



Melville United Church Fergus, ON



Halo Socio-Economic Impact Study

August 2023

Sphaera Research

www.halocanadaproject.com

Halo Studies



Halo studies use peer-reviewed research in parallel sectors to help congregations ask: “What is the socio-economic value of our ministry and service to the wider community?”

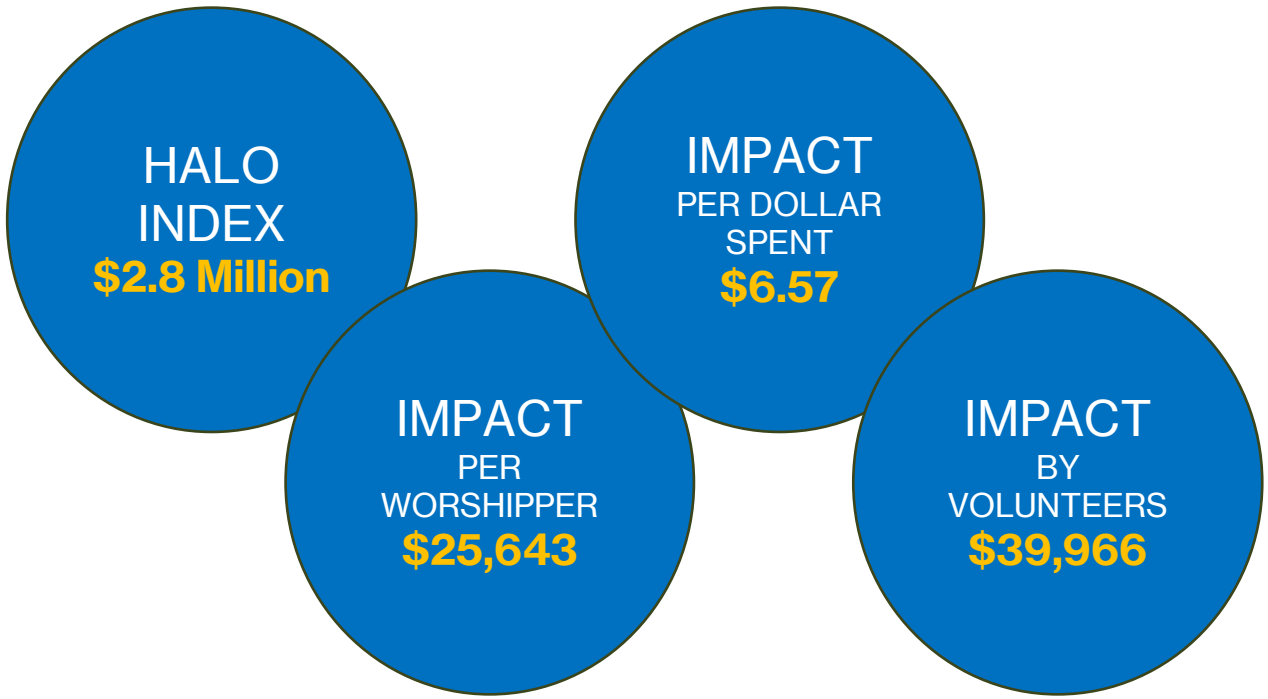
In other words, “If our congregation disappeared, what would it cost the municipality to replace the programs, services and activities we provide with and for our neighbours?”



Executive Summary



Melville United Church is a key contributor to the socio-economic vitality of Fergus and the surrounding township of Centre Wellington.



Congregational Profile



History and Building

- Established - 1845
- Current building – 1900
- Additions – 1930
- Own building without a mortgage
- Parking for 30 cars / open to the public
- 5 Garden plots for the foodbank

Membership and Attendance

- 80 active members
- 45-50 weekly attenders
- 1-5 children attend weekly

Reach

- 55% live within a 3 km radius
- 5% travel more than 10 km to worship

Finances

- Revenue - \$195,270
- Expense - \$233,996
- Deficit - \$38,726

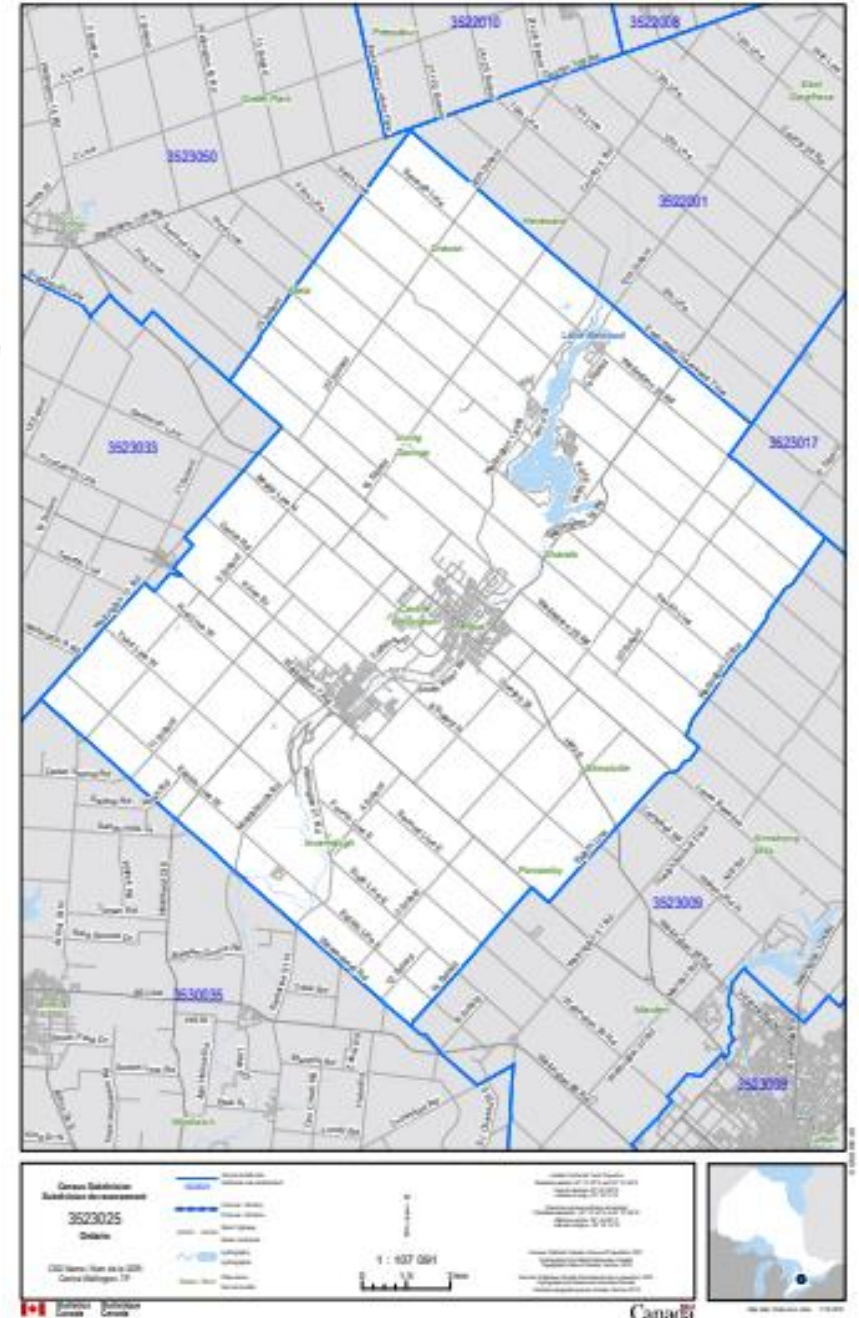
Staffing

- 1 full-time
- 6 part-time

Neighbourhood Profile

Centre Wellington Township

- Fergus is the largest town in the Township of Centre Wellington.
- Located 20 minutes north of Guelph and 1 hr 20 min northeast of Toronto.
- With a long history of Indigenous activity, the area was settled by Europeans in 1833 as a Mill Site.
- The area now serves as a centre for agricultural activity and small-scale industry.



Demographics



POPULATION

31,093



MEDIAN AGE

43.3 / 40.7



MEDIAN AFTER-TAX
HOUSEHOLD INCOME

\$88,000 / \$79,500



VISIBLE MINORITIES

5.0% / 34.5%



UNEMPLOYMENT

8.1% / 13.4%



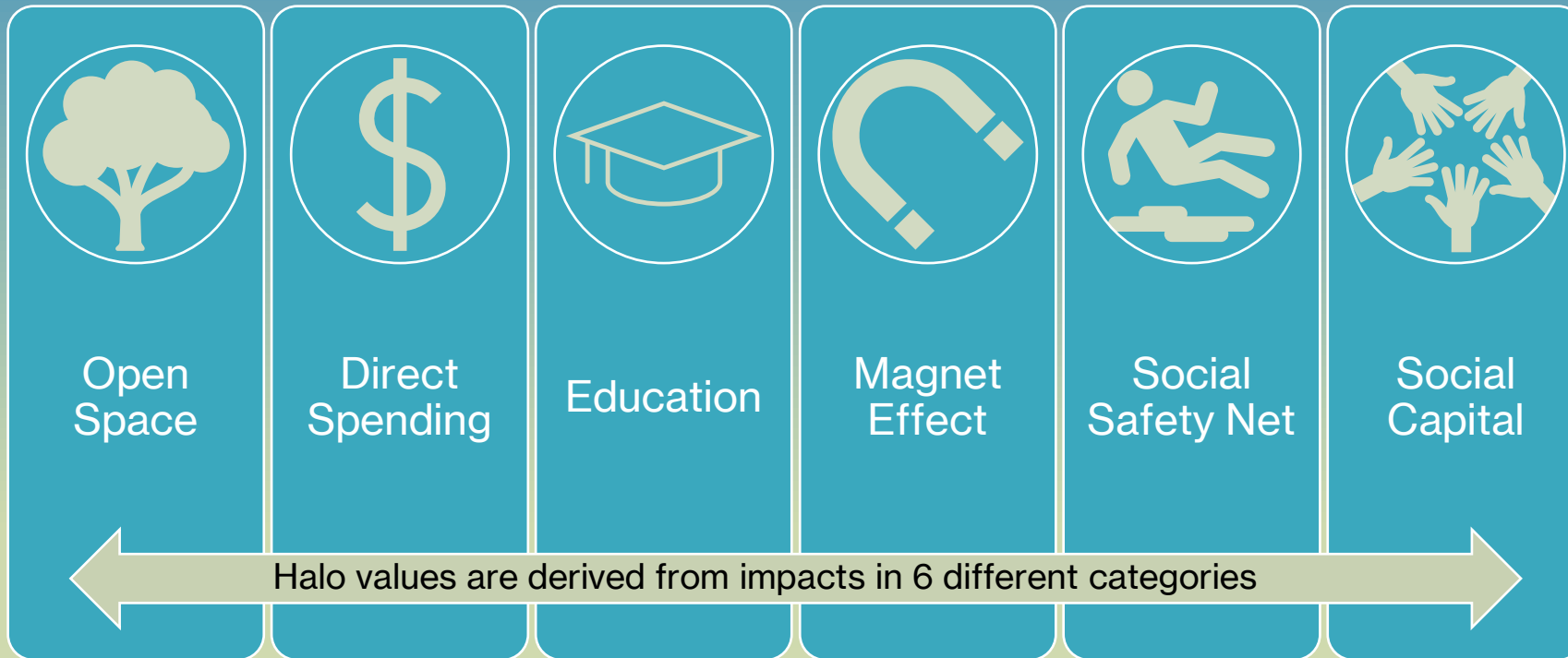
EDUCATION

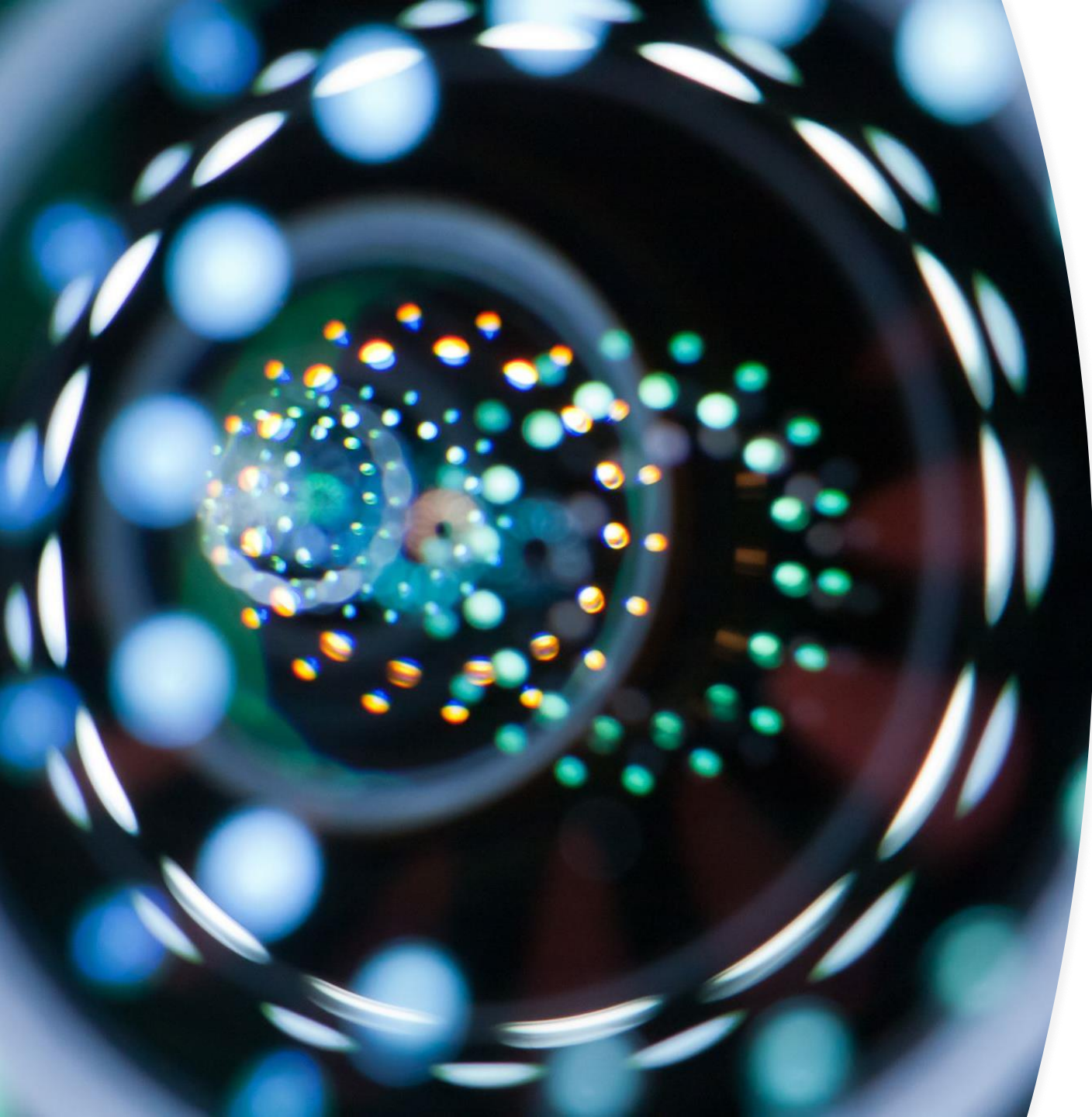
68.6% / 70.8%

- Children aged 0-14 make up roughly the same percentage of the population in Centre Wellington as in the rest of the province (16.0% / 15.1%)
- There are more seniors aged 65+ in Centre Wellington compared to the rest of the province (23.7% / 19.8%)
- 72.6% live in detached houses. Ontario = 53.6%
- Fewer people live on their own (22.7% / 26.0%)
- Average census family size is 2.9
- Average number of children in census families is 1.9
- Fewer single parent families (11.7% / 17.1%)
- Median household incomes are 10.6% above rest of Ontario

- Similar numbers have post-secondary education
- Slightly more children and youth aged 0-17 live in poverty according to the Low Income Measure After-Tax (19.5% / 18.6%)
- More seniors aged 65 and older are living in poverty according to the LIM-AT (22.4% / 18.9%)
- Fewer Central Wellington residents are spending 30% or more of their income on shelter costs (16.9% / 24.2%)
- There are far fewer visible minorities in Central Wellington
- South Asians make up almost half of all visible minorities in the region.

Halo Impact





Halo Impact

\$1.28 million in socio-economic impact

\$25,643 worth of impact per worshipper

\$6.57 worth of impact for every dollar spent

\$39,996 generated through volunteers

.

Halo Impact



Category	LOCAL HALO	Percentage	Compared against National Halo Study	Difference
Open Space	\$3,875	0.3%	1.5%	-1.2%
Direct Spending	\$195,270	15.2%	26.4%	-11.2%
Education	\$809,440	63.1%	7.6%	55.5%
Magnet Effect	\$26,500	2.1%	5.8%	-3.7%
Social Safety Net	\$195,433	15.2%	31.7%	-16.5%
Social Capital	\$51,626	4.0%	20.9%	-16.9%
HALO TOTAL	\$1,282,144	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%

HALO – Open Space



Congregations often have outdoor spaces that contribute to their socio-economic impact.



Contributors include community use of parking, rec facilities, or community gardens.



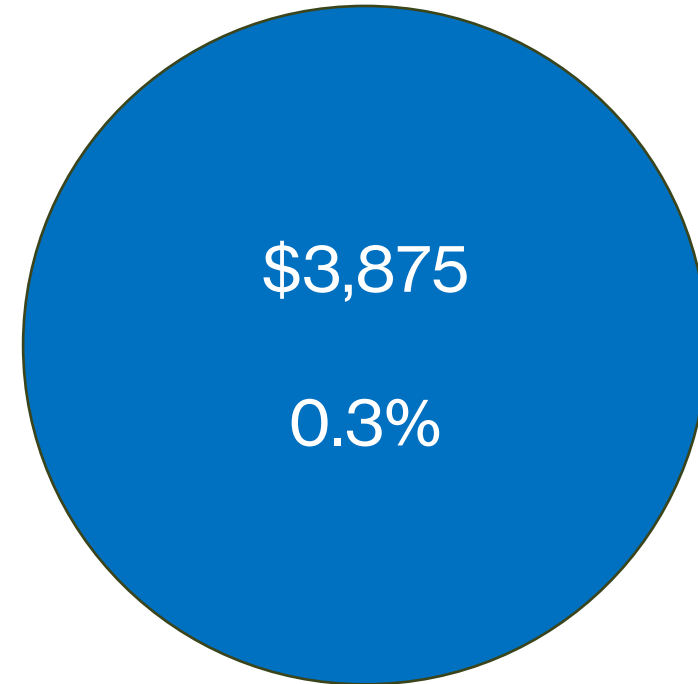
Melville United's impact comes primarily from produce grown in its community garden.



Community use of parking in urban areas offers social impact.



Impact in this category is 1.2% below the national average.



HALO – Direct Spending



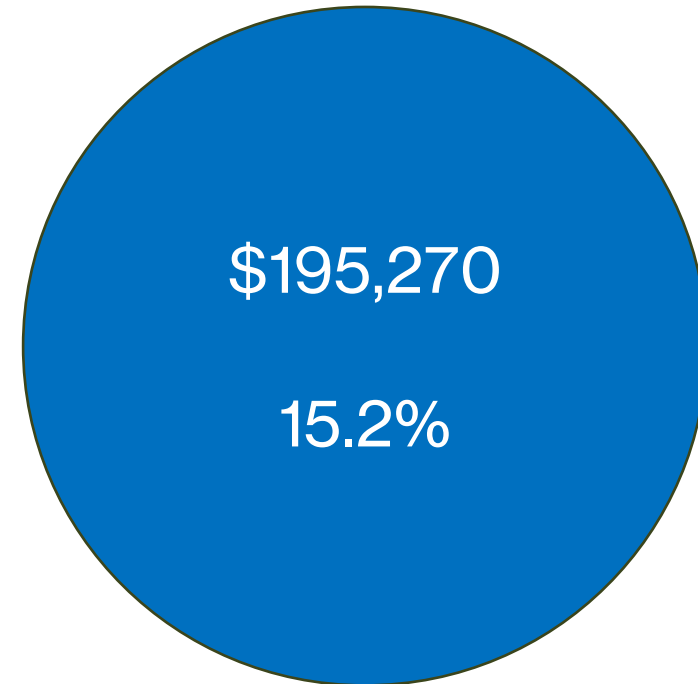
Congregations exist in communities. They contribute to local economies through their purchasing power and employment capacity

80% of church spending typically occurs within a 3-5 km radius of the church building

Congregational budgets are mostly spent locally on salaries, music, programs, social services, maintenance and upkeep

Most congregational staff tend to live locally and therefore spend the bulk of their salary locally

The lower the Direct Spending the better. Melville United produces \$6.57 worth of social impact for every dollar spent. This is close to double the Canadian average of \$3.39



HALO – Education



Educational programs can help to maximize the building's use, generate revenue to support other ministries, and provide a much-needed service in the community

Infant and nursery care have been shown to provide as much as \$20,000 worth of annual social benefit for each child enrolled

Melville United contributes more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of a million dollars in social impact through its Early Years Program

This category contributes close to $\frac{2}{3}$ of the congregation's socio-economic impact

\$809,440

63.1%

HALO – Magnet Effect



The Magnet Effect measures the extent to which congregational programs and services attract people from outside the community.



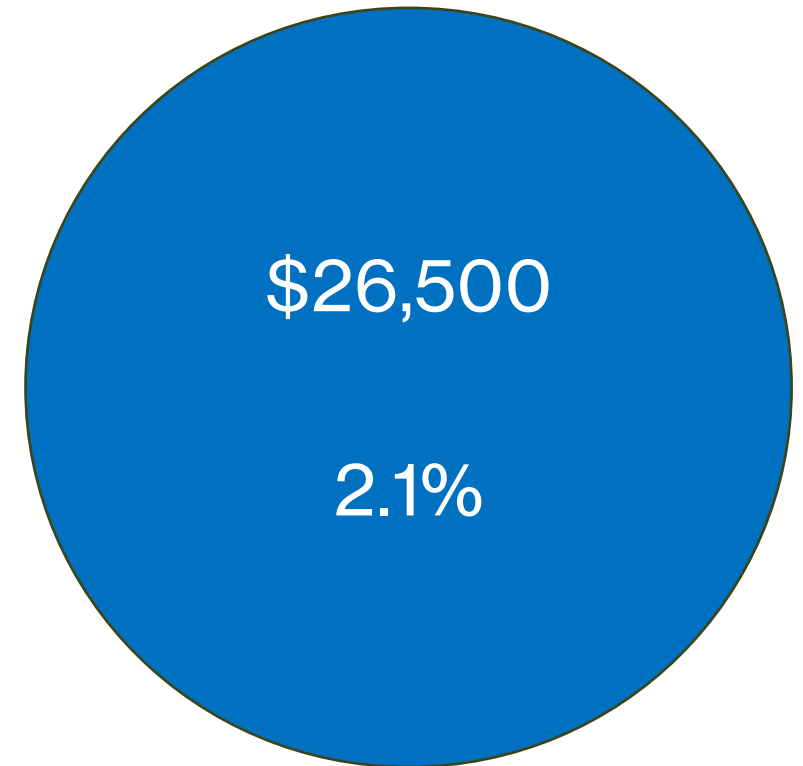
The Ontario Ministry of Tourism estimates that people travelling more than 10 km to a destination point outside their community spend an average of \$20 per visit on items like gas, groceries, and meals.



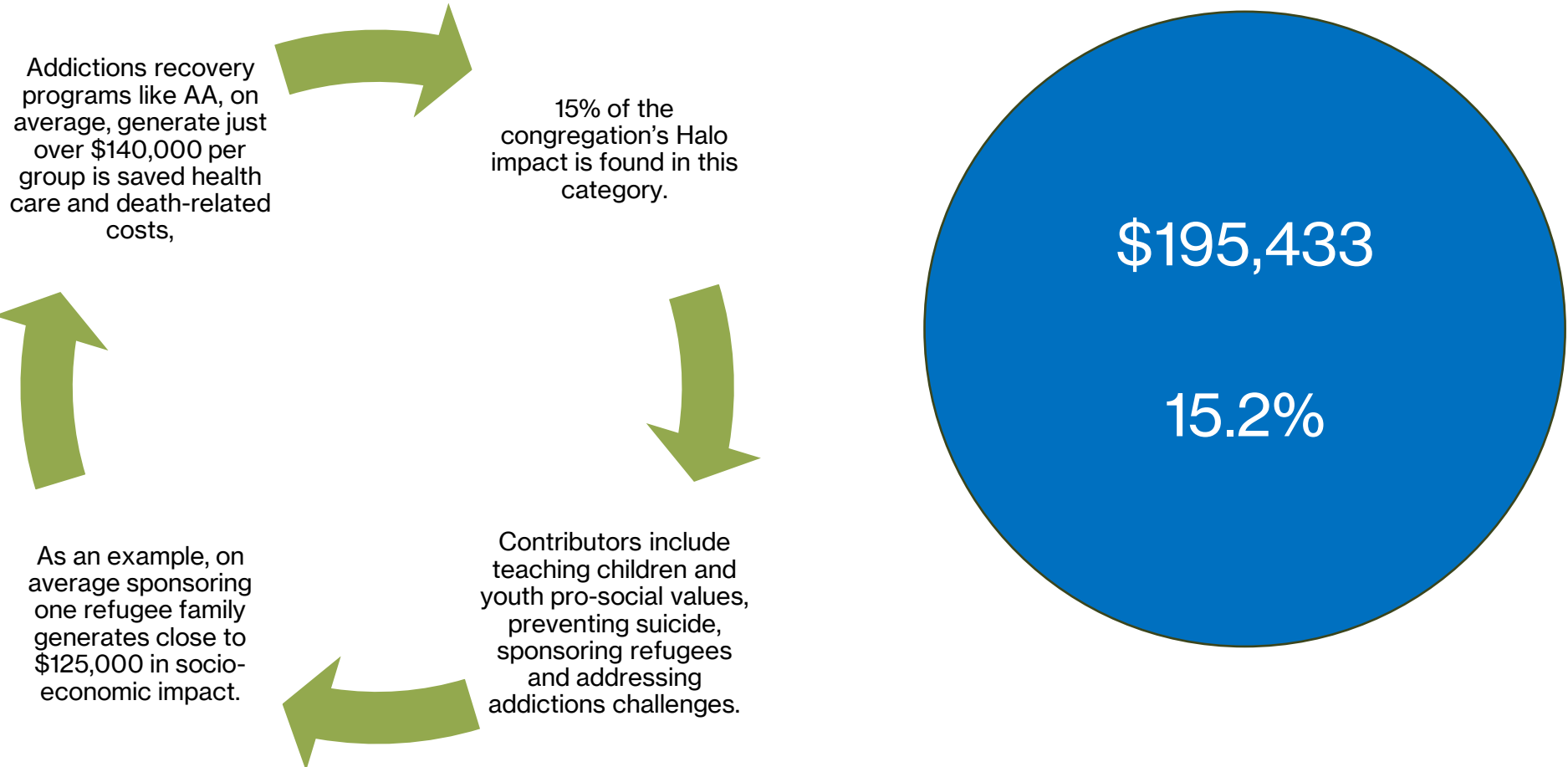
Weddings, funerals, conferences, arts events, community, and religious festivals, and seminars all provide opportunities to attract individuals and increase community spending.



Impact in this category is about a third of what it is in most congregations. Remember, exceptionally high values in one category will proportionally reduce values in other categories.



HALO – Social Safety Net

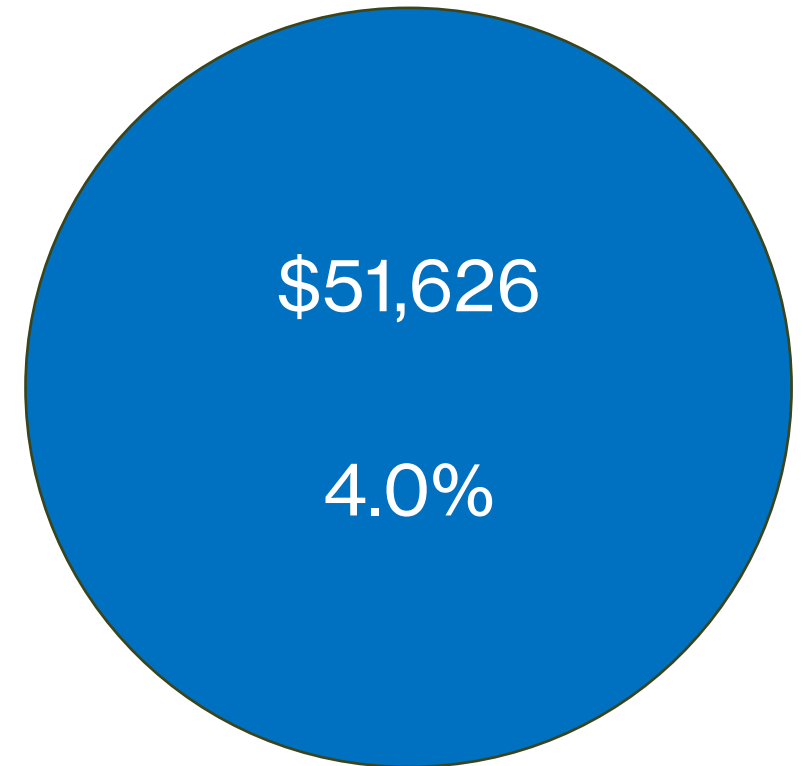


HALO – Social Capital

Social Capital captures how congregational space and volunteer time can create social value.

Melville United Church provides and facilitates close to 1,500 volunteer hours worth close to \$40,000 in social impact.

It also provides close to \$12,000 in reduced space costs for community groups.



HALO – Potential Tax Benefit



Many in Canadian society object to the tax benefits faith communities receive.

Property Tax Exemptions

In most cases, faith communities are not required to pay property tax.

Sales Tax Rebates

In most cases, faith communities can claim rebates on sales taxes paid to the provincial and federal government.

Personal Tax Credits

As registered charities, faith communities can issue tax receipts that permit donors to deduct a percentage of their financial contributions made to congregation on their taxes.

HALO – Potential Tax Benefit



\$13,190

None Reported

\$46,913

\$60,103

Melville United Church's social impact is 21 times any tax benefits it receives

CONSIDERATIONS



Open Space

Melville United is situated on a large piece of property. Centre Wellington has identified housing as a current priority. Is the congregation willing to explore housing as a means of increasing its socio-economic impact and supporting its mission? Supportive housing generates close to 3.5 times more social impact than it costs.

Magnet Effect

Only 5% of the congregation travel more than 10 km to worship and other church activities. Are there opportunities to expand Melville's reach and activities to become a destination place for community gathering. In addition to all the other benefits, individuals who travel more than 10 km tend to contribute \$20 to the local economy through spending on every visit.

Social Safety Net

In communities like Fergus where there are fewer unemployed and fewer immigrants and refugees, services for these individuals are often limited. Pre-employment training can be worth as much as \$610 for every participant. Imagine the impact generated if that training leads to even a minimum wage job. Supporting a refugee family can generate up to \$125,000 in social impact. For others looking to integrate into Canadian society offering channels to access food, housing and medical supports can generate untold social benefits. In Centre Wellington more than 20% of seniors are living at or below the poverty line. Delivering or partnering with programs that deliver services and decrease social isolation for seniors presents another significant opportunity for program expansion.

CONCLUSIONS



Melville United Church is an integral part of Fergus' and Centre Wellington's social economy contributing more than \$1.28 million worth of social impact every year.

It generates \$6.57 worth of social impact for every dollar it spends – twice the national average observed in more than 100 congregations.

Close to two-thirds of that impact is derived from its participation as an Early Years Centre.

Other activities include physical fitness programs, addictions services and opportunities to decrease social isolation.

It delivers and facilitates close to 1,500 volunteer hours worth close to \$40,000.

Part of the ongoing task for Melville United Church will be to advance its vision, not only as a centre for spiritual care, practical support and nurture, but as a community economic engine whose activities and space use are rooted in the needs of its surrounding community.



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