SUMMER 2026 NEWSLETTER

Accredited
IMAGINE CANADA







A Season of Growth, Connection & Community

Summer was a season filled with meaningful programs, community outreach, and memorable events. This summer, we continued building stronger connections, expanding partnerships, and creating opportunities that supported and uplifted our community.

Check out our impact from this term!

Take a look at what we've been up to!

Term Snapshot

3	Programs Delivered
4	Events Hosted
34	Program Sessions Delivered
55	Counselling Clients Supported
100	Backpacks Distributed to Children in the Community
600+	Program Participant Attendances

info@msswr.org
480 Charles St. E., Kitchener, N2G 4K5
www.msswr.org

COUNSELLING SERVICES

Accessible support for individuals, youth, couples, and families.



Scan the QR code to get started!

55
clients served

7
languages offered

Our Services

- Individual counselling
- Youth counselling
- Family counselling
- Couple counselling

- Arabic
- English
- Urdu
- French
- Punjabi
- Hindi
- Spanish

How to Access Counselling

- Submit an intake form
- Initial call to discuss details of needs
- Assigned to an MSSWR counsellor
- Regular meeting with counsellor
  Every 2 weeks for 8 sessions

If more support is needed, you will be referred to our Intake Specialist for wrap-around services.

Counselling Partners and Supporters

Counselling Collaborative
WATERLOO REGION

MSSWR extends our heartfelt thanks to CCWR as partners in this work and to our funders for their generous support of counselling services in our community.

- Kindred Credit Union
- Bell Let's Talk
- City of Kitchener
- Astley Family Foundation
- Resilience Project
- United Way WRC
- Region of Waterloo
- Government of Ontario
- Kitchener Conestoga Rotary Club



SUMMER PROGRAMS 2026



A Summer of Learning, Wellness, Recreation, Belonging & Community Connection

Our summer programs were designed to inspire, support, and connect children, youth, and families. Through enriching activities and meaningful experiences, we created spaces where everyone could grow, thrive, and feel a true sense of belonging.





PROGRAMS OVERVIEW



SUMMER CAMP

A fun and active camp experience filled with games, creativity, outdoor adventures, and friendship!

MAKING WAVES: GIRLS IN SWIM

Building confidence through swim skills, water safety, and empowering girls in the pool and beyond.



MINDFUL GARDENING

Connecting with nature, growing together, and learning the joys of gardening and sustainability.

The Waterloo Region Record - Lyle S. Hallman Foundation Kids to Camp Fund

KIDS SUMMER CAMP

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Summer Camp 2026 was an incredible success, with campers engaging in uniquely themed activities each week. Participants had the chance to enjoy creative art projects, cooking days, outdoor adventures, and waterpark fun. Each week concluded with an enriching and enjoyable field trip!

Thank you to Waterloo Region Community Foundation for making this program possible!

SCAN TO VIEW OUR SUMMER CAMP RECAP VIDEO!

Attendances	Sessions:
181	20

SUMMER CAMP PARENT:

"Our family had a wonderful experience with the MSSWR Summer Camp. The staff were caring and organized, and our children came home happy, more confident, and excited to share what they learned each day. We truly appreciate the safe, welcoming, and engaging environment and look forward to participating again next year."



































“My son made a lot of new friends and became more confident in expressing his feelings throughout the summer camp. He has been to many MSSWR programs, and they have all helped him a lot. **He looks forward to coming back to the summer camp next year.**”

MAKING WAVES
GIRLS IN SWIM

Confidence in the water. Strength beyond it.

SUPPORTED BY Jumpstart Bon départ AVEC LE SOUTIEN DE

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

This summer, we introduced an exciting new initiative aimed at providing women and girls with a safe, private, and enjoyable swimming experience. Each week, participants had the chance to swim in a women-only setting, which ensured their comfort and privacy. The program received a great deal of positive feedback and enthusiasm from our community. Additionally, we were able to offer **free modest swimwear** for families who identified it as a barrier to participating in swimming activities.

Thank you to Jumpstart for making this program possible!

Attendances	Sessions:
296	7

PARTICIPANT:

"The most helpful part of this program was it being a private swimming program that is only for women, respecting the privacy and the safety, which made it more comfortable"



MAKING WAVES
GIRLS IN SWIM

Confidence in the water. Strength beyond it.

SUPPORTED BY Jumpstart Bon départ AVEC LE SOUTIEN DE

"As a hijabi girl, it has always been difficult to find a swimming program where I could feel comfortable, respected, and fully included. Most swimming spaces do not consider our need for privacy, modesty, and cultural understanding.

MSSWR's girls' swimming program was different. It created a safe and welcoming environment where I could learn to swim, build confidence, be active, and enjoy time with other girls who shared similar experiences. I did not have to choose between participating and respecting my values.

This program gave me more than swimming skills. It gave me confidence, friendship, a sense of belonging, and the freedom to take part without feeling judged or excluded.

Programs like this are deeply needed because every girl deserves the opportunity to learn, grow, and participate in recreation in a way that respects who she is."

Mindful Gardening

Reep Green Solutions

WISAHKOTEWINOWAK

CROW SHIELD LODGE

WATERLOO REGION Community Foundation

Greater KW Chamber of Commerce - Corporate Challenge Fund

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

This summer, Mindful Gardening made a vibrant comeback, with participants eagerly prepared to cultivate their gardens in delightful weather. At the beginning of the term, they planted seeds and closely followed the growth of their fruits and vegetables throughout the summer and into fall. Each week, the participants gathered to foster community, connection, and a love for nature. A special thanks to our partners; **Crow Shield Lodge, Wisahkotewinowak,** and **Reep Green Solutions** for their support and partnership, and for helping us create opportunities for relationship-building and intercultural learning in our community.

Thank you to Waterloo Region Community Foundation for making this program possible!

Attendances	Sessions:
135	7

PARTICIPANT:

"The gardening program is one of the best programs I've ever participated in. I have a wonderful time learning about gardening and connecting with the land."



















> Working on the land and gardening helped me a great deal in **releasing negative energy** and **improving my mental well-being**.

Upcoming FALL PROGRAMS



TUTORING
An engaging environment for children to improve their Math and English skills.

MINDFUL GARDENING
Connecting with nature, growing together, and learning the joys of gardening and sustainability.

BLOOM THROUGH ART
A community wellbeing program focused on expression through art and creativity.

CREATE AND CONNECT
An space for parents to create lasting connections with the community while exploring their creativity.

GIRLS IN SPORT
An active girls-only space for young girls to thrive and build confidence through sports.

RISE AND PLAY
A women's only senior program to encourage self-care and gentle exercise for improved health.

THRIVE THROUGH NUTRITION
A program for women to engage in accessible cooking activities and building confidence in the kitchen.

NEIGHBOURS HELPING NEIGHBOURS
A safe and welcoming space for communiy members to explore community resources

AL-NOUR PROJECT
A space for young Muslim women to explore their identities, find a place to belong and learn from each other.

ROOTED: YOUNG MENS' RESILIENCE PROJECT
A program designed to support the emotional wellbeing, identity development, and sense of belonging of young Muslim boys

Click here for more details!

SUMMER EVENTS 2026







Events That Brought Our Community Closer Together

Our summer events this term were designed to engage all community members. From the Back to School Backpack Initiative to Volunteer Appreciation, we ensured that it was a memorable summer for everyone!

EVENTS OVERVIEW

- COMMUNITY SUMMER BBQ AND VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION
- 2026 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
- BACK TO SCHOOL BACKPACK INITIATIVE
- SUMMER CAMP GRADUATION CEREMONY





July 22nd, 2026

Annual General Meeting AGM 2026

26 ATTENDEES

9 VOLUNTEERS

ABOUT THE EVENT

CLICK TO VIEW THE FULL GALLERY

We held our Annual General Meeting to highlight the accomplishments we achieved in 2025. The event served as a wonderful gathering for the community. During this occasion, we also took a moment to honour and bid farewell to three of our retiring board members: **Chair Khalid Khokhar, Vice Chair Brice Balmer,** and Board Member **Rihanat El Alawa**, as they embark on new journeys. A special ceremony was held to express our gratitude for their invaluable support in the past.

We would like to welcome our newest board member, **Ahmed Abou-Sharkh** to the board members team. We would also like to congratulate and welcome **Tina Baksh** to the role of Board Chair and **Takhmina Shokirova** to the role of Board Secretary. We look forward to achieving great things together!

Thank you to every partner, funder, volunteer, supporter, and staff member who attended our AGM and helped commemorate our community work in 2025.










July 29th, 2026

SUMMER BBQ & VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

BBQ & POTLUCK

Reep Green Solutions
WISAHKOTEWINOWAK
CROW SHIELD LODGE
WATERLOO REGION Community Foundation — The Alice (Braley) Judges - Walter Judges Fund
WATERLOO REGION Community Foundation — Greater KW Chamber of Commerce - Corporate Challenge Fund

CLICK TO VIEW THE FULL GALLERY

60+ ATTENDEES PRESENT

42 VOLUNTEERS HONOURED

ABOUT THE EVENT

This summer, we partnered with **Crow Shield Lodge, Wisahkotewinowak,** and **Reep Green Solutions** to organize a community BBQ event. It was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the warm weather alongside our community members and honour **42** of our dedicated volunteers. The event featured a community BBQ, followed by a ceremony to acknowledge the volunteers' efforts and present them with appreciation certificates.










July 31st, 2026

12 GRADUATES

5 VOLUNTEERS

KIDS SUMMER CAMP

GRADUATION CEREMONY

WATERLOO REGION Community Foundation

The Waterloo Region Record - Lyle S. Hallman Foundation Kids to Camp Fund

ABOUT THE EVENT

In celebration of the end of Summer Camp, MSSWR organized a delightful graduation ceremony for our young learners! Campers took turns sharing their favourite memories from the experience, while the staff highlighted moments of positivity and personal growth. This was followed by an Awards Ceremony and a Friendship Bracelet exchange, locking in the lifelong friendships and connections formed. The event was truly remarkable, showcasing the campers' successes and reminding us of the importance of the work we do. **Thank you to Waterloo Region Community Foundation for supporting youth in our community!**

















BACK TO SCHOOL BACKPACK INITIATIVE

ISLAMIC RELIEF CANADA

100 BACKPACKS

11 VOLUNTEERS

ABOUT THE EVENT

CLICK TO VIEW THE FULL GALLERY

In collaboration with **Islamic Relief Canada**, we distributed backpacks to community members in preparation for the back-to-school season. We successfully allocated **100** backpacks, ensuring that every child is well-prepared for their first day of school. Each backpack was filled with essential school supplies to further support the families in our community. Thank you to our volunteers for your help, and to Islamic Relief Canada for your support in providing youth with the tools for their success!










NEW STAFF UPDATES

MSSWR IS THRIVING AND EXPANDING!

This Summer term, we proudly welcomed three new staff members to enhance our ability to serve our community and address the growing demand for our services.



Saaima Umar

Program and Events Coordinator

Saaima works to develop and deliver engaging community programs and events that being people together. She is passionate about fostering inclusive spaces, building partnerships, and creating opportunities that support learning, connection, and community well-being.



Muna Ali

Programs Facilitator Lead

Muna is a dedicated Program Facilitator committed to creating inclusive, welcoming, and supportive spaces for individuals and families from diverse backgrounds. She is passionate about empowering community members and fostering a strong sense of belonging.



Sarah Malik

Specialized Intake Coordinator

Sarah Malik is a Registered Social Worker with the Ontario College of Social Workers. Committed to culturally responsive mental health care, she has experience with diverse groups, including students and Muslim youth, and aims to foster an inclusive environment for mental health services.

MSSWR | SUMMER OUTREACH EVENTS 2026

During the summer term, MSSWR had the privilege of participating in various outreach and community partner events. We were honoured to attend these gatherings, allowing us to network and forge connections with community organizations and partners.

Together, we grow stronger.



2027 Multicultural Connections – Follow Up

Wednesday, July 15, 2026



Parenting Alliance of Waterloo Region Meeting

Tuesday, July 21, 2026

PG Event Planning Meeting

Tuesday, July 21, 2026



Food Sovereignty in Waterloo Region Partnership Grant Stage 2 Meeting

The meeting focused on strengthening collaboration, confirming priorities, and coordinating efforts to support the next stage of the project.

Indigenous and Newcomer Gatherings at Victoria Park Pavilion

The gathering brought indigenous community members and newcomers together to build relationships, share experiences, strengthen cultural understanding, and identify opportunities for collaboration and mutual support.

WR Food Sovereignty Downtown Kitchen Walking Tour Planning

The meeting focused on planning the Food Sovereignty Downtown Kitchener Walking Tour. The discussion covered the purpose and scope of the tour, potential locations and community food assets to highlight, participant engagement, and logistical considerations.

Grow With Us



Volunteer. Connect. Make an impact.

Every act of service creates a ripple of change.

Whether you're looking to gain experience, build leadership skills, complete volunteer hours, or give back to your community, there's a place for you at MSSWR. Our volunteers are at the heart of everything we do, helping create welcoming spaces, support meaningful programs, and make a lasting difference in the lives of individuals and families across the Waterloo Region.

WHY VOLUNTEER?

BUILD MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS
Meet passionate volunteers, staff, and community leaders.

DEVELOP NEW SKILLS
Gain experience in leadership, teamwork, communication, and event planning.

GIVE BACK TO YOUR COMMUNITY
Support programs that empower youth, newcomers, seniors, and families.

EARN VOLUNTEER HOURS
Perfect for high school students, university students and anyone looking to make an impact.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION
Receive certificates, reference letters, and celebrate your contributions.

MAKE A LASTING IMPACT
Your time and talents help create stronger, healthier, and more inclusive communities.

2025 VOLUNTEER RECAP

1620+ Volunteers

2500+ Volunteer Hours

9,175+ Individuals Served

JOIN OUR *Volunteer family!*

Applications are now open.

APPLY TODAY!

www.msswr.org/volunteer



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IMAGINE CANADA

STAY CONNECTED

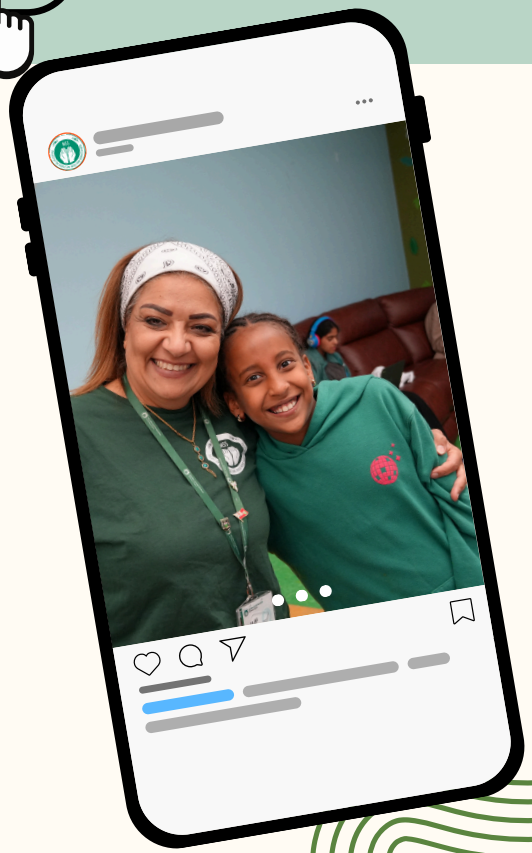
Become a Donor!

Together, we can build a strong community that supports culturally informed, customized services for programs and mental health supports. With your donation, you contribute to newcomers expanding their personal capacity, gaining self-confidence, and developing resilience. Your support means hope and a better future for many. Let's create change together and positively influence lives!

SCAN ME

Scan the QR code, or
click the button to donate!

DONATE NOW



Follow Our Journey

@muslimsocialserviceswr

@kwmuslims

COMING SOON TO MSSWR:

SYSTEM NAVIGATION SERVICES!

STAY TUNED FOR MORE DETAILS

info@msswr.org | 480 Charles St. E., Kitchener, N2G 4K5 | www.msswr.org

COMMUNITY BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

MSSWR is supporting local businesses and strengthening community engagement through our new Community Business Spotlights.

