

# PATHWAYS TO REMEMBERING

Together, we remember those we have lost to  
drug poisoning in Guelph and Wellington County



## About the Project

The Pathways to Remembering project is a permanent memorial in Guelph for reflection, healing, and remembrance of those who have died due to drug toxicity. The project was initiated in 2021 and has been supported by a working group of community agencies, people with lived and living experience, and families who have lost loved ones. In addition to honouring lives lost, the memorial aims to reduce stigma, draw attention to the impact of drug poisonings in our community, and support those who continue to carry grief. Many have shared that their grief is often complicated by stigma, yet every person lost is deeply loved and missed.

The Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy Pathways' Working Group is collaborating with the City of Guelph to finalize the memorial's design, with the goal of unveiling it in August 2026 to mark Drug Poisoning Awareness Day. The memorial is a structure at the end of a path, surrounded by native trees, shrubs, and perennials. The memorial will be inscribed with *Together, We Remember*, to acknowledge the loss that many community members collectively experience. The memorial will be located in York Road Park, near the covered bridge, in downtown Guelph.

## Why it Matters

According to Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health data, there have been at least 240 substance related fatalities in Guelph and Wellington County since the project began fundraising in 2021. Behind every number is a person who mattered, and a network of people carrying grief.

### The Pathways to Remembering Memorial is:

- A place of honour and healing - where families and individuals can gather to remember someone they love. The memorial offers a powerful counter-narrative to the stigma that accompanies lives lost to substances.
- A public statement of compassion - demonstrating that community members in Guelph are actively working to reduce stigma related to substance use and advocating for health-focused approaches.
- An opportunity for education and change - highlighting the impact of drug poisonings in our community and the need for compassionate care and support for people who use substances.
- A welcoming, peaceful space that offers reflection and connection for everyone.

The memorial is not only about remembrance — it is about shifting the conversation, reducing stigma, and supporting those who continue to carry loss.



“This memorial is a place of remembrance and reflection. It honours the people we’ve lost, acknowledges the grief carried by so many, and calls on all of us to respond with compassion and understanding.”

- Karen Lomax

Thrive Admin & Volunteer Coordinator &  
Pathways Working Group Member

## Fundraising Milestones

Fundraising began in 2021 and reflects years of community commitment, from T-shirt sales during Drug Poisoning Awareness Day events to donations from families, friends, and community members, many of whom carry the pain from the death of someone they love. The fundraising campaign was completed thanks to a generous contribution from Homewood Health Centre, whose donation helped WGDS and community partners meet the \$25,000 fundraising goal. Reaching this milestone is a powerful testament to our community’s commitment to remembrance, compassion, and change.

## With Gratitude:

This memorial would not be possible without the dedication and partnership of many individuals and organizations.

A heartfelt thank you to the City of Guelph for their unwavering support in bringing this project to life, and for their continued care, stewardship, and commitment to preserving the memorial.

We extend our sincere thanks to our key partner agencies, as well as OPIRG, Homewood Health, Danny Lui & Dorothy Baker for their donations and early support of the project.

We are grateful to every donor, volunteer, advocate, and family member who has contributed to bring this vision forward. Together, we are creating a lasting place of remembrance – and a stronger, more compassionate community.

## In Collaboration With:

