

2023-24

ANNUAL REPORT



**Canadian Public
Relations Society**

Hamilton Society



A panoramic view of the Hamilton skyline, featuring several high-rise buildings and a mix of urban architecture. The word "INTRODUCTION" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image. The sky is blue with light clouds, and a body of water is visible in the distance.

INTRODUCTION

Hamilton Skyline

The Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS) Hamilton is a professional organization comprised of dynamic communications and public relations members who practice throughout Southern Ontario.

Our Chapter is managed by a volunteer Board of public relations professionals who provide various career development options, such as the accreditation program that provides APR preparation and support, the highly sought-after mentorship program, and much more.

We support ethical standards of professional practice and conduct among our members while developing public awareness of the value and function of the public relations profession.

Our membership area covers Hamilton, Halton, Niagara and Southwestern Ontario. Learn more at www.CPRShamilton.ca



EXECUTIVE & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dundas Valley

Executive

- Past President **Kim Sweeney, MEd, MCM, APR**
- President **Michael Marini, APR**
- Vice President **Ryan Strang, APR**
- Treasurer **Josie Cassano Rizzuti, MCM, APR**
- Secretary **Andrew Macklin**

Board of Directors

- Chair, Accreditation, **Alyssa Lai, APR**
- Chair, Communications, **Kim Zarzuela**
- Chair, Events, **Alison Springate, APR** (*until January 2024*)
- Chair, Membership, **Heather Francey, APR**
- Chair, Mentorship, **Linneah Tovstiga**
- Chair, Professional Development, **Alex Sevigny, PhD, APR**
- Chair, Sponsorship and Business Development, **Alexandria Anderson, MA**



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

King West BIA, Hamilton

Greetings CPRS Hamilton:

This is my final President's message for CPRS Hamilton- a fact that brings me mixed emotions.

Slightly saddened to leave a post that I quite enjoyed and a Chapter I am always proud to represent, but happy at the same time to know that the Chapter moves forward with extremely capable Board members and leadership. Board members who care deeply for the Chapter and who will, no doubt, work to enhance your experiences and professional development.

I leave this role knowing the Chapter enjoys strong financial and business development positions, creative and engaging professional development events and a commitment to professional excellence through our APR and mentorship programs.

I also leave this role knowing that we have done all that we could as a Board to revamp our Bylaws, so that the next generation of leaders have a clear document upon which to base their decisions and actions. Indeed, it was no small feat, but I thank each of my fellow Board members in getting us to this point- in particular, Past President Kim Sweeney.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Brant Street Pier

If I could impart a final thought as President, it would be this- champion this Chapter and the profession. Our role as communicators is often mischaracterized as "spin doctors." This couldn't be further from the truth. What we provide daily is well-grounded, professional advice founded in critical concepts like transparency, honesty and collaboration. Our role as communicators is to bridge gaps, facilitate progressive two-way dialogue and ensure that what we do and the organizations we represent advance learned thought.

This is a critical time for professional communicators, and I encourage you to always be the voice of reason, provide sober second thoughts and give unimpeachable advice.

I sincerely thank you for trusting me and the Board and for an experience I will value for many years to come.

Michael Marini, APR,
President



2023 PINNACLE AWARDS

CPRS Hamilton Chapter is proud to recognize the exceptional talent of its members and those of the wider community of professionals within the public relations industry through the Pinnacle Awards. Pinnacle Awards are open to both members and non-members of the Canadian Public Relations Society who work in Hamilton, Halton, Niagara and Southwestern Ontario.

GOLD AWARDS

Issues/Crisis Management Campaign: *“Stick it to COVID – Vaccinating Niagara’s Youth”*
Courtney Westerhof, Niagara Region Public Health

Communications Project, Research: *“The New Organizational Gatekeeper: Enhancing Reputation Management Through Data”*
Sabrina Lavi, Ontario Health Cyber Security

Integrated Marketing and Communications Campaign: *“Inspired Research. REAL IMPACT.”*
Wilfrid Laurier University

Marketing Communications Campaign: *“Smashing Conversion Goals with Content and Camping”*
Alexandria Anderson, Alex&Co and Four Corners Algonquin

Government Relations Campaign: *“This is Our Time: Brant Community Healthcare System’s Campaign for New Hospital”*
Linneah Tovstiga, Brant Community Healthcare System



2023 PINNACLE AWARDS

SILVER AWARDS

Marketing Communications Campaign: *“Bloody Generous: Keeping Canada’s Lifeline Strong Amid Pandemic Challenges”*

Rebecca Kieswetter, Wilfrid Laurier University

Communications Project, Publication: *“Forever Golden: Laurier Campus Magazine Final Edition”*

John Zronik, Wilfrid Laurier University

Issues/Crisis Management Campaign: *“Mpox Vaccination Campaign – Community Partner Engagement”*

Andrew Korchuk, APR, Niagara Region Public Health

Issues/Crisis Management Campaign: *“What’s Up Welland?”*

Marc MacDonald and Paul Orlando, City of Welland

SPECIAL AWARDS

Bill Cockman Memorial Award for Excellence in PR: Kim Sweeney

Dr. Louis J. Cahill Memorial Award for Distinguished Service: Josie Cassano Rizzuti

Heather J. Pullen Memorial Award: Caitlin Costello

Student Award of Excellence, Mohawk College: Rishita Seth

Student Award of Excellence, Niagara College: Emily Zwart



TREASURER'S REPORT

London, Ontario

CPRS Hamilton's fiscal year, ending March 31st was marked by vibrant member engagement opportunities, including mentorship programming, an accreditation focus, and many social events. These initiatives, driven by the unwavering dedication of our board members, contributed significantly to our community's vitality.

Our financial landscape remained robust, primarily fueled by membership fees, supplemented by revenue from Pinnacle Awards, sponsorship and interest income from investments. However, as we endeavoured to enrich member experiences and complete our Bylaws, we lost \$4,283. This deficit was primarily attributed to our commitment to delivering exceptional value through our renowned Pinnacle and Special Award celebration at the picturesque Royal Botanical Gardens in June. The event drew substantial attendance and created lasting memories with its breathtaking views and camaraderie. Additionally, our finances supported the development of our new Bylaws, resulting in increased legal expenses in the fiscal year.

As a not-for-profit organization, CPRS Hamilton currently has assets totalling \$50,918 in short-term investments and cash, a testament to the dedicated efforts of our esteemed past members. Over the past year, our finance portfolio enhancements continued to bolster programming and provide members with an efficient digital experience. Our prudent investments allowed us to capitalize on rising interest rates and adapt to the changing economic environment.

A photograph of the Victoria Park clock tower in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. The tower is a classical-style structure with four columns supporting a dome with two clock faces. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. A red horizontal bar is at the bottom of the image.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Victoria Park, Kitchener

Looking ahead to 2025, we will focus on prioritizing membership growth, fostering mentorship, providing robust accreditation support, and further enhancing communication channels. These strategic initiatives are set to remain within budget for the upcoming 2024-25 fiscal year. We're thrilled to welcome Alex&Co as our new Silver Sponsor and sincerely thank McMaster's Master of Communication program for its generous Platinum sponsorship and unwavering support of our Chapter.

In closing, I express heartfelt appreciation to all current and former board members for their steadfast commitment, invaluable support, and active engagement in guiding CPRS Hamilton's financial journey, both in the present year and throughout the past. With a promising financial outlook, CPRS Hamilton is prepared for continued growth and the delivery of enriched programs for our valued members. With your ongoing collaboration, we are set for success and exciting times.

Josie Cassano Rizzuti, B. Comm, MCM, APR, CMP
Treasurer

TREASURER'S REPORT

Victoria Park, Brantford

Balance Sheet as of March 2024

ASSETS	
Cash and Cash Equivalent	
101000 RBC - 4509	\$12,618
101000 RBC GIC - 1390	\$32,000
10050 Mark Gregory Trust Fund	\$5,000
Total Cash and Cash Equivalent	\$49,618
Accounts Receivable	\$1,300
Total Assets	\$50,918
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Current Liabilities	
20005 Miscellaneous	\$578
Total Liabilities	\$578

A photograph of a waterfront scene with a concrete pier and a chain in the foreground, and a body of water and a distant structure in the background.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Spencer Smith Park, Burlington

Balance Sheet

as of March 2024

EQUITY	
30000 Opening Balance Equity	\$37,457
Retained Earnings	\$17,166
Profit for the Year	(\$4,283)
Total Equity	\$50,340
Total Liabilities and Equity	\$50,918

TREASURER'S REPORT

Hamilton Skyline

Statement of operations year to date April 2023 to March 2024

INCOME	
40105 Membership	\$4,161
40300 Events and Sponsorship	\$5,083
40510 GIC Interest	\$802
Total Revenue	\$10,046
EXPENSES	
50100 Board Expense	\$1,121
50150 Communications	\$2,013
50300 Event Expenses	\$7,703
50400/50500 Office Expenses, Legal and Bank Charges	\$3,492
Total Expenses	\$14,329
Profit/Loss	(\$4,283)

A photograph of a modern, multi-story glass-walled building, identified as City Hall in Hamilton. The building is set against a clear blue sky. The text 'ACCREDITATION REPORT' is overlaid in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the upper portion of the image. A red horizontal bar is at the bottom of the image, containing the text 'City Hall, Hamilton' in white.

ACCREDITATION REPORT

City Hall, Hamilton

Huge congratulations to our newest slate of APR professionals!

- Dalia Emam, APR, Town of Halton Hills
- Ethan Fahey, APR, Niagara Peninsula Energy Inc.
- Heather Francey, APR, Halton District School Board
- Michelle Idzenga, APR, Niagara Region
- Andrea Swinden, APR, Halton Catholic District School Board

Candidates underwent a rigorous evaluation of key skills and competencies to practise public relations at a senior level. They were tested on their knowledge of public relations theory and policy issues, ethical practice of public relations and strategic communications planning skills.

CPRS Hamilton boasts a high number of APR professionals, thanks to its strong mentorship culture to support new candidates undergoing the process. With thanks to the following members who graciously offered advice and coached candidates on various aspects of the APR.

- Daryl Barnhart, APR
- Andrew Korchok, APR
- Carleen Carroll, APR
- Tara Sprigg, APR
- Amra Durakovic, APR
- Alison Springate, APR
- Donna Kell, APR

Alyssa Lai, APR, Chair, Accreditation



MENTORSHIP REPORT

Covered Bridge, Guelph

It has been my sincere pleasure to lead the CPRS Hamilton Mentorship Program through another year of growth, community building, and learning. After an engaging in-person orientation, we were thrilled to launch the Mentorship Webinar Series, which provided education beyond the classroom on emerging topics in the communications world. These webinars, offered completely free and to a national audience, have featured panelists from CPRS Chapters across the country who are changing the game in the field. Topics covered in 2023-24: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; the rise of AI; crisis communications; and mental health and wellbeing.

This year, we matched 24 mentors and mentees, representing a wide range of sectors, experience levels, and interests. We are grateful for the ongoing support of our academic partners: Niagara College, Mohawk College, and McMaster University. The Mentorship Committee learned a great deal about these institutions and how the Mentorship Program can evolve to continue to meet the needs of future cohorts.

My deepest thanks go out to the 2023-24 Mentorship Committee: Andrew Macklin, Caitlin Costello, Megan McGinnis, and Tyler McNeil.

Thank you to this year's participants. The program's success depends on your active engagement and trust.

Linneah Tovstiga, Chair, Mentorship



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT

McMaster University

This year was marked by the explosion of generative artificial intelligence on the public relations and communications management professional scene.

To reflect this trend, we held two events. The first was on “New Trends in AI,” presented by Dr. Alex Sévigny, APR, at an in-person event hosted by King’s College London. It was extremely well attended by members of CPRS Hamilton, the local IABC Chapter and members of the larger Western University community.

We also renegotiated our relationship with the McMaster University Master of Communications Management program to co-offer professional development synchronized to the MCM on-campus residencies held at the beginning of each academic term.

Overall, this was a good year of discovery and networking. I look forward to an even better year in 2024-25.

Alex Sevigny, PhD, APR, Chair, Professional Development



SECRETARY AND EVENTS REPORT

Grimsby, Ontario

In 2023, we successfully re-introduced the Pinnacle Awards with a formal event at the RBG Rock Garden. It was an intimate crowd, but it laid the foundation for growth in 2024, which has already been seen in the nomination process. We held a successful Holiday Humbug in Hamilton and are well on our way to presenting a reinvigorated Pinnacle Awards event in 2024. *Note: this portfolio was initially held by another executive member, who helped re-develop the Pinnacles before her untimely departure from the Board in January 2024. Andrew Macklin, Board Secretary, has since picked up the portfolio.*

The Secretary position is a difficult one to pull highlights for, but thanks to the cooperation of the other Board members, we were able to run successful monthly meetings that ran efficiently and effectively. A few meetings ran beyond the time allotted despite numerous activities covered by all portfolios at each meeting. One of the initiatives introduced at this position is a rotating land acknowledgement that helps teach our Board members of the different Indigenous People and treaties throughout southwestern Ontario. This is helping everyone learn more about the Indigenous peoples that have called the region home for centuries and allowed us to progress on our individual journeys for Truth and Reconciliation.

Andrew Macklin, Secretary



SPONSORSHIP REPORT

Windsor, Ontario

Sponsorship and Business Development has maintained its strong foundation this year while refreshing our offerings and outreach. We have updated our sponsorship package and communications to ensure our offerings remain relevant and appealing to current and potential partners. This effort has resulted in maintaining valued relationships and securing sponsorships that support our core activities:

- We are pleased to continue our partnership with the McMaster University Master of Communications Management program as our Platinum Sponsor.
- Alex&Co has joined us as a new Silver Sponsor, enhancing our sponsorship diversity and supporting our initiatives.

In total, we secured \$1,250.00 in sponsorship dollars for the 2023-24 year, which has helped bring more valued programming to our membership. As we look to the future, we are exploring additional avenues to enhance our revenue through potential new professional development partnerships.

In summary, this year has been one of maintaining our course and strengthening our connections within the industry. We look forward to continuing our work and finding new opportunities in the 2024-25 year.

Alexandria Anderson, MA
Chair, Sponsorship and Business Development



2023 - 24

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www.CPRShamilton.ca

communications@cprshamilton.ca

  CPRS Hamilton

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