



OneBrantford: Inclusive City Strategy

2025 Annual Report



Introduction

The OneBranford: Inclusive City Strategy (ICS) was approved by City Council and implemented in June 2025. The ICS guides the City's efforts to build a stronger and more inclusive community within three key objectives:



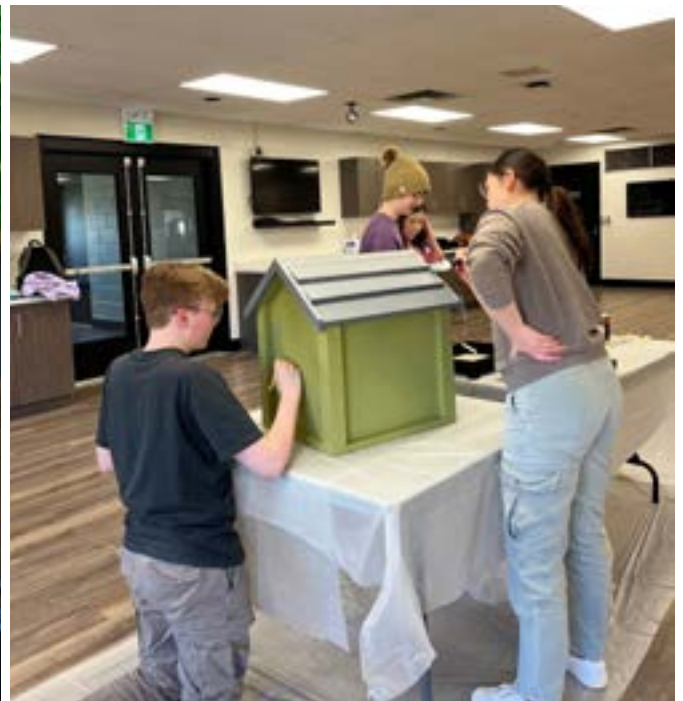
1. Providing inclusive programs, services and facilities



2. Creating a welcoming and inclusive workplace



3. Helping to build an inclusive community



1. Providing inclusive programs, services and facilities

Accessible Trail at Jaycee Park – The pedestrian bridge replacement and trail construction at Jaycee Park was completed restoring a key connection through one of Brantford’s most popular parks and included an accessible trail upgrade.

Glenhyrst Art Gallery, Coach House and Gardens –

The updates of automatic door, accessible washrooms and modifications to ramps, parkway and patio improved the access and use of this cultural and historical community space.

Accessible Playground and Community Garden Upgrades at Woodman Park Community Centre –

The park’s updated design incorporates innovative outdoor learning and meeting spaces, games tables, paved pathways, shade structures and new tree plantings. A highlight of the playground is the new We-Go-Swing™.



Indigenous Peoples Day Celebration

– Earl Haig Family Fun Park opened its doors for free to hundreds of community members in partnership with Gihekdaye Friendship Centre for National Indigenous Peoples Day 2025. The event included service organization resource booths, craft vendors, speeches and Haudenos-aunee and Anishinaabe dancers. Event partners included: Brantford Native Housing, Woodland Cultural Centre, Métis Nation of Ontario, Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg, Child and Family Services of Grand Erie, Aboriginal Health Centre, Brantford Public Library and the City of Brantford.

Indigenous Housing Development and Supports

- **Indigenous Housing Advisor** – this position will provide Indigenous led housing supports to strengthen Indigenous cultural safety across the community housing system.
- **Housing Subsidy Pilot with Brantford Native Housing** – this program supports a per-unit subsidy model to expediate the construction of non-profit affordable housing, including 18 units

Indigenous Led Learning – in partnership with Six Nations of the Grand River, the City continues to operate an Indigenous-led child care centre and offers Indigenous-led EarlyON programs at various locations to provide opportunity for cultural learning and connections.

Indigenous Youth Hub – Niwasa’s Youth Hub launched in May 2025 and provides multiple days per week of after-school culturally-based drop in programs for Indigenous youth.

Inclusive EarlyON – in partnership with Lansdowne Children’s Centre, EarlyON Child and Family Centres, this program offers an opportunity for children 0-6 years with special needs and their parents and caregivers to connect with each other. The environment and activities are designed to meet children’s sensory needs and developmental goals, and occasional guest speakers share ideas and resources.



Brantford Beats & Eats

– this event featured live music on two stages, live performances such as line dancing, Bollywood dancing, aerial hoop performances, a magic show, a dog show, and food trucks.

Culture Days on the Trail

– invited attendees to walk along a 2.6 km stretch of trail, between Hardy Road and Lafayette Avenue, to attend free mini-concerts and performances featuring painters, musicians, and dancers.



Fusion Beats – Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts and the Laurier Hub for Community Solutions hosted the 3rd annual Fusion Beats community talent show, featuring diverse young performers who performed original music, classic covers, and performance art.

Trail Mix Live! – supporting local artists through live music and entertainment at the Brantford Farmers Market throughout the spring and summer.

Doors Open Along the Grand – hosted by the City of Brantford, County of Brant and Six Nations of the Grand River this free event welcomed residents to celebrate and explore 15 unique heritage buildings and sites.

Futurpreneur Partnership – in partnership with Futurpreneur the Brantford Resource Centre (BRC) provides tailored mentorship, financing, grant funding and business advisory services to underrepresented entrepreneurs, helping them launch and grow sustainable businesses.

Racialized and Indigenous Supports for Entrepreneurs (RAISE) Program – provides funding opportunities for racialized individuals working to break down financial barriers to entrepreneurship. Through these partnerships the BRC can provide access to resources, address systemic barriers, and create opportunities for diverse business owners.

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Business Basics for Newcomers – in partnership with Wesley, the BRC hosted a Business Basics workshop for Ukrainian newcomers interested in starting a business, and provided an overview of business structures, tax information, and highlighted available funding opportunities.

PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise – in partnership with PARO Centre, a not for profit social enterprise that empowers women, strengthens small businesses, and promotes community economic development across Ontario. The workshop highlighted the wide range of programs and supports PARO provides to women entrepreneurs, including business development programs, grant funding, advisory services, and technical resources that help turn business ideas into successful ventures.

Retirement Ready Series – hosted by the BRC as a Seniors Month series, focused on healthy aging, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy, offering participants practical tools and inspiration for navigating this new chapter.

Seniors Art Series – showcasing local talent while offering older adults ages 55 and up an opportunity to engage in hands-on, creative expression.

Seniors Resource Fair – in partnership with Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario (OACAO) through funding support from the Government of Ontario, this event provided an opportunity for older adults to learn more about resources and services that help seniors live well, stay connected, and remain active participants in the community.



Sensitive Santa – hosted at the Sanderson Centre for Performing Arts, this event allowed families to book prearranged meetings for children with sensory disabilities with Santa in a controlled environment with reduced stimuli.

Youth Little Free Library – designed and launched by Brantford Youth Council to offer youth-focused books and resources in a Little Free Library in Centennial Rotary Waterworks Park and Woodman Park Community Centre.

Youth Engagement Series (YES) – in partnership with Brantford Police Services and the Hamilton Burlington Brantford YMCA this program offers youth the opportunity to participate in a six-week program that pairs recreational physical activities done alongside police officers with information sessions on important safety topics.

Healthy Kids Programs – offers inclusion and diversity training and tools to support local sport, art, culture and recreation organizations. This program also supports childhood development including physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development and communication skills.

Blanche E. Williams Community Centre
– the new southwest community centre and park was named “Blanche E. Williams Community Centre and Park” to honour a Brantford woman who played a pioneering role in breaking down racial barriers in education 130 years ago. Construction is expected to be completed in 2026.

Accessibility and Special Events
– City of Brantford Special Events, such as “Scare in the Square,” and “Canada Day Celebration” continued to prioritize accessibility in the planning and implementation of these beloved local special events.



2025 Special Olympics Ontario Provincial Summer Games

– This three-day event was hosted in partnership with the Brantford Police Service, Six Nations Police and the Ontario Provincial Police and welcomed over 750 athletes in 5 different sports.

2. Creating a welcoming and inclusive workplace

#TeamBrantford in the Community

- **Orange Shirt Day** - Staff show their support for the Survivors' Secretariat through their annual Orange Shirt Fundraising Campaign.
- **National Day for Truth and Reconciliation** - City staff volunteered at Woodland Cultural Centre's 2025 unveiling the former Mohawk Institute Residential School as an Interpretive Historic Site.
- **Earth Day 2025** - Staff supported the Let's Clean Our City Event and the 12th annual Brantford Community Tree Planting event in D'Aubigny Creek Park.
- **Brantford Foodbank** - Staff supported Brantford Food Bank's First Annual Spring Into Action Food Drive and organized the holiday themed "Share the Love" drive.
- **Holiday Bake Sale** - Staff hosted a holiday bake sale in support of Brant United Way.
- **Rotary Classic Run and the United Way Gala at Home** fundraisers were supported by staff.



#TeamBrantford Wellness, Support and Training

- **Wellness Teams** - continue to offer opportunities for fitness, stress management and peer connection through events, such as: Meditation, Zumba, lunch-time Yoga, Jersey Week and TeamBrantford softball series.
- **Peer Support Team** developed to promote workplace wellness by providing peer-led support, education and crisis intervention to staff and volunteers.
- **Dementia-Friendly Training** - developed by Alzheimers Societies across Canada and promoted to all staff to provide free tools and resources to better understand and support dementia-friendly policies, practices, spaces and services.
- **Indigenous Matters Course** - developed by Wilfrid Laurier University continues to be available to City Staff and is mandatory by all new employees to support Indigenous cultural learning and competency.
- **Pieces for Peace Speaker Series** – hosted by the ICS staff project team, this Speaker Series was an opportunity for staff to hear from subject matter experts on the meaning of inclusion within municipal work and the economic and social benefits to the community.



#TeamBrantford Recognition and Appreciation

- **Mayor's Staff Appreciation Luncheon.**
- **#TeamBrantford Gearing You Up! Employee Recognition Campaign** launched by Organizational Change Management (OCM) Committee to promote staff appreciation.
- **The City celebrates the contributions of staff through events and acknowledgements**, including Transit Operator and Worker Appreciation Day, Public Works Week, and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day, to name a few.



City of Brantford Accessibility Awards – as part of annual National AccessAbility Week events, the City of Brantford Accessibility Awards recognize and celebrate a person, group or organization that has made, or is in the process of making a significant contribution towards improving accessibility to accommodate persons with disabilities. In addition to two community awardees, the following staff from the City of Brantford were also recognized:

- Spencer Moore, Fitness Instructor Specialist, City of Brantford's Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre
- Christian Bean, Manager of Construction, City of Brantford
- Traffic Services Department, City of Brantford

Ontario Age-Friendly Community Recognition – City of Brantford achieved recognition from the Ontario Government celebrating Brantford's achievements towards making Ontario more accessible and inclusive for people of all ages and abilities.

Volunteer Recognition and Impact

Awards – in partnership with Brant Regional Association of Volunteer Administrators (BRAVA), this honours and celebrates community volunteers and their ongoing contributions and commitment to community.

Brantford Youth Excellence Awards

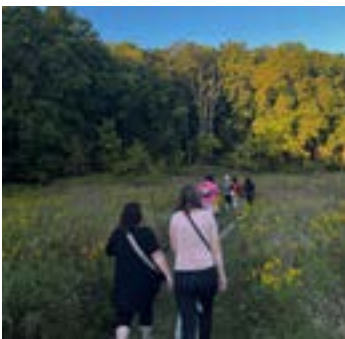
– recipients were recognized for their outstanding contributions to well-being, growth, diversity and inclusion, community, leadership and impact. The award ceremony showcased visual art displays from local youth artists and performances by local youth musicians.



3. Helping to build an inclusive community

Welcoming Week 2025 – Brantford City Council officially declared Welcoming Week from September 12-21 illuminating City Hall in orange, turquoise, and purple.

- **“Art & Belonging” project pieces at Brantford Public Library** – this project was hosted by the Neurodivergent Artist Collective to consult with local youth through art-based modalities around how to make local facilities more welcoming and accessible for youth with disabilities.
- **Cultural Cooking Classes** – hosted in partnership with Grand River Community Health Centre, “Kitchen Connections” was an opportunity to engage with different cultures and foods, while learning to cook a nutritious meal together.



- **Queer Joy Hike** – this event was geared to newcomer 2SLGBTQIA+ community members, and open to all, as an opportunity to learn more about local trail networks and make new connections. The event included a scavenger hunt and a guided hike at the Whiteman’s Creek Trail.

- **International Film Series** – in partnership with Wilfrid Laurier University, this series provides the community with an opportunity to share, reflect and celebrate different cultures, languages and cinematic art. Since starting in 2022, the series has screened films from 20 different countries, including: France, Ireland, Mali, India, Taiwan, Mexico, Iran, Korea, Spain, Sweden, Iceland, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Belgium, Italy, UK, Denmark, Lebanon, Germany, and Poland.



Brantford International Villages Festival – an annual four day celebration of Brantford’s diversity, culture and heritage – including food, dance and music.



Newcomer Welcome Day 2025 - The Brantford Immigration Partnership (BIP) with 60 community organizations hosted this fourth annual event to support New Canadians and their families. Over 200 attendees were able to access information, resources, programs, and valuable community connections to support their settlement in Brantford.

Hockey is for Everyone – this three-part series developed in partnership with the Brantford Immigration Partnership (BIP), Brantford Youth Council, and the Town and Gown Committee was created to support fostering a sense of belonging for newcomer youth through access to neighbourhood play. This series included a workshop where all participants received a free hockey stick from Free Sports for Growth, a Youth Skate Night at Harmony Square, and distribution of Brantford Bulldogs tickets to local newcomer and refugee youth through community partner organizations.



Brantford Immigration Partnership: Community Learning

– the BIP hosted several training opportunities for community partners, including: “Inclusive & Equitable Approaches in Dealing with Diverse Backgrounds” and “Culture Competency in Leadership”.

Brantford Immigration Partnership Community

Recognition - The BIP was honoured with a Certificate of Appreciation at the Muslim Education & Resources for Community and Youth Ifar and Appreciation Dinner. The event recognized local leaders and organizations whose efforts continue to foster inclusivity and a sense of belonging for Muslim communities across Brantford-Brant.

Destination Brantford Video Series – The BIP launched this four-part educational and promotional series to highlight Brantford as a destination for newcomers, along with information on services, employment, economic development, and local businesses. The series features interviews with local officials, employers and immigrant-serving agencies, along with unique newcomer stories about why they are proud to call Brantford home.

International Mother Language Day Celebration – in partnership with Grand River Community Health Centre and Brantford Public Library, the BIP hosted a drop-in community engagement event to celebrate linguistic diversity and multilingualism.



Newcomer Winter Activity and Safety Event – East Ward Echo Place Neighbourhood Association in collaboration with the BIP hosted Winter Wonders: Your Guide to Thriving in the Cold to support New Canadians with information and resources about navigating the winter season, including presentations on winter driving and mental health.

IPV/GBV Community Partners Forum – in partnership with the Brant Response Against Violence Everywhere (BRAVE) Committee, this second annual forum brought together 100 representatives from over 45 local organizations to connect and learn about the work happening locally and across the province to address ending intimate partner and gender-based violence.

Gender-Based Violence Prevention Training – in partnership with Western University and the Brant’s Response Against Violence Everywhere (BRAVE) Committee, launched Neighbours, Friends and Families: Understanding & Preventing Intimate Partner & Gender-Based Violence. This free online course has been designed to educate the community about the dynamics and warning signs of intimate partner and gender-based violence, and how to access community support services.



Interconnected Panel Series – in partnership with the Brantford Public Library, Brantford Pride, The Bridge Brant, and moderated by Queer Joy Events, this panel showcased 2SLGBTQIA+ community organizers and explored topics like local 2SLGBTQIA+ Seniors and Youth as leaders in local community development and trans and non-binary leadership in grassroots initiatives.



Brantford Pride Festival – in partnership with Brantford Fire, staff hosted displays at the 2025 Pride in the Park Festival to promote City initiatives and resources, and fire safety and prevention information to over 1000 guests in Mohawk Park.

Celebration of Black Wellness & Culture — in collaboration with Brant Community Healthcare System, Brantford-Brant-Norfolk Ontario Health Team, Woodview Autism & Mental Health Services, Canadian Mental Health Association, and the Brantford Public Library, the City of Brantford supported the Black History Month program called “A Community Celebration of Black Wellness & Culture.” This highlighted the works of local Black youth artists, and featured a keynote discussion from Dr. Kathy Hogarth, Associate Vice President, Global Strategy at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Research Into Local Experiences of Hate-Based Incidents – in partnership with Wilfrid Laurier University’s (WLU) Centre for Research on Security Practice, this research seeks to better understand and document local instances of hate crimes and speech experienced by racialized community members. This research will develop actionable steps to better prevent, monitor, and address local instances of hate crimes and hate speech.



Community Changemakers Program – now in its ninth year, the Changemakers Program 2025 invited Brantford residents to develop and launch a program, service, or event that makes a positive impact in the community. Projects included:

- **Parker's Promise:** creation and distribution of resource kits for new and expectant parents, featuring strategies and tools for grounding themselves in stressful situations, contact information for community service providers, and educational materials.
- **Pass the Puck Forward:** a social enterprise initiative where residents can buy mini “pucks” to redeem for food and drink at participating local businesses, encouraging a pay-it-forward model of spreading generosity, local pride, and community connection.
- **Quilt of Belonging:** a display of the famous Quilt of Belonging: a collaborative work of art that celebrates Canada's diversity, at local events in collaboration with community arts and heritage organizations.
- **Brantford Food Skills Initiative:** a series of free, hands-on food security educational workshops, offered in partnership with the Brantford Station Neighbourhood Association, covering a range of topics, including growing your own food, meal preparation, and food preservation methods.
- **Sidewalk Joy Art Cart:** creation of a small mobile art gallery that will travel around as a pop-up art installation at community events, encouraging participation in art making, sharing art, and learning about local artists.



- **Water Lantern Festival:** a festival where community members design and release biodegradable lanterns to celebrate the importance of the Grand River, incorporating storytelling, environmental action, and community unity.
- **Eagle Place Drop-In Art Classes:** free monthly art classes over the course of 10 months where residents ages 16 and up can participate in guided, hands-on activities that foster creativity and encourage self-expression.
- **The Golden Standard Initiative:** a startup to increase awareness of the services and resources available for preventing and reporting drug-facilitated sexual assaults and intimate partner violence, including distribution of GHB testing strips to local businesses and organizations.
- **Dutch Canadian Liberation Celebration:** a celebration event held May 1 to 3, 2026, in partnership with the Canadian Military Heritage Museum, including the development of an accompanying locally devised musical theatre production.



2025 Flag Raisings

- Bell Let's Talk Day
- Black History Month
- International Women's Day
- Trans Day of Visibility
- Autism Awareness Month
- Youth Sports Week
- Sikh Heritage Month
- National Volunteer Week
- Brantford Youth Week
- Mental Health Week
- Polish Heritage Month
- Public Works Week
- Childhood Cancer Awareness
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness
- Suicide Prevention Day
- Every Child Matters
- Breast Cancer Awareness Day
- Cadet Week
- PROBUS
- National Disability Employment Awareness Month
- Arnold Anderson
- Hindu Heritage Month
- Transgender Day of Awareness
- Wrapped in Courage
- Christian Heritage Month