

MIAG



CENTRE FOR DIVERSE
WOMEN & FAMILIES

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025



Message from the Chair of the Board & the Executive Director



This year marks the 35th anniversary of MIAG—a significant milestone in our journey of empowering communities. It also marks the conclusion of our five-year strategic plan, which laid the foundation for new growth and innovation. What began as capacity-building initiatives have now evolved into core programs, including employment bridging for women, community health and well-being, mental health awareness, and senior engagement.

Additional programs were developed for other community groups as funding allowed.



We've also transitioned from a COVID-19 response phase to a recovery phase, and from fully online programming to a flexible hybrid model - involving people where they are and respecting their comfort levels. Over the past five years of our strategic plan, nearly 24,000 individuals have participated in our programs. These engagements have led to meaningful, transformative outcomes: improved life skills, greater job readiness, increased resilience, informed decision-making, enhanced health and well-being, expanded social networks, and a stronger sense of belonging. It is always deeply rewarding to witness our clients grow and move forward positively in their lives.

Our MIAG Training Unit—dedicated to professional development for service providers - has grown into a well-known educational entity in the sector. With a skilled team, it delivers "train-the-trainer" models that build capacity across the field in emerging areas related to social development, mindset, and mental health. We are profoundly grateful to our Board of Directors, our tireless volunteers and students who have devoted thousands of hours to community service, and our dedicated staff who bring our mission to life every day. To our funders, partners, and supporters - thank you. Your trust and belief in us power the impact we make. Together, we continue to make a difference.

Nermin R. Foda
Chair of the Board

Huda Abbas
Executive Director

Board of Directors

Executive:

Nermin R. Foda, *Chair*
Shivani Parshad, *Vice Chair*
Jessica Bryant, *Treasurer*
Trisha Gangwar, *Secretary*

Directors:

Fauzia Khan
Susan Lee
Shalini Phillips
Varu Jawa
Mudassara Anwar



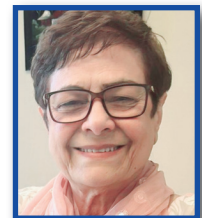
Nermin R. Foda



Shivani Parshad



Jessica Bryant



Fauzia Khan



Susan Lee



Shalini Phillips



Varu Jawa



Mudassara Anwar

MIAG's Staff



Staff Members



Sangeeta Raina



Daniel Valdivieso



Joy Edobor

Staff Members:

Huda Abbas, *Executive Director*
Farida Salahuddin, *Administrative Assistant*
Yasmine Behiry, *Operational Manager*
Daniel Valdivieso, *Social Media Specialist*
Kerri Lambie, *Project Coordinator*
Solinas Elgamal, *Project Coordinator*
Dalia Taha, *Project Coordinator*
Mayada Yousif, *Project Coordinator*
Sangeeta Raina, *Project Coordinator*
Joy Edobor, *Fundraising Specialist*
Eran Derandonyan-Asombang, *Accountant*

Resource People:

Doaa El Islambouly, *Project Evaluator*
Hana Murtaga, *Holistic Nutritionist*
Nahid Ameen, *Certified Nutrition Practitioner*
Fernanda Jarrin, *Fitness Instructor*
Noel Bhatia, *Yoga Instructor*

Program Facilitators:

Danielle Farrell, Asma Khan & Jessica Pochodaj - *ECCW Program*
Hassan Wadi & Rizwan Ahmed - *Youth Connection 101*

MIAG's Vision, Mission, Values and Clientele 2024-2025

Vision

Working towards an inclusive and a resilient community.

Mission

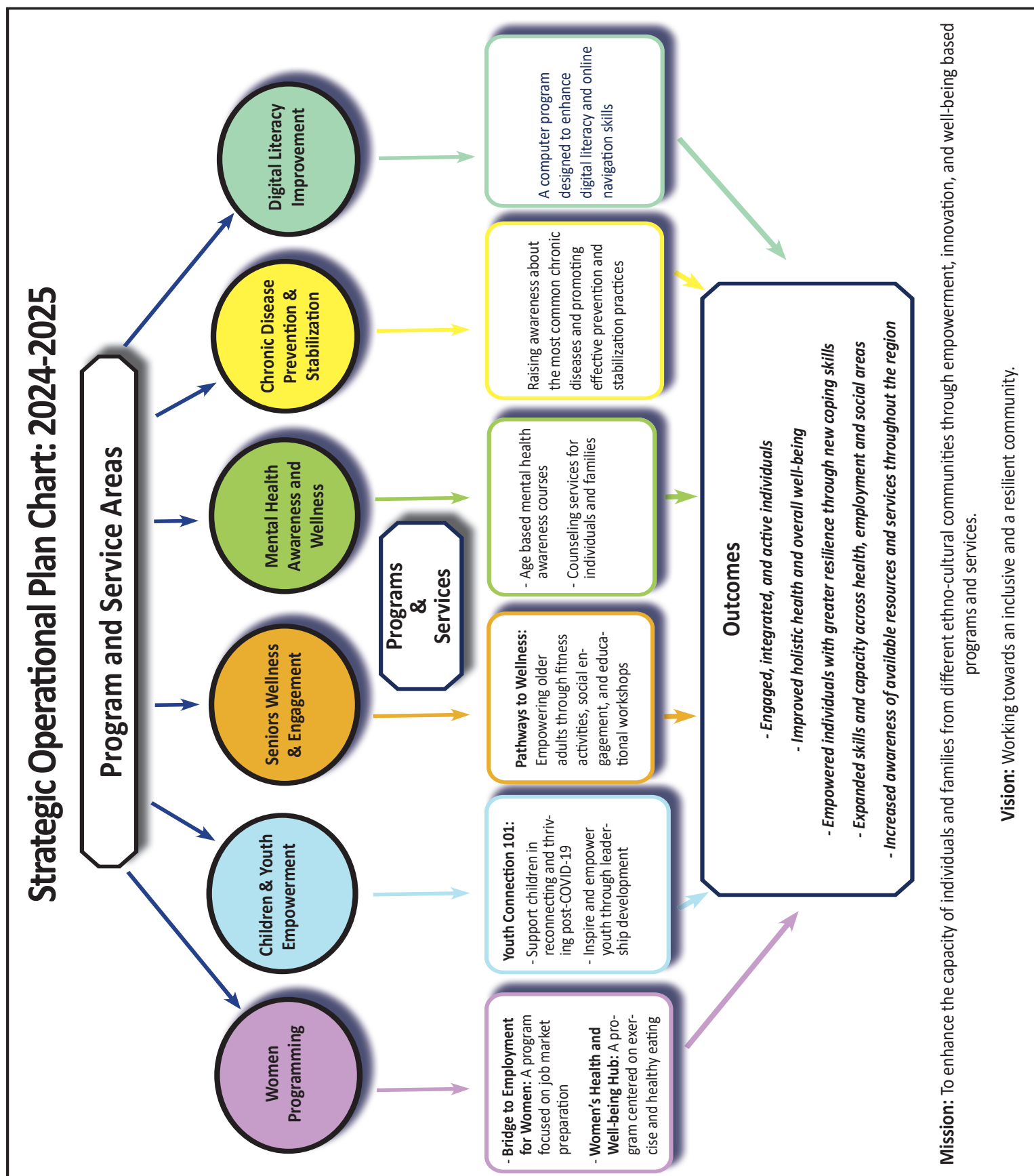
To enhance the capacity of individuals and families from different ethno-cultural communities through empowerment, innovation, and well-being based programs and services.



*In the past fiscal year, MIAG supported **4,616** individuals, with a total of **13,474** participations across our programs and services.*



Strategic Operational Plan Chart 2024-2025



Recognizing Excellence: A Celebration of Impact

A Moment of Honor & Celebration!



We are beyond proud to share that our Executive Director, Huda Abbas, has been awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal! This prestigious recognition, presented by MP Peter Fonseca at Le Treport Convention Centre on March 6, 2025, is a testament to her unwavering dedication, leadership, and commitment to serving our community.



We are incredibly proud to share that Nermin Foda, the Chair and Fauzia Khan, the Director of MIAG have been honored with the Civic Award of Recognition by the Mayor of Mississauga, Carolyn Parrish! Nominated by our local Councillor, this prestigious award recognizes their outstanding contributions and unwavering dedication to serving our community. Their leadership has been instrumental in advancing MIAG's mission to empower and uplift diverse communities through impactful programs and initiatives.

Organizational Capacity Accomplishments

Building Resilience: MIAG's Journey of Innovation and Development

Over the past year, MIAG Centre for Diverse Women & Families made significant progress in organizational development and community engagement. With support from key funders—including the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Mariam Asefa/WES Foundation, and the Community Foundation of Canada via the Canadian Red Cross—the organization strengthened its operational capacity, launched a new fundraising strategy, and revamped the MIAG Training Unit (MTU), establishing partnerships with non-profits and institutions like Mohawk College.



Our staff became certified trainers in Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NVC), Mental Health First Aid, LivingWorks ASIST Suicide Intervention, WHMIS, and Personality Dimensions. Broadening the scope of training offerings through MTU we have trained a total of 100+ participants across a variety of agencies since the re-launch.

This year, we also hosted our first-ever Fundraising Breakfast, which proved to be a successful and inspiring event. It brought together community members and local businesses in support of our mission, raising both awareness and critical funds.



Digital engagement saw major growth, particularly on Instagram (116% increase in reach) and Facebook (31.9% rise in content interactions). Website traffic remained strong, and key tools like online payments and fundraising platforms (Zeffy and CanadaHelps) were integrated to enhance user experience. These milestones reflect a year of strategic advancement, laying the groundwork for continued impact and growth.

Digital Media Engagement

April 2024 to March 2025



ON FACEBOOK  **31,9%**
Content Interaction increased by:



ON INSTAGRAM  **116,2%**
Content Interaction more than doubled:



OUR WEBSITE
Maintained steady interest



20,365 Visits



43,392 Page Views

Programs for Women

Bridge to Employment for Women

A robust, multiphase approach to workforce readiness equipping participants with essential skills for today's job market. Through hybrid sessions, women learned resume writing, emphasizing how to effectively showcase their hard skills, soft skills, and transferable experience. This not only improved the quality of their applications but resulted in more interview invitations and interest from employers. Workshops also focused on interview techniques, professional communication, and business etiquette - boosting participants' confidence and job-readiness. The training helped them feel more prepared, self-assured, and capable of navigating Canadian workplace culture.

Co-op placement was another vital pillar. Through one-on-one meetings with the Co-op Coordinator, participants explored personalized placement options based on their background, location, and goals. This tailored support gave women a voice in shaping their experience. Women gained hands-on experience in diverse fields such as office administration, insurance, and the nonprofit sector. Employers benefitted from the energy and professionalism of women eager to contribute.



Virtual networking events connected participants with Canadian professionals, providing real-time insights, inspiration, and potential opportunities. BEW's comprehensive approach empowered women to take control of their employment journey—building skills, confidence, and long-term potential.

This project is funded by the United Way Greater Toronto.



Outcomes:

- **89% reported an improvement in their knowledge of the ways to format an E resume successfully.**
- **90% of participants reported an improvement in their knowledge of how to be confident in an interview, how to prepare yourself for an online interview, and the different types of interviews.**
- **98% who completed the pre- and post-surveys reported an improvement in how to negotiate and discuss salaries in an interview.**

Testimonial:

- *"This program has really helped me to build my skills and to see where I need to make necessary adjustments to be more tactful and skillful in my job search. I also find myself to be more adaptable, ready to learn, giving me the opportunity to collaborate with people, enhancing teamwork and communication skills as well as demonstrating self motivation and goal setting skills, giving me the insight into the Canadian job market and industry expectations, improved my resume and cover letter writing skills, increasing my confidence in job applications. A big thanks to Bridge to Employment for Women, for helping, teaching, and for the words of encouragement that has been a source of strength to me." - Oluwatosin O*

Programs for Women

Women's Health and Well-being Hub

This program is a recreational physical activity and healthy eating education initiative designed to promote active living and healthy lifestyles among women from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds. Each session includes a one-hour fitness class led by qualified instructors, followed by a one-hour healthy eating and nutrition class facilitated by registered nutritionists. Participants are introduced to a variety of healthy recipes and practical dietary tips aimed at preventing chronic diseases. Through regular participation, women improve both their physical and mental well-being. Many participants also shared their knowledge with their families and friends, thereby extending the program's benefits to the broader community. This project is generously funded by the City of Mississauga.

Outcomes:

- 335 women attended the program, cumulative attendance is 1,550 across 24 sessions.
- 94% met their fitness improvement goals and enhanced overall well-being.
- 93% enriched their understanding of healthy eating.



Testimonial:

- "This program benefits me a lot as I have a very overwhelming job as a family caregiver. I am able to connect, learn a lot from everyone, able to rejuvenate after this program. Exercise and healthy eating tips has encouraged and motivated me to be a better person socially and mentally and will like to continue on this path". - Jessie Roopnarine

Women Abuse and Children Who Witness Abuse Workshops

Over the past fiscal year, MIAG successfully hosted eight workshops under the HEAL Network initiative, focusing on women abuse and its impact on both women and children who witness it. These sessions offered a vital platform to raise awareness, promote healthy family relationships, and connect participants with essential support services.

A total of 166 participants from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds attended the workshops last year. To ensure cultural relevance and accessibility, the sessions were delivered in Arabic, Bangali and in English for other groups, including South Asian communities.

Abuse often remains hidden - shrouded in fear, stigma, and isolation. MIAG's workshops created a safe and respectful space for participants to share their stories, ask questions, and learn to recognize the signs of abuse. Our goal extends beyond raising awareness: we strive to empower women and support families in breaking the cycle of violence. By encouraging open dialogue and offering appropriate referrals, we aim to help survivors take the first steps toward safety and healing.



These workshops were funded by the HEAL Network.

Programs for Everyone

Ethno-cultural Communities Well-being Project

This project focuses on promoting mental health and well-being in the community by raising awareness and dismantling the stigma around mental health. The project includes five educational courses as well as counselling services. During this fiscal year, the program has benefited 1200 individuals, with 291 attending educational mental health courses. Program participants delivered presentations to 440 individuals, enhancing their self-confidence, and community ties, while effectively combating mental health stigma through widespread outreach.

The project provided valuable information on recognizing signs and symptoms of prevalent mental health disorders, shared resources to support individuals facing mental health challenges or crises and highlighted the importance of utilizing practical coping strategies. On March 21st, 2025, we hosted an Achievement Celebration that recognized our clients' participation and shared the program's outcomes.



This program is funded by United Way Greater Toronto.

Outcomes:

- **100% gained increased awareness of mental health disorders.**
- **95% enhanced healthy coping strategies for managing various stress responses.**



Testimonials:

- "I enjoyed the program - it really impacted my life and my kids'. I learned a lot from the Early Development and Mental Health course. Supporting children to understand their emotions and communicate openly leads to healthier relationships and long-term positive outcomes. Thank you for your support." - Client K.V.

- "Adjusting to a new country was difficult, no family, no friends, no work. I struggled silently. This program helped me recognize the importance of mental health, develop coping strategies, and connect with others. It has transformed my life and empowered me to support those around me. - Client M.C.

Mental Health Counselling Services

470 individuals accessed counselling services through referrals from our partner agencies. The clients receive services through phone, virtual and/or in-person counselling sessions. This service facilitated clients in accessing the support necessary to enhance their mental well-being. Clients are also supported by connecting them to various resources/services in the community.

Programs for Everyone

Digital Literacy 101

Digital Literacy 101 empowers social assistance recipients and low-income individuals in Peel with essential digital skills to better engage in the workforce and daily life. The program offers both Beginner and Intermediate levels, running four days per week over five weeks (20 classes per level), and was delivered six times last year.

Following the Region of Peel's recommended curriculum and a structured learner assessment plan, the program is offered in a hybrid format, providing accessible learning options both in-person and online.

This program is funded by the Region of Peel.



Outcomes:

- **145 participants in the last year**
- **97% improved their understanding of computer security and privacy**
- **92% enhanced their knowledge of software and hardware basics**



Testimonials:

- *"The course is outstanding; even beginners with no computer experience will see great improvement after taking it."* - S. N. participant
- *"Good for newcomers, I learnt a lot and overcame my fear of practicing on the computer!"* - E. Z participant

Volunteer and Student's Journey with MIAG

My practicum at MIAG has been an incredibly meaningful experience, shaping both my professional development and personal growth. Being part of an organization committed to fostering inclusion and community well-being has deepened my understanding of mental health advocacy and support.

I was involved in the Ethno-Cultural Communities Well-being (ECCW) project for mental health. Through this initiative, I had the opportunity to witness the program's impact in increasing awareness and creating safe spaces for meaningful discussions. Engaging with community members and supporting their journeys reinforced my belief in the importance of accessible and culturally relevant mental health resources. This practicum has strengthened my passion for community-centered social work, and I am grateful for the skills and insights I have gained along the way. - Nicole Minott, Toronto Metropolitan University.



Programs for Children and Youth

Youth Connection 101

This project addressed the need for children and youth to revive their active lifestyles and establish meaningful connections in the post-COVID-19 "New Normal" era. It offered free leadership skills training to children and teenagers from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds. It empowered and inspired young individuals to exercise social skills engagement.

Throughout the program, children acquired vital personalities and social skills that are essential in today's society. These include qualities of leadership, positive communication, conflict resolution, teamwork, mutual respect, appreciation for diversity, public speaking, volunteerism, and contributing to society. These values and skills are nurtured during the program and will continue to influence their decision-making processes both within the program and in their future endeavors.

The program consists of six weekly sessions, and upon successful completion, participants receive certificates in recognition of their achievement.

This Project is funded by the Community Foundation of Canada.



Outcomes:

- **131 children and youth participated last year**
- **96% of children age 7 – 11 years old indicated enhanced abilities in forming successful friendships**
- **90% of youth age 12 – 15 developed confident presentation skills**



Testimonials:

- *"I was glad to learn new strategies for public speaking, and it was great to see other kids my age facing similar challenges. I picked up some valuable insights from the program. The instructor was patient and took the time to listen to my ideas, allowing me to actively participate in the sessions. Each week, I enjoyed taking part in activities and learning new techniques, which I plan to use in my next school speech."*

- R. O. 14 year old

- *"I enjoyed this program and learned a lot of new things, such as teamwork and volunteering. I really liked the program - it was a lot of fun!"* - K. M. 9 year old

Programs for Seniors

Pathways to Wellness

Pathways to Wellness is a 20-week program designed to support seniors in staying active, informed, and socially connected. Offered in a flexible hybrid format—two hours per week both in person and online—the program provides a safe, inclusive environment where older adults can continue to grow, engage, and thrive.

The program includes muscle and bone toning classes are helping participants build strength and stability, while craft workshops enhance creativity and connection. In addition, practical and educational sessions have included scam and fraud prevention, financial literacy, and navigating senior resources such as Old Age Security (OAS), Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), and community supports.



To promote holistic well-being, the program also features sessions on mobility and fall prevention, skincare and hygiene for aging skin, improving sleep quality, and expert-led talks from geriatric professionals, offering guidance on healthy aging, cognitive wellness, and emotional resilience.

An essential element of Pathways to Wellness is its emphasis on reducing social isolation through peer interaction and inter-generational exchange. Seniors share their experiences and wisdom, while younger volunteers contribute insights into digital tools and modern trends, creating a vibrant, mutually enriching environment.

This project is funded by the New Horizons for Seniors Program (NHSP).

- “The Pathways to Wellness classes and activities are not only engaging and fun, but they are also thoughtfully designed to meet the needs of seniors like me. Each session brings something new - from exercises that help strengthen our muscles to discussions that open our minds and hearts. I’ve noticed a significant improvement in both my physical and mental well-being. It’s uplifting to connect with other participants, share laughs, and form new friendships”. Ann Gill, Pathways to Wellness participant



Our Funders and Donors

MIAG gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the following:



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With Heartfelt thanks to our Donors:



Collaborative Agencies and Groups

MIAG is thankful for the in-kind contributions of the following:

Alzheimer Society Peel
ArchLynk Canada
Azerbaijani Women's Support Centre
Caledon Meals on Wheels
Catholic Family Services Peel-Dufferin
Catholic Cross-cultural Services
Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)
City of Mississauga
Connected Canadians
Data Solutions Inc
Dejardins Insurance
Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre
English Educators
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Region of Peel
Serenity Family Services & Childcare Inc.
Sheridan College
Toronto Metropolitan University
Vita Centre
Vital Inc Training
York University
Youth Speaker Academy



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