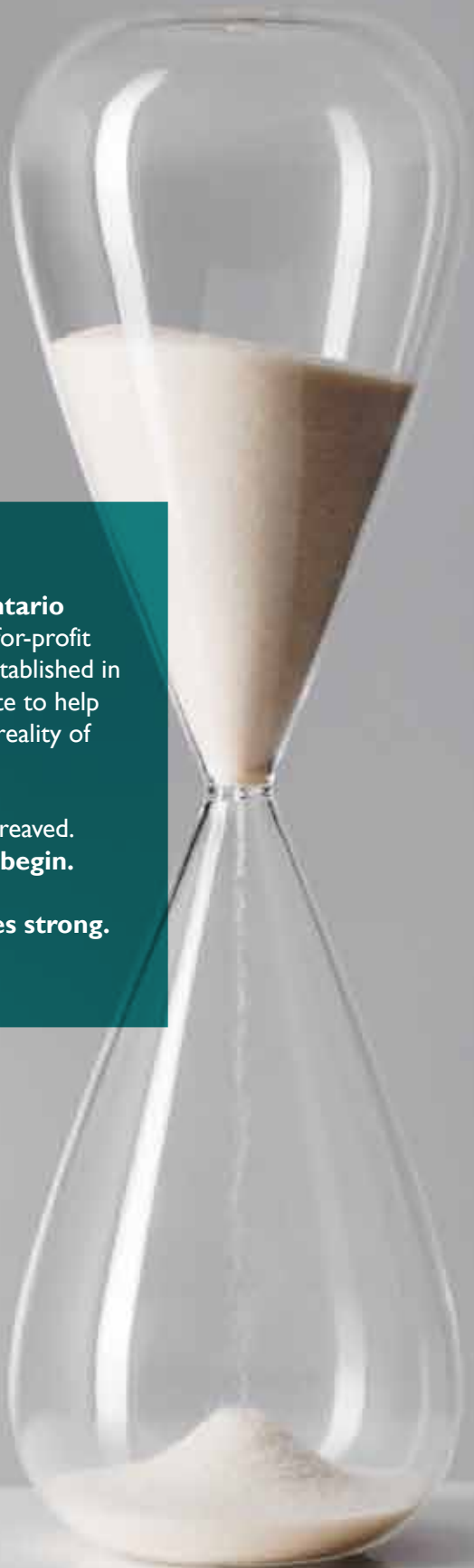




BEREAVED FAMILIES OF ONTARIO | SOUTHWEST REGION

# ANNUAL REPORT

**Time is not measured by clocks, but by moments.**



**Bereaved Families of Ontario  
Southwest Region** is a not-for-profit organization that was formally established in September 1984 with a mandate to help families cope with the painful reality of the death of a child.

The bereaved helping the bereaved.  
**We can help the healing begin.**

**We are 809 Member families strong.**

# MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

It's that time once again that I have the privilege to write to the members of Bereaved Families and report on our organization for the previous year. This has truly been an exciting year. From the transition to Cathy Howe as the new Executive Director, to new volunteers, more programs, topped off with a winter gala. I'm also happy to report the strong health and management of our beloved organization.

Just like many of you, I had worries about what the transition of Cathy Walsh from the Executive Director would mean for us. As I speak with many of you, the story always includes, "Thank God for Cathy". For over 30 years, Cathy Walsh has not only been the one who answers the door or the phone; she has been that compassionate voice who helped guide us in those moments of chaos and pain. From helping us make some sense of our reality, to connecting us with others with similar stories or just listening to us when we need to cry and mention our children's name to someone who will listen. Cathy has given us the space that is so crucially needed to heal. I'm sure I speak for all of you when I say it has been a joy to have Cathy Walsh lead our organization for a generation and her legacy will be one that can be felt for generations to come. It's also with great relief that we have Cathy Howe to fill this role and over the past year, she has proven herself to be the perfect successor to Cathy Walsh. Having them work together in the office over the past year has helped strengthen our programs and increased our ability to service our community.

Over the past year, we have also seen more participation in our services and events. Our mother's group continues to grow and many cherish the time they share together. We have also started a new father's group which many now look forward to each month. We have new small groups for families who need weekly support and we have supported our youngest members with new children's groups. There has also been an increase in new individuals supporting our Walk to Remember as well as our 5k Summer Run. We've also had lively evenings with one another including our much-loved Ladies Night Out Purse Party and we hosted our first Gala, which we will be looking at working into our annual events. I thank all of you for those who put in their time, effort and money to supporting our events which help us continue to grow our programs and services for our members.

I look forward to more time with many of you and greatly look forward to the year to come.

*Stephen Nelles*  
President





## OUR PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION

Many new member families start their journey with Bereaved Families at our regularly scheduled Monthly Meetings and Grief Support Groups. Monthly Meetings provide an opportunity for bereaved parents to gather together, share their experiences, and remember their children in a safe and understanding environment. Grief Support Groups are focused group meetings, designed to encourage our members to share their common feelings openly with other bereaved parents or with young individuals of the same age.

### **There are four Grief Support Group categories:**

1. Parents who have lost a child of any age.
2. Children age 7 to 14 who have lost a parent or sibling.
3. Youth age 15 and over who have lost a sibling or a parent.
4. Families who have experienced a miscarriage.

### **Additional Programs and Services include:**

- Infant Loss Groups
- One-to-One Support
- Guest Speakers
- Community Outreach
- Memory Garden
- Fundraising Events
- Annual Lecture
- S.T.A.R. Secondary School Program
- Adolescent and Youth Workshops
- Memorial Events

## Communication with membership is key to the success of our organization and ongoing support of our families.

- Each month **810 member newsletters** are created and sent to keep our membership up to date on upcoming events and meetings, as well as new services and programs.
- The Darren Walsh Memorial Library is a quiet and serene lending library with over **1,650 grief support books and publications**.
- Each new member receives a New Member Information Package that is designed to ensure that newcomers receive immediate support.
- Passages, a newsletter sent to **238 professional associates** twice a year.
- Our website is a user-friendly resource and includes an overview of our healing philosophy, calendar of events, tips for helping the bereaved and more. Visit us at: **[www.bfolondon.ca](http://www.bfolondon.ca)**
- Like us at **[www.facebook.com/bfosw](http://www.facebook.com/bfosw)**

## VOLUNTEERS

Thanks to the efforts and compassion of our family of volunteers, Bereaved Families of Ontario - Southwest Region is one of the largest chapters in the province.

A special thank you to each and every one of our valued volunteers. We are so very fortunate to have a dedicated team of individuals who provide leadership, facilitate Grief Support Groups, raise funds and participate on the Board and its subcommittees.

## OUR TEAM

### Professional Staff

Cathy Howe, Executive Director  
Cathy Walsh, Associate Director

### Professional Advisory Committee

Susan Alexander, M.S.W.  
Kylene Dube, M.S.W.  
Janice Gorodzinsky, M.S.W.  
Lisa Howe, B.S.W.  
Bo Venkatesan, M.D. Psych.

### 2016/2017 Board of Directors

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This year **60 volunteers** gave **2400 hours** of their time to our organization.



# EVENTS

## WALK TO REMEMBER

In its 19<sup>th</sup> year, the walk was held at Westmount Shopping Centre, with 212 walkers. Each year our "Wall of Memories" continues to grow. Special thanks to our MC, Julie Simpson.



## SUMMER NIGHT 5K RUN

The 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Run took place in July in collaboration with London's Runner's Choice store. This year we welcomed 380 participants including avid runners, first time joggers and even youngsters.

## BUTTERFLY RELEASE

This past June, 246 people gathered in this peaceful setting at Springbank Park to release butterflies in memory of our children. Our memory walls now hold the names of 276 beloved children.



## MEMORY LINKS GOLF TOURNAMENT

The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Tournament was held at Westminster Trails Golf Club this September and enjoyed by 120 golfers despite being cut short by the rain. Special thanks to our Golf Committee.







## LADIES NIGHT OUT PURSE PARTY

The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Purse Party welcomed over 230 women to browse and bid on a line up of purses, jewelry and accessories. Thanks to our new committee members!



## PREGNANCY & INFANT LOSS AWARENESS CANDLE LIGHTING

We were joined by 7 individuals who came together on this special day.

## WINTER WONDERLAND GALA

In November we held our first ever Gala at the Hellenic Community Centre. A crowd of 130 enjoyed dinner, dancing, live entertainment, as well as live and silent auctions. Special thanks to our Gala Committee for a job well done! Sincere gratitude to our Signature Sponsor, Cohen Highley Lawyers and our Media Sponsor, Free 98.1 FM Classic Rock.



## CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL SERVICE

In November we were joined by 200 families to celebrate our children- and the holiday season.

## ANGEL TREE

This year, the white lights of the Angel Tree were lit for 375 children. Thank you to the City of London Parks Department for their support and care in installing our lights. Thank you to the London Free Press for their generous sponsorship of our Angel Tree Memorial Listing in December.



Always defend your right to heal at your own pace.  
 You are taking your time.  
 You are allowed to take your time.     - unknown

# FINANCIAL REVIEW

	2016	2015
<b>Total Funds Raised</b>	<b>\$103,507</b>	<b>\$96,978</b>
Donations	10,363	21,360
Bingo	17,993	13,914
Provincial Nevada	8,252	11,409
Investment Income	-	668
The Angel Tree	13,702	13,900
Golf Tournament	5,474	7,024
Memory Garden	4,163	3,899
Summer Run	8,480	2,585
Walk to Remember	10,853	9,138
Purse Party	14,880	13,594
Winter Wonderland Gala	8,956	-
Merchandise	391	155
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$113,505</b>	<b>\$106,770</b>
Delivering our Programs	57,494	54,150
Grief Support Groups, Monthly Meetings and One-to-One Support		
Communicating with our Membership and the Community	29,495	26,400
Newsletters, Telephone, Postage, Annual Reports and Advertising		
Office Administration	26,516	26,250
Rent, Insurance, Supplies, Provincial Fees and Equipment		



# A Special Thank You to our Generous Donors

## BENEFACTOR

Cohen Highley LLP \$3,800  
Transportation Maintenance & Technology Association \$2,000  
Tom & Vicki Biven \$1,500  
Chris & Anna Celluci \$1,200

## HOSTS

CUPE 4222 • Jackpot City Gaming  
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London Parks Department • St. Justin's Parish  
Westmount Shopping Centre

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These include:

- Families and friends who make personal memorial gifts.
- Volunteers who selflessly donate thousands of hours each year to support other bereaved families and the organization.
- Employee charity funds, grants, church collections, and donations to the Darren Walsh Memorial Library.
- Sponsors who help through donating money, services, or gifts in kind.

If you would like to donate, visit us online today at [www.bfolondon.ca](http://www.bfolondon.ca) or mail your contribution to:

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Gifts in any amount are gratefully accepted. All donations are tax receipted.





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