



LANARK COUNTY INTERVAL HOUSE & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

# ANNUAL REPORT

*HONOURING 45 YEARS OF EMPOWERING WOMEN  
IN LANARK COUNTY*

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# A Word from Our Executive Director

It has been another year of demanding work of evolution and growth for LCIHCS.

We continue to extend support to clients facing barriers related to housing, seeking justice, child custody and self-representation in court processes, specifically related to criminal courts. We have seen a growing increase in senior women accessing support and both our phone in group and direct service supports continue to engage and respond to this growing trend.

Our political action efforts remained central to our work as we continued to lead efforts related to local, provincial, and federal implementation of inquest recommendations. The elections provided an opportunity to collaborate with like minded agencies to launch #vote to end GBV campaign. All these efforts will inform strategies moving forward as we anticipate government change.

Opportunities have been consistent as we explore new partnerships, approaches as we launched Economic Abuse Support and Empowerment (EASE) in partnership with Women ACT and Coaching Boys into Men (CBIM) in partnership with Hamilton Interval House and locally, within the UCDSB.

Our amazing staff team continues to change and grow. Our structure has supported capacity building opportunities for staff and the insertion of two program leads (in residential and CSP). Our team is growing together toward change while maintaining stellar services to women and children in our community.

Our Board continues to lead with a solid foundation and the AGAN store continues to thrive as our storefront, and entry point for many. The Suit Yourself program's partnership with iSisters has proven positive and valuable for many community clients.

With change came the implementation of our new onboarding process for staff, an amalgamation of committees to create an overarching Trends Committee, and the expansion of our SINICI campaign to Ottawa, Kingston, and Mexico.



*Erin speaks to the Ontario Legislature on the importance of enacting Bill 173 which would see Ontario officially declare Intimate Partner Violence an Epidemic. April 2024.*

Our community: We are embraced and supported by a tireless community of care and kindness. Third party events have become a staple, our donor outreach and mail outs continue to produce, and we are creating a fundraising strategy for the agency as we face the economic realities of our province and country.

Our dedicated volunteers enhance our services; our board of directors steer us with confidence and our local politicians hold space for the agency's issues.

Our education, social media presence and international reach keeps the agency current and builds our profile beyond our rural region.

In 2024, 187 women and girls were killed in Canada and 46% of victims were killed in rural areas/small towns.

In Ontario, 62 women and children were killed at the hands of violence in 2024.

The epidemic is real, we must own it, and continue to advocate for change rooted in equity, justice, and system change!

We all have a responsibility to act when we see it, name it and change it.

With much gratitude



Erin Lee, LCIHCS Executive Director



# A Word from Our Co-Chairs of the Board of Directors

## Strength in Action

This year at LCIHCS has been one of remarkable transformation and progress. The Board of Directors has been privileged to witness—and actively support—the many achievements and challenges that have shaped our journey, all while looking ahead to the future of our organization. Alongside this work, the Board continues to exercise strong financial stewardship, ensuring the agency’s long-term health and sustainability. We also forged a new partnership with the Perth & District Community Foundation, opening new pathways to connect with and engage more members of our community.

Supporting the women and children of Lanark County continues to be the cornerstone of LCIHCS’ work, alongside advocacy and political action as key components of the agency’s mission to provide protection, support, safer options and advocacy toward the elimination of violence against women. With the rise in reported incidents of violence, it is clear that more must be done to ensure that women are safe—both in their homes and in public spaces. Our See It, Name It, Change It campaign continues to gain momentum, reaching audiences around the globe and sparking crucial conversations on these urgent issues.

While the challenges are many, so too are the successes—made possible through the steadfast leadership of our Executive Director and management team, and the exceptional dedication of the LCIHCS staff and volunteers. We extend our deepest gratitude to the women who generously serve on the Board of Directors, giving their time, energy, and expertise, and to you—our members, volunteers, and supporters—whose presence here tonight reflects your ongoing commitment to our mission and values.

The Board of Directors remains committed to doing everything possible to support our staff, volunteers, and clients in the years ahead. Together, we will continue to build a community grounded in compassion, resilience, and empowerment.

Sincerely,

*Linsey Sherman-Zekulin and Christine Walterhouse*

*Co-Chairs of the Board of Directors, Lanark County Interval House and Community Support*

# Board of Directors

LCIHCS is privileged to have strong women represented in leadership roles on its Board of Directors. The organization remains committed to maintaining a Board comprised of individuals with a broad range of knowledge, skills, and experience. The following outlines the current members of the Board of Directors for the 2024–2025 fiscal year:

**Linsey Sherman-Zekulin, Co-Chair**  
**Christine Walterhouse, Co-Chair**  
**Judith Haddad, Past Chair**  
**Cara Gibbons, Secretary Treasurer**  
**Candace Roberts**  
**Kristine von Bloedau**  
**Kelly Blair**  
**Karen Milligan**

Since September 2024, the agency has been represented by Board Co-Chairs, Linsey Sherman-Zekulin and Christine Walterhouse, with Judith Haddad fulfilling the role of Past Chair.

This year, we bid farewell to Judith Haddad, our Past Chair, who has provided dedicated leadership and invaluable guidance throughout her tenure on the Board. Her commitment, expertise, and contributions have greatly strengthened LCIHCS, and we extend our deepest gratitude for her service. In recognition of her own outstanding service and continued commitment, we are pleased that Candace Roberts will assume the position of Past Chair. We also acknowledge with thanks the contributions of Dianne Strickland, who has stepped down from the Board, and we are grateful for the time and insight she has shared with the organization.

During the last fiscal year, LCIHCS undertook a recruitment campaign to identify strong candidates to fill open positions. As a result, we are pleased to propose the election of Karen Milligan as a member of the Board. Karen Milligan is the Executive Director for Ontario 211 Services. She is a values-driven, empathetic leader who is passionate about partnering with others to develop innovative solutions to complex community challenges. Looking ahead, we remain committed to strengthening our leadership and will continue recruitment efforts with the goal of adding up to two additional Board members.



# Continuing the Work:

## *Reflections & Updates Two Years After the CKW Inquest*

Over 100 municipalities across Ontario, starting with Lanark County, have now declared Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) an epidemic. This milestone reflects the growing momentum across the province to act on the 86 recommendations released following the CKW (Renfrew County) Inquest. Despite this progress, we continue to wait for the Government of Ontario to formally recognize what so many communities already have: IPV is an epidemic.

In April 2024, LCIHCS Executive Director Erin Lee and staff travelled to Queen’s Park to support Bill 173: The Intimate Partner Violence Epidemic Act during its second reading. The bill passed with all-party support and was referred to the Justice Policy Committee, which subsequently consulted stakeholders—including LCIHCS—through the summer. While this step represented meaningful progress, many of those consulted were already expert witnesses at the inquest and have spent years calling for action. Despite the bill’s promise, it ultimately died on the table due to the provincial election. We continue to urge the next government to act swiftly and decisively.



### **Community Leadership and National Advocacy**

In June 2024, staff and volunteers attended Because of You in Barry’s Bay to mark the second anniversary of the CKW inquest recommendations. The event featured a powerful community discussion and vigil at the ReDefine Arts mosaic, where survivors, families, and advocates gathered to reflect on progress and recommit to change. The vigil was a poignant reminder of why this work must continue. We remembered Carol, Nathalie, Anastasia, and all victims and survivors of IPV and femicide.

LCIHCS also helped take the movement to a national level. Ahead of the federal election, we joined a coalition of frontline agencies and advocates to urge all party leaders to go beyond law-and-order responses and commit to meaningful systemic change. We asked for a formal declaration of IPV as an epidemic, the appointment of a national Gender-Based Violence Commissioner, and sustainable investments in prevention and response. Some parties responded with strong commitments. Others did not respond at all.



## Rural Roots: A Groundbreaking Initiative

In 2024, LCIHCS partnered with Luke’s Place and Neighbours, Friends and Families to launch Rural Roots, a bold and essential campaign addressing the unique challenges of IPV in rural communities. The initiative builds on our longstanding “See It. Name It. Change It!” framework and adds new tools to help rural neighbours recognize and respond to signs of IPV.

Rural women are 30% more likely to face firearm threats than their urban counterparts, and often lack access to services, transportation, and anonymity. Rural Roots directly addresses these gaps—offering community-specific training and resources to empower rural residents to act. The campaign was born from a webinar titled “A Rural Inquest” and has since become a cornerstone in Ontario’s response to the CKW inquest recommendations.

We are proud to say that Rural Roots is not just a campaign—it’s a movement. One that is inspiring change across rural Ontario and providing critical tools to keep women safe in places where danger is often hidden.

## Keeping the Conversation Alive: 86 Weeks of Radio Advocacy

From 2022 to September 2024, Executive Director Erin Lee joined Lake 88’s Bob Perrault each week to spotlight one of the 86 CKW inquest recommendations on air. This incredible effort spanned 86 consecutive weeks, bringing ongoing public attention to the inquest and the issue of IPV.

At our 2024 Annual General Meeting and again during the 16 Days of Activism, we were proud to honour Bob Perrault for his steadfast support. His commitment to amplifying survivor voices and keeping the recommendations in the public eye has made a lasting impact.

We offer a special thank you to MyFM for this invaluable partnership. These radio segments helped our community learn, reflect, and act—and kept Carol, Anastasia, and Nathalie at the heart of the conversation.

## Increasing Access: CKW Inquest Hub and Action Tool

To make the inquest findings and responses more accessible, this year we launched a dedicated CKW Inquest page on our website. The page houses news reports, inquest documentation, our organizational responses, and updates on advocacy efforts. You can find it here: [lcih.org/renfrewcountyinquest](https://lcih.org/renfrewcountyinquest).

We also continue to share and promote the CKW Inquest Recommendations Priority Analysis and Action Plan: a public-facing tool developed to help individuals, agencies, and municipalities identify key actions and move forward with meaningful change. This tool was recently featured during the 16 Days of Activism and remains a practical resource for those looking to take informed, strategic action.

## We Continue, Because We Must

While we mark progress, we remain clear-eyed: declarations alone will not end IPV. Action will. We must keep pushing for full implementation of the inquest recommendations, sustained funding, and survivor-centered systems of support.

Because of you—our community, our partners, our survivors—this work continues. And we won’t stop until everyone can live safely, freely, and with dignity.

# Community Relations

Every year, we are reminded of the power of community and, in 2024–2025, that power was deeply felt. LCIHCS continues to thrive because we are surrounded by individuals and organizations who believe in creating a safer, more just world for women, children, and gender-diverse people.

This year, we were committed to developing, maintaining, and honouring the many partnerships that make our work possible. We've watched our relationships with both the Lanark County OPP and Smiths Falls Police Service grow stronger through mutual trust, survivor-centred training, and shared advocacy. Our friends at RONA Carleton Place continued to show up for us, not only by hosting events donating RONA gift cards as prizes for our "Shop With a Purpose" day during the 16 Days of Activism, but by volunteering their time and energy to improving our shelter and additional properties.

At our Annual General Meeting in September 2024, we celebrated these relationships in a deeply meaningful way. We announced the creation of a Healing Garden at our Community Support Programs building, to be planted in summer 2025. This garden will serve as a place of reflection, comfort, and renewal—featuring plants with medicinal and symbolic properties, a purple bench, and a calming water feature. We proudly dedicated symbolic plants in honour of six community partners whose ongoing support has strengthened our work and nourished our mission. We were proud to further honour our relationship with local media during the 16 Days of Activism campaign. For years, our media partners have gone beyond reporting; they have amplified survivor voices, advocated alongside us, and covered issues like femicide long before national outlets followed suit.



*Erin Lee honours members of local media Bob Perrault, Lara Gesner, Kathy Botham and Laurie Weir (not pictured) at our Annual General Meeting in September 2024.*

We also continue to push for change in the language we use to name violence. This year, we deepened our advocacy efforts to encourage the adoption of the term femicide by both police and media outlets, recognizing that naming the issue is essential to addressing it.

Our activism remained visible in the public sphere. During Sexual Assault Prevention Month, we displayed our “We Stand With Survivors” banner in downtown Mississippi Mills. This was paired with a successful informational and awareness campaign across our social media channels, helping educate the public on the realities of sexual violence and how to support survivors. We hosted several successful events including Take Back the Night and a vibrant 16 Days of Activism Campaign which included a December 6<sup>th</sup> Vigil and a book launch for the newest book by Pamela Cross, a renowned lawyer, advocate, and author. Her latest work shines a spotlight on systemic violence, justice, and hope, and her event allowed our community to engage directly with the stories and solutions that shape our work.

We also used our online platforms to lead thoughtful and educational campaigns during Pride Month and Black History Month, centering the experiences of marginalized women—including Black, Indigenous, racialized, and 2SLGBTQ+ survivors of violence. These campaigns highlighted the intersectionality of gender-based violence, showing how systems and identities shape the way women experience and navigate harm and support.

Despite ongoing challenges with Meta’s news ban, we remained resourceful. We found a reliable workaround to share timely and relevant news with our audience and are proud to be building a reputation as a trusted source of information on gender-based violence and equity issues in our community.

Our digital reach continues to grow, thanks to the community’s engagement and the powerful content we share:

- Facebook: Reach up 82.5%, content interactions up 48%, visits up 33.3%
- Instagram: Reach up 399.1%, profile visits up 41.3%, with 191 new followers
- LCIHCS consistently performs above the 75th percentile for nonprofits on Meta platforms

We’re also thrilled that our “See It. Name It. Change It!” merchandise continues to pop up in our community, with many residents wearing their values proudly.

To everyone who walked beside us this year—volunteers, donors, neighbours, staff, and supporters—thank you. Whether you amplified our message online, attended an event, or simply had a conversation about what you learned, you’ve helped build a stronger, more connected, and more compassionate Lanark County. Together, we are not only supporting survivors—we are changing the story.



# Public Education

Our Public Education program is a cornerstone of our work to prevent gender-based violence. Through education, we aim to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and foster a community that is informed, empowered, and ready to take action. Our team works hard to ensure people across Lanark County understand the signs, causes, and impacts of domestic violence and sexual assault, and know where to turn for support. A key tool in this work is our See It. Name It. Change It! campaign, which encourages every community member to recognize and disrupt violence when they see it.

We offer engaging community presentations, workshops, and resources that not only support survivors but also equip the public to be active participants in the movement to end violence. In 2024–2025, we were proud to deepen this work in several exciting and innovative ways. We would like to thank the County of Lanark for their support of our public education awareness and initiatives through the Community Grants program.

## Local Advocacy with Provincial Reach

During the 2025 provincial election, we joined forces with partner agencies across Ontario to launch a province-wide social media campaign encouraging folks to “Vote to End Gender-Based Violence.” Through our own channels, we created and shared accessible, nonpartisan educational content about the importance of voting through a GBV-informed lens. This included breakdowns of each candidate’s platform and their positions on issues that affect women and survivors. We saw high levels of engagement, with community members reaching out to express their appreciation for clear, values-based information in a time of political uncertainty.



We also took bold steps to normalize and promote the use of the word femicide in local media and public education efforts. Femicide, the gender-based killing of women and girls, remains underreported and often misunderstood. Through articles, interviews, and social media campaigns, we explained why this term matters: because naming the issue is the first step to changing it. By defining femicide clearly and using it consistently, we help the public and our partners understand that gender is not incidental—it is central to the violence women experience.

## Community Engagement and Youth Empowerment

We were thrilled to be present at a number of community events this year to help spread awareness, build relationships, and make support more accessible. These included the Teen Expo at Notre Dame, Party Smart at CPHS, and the Student Wellness Fair at PDCI. At each of these events, students chose to visit our booth and engage in thoughtful conversations about consent, healthy relationships, and our See It. Name It. Change It! campaign. The students we met were curious, passionate, and eager to be part of the solution. These interactions remind us of the power of youth leadership in preventing intimate partner violence before it starts and the importance of equipping young people with the tools and language to make a difference.

**Professional Training and Partnerships**

In May 2024, we invited Dr. Dietzel back for Sexual Assault Prevention Month to offer a session for local practitioners on Technology-Facilitated Sexual Violence. Staff from LCIHCS and partner agencies attended the training, which focused on identifying and responding to online forms of abuse, including image-based violence, digital coercion, and tech-enabled stalking. This session strengthened our collective ability to support survivors in an increasingly digital world.

We were also excited to introduce a new program to our community: Coaching Boys Into Men. Three of our staff members were trained in this evidence-based violence prevention curriculum, which empowers coaches to talk to young male athletes about respect, consent, and healthy relationships. With the support of the Upper Canada District School Board, we trained local coaches to deliver this program during sports practices and in gym classes. Early feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and we’re hopeful about the ripple effects this will have on our next generation of community leaders.

**Global Learning, Local Impact**

Our agency’s reach has extended beyond national borders. Through a partnership with the Department of Justice, we were honoured to host delegations from Mexico, Costa Rica, and Kazakhstan who were eager to learn about our approaches to shelter, outreach, advocacy, technology, safety, and justice partnerships. These visits sparked valuable conversations and the mutual exchange of ideas. In early 2024, we were invited to travel to Mexico as part of a final delegation, where we delivered presentations, participated in press conferences, met with local officials, and connected with frontline workers. A highlight of this journey was the announcement from Dr. Rosie’s team that Mexico will be translating and integrating our See It. Name It. Change It! campaign into their national strategy—a powerful example of how local programs can have global impact. We returned home deeply inspired, with a renewed sense of solidarity and purpose.



*Left: A delegation from Khazakistan joins us for a day of discussion in Carleton Place, September 2024. Right: Brianne Luckasavitch and Erin Lee of LCIHCS present to a delegation of VAW workers in Mexico, January 2025.*

**Looking Ahead**

While the year was filled with progress and good work, it also brought challenges. Staffing changes meant that our Public Education Coordinator was balancing multiple responsibilities, limiting their availability for presentations and outreach. However, our team stepped up to the challenge, attending events and delivering presentations as a united front. This collaborative approach allowed us to maintain momentum and meet community needs. As we look ahead, we remain committed to this vital work and plan to hire a full-time Public Education Coordinator in the next fiscal year to expand our reach even further.

# Resource Development

Fundraising efforts for 2024 and 2025 have encountered numerous obstacles such as economic instability and evolving donor behaviors. Resource Development is dedicated to monitoring donor patterns and engaging in networking events. Maintaining a steady income stream is crucial for sound financial planning. The Canada Helps program recorded 6.5% increase of monthly donors, over 2024.

LCIHCS successfully organized its inaugural golf tournament in May 2024, raising over \$11,000. This event not only achieved financial success but also served as a significant platform for public education and awareness for the agency. The well-established fundraising event, Violet Femmes, raised over \$45,000 in 2024. In April 2024, we held a special fundraising event in honour of our 45<sup>th</sup> year. We held a “Paint Party” with Janet Beath in which participants painted butterflies, a symbol of hope, renewal, and change. LCIHCS is surrounded by community members, and organizations big or small that continue to donate and offer to plan Third Party Fundraising.

Acquiring donations has become increasingly difficult as the demand for support grows. A Strategic Fundraising Committee, made up of staff and board members, has been formed. This committee has created the LCIHCS Pillars of Fundraising document, which aims to strategically advance to meet current fundraising goals and improve the financial stability of LCIHCS. The objective is to boost fundraising by 31% over the five-year span from 2025 to 2030. The pillars include Legacy Giving, Board Presence and Engagement, Monthly Donors, and Corporate and Cash Donors.

Fundraising trends to emphasize in 2025 involve prioritizing donor trust and clearly showing how donation funds are used. It is vital to educate the public about LCIHCS, as donors want to feel empowered to make informed decisions regarding their contributions. Tailoring outreach efforts, enhancing in-person community involvement, and enhancing the agency's image will encourage generosity.



# As Good As New Store

Now in its 44th year, The As Good As New continues to be one of the most reliable and significant sources of revenue for LCIHCS. This success is thanks to the incredible dedication of over 40 volunteers who give their time and energy to keep the store running smoothly. The proceeds from donated items directly support both the shelter and our community programs. This year, for the first time in five years, we made a small increase to our pricing. This was a thoughtful and considered decision, and we remain committed to keeping prices as low as possible to ensure the store remains accessible to everyone in our community.

We continue to support our community partners by re-donating items whenever possible and are proud to operate as a green business—diverting as much as we can from the landfill. Our popular Thursday sale days remain our busiest, and we've expanded our schedule to include two additional Saturday sales.

We're proud to report that this year, we achieved a revenue increase of 14%.

Our store sales have increased by 66% over the 10 year period from 2015 to 2025, with considerable gains experienced post Covid. This can be attributed to increased interest in thrifting, economic realities and environmental concerns. It is also a strong indication that our investment in our store refresh and management, thanks to the Ontario Trillium Foundation support in 2022-23, is yielding considerable benefit.



# Volunteer Program

In a time when many nonprofit organizations across Canada are struggling to recruit and retain volunteers, LCIHCS is incredibly fortunate. While national statistics show that only 8% of nonprofits have more than 100 volunteers, we are proud to count 108 active volunteers among our team—up from 97 last year.

In fact, with such a generous and engaged volunteer community, we made the decision to temporarily close new applications to our volunteer program this year. This choice allows us to focus on nurturing and supporting our existing team, while also encouraging prospective volunteers to share their time with other community organizations in need.

Together, our volunteers contributed approximately 7,700 hours over the past year. This remarkable effort translates to over \$235,000 in cost savings for our agency, underscoring the real value and necessity of their support. Volunteers are essential to keeping our programs and services running.

We are especially grateful for the contributions of our dedicated volunteer teams who continue to go above and beyond. Our As Good As New volunteers are often the first point of contact for members of the public and are the compassionate face of our agency, offering support with care, consistency, and kindness. Our Holiday Giving volunteers pour tremendous energy and heart into ensuring women and families feel supported and remembered during the holiday season—often managing large volumes of donations and coordinating logistics with grace. And our shelter support volunteers play a vital behind-the-scenes role, helping keep our spaces safe, clean, and welcoming for those seeking refuge. Their collective efforts create stability and warmth for everyone who walks through our doors.

We are continually amazed by the passion, dedication, and heart our volunteers bring to every task—big or small. Some of them have become known within the agency as “saints” for their unwavering willingness to help, their reliability, and their deep understanding of our mission. It’s no exaggeration to say: we truly could not do this without them.

To every volunteer who gave their time, energy, and care this year—thank you. Your impact is felt not only in the numbers, but in the lives you touch every day.





# 2024-2025 Shelter Statistics

**70 CLIENTS**

Stayed in the shelter

**686 WOMEN**

Were turned away due to capacity.

**267 DAYS**

Shelter was at or beyond full capacity

**68 WOMEN**

Died by Femicide in Ontario in the last fiscal year.

**2,969**

Crisis Calls

**70 DAYS**

Average length of stay

# Residential Women's Program

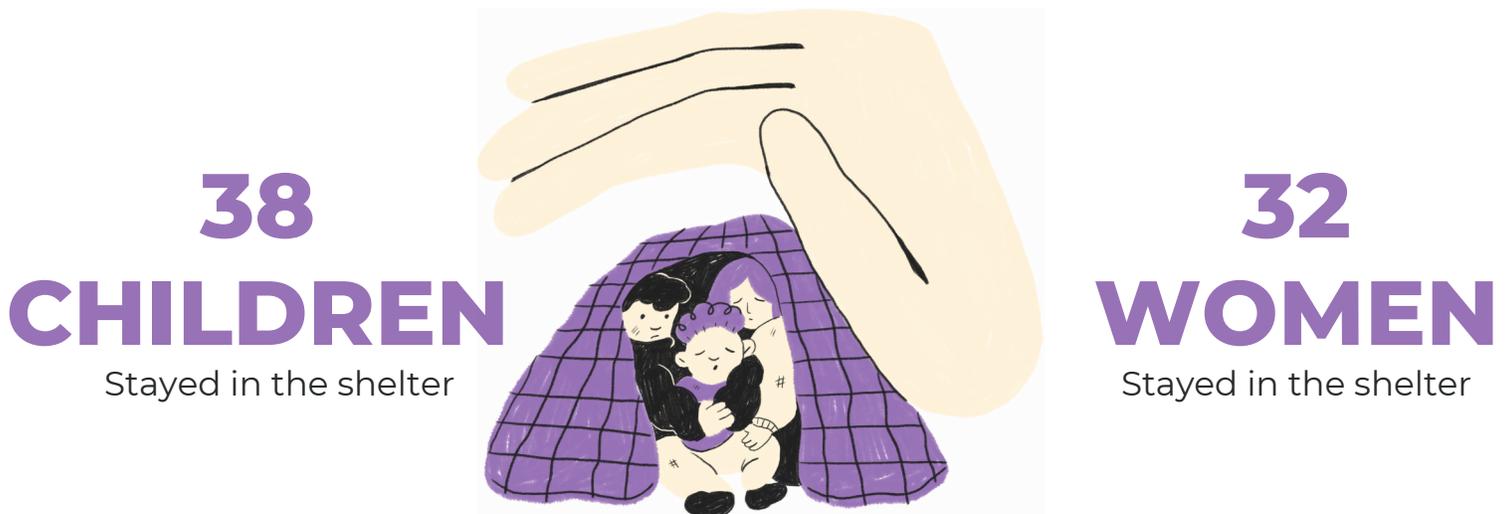
Our Residential Services program operates a 15-bed emergency shelter, offering a safe, supportive, and confidential space for women and children fleeing violence. The shelter is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and is supported by our 24-hour crisis line. Our goal is to provide a secure environment where women and children can begin to heal and work toward transitioning back into the community.

This past year, we have observed several concerning trends. There has been an increase in women being criminally charged while attempting to flee violent situations—an alarming barrier to safety and justice. We are also seeing more women arrive at the shelter without their children. In some cases, the abuser is withholding the children; in others, shared custody arrangements pose serious safety concerns, as children may unintentionally disclose the mother's location. Abusers often manipulate these circumstances, attempting to frame shelters as unsafe in order to regain control.

The complexity of the situations faced by the women we support continues to grow. Alongside domestic violence, many are experiencing overlapping challenges such as addiction, mental health issues, homelessness, heightened safety risks, the threat of femicide, and the difficulty of parenting while navigating trauma. Shelter staff play a critical role in helping women navigate these intersecting systems and access the resources they need to rebuild their lives. Our team works from a trauma-informed, harm reduction, and woman-centered approach.

This year, we were grateful for the support of community partners. A special thank you to Scott McNeely for building a new back porch at the shelter, and to the RONA Carleton Place team for their generous help with beautifying our backyard space creating a more peaceful and welcoming outdoor area for residents.

However, the ongoing housing crisis continues to present a major barrier. The lack of safe, affordable housing options makes it extremely difficult for women and children to move forward. Waitlists for subsidized housing are long, and many women are left with heartbreaking decisions: remain in the shelter longer than intended, stay in unsafe situations, or leave their communities and support systems behind in search of housing elsewhere.



# Residential Children's Program

Our Children's Program works closely with children and their mothers, providing advocacy, safety planning, referrals, and individualized support tailored to each family's unique needs. The program also collaborates with various community agencies, maintains detailed records, and plays an integral role in ensuring families receive comprehensive, wraparound support.

This year, we faced significant challenges in the complexity of needs of the children accessing our services. We saw a rise in large families—sometimes with four or more children—seeking shelter, which placed pressure on our capacity and resources. As a result, we were often operating above our intended capacity. Many of the children arriving at the shelter had complex emotional and behavioural needs, often as a result of witnessing violence in the home. Supporting them required a great deal of patience, compassion, and trauma-informed care from our staff.

In October 2024, we experienced staffing transitions within the Children's Program and were pleased to welcome a new Children's Program Coordinator to the role.

We are also grateful for the generosity of a local retirement home, which raised funds specifically for the Children's Program. Their support allowed us to revamp our playroom with a fresh coat of paint and vibrant, welcoming colours—creating a more joyful and engaging space for the children staying in the shelter.

## 18 MOTHERS

Served by the program.

## 38 CHILDREN

Served by the program.





# 2024-2025 Community Support Statistics

Our Community Support Programs provide counseling, legal referrals, advocacy, and more for women and children who are living in the community. These clients may still be living with their abuser or navigating life post-abuse. They face ongoing challenges caused by systemic oppression and lack of resources in our rural area.

**483 WOMEN**

Served in Total by CSP Programs.

**70 CHILDREN**

Served by CSP Programs

**95%**

Of the women we serve face barriers to safe, affordable housing.

**2,190**

Client calls.

**10 GROUPS**

Were offered for Women this year.  
An additional **3 group support programs** were offered for children and youth.



# Women's Program

Our Women's Program offers support to women who have experienced gender-based violence in their home or community. Our services include support groups, individual counseling, referrals, and advocacy. This program supports women in the county who are not accessing the shelter. Our services are free and confidential.

Over the past year, the women's program has experienced a season of meaningful transition and growth. We've seen valued team members move on to exciting new adventures in their careers, and we celebrate the contributions they made during their time with us. Others stepped into new roles—embracing opportunities for leadership, mentorship, and professional development. These changes have brought fresh energy, new perspectives, and a renewed commitment to our shared mission. Change is never easy, but it often brings growth. I am proud of how our team has adapted, supported one another, and continued to deliver with excellence.

This past year has brought exciting developments in our programming, including the introduction of a new leadership initiative: Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM). CBIM is a powerful, evidence-based program designed to engage youth male athletes in conversations about gender-based violence (GBV), consent, and healthy relationships. I had the opportunity to be trained in this program, which creates a safe and supportive space for young men to reflect, learn, and lead with respect.

We've begun presenting CBIM in high schools across the Upper Canada District School Board (UCDSB), and we're thrilled to expand its reach to local sports teams. Coaches will be trained to deliver the program and tailor it to meet the unique needs of their teams—making it a flexible and impactful tool for mentorship and leadership development. This initiative represents a significant step forward in fostering respectful, informed, and empowered young leaders in our community.

This past year brought one of the biggest challenges of my career: making the transition to a new program area after over 20 years of working with children and youth. It wasn't an easy decision—I've poured my heart into supporting young people, and they will always hold a special place in my heart. I knew it was time for a change. I needed a new pace, a fresh challenge, and a chance to use my skills in a different way. Stepping into a Team Lead role gave me that opportunity—and while the shift was significant, I've finally found my groove.

Now working with women, I'm discovering new ways to grow, lead, and support others. I'm enjoying the work, the learning, and the relationships that come with it. Change can be hard, but it can also be exactly what we need to thrive.

One of the most pressing challenges facing women today is the lack of affordable, safe, and stable housing. Our systems are stretched thin and, in many cases, outdated—making it increasingly difficult for women and their children to find the support they need. Despite these challenges, there is hope. Across our community, agencies are coming together, thinking outside the box, and collaborating in new and innovative ways to find solutions. Whether it's through shared resources, creative housing models, or wraparound supports, we are committed to working collectively to meet the needs of the women and families we serve.

This work is not easy, but it is essential. Together, we are building a stronger, more responsive network of care—one that recognizes housing as a fundamental right and a foundation for healing, safety, and opportunity.

# Lanark Highlands Outreach

The Lanark Highlands Community Outreach Program provides vital support to women experiencing abuse in the more remote and rural areas of Lanark County. Services include individual support appointments, safety planning, court accompaniment, referrals, support groups, legal system navigation, police reporting assistance, and anything else required to help a woman move forward from an abusive relationship.

The strength of this program lies not only in its services but in the compassionate network of community support that surrounds it. Local businesses and service providers frequently offer aesthetic and holistic services, donations, and practical resources—like a furniture locker stocked through community generosity. The Caring Community Quilters continue to donate beautifully handmade quilts, offering warmth and comfort to women and children who have fled abusive situations. Shelter Movers has also been a key partner this year, helping women relocate from even the most remote locations and providing essential moving support, including temporary storage solutions for their belongings until stable housing is secured. These gestures show women that they are cared for and valued—offering a sense of hope and encouragement during an otherwise difficult transition.

While the housing crisis has persisted for some time, its impact continues to be severe and unprecedented. Women and children leaving abuse are facing longer delays in accessing safe, affordable housing and are often forced to stay temporarily with family or friends. The Second Stage and Beyond Housing Program by LCIHCS has made a meaningful and innovative contribution to addressing these challenges, especially in the Perth area.

Legal support has also become more difficult to access. Changes to the Legal Aid Family Law Program have made it harder to find local legal representation, with more women now working remotely with lawyers rather than having in-person consultations.

Additionally, many of the women we work with are new to the area—often relocating from larger cities—and are unfamiliar with both the available resources and the unique culture of the Highlands. Outreach staff play an important role in helping them feel connected, informed, and supported as they rebuild their lives.



**103 WOMEN**

Served by Highlands Outreach

# Child and Youth Program

The Children and Youth Program supports young people ages 5–18 through one-on-one and group programming that focuses on safety planning during family changes, effective communication, conflict resolution, anger management and appropriate emotional expression, self-esteem building, and developing healthy relationships, boundaries, and friendships.

While previous years included dedicated funding for camps and other family supports, this year we did not receive the same financial resources to provide those opportunities. However, we were fortunate to be gifted three spots at the Carleton Place Youth Centre for summer 2025, offering three weeks of free summer camp to children and youth connected to our program—a welcome chance for healing, fun, and connection.

Throughout the year, we have seen an increase in the complexity of needs among the children and youth we support. There has been more involvement from fathers, and in many cases, we have had to work closely with mothers to navigate these evolving dynamics. Consent from both parents is often required for children to access services, and split decision-making authority has created barriers—particularly when one parent, often the father, refuses to consent to support services.

Meeting space within schools continues to be a challenge. The environments provided are not always welcoming or conducive to trauma-informed care, with staff often assigned small, cluttered rooms that do not support meaningful engagement with children.

Despite these barriers, we remain committed to bridging the gap between shelter and community. Ongoing communication with women leaving the shelter ensures continuity of care and connection to agency supports as they rebuild their lives.



**76 WOMEN**

Were served by the Child & Youth Program this year.

**70 YOUTH**

Were served by the Child & Youth Program this year.

# Sexual Assault Support

The Sexual Assault Support Program offers free and confidential individual and group counselling for survivors of sexual assault, childhood sexual abuse, harassment, and other forms of sexualized violence. We are proud to offer services through a trauma-informed, queer-affirming, anti-oppression, and harm-reduction lens.

This year, we reintroduced Healing Through Expression, a support group for survivors of sexual violence, into our group programming. The group continues to grow and evolve in response to the needs of participants. We were pleased to collaborate with art therapist Nancy Currie, who provided valuable input into the development of the group's curriculum.

Throughout this fiscal year, the program faced two major challenges. First, the rural isolation experienced by many survivors—particularly those without access to reliable transportation or local services—continues to make in-person and hybrid support difficult to access in communities like Perth, Carleton Place, and Smiths Falls. The introduction of our new transportation coordinator has alleviated some of this during the hours that the program is available. Second, is adjusting to the post covid realities or no longer having access to the emergency resources (like gift cards) that were more available at that time. On a positive note, the program has leaned on our incredible volunteer network, who have helped bridge some of the gaps. Volunteers have provided transportation for group participants, contributed to art projects in Healing Through Expression, and included dedicated students helping in various program capacities. While these supports are not new, their importance was especially felt this year. The intention is to continue with this valuable resource.

We continue to seek creative and community-based ways to serve rural survivors, despite systemic challenges such as a lack of transportation, minimal funding, limited referral options, and an overall shortage of specialized rural resources.

Women remain interested and enthusiastic about our support groups. They are reaching out to connect—many of whom are simultaneously navigating intimate partner violence (IPV) and homelessness. Safe, stable, and affordable housing has emerged as a critical barrier to healing. When basic needs like housing and safety are not met, the ability to engage in trauma recovery is severely limited. As we work from a harm-reduction approach, we are acutely aware of how the housing crisis impacts every step of the healing process. Supporting survivors requires more than counselling—it requires addressing the systemic conditions that perpetuate cycles of violence.

**65**  
**WOMEN**

Were served by the Sexual Assault Program this year



# Victim Advocate

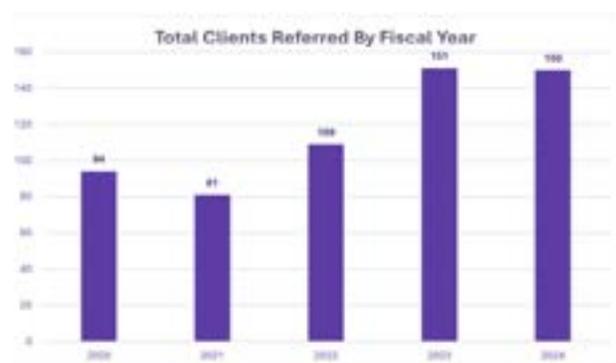
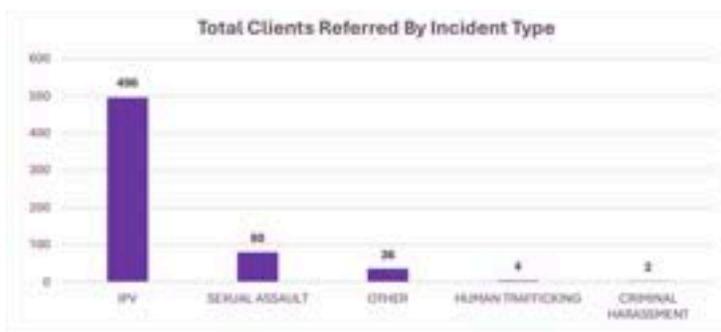
The Victim Advocate (VA) works in collaboration with the Lanark County OPP and Smiths Falls Police to provide trauma-informed support to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. Services include safety planning, system navigation, crisis counselling, court accompaniment, and referrals to appropriate community supports.

Over the past year, we have seen a positive shift in officer engagement. New officers have been especially receptive to working with the Victim Advocate and are proactively seeking support during calls involving sexual and domestic violence (SADV). This growing collaboration has led to an invitation for the VA to co-facilitate training sessions with police, focusing on centering victims' voices and deepening understanding of their concerns.

As part of these efforts, the Victim Advocate has been increasingly involved with Smiths Falls Police, now visiting the detachment bi-weekly to offer on-site support and accept referrals. This increased presence has strengthened communication and enhanced service delivery.

Referrals to the Victim Advocate have risen this year, and managing time across a wide geographic area has become more complex. Many survivors express discomfort with meeting at police detachments. As a result, the VA now works from up to three different locations each week to prioritize the comfort, safety, and accessibility needs of victims. Flexibility and strong, ongoing communication with both the Smiths Falls Police and the OPP remain critical to delivering responsive, victim-centered care.

A key question continues to shape this work: Why aren't more victims of SADV reporting to police, and how can we build stronger trust between officers and the community? Survivor forums and joint police trainings provide vital opportunities for survivors to speak directly with those in positions of power. These conversations ensure that victims' voices are not only heard—but are actively shaping how services and systems respond to violence.



# Family Court Support

The Family Court Support Program continues to benefit from enhancement funding that expanded the program to 28 hours per week. This funding, initiated as part of COVID-19 response measures, has been jointly supported by both federal and provincial governments through to the end of the current fiscal year, March 31, 2026. We remain hopeful that this enhanced support will become permanent in the future.

This program provides critical assistance to women navigating the complexities of the family court system. In the past fiscal year, the Family Court Support Program assisted 103 families. Support includes assistance with court documents and statement preparation, navigating Legal Aid, attending legal appointments, advocacy, and support throughout court proceedings.

Relationships with legal professionals remain central to the program's success. Ongoing training and education through partnerships—such as with Luke's Place—ensure that staff remain equipped with the latest information and strategies for supporting survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV) in the legal system. The program also continues to engage with local tables and explore opportunities for collaboration where it aligns with our mission and enhances service delivery.

While there were some staffing transitions this year, service disruption was minimal, and client numbers remained steady. The stability of this program has proven essential for families during one of the most stressful and vulnerable times in their lives.

We are deeply grateful for the funding enhancements that have strengthened this program and continue to advocate for the long-term sustainability of this critical support.



# 93 WOMEN

Were served by the Family Court  
Support Program this year

# Transitional Housing Support and Housing Programs

## Transitional Housing Support Program (THSP)

THSP services support survivors and their children as they work to increase their safety and overall stability and heal from violence. THSP supports women with housing applications, financial issues, legal, safety planning, advocacy, help to navigate the systems and barriers that she may face.

**32 WOMEN**

Were served by the Transitional Housing Support Program this year

The increase of abusers using technology in order to try maintain power/control and information on women. This has caused many women that have been supported over this past year to have to change their emails, phone numbers, and adding an additional level of security on their devices. This has also caused women to have a different level of fear that they feel like every movement is being watched even though they are in the shelter and physically safe.

THSP continues to support women who are navigating all the systems that she may encounter while trying to leaving an abusive situation.

The biggest challenge for women that access the THSP program is safe affordable housing. Private market rent continues to remain high and unaffordable on a single persons income, if a woman has children this becomes even more challenging. Women are being creative with their transition plans however in some cases women have had to remain/return to their abuser or move out of their community where they have most of their supports.

This also creates women to access residential services (emergency shelter) for longer periods of time.

## Housing Program

The goal of the housing options provided by LCIHCS is to offer women and children safe, affordable, and supportive transitional housing as they work toward securing permanent accommodations. One of the most significant benefits for many of our clients is that our units include rent subsidies through the Lanark County Housing Corporation. These subsidies remain available while clients are on the waitlist for permanent rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing, offering crucial financial relief during a time of transition.

**37 WOMEN  
& CHILDREN**

Were served by the Housing Program this year

**68% ↑**

This year, the Housing Program experienced several important developments. We expanded our Scattered Housing portfolio in Perth by adding three new units—two studio apartments and one large three-bedroom apartment—which allows us to better meet the needs of both individuals and larger families. In our Second Stage Housing Program, we introduced a mandatory financial literacy program for all residents. This program equips women with essential budgeting and money management skills to support long-term independence. We also worked to streamline the support structure across our various housing options.

In particular, we clarified the role of the Housing Coordinator to ensure consistent and efficient responses to tenant needs, especially within our scattered housing units. In addition, our ongoing schedule of quarterly unit inspections continues to serve the program well by identifying potential issues early and helping maintain the safety and quality of our properties.

We are deeply grateful to the partners and supporters who helped make this progress possible during the past fiscal year. United Way East Ontario provided \$20,000 in funding, and we also received generous support from RE/MAX Affiliates Marquis Ltd. Brokerage, Lindsay Beauchamp and Family through EnviroBottles, and the Almonte Community Coordinators.

Despite these positive developments, we continue to face ongoing challenges. One of the most significant barriers to housing access is our no-pet policy, which can be a difficult reality for some women considering LCIHCS housing. For many survivors, pets offer unconditional love, comfort, and emotional support. While our current housing structure does not permit animals, we continue to meet women where they are at and support their choices, including helping them seek alternative housing that allows pets. In addition, the ongoing lack of affordable rental units in the private market, along with long waitlists for RGI housing through social services, continues to delay the transition to long-term stability for many of our clients. These challenges make it increasingly difficult for women to move forward from violence, but we remain steadfast in our commitment to advocating for more housing options and supporting survivors every step of the way.



*As of March 2025, the county's by-name list (a real-time list of people experiencing homelessness in the community) indicated that 105 people were actively unhoused, up from 62 in February 2024. These individuals were staying in an emergency funded motel, domestic violence shelter, or in public places on the night of the count. Women make up over half of this number. This was up from 58 people on the last count in 2021, and 27 people on the last count before that in 2018.*

*Domestic Violence is one of the leading causes of housing instability, including homelessness, for women and children in Canada.*

**Lack of access to safe, affordable housing continues to be LCIHCS' biggest obstacles to our services.**

# Perseverance Pantry

The goal of the Perseverance Pantry is to provide women and children in our community, who utilize our services, with food and hygiene items as they navigate supporting themselves and their children in a society where the cost of living has significantly increased since the pandemic.

This year, the pantry served 78 women and 100 children. While this may appear to be a decrease from previous years, it is important to note that in past reports the total number was calculated by total registrations, not individual counts, which accounts for the change in how the data is represented.

This past fiscal year, a few unique developments helped shape and strengthen the program. Our Transportation Coordinator took on the majority of grocery shopping and handled all deliveries, most of which went to clients in Smiths Falls and Perth. We also began a new partnership with a local egg farmer, Christiana Gwin, who generously provided 12 to 15 dozen eggs every two weeks from spring through fall. Additionally, we welcomed a new volunteer who dedicated two hours each week to packing pantry orders. We aligned most pickups with this volunteer's schedule to streamline operations. We also improved internal communication between the shelter and the pantry teams, which allowed for better coordination around transportation, staffing coverage, and food preservation efforts.

We are very grateful to the donors and community partners who helped support the pantry this year. Financial support came from Mazon Canada (\$3,800) and the Perth & District Community Foundation (\$12,500), while in-kind and local contributions came from Jeff Julian of Desjardins Insurance, Anderson's Your Independent Grocer, St. Paul's Church, Starbucks, and local egg farmer Christiana Gwin.

One challenge that was unique to this year was a noticeable drop in dry goods donations. To maintain the level of service our clients rely on, we increasingly depended on grant funding to support regular grocery shopping. The ongoing challenge of rising food prices at grocery stores also continued to affect the pantry. In response, we became more strategic in our shopping habits—prioritizing items with the highest value for clients and actively price matching whenever possible to make the most of our available resources.



*This photo showcases some of the beautiful vegetables grown by residents in the gardens at Second Stage. The fresh produce harvested from these gardens is used to supplement the Perseverance Pantry and is delivered directly to women accessing the service, ensuring they have access to nutritious, homegrown food.*

# Transportation Support

One of the most significant developments this past fiscal year was the formalization of the Transportation Coordinator role as a permanent position. In Lanark County, lack of access to reliable transportation is a major barrier—for our agency and many others. Being able to create and sustain this role has made it possible for women to access our services more reliably and with greater ease.

The Transportation Program provides vital, safe, and reliable transportation for women and children, helping them get to essential services, appointments, programs, and school. It also facilitates the delivery of items from the Perseverance Pantry to families across Lanark County who are experiencing food insecurity.

This year, the program served 92 women and 85 children, and 266 pantry deliveries were made to families. The continued growth in participation and need demonstrates just how essential this program has become for our community.

We are deeply grateful for the generous support of community donors, whose contributions help keep the Perseverance Pantry stocked and operational. Thanks to this ongoing support, we are able to provide consistent access to food, hygiene items, and other essentials for women and children facing hardship.

As demand increases, the program has adapted by combining pantry packing and delivery days, optimizing schedules, and exploring more sustainable approaches. One such shift includes moving toward a client-choice model, which would allow families to select their own food items—restoring dignity, reducing waste, and ensuring their needs are truly met.

The Transportation Program continues to grow, and with it, our ability to ensure that more families can access the supports and services they need.



# Suit Yourself Program

The Suit Yourself program continues to empower and uplift women as they prepare to re-enter the workforce. Through one-on-one support, we help our clients build resumes, prepare for interviews, and access professional clothing—ensuring they feel confident and job-ready.

This year, we were proud to deepen our impact through a partnership with iSisters Technology Mentoring, offering two enriching courses to our clients:

- Career Connection Course – Focused on digital literacy, this course helped women develop essential computer skills and understand how to apply them in job searches and the workplace.
- AI Literacy Program – Introduced clients to the rapidly evolving world of artificial intelligence, with a focus on using AI tools to enhance writing and simplify everyday tasks.

A standout success from this partnership was seeing one of our clients, after participating in one of these courses, offered a teaching position with iSisters. This milestone represents the heart of what Suit Yourself stands for: creating opportunities, building confidence, and supporting women as they take bold steps toward a brighter future.

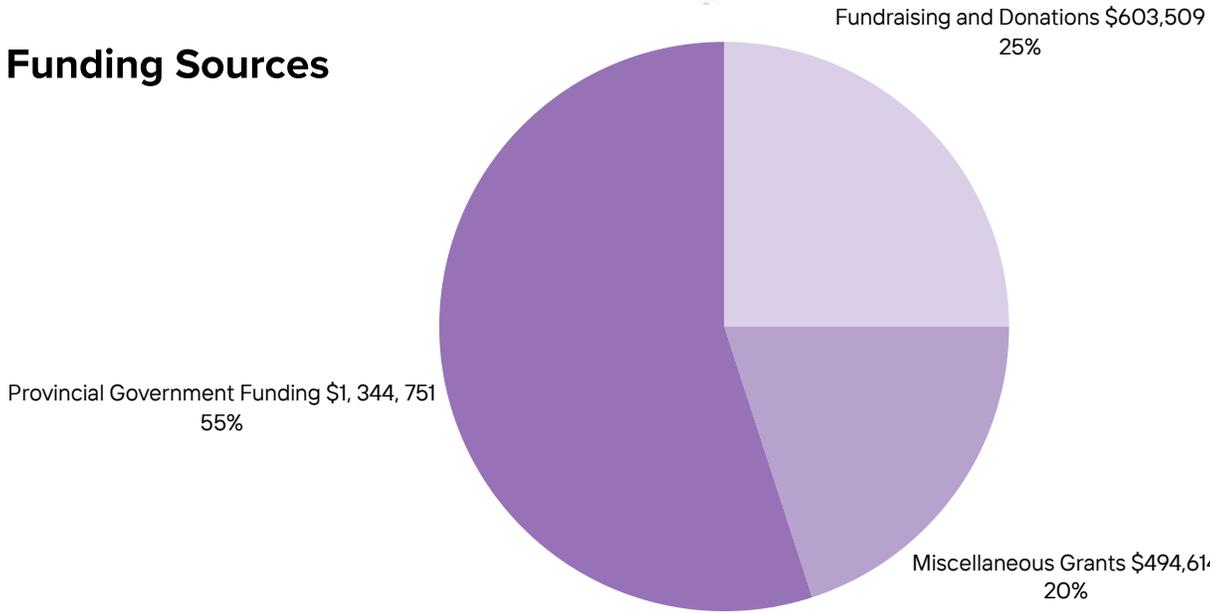


# Finances

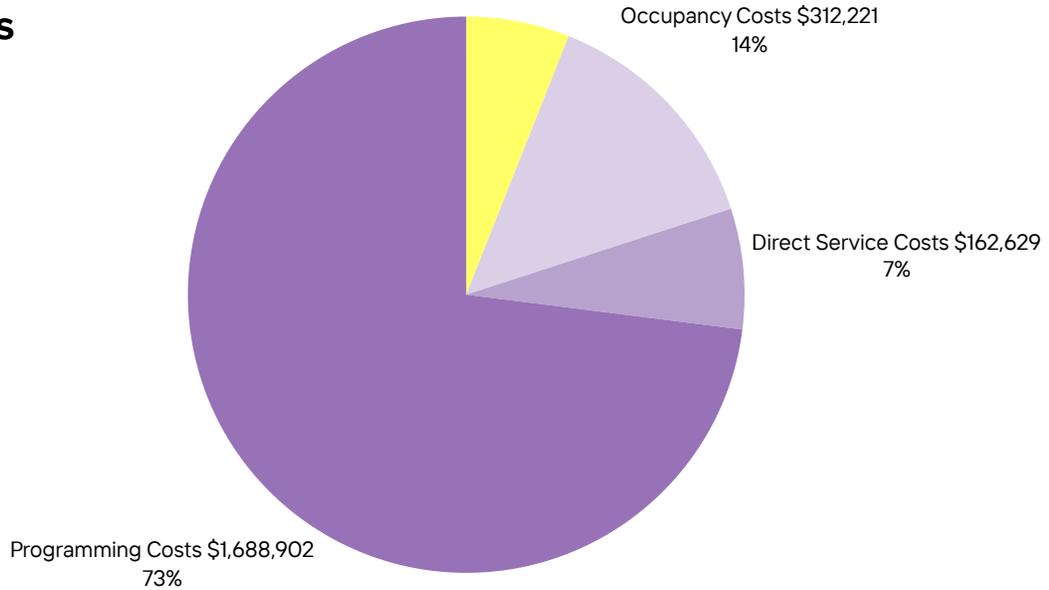
Statement of Operations for the year ended March 31, 2025

Revenue	2025	2024
Provincial Funding	\$1,344,751	\$1,450,429
Miscellaneous Grants	494,614	707,370
Fundraising and Donations	603,509	517,831
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>2,442,874</b>	<b>2,675,630</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Programming Costs	1,688,902	1,551,836
Direct Service Costs	162,629	208,632
Occupancy Costs	312,221	485,290
Administration	145,703	176,856
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>2,309,455</b>	<b>2,422,614</b>
<b>Net Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>133,419</b>	<b>253,016</b>

## Funding Sources



## Use of Funds



# THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

These organizations make it possible for us to run a number of our programs including Second Stage Housing, The Sexual Assault Support Program, Public Education, Resource Development and The Volunteer Program. We wouldn't be the agency we are without the support of these organizations and their people. Thank you for being the Champions our clients need!

## CHAMPIONS IN THE FIGHT TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (\$20,000+)



## PROTECTORS IN THE FIGHT TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (\$10,000+)



**Almonte Civitan Club**  
Serving our community since 1972

**LAVENDER & LACE LINGERIE AND ACCESSORIES**

## SUPPORTERS IN THE FIGHT TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (\$5,000+)



## & BRENDA AND DALE DERBYSHIRE FOUNDATION

## ALLIES IN THE FIGHT TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Almonte Community Presbyterian Church  
Bayshore Home Health  
Bean Motors  
Beauties of the Beast  
Carleton Place Rotary Club  
Carleton Place Royal Canadian Legion  
Dragon Fly Boutique  
Eric and Christiana Gwin

Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario  
Fashion Envy  
Grand Hotel Carleton Place  
Janet Beath - Paint by Janet  
Jara Sweeping  
Jeff Julian Desjardin Insurance  
Lanark County Crime Stoppers  
Mazon Canada

Ottawa Basketeers  
Renewed with Love Bridal  
Rideau-St. Lawrence Real Estate Board  
Rona Foundation  
Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 95  
Royal Lepage Shelter Foundation  
Shelter Movers Ottawa  
St. Paul's Church Almonte  
Town of Carleton Place