



Annual Report

Fiscal Year Ending - March 31, 2020

Compiled by Stephen Dines G.A.P. Community Volunteer

Gravenhurst, “The Gateway to Muskoka”, is a town on the southern end of Lake Muskoka with a population of approximately 12,000. At one time, the town was known as “Sawdust City” because of its connection with the logging industry. The local economy is highly dependent on tourism and vacationing.

Gravenhurst Against Poverty

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OPENING COMMENTS FROM G.A.P. VICE CHAIR

I am a volunteer member of Gravenhurst Against Poverty. I am hope-filled and purpose-driven because I know I can make a little bit of a difference for those in need.

We call it G.A.P. because that's what we're trying to fill - the cracks, the holes, the missed chances.

We have gotten past the idea of assuming that everything will be available to people whenever they need it. It started as a conversation in a church about specific needs and those living in difficulty and now it has grown a life way beyond that--G.A.P. has become a compassionate movement in this community.

Those who have joined it, come to G.A.P. offering what they can: time and energy as volunteers, food from their gardens, money from their pockets and services from their businesses.

At no other time in my 45 years in Gravenhurst, have I seen so many residents unite strongly, quietly, and consistently to support a cause. They are sending a clear message that every individual's needs are important.

Hundreds of volunteers now participate in G.A.P.'s activities. It could be filling food boxes, walking for the Coldest Night of the Year fundraiser, growing vegetables, taking time to listen to someone, providing transportation or solving problems. No matter how small the task, each one is far-reaching because it makes a little bit of a difference to a lot of people and together that all makes a big difference to the well-being of our community.

Oh, and there is individual reward as a dividend.

When what you are good at is what people need, you have found purpose.

That is what has happened to me along with so many other volunteers through Gravenhurst Against Poverty.

Vice-Chair

Gravenhurst Against Poverty

INTRODUCTION

Poverty, wealth and wellness.

Poverty can be thought of as *“lacking the resources necessary to function effectively in the local community and therefore, in society as a whole”*.

The Bridges Out of Poverty Training Supplement, (Philip E DeVol et.al.) defines these resources as:

- Financial
- Emotional
- Mental
- Spiritual
- Physical
- Support systems
- Relationships/role models
- Knowledge of hidden rules (knowing how to fit in and be part of a group)

So, if poverty is the lack of these resources, then wealth is having an abundance of them, that is, enough to meet one’s own needs with some left over to give to others.

Wellness is the opposite of poverty. It is having the resources necessary to function effectively enabling one to actively pursue reaching full potential.

The G.A.P. community as a whole (donors, partners, volunteers, program participants) is committed to the concept of wellness.

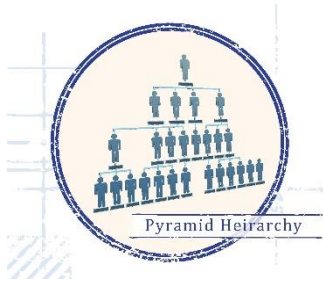
Part of the purpose of this Annual Report for 2018-19 is to show how G.A.P. is bringing together those with sufficient resources—the wealth, as it were—to alleviate the effects of poverty and improve the wellness of residents in the Greater Gravenhurst Area.

History, Culture and Structure of G.A.P.

In 2017, several residents of Gravenhurst met in the Fireside Room of Trinity United Church. The matter for discussion was the alarming levels of poverty in the Town, particularly in relation to food and food security. Early in 2018, a Needs Assessment resulted in nine areas being identified as ways to help local citizens.

A key feature of this survey was engaging with people on low income and engaging the community as a whole, especially those with an interest in the wellbeing of Gravenhurst residents.

It is the continuous engagement of local residents from all walks of life and vastly different “lived experiences” that sets the G.A.P. community apart and makes it a truly “grassroots” entity with a mandate to partner, listen, respond and advocate.



The structure of a traditional organization is hierarchical with formal use of power and authority. Communication is dictated from the top, down. This structure stifles communication, problem solving and teamwork, and kills creativity and innovation. This structure is built for stability but tends to become rigid, fixed and stuck when faced with complex problems.



The structure within G.A.P. is more organic in nature with the founding and guiding principles at the centre. There is no hierarchy; no formal use of power and authority. There is continuous dialogue and decisions are based on consensus. This results in a body of people who are continually learning and growing. When faced with complex challenges, they can be responsive, adaptive, creative and innovative. They can break free from the forces that hold traditional organizations back.

The structure and purpose of G.A.P. is attracting professionals from many partner organisations believing that an alternative approach to solving local problems might be extremely beneficial.

A member of the G.A.P. Council and Steering Committee said:

“When I heard about G.A.P.’s “Grass Roots” approach I became intrigued [as] the traditional top-down approach to providing mental health services to young people can be problematic at times. Funding criteria does not always support collaboration. G.A.P. removes that barrier by securing its own funding and therefore creates the potential for a multi-disciplinary approach, for example, a dedicated wellness centre located in Gravenhurst”.

FOUNDING AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

G.A.P. is founded on the following principles:

- To always be grassroots-directed
- To reduce the effects of poverty
- To partner with the community
- To listen and respond to those most affected by poverty.
- To advocate for those living in poverty.
- To work within the Greater Gravenhurst Area.

Because G.A.P. was founded on these principles by a group of concerned citizens, it has developed into neither a “top-down” nor a “bottom-up” organization. Rather, it has grown into an “inside-out” organism, willing and able to respond and adapt to changes in local needs and find new and innovative ways to bring people together.

The whole of the G.A.P. community works based on consensus and continuous dialogue between all members of that community. This is critical to the success of G.A.P.’s work/activities.

G.A.P. COMMUNITY COUNCIL

The group is comprised of Gravenhurst citizens who are representatives from partner organizations and citizens from the community, who share the philosophy of the founding and guiding principles.

The monthly meetings are agenda-driven, center around needs identified, fund raising, review of donors/grants, and programs/participation, and include opportunity for anyone who wishes to have their voice heard.

Key area of focus is the Top 10 Needs identified from the Survey and subsequent/ongoing discussions. (see Needs Assessment Table below)

STEERING COMMITTEE

This committee must have the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of people affected by poverty so that the GAP community as a whole can fulfill its purpose

It is made up of Gravenhurst citizens with the required specific knowledge and skills to be able to assess the feasibility of ideas from the G.A.P. Community Council and devise practical workable programs.

The monthly meetings are agenda-driven and center around ideas submitted from GAP Community Council; decisions are made by consensus and relayed back to G.A.P. Community Council. Agenda items include, but are not limited to, regular evaluation of activities and programs, financial reporting, recruitment and training of volunteers, grant and funding applications, achieving charitable status, Health and Safety, social media, outreach, fundraising and promotion.

“When what you are good at is what people need, you have found purpose”.

G.A.P. Volunteer.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT OUTCOME: TOP 10

The areas of concern listed here are in ranking according to # of requests based on consultation with residents affected by poverty.

Identified Area of Concern	Brief Description of Concern
Seniors	-Safe places to have social activities with food -Access to transportation
Medical	-Family Doctor availability
Food	-Access to more low-cost healthy food on regular basis
Mental Health Help	-Need for ‘free’ mental health walk-in counselling
Youth	-More ‘safe’ places to go
Transportation	-No bus service, Taxi \$\$
Social Groups	-Safe FREE places to go for each age group esp. men, seniors, youth and children
Children’s Programs	-More free programming with food for lower income families -More available after school care
Housing	-More affordable housing
Exercise groups	-Free programs which center around fitness

G.A.P. KEY INITIATIVES: FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING - MARCH 31, 2020

2018-19 Key Initiatives which address some of the identified needs happened as a result of cash donations, “gifts in kind”, produce from G.A.P gardens, and volunteers to achieve the resulting success.

- Tuesday Weekly Community Lunch: 10 Volunteers, served 30-40 guests weekly
- Thursday Fresh Food and Protein Giveaway: 6 volunteers served 50 people at a weekly drop-in
- Thursday Community Dinner (from Sept 2019-February 2020): 20 Volunteers served 50-70 guests weekly
- The OAR F.E.E.D gift card program: 50 cards distributed, then recirculated
- GAP Community Gardens (spring/ summer only) involved many students from local schools
- Discussions with local doctor resulted in a Methadone Clinic open 1x per week, and a walk-in clinic open Tuesdays.

The outcome of these initiatives was that the following needs were filled: ‘safe ‘places to go, provision of food and meals, social activities, learning opportunities for all ages in our community

G.A.P.’S REACH BY NUMBERS

All programs	Annually
Milk	12000+ Liters
Eggs	750+ dozen
Lean Ground Beef	2500 lb.
Fruits and Veggies	10000+lb
Meals	7000+

People	Annually
Volunteers	90+
Coldest Night of the Year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • walkers • donors 	213 957
Community Partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • donors/supporters 	25+
Part time Employees	1

MENTAL HEALTH

GOAL: To create a wellness centre in our community.

There is no office or centre or in-service facility in Gravenhurst for community members needing the help and/or consultation with mental health professionals. It is the goal of Gravenhurst Against Poverty to raise the funds to make a permanent location available.

One of the main problems identified when dealing with mental health are the financial barriers and making sure funding goes to the right groups. It was noted that when someone is dealing with mental health for themselves or for others, they do not know where to go to receive the treatment they need.

Currently, G.A.P. and CMHA are working together to develop a vision and look for funding.

To help educate the public Gravenhurst Against Poverty has created a Compassion Series of webinars that links poverty and mental health. In session One viewers are invited to deepen their understanding and connection to the term Poverty.

VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY

Volunteerism powers G.A.P.'s achievements

Volunteers include members of the local community from all walks of life with various backgrounds and experiences including people living in poverty.

G.A.P. is successful in attracting and retaining volunteers with their 'open door' approach. The G.A.P. community creates an environment where volunteers can actively participate using any of their existing knowledge and skills.

See Appendix 2 "Voices from G.A.P. Community"

DONOR COMMUNITY

The donor community is made up of local business owners and members of the local community who donate cash and or 'gifts in kind' to support the work of G.A.P.

National and provincial funding bodies provide funding/grants for local programs and initiatives.

See Appendix 4 for "Local Business Partners"

G.A.P. FUNDRAISING

Fundraising events are planned and held within the local community involving Donor Partners and volunteers. These events provide opportunity for all residents to participate in and or 'safely' attend with the intent to raise funds to support the work of G.A.P.

Highlight of recent activities in 2018-19

- Coldest Night of the Year
- The OAR's PEI Oysters and Bison Burgers
- Sunset Salsa
- Yoga Rocks
- Elexicon Energy Golf Tournament
- Rotary Charity Race Night
- 12th Annual "Empty Bowls" event

FINANCIAL PICTURE

The revenue chart shows monies received from the start of the food program to the end of the fiscal year (March 31, 2020) totalling \$169,915. The support of the entire community goes into making up this amazing total. Our donors, with their continuing generosity, show the recognition of the needs within our community, and the support for the programs offered through GA.P.

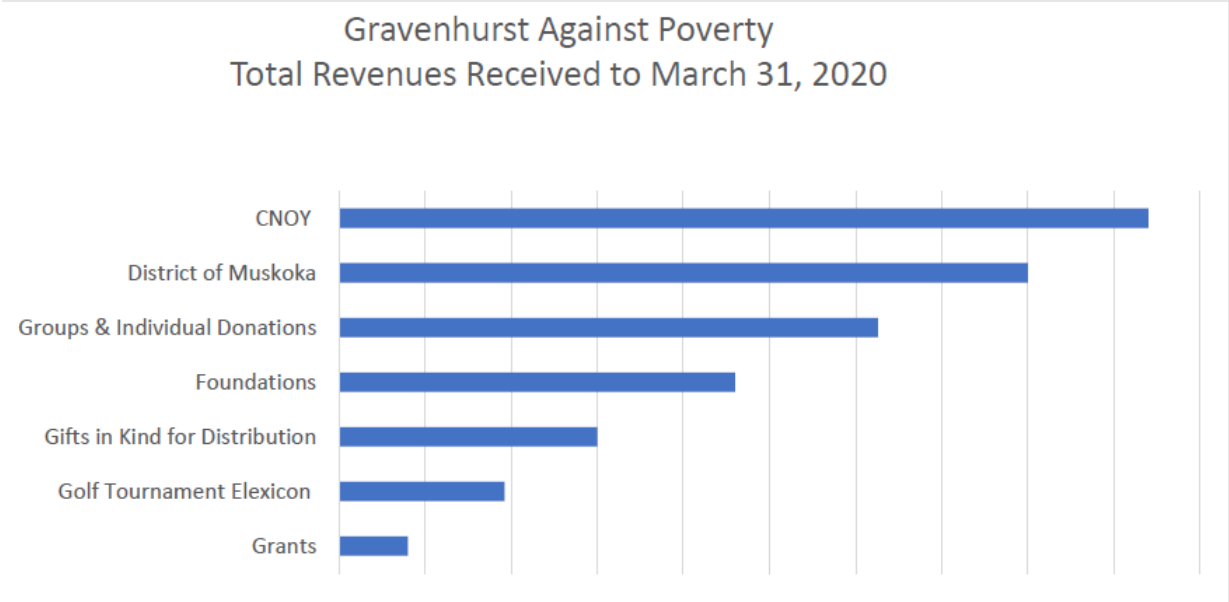
The expense chart comparing fiscal years ending March 31, 2019, and March 31, 2020, validates the commitment of the organization to monitor and control spending to ensure the maximum value is given to the program itself. We ended 2020 with a balance of \$38,817. This allowed G.A.P. to start the new fiscal year in good financial shape.

The current fiscal year is experiencing strong donations and increased distribution through the food program. We anticipate continued growth to meet the current and increasing needs of our participants.

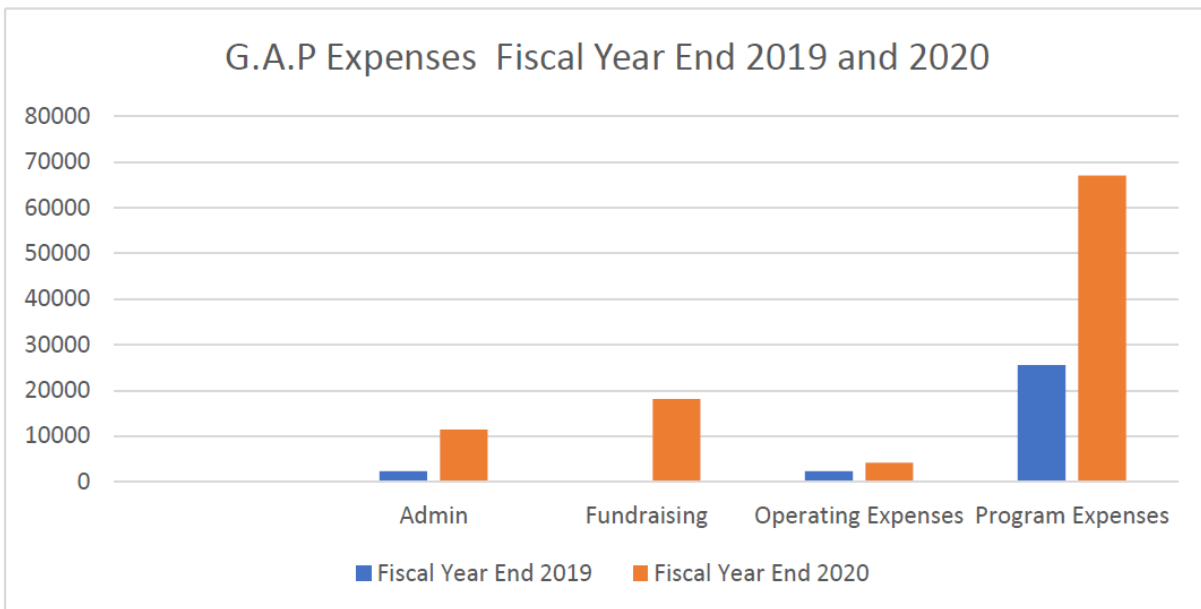
Not only have we experienced financial success, but the program would be hard pressed to carry on without the dedication of our 85 active volunteers. According to the standards used by the Conference Board of Canada, the value of our volunteer contribution of 5,273 hours is \$95,725. This is an amazing accomplishment and ensures the success of everything we do.

Detailed financial statements are available for review upon request.

All Donations from the start of the program to the end of fiscal year March 31, 2020		
Gravenhurst Against Poverty	Dollar Value	% of Total Revenue
Grants	\$4,000	2.4
Golf Tournament Elexicon	\$9,619	5.7
Gifts in Kind for Distribution	\$15,000	8.8
Foundations	\$23,000	13.5
Groups & Individual Donations	\$31,286	18.4
District of Muskoka	\$40,000	23.5
CNOY	\$47,010	27.7
Total Revenues to March 31, 2020	\$169,915	



G.A.P. Expenses	Fiscal Year End 2019	Fiscal Year End 2020
Admin	\$2,296	\$11,376
Fundraising	\$0	\$18,035
Operating Expenses	\$2,290	\$4,153
Program Expenses	\$25,520	\$67,092
Total	\$30,106	\$100,656



**Gravenhurst Against Poverty
Fiscal Year End March 31, 2020**

Cumulative Revenue	Cumulative Expenses	Balance March 31, 2020
\$169,915	\$130,762	\$39,153

2020 PLANNING

Planned continued support of the successful existing programs with some additional KEY high level areas of focus in the year ahead are as follows:

- Transportation: give away Bundle Buggies (6), devise a discretionary fund for Taxi services
- Strengthen partnership with Gravenhurst Women's Centre
- Wellness Centre: "The Big Dream"
- G.A.P. Gardens - additional garden boxes
- Recruitment and training of volunteers
- Expanding social medial activities
- Addictions and Mental Health support for young people
- Improved access to internet by way of hardware, skills, connectivity

REFERENCES

G.A.P Needs Assessment April 18, 2018 *Marlene Buwalda-Liao*

APPENDIX 1 *PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS G.A.P. COUNCIL*

Catholic Women's League	Horticultural Society	The Ryde Community Co-op
Canadian Mental Health Ass.	Muskoka Community Foundation	Senior Co-op housing
District of Muskoka (ODSP, OD, Children's services)	Muskoka Victim Services	St. James Anglican Church
Employment North	O. P. P.	Town of Gravenhurst
Elizabeth Fry Society	Poverty Reduction of Muskoka Planning Team (P.R.O.M.P.T.)	Trinity United Church Gravenhurst
Gateway Worship Centre	PROBUS	Gravenhurst Women's Centre
Gravenhurst Library	Public Health (SMDHU)	YWCA Muskoka
Gravenhurst Residents	The Rotary Club of Gravenhurst	

APPENDIX 2 VOICES FROM G.A.P. COMMUNITY

Acting Director of Gravenhurst Women's Centre

The Gravenhurst Women's Centre is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of women through social outreach, access to resources, education and emotional support. Our center is a place for socializing, reading, working, participating in an educational or recreational workshop, or simply enjoying a complimentary cup of coffee or tea in a warm and welcoming environment. It is through this group that I began to learn about G.A.P. and what it was doing to support the community. We began to consider how a partnership with G.A.P. might work. I then joined the G.A.P. Steering Committee along with another volunteer from GWC, who already was active with G.A.P. The two of us provide our thoughts around initiatives and keep the Steering Committee and Advisory Board aware of things happening within the Centre.

Through this relationship, I decided to get more actively involved with G.A.P. and now support the weekly food distribution initiatives and am growing produce in our family garden to aid with the food giveaway programs. I also sat on the 2019 CNOY planning committee and manned the front desk on the evening of the event.

I started to help with the dinner distribution initiative just recently and I was taken aback by the energy of the volunteers and the amount of food that gets out every Thursday to folks around Gravenhurst. It makes me very proud to be helping this group of dedicated folks and to see the difference we are making in the lives of those in need within our community.

YWCA Muskoka Circles Coach S. Muskoka, Bridges out of Poverty Facilitator

I have been honored to work alongside G.A.P as part of the YWCA Muskoka/Circles South Muskoka initiative. Collaborating with this incredibly dynamic organization and being a part of the inner workings of providing nutritious food to ALL who are in need with no questions asked has reinforced for me that this is exactly how it should be! These basic necessities being provided without hesitation, are building a community trust that is impacting individuals to seek higher achievement. Goals are being met because of the hard work and passion that G.A.P has to eradicate food instability in the Gravenhurst Muskoka Community. These are exactly the type of principles we offer in our Bridges out of Poverty series for community members to be a part of in order to have a better understanding of what poverty actually looks like and establish that "no one wants to live in poverty". Circumstances have been created and G.A.P has beautiful intentions to provide a holistic support system involving relationships with individuals and other community partners: branching out to mental health resources and looking into transportation barriers is only the beginning. I am grateful to partner with and be a part of this movement!

APPENDIX 3 *FEATURE HIGHLIGHT G.A.P. GARDENS*

G.A.P. Garden Volunteer

The idea of creating gardens that would produce a substantial source of fresh, local, vegetables came out of a G.A.P. Needs Assessment Survey. The people in our community living in difficulty indicated that fresh produce was expensive to buy and something they needed more of in their homes. Follow-up conversations suggested that there was interest in participating and learning more about gardening. In March 2019, volunteers came together to plan and build garden boxes. Trinity United Church, Gateway Worship Centre, Bethune House, The Shipyards, and Taylor Chiropractic offered garden space. Meetings were arranged with teachers to involve students at Gravenhurst High School, Gravenhurst Public School and Muskoka Beechgrove Public School. Seeds were purchased and planted in pots of soil and seedlings began growing in homes and classrooms. Thanks to money secured through a grant application, a Home Building Centre lumber donation, Coon Bros soil discount, and physical work from community volunteers, fourteen garden boxes were built, filled and planted along with the existing plots at some of the sites. Lead gardeners were established along with volunteers who would water and weed on a regular schedule. With hard work, determination, and tender care, the gardens flourished. Plenty of fresh harvest was brought weekly to our Thursday night Fresh Produce Giveaway as well as our weekly Community Lunches. The GAP Garden project was deemed a success with plans made to build additional garden boxes in 2020.

APPENDIX 4 LOCAL BUSINESS SUPPORT / PARTNERSHIPS

The Anglican's Woman's Club	Gravenhurst Public Library	The Oar - Restaurant	St. Paul's Catholic Church
Bethune Memorial House	Gravenhurst Rotary Club	Pay it Forward - Muskoka District	Swiss Chalet Gravenhurst
Community Food Centres Canada	Harrow Fair - (Seat At The Table)	Recovery Muskoka	Taylor Chiropractic
DTA Accountants & Business Advisors	Knights of Columbus	The Salvation Army	Trinity United Church Gravenhurst
District of Muskoka	The Manor at Gravenhurst	The Muskoka Musical Festival	United Church of Canada
Elexicon Energy	Muskoka Community Foundation - Smart & Caring Fund	The Shipyards	United Way Simcoe Muskoka
Field of Greens	Muskoka Graphics	Sublime Graphics	Terence Haight Fund
Frank H. Hori Charitable Foundation	Muskoka Rock Company	Sobeys Gravenhurst	Well Fed
Gateway Worship Centre	Muskoka Youth Choir	St. James Anglican Church	Many individuals from our Community!

CONTACT INFORMATION

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