED  
**34**

Partnered With



# MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS



YOUTH SERVED

40

PARTICIPANTS SERVED

40

The MindWell platform has empowered our A4H Skills Lab participants to improve stress management, advance their professional skills, and build stronger community connections.

Through programs like the Take 5 Mindfulness Certificate, the Financial Freedom Series, and Career & Wellness Healing Sessions, our participants have gained practical tools and support to thrive both personally and professionally.

Partnered With  MINDWELL



# SERVICES DELIVERED



## Grocery Support

ADULTS SERVED

17

# OF SUPPORT DELIVERED

46

## Job Placements

ADULTS SERVED

31

PLACEMENT HOURS

14880

## Skilled Trades College of Canada Scholarship Instruction

ADULTS SERVED

65

HOURS ATTAINED

31200

## Housing Subsidies

ADULTS SERVED

10

UNITS CREATED

4

# OF SUPPORT DELIVERED

23



# STUDENT TESTIMONIALS



Arthur  
Toronto, ON  
EJEFT Program

“Before this program, I didn’t know anything plumbing. ... I don’t really shame myself for the past things I’ve done. [I’ve] dropped out of school [in] grade nine, I haven’t been back to school since then so I really didn’t know anything about school. This was all completely new for me, coming here (EJEFT Program). ... I didn’t want to get up and come here, it was too much for me. [I’m] not a morning person [and] then I don’t know, I just fought the battle I guess, I made it.”

## Nathan Edwards

Whitby, ON  
EJEFT Program



“Don’t be afraid to start something new. ... You don’t really want to kind of step away from that (football) and you know, start a new career path but like eventually, like everything comes to an end and it’s time for, you know a new chapter. ... You know, I was procrastinating like I wasn’t really going to do it (EJEFT Program) but I just [ended] up making that call because of them (cousins)... obviously Aspire for Higher for giving me the opportunity to go through this course.”





ASPIRE FOR HIGHER

## CONTACT US

[www.aspireforhigher.ca](http://www.aspireforhigher.ca)

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[@a4hsports](#)

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