

Dear Members of Council,

I am writing to express my strong support for the continued funding of 519Pursuit. As a fifth-year Medical Sciences student at Western University, I have worked with 519Pursuit for the past two years. I began working with 519Pursuit as part of my fourth-year capstone project, which quickly became something much more meaningful to me. As such, I chose to continue volunteering beyond the course because of the impact I witnessed firsthand.

Through my work with 519Pursuit, I have come to understand that supporting unhoused individuals extends far beyond simply providing resources. Building trust, long-term relationships, and providing that sense of connection is just as essential, if not more, in creating meaningful and lasting support. 519Pursuit as an organization meets people where they are, without judgment, and creates space for these relationships to form over time. This approach is not only compassionate, but effective as many of the individuals we connected with were far more willing to engage with resources, accept support, and explore next steps because that foundation of trust had already been established.

From the perspective of a student, this experience has taught me much about our community, about interacting with others, and about the intention behind every interaction I have. It has also given me a deeper understanding of the challenges many members of our community face on a daily basis, and what it truly means to approach others with equity, compassion, and accessibility in mind. This is something that cannot simply be learned in a classroom, and I am deeply grateful to 519Pursuit for allowing me to have these experiences and learn these lessons firsthand. The understanding I have gained is a direct result of the way 519Pursuit engages with the community through consistent, relationship-driven support that would be difficult to replicate elsewhere.

The work that 519Pursuit does also fills critical gaps in the current system. Many individuals face barriers that prevent them from accessing traditional services, whether due to stigma, past experiences, or various other struggles. 519Pursuit's outreach model helps bridge these gaps by

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bringing support directly into the community. Without organizations like this, many individuals would remain disconnected from the care and resources they need.

Continued support for 519Pursuit is essential not only for the organization itself, but for the individuals and communities who rely on it. The value of this work cannot be measured solely in numbers; it is reflected in the many lives they have positively impacted, in the trust they have built within the community through consistency, and in the small but meaningful steps individuals take toward stability.

I strongly urge Council to consider the broader impact of their decision and to support the continued funding of 519Pursuit. From both my academic perspective and my personal experience, I can say with certainty that their work is deeply meaningful and necessary.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Zhang". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jennifer Zhang