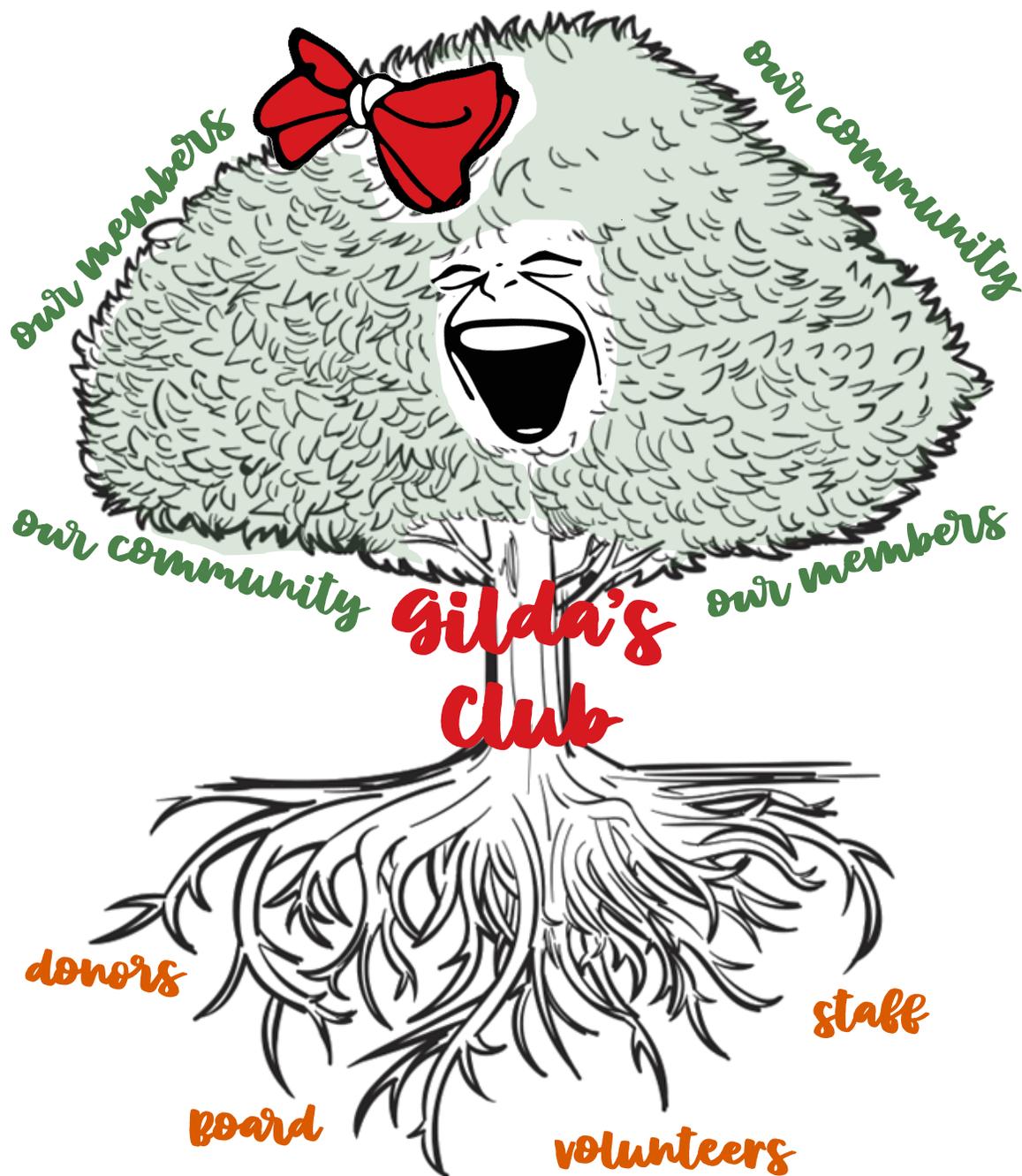


# Growing Stronger Together



**GILDA'S  
CLUB  
SIMCOE  
MUSKOKA**

## Gilda's Club Simcoe Muskoka 2022 Annual Report

The mission of Gilda's Club Simcoe Muskoka is to uplift and strengthen people impacted by cancer by providing support, fostering compassionate communities, and breaking down barriers to care.

An Affiliate of the  
**CANCER SUPPORT COMMUNITY**

# Our Growing Community

*“Blessed are those who plant trees under whose shade they will never sit.”*

Imagine Gilda’s Club Simcoe Muskoka was a young sapling of a tree planted just over 13 years ago, opening it’s Red Door for the first time to the community wondering what the future held. The care and support to grow this organization has been constant, and the results we see today is a tree that provides shelter and support for hundreds in our community.

The storm of the pandemic certainly shook our community. Still, we stand strongly in the face of cancer to provide a safe harbour for anyone impacted by cancer. We could not do this without the support that donors, supporters, volunteers, and our community provides. Our strength is your caring and empathy for the families under our care.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the staff of Gilda’s Club, we want to thank the many people who help us provide shelter to those in our community impacted by cancer.

**Domenic Maccarone**

Chair, Board of Directors

**aaron lutes**

Executive Director



## Member Gratitude - Greg Harbridge

As a lifelong boater, calm water makes for smooth sailing. However, when encountering rough water or unpredictable weather, a good navigator looks for safe harbour; a place of protection from the crashing waves to wait out the storm’s wrath. Although the storm cannot be changed, one can find shelter to endure what mother nature has presented.

In my personal life, it was smooth sailing along life’s pathway until I was diagnosed with cancer in January of this year. I found myself in the storm of my life. While I was grateful for the doctor saying “we are giving you everything we have”, I was overwhelmed. I was not prepared for what was forthcoming. The extensive tests, procedures, surgeries, treatment that followed seem unending. Uncertainty, fear and emotional trauma describes my situation well. I found refuge in my storm behind the **Red Door** at Gilda’s Club Simcoe Muskoka!

When I first started visiting Gilda’s, I didn’t want to share with others what I perceived as burdens, I just needed a place to take a break from the chaos. I soon learned that there is no judgement at Gilda’s. In fact, the only personal thing that people knew of me was that I am somehow connected to cancer and was looking for “something” to support that journey. This support is available to me in so many ways. I can socialize to whatever degree that I want or am able by participating in the many programs offered. My wife enjoys programs such as yoga, Pilates and other mindfulness or art classes. I often need a quiet place to grab a never-ending cup of coffee to collect or distract my thoughts; it is here that Gilda’s has me covered. They say that food feeds the soul and I have seen this in the soup and pancake socials, along with BBQ’s bringing those affected by cancer together. From counselling to networking, maybe laughter or even a tear or a hug, I see so many positive things going on at Gilda’s. The relationships I have made through my involvement with Gilda’s has reaffirmed my ability to endure this storm. Gilda once said “there is no real security except for whatever you build inside yourself”. Gilda’s Club has provided the conduit to do that for me.

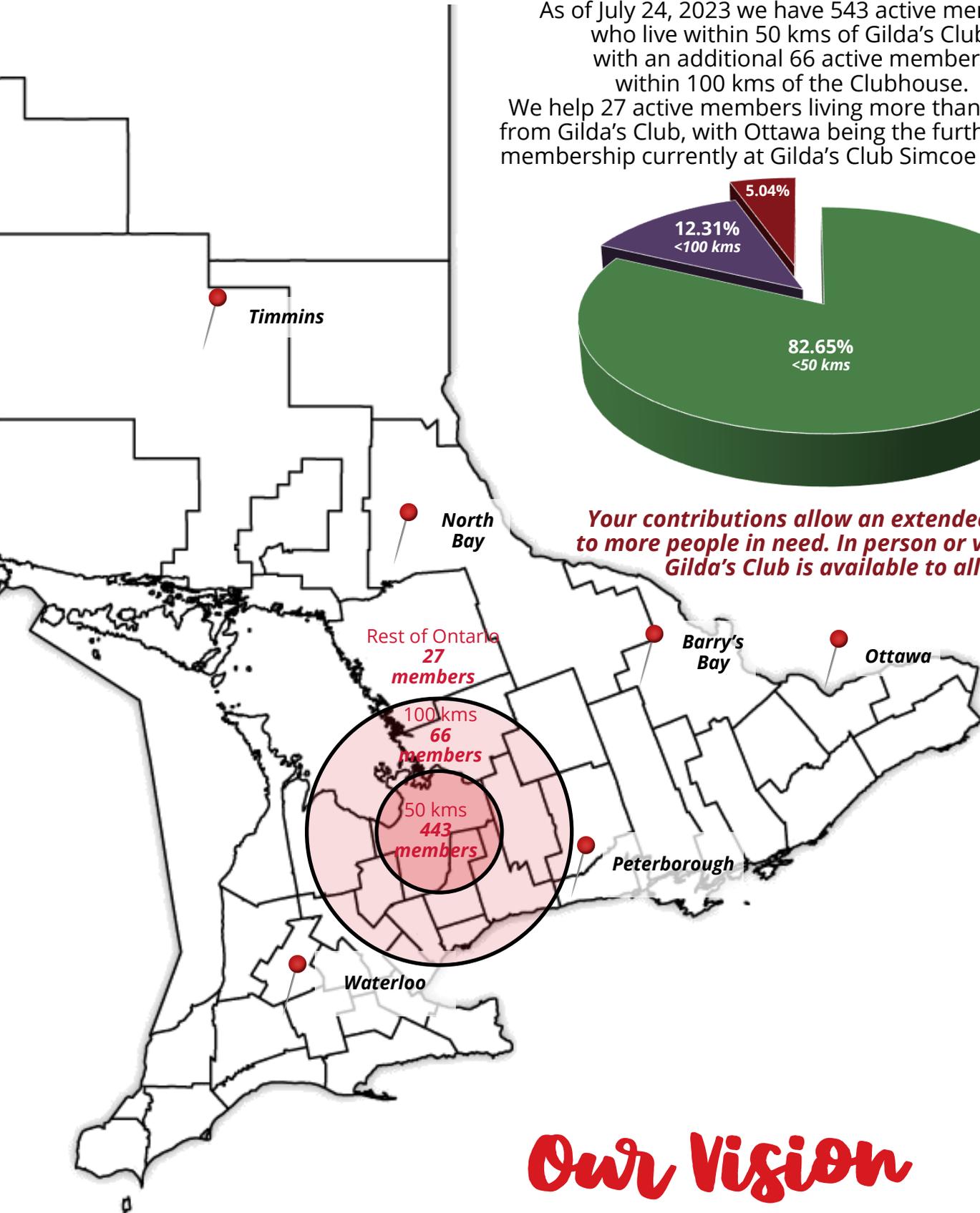
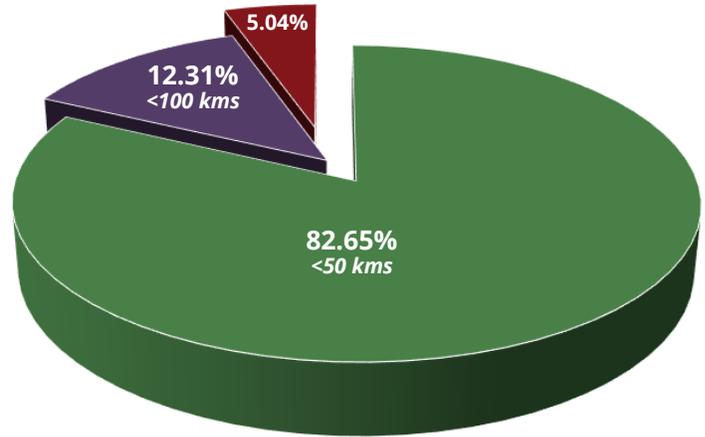
The reality is that what is behind Gilda’s **Red Door** became and continues to be a refuge in my storm. I am humbled and so grateful for this place. From the staff to the bricks and mortar, Gilda’s is special. To those who had the foresight to build it, those who run and volunteer here, and to those who support it in so many ways, I am deeply and forever thankful for you. Without you, I’d still be looking for my safe harbour.



## Q: Does my support stay local?

As of July 24, 2023 we have 543 active members who live within 50 kms of Gilda's Club, with an additional 66 active members within 100 kms of the Clubhouse.

We help 27 active members living more than 100 kms from Gilda's Club, with Ottawa being the furthest active membership currently at Gilda's Club Simcoe Muskoka.



*Your contributions allow an extended reach to more people in need. In person or virtually, Gilda's Club is available to all*

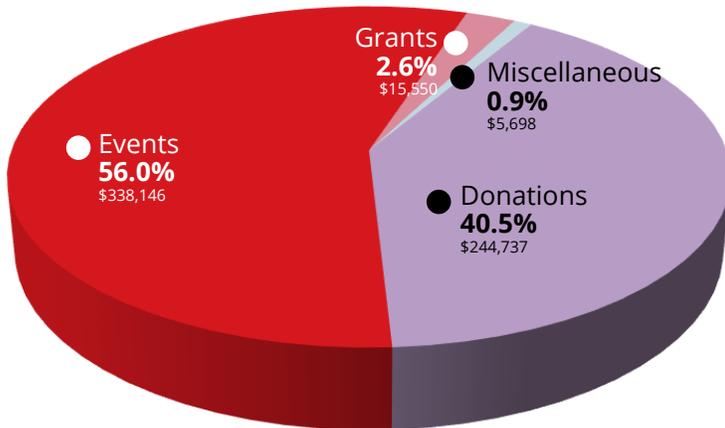
## Our Vision

Everyone impacted by cancer receives the support they want and need throughout their experience.

# The Balancing Act

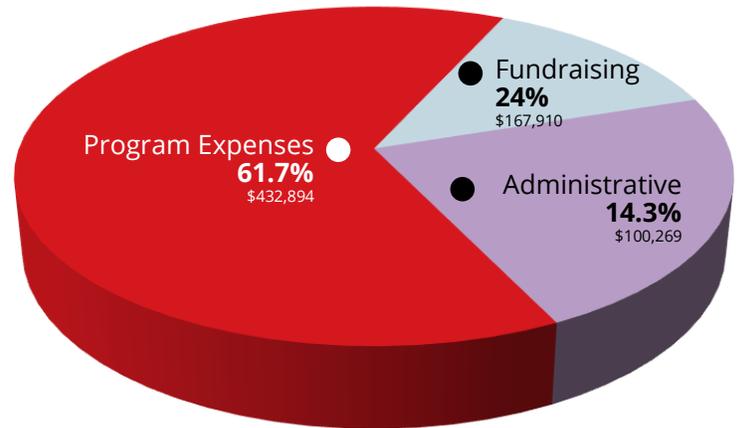
## Revenues

\$604,131



## Expenses

\$701,073



Gilda Radner was a cast member on the original Saturday Night Live. Gilda created a compelling character named “Roseanne Rosannadanna” who habitually ended her routine with the line, “It’s always something,” which was her father’s favourite expression about life. Radner chose the catch-phrase she made famous as the title to her brave, funny, and painfully honest memoir: the story of her struggle against cancer and her determination to continue laughing.

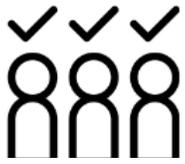
Gilda’s Club, a network of affiliate clubhouses that seeks to provide a social and emotional support community to people living with cancer, was founded in Gilda’s memory in 1991. The name of the organization comes from a remark Gilda once made, that cancer gave her “membership to an elite club I’d rather not belong to.” In partnership with Gilda’s Club, It’s Always Something includes valuable information for all whose lives have been touched by cancer and reminds us of the important place laughter has in healing.



Told as only Gilda could tell it, It’s Always Something is the inspiring story of a courageous, funny woman fighting to enjoy life no matter what the circumstances. She died in 1989. Gilda’s Club is distinguished by its unique philosophy and program, “cancer support for the whole family, the whole time.”

Gilda’s Club Simcoe Muskoka stewards a reserve fund titled “It’s Always Something” that currently holds \$750,000 for emergency needs. This fund is to ensure we have the resources we need to always provide support to people who need it. Our donor support is what ensures our programs remain free for all.

# Your Impact



**2834**

Total program visits



**164 Support  
Group Sessions**

128 Adult

36 Child/Youth



**17 New Members**

average per month



**468 Adult  
Activities**

2133 visits



**108 Child/Youth  
Activities**

65 Active registered youth

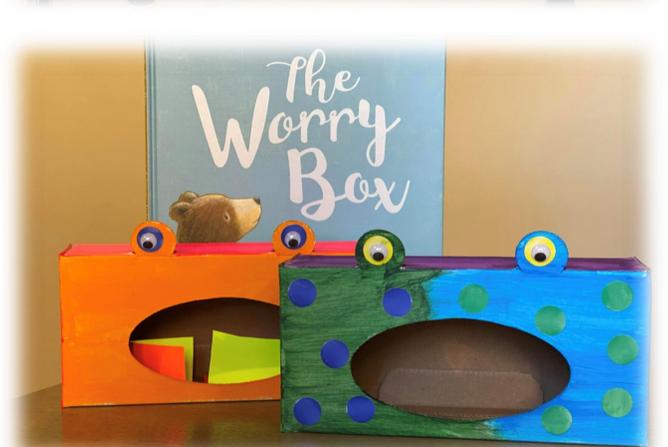


**472 Members**



**63 Volunteers**

Clubhouse support



# Our Members Share

“

I WAS A RECIPIENT OF ONE OF YOUR KITS WAITING FOR ME WHEN I GOT TO MY ROOM AFTER SURGERY. IT WAS SO THOUGHTFUL OF YOU AND THE VOLUNTEERS, THE HEART PILLOW MADE THE RIDE HOME COMFORTABLE, AND THE EXERCISE INFORMATION WAS VERY HELPFUL. THANK YOU THANK YOU.

DIANE B.

★★★★★

*What a great resource. The staff is wonderful and the peers are a wealth of support. A true ray of light in somewhat dark times..*

Kari M  
Google Review

“

I RECEIVED A KIT. I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW REALLY WHAT IT WAS. ON A DAY WHEN I NEEDED IT MOST IT FILLED MY HEART TO FEEL SUCH LOVE AND SUPPORT FROM MY COMMUNITY.

THANK YOU AGAIN.

★★★★★

*I would give more stars if I could, Gilda's has exceptional staff and facilities.*

*Gilda's has provided a safe space for our family during such a challenging time in our lives.*

*Thank you so much!*

Eric C  
Google Review



★★★★★

*Gilda's has been a source of strength and hope to me and my family. Gilda's staff and their programs, have supported me through my daughter's cancer journey and her death, and my husband's journey and death.*

*I don't know what I would have done without it. You get it, you know the devastation cancer brings to a family. I am eternally grateful. As a community we are blessed to have such a facility and staff, who's mission is that "No one faces cancer alone". Thank you*

Deborah M

“

GILDA'S CLUB IS A WONDERFUL PLACE FOR NOT ONLY PEOPLE BATTLING CANCER BUT FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS. THE MEMBERS AND STAFF ARE WONDERFUL AND THE SUPPORT IS SECOND TO NONE. IT'S A PLACE YOU CAN RELATE WITH OTHERS WHO KNOW WHAT YOU ARE GOING THROUGH AND CAN ALSO LET YOU KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT DURING YOUR JOURNEY TO BECOMING CANCER FREE.

GAYLE O.

★★★★★

*Gilda's Club of Simcoe Muskoka are providing a great service to people with cancer and their friends & family. They are so approachable, helpful & have a great selection of programs to help those afflicted by cancer.*

JL  
Google Review

“

I RECEIVED A KIT LAST JUNE AFTER MY SURGERY AND IT WAS THE BEST THING THAT I COULD HAVE RECEIVED. THE PILLOW WAS AMAZING AND SO GOOD TO HAVE THE BREAST FORM TO USE UNTIL I COULD GET A PROSTHESIS. THANK YOU SO MUCH

NANCY G.

*As a supporter and donor of Gilda's Club - you helped make all of this good work happen. Thank you.*

# The Difference Makers

## Board of Directors

Domenic Maccarone  
(Board Chair)  
Wade Burmister  
Christine Charlebois  
Penny Darragh  
Scott Fairley  
Patricia Gilbert  
Ankush Goyal

Kim Kieller  
Kelly Letourneau  
Lise McCourt  
Paulina Molnar  
Ashley Oliver  
Sarah Stewart  
Kelly Swift-Henderson  
Deb Van Natter

*Thank you volunteers for your leadership  
and your gift of time...*

Members of the Board of Directors of Gilda's Club Simcoe Muskoka are volunteers who provide governance and leadership to the organization. A volunteer is a person who by choice and without financial compensation contributes time and service to assist in fulfilling the mission and vision of Gilda's Club Simcoe Muskoka. The contributions of individuals who volunteer in governance roles (Board and committees) is essential to the future of Gilda's Club Simcoe Muskoka as well as to the daily life of the cancer support community.

## Program Facilitators & Staff

### Professional Support Group Facilitators

Erica Periera MSW, RSW | Fawn MacInnis MSW, RSW

### Workshop Facilitators and Volunteers

Jeff Aldridge | Lisa Cimino | Lauren Engel | Kim Evans-Milak | Doris Howell  
Brenda Light-MacKinnon | Graham Knight | Maja Ognajanovich | Katherine Parent  
Cindy Pilchuck | Kate Rea

### Staff

Tonya McKee MSW, RSW Program Director  
Jessica Ward MSW, RSW Part-Time Program Counselling and Group Facilitation  
Erin King HBSW, RSW Program Coordinator  
Tamara Christie HBSW, RSW Program Coordinator and CYF Programs

# Our Top Fundraising Priorities

PROGRAM  
IN PROCESS



**GILDA'S CLUB  
SIMCOE MUSKOKA**  
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## What is a Mastectomy Kit?

What is the **first thing** a Mastectomy patient is asked to do when they leave the hospital? **Put a seatbelt across your chest.**

We asked how can this community can help: Let's make some Mastectomy Kits that are free and full of valuable resources, information, and support.

### Step 1 (Summer 2020)

We had 3 volunteers come up with a kit that would help people with the next steps/chapters that follow a Mastectomy surgery. We got some donated materials, and started making kits!!



A: Heart-Shaped Pillow  
B: Japanese Knot Rag  
C: Temporary post-surgical breast form  
D: Foam Exercise  
E: String for exercises  
F: Resource Guide (this booklet)

### Step 2 (2021)

We asked Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie how many that they would need. "300" + "this year"

**We needed help!!**

Kempenfelt Quilters Guild to the rescue!

**RVH**  
Royal Victoria  
Regional Health Centre

We need  
300  
this year!



**Kempenfelt**  
Quilters' Guild

### Step 3 (2022/23)

Growing community, drop in cancer screenings = increased need

We need  
100  
this year!



We need  
120  
this year!



We need  
50!!



### Step 4 - Today

**550+ KITS**

Can you donate \$10 a month - a coffee a week? This helps build a kit and provides an hour of support a group. Maybe you can sew and help us meet the growing demand.



PROGRAM  
IN DEVELOPMENT



# Cancer Works

CancerWorks is a new program initiative aimed at helping employers support employees impacted by cancer.

CancerWorks is a way to connect cancer support to the workplace, and develop a permanent relationship with Gilda's Club Simcoe Muskoka.

*For more information about our programs  
or to make a gift, please get in touch.*



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**Gilda's Club Simcoe Muskoka**

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