



REPORT

From the office of the...

Jenny Zhao (SWHAT Coordinator)

TO: Members of the Executive Board
FROM: Jenny Zhao
SUBJECT: SWHAT Report 8
DATE: March 27, 2024

Yearplan Update

Thank you everyone for such a wonderful year. The 2023-2024 school year marks our second full year of operations since the pandemic. Due to all the work my predecessors put into rebuilding SWHAT last year, I was able to focus on ways to improve our service. As mentioned in my Year Plan, my goal this year was to “leverage our momentum, establish best practices and refine all aspects of our service to uphold our reputation as a dependable contributor to campus safety at McMaster.” I believe we have achieved this by increasing our team size, improving our volunteer training, adding a text number, making new additions to our walk experience, and adapting to unexpected situations throughout the year. This is further summarized by the achievements below:

- Completed 754 walks with one more month of operations left!
- Hired a team of 6 executives and 92 volunteers.
- Completed ~180 walks during our November walkathon and donated \$200 to a local not-for-profit.
- Spearheaded the Wellbeing Week initiative with ~150 attendees.
- Added the option for “Recurring walks”, accounting for 16% of our total walk usage.
- Held two volunteer socials (anticipating three by the end of the year) and two intramural teams!
- Continued our successful promotions and nightly stories on social media.

Events, Projects, & Activities

General Service Usage

SWHAT completed ~140 walks in September, ~150 walks in October, ~180 walks in November, ~80 walks in December, ~150 walks in January, ~124 walks in February/early March. The total walk count since the start of the year is **754 completed walks**, compared to the ~720 walks completed during this time last year.

As seen by the numbers, service usage increased over the early months of the fall semester and dropped in the winter semester. There could be several reasons for this such as students becoming more comfortable with the area/walking alone, or our frequent service users having fewer night classes or commitments in the winter semester. Overall, I still see this year's service usage as a major success. If anything, I think this is a sign that our promotions work best at the beginning of the year and I would encourage the future SWHAT Coordinator and team to continue doing so!

This question was added to our form partway through the year, as you can see, most walks are requested in-person. This is a big surprise, but I think these numbers show the importance of having visible SWHAT signs throughout MUSC and also increasing awareness of our office location in MAPS. I would suggest to the future Coordinator to consider trying SWHAT dispatch booths in more visible areas on campus.



Recurring walks were a new type of walk request we implemented this year. If service users required the same walk regularly, with the same details/location, they could indicate this on the form. We would then contact them on the days they requested so they would not have to then book walks via phone or form. Many of our service users enjoyed this new option since we have students who use SWHAT on a weekly or even nightly basis. This is a small, but impactful change I would keep for future years.

In addition, this year we added a SWHAT text line. Using the TextNow app, we were able to generate a phone number that service users could text. Previously, dispatchers would text service users via their personal devices. This was confusing for service users because the number would be different every night and there was never a guaranteed way for them to reach us via text. Overall, I think this was a huge help. Service users were able to expect texts from the same number to confirm walk details or send updates. Unfortunately, the TextNow number may potentially expire if we don't use it over the summer. I would suggest that next year's SWHAT Coordinator consider or explore the possibility of a permanent text number for SWHAT.

Projects & Events: Executive Hiring (Complete)

Executive hiring began May 8 and decisions were finalized by June 12, 2023. Hiring was promoted on Instagram, Facebook, and MUSC displays.

Now that the year is coming to an end, I can confidently say that all the executives excelled in their roles. Being a SWHAT executive is a significant commitment that ranges from 20-30 hours each month. Overall, I would not suggest many changes to executive hiring in the future.

Projects & Events: SWHAT Executive On-Boarding (Complete)

Executive on-boarding went smoothly. Since the start of the year, we have held around 8 executive meetings, in addition to individual one-on-one meetings. I think executive on-boarding is so essential to the service. My suggestions to the future SWHAT Coordinator would be to take onboarding seriously. The effort you put into training your executives and ensuring they understand their role sets the service up for success for the year. One change I would highly suggest is that executives (particularly Volunteer Affairs and Public Relations executives) be expected to draft a rough year plan by September. This was not something that was implemented by me or my predecessor, but I can now say this is essential for success. Year plans can ensure successful events and promotional campaigns, which often require early preparations.

Projects & Events: Volunteer Hiring (Complete)

Summer SWHAT Walker/Dispatcher hiring opened on June 28 and closed on July 16. The hiring graphic was created in collaboration with The Underground, and was posted on Instagram, Facebook, and in MUSC displays. We hired 62 walkers and 10 dispatchers in the summer. In the fall we hired, 17 more walkers and one more dispatcher. In total, across both rounds, SWHAT received a total of 137 applications. Overall, the hiring process was successful. My biggest recommendation next year is to try and promote SWHAT in more faculties. According to our volunteer intake form, around 72% of our service is in the Faculty of Health Science or Science. I believe we can reach more individuals by promoting to different faculties.

Projects & Events: Welcome Week Events (Complete)

This year, SWHAT participated in the Services and Sites Webinar hosted by MSU Spark and Macademics online, the Health Science Welcome Week Faculty Fest, the Maroons scavenger hunt, and ClubsFest. These opportunities were the perfect opportunity to answer questions about SWHAT and promote our First-Year/Transfer Priority Walker Hiring. We created an email list, which was used to contact interested students once fall applications opened. Overall, our Welcome Week events were very successful. However, I would recommend future SWHAT Coordinators stay proactive about increasing our presence during Welcome Week. I would like to SWHAT attend more faculty days, however, this requires the Coordinator to email the Welcome Week planners very early!

Projects & Events: SWHATted at Mac Promotional Campaign (Complete)

Our Public Relations Executives, Reem and Yumnah, organized our SWHATted at Mac Instagram/Facebook campaign to highlight three of our amazing

volunteers. This campaign helped boost our social media presence before start of operations and first-year/transfer student hiring. The social media engagement of this campaign will be included in the next section of the report. Overall, I felt this campaign helped us introduce our service and gain traction.

Projects & Events: Walker/Dispatcher Training (Complete)

SWHAT Walker Training was held over Zoom on August 12, 2023 by myself, the executive team, and McMaster Security Services. SWHAT Dispatcher training was held over Zoom on August 16, 2023 by the Dispatch Executive, Jonathan. Both trainings were held virtually to accommodate for travelling or working volunteers.

The mandatory trainings were successful. Most of our volunteers attended live, but a recording and completion quiz was provided for absent volunteers. The training covered volunteer expectations, SWHAT protocols, shift rules, safety, and more. We also incorporated icebreaker activities at the start of both trainings, which I thought went well. I am especially grateful for the involvement from McMaster Security Services who joined us to provide safety tips and speak about the importance of SWHAT on Campus! In the future, I would recommend that we continue to invite Security Services to join us for training. I would also consider different ways we can make our training more comprehensive or professional.

Projects & Events: Executive Instagram Introductions (Complete)

Our executive introduction posts received great traction and allowed us to establish our social media presence for this year. I would definitely repeat this in future years.

Projects & Events: Volunteer Bonfire (Complete)

Our volunteer bonfire was held at Altitude on October 17, 2023. We had around 40 volunteers attend the event. This was a great way for the volunteers to bond, and for the new volunteers to meet everyone! Typically, we hold the bonfire at the end of the year when volunteers know each other better. We tried to hold it at the beginning of this year as per volunteer requests. Overall, after discussing with the Volunteer Affairs Executive, I would recommend that we continue to hold the bonfire at the end of the year!

Projects & Events: November Walk-a-thon (Complete)

November Walk-a-thon started November 1, 2023. For every walk we completed, SWHAT donated \$1 to a local non-profit. This year, the volunteers voted on Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg, a multi-service indigenous organization offering a food bank, youth and children's programs, and different initiatives Indigenous culture and language initiatives. The graphics and promotional materials for this event were created with The Underground. Overall, we finished the month with 181 walks and rounded up to donate \$200.

Projects & Events: Volunteer Intramurals (Complete)

Each of our volunteer intramurals (dodgeball and volleyball) had ~20 volunteers signed up in total, with a consistent turnout weekly turnout of 5-10 volunteers. I think intramurals are great for volunteers to get to know each other outside of shift! I would continue this.

Projects & Events: Volunteer End-of-Semester Cards (Complete)

The executives and I created hand-written cards for all the volunteers which we handed out before and after the break. I also prepared cards for the executives as well. The cards were very well received! Many of the volunteers mentioned that they were grateful, and even surprised, by the personal touch / little drawings included in the cards. Since our team is so big, I am glad we can prepare small tokens of appreciation to help everyone feel seen and heard! Definitely would do this again!

Projects & Events: Executive 1-on-1 Meetings (Complete)

Over the winter break, I helped 1-on-1 meetings with my six executives. We met over Zoom, and I asked check-in questions like: "Is the role what you expected? What do you think you have done well in your role? What do you think you could improve on in your role? Do you feel that you have adequate support in your role? How can I better support you?" I think this was a great opportunity for my executives to discuss candidly, and for me to see how they are progressing in their role.

Projects & Events: Wellbeing Week (Complete)

Our second annual Wellbeing Week was a significant project for SWHAT to lead and organize, especially for a service with no specific events team. However, SWHAT's PR team (Reem and Yumnah) were up to the challenge and were able to bring together 9 services for this week-long campaign. For reference, the campaign featured 5 MSU services last year. We received a turnout of around 250 students across all five events. The events included:

- SWHAT x SPARK: Housing Hinge Event
 - o This event was held in TwelvEighty. VP Education, Abby, shared a presentation on finding safe housing and tenant rights. Attendees had the option to complete a roommate matching quiz and meet the other attendees. We had around 20 total attendees.
- SHEC x EFRT: Naloxone Training Workshops
 - o Two workshops were held in MUSC in collaboration with a pharmacist. Attendees received a certificate for their training. A vitals booth was also held on the first floor of MUSC. There were around 30 attendees in total.
- PCC x WGEN: Paint and Trivia Night
 - o This event was held in BSB. Unfortunately, the fire alarm went off during the event and the event was cancelled.
- Maccess: Paint and Games Night

- This event was held in MUSC. The event received around 15 attendees and looked like a success!
- FCC x DEN: Around the Globe Tasting
 - This was one of the most successful events of Wellbeing Week.
 - The event was held in MUSC Atrium and gained significant traction.
 - Around 100 students entered the giveaway from this event, but other students in attendance did not enter the giveaway. I would estimate around 100 to 200 students stopped by for some samples.
 - The cultural clubs were very excited to help with the event, which
 - was amazing!

Since SWHAT does not typically plan events, it is an amazing feat that our PR executives handled the promotions and logistics of the week-long campaign. The impact of this campaign on the McMaster community was evident. However, there are also many lessons for future years. Firstly, I would encourage the SWHAT Coordinator to carefully evaluate whether this event is worth leading next year. It requires a significant amount of time, organization and effort. I think it is important to consider whether this event can directly increase awareness of SWHAT. If SWHAT decides to pursue this event next year, *plan early*. Services should be contacted and the overall plan for the event should be made in October. For reference, we started around the middle to end of November.

Projects & Events: Walker and Dispatcher Check-Ins (Complete)

Although our team consists of 80+ walkers and dispatchers, it is important to me that every one of them feels connected and integrated with our service and community. The executives and I divided the volunteers and have been sending simple check-in messages to see how they are doing with SWHAT and school. From my interactions, many of the volunteers have been appreciative of the check-in and it has been nice to chat with them!

Projects & Events: February Giveaway Month (Complete)

We held two giveaways in February over Instagram. Both received great traction.

Projects & Events: Volunteer Paint Night Planning (Complete)

Our Volunteer Affairs Executive, Albi, organized a paint night on February 7. The event was a drop-in event for all volunteers, and we had around 15-20 volunteers attend despite the midterm season.

Projects & Events: March for a Button (In-Progress)

This March, we decided to try a new campaign. Given our limited budget, we decided to order buttons, which we give out to students for each walk they book. There are a total of four button colours to incentivize service users to try and collect all the colours. I think this was a fun initiative to try and I have seen some new service users / names request walks since the start of March Walkathon. I'm interested to see the results from this campaign.

Projects & Events: End of Year Social (In-Progress)

We are currently planning our SWHAT end-of-year social for early April! We are hoping to hold a board games / group games night with different activities like Minute to Win It, Nintendo Switch Games, Ping Pong etc. We'd like to book out the loft space in The Hub to host this final social!

Outreach & Promotions

Summary

Overall, outreach and promotions this year have been a major success. We continued to build off our momentum from last year by posting regularly. Our nightly Instagram stories continue to be a huge success and they help us humanize our service. In addition, we tried a few new things this year which include our new SWHAT TikTok account and a few short-form videos which we published on Instagram Reels. Before the year ends, we will likely be posting a few more group photos and also some year-end summary videos as well.

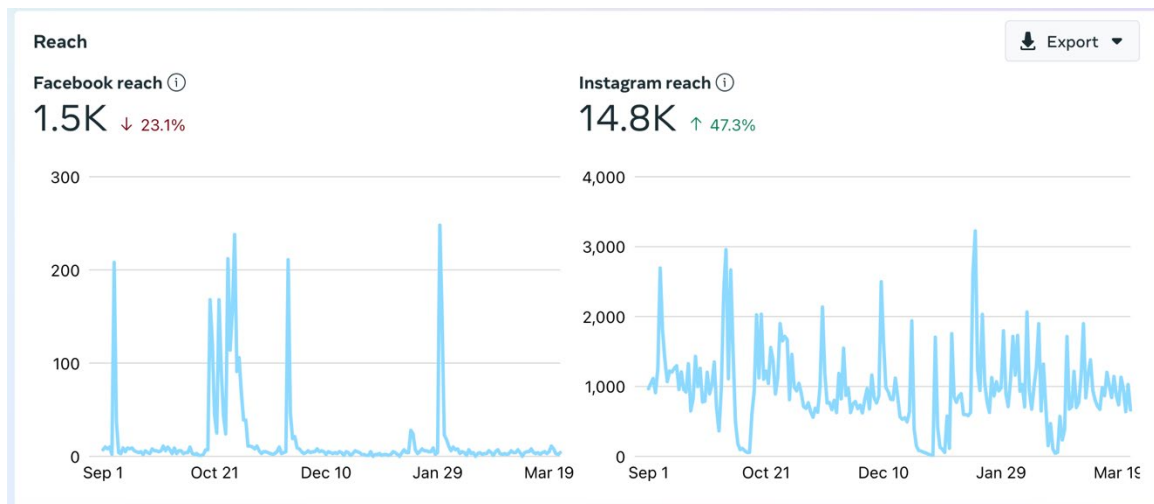
I also just want to give a huge shoutout and thank you to Will Dang for taking our group photo and headshots, which we have posted throughout the entire year.

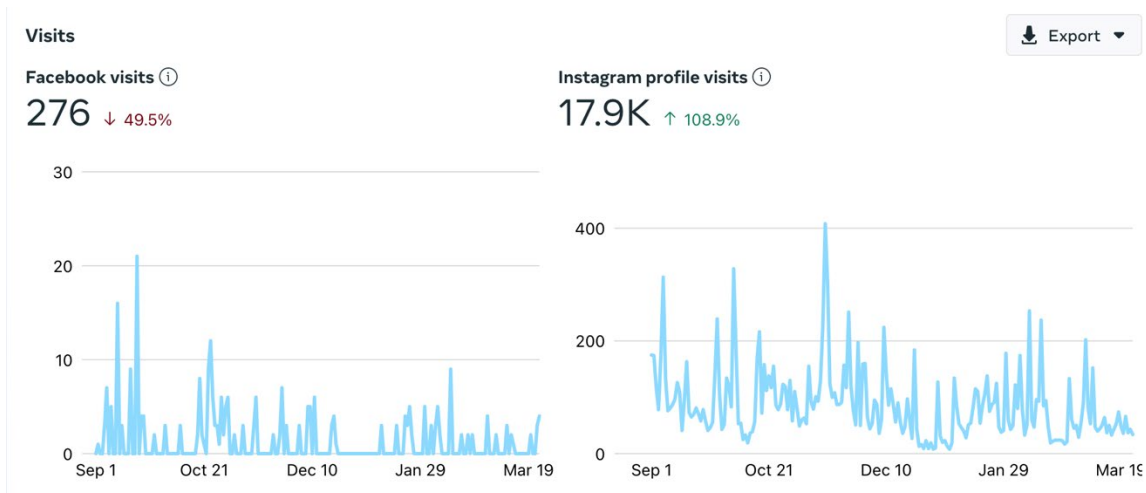
Promotional Materials

We have not shared any new posts since the last EB Report.

Social Media Engagement Over the Year

Please see the statistics for our engagement over the year. Since Sept 2023, you can see that our Instagram reach and visits have increased significantly. Most of our promotions are targeted towards Instagram, so you can see that we do not have the same success on Facebook.





Finances

Budget Summary

We have not made any purchases since the last EB Report. Before the end of the year, I anticipate we will be purchasing end-of-year Thank You cards and food/supplies for our final volunteer social. Altogether, this should cost around \$200-250. Although the Volunteer Recognition line is over budget, this will be compensated with the \$800 Uniform budget (that we are not using).

ACCOUNT CODE	ITEM	BUDGET / COST
	Walker Dispatcher Hiring Package	100.00
	Executive Hiring Package	100.00
	500 Rave Cards	150.00
	300 Footprint Stickers	183.00
	300 Dog Stickers	20600
6501-0117-0200	New Sticker Design Cost	55.00
	ClubsFest	20.00
	November Walkathon Package	150.00
	Wellbeing Week Graphic	33.33
	March for a Button Digital Package	100.00
ADV. & PROMO	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	1097.00
	REMAINING IN LINE	152.67
6901-0117-0200	Volunteer Uber Ride	16.93
	Volunteer Uber Ride	14.05
	Volunteer Uber Ride	11.80
	Volunteer Uber Ride	11.24

	Volunteer Uber Ride	9.80
	Volunteer Uber Ride	17.59
	Volunteer Uber Ride	10.28
	Volunteer Uber Ride	12.28
	Volunteer Uber Ride	30.37
	Volunteer Uber Ride	9.88
	Volunteer Uber Ride	11.48
	Volunteer Uber Ride	16.49
	Volunteer Uber Ride	13.16
TRAVEL & CONFERENCE	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	172.19
	REMAINING IN LINE	827.81
6494-0117-0200	Volunteer Volleyball Intramurals	110.00
	Volunteer Bonfire	400.00
	Volunteer Dodgeball Intramurals	85.00
	Holiday Cards	60.90
	Volunteer Paint Night Canvas	36.53
VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	692.43
	REMAINING IN LINE	57.57
	Snacks (September)	98.24
	Snacks (October)	130.00
	Foldable Office Desk	55.00
5003-0117-0200	Bonfire Fortinoes Snacks	20.24
	Bonfire Food Basics Snacks	48.46
	Snacks (November)	194.22
	January and February Snacks	239.77
	March and April Snacks	296.13
OFFICE SUPPLIES	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	1240.42
	REMAINING IN LINE	-240.42
6102-0117-0200	November Walkathon Donation	200.00
	Wellbeing Week	294.92
	Walkathon Buttons	256.50
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	751.42
	REMAINING IN LINE	-\$201.42
TOTALS		
TOTAL BUDGETED DISCRETIONARY SPENDING		5850.00
TOTAL ACTUAL DISCRETIONARY SPENDING		4281.60

Executives & Volunteers

The executives are doing well! I am currently planning a final executive social or dinner event to thank the executives for their hard work. In addition, the executives are working on their transition reports for next year.

Overall, the volunteers seem to be fairly satisfied with SWHAT. Many of them were very excited to receive their SWHAT sweaters and continue to enjoy the snacks we had on shift. Commitment has slightly decreased towards the end-of-the-year which is expected due to exams and religious observances. Nonetheless, I anticipate that we will have enough volunteers to finish the year off strong!

Successes

My successes remain the same as my EB report from last week!

1. **A successful year of operations** – We are so close to finishing this year strong! I am so proud of the team for excelling above and beyond, with even more social media engagement and service usage than last year.
2. **Our community** — Beyond everything, I think it is important to mention that many volunteers have made new friendships over the course of this year, which I believe is the most rewarding thing for me to see as Coordinator. I am glad to hear that many of our volunteers enjoyed their time on the service and felt heard this year.

Current Challenges

1. **Volunteer retention** — I would not consider volunteer retention a challenge. However, I would like to briefly mention that we typically do receive a few resignations throughout the year. This year we had 10 volunteers resign throughout the year from our original team of 96 volunteers. Most individuals resigned because school was unexpectedly challenging, or the service did not fit their schedule. I think this is very understandable because of SWHAT's unique hours of operation. I do not think this is a major concern, especially because most services see a similar pattern throughout the year.