



ACT FIVE 2024-25

# ANNUAL REPORT

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# A VISION OF HOPE

## DIRECTOR'S ADDRESS



"Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." - Rev 21:3-4 (NIV)

At the end of each program year in April, our gap year students complete an assignment that responds to the vision of the New Creation presented in Revelation 21. They do this as a culmination of their walk through the biblical story and their journey through our program over the previous 7 months.

As Dr. Rikk Watts shared in my New Testament class when I was a grad student, "We are eschatological people". What he meant was that our vision of where the Big Story of God is going shapes how we live out our days. We are meant to be people shaped by and hoping toward this poetic vision of the New Creation as presented quite profoundly in Revelation 21.

As an Act Five staff and board, our hearts are shaped by this vision and we believe God is calling us to participate in the coming of this vision even now. It guides our decision-making and programming - on canoe trips, on Manitoulin Island, in our public learning spaces, in shared meals with our refugee neighbours, and more.

At the end of the 2024-25 program year, one student wrote the following in this final assignment:

*"The Lord is making everything new. ... We are given a vision of renewal, of restoration, and of justice. A vision where all who are thirsty come to the table and drink the water of life. A vision where God's dwelling, God's tabernacle is with the people and the people make space for God."*

We live in a world that is broken and groaning, yet we are committed to finding and growing seeds of new life that push through the cracks. Our visions of hope in a New Creation - a hope to come in full one day but promised to grow among us now - matter. As a community committed to educate, encourage and prepare young people for lives of faithfulness, our confidence in this hope is where our work begins.

May more and more young people come through this place and go on to lead rooted, engaged and purposeful lives on campuses, in workplaces, and in neighbourhoods well beyond Hamilton.

**Jon Berends**  
Executive Director



# THE CORE VALUES OF ACT FIVE

Over the past two years, Act Five has discerned our five core values.  
We believe it is time for us to now share these publicly!

These values guide Act Five and will continue to shape us moving forward,  
be it in our programming, teaching, hiring, board work and beyond.

1

## Trusting the Story

We trust and live in God's unfolding story, first revealed in Scripture. Shaped by this story, we follow Jesus, trust the work of the Spirit in the world and look toward—and participate in—the coming of the kingdom of God.

2

## Improvising in Community

We are called to improvise our lives in this world as faithful disciples of Jesus. This can only be done in community - where we learn to live as image bearers, work out our salvation, join God's mission here on earth and learn the rhythms of grace.

3

## Embodied & in Place

We follow an incarnational God—present in creation from the beginning and fully in Jesus. We embrace our embodiment as good, seeking the flourishing of our communities, knowing our own flourishing is bound to that of our places.

4

## Participating in Reconciliation

As Christ reconciles us to himself, we see the work of reconciliation as our invitation. In the face of all that seeks to separate, we see God's heart to restore right relationships within all of creation. We grieve the brokenness in our world and in ourselves, we repent and forgive, and we work toward shalom.

5

## Practicing Resurrection

We hope and expect that God can do greater things than we can imagine. While we acknowledge the reality of suffering, we hope and wait on the resurrected Lord, practicing resurrection life as we build communities, plant gardens and sing new songs.





# OUR INITIATIVES

## Residential Programming

### GAP YEAR PROGRAM

This year we welcomed 7 students to our Gap Year Program. Through adventure and travel, service and learning, this crew grew in incredible ways and is now off to their next steps in new places.

Learn more at [actfive.ca/gap-year/](https://actfive.ca/gap-year/)



### RESIDENCY PROGRAM

Our Residency Program was filled with 6 young adults this year. As they worked and pursued grad studies, they grew as a community working out a life of faith alongside our gap year students.

Learn more at [actfive.ca/residency/](https://actfive.ca/residency/)

## Moving Outward

Act Five moves beyond the walls of Blake Street and our residential programming. Through Serve & Observe trips, speaking engagements at churches, schools, and camps, hosting storytelling evenings, and our Winter Learning Series, there are many ways to become part of our learning community.

### Testimony from Phil Hosmar, Teacher at London Christian High

"When [our] Capstone course launched in September of 2022, we felt there needed to be something to jumpstart the learning experiences for the students. I had heard about other schools partnering with Act Five on what was called a 'Serve & Observe' trip in Hamilton...[Now], we are in year three and trip five connecting with Act Five and the experience has always been the same. We are welcomed when we arrive and are encouraged

to notice the beauty and brokenness that exist all around us, but to also see God's image in those we encounter. We have enjoyed spaghetti dinners, community walks and time at 75 Blake St., and been connected with agencies who care for their community as Jesus commanded; to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and care for the widow and orphan. Students often refer to this trip as the highlight of the Capstone course and of their year. We pray it continues for years to come as they speak into the lives of high school students and do God's work in the city of Hamilton."

Check out our new **Digital Front Porch** to learn more about what we do and how to get involved.

Find it at [actfive.ca/the-front-porch/](https://actfive.ca/the-front-porch/)

Listen in and join the conversation as we wrestle with how to *Faithfully Improvise* in today's world.

Find it at The Act Five Podcast on [Spotify](#) or [Apple Podcasts](#)





Megan (Student 24-25)

"I feel as though coming to Act Five was a step in me knowing when to say 'enough'. Instead of simply continuing on with the rat race of life with all it's busyness, I have been able to intentionally take time away to do something different, to grow and to learn, to see places, and meet people I would have never met otherwise."

#### TO DATE, AFTER 6 YEARS:



70

TOTAL GAP YEAR GRADUATES



143

TOTAL RESIDENTS

#### PARTNERSHIPS:

26

LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

15

CHURCHES

7

HIGHSCHOOLS

4

CAMPS

#### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2024 - 25 YEAR:

378

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN A SERVE & OBSERVE TRIP



327

WALKS AROUND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD



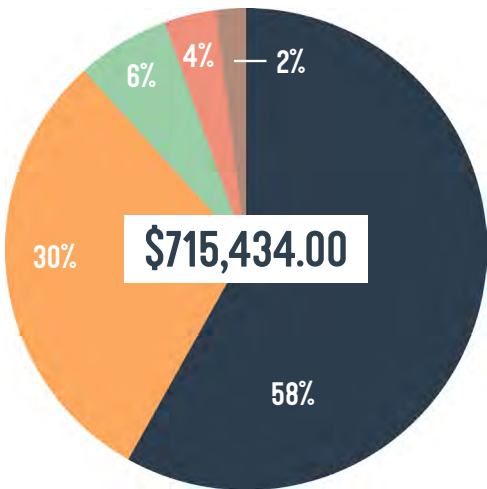
62

HOURS OF STORYTELLING NIGHTS



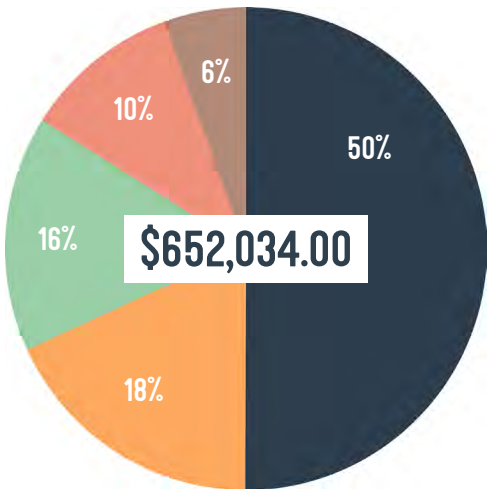
# 2024-25 FINANCIAL REPORT

Revenue and expenses for Act Five’s Fiscal Year, from May 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025.



## REVENUE ↑ 33% from 2023-24

- Donations \$415,870
- Tuition, Program Fees, Room & Board \$215,595
- Partnerships \$44,650
- Fees for Service & Additional Revenue \$24,929
- Bursaries \$14,390



## EXPENSES ↑ 21% from 2023-24

- Employee Wages & Benefits \$326,412
- Property \$117,738
- Program \$103,230
- \*Professional Fees & Services \$68,479
- †Additional Costs \$36,175

2023-24 Revenue \$534,380  
2023-24 Expenses \$538,320

*\* Marketing, accounting, web development, strategic planning, insurance and legal services.*  
*† Fundraising expenses, recruitment, Podcast, Winter Learning Series and other events.*

We are thankful for our growing community of support.



Students had an average of 25% of their Tuition & Fees covered through means of Financial Aid.

↑ 100% from 2023-24!

24

MAJOR DONORS  
[\$5000+]

↑ 60% from 2023-24

45

MONTHLY DONORS

↑ 50% from 2023-24



# PREPARING FOR GROWTH

## 2025-26 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### ESTABLISHING *home*

In January 2025, Act Five launched a long-awaited project to purchase and renovate the Act Five home.

With ownership as of May 2025, Act Five has begun a series of needed renovations to make this home a place of hospitality, refuge, and formation for emerging young adults.

**We are immeasurably grateful to all who have given so far to make this possible.**

As of September 2025, Act Five has raised \$1.4 million of the \$2.6 million needed.

### REMAINING NEED \$1,200,000

Learn about the Establishing Home Capital Project at [actfive.ca/establishinghome](https://actfive.ca/establishinghome).

### OPENING *doors*

\$100k in new bursaries

\$40k to grow recruitment avenues

\$60k in new monthly donors

**NEED \$200,000**



### TELLING OUR *story*

\$10k for Podcast development

\$30k for expanding events

\$10k to invest in partnerships

\$50k for infrastructure to sustain growth

**NEED \$100,000**



# WAYS TO GIVE AND INVEST IN ACT FIVE

Act Five relies on the support of those who believe in this work with us, that we might establish home, open doors and tell this story for years to come. Please consider the following invitations.

## GIVE ONLINE

Join the story as a monthly donor or give a one time gift by visiting [actfive.ca/give](https://actfive.ca/give)

## GIVE BY E-TRANSFER

Please send your e-transfers with a note to [finance@actfive.ca](mailto:finance@actfive.ca)

## GIVE BY CHEQUE

Please send all cheques to:

Act Five Initiatives  
75 Blake St, Hamilton, ON L8M 2S7

## ESTABLISHING HOME

If interested in supporting Act Five's ongoing Capital Project, contact Jon Berends at [jberends@actfive.ca](mailto:jberends@actfive.ca) to learn how.

ACTFIVE.CA

75 BLAKE ST, HAMILTON, ON L8M 2S7  
Charitable Registration No: 71562 7105 RR0001

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