

The Power of Connection

Together, Possibility Is Limitless

ANNUAL REPORT 2025 – 2026

GEM

Table of Contents

A Message from GEM Leadership 1

Impact At A Glance 2

The GEM Approach: Together Possibility Is Limitless 3

Who We Serve: Our Mentees & Mentors 4

OUR IMPACT

The Power of Mentorship: Building Confidence & Connection 6

Expanding Horizons: Exploring Careers & Possibilities 7

Discovering Direction: Building Skills for Success 9

Opening Doors: Access to Education & Opportunity 10

A Network that Grows with Her: A Lifelong Community 12

Mapping the Road Ahead 14

Partner with Us 15

Our Supporters 16

Board of Directors 18

Program Components & Impact Measurement 19

Financial Statements 20

A Message from GEM Leadership

The heart of GEM has always been community: girls and women learning from one another, sharing knowledge, building connections, and expanding what is possible together.

This year, 260 girls navigating barriers to opportunity were accepted into the GEM program. Among participating mentees, 91% accessed opportunities they otherwise would not have experienced, 81% felt more confident in themselves and their abilities, and 87% of graduating mentees are heading to post-secondary education.

These numbers represent young women moving forward with greater confidence, clarity, and ambition. They also reflect the strength of a community that opens doors, shares knowledge, and helps girls see new possibilities for their futures.

As the world of work changes quickly, career literacy has never been more important. Through GEM's industry partnerships, mentees gained real-world exposure to evolving fields, emerging technologies, and the skills shaping the future.

With a growing team and our recent expansion into the Waterloo Region, GEM is ready to welcome more girls into a network that continues beyond the mentorship year. Mentees become alumnae, mentors, colleagues, and leaders—sharing what they have learned while continuing to grow themselves.

To our staff, mentors, alumnae, board, donors, and partners: thank you for being part of this constellation of support.

With gratitude,



Sarah Morgenstern
Executive Director



Mary Lee
Board Chair

2025-2026 **Impact at a Glance**

At Girls E-Mentorship, every girl deserves the opportunity to create her own future, regardless of the challenges she faces.

Since 2012, GEM has supported girls facing socioeconomic barriers by connecting them with professional women who help them see and seize new opportunities for their futures. Our goal is to fuel the hopes and ambitions of girls, equipping them with the confidence, clarity and courage to see what is possible and shape their own futures. We measure our impact intensively because behind every number is a story of transformation.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

91%

of mentees accessed opportunities they otherwise would not have had

87%

of Grade 12 mentees are transitioning to post-secondary education

86%

of mentees feel more prepared for life after high school

35

Scholarships awarded, totaling $82,300

85%

Developed new knowledge and skills

2,400+	Hours of personalized mentorship
5	GEMinars which bring GEM girls together with professionals and hands-on experiences that expand their skills, networks and sense of possibility
26	Diverse experiential learning opportunities
81%	of participants improved their confidence in themselves and their abilities



"GEM has played an important part in my journey. I didn't just gain mentors. I gained access, confidence, and a seat in rooms I once only imagined."

— Arianne Rull, GEM Mentee alumna (2020-2021 cohort)

Verified Impact: According to the Impact Genome Registry, a third-party impact verification platform, the quality of evidence supporting GEM's outcomes is stronger than that of 96% of comparable programs.

The GEM Approach
Together, Possibility Is Limitless

A girl doesn't need just one opportunity. She needs an ecosystem.

Each fall, teen girls from across the Greater Toronto Area, Hamilton, and Waterloo Region join GEM's evidence-based nine-month mentorship program. Combining one-to-one mentorship, experiential learning, career development and a lifelong community, GEM surrounds each girl with the people, tools and opportunities to shape her future.

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED MENTORSHIP INNOVATION

Program enhancements are shaped directly by GEM's four youth councils and by the insights of mentees, alumnae, and mentors shared in design-thinking workshops.

MENTORSHIP

One-to-one guidance from a professional woman mentor to build confidence, explore careers and set goals



COMMUNITY

A lifelong alumnae network offering opportunities for growth, peer mentorship and leadership

ACCESS

Connections to women leaders and professional networks through GEMinars and corporate partnerships

KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

Practical knowledge and skills to navigate education, employment and what comes next

NEW EXPERIENCES

Hands-on workshops in real workplaces that introduce new industries, careers and possibilities

Who We Serve, Who Supports Them
Our Mentees & Mentors

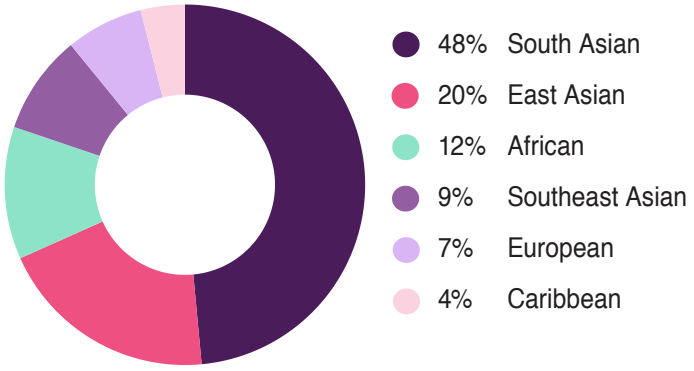
Our Mentees at a Glance

GEM's 2025–26 cohort brought together 260 teen girls for GEM's nine-month mentorship program.

Each girl arrives with her own identity, circumstances, and ambitions.

Together, the cohort reflects the diversity of the communities GEM serves, and the range of experiences girls bring with them.

Cultural Identity



88% **are in their final years of high school** – a pivotal period when young women are making critical decisions about their future and identity.

92% **come from immigrant households;** 11% have resided in Canada for five years or less.

Why Mentorship Matters

At intake:

60% **reported low self-confidence.**

46% **identified lack of professional connections as a barrier.**

Only 30% of GEM mentees strongly agreed that "there are adults I can ask for help if I need it."

Just 10% strongly agreed that their identity was positively represented in their education and in the media.

These starting points matter. They show what girls are looking for when they come to GEM and why the mentor matched with them can make such a difference.



The Importance of Connection

Across Canada, young women continue to face systemic barriers to economic and social mobility. For girls from racialized, immigrant and low-income families, these barriers are further compounded by rising cost-of-living, increased competition for fewer entry-level jobs, and changing skill requirements by employers.

The City of Toronto's 2025 report on reducing barriers to youth employment found that the strongest youth employment outcomes are tied to programs like GEM that combine mentorship, training, and wraparound supports.

GEM provides mentorship at the moments when it matters most. Mentor Canada's 2026 Youth Voice Report identified a persistent lack of individualized mentorship during the transition from high school into post-secondary education or employment, particularly for first-generation students and newcomer youth.

Our Mentors

GEM mentors bring at least five years of professional experience and something equally important: the willingness to listen. They offer mentees a trusted perspective and social support outside of school and family as they make decisions about education, careers and what comes next.

89% **of mentees said their mentor provided a supportive environment to learn and grow.**

Nearly 60% of mentee-mentor pairs met more often than the program's required one hour per month, together logging more than 2,400 hours of tailored one-to-one mentorship.



"Being a GEM mentor allows me to share my experience, skills, and perspective while contributing to an active and supportive community group. By creating space for young women to find their voices, recognize their potential, and see the possibilities ahead of them, I hope to continue to help mentees build the confidence to pursue their dreams and create meaningful change in their communities."

Katherine Nip, Senior Manager, Metrolinx
Three years as a GEM Mentor

"I have people in my corner"

Change often begins with a connection.

Through one-to-one mentorship, GEM girls have someone in their corner: a trusted adult who listens, shares knowledge and helps them navigate what comes next.

For many mentees, that relationship becomes a foundation for something even bigger—the confidence to trust their own voice, take on challenges and move toward their goals.

Supportive mentorship helps girls build confidence in their future.

Connecting Girls to Women to Limitless Possibility

- **89%** felt heard and valued by their mentor.
- **89%** said their mentor provided a supportive environment to learn and grow.
- **88%** said their mentor was knowledgeable and shared useful and relevant guidance.
- **85%** felt they could turn to their mentor for help when they needed it.

81% **felt more confident in themselves and their abilities after GEM.**

More Than Mentorship: Rosie's Story

When Rosie joined GEM at 16, she felt she should have her future figured out. As the eldest sibling and first in her family to pursue post-secondary education, she felt pressure to make the "right" choices.



Then she met her mentor, Linda. Their relationship gave Rosie space to ask questions, explore possibilities and become comfortable not knowing exactly what came next.

> ***"I think I had to unlearn the idea that being independent meant having all the answers."***

Rosie began to see her future not as one path she had to get right, but as something she could shape herself. Years later, Linda is still in her corner. Rosie now works at GEM, while Linda serves on its Board—and Rosie offers other girls the support she once received.



> ***"Now, I get to help create the kind of environment where another girl can feel safe enough to ask those same questions."***

Looking back, Rosie sees how far that impact reached.

> ***"If my teenage self could see us now, I think she would be surprised, but also really proud. She would probably realize that the mentorship was never just about helping me through one stage of my life. It shaped how I approach relationships, opportunities, and the way I now want to show up for other people."***

"I see more possibilities for my future"

It is difficult to imagine yourself somewhere you have never had the opportunity to see.

GEM girls encounter new people, places and pathways through mentors, GEMinars, experiential learning and exposure to professionals across industries.

These experiences expand their knowledge of what is out there and what they can imagine for themselves.

76% said their GEM experience sparked new interests and ambitions.

74% said they have developed a sense of purpose.

77% understand the career opportunities and pathways available to them.

91% **said they gained access to opportunities they would not have experienced otherwise.**

Experiential Learning

Career literacy is built through exposure — through seeing, asking and stepping into spaces that once felt out of reach.

This year, 26 partner-led sessions at organizations such as SickKids, Chanel, Staples, Mars Wrigley and HP brought mentees inside workplaces across healthcare, technology, retail and consumer goods.

Inside the Labs at SickKids

This winter, GEM mentees and alumnae stepped inside the research labs at SickKids to explore where a future in science could take them.

Thanks to SickKids and KidsScience, our youth participants explored careers in laboratory and clinical research, examined lung cells and learned how research can lead to better care for young people. For many, it was their first time inside a research facility—and a chance to see a career in science up close.



Powered by Partnerships: Sephora Canada

Exploring Career Possibilities

Through the GEMinar and Career Coffee chat events we hosted with Sephora Canada, mentees were given a behind-the-scenes look at the people and career paths that power a global brand. Sephora leaders shared their own career journeys, introducing girls to different possibilities within the beauty and retail industry and the many paths a career can take.

Participating in an interactive workshop on confidence, vulnerability and authenticity, mentees were encouraged to recognize their strengths, own their voices and imagine where their own talents might take them.

Since 2022, Sephora has donated over $160,000 to support GEM's mission.

Sephora Gifting Suite at the GEM Holiday Party

At GEM's holiday party this year, every GEM mentee received beauty, skincare, and fragrance favourites thanks to generous donations from Sephora.

It was a special reminder to every mentee that she is valued and worth celebrating.



SEPHORA

Classes for Confidence

Thanks to our partnership with Sephora, GEM girls took part in a hands-on Classes for Confidence experience, learning beauty and skincare skills from Sephora professionals. The experience gave girls a chance to try something new, learn from industry experts and explore new interests and possibilities.

Investing in the Next Generation

Canada's first WNBA team launched their inaugural jerseys this year and turned the moment into an investment in the next generation of girls. For each of the first 1,000 Toronto Tempo jerseys purchased, SEPHORA Canada donated $26 to GEM to help support mentorship and leadership opportunities for girls across our community.

"GEM has been such a wonderful partner to work with this year. Their commitment to creating meaningful opportunities for diverse young women really resonates with us at Sephora Canada. Their agility, responsiveness and collaborative spirit have made the partnership incredibly rewarding. We're proud to work alongside a team so deeply committed to helping the next generation thrive."

Kayla Campbell,
Vice President, Human Resources,
Sephora Canada



"I know how to get there"

Seeing a future for yourself is one thing. Knowing how to pursue it is another.

Through one-to-one mentorship and experiential learning, GEM girls gain the knowledge, skills and professional connections to pursue their career goals.

Ready for What Comes Next

By the end of the program:

- **79%** were optimistic about attaining the career or job path they wanted.
- **81%** felt better prepared for the workforce.
- **83%** knew what skills and knowledge they needed to develop to reach their career goals.

From Possibility to a Plan

● Before GEM ● After GEM



GEMinar 3: Secrets to Success

Mentees, mentors, alumnae and partners came together at the Park Hyatt Toronto for an afternoon of skill-building, reflection and connection.

Mentees strengthened their professional skills and reflected on how they want to show up in the working world.

The afternoon culminated in a panel of accomplished women from media and business who shared candid reflections on their career journeys, navigating setbacks, building resilience and developing confidence.

Their stories reinforced an important lesson: success is rarely linear, perseverance matters and there is no single path forward.



"Opportunities are within my reach"

Knowledge and confidence matter.
So does access.

GEM helps girls bridge the distance between aspiration and opportunity by connecting them with post-secondary guidance, professional networks and financial support.

The result is not simply greater readiness for the future, but a clearer sense of what comes next.

13% are the first in their families to pursue post-secondary education.

75% were admitted to their top-choice program of study.

48% received an external or GEM scholarship to support their studies.

66% are pursuing post-secondary studies in a STEM field.

87% **of Grade 12 mentees will begin post-secondary studies in September 2026.**

Guidance Along the Way

80% of mentees identified post-secondary guidance and application support as a key part of their one-to-one mentorship.

Making Education More Accessible

35
scholarships

$82,300
awarded

Financial support helps reduce one of the barriers young women face as they transition to post-secondary education.



"This GEM scholarship helps me reach my full potential, as I will be empowered to participate in opportunities without the worry of financial burden or guilt, allowing me to focus on my own growth rather than financial limitations."

Vrishika Mehta,
Ivey Executive MBA Class of 2025
Scholarship Recipient

Opening Doors: GEM x Ivey

Over eight years as a GEM mentor, Kim Randall has supported eight mentees, helping each navigate her next steps.

That connection has also helped grow a partnership with Ivey Business School that opens doors for GEM girls and mentors alike.



What began with one mentor has grown into a network of opportunity.

Ivey alumnae and graduates have also joined GEM as mentors — extending the impact of the partnership even further.

For the past several years, Ivey has welcomed approximately 80 GEM mentees and mentors annually for an enrichment event focused on business and women in leadership.

In recent years, the event has included live case studies delivered in partnership with Ivey and the John F. Wood Centre for Innovation in Business Education.

The partnership has also helped reduce barriers to post-secondary education through transportation to Western University's fall open house, waived application fees, and application support.

More recently, Kim and members of her Executive MBA cohort established a scholarship for a GEM mentee, while a $15,000 scholarship opportunity was introduced for eligible GEM mentors pursuing an Ivey program.

"They've done all the work, but I'm happy I could be someone they could turn to to process big decisions and next steps, and who could expose them to different opportunities. It's so special to be one of their first calls when they get good news."

Kim Randall,
Associate Director, Recruitment,
Ivey Business School

A Network that Grows with Her
A Lifelong Community

A Community for Life: GEM Alumnae

Girls don't graduate from GEM.
Their place within it evolves.

Since 2012, 1,847 girls have completed the GEM program, but their connection to GEM doesn't end there.

As alumnae move through post-secondary education, careers and leadership, they bring their knowledge, networks and experiences back into the community. Today, many have returned as mentors and leaders, creating new connections and opening doors for the girls coming next.



MENTEE
> ALUMNA
> MENTOR
> COMMUNITY LEADER

The role may change.
The connection remains.

GEM Alumnae Council

Made up of GEM graduates who know the program, community and impact firsthand, the GEM Alumnae Council helps create meaningful opportunities for alumnae to connect, grow and give back while ensuring their voices have a seat at the table as GEM continues to evolve.









Growing Careers, Growing Networks

The GEM Alumnae Career Expo brought graduates face-to-face with recruiters and professionals across finance, healthcare, retail, technology and consulting — giving them space to ask candid career questions, make industry contacts and learn about roles across sectors.

Led by the GEM Alumnae Council, the event brought together partners including People Corporation, KPMG Canada, SE Health, Staples Canada, SAP, TZR, BGO, Sephora Canada and RBC.



Our mentees don't leave the constellation.

They become part of someone else's.

Preparing for the Future: Microsoft AI Promptathon

GEM alumnae spent an afternoon at Microsoft building practical AI skills through an AI 101 session and hands-on Promptathon using Microsoft Copilot. The experience culminated in a fireside chat with women leaders who shared candid insights on careers in technology and mentorship—giving alumnae new tools, connections and confidence to carry into school, work and an increasingly AI-powered future.





Mapping the Road Ahead
What's Next for GEM

As GEM grows, we're thinking carefully about what comes next: how we reach more girls, strengthen our community, stay connected to our alumnae, and continue improving the mentorship experience.

Waterloo Region

Reaching girls in new communities

GEM is expanding to Waterloo Region, bringing our mentorship program to more girls across Ontario. As we enter a new community, we'll work alongside local mentors, schools and partners to build the relationships and ecosystem that make GEM possible.

Alumnae

Deepening lifelong professional connections

Our relationship with GEM girls doesn't end at graduation. We're continuing to grow opportunities for alumnae to connect with each other, build their careers and stay involved with GEM as their professional lives evolve.

Innovation

Using community insights to strengthen mentorship

We're continuing to learn from the girls and communities we serve to inform how GEM grows and evolves. This year, we launched two inaugural youth councils in Scarborough and Waterloo Region, complementing our Alumnae Council and Hamilton Youth Council, creating new opportunities for young people to share their perspectives and help shape ongoing program improvements.

GEM's Growing Impact

Growth

+69%

increase in cohort size since 2021

Reach

1,847 Mentees | **963** Mentors

since 2012

Investment in Opportunity

$687,800

in scholarships awarded since 2020

Partner with Us
More Girls Are Ready

Every year, more girls seek out GEM than we have the capacity to welcome. But too many are still waiting.

We need to be ready for them.

More mentors mean more girls are connected with professional women who can share their knowledge, experience and networks.

More partners mean more opportunities to discover career possibilities, gain real-world experience and open doors to what comes next.

More donors mean more girls can access the mentorship, programming and financial support that help them pursue their ambitions.



No one succeeds alone. It takes a community.

The stories and results throughout this report show the power of connection — what becomes possible when girls have people in their corner. A conversation can build confidence. An introduction can open a door. A relationship can continue long after the mentorship year.

More girls are ready for those connections. Together, we can help make them possible.

HELP US REACH MORE GIRLS

MENTOR — Share your experience with a young woman navigating what comes next.

PARTNER — Give girls access to workplaces, people and experiences they might not otherwise encounter.

GIVE — Help fund mentorship, programming and scholarships for the next cohort.

Be part of what comes next:
www.girlsementorship.com

Our Supporters

Everything in this report is made possible by people who believe in GEM girls.

We gratefully acknowledge the donors and partners who invested in their futures during the 2025–26 program year. Every member of our Board of Directors also made a personal financial contribution, demonstrating a shared commitment to GEM's mission.

$100,000 +

Nicola Wealth Private Giving Foundation | RBC Foundation
Sephora Canada Beauty Inc. | The UPS Foundation



$50,000 - 99,999

Margaret Hope | RBC Capital Markets
Richemont North America, Inc. | The Bank of Nova Scotia
The Petman Foundation

$25,000 - 49,999

Chanel Canada | The Allen and Milli Gould Family Foundation

$10,000 - 24,999

Algoma Central Corporation
Burgundy Asset Management
Canadian & Foreign Securities Co.
Debenture and Securities Corp.
Dominion and Anglo Invest Corp.
Dream Community Foundation
Economic Investment Trust Ltd.
E-L Financial Corporation Ltd.
Element Fleet Management
Empire Life
HP Canada
Kiwanis Club of Toronto Foundation
McLean Smits Family Foundation
Robert Kerr Foundation
Sandeep Lai
The Canadian Red Cross Society
The Fulcrum Investment Co. Ltd.
The Throop Family Foundation
Tippet Foundation
Triveni Property Holdings Ltd.
United Corporations Limited

RBC has been a proud supporter of GEM since 2018, sharing our vision to address the critical gap in career mentorship and skill-building for teenage girls.

"GEM's work directly supports young women who face systemic barriers to career opportunities. Seeing our own employees give their time to mentor and inspire these incredible young women reinforces RBC's commitment to fostering inclusive growth in our communities. We're proud to support GEM's mission,"

Hanan Rafih, Regional Vice President, Toronto Downtown, RBC

$5,000 - 9,999

Cameron Bossert
Jane Boyle
Enterprise/Taylor Charitable Entities
Enterprise Holdings Foundation
Heather Hiscox
Lynn Bevan Foundation
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$1 - 4,999

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Joanna Agnello
Faranaaz Alimohamed
Laura Allaby
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Fariha Anika
Anonymous (21)
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Luiza Araujo
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Sephora

Special thanks to our in-kind donors, whose generous gifts of goods, services and expertise help us do more for our community.



*** Names in bold are members of the GEM Collective monthly giving circle**

Board of Directors

As the governing body of GEM, our Board of Directors oversees our policy development, sets our strategic direction, and monitors our performance against our goals.



Mary Lee
BOARD CHAIR



Christine Andrew
COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR



Cameron Bossert
TREASURER



Ryan Kenny
FUNDRAISING CHAIR



Peggy Doe
MENTOR CHAIR



Sona Shah
MENTEE CHAIR



Linda Lam
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE CHAIR



Ayesha Singh
HR CHAIR



Rochelle De Goias-Jackman
FOUNDER AND CHAIR EMERITUS

Program Components & Impact Measurement

How the Program Works

Each fall, teen girls from across the Greater Toronto Area, Waterloo Region, and Hamilton join GEM's nine-month mentorship program.

Each mentee is carefully matched with a professional woman mentor who provides personalized support and guidance, helping her build confidence, develop skills and set informed goals for the future.

Throughout the program, mentees access a range of opportunities and support, including:

GEMinars – large-scale learning and networking events co-hosted with corporate partners, featuring women leaders from diverse industries.

Enrichment Workshops – hands-on sessions held in workplaces, exposing mentees to real-world environments and skill-building experiences.

1:1 Mentorship – personalized guidance, encouragement, and career exploration through regular mentor meetings.

Alumnae Network – continuing opportunities for growth, peer mentorship, and leadership.

Scholarships – financial support reducing barriers to post-secondary education.

Internships – paid talent development placements.

GEM's Verified Impact

At GEM, we embrace a learning culture through evidence-based practices. We employ a full-time Program Evaluation and Research Lead to measure the social impact of our mentorship program on teen girls and continuously identify opportunities to enhance program activities and materials in accordance with the evolving needs and experiences of our beneficiaries.

According to the Impact Genome Registry (IG), a trusted third-party impact verification platform, the quality of evidence supporting GEM's outcomes is stronger than that of 96% of comparable programs. The complete IG Impact Verified Report can be viewed **here.**

How We Evaluate the Mentorship Program

Our impact measurement incorporates both process and outcomes evaluation, enabling us to demonstrate measurable outcomes among mentees while assessing operational effectiveness and informing responsive program improvements.

Annual evaluations of the GEM program consistently indicate achievement of all five intended outcomes:

I. Increased Access to Trustworthy Personal and Professional Networks

II. Knowledge to Pursue Post-Secondary Options

III. Positive Identity Development (Confidence and Self-Efficacy)

IV. Increased Career Knowledge and Employability Skills

V. Improved Social-Emotional Skills

Evaluation methods include participant surveys, focus groups, and the Adolescent Mentorship Competency Assessment (AMCA), a custom tool GEM developed in partnership with Dr. Michael Shier at the University of Toronto's Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work. The AMCA measures mentees' abilities across five domains of social and emotional learning (SEL) and informs GEM's wider research agenda and mentorship innovation.

Financial Statements

GIRLS E-MENTORSHIP
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT JUNE 30, 2026

	2026	2025
ASSETS		
Current assets		
Cash	$ 150,590	$ 978,236
Guaranteed investment certificate (note 3)	908,832	-
Accounts receivable	5,076	146
HST rebate recoverable	14,904	33,250
Prepaid expenses	6,212	4,270
	$ 1,085,614	$ 1,015,902
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	$ 41,432	$ 50,246
Deferred contributions (note 4)	50,000	-
	91,432	50,246
Net assets		
Designated (note 5)	250,000	250,000
Unrestricted	744,182	715,656
	994,182	965,656
	$ 1,085,614	$ 1,015,902

Financial Statements

GIRLS E-MENTORSHIP
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2026

	2026	2025
REVENUE		
Contributions (note 6)	$ 1,006,746	$ 799,384
Interest and other	20,069	27,590
	1,026,815	826,974
EXPENSES		
Program		
Personnel	$ 494,055	$ 451,235
Program and events	118,484	50,323
Scholarship awards	82,300	111,500
Total program expenses	694,839	613,058
Administrative		
Personnel	22,401	38,576
Professional fees	79,698	135,599
Office and general	58,264	45,089
Occupancy	53,594	43,178
Total administrative expenses	213,957	262,442
Fundraising	89,493	48,912
	998,289	924,412
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR	28,526	(97,438)
Net assets, beginning of year	965,656	1,063,094
NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	$ 994,182	$ 965,656

GEM

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